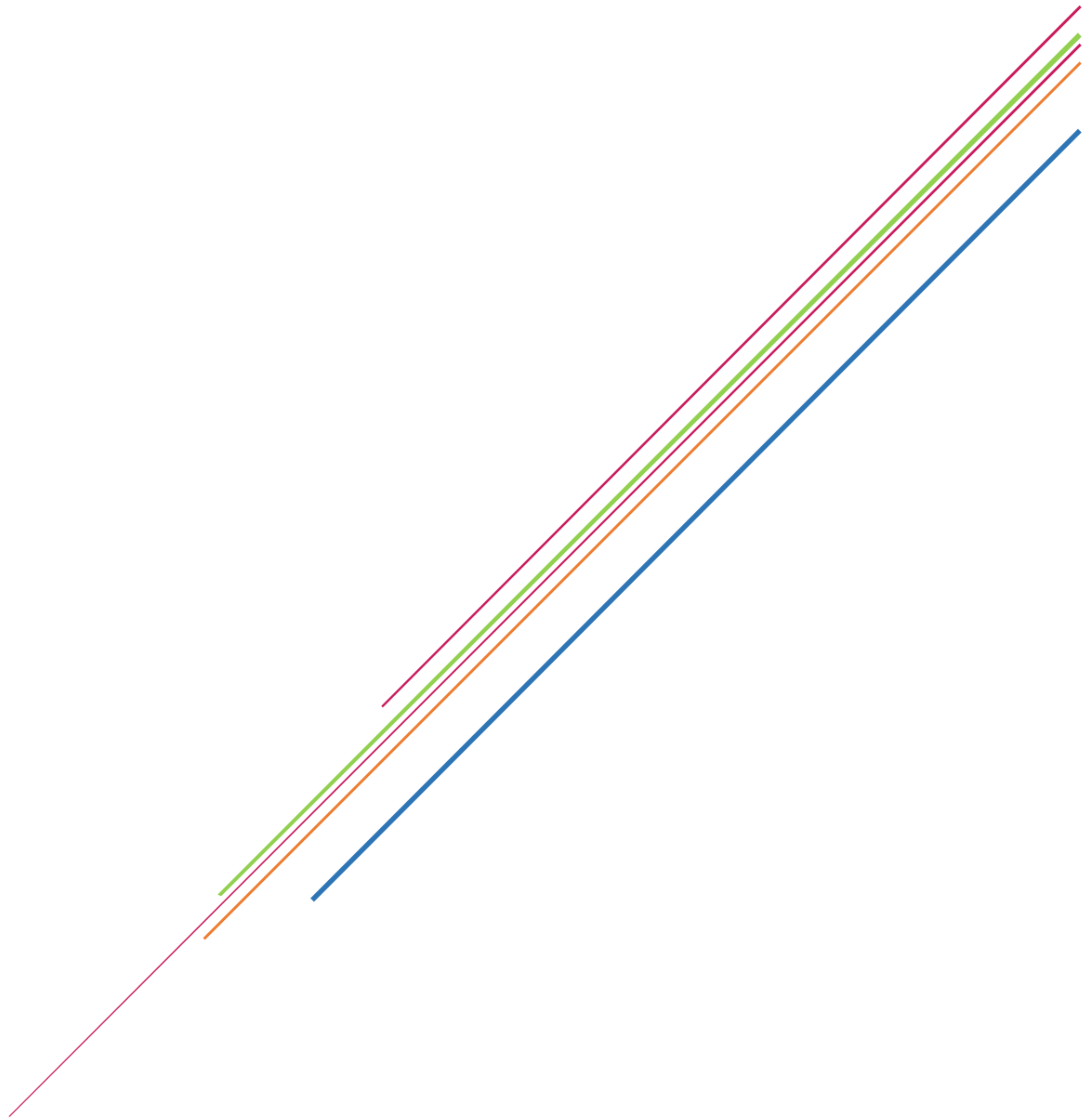


# TRAINING KIT FOR TRAINERS



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## Introduction

Sustainable development cannot be achieved in any area without gender equality and women's rights and empowerment (UN Women, Handbook on, Gender Mainstreaming for Gender Equality Results, 2022). This attitude is also applicable for the women with migration and/or ethnic minority background. Such a position has consistently been reaffirmed by the EU, highlighting the importance of the migrant and ethnic minority women's successful integration into the host country, among it being also long-term inclusion into the labour market. Yet, the EC policy report on "Demographic Scenarios for the EU Migration, Population and Education" states of a larger non-working population, particularly female immigrants. Furthermore, women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background face persistent disadvantages in the labour market, sometimes referred to as a "double disadvantage" based on being a woman and being with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background (OECD, Migration Policy Debates, N25, 2020).

Deskilling is a common experience, with women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background often being overqualified for their jobs. Moreover, the emphasis on migrant women in lesser skilled sectors of the labour market and on the more masculinised sectors of the skilled labour market have further overshadowed the noteworthy presence of skilled migrant women in the labour market (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Skilled female migrants in the discourse of labour migration in Europe). Skilled women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background are mostly marginalised, less active as their peer nationals or are overqualified for their jobs (OECD, Migration Policy Debates, 2020) and their potential, their capacity and ambitions for a qualified job has not been sufficiently addressed (Expertise from German Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, 2019).

As a result, skilled women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background across the EU continue to face challenges inside and outside their communities that have a detrimental effect on their equal participation in society. Discrimination and social exclusion reduce their capacities to claim their rights and place them in an extremely vulnerable situation where poverty and violence intermingle in a closed circle, reproducing the problems over generations. On the other hand, the EU acknowledges that employment can ensure effective integration into host societies and positively impact on the EU economy; this entails fully using their skills and realising their economic potential (EC, Migration and Home Affairs, Integration in the Labour Market).

Against this background, the current handbook offers innovative approaches, methodologies and techniques that can foster the social and labour inclusion of women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background by addressing their specific needs, empowering them and motivating them and these through professionals working with them. The handbook comes up with interactive, realistic and sustainable up-skilling methods and models based on country and culture specific characteristics, migration context, work-based and experiential learning with the use of gamification which will be deployed as "an instructional design process, and not an instructional method, applied to existing instructional methods to improve target outcomes" (Cambridge Handbook of Technology and Employee Behavior, 2019). As such, this handbook is intended for use by practitioners, VET trainers, job-coaches, social workers, policymakers, managers with varying levels of awareness and knowledge. It is also a resource for migration specialists and advisors, who seek to ensure integration, equality and non-discrimination.

The handbook is a way to move beyond the general, wide-spread "integration-course" approach towards a deeper and more sustained impact on the integration policy and practice for the women

with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background. It has been developed with the aim to encourage and support a systematic and effective inclusion of skilled women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background into the labour market for the achievement of their empowerment and integration within all sectors.

By consolidating knowledge on integration and inclusion into labour market of the skilled women with migration and/or ethnic minority background by identifying promising practices and positive trends to strengthen its implementation, this publication can provide an incentive to build on the gains that the target group can generate.

**Referring to the “skilled/“qualified” determinations, the handbook refers to the level 3-5 of the European Qualifications Framework and in exceptional cases also Level 6.**

## The Rationale and Purpose of the Handbook

The handbook aims to establish a framework of an innovative and sustainable programme/course of Vocational educational training (VET training) based on the research and combination of strategies to ensure viable, lifelong practical skills and competences. It equips professional facilitators (trainers, social pedagogues/workers, VET providers, etc.) with practical, engaging and personalised material and strategies which they can use for training the skilled women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background, to increase their efficiency and productivity as well as enable them to fully exploit their potential. It enables them to acknowledge their strengths, upgrade their capacity and knowledge of the country-specific and job-related skills and competences, and to provide labour market related insight. It provides good practice examples, practical solutions (e.g. re childcare) and problem management tools (also via gamification and experiential learning).

The constructions of the handbook are based on the 2020 Council Recommendation on VET, highlighting the demands in the labour market and the necessity of work based. It also acknowledges the fundamentals of the Osnabrück Declaration 2020, highlighting the prerequisite of digital transformation. In line with these, the handbook refers to the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators, to empower the trainers with strategies and skills that can enhance and innovate education and training.

## Using the Handbook

When preparing the handbook, as an initial step the researchers have referred to the analyses and reports of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, to embrace the VET and the labour market related trends, transitions and needs. Additionally, needs analysis and analysis of success stories in each of the 4 countries – Austria, Bulgaria, Germany and Portugal, were conducted. Afterwards, the handbook was produced based on first-hand knowledge and expertise as well as desk research.



As a result, a unified and sectoral handbook is prepared, comprising four blocks:

- Block 1: Models for career developing
- Block 2: Labour market related skills and competences
- Block 3: Models for emotional intelligence
- Block 4: Developing/improving cognitive skills

Each training block is intended to ensure specific learning outcomes with knowledge, skills and competencies that enable the participants to enlarge their professional as well as socio-cultural spectra and expertise. Moreover, each Block is divided into 2 separate sections: 1) a theoretical framework, providing paradigms for developing career- and job-related skills and competences of the target group based on their qualifications, 2) a practical part, supporting creativity as well as confidence building and improving self-esteem of the target group through hands-on sessions and mind-provoking exercises.

Additionally, in the Appendix the practitioners can find Assessment Tools and Checklists which can help them to identify their participants, their background and expectations and based on this information they can develop a more customised and personalised course.

## Block 1: Models for career developing

### 1.1. Description

For women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background, entering the workforce often proves to be a difficult hurdle. In addition to language barriers, unclear career and life goals in the new home country (my role as a woman), and a lack of qualifications, the compatibility of family and career is a particular obstacle for many migrant women on their way into working life and hinders their (re)integration efforts in the labour market.

### 1.2. Keywords

Labour market integration, soft skills, basic skills, role models, empowerment

### 1.3. Module Goals

Women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background should be demonstrably equipped with action competencies, and the course design is oriented to the output of the learning processes. The successful mastering of competencies is the top priority, away from content and towards the ability to act.

### 1.4. Learning Objectives

Women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background deal with the understanding of their role as well as different possibilities of practicing their profession in their new home country.

### 1.5. Learning Outcomes

Knowledge	Skills	Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about skills and competencies achieved by formal, non-formal or informal learning</li> <li>• about own roles in the family and how to connect them to labour market integration</li> <li>• about trends in the local/regional/national labour market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ability to recognize diverse and self-fulfilling life models</li> <li>• ability to transfer knowledge into practice as part of the teaching/learning process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to apply achieved skills and competencies in different contexts</li> <li>• to participate actively in social and professional life in their new home country</li> </ul>

## 1.6. Main content

For women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background, entering the workforce often proves to be a difficult hurdle. In addition to language barriers, unclear career and life goals in the new home country (my role as a woman), and a lack of qualifications, the compatibility of family and career is a particular obstacle for many women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background on their way into working life and hinders their (re)integration efforts in the labour market.

BEST has been implementing the training and support project “Wiedereinstieg mit Zukunft” (Re-entry with Future) for many years, in which women and migrants with widely varying prerequisites (educational/professional biographies, etc.) are supported in a targeted and needs-oriented manner in their (re-)integration into the labour market. Migrant women deal with the understanding of their role as well as different possibilities of practicing their profession in their new home country. For this purpose, various possibilities of combining work and family, different professional employment opportunities and trends on the (regional) labour market are pointed out.

A comprehensive assessment of competencies enables the women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background to become (re)aware of their (in)formal competencies, potentials and resources and, based on these, to concretize their professional goals. Migrant women who need/want to reorient themselves professionally receive comprehensive support and guidance from company contact persons/coaches. A wide range of courses/workshops on various basic skills, ICT, digital skills and soft skills (at various levels) allows migrant women to brush up and acquire the skills and know-how they need for their future careers. The diverse offerings are tailored to the varying needs of migrant women (educational/professional biographies) and allow for needs-based skills development. In addition, the migrant women are supported and supervised in their job search and various application activities. Above all, the individual support provided by coaches/company contacts decisively supports the migrant women in their vocational (re)integration efforts.

Participation in WMZ has enabled many female migrants to enter the workforce and thus to actively participate in social and professional life in their new home country. The WMZ model presented below was derived from this training and support project.

### 1.6.1. Profiles of trainers and learners

#### Trainers/coaches:

The training experts working in the WMZ project with the target group in vocational orientation courses and career counselling & guidance put the focus on both the specific needs of the labour market and the participants' individual situation and competences. A number of them has a migrant background with a higher education level and childcare obligations, and are yet able to perform an independent and self-determined lifestyle. These features often make them role models themselves for migrant women, and enables them to provide a high degree of experience-based knowledge, flexibility and empathy in dealing with the learners from the target group.

The trainers and coaches working in the WMZ project need to have a degree in social or pedagogical counselling or bachelor's degree in education, a valid gender mainstreaming and diversity management certificate and several years of experience in educational context. A number of them hold a degree or diploma in the fields of German language teaching.

## Learners

The target group of the WMZ project are women who seek to (re-) enter the Austrian labour market, mostly after career breaks due to family and care responsibilities or immigration. The educational backgrounds may be different, from women who have achieved a higher qualification in their home countries which are not or not yet acknowledged in Austria to low skilled women with no or only little professional experience. For a sustainable integration in the labour market learners not only need support and guidance on their way into working life according to their respective needs and (professional) interests, including the achievement of formal educational qualifications or acknowledgement of existing foreign educational qualifications. Another focus is the aligning of family, work, and childcare, which is often not necessarily common in their cultural backgrounds and requires some rethinking of roles and self-determination.

### 1.6.2. Challenges Identified

#### Reduction of counterproductive attitudes, development of willingness to participate and motivation

First and foremost, any counterproductive attitudes toward participation must be eliminated. This can be achieved by explaining to the migrant women at the beginning of the project the varying possibilities for design/use and the right of co-determination and co-design that is granted (what content/tasks/questions etc. do I want/need to deal with to enable me to take up work in the desired occupational area?). The women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background should experience that they themselves, with their current situation, prevailing (occupational) interests/desires and (learning) needs, are at the centre of events and that the further course of the course (maybe: direction of the course?) is geared to their needs or the envisaged goals.

#### Conveying of new perspectives

The women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background are shown by role models (e.g. trainers with migrant background and childcare obligations) through personal experiences that it is possible and desirable for women to pursue a career: (financial) independence, self-fulfilment as well as the manifold advantages that gainful employment holds for women in the short/medium and long term.

### 1.6.3. Good Practice: The WMZ model – empowerment, targeted training and individual support



“Wiedereinstieg mit Zukunft“ by BEST, <https://youtu.be/PvbsZ59tLq0>

The WMZ model is especially suitable for women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background: they are supported and accompanied on their way into working life according to their respective needs and (professional) interests. In the sense of empowerment, migrant women are encouraged and motivated from the very beginning to take the necessary steps towards professional (re)integration actively, which will pave the way to a satisfactory gainful employment that will secure their livelihood. The development of self-confidence, motivation and commitment as well as the recognition of one's own learning and performance capabilities are important prerequisites for an independent and self-determined lifestyle, to which migrant women should be gradually introduced.

### 1.6.4. Didactic Methodological Design

Competency-based trainings of the WMZ model are oriented towards learning outcomes, are action-, learning- and process-oriented, participant-centred and are guided by the following goals:

#### **Orientation to learning outcomes:**

Migrant women should be demonstrably equipped with action competencies, and the course design is oriented to the output of the learning processes. The successful mastering of competencies required for professional challenges is the top priority, away from content and towards the ability to act.

#### **Action orientation:**

An essential component is the transfer into practice as part of the teaching/learning process. Knowledge is not applied in isolation but in context.

#### **Interdisciplinarity and holism:**

Professional situations often require not only technical knowledge and skills but also personal and socio-cultural competencies.

#### **Learning orientation:**

The main focus is on planning, organizing and accompanying the learning processes of the learners; trainers and coaches play the role of facilitators and learning companions.

### **Participant-centeredness:**

In the competence-oriented approach, learners are responsible for their own learning progress, solve problems and are self-reflective. They deal with their learning progress as actively and individually as possible. The development of a situational interest and the emergence of a personal motivation to learn are decisive.

The starting point for the respective (learning) activities is the available knowledge/ competencies of the women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background. Individual learning goals (e.g. “this is what I need for my everyday working life”) are defined together with the trainers/coaches during the competence assessment/individual coaching so that migrants can orient themselves to these goals in the further course. Migrant women should become (re)aware of their available potential and resources, build on these and expand them as needed (taking into account the intended occupation). “Connected learning” and “competence-oriented learning/working” are the guiding criteria for a variety of learning settings: Migrant women are invited to actively contribute their knowledge, experience and skills to the course and to apply them in a variety of practical exercises and tasks. Migrant women receive feedback on the tasks they have completed, can ask questions and thus check the learning objectives that have been set. The teaching and acquisition of learning techniques (e.g. migrant women learn to organize themselves) should also enable them to consciously perceive and independently carry out checks on learning objectives, thus optimizing the achievement of learning objectives.

Migrant women should also learn with and from each other in order to use the diverse potential of individual migrant women (maybe: of each other?) in the sense of valuable synergies and to be able to expand valuable opportunities. Migrant women are also motivated to deal with various (learning) contents (e.g. by using e-learning offers, learning platforms, apps, etc.) on their own, by setting individual tasks, etc.), to obtain information, ... to continue self-learning beyond the end of the training.

An important step in this process is the assessment of available knowledge and competencies in the course of the competency assessment: previously acquired training and experience, formal and informal competencies are processed (in the course of comprehensive support by trainers/coaches) and thus made (again) “visible” and the migrant women “aware”. This particularly important experience/knowledge has a lasting effect on the migrant women's self-confidence, motivation and commitment. The individual support in the accompanying one-on-one settings is also characterized by comprehensive motivation work, an increase in self-confidence and the development of confidence in the personal ability to learn/perform and a certain “willingness to persevere” – essential prerequisites for the success of the (re-)integration into the labour market in the near future.

The use of a diverse compendium of methods that encourages participants to independently and actively acquire knowledge/expand competencies also takes into account various educational/professional biographies, learning types/tempo and learning preferences. By using different methods and teaching materials (analogue/digital), learning processes can be designed flexibly, learning can take place across learning fields, and different competencies can be trained in parallel. If necessary, sufficient time is provided for the development of individual topics (as well as learning success control), so that a sustainable learning transfer and corresponding (learning) goal achievement is ensured.

Also offers such as language meetings, “women's meetings”, lectures by role models, learning/focus groups on different topics/interests of the migrant women serve the individual competence extension as well as the networking and solidarity among women.

The WMZ model aims at comprehensively supporting migrant women in their (re)integration efforts; the following objectives and activities are guiding principles:

- Critical examination of role clichés and comparison with labour market realities. Migrant women should also think “outside the box” and consider atypical/future-oriented occupational areas as possible fields of employment.
- Clarification: migration experience as a resource and cultural diversity as an enrichment, in the professional context e.g. additional qualifications in the form of language skills etc.
- Making existing qualifications and (in)formal competencies visible to increase motivation and realistic assessment of potential job opportunities in the new home country.
- Targeted support for any social/structural problems associated with one's own migration background, e.g. through mediation/establishment of contact with counselling institutions, option of information and counselling in first language.
- Strengthening of self-confidence with regard to personal and professional competencies, the ability to learn/perform, one's own ability to work as well as making competencies visible.
- Active support in the organization of childcare, as well as suggestions and information on the compatibility of family and career.
- Comprehensive motivational work through role models.
- Promoting the development of assertiveness skills through comprehensive motivational work, building self-confidence, encouraging self-confident appearance in job interviews (e.g. exercise “Praise to myself”).
- Diverse learning settings with various practical exercises/tasks, which are worked on and reflected upon by the migrant women alone, in tandem or in small groups.

### 1.6.5. Unit 1

#### 1.6.5.1. Role models “I as a woman/mother” – reconciling work and family life

Since migrant women are usually responsible for looking after the children and running the household on their own, it is of decisive importance to show migrant women various possibilities and approaches to reconciling work and family life. It is also important to address the prevailing role expectations of women in the new home country or in the home country in order to show women diverse and self-fulfilling life models (employment, independence, (professional) self-realization, etc.) in the new home country.

Migrant women should be supported in expanding their cultural understanding of their roles. The manifold professional opportunities that are offered to women in their new home country as well as manifold possibilities to combine career and family are demonstrated. Comprehensive motivation work and a particularly empathetic approach on the part of the trainers make a significant contribution to this.

To this end, workshops will be held on the following topics:

- **Role models of women:**

My role as a woman/working mother, intercultural role understanding, mothers as role models for their children, building self-confidence & motivation – empowerment, social/family law basics.

- **Childcare:**

Childcare/external care options, involvement of partner and others, childcare providers/offers in the area, support/funding options, childcare organization; migrant women are supported in organizing childcare by the trainers/coaches, if necessary, childcare can be provided at the course location.

- **Family and household management:**

Reorganization of family/household management, involvement of partner and other persons – delegation, possibilities/techniques of efficient time/stress management (work techniques, handling resources, etc.).

- **Benefits and impacts of gainful employment:**

Awareness-raising: importance/necessity of gainful employment, pointing out advantages/potential possibilities of professional realization – empowerment, importance of regional/professional mobility – integration of role models; effects of gainful employment on life income/pension.

#### 1.6.5.2. Task “Perfect image of you”



### Perfect image of you

➤ **Learning objectives:**

This exercise will help migrant women to evaluate the degree of overlap between perceptions of the ideal person and the male and female gender based stereotypes, an important step towards recognition of their own roles apart from family and childcare obligations.



### Setting/Materials Needed

- Course room
- Paper
- Pens
- Flip chart and sheets





## How to conduct the task

Migrant women are each handed a piece of paper at the beginning of the training sequence. They are instructed not to look at what is on the papers others have, and given one of the following assignments:

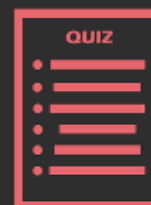
- List the 5 most important characteristics that an ideal person should have.
- List the 5 most important characteristics that an ideal woman should have.
- List the 5 most important characteristics that an ideal man should have.
- Next, the findings are compared, discussed and evaluated in the group, referring to the degree of compliance between perceptions of the ideal person and the male and female stereotypes.
- Facilitating questions:
  - Why are perceptions and stereotypes complying?
  - In which way are the group members individually affected by this?
  - What is the connection between the lists and the pictures of well-known celebrities/models?
  - What was your experience from this activity?
  - What new insights have you gained?
  - Was there something particularly impressing for you?
- Next, the findings are compared, discussed and evaluated in the group, referring to the degree of compliance between perceptions of the ideal person and the male and female stereotypes.
- **Conclusion:** The facilitator places a white sheet of paper on the wall and asks the group to make a summary. On the white sheet, it says: "The ten words I will remember from this activity?" Each of the participants speaks (or writes herself on the sheet) a word / a term, a phrase that she will remember from this exercise.



- Duration 45 to 90 min, depending on number of participants
- Pictures of "ideals" can be brought and showed to the group when every participant has finished the task.

### 1.6.5.3. Quiz for Self-Assessment

To be answered by participants at the end of the unit



#### 1. What is the first step towards gender-based equality inclusion:

- A )  understanding different cultures
- B )  division of good and "not good" cultures



2. **Can you choose your social role in society instead of society gives it to you?**

A )  Yes

B )  No

3. **What profession would you choose to get an excellent role in society and why?**

.....  
.....  
.....

4. **List the 5 most important characteristics an ideal person should have:**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5. **Are there different rules and expectations for men and women in society?**

A )  Yes

B )  No

6. **Is there a connection between the objectification of human body and gender-based violence?**

A )  Yes

B )  No

7. **Gender stereotypes determine my role in society and expectations of me?**

A )  Yes

B )  No

8. **How can you counter gender stereotypes in your personal environment?**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

9. **What is the basis for the development of stereotypes?**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

10. **Do stereotypes match reality to a higher degree?**

A )  Yes

B )  No

## 1.6.6. Unit 2

### 1.6.6.1. Skills assessment – support for career orientation

Within the framework of the competence assessment, migrant women deal with their previous professional/life biography. Using a variety of tasks, (practical) exercises, and the completion of questionnaires/quizzes (analogue/digital), they are asked to identify their strengths/weaknesses, (in)formal competencies acquired in their home country, digital competencies, soft skills, and (professional) experience, and to use these as a basis for creating initial career prospects. Results of the individual competence survey activities are summarized in the competence profile. The competence profile is drawn up individually for each migrant and is intended to establish the greatest possible reference to the profession practiced/appointed and to enable the necessary realizable career prospects. The skills assessment not only identifies existing skills and competences and learning gaps. It also helps migrant women to better recognize their strengths and talents, thus offering a different point of view on themselves and their roles apart from family and child care obligations.

The main topics of the competence assessment are:

- **Strengths/weaknesses analysis:**

Self-assessment/awareness: personal potentials and resources; strengthen strengths – weaken weaknesses – empowerment; women should become aware of their role as "multipliers" in the integration process in the family.

- **Survey of (in)formal competencies:**

Survey of formal/informal competencies as well as competencies acquired in the home country; creation of a personal portfolio; information and support for nostrification/nostrification (?) as needed.

- **Survey of digital competences:**

Survey of digital competencies (quizzes/questionnaires/worksheets etc.); provision of information on further qualification offers of digital competencies

- **Survey of envisaged career goals:**

Survey of usable (professional) experience, existing (partial) qualifications and practical periods, initial career goal planning (e.g. using "WOOP" method – Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan).

Women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background who want to/have to reorient themselves professionally receive targeted support: the provision of diverse (analogue and digital) information on various industries and professions, trends on the regional labour market, etc., as well as individual support from a coach/company contact support the migrant women in their professional reorientation.

Once the career objectives have been defined, the further career planning can be concretized in the career plan with the specification of further necessary steps (which qualifications/further training are still required, which potential job opportunities/job offers are available, etc.). Subsequent workshops can be attended by the migrant women in order to be able to advance the career goal planning as well as active job search and various application activities in a goal-oriented manner:

- **Career plan:**

Concretization/finalization of professional perspectives in the career plan – as a result of the competence assessment/competence profile.

- **Job search and job market research:**

Possibilities of job market research, use of different media/job platforms, etc.

- **The “hidden job market”:**

Importance/opportunities of the hidden job market, expanding & maintaining personal contacts/networks.

- **Using social media for your career:**

Career opportunities/risks of social media, social media use for career.

- **Professional application materials:**

Creating resume, cover letter and application video, elevator pitch, applying via online conference system (such as Zoom, Skype, etc.).

- **The job interview:**

Preparing for the interview, possible (awkward, unwarranted) questions, etc., assessment centre, the professional “first impression”.

### [Needs-oriented skills enhancement – comprehensive range of courses/workshops](#)

A diverse range of courses and workshops enables migrant women to refresh and expand precisely those skills and know-how that they need for their future careers. The wide range of courses on offer in the areas of basic skills, ICT and digital skills, and soft skills takes into account the individual educational/professional biographies, (learning) needs and (professional) interests of migrant women.

Course/workshop offerings:

- **Basic Skills:**

National language at different levels (A1-B1), conversation training, English, English conversation, mathematics, commercial arithmetic, etc.

- **ICT and Digital Skills:**

Internet/e-mail, internet safety, word processors, spreadsheets, presentation skills, social media, eBanking/eGovernment etc.

- **Soft Skills:**

Communication training, team management, conflict management, presentation skills, self-presentation, gender mainstreaming, diversity management, etc.

### [Individual support services – support from coaches/company contacts](#)

In addition, women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background are individually supported by a coach/company contact in the concretization of envisaged job perspectives, the active job search and job research as well as possible application activities (preparation of application documents, preparation and reflection on job interviews, application coaching). It is recommended that migrant

women are always supported by the same coach/company contact person. In this way, an intensive relationship of trust can be built up between the migrant and the coach/company contact, so that support can be tailored to the respective current needs/situation. The individual support provided by the coach/company contact person has proven to be a useful way of providing migrant women with the best possible support in their vocational (re)integration efforts. Migrant women who need further support in their (re)integration efforts after the end of project participation can optionally be offered further follow-up support.

Individual coaching sessions can also address the issue of domestic violence. Comprehensive information on the topic (violence in the family/against women), sensitive awareness-raising, forms of 'defending oneself', as well as information about and, if necessary, contacting/cooperating with counselling/violence intervention centres/women's shelters are intended to encourage women affected by violence to free themselves from these stressful situations and to take advantage of appropriate support services. A particularly sensitive and empathetic approach on the part of the coach is crucial here. The women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background must also be assured that their issues/problems will be treated confidentially.

#### 1.6.6.1. Task "Talent Exchange Market"



### Women Start Business – Talent Exchange Market

#### ➤ Learning objectives:

This exercise will help unemployed women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background to raise awareness that they have a multitude of talents, strengths, competencies, qualities, abilities and skills, as well as extensive and valuable experience in a wide range of areas, achieved by informal learning and experience: e.g. in the household, cooking, childcare, creativity, communication, organizing. And in a next step, subsequently "marketing" these talents, strengths, competencies, skills and abilities within the framework of a talent exchange market.



### Setting/Materials Needed

- Course room
- Paper
- Pens

- Flip chart and sheets
- Moderation cards
- Pins or adhesive strips
- Products or services that the participants prepare themselves and bring to the training activity



## How to conduct the task

- **Step 1:** Participants receive cards and are invited to write down their talents, strengths, competencies, qualities, abilities and skills on these cards. For example: “I can prepare traditional food very well.” “I can bake well.” “I can sing well.” “I’m good at telling stories.” “I’m a good listener.” “I can help others to learn.” “I am good at child care.” “I can prepare traditional food very well.” “I can cut other people’s hair,” etc.
- **Step 2:** Participants present their talents, strengths, competencies, qualities, abilities and skills in turn in the plenary session and pin or stick the cards to a dedicated pin board (wall). The trainers make sure that these are clustered – e.g. 5 cards from women who can cook well, 3 cards from women who can sing well, etc.
- **Step 3:** Participants are given the assignment to think about which products (e.g. self-made clothes, accessories, food, etc.), but also services (e.g. learning support, counselling, singing, etc.) they would like to prepare and offer for the talent exchange activity. They are invited to cluster with participants with the same or similar talents, strengths, competences, qualities, abilities and skills in small cooperatives of 3 to 4 people. In the cooperatives (teams) it is agreed who will bring what to the talent exchange day and offer it for exchange.
- **Step 4:** During the talent exchange day, participants and trainers first of all redesign the course room so that each team can present and market its products and services in the best possible way (design of sales stands, communication and consultation corners, stage for singing performances, etc.). Then the talent exchange market starts, where the participants should exchange as many talents, products and services as possible.
- **Conclusion:** Participants are engaged in a final reflection activity within their teams. The following guiding questions might be used:
  - Which of my talents, strengths, competencies, qualities, skills and abilities have I offered?
  - What have I received from the other participants in return?
  - What have I learnt about myself through the talent exchange?
  - What am I particularly proud of?



- Could I imagine using, offering and marketing my talents, strengths, competences, qualities, abilities and skills professionally? Duration 3 - 4 hours of preparatory introductory exercises
- 4 - 6 hours for the talent exchange activity



1.6.6.2. Quiz for Self-Assessment

To be answered by participants at the end of the unit

1. Labour market inclusion necessarily requires:

- A )  A formal education
- B )  Awareness of own knowledge, skills and competences

2. Skills and competences are only achieved through formal learning?

- A )  Yes
- B )  No

3. If you could make a choice, what would be your favourite profession, and why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. List the 4 most important characteristics your favourite job would have:

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. Would your environment recognize that you have successfully entered the labour market?

- A )  Yes
- B )  No

6. Can you get support for childcare apart from your own family?

- A )  Yes
- B )  No

7. Do you know a job where your skills, competences and experiences are on demand?

- A )  Yes
- B )  No

8. In your opinion, what are the main hinderers for a sustainable job entry?

.....

.....

.....

.....

9. What in your current life situation is helpful, what hinders you from achieving professional goals?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

10. Do men and women have equal job opportunities in our country?

A )  Yes

B )  No

### 1.7. Block conclusion

The aim of this project is to inspire confidence in migrant women’s own abilities, on the one hand by strengthening soft skills and making competences visible and further developing them, and on the other hand by supporting them in obtaining formal educational qualifications after the end of the course, if needed. The focus is on a women-specific educational approach, competence-oriented learning/training, contacts in the real working world, the promotion of mobility & dealing with diversity and pluralism, and shaping the image of their own roles in the labour market context.

The use of a diverse compendium of methods that encourages participants to independently and actively acquire knowledge/expand competencies also takes into account varying educational/professional biographies, learning types/tempo and learning preferences. By using different methods and teaching materials (analogue/digital), learning processes can be designed flexibly, learning can take place across learning fields, and different competencies can be trained in parallel. If necessary, sufficient time is provided for the development – as well as learning success control – of individual topics, so that a sustainable learning transfer and corresponding (learning) goal achievement is ensured.

### 1.8. References

<https://www.best.at/gefoerderte-personalentwicklung/wiedereinstieg-mit-zukunft-2-0-sued/>

<https://nogaps.eu/>

Video “Wiedereinstieg mit Zukunft” by BEST, <https://youtu.be/PvbsZ59tLq0>

Image credit: [https://cdn.pixabay.com/photo/2016/11/05/11/10/quiz-1799934\\_340.png](https://cdn.pixabay.com/photo/2016/11/05/11/10/quiz-1799934_340.png)



## Block 2: Labour market related skills and competences

### 2.1 Description

The focus of this chapter is laid on the information about labour market related skills that are necessary for migrant women to find an adequate qualified job.

The material (unit and lessons) should help trainers/mentors/facilitators to improve their support during their work with the target group (women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background).

Especially after the COVID pandemic, the most important labour market related skills (that are requested in work offers) changed to prudence, empathy and a positive basic attitude. After completing this block – trainers gain the knowledge about new variants/possibilities of development in the job carrier; about important skills, methods and theories; and therefore – information about how to facilitate and encourage others in the process of job career development.

### 2.2. Keywords

Labour market integration, labour market related skills, skills (hard, soft, metacognitive, transferable, entrepreneurial skills), abilities, competencies.

### 2.3. Module goals

- To enrich the knowledge (theoretical information) of trainers about labour market related skills. (For example, trainers should know information about the Theory of Resilience; also should know the Theory of Nonviolent Communication).
- To teach practically (with practical examples/exercises) how is it possible to develop the labour market related skills. (For example, trainers should know how to implement theoretical information about skills and theories in work with the target group (women with migration background)).
- To facilitate the engagement of trainers in the topic and to help the trainers to develop own ideas and methods for education practice on this topic.

### 2.4. Learning Objectives

- To get detailed information about labour market related skills, to know classifications of skills and distinguish among them.
- To learn how to recognize – what labour market related skills possesses certain person.
- To get theoretical information and practical advice (certain exercises/activities) about how to develop labour market related skills.
- To realize how to adopt gained knowledge/skills for the certain educational/working context and how to run workshops on this topic.

- Trainers get ideas how to create/apply educational practice with the goal of diminishing the feeling of powerlessness and empowerment and strengthening the capacity to act for the members of the target group.
- Trainers can try to develop own ideas and methods for education practice on this topic with the target group.

## 2.5. Learning outcomes

Knowledge	Skills	Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• about labour market related skills (general information; classification; detailed explanation);</li> <li>• about how to recognize certain labour market related skills which needed to be developed in any individual case;</li> <li>• theoretical knowledge about development of certain labour market related skills and practical knowledge (exercises/activities) for developing necessary skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ability to recognize different categories of skills (hard, soft);</li> <li>• ability to recognize certain labour market related skills, needed to be developed in particular individual case;</li> <li>• ability to provide training for development of needed labour market related skills (necessary for trainers) / ability to learn and to develop needed skills (necessary for participants) / gaining or developing some needed skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enriching the experience how to apply properly acquired information;</li> <li>• ability to help the participant to recognize needed labour market related skills (necessary for trainers) / ability to self-recognize needed labour market related skills (necessary for participants);</li> <li>• implementation of gained knowledge and skills.</li> </ul>

## 2.6. Main Content

In this block such key words as “abilities”, “skills” and “competencies” are used rather often. As sometimes they can be understood as synonyms, it is necessary to explain, that there are certain differences: abilities are rather inherent, skills are acquired, learnt, mastered, skills are results of repeatedly applied knowledge or ability. Competencies encompass knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviours.

What are “labour market related skills”? These are skills needed to be successful while accessing the labour market and retaining employment.

Labour market related skills include:

- hard/technical/practical/basic skills (specific knowledge, skills and competencies, e.g.: literacy, numeracy, science, technology);
- soft skills (personality traits, include subgroups such as methodical skills, social and communication skills, personal skills, e.g.: team work ability, conflict management, intercultural skills);
- metacognitive skills (ability to learn and cultivate/develop some needed skills quickly);
- transferable/transversal/portable skills (skills, learned in one context and/but are relevant in another, job-related context and can be applied there);
- entrepreneurial skills (can encompass hard/technical skills, creative thinking and soft skills such as leadership, time management, team management etc.).

Learners should also know information about the theory of resilience.

- The word “resilience” describes the competency to hurdle adversity strikes, crisis or traumas.
- It is mostly used in the context of risk factors (migration, stress, trauma).
- It is connected with the aspects of an active approach towards problem solving and a positive way of thinking.
- It helps social workers, advisers in different working phases with the women of the target group to lead their empowerment.

Learners should also know the theory of Nonviolent Communication.

- The Theory of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) was first introduced by Dr. Marshall B. Rosenberg. It is based on a quadrilateral model: “Observations” (distinguishing observation from evaluation), “Feelings” (emotional awareness), “Needs” (need awareness), and “Requests” (need fulfilment). To better understand the concept of NVC: Rosenberg defines it as a way of communication based on empathy and without judgement, criticism, labelling others, and uses the concept of rightness and wrongness. On the other hand, NVC can be understood as a so-called “process language” which enables someone to listen for the needs and beliefs behind someone’s statement. NVC empowers the speaker to deal with unpleasant situations such as criticism, verbal assaults, or allegations.
- The NVC model consists of four elements: 1) Consciousness 2) Language 3) Communication 4) Means of Influence. This method creates an atmosphere of trust between the social workers/volunteers and the women with migrant or refugee background. It generates empathy and actively contributes to the empowerment process.
- Usage of the following information can help to provide successful communication.

### 2.6.1. Profile of trainers (mentors/coaches/facilitators) and learners

#### Trainers/coaches:

Trainers are professionals from QBS Gewerkstatt who worked with the target group in different projects (language courses, guidance and career counselling, vocational orientation courses). Their professional background are teachers, social pedagogic workers or educators with a higher education on a high second graduation or diploma level. Some of them had a migration background too and had qualified experiences.

#### Learners

The learners are skilled women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background who have qualifications equal from level 3 to 5, and in special cases to level 6, of the EQF, have at least A2 language level and are with or without children in kindergarten or of school age. They seek to take up an adequate job or aim for further training, but do not see/know a realistic implementation option/model in their specific case.

### 2.6.2. Challenges identified

When doing needs analysis in the four participating countries – Austria, Germany, Bulgaria and Portugal, – it was found that migrant/ethnic minority women among other barriers face the following difficulties in their efforts to enter the labour market: language barriers, participation in unsuitable/not-matching labour market-oriented integration measures, limited possibilities for improving vocational qualifications, lack of Information, complications in recognition of certificates as well as in job application process, cultural and ethnic differences, etc.

In this sense, training is usually found to have the strongest positive long-term effects. Furthermore, on-the-job training, general programmes and vocational training are all suitable but for different purposes. As such, general programmes contribute to a better matching of skills, particularly after the first entry into the labour market. To this end, the first step should be for the trainers to assess the skills of the trainees. For that purpose, in the Appendix of the current handbook, the trainers can find Assessment Tools and Expectations Checklist. It will enable them to assess the knowledge and skills of the partners against / according to the demands in the labour market. Additionally, as a further source the trainers can make use of the EU Skills Profile Tool which profiles the skills of Third Country Nationals, being specifically designed for use by national authorities responsible for reception and integration of refugees, employment assistance services and other (social) services for refugees and migrants. The Tool is multilingual, available in all EU languages (except Irish) and in Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Sorani, Somali, Tigrinya, Turkish and Ukrainian.

To provide job matchmaking, trainers can apply to ESCO (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations) which is a European Commission initiative, describing, identifying and classifying professional occupations and skills relevant for the EU labour market and education and training. Its concepts and descriptions can help to understand:

- what knowledge and skills are usually required when working in a specific occupation.
- what knowledge, skills and competences are obtained as a result of a specific qualification.
- what qualifications are demanded or often requested by employers from those searching for work in a specific occupation.

Depending on the field of activity, educational and professional background, the participants will need to develop and improve a set of skills and competences, among them being:

- Skill to manage work time effectively in the workplace;
- skill to write reports; to do documentation
- skill to acquire new knowledge;
- skill to express own ideas,
- computer and internet literacy
- competence for effective communication
- skill to collaborate
- competence for flexibility

- competence to meet customer needs
- competence for efficiency
- skill to be independent
- problem solving skills
- competence in planning and organizing one's own work
- competence for lifelong learning
- competence for a proactive approach
- skill to find and manage information

In addition to long-term trends, the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded its worldwide shock effect on labour markets. Large-scale restructuring is taking place in manufacturing, transport, retail and hospitality/leisure. The economic recession touches especially the low skilled, youth and migrants as well as women. At the same time, COVID-19 pushed the demand for more digital skills in education, administration and business.

Numerous references have already been made to the significance of competencies and to the role they play in working environment. Likewise, there are various approaches regarding competence improving methods – e.g. real experience attained under real conditions at the practical places (with the companies) can improve the competencies. In addition to practical training or combined with it, simulation games can improve competencies, for instance entrepreneurial skills and abilities while learning through business simulation games. Their main advantage is that certain simulated events can be tried without undertaking serious financial risks. Simulation gives an insight into the financial and economic operation and structure of the given organisation. Complex business-like way of thinking, integrated process-oriented approaches, managerial decision making skills, team work and managerial special knowledge are eventually improved by business simulation games. Strategic, financial, marketing and/or commercial decisions have to be made. Flexibility is essential to the changing environment while effectively working in a team. This experience-centred education supporting the gaining of individual experiences can be regarded as a more efficient and thorough form of education. This will also be the approach that the current handbook will apply to fill in the gaps that the participants may have.

### 2.6.3. Good practices

In the following we report on migrant women who have been successfully placed in the primary labour market. Some of them were supported within the framework of various measures provided by the QBS Gewerkstatt and integrated. Two of the women had gained some work experience in their home countries and had a language level of about A2 or higher before the start of the mentoring.

Ms D., 38 years old from Guinea lived in collective (family) community in her home country and attended a type of preschool class. At young age, Mrs. D. was made responsible for catering to this community and has taken on mostly agricultural and housekeeping activities, while also developing a passion for cooking.

She arrived Germany in 2015 and took part in a preliminary measure for practical testing for various profession. During in the entry phase, the participants had the opportunity to go through various practical areas and choose one of the sub-areas. Mrs. D. chose the kitchen area, where she was able to acquire basic skills with the help of the trainers and social pedagogues. Ms D. was highly motivated to go to work. Within the framework of the measure, practical testing on the corresponding practical areas was a means of identifying and expanding existing competencies, as well a theoretical part which

practical content was addressed and reflected upon. Practical, individual German lessons in small groups were particularly popular and in the case of Ms D. very effective with regard to her writing and reading problems (about 80% of people in Guinea are illiterate). She was able to sustainably improve her reading and writing skills, which ultimately enabled her to enter the job market. Since migrants are a very heterogeneous target group, individually tailored teaching materials were developed and used, especially for illiterates. This was not infrequently done with the help of the social pedagogues, who are able to identify needs for action in teaching various basic skills on the basis of the individual discussions. The learning pace also had to be adapted for this group and the lessons had to be designed in an internally differentiated manner. This requires a high degree of ambiguity tolerance, pedagogical sensitivity and a willingness on a part of the trainers and instructors to constantly reflect on their own working methods and adapt them if necessary. A resource-oriented approach increases the willingness of learners and helps prevent fluctuations in motivation. There is a constant need for action here on the part of the pedagogical specialists, but also later in everyday working life a sensitive feeling on the part of employers for the needs of migrant women with regard to cultural dimensions, living environment, socialization and resources brought with them (e.g. to regard multilingualism not as a deficit but as resource) is decisive for successful and above all sustainable integration in working life.

During the measure, Mrs. D. was placed as a kitchen assistant on a part-time basis at family-friendly working hours in a small home for the elderly, which proved to be very interested in offering Mrs. D. appropriate assistance if necessary, enabling her to take care of her three children. Is it worth mentioning in the case of Mrs. D. that she was supported by her husband.

Another successful integration in the labor market is the cooperation with a 42 years old participant from Iraq. When Mrs. C. came to the QBS Werkstoff as part of a placement measure, she had already taken part in various integration courses and already had a good knowledge of German, which at this level was not an obstacle placement. Verbal and written communication was fluid and uncomplicated. There was also support from the family (husband already integrated in the labor market and three children of adolescent age). In the case of Mrs. C. cultural and religious circumstances and views were the greatest challenge to successful placement on the labor market, which also initially threatened to fail.

Mrs. C. had never been employed and had taken care of her children and the household. She had a high school diploma. As her children were becoming increasingly independent, she decided to seek support for career orientation from the Federal Employment Agency and was assigned to a pure placement measure. Her desire was to pursue a social activity, preferably with the elderly, as she had already cared for her deceased mother. After a few individual interviews, it was clear for Mrs. C. that she wanted to make a lateral entry as a geriatric nurse, which should not initially pose a problem for the pedagogical staff given the prerequisites she brought with her. During the application process, Mrs. C. was invited to interviews and job shadowing, but she was not hired. It was observed that after several rejections, Mrs. C. had to struggle with strong fluctuations in motivation. Only after some very intensive individual interviews did Mrs. C. dare to state that she could only exercise the profession of geriatric nurse under certain conditions and these were that Mrs C. could not wash and/or dress and change men in particular. The word „could” was deliberately chosen because she wanted to perform these activities, but due to her cultural and religious values she did not manage to jump over her shadow, not even considering the social aspect. Even good coaxing from her husband was not enough to change her attitude, although she herself repeatedly got involved in these discussion –also with the pedagogical specialists- and was also prepared to change her feelings in this regard, she did not succeed, and suffered greatly as a result.

Within the measure, Mrs. C. could not be placed in an employment relationship, but a professional perspective could be worked out for Mrs. C., which fits her profile better and does not drive her into emotional distress. After the end of the placement measure, Mrs. C. completed a qualification as caregiver according to §53c and was employed as a part-time caregiver in a retirement home. In this case an appreciative and empathetic attitude toward her religious values was an important factor in placing her in employment. It can be assumed that Mrs. C. would not have pursued her plans to work without this applied understanding of her individual needs. There was no financial pressure in her case, as her husband earned a good income.

Mrs. Ca. 39 years old, from Bolivia has enjoyed a good school education in her home country and has a degree similar to a high school diploma. She has gained relevant work experience in Bolivia as a forwarding agent and commercial manager. However, these qualifications are not recognized in Germany. Mrs. Ca. speaks four languages and her German language skills are at C1 level. After entering Germany, Mrs. Ca. attended several language courses and has a C1 level. She has already gained professional experience in the German labor market, where she has also worked as a quality manager in a large company in Duisburg. Despite the fact that the qualifications she brought with her are not recognized in Germany, well-qualified jobs can be found for Mrs. Ca. and companies show interest in working with her. Within the framework of a placement measure, Mrs. Ca. was supervised in the QBS Gewerkstatt trade workshop and could find an employment relevant to her background very quickly. The cooperation with Mrs. Ca. is uncomplicated and no consideration has to be given to childcare, since the children live with the father, who is separated.

#### 2.6.4. Implications from Good Practices

All four migrant women received individual support at the socio-pedagogical and vocational-pedagogical level on their way into working life. The teaching and learning of the language is a great challenge for migrant women and for both pedagogical specialists and employers and is a process that takes years.

In the case of well-qualified female migrants, there are often problems with the recognition of qualifications, so that they are placed in lower-qualified occupations despite good qualifications, but there are exceptions. In particular, companies that have employed female migrants for a long time overlook the fact that corresponding degrees are not recognized in Germany, which is not feasible in every occupational field due to legal conditions. Family circumstances due a lack of or existing support must be taken into account in the integration process. Cultural and religious values are part of the socialization and the living environment of migrant women and cannot be „simply discarded“ as a rule. Intercultural understanding and a certain degree of tolerance are important factors that educational professionals and employers should be prepared to muster if they want to integrate migrant women into the labour market.

#### 2.6.5. Unit 1

##### 2.6.5.1. Time management

Learners will know about which labour market related skills are needed to be developed to support women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background in their process of professional integration in the labour market. One aspect is the look at the meaning of time in different cultures background. There is a different way to look on timetables and regulations in Germany or northern countries than in southern Europe or Arabic countries.

In Germany it is an important competence to deal effectively with tasks and the time management (e.g. start of working, breaks, deadlines, ...) and regulations (work documentation).

In the task learners should learn methods on how to optimize personal schedules.

#### 2.6.5.2. Task 1: Time management development



### Task 1: Time management development

#### ➤ Learning objectives:

The following exercise will help the participants to become more aware as for their daily routine; to evaluate what components of their daily routine are useful and desirable for them; to make suggestions about optimization of their personal schedule and therefore time management skills.



### Settings/materials needed

- Classroom
- Stationery items (paper, pens, flip chart and sheets for it)



### How to conduct the task

At the beginning of the training sequence, participants are each handed a printed template. Participants have to fill in the template as detailed as possible. In the template participants describe their usual schedule; evaluate each action in terms of usefulness for them; evaluate whether they spent necessary amount of time for the action or it is better to optimize it. Participants need 15-30 minutes to fulfil the task. (Another variant: participants get this task as a home task, and accomplish it consequently during the day. Then they bring already filled template to the training sequence. In this case, there is more time for discussion).



## Template

Action and time period (and personal evaluation remarks)	Usefulness	Awareness
....		
....		
....		

Example of how participant can fill it in:

Action and time period (and personal evaluation remarks)	Usefulness	Awareness
<b>morning exercises - 8:00-8:05 (it's better to do longer)</b>	useful	Aware
<b>cooking breakfast - 8:05-8:20 (it's ok)</b>	useful	Aware
<b>eating - 8:20-8:35 (it's ok)</b>	useful	partially aware
<b>watching some stuff on the internet - 8:35-9:10 (it was necessary to shorten!)</b>	partially useful	aware only at the beginning of the action
<b>washing dishes - 9:10-9:15 (it's ok)</b>	useful	Aware
...		


When participants have written about their daily routine and also are ready with their self-reflection process – they can make some personal conclusions for improvement. *(For example, the participant realizes, that some actions can take longer time than it was planned and that it is necessary to choose actions more carefully (e.g. to try to avoid spending much time playing computer games or browsing social networks purposelessly).*

Then trainer suggests to discuss obtained results and to make general conclusions as for optimization of personal schedules and improvement of personal time management skills.

Trainer can use following questions for discussion:

- Have you revealed that some actions took longer time than it was planned?
- What obstacles can you single out? (What disturb you to fulfill the action/task in time)?
- How can you manage this? (What should you avoid/change to use not more time for an action than it was planned)?
- What advice, life hacks can you recommend?
- How can you implement these pieces of advice in your schedule?
- When can you start with your “new schedule”?

It is possible to make a list of life hacks and suggestions how one can improve one's schedule and time management skills. (Trainer/ or participants can use flipchart to write down all ideas).

 - Duration 60 to 90 min, depending on number of participants
--

## 2.6.6. Unit 2

### 2.6.6.1. Idea for start-up and development of business plan

Many migrants in Germany in the last decades founded their own business.

During this unit it will be given an overview about what entrepreneurial skills are needed to create an own business.

Topics are:

- Strengths, chances and ideas
- Formulating goals and strategies
- Development of business models
- The founding process
- Market analysis
- Marketing
- The business plan
- Finance planning

### 2.6.6.2. Task 2: How to create successful start-up and to develop business plan



## How to create successful start-up and to develop business plan

### ➤ Learning objectives

While accomplishing basic tasks for creating idea for start-up and business plan, participants can develop their entrepreneurial skills (they can start to look for possibilities, try to think consequently and innovatively) and as a result they boost their self-esteem and therefore their motivation.



## Settings/materials needed

- Classroom.
- Stationery items (paper, pens, flip chart and sheets for it).



## How to conduct the task

Participants are each handed the printed template with some consequent questions, which help to create idea for start-up and business plan for it.

Participants can work individually or in small groups (2-3 persons) according to the number of participants.

Participants fill in the template consequently, if they work in the group, they discuss different variants and negotiate.

### What I am good at?

#### What I like to do (and it can be used as idea for my start-up)?

*You can think about any successful business ideas/projects, that you know, and use information as an example.*

*You can use following ideas (for ex. cooking class, music school, design class, sewing course, cleaning firma, delivery firma, retailing cosmetics, bakery-confectionery, fitness course) or create your own idea for start-up and business plan.*

When participants have chosen any business idea, they decide, how to develop and implement it.

### What customer needs/demands can be met and satisfied, if implementing this business idea?

#### What do I need to start?

- Is it necessary to get official approval?
- What space is needed?
- What time for preparation is needed?
- What materials are needed?
- And where I can get them?

**What is my role in the start-up? (For ex. manager, accountant, moderator, seller, all mentioned)**

#### Do I need coworkers?

If "yes", how many and in what roles?

How to find potential coworkers? (For ex. using social networking, advertisements)

What amount of salary for the potential coworkers can be demanded?

How to find potential customers? (For ex. using social networking, advertisements)

**Suggested costs for starting (space/materials/salary for coworkers, etc.)**

**Therefore, suggested price for customers for ... (for ex. cooking class, music school, design class, etc.)**

After answering the questions, participants can make conclusions.

**What benefits can potential customers have?**

**What benefits can I have?**

**Does this work with business idea can help me in self-development process?**

When all business plans are ready, it is necessary to discuss them in the whole group.



- Duration 60 to 90 min, depending on number of participants

## 2.6.7. Unit 3

### 2.6.7.1. Examination of job offers

Receiving a job is both exciting and relieving. Yet, a job seeker should not hurry to accept it as the job might be not suitable to one's background and/or expectations, or might result in you straying from the preferred career path.

It's sensible to take the time to factually evaluate a job offer, and whether it really suits the person and their long-term career goals. At the same time, it is important to remain realistic – the offer may not be perfect, and there might be compromises on certain features of the job – but your eventual objective is to headway, and improve on your current position.

A good starting point can be **evaluating the job offer** against certain criteria for you, e.g.

1. Information about the potential Employer – it can be helpful to get information as about the organization's stuff, its repute, standards, working environment, and culture, and management style. Based on this, the participants can perceive whether they fit in the organization or they would undergo a culture shock
2. Salary – while salary is often seen as the major criterion when accepting a job offer, other aspects must also be considered. The job seeker should evaluate how much skills and experience are in fact needed. Websites such as vault and glassdoor can give a good idea of the average salary rates within a certain industry, position, location, and company. It's also essential to reflect potentials. The salary on offer might be appropriate for present but, without certain yearly cost-of-living growths, the income could reduce. Or if the salary is commission-based, the bonus arrangements must be realistic.
3. Benefits and Bonuses - it is important to examine the kind of plans the employer offers for health insurance, vacation, sick time, vacation allowances and the flexibility of work hours. It

would also help to consider the incentives offered, such as raises, bonuses and retirement plans.

4. Savings and Expenses - one of the biggest expenses to consider when evaluating a job offer is commute. Will your travel costs increase or decrease?
5. Time- the amount of time that the job will take up beyond core hours. If it is paid for the job by the hour, it might be an opportunity to work extra time. If there is a fixed salary, working more hours can be disturbing.
6. Career Path - getting a job might be a priority right, but it is important to think carefully about how it will impact one's long-term career prospects. It is not advisable to litter CV with several short-lived jobs as it may look unreliable to potential employers
7. Understanding the position- reading the job description and person specification over and again cannot harm. It will show whether the job is something suitable or not. It's also important to be certain of exactly what will be expected of you, and that those expectations are realistic

Once the job seeker has evaluated the job offer thoroughly, they will be in a much better position to judge whether they should take the job, try to negotiate a better deal, or reject the offer completely. There are some aspects that the job-seeker should know **how to negotiate a job offer:**

1. Only negotiate the most important factors
2. Recognise your possibilities- know the entire benefits package before negotiating, prepare some facts, etc.
3. Plan what to say and justify your requests
4. Be flexible
5. Be ready to decline the offer if it is not suitable

In this unit learners/facilitators learn how to avoid problems during their job seeking. Migrants and refugees are often victims of ruthless and illegal job offers.

### 2.6.7.2. Task 3: Examination of job offers



## Examination of job offers

### ➤ Learning objectives

Participants need to have the competences to read and understand job offers, to avoid exploitation, discrimination and to make the right choices in the labour-market.

Together with the other labour market related skills – it is important to develop critical thinking and logic. In the process of finding the job, it is necessary to understand the quality of information and to verify it in official agencies or support organizations, in order to avoid risks.

Labour market related skills encompass different skills and abilities. Logic (logical thinking) and critical thinking are important part of labour market related skills.

Person who tries to find and to get appropriate job, has to be cautious and attentive and must use logical and critical thinking while evaluating job offers and choosing the certain job offer.

Of course, it is desirable to contact and consult in official institutions for some purposes:

- to avoid risks;



- to clarify everything what is necessary about an employment contract (for ex.: information about fixed working hours; wages; rights and obligations of employer and employee);
- to get information about the minimum wage (in Germany – 12 euro per hour before tax deductions);
- in case when there is a possibility to receive accommodation and food from employer – to get detailed information about it
- to get detailed information about obligatory registration.

Moreover, it is important, when the person develops logical and critical thinking and deals with different information thoughtfully and considerately.

In the following exercise, it is possible to refine logical and critical thinking of participants.



### Settings/materials needed

- Classroom.
- Stationery items (paper, pens, flip chart and sheets for it).



### How to conduct the task

**Participants get several examples of job advertisements.**

**They read them attentively (10-15 minutes). Then participants have to sort advertisements into two groups: relevant job offers and irrelevant/fake job offers. After that trainer may encourage the participants to discuss in small groups / or to answer individually:**

- what are the reasons that make certain job offer/advertisement to be irrelevant?
- what makes relevant job offer to be attractive?
- what job offers (from the following advertisements) are interesting personally to you and why?

**Trainer/ or participants can use flipchart to write down all information. It is possible to make a list of answers in order to compare and then to discuss the opinions.**



- Duration 35 to 45 min, depending on number of participants

#### 2.6.7.3. Quiz for Self-Assessment



**To be answered by participants at the end of the unit**

- 1) Labour market related skills consist of:
  - a) exclusively / only of different hard skills;
  - b) encompass important hard and soft skills;
  - c) exclusively / only of different soft skills.
- 2) "Resilience" can be explained or characterized as:
  - a) being stubborn;
  - b) being flexible and adaptable;
  - c) resilience can not be learned, it doesn't belong to skills or abilities that can be trained;
  - d) it can be learned and trained, it is connected with problem solving.
- 3) NVC model, which can create an atmosphere of trust in communication, is based on:
  - a) observations, feelings, needs, requests;
  - b) emotions, evaluation, educational process, requests;
  - c) observations, feelings, self-criticism, leadership;
  - d) observations, habits, level of education, character traits.
- 4) In the NVC theory judgement and criticism are:
  - a) necessary for building friendly connections with people (important part of successful communication);
  - b) not necessary and even should be reduced / avoided in communication.
- 5) Time management development is:
  - a) important only for leaders;
  - b) important only in certain spheres, professional sphere, for example; is not necessary in everyday life;
  - c) important in everyday life;
  - d) important in all spheres.
- 6) For improvement time management skills:
  - a) it is possible to pay attention to all activities during a day and to provide self-reflection with conclusions about new version of everyday time-table;
  - b) it is necessary only to come to work/ to class in time.
- 7) Relevant job offer contains:
  - a) clear information about working conditions;
  - b) only information about salary, other information is not important.
- 8) Is it desirable to consult in office institutions about job offers?
  - a) yes, to avoid risks;
  - b) no, it is not so important.
- 9) In the process of creating business idea and business plan it is desirable and helpful – to arrange successful product:
  - a) to be consequent and creative;
  - b) don't think about customers' needs – it is not so important;
  - c) only to know the situation in the certain sphere.
- 10) Choose three variants of skills, that are the most important in the sphere "labour market related skills"? (In this question different answers, according to the personal opinion, are possible).
  - a) resilience;
  - b) creativity;
  - c) critical thinking;
  - d) time management;
  - e) being communicative.

## 2.7. Block conclusion

After finishing this block the participants should know about the actual labour market related skills needed, about the theory of resilience, and how to communicate in a nonviolent way.

Furthermore, they learn about time management and about development of a business plan.

Also they can analyze job offers and avoid discrimination, exploitation and develop critical and logical thinking.

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OECD Employment outlook 2020



## Block 3: Models for emotional intelligence

### 3.1. Description

Through completing this block, participants will have increased emotional self-awareness about their own emotions and their subconscious character. They will gain an improved understanding about the abilities, weaknesses, and biases in the way our brains work. They will also become more aware of the way they process information and make decisions. These elements form the most important foundations for increased self-confidence.

This Emotional Intelligence block will introduce the trainees to the ability to control, instead of suppressing emotions, giving insights into practical techniques for stress management and regulation of emotions. The training module is designed to help understand the complex nature of motivation – the engine that hides in every one of us and is driven by a different fuel. This block will also let participants behind the curtains of this abstract noun “empathy”, showing the different types of empathy.

### 3.2. Keywords

Self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy.

### 3.3. Module Goals

The biggest goal of this module is to underline the importance of “starting from within”, i.e. to turn past experience into a resource, and to help the target women of the “MyPath” project face future challenges with bigger awareness of their own strengths and how to tackle them. The foundation of knowledge and attitudes explored in this module is linked to the notion of self-awareness. Often, people underestimate the power of the subconscious processes in their mind which guide their behaviours. In this module, participants will have the opportunity to experience the automatic systems of their brains and to become more self-aware about the cognitive errors these brain processes result in. Such awareness is crucial in order to discover the roots of certain emotions that might help or prevent us from moving forward towards our goals and to know one’s internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions.

After laying these foundations, the module aims to equip trainees with knowledge and skills on self-regulation and self-motivation, with concrete steps and ideas, that could be immediately implemented in their lives. Finally, after building such a positive skill set for the regulation of the internal state, the module finishes with an encouragement towards a mindset of “Giving back to community”.

### 3.4. Learning Objectives

Each unit in the current module is dedicated to one of the main categories of **competencies**, that are shown to determine our levels of Emotional Intelligence (EQ). The aim is to transmit knowledge of the interrelationship between these levels and to raise awareness of the importance of the separate groups of competences – self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, which are important tools when navigating work dynamics. Furthermore, the experiential learning exercises aim to increase personal experiences with these and shift one's own attitudes towards the different sub-

competencies and how these could be implemented in everyday life, with the aim of improving one’s career prospects. Lastly, the shift towards practice and self-reflection is one of the biggest learning goals and is woven throughout all the units.

### 3.5. Learning outcomes

After completion of this training module, trainees are expected to have the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge	Skills	Competences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the importance of self-awareness.</li> <li>• Knowledge of the different cognitive errors and awareness of the way they influence one’s perception.</li> <li>• Knowledge about self-regulation and what types of strategies there are to regulate one’s own levels of stress.</li> <li>• Knowledge about the importance of self-motivation and one’s own internal drivers.</li> <li>• Knowledge about what empathy is and what its benefits are.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to reflect on one’s own feelings and to name them.</li> <li>• Ability to implement different techniques for self-motivation towards goal achievement in a personal and professional context.</li> <li>• Awareness of others’ feelings, needs and concerns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence.</li> <li>• achievement drive, commitment, initiative and optimism.</li> <li>• understanding others, developing others, service orientation.</li> </ul>

### 3.6. Main content

This training module aims to provide professional facilitators with useful educational content and a set of practical activities they can use to support skilled women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background to fully realise their potential.

The training module will cover five competencies of emotional intelligence (EQ), namely self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and relationships.

#### Why is Emotional Intelligence (EQ) important?

This module is building on the Emotional Intelligence Framework of Daniel Goleman<sup>1</sup>, a prominent Harvard PhD who has a significant role in researching the Emotional Intelligence concept as a set of

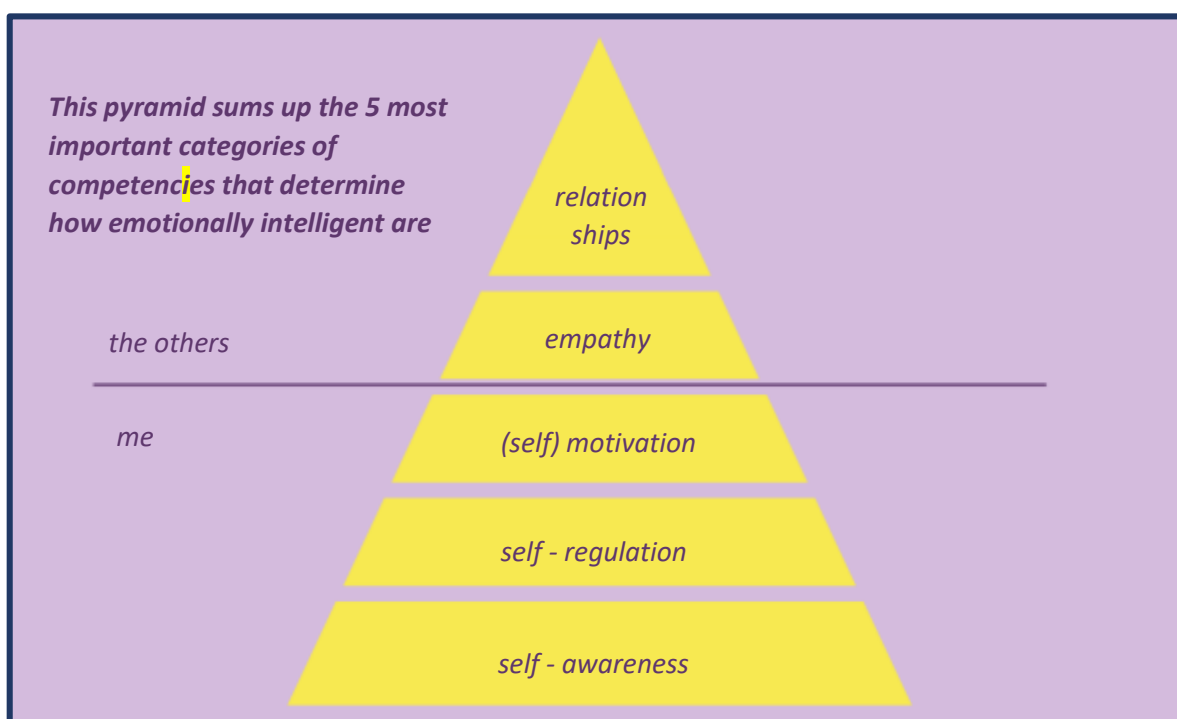
<sup>1</sup> Author of “Emotional Intelligence – Why it can matter more than IQ”, “Social Intelligence”, “Working with Emotional Intelligence”.

skills which could be acquired and developed throughout one's life. The main skills are divided in 2 groups: **personal and social competencies**, referenced as "Me" and "The others" in the pyramid below.

*Emotional intelligence is the ability to **recognize** your own feelings and the feelings of others, to **motivate** yourself and to **manage** emotions well – yours and the ones of others.*

Daniel Goleman

Looking at the definition of the EQ phenomenon above, it comes as no surprise that Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is responsible for over 1/3 of the job performance. Following the Emotional Intelligence Competence Pyramid model below and through in-depth self-reflection, one should be able to form relationships with others better, be more empathic, communicate better and build more effective networks around herself. Studies have shown that EQ is much more important than IQ in everyday life roles, especially in leadership. The good news is, that unlike IQ, that remains stable throughout our whole lifespan, EQ could be developed during the whole lifetime.



*Image adapted from Five Competencies of the Emotional Intelligence Pyramid, Daniel Goleman, 2021.*

### 3.6.1 Profiles of trainers and learners

#### Trainers/coaches:

The trainers working with the target group as part of the MyPath project on the topic of emotional intelligence will be teaching this module after having identified the participants' individual situation and competencies.

The trainers will either have a migrant background or would have an extensive experience working with migrant women and their integration into the labour market. This will allow the trainers to use their own lived experiences as a resource and would enable trainees to relate to them more easily and perceive them as approachable role-models.

## Learners

The target group of the MyPath project are women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background who seek to re/enter the Bulgarian labour market with the aim of getting a higher qualification or position which more accurately corresponds to their existing professional and educational qualifications, which they may struggle to have recognised. They may also face barriers due to care responsibilities or the limitations related to their migrant status and employability.

In order to have sustainable labour market integration, from the point of view of emotional intelligence, representatives of our target group must feel empowered enough to seek new opportunities, rethink rigid gender roles, be aware of their strengths and skillsets, recognise where there might be possibilities for improvement, and build new relationships and networks in order to be better resourced when facing challenges and barriers.

### 3.6.2. Good Practice: The “Start from Within” Emotional intelligence model

The “Start from Within” Emotional intelligence model has already been piloted in 7 European Countries through the gamified platform<sup>2</sup> of the Bulgarian Foundation Emprove, with a different target group of women – survivors of domestic violence, sheltered women in crisis centres or women going through therapy. It has been tested by altogether 250 registered users in 2017 and 60 EU counsellors have been trained to implement it.

The aim of including this model has been to support women on their journey to self-discovery, confidence, empowerment and increased economic independence – all of which can also be geared towards improving one’s career prospects. The EQ Competence pyramid has also been largely implemented into long-term Leadership Programmes. It is shown to encourage the overall level of self-reflection, which also improves the learning gains in other modules.

There are four main principles which lie at the backbone of this approach that are an inspiration for the creation of the current model, developed by BFW, which can also resource MyPath trainers to better support our target group:

#### **Self-awareness**

Being aware of your own strengths and weaknesses, while recognising your emotions and the way they influence your decisions and perception. Trying to catch your own limiting beliefs about you and about the people you are working with.

#### **Curiosity**

A special power that children possess, and grown-ups seem to forget – is being curious. Interestingly, it is also rooted in being empathic and listening effectively, all very relevant for the success of this approach.

#### **Belief in the trainee’s capacity and resources**

Think about the powerful phenomenon called self-fulfilling prophecy. If you believe that your trainee will not be able to master a certain task, you will probably transmit this insecurity in your communication or even worse – maybe you will not even dare to challenge your trainee at all.

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<sup>2</sup> The EMPROVE project entangles the power of Gamification into its training process in order to increase the level of engagement, intrinsic motivation and empowerment of the counselled women, survivors of domestic violence. You can read more at: <https://emproproject.eu/gamification/>

Believe in the hidden potential of the woman you are working with and challenge her to show it to you, to herself and the world!

### Optimism

Being optimistic and having a bright view for the future is a key competence that is shown to directly influence the perception for empowerment of the person you are communicating with. Therefore, facilitators should try to implement it in this model as well.

BFW has adapted this model to suit the needs of the MyPath target groups – higher qualified women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background – to support them on their way to labour market integration. The model is learner-centred, suitable for self-directed learning, based on experiential learning and encourages self-reflection.

## 3.6.2. Unit 1

### 3.6.2.1. Self-awareness

Self-Awareness means knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions. This competence is related to one's ability to reflect about their own actions, thoughts, emotional reactions, to draw some lessons, ask for feedback (in order to get to more accurate self-assessment etc.), all important skills which are used within the dynamics of the workplace. Self-awareness include following competencies: emotional awareness; accurate self-assessment; and self-confidence.

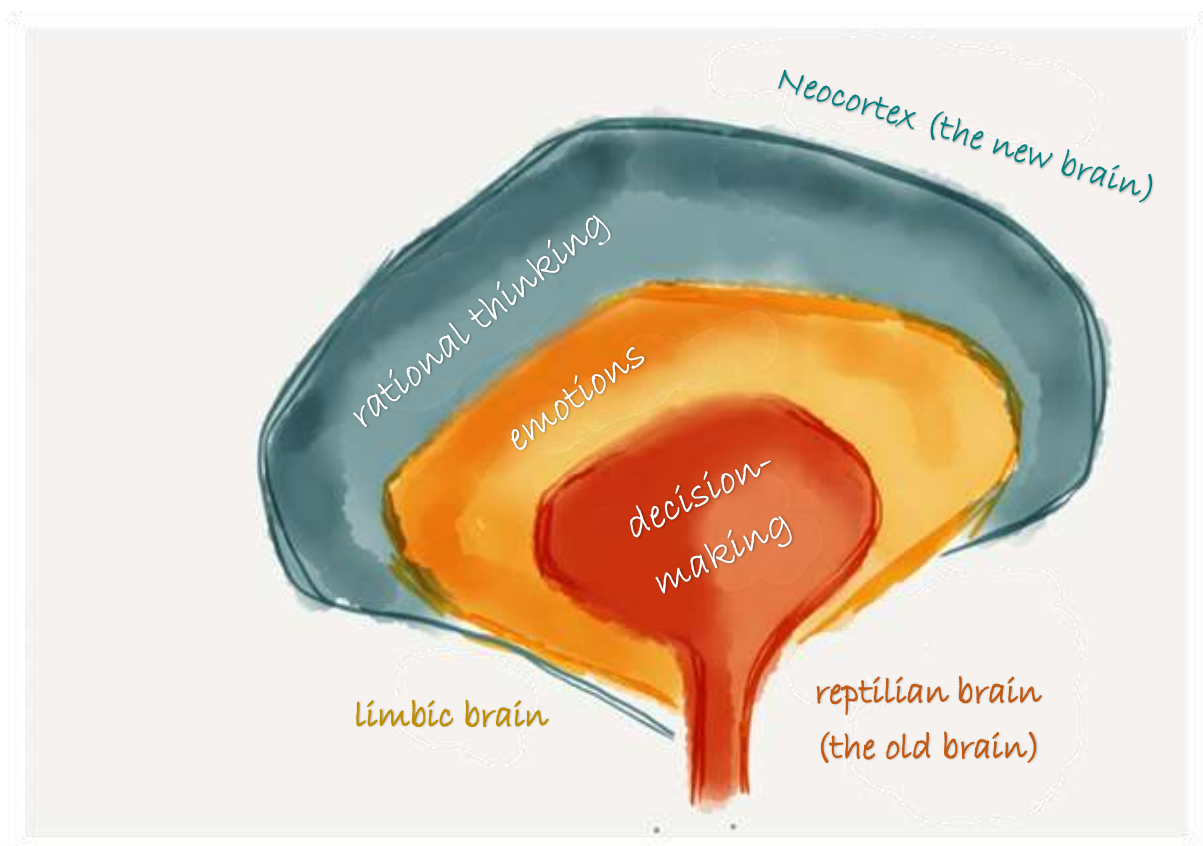


Image: Dr Paul MacLean – Triune brain theory, illustrated by [Christel Quek](#)

Only 5% from our brain activity occurs in the neocortex (our rational brain). The rational brain appeared only 2 million years ago, while our limbic system where our feelings, values, and actions are rooted, is aged about 200 million years! These facts are often underestimated by the trainers and therefore often they may not be able to reach trainees without the trainer's ability being doubted or questioned by them. Given these statistics, we can say that this is why emotions can sometimes explain our behaviours far better than rational arguments.

Therefore, this Unit will focus on developing an understanding of how subconsciousness works and where stereotypes and self-stereotyping are hiding. These may act as a barrier to the self-confidence required to seek out new opportunities and to have trust in your own abilities – experiences which may be all too familiar to women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background who may be starting out their careers anew in a host country or may be expected to comply with rigid gender roles in the household and in the workplace, as many other women do. Trainees will experience various brain games that will help them become more self-aware. They will gain more awareness about the most common cognitive errors and the way they influence our perception, and more importantly – our self-perception.

### 3.6.2.2. Task “Brain Games on Cognitive Bias”



**Brain games on cognitive bias: Test your brain! Catch it in action!  
Improve your awareness!**

#### ➤ Learning objectives:

These exercises will help trainees to “catch” their subconscious (emotional) mind in action – the quick way our brain processes information.

By playing the games, they will achieve great success by giving their rational brain enough confidence to catch their emotional brain when it tries to delete/filter/misinterpret information.

It is shown that once you catch your brain doing a mistake, you are able to make a rational choice and control your automatic reactions much better.

This activity is one big step in the increase of your self-awareness.



#### Setting/Materials Needed

- Course room
- Paper

- Pens
- Flip chart and sheets
- Optional: little stone or other small object, even a colourful paper clip (for the Thoughts Hunter exercise)



## How to conduct the tasks

### ➤ Task 1:

Migrant women are each handed a piece of paper and a pen at the beginning of the training sequence. They are instructed to participate as spontaneously as possible, without overthinking, and given the following assignment:

- **Suggested introductory words for facilitators:** “In order to experience how such brain flaws happen in the real life, **download our [Cognitive Biases Presentation](#) from the MyPath website and play the brain games we have prepared for you.** By playing these games, you will give your rational brain enough confidence to catch your emotional brain when it attempts to delete/filter/misinterpret information. It is shown that once you catch your brain doing a mistake, you are able to make a rational choice and control your automatic reactions much better! This activity is one big step in the increase of your self-awareness.”
- **Suggested questions:** Please share how you felt in these games? What happened? What surprised you? What have you noticed?
- Next, the findings are turned into consolidated group lessons learned, through a discussion of “What is a lesson/a thought you are taking with you after having felt how your brain processes information?”
- **Conclusion:** The facilitator might conclude with a dose of humour, in order to minimise the usual “fear of the unknown” that the brain subconsciousness causes. This summary might sound like this: “To sum up, our brain is our laziest human organ, so it would do everything to minimise its work, by generalising, deleting, not perceiving information. So, do not overestimate your judgement about yourself or others!”



- Duration 40-60 min, depending on the number of participants.

### ➤ Task 2:

Migrant women are each handed a [list of cognitive distortions](#) at the beginning of the training sequence. They are instructed to take a look at it, and are given the following assignment:

- **Suggested introductory words for facilitators:** “If you’re familiar with cognitive distortion or “cognitive bias” these psychology terms teach us that there are subtle ways that our mind can convince us of something that isn’t really true. These inaccurate thoughts are usually used to reinforce negative thinking or emotions, thus holding us back. We all do this both consciously and unconsciously, and how we do this provides pointers to our underlying beliefs about ourselves, our peers, partners and colleagues, and the immediate world around us. Can you check **the list of [Top 10 Cognitive Distortions](#) available on the MyPath website** and identify which of these you do?”
- Next, participants are encouraged to ask a trusted peer or someone within the group for perspective and discuss whether this might present a challenge in their professional life and how they might catch such biases more often.
- **Conclusion:** The facilitator encourages each participant to leave this exercise with at least one personal goal of self-observation and catching a certain cognitive bias.



- Duration 20-40 min, depending on the number of participants.

### ➤ Task 3: The “Thoughts Hunter” Exercise

Trainees are each handed a little stone or other small object at the beginning of the training sequence. They are given the following assignment:

- **Suggested introductory words for facilitators:** “The brain is like a muscle – the more you train it, the more you will enhance that skill and it will be easier to be a “hunter of thoughts” – thoughts, which could potentially have a negative impact on how you perceive a situation. One really simple exercise for your daily routine or over the course of this training, in order to practice and enhance your self-awareness: try to catch out yourself every time when a non-productive thought passes through your mind.

A non-productive thought is one which:

- prevents you to experience enthusiasm from a particular experience (“ugh, why do I need to learn this, I can do without it”)
- prevents you to hear advice when it is being shared (“ugh, I do not need any advice, you don’t understand my feelings”)
- makes you ponder about your own skills (“ugh no, I can’t do this”)

The goal in this simple task is to catch such type of thoughts – in order to be aware when they prevent you from fully experiencing the moment and taking full advantage of it.

**Advice:** use a small object (such as a stone) which stays in your pocket or near the place where you often spend time, to remind you to go back to the exercise.”



- Duration 10-15 min, depending on the number of participants.



### 3.6.3. Unit 2

#### 3.6.3.1. Self-regulation

When your trainees are self-aware and capture themselves in non-productive emotions/thoughts /reactions related to a given situation, it is important to **regulate** these and convert them to productive ones – this is where self-regulation comes in. It is about acting **intentionally** rather than **reactively** – to think before we act, to manage our impulses and internal states. This also includes being adaptive and innovative in challenging situations.

Therefore, Unit 2 is about managing one's internal states, impulses and resources. This category includes competences as: **self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability and innovation**. Focus was put here especially on the stress perception and stress management, as well as reframing techniques in stressful/negative situations.

Self-regulation is mostly about being able to control your emotions and responses to situations and other people. Self-regulation helps us act intentionally rather than reactively and have a choice to how we express our feelings. Emotional self-control is not the same as overcontrol, the stifling of all feeling and spontaneity. In fact, there is a physical and mental cost to such overcontrol.

Most people experience some degree of stress in their jobs. But if you understand the most common types of stress and learn how to spot and distinguish them, your skills for managing stress will enhance and improve. This, in turn, helps you work productively, build better relationships, and live a healthier life.

**Dr Karl Albrecht**, a management consultant and conference speaker from California, is a pioneer in the development of stress-reduction training for businesspeople. He defined four most commonly experienced types of stress in his 1979 book, "Stress and the Manager":

- A. Time Stress:** You experience time stress when you worry about time, or the lack thereof. You worry about the number of things that you have to do, and you fear that you will fail to achieve something important. You might feel trapped, unhappy, or even hopeless. Common examples of time stress include worrying about deadlines or rushing to avoid being late for a meeting. Nowadays, time stress is one of the most common types of stress that we experience.
- B. Anticipatory Stress:** Anticipatory stress describes stress that you experience concerning the future. Sometimes this stress can be caused by a specific event, such as an upcoming presentation. However, anticipatory stress can also be vague and undefined, such as for example feeling sense of dread about the future, or a constant anxiety that "something will go wrong." Research shows that your mind often cannot tell the difference, on a basic neurological level, between a situation that you have visualized repeatedly and one that has actually happened.
- C. Encounter Stress:** Encounter stress refers to people around us. You experience encounter stress when you worry about our relationship with a certain person or group of people – you may not like them, or you might think that they are unpredictable. Encounter stress can also occur if your job involves a lot of personal interactions with customers or clients, especially if those groups are in distress. For instance, doctors and social workers have high rates of encounter stress, because the people they work with routinely do not feel well, or are deeply upset. This type of stress also occurs from "contact overload": when you feel overwhelmed or exhausted from interacting with too many people.

- D. Situational Stress:** You experience situational stress when you are in a scary situation that you have no control over. This could be an emergency or an accident. More commonly, however, it is a situation that involves conflict, or a loss of status or acceptance in the eyes of the group you belong. For instance, major mistakes in front of your team or dismissal are examples of events that can cause situational stress. Situational stress often appears suddenly, for example, in a situation that you completely failed to anticipate.

### 3.6.3.2. Task “Stress Management”



## Recognising stress and managing it effectively

### ➤ Learning objectives:

These exercises will help women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background to recognise the four main types of stress, to exchange experience on how they personally tackle these and what are the negative consequences related to each type.



## Setting/Materials Needed

- Flip-chart
- Colourful pens
- Sticky notes
- 4 types of stress printed once – 1 type per group



## How to conduct the tasks

### ➤ Task 1:

Trainees will work in groups to define and present to each other the 4 major types of stress, combined with an exchange of experience about stress management. They will need to print the definitions of the different types of stress – one handout per group.



<https://bit.ly/3Ej1u0z>

- Split participants in four groups and assign each group a specific stress type. Give them 30 to 40 minutes to elaborate on the following questions for each type of stress: **1. What causes this type of stress? 2. How is it expressed in everyday life (influence/consequences) – give examples from your practice; 3. How do we deal with this type of stress?**
- Ask the participants to prepare a short group presentation for the given type of stress and share their strategies to fight this specific stress.
- **Conclusion:** After summarising all shared techniques on a flipchart, enrich with the following summary of the following basic stress management techniques:
  - ***Observe the signs of high stress levels carefully. Self-awareness is a foundation competence for effective stress management.***

The sense of being overwhelmed with work or with our personal life, is an energy-consuming sensation and can make us irritable, absent-minded and ineffective. Many of us are so often stressed, that we start to perceive it as a normal state. The first step towards a better stress management is to simply recognise it, before it has grown into a bigger, more complex problem – for example to affect our physical or emotional well-being. We can learn simple ways to “check” for the presence of stress e.g., by asking ourselves how we feel during the day and learning to recognise the physical signals of our body. It is normal to react with anxiety to certain situations in life, but we are not stuck with this feeling! It is something we can control as soon as we discover it!

- ***“Catch” stress by observing your muscles, internal feelings and breathing.***

If you experience muscle tension or other internal signals (such as pressure in your jaws, hands, back, stomach, headache, etc.), your body is trying to tell you that you are under serious stress. Another signal, for example, is, if you notice that your breathing is shallow or when you “forget” to breathe deeply and relax from the abdomen.

- ***Move!***

Our heart rate rises, when we move our bodies, which helps us improve our mood, boost our energy and calm our minds and bodies. Try doing physical exercises for at least 30 minutes per day. If it is difficult to find time during the day, divide the activities to two or three shorter parts. Try activities such as walking, stretching or participate in a certain sport (football, dancing etc.). Physical activity does not only help relieve stress but is also beneficial for achieving better physical health and higher productivity.

Moreover, activity keeps your dopamine level high. Exercise increases the level of neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine, in particular and the whole brain gets a great boost of health and development.

- ***Connect with others and get socialized***

Talk to your family or friends when you feel stressed. Sharing your thoughts and feelings, with someone you trust, can significantly help. Developing friendships with your colleagues can help you protect yourself from the negative effects of stress.

By doing so, we release oxytocin which not only affects our brain and makes us seek support, but also protects our cardiovascular system from the effects of stress. The best oxytocin function affects our heart, which has special receptors for this hormone – it helps the cells regenerate and “heal” themselves from any damage caused by stress.

- ***Take breaks***

When you are feeling overloaded, take your short break and move away from the stressful situation. Walk for a while. Sometimes the physical movement, the positive internal monologue, and changing the environment can help you reboot yourself and increase your coping abilities.

- ***Create healthy sleeping habits***

Getting enough hours of sleep is of critical importance in managing everyday stress. When you have rested, in addition to having more energy – you have better resources to deal with different challenges. Try having 8 hours of sleep per night. Avoid watching TV, working on a computer, getting too focused on things that worry you, quarrels and alike, just before sleep.

- ***Look for humour***

Humour, when used properly, can be a great way to reduce stress. When you feel that you start to get overwhelmed, look for ways to lift your mood by telling a joke or a funny story. Having fun and laughing are extremely important, including at work.

When we are laughing, natural killer-cells of tumours are activated, as well viruses such as interferon gamma (a protein that fights diseases), T-cells, which occupy a considerable part of the responses of the immune system and B -cells, which create antibodies that destroy diseases.

- ***Know your limits***

Do not try to combine too many things in a single day. Prioritize, if a task is not so important and/or urgent at this particular moment, leave it for later. Look for help. Learn to say “no” and set limits when you are required to take on more than you could. If you feel overworked, ask your supervisor for a meeting and talk this through.

- ***Create a balanced schedule***

Analyse your schedule, duties, and your everyday tasks. Plan at least one fun or enjoyable social activity per day. Find the balance between work and family, also it is important to find time for yourself and remain alone, in order to avoid burn-out.



- Duration 60-75 min, depending on the number of participants.

### 3.6.4. Unit 3

#### 3.6.4.1. Self-motivation

Self-motivation is about using and directing all those emotions that are in us towards the achievement of our goals. It is linked to the way your trainees strive for improvement; show engagement and own initiative; and in how far they have willingness to use the opportunities provided to them.

And this group of competences is about remaining **optimistic** and **committed** on the way to their goals. Therefore, self-motivation is the **emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals**. **Motivation competencies include: achievement drive, commitment, initiative and optimism.**

On the topic of self-motivation one should first know which are their internal drivers and how to get them fulfilled in a personal and professional context.

#### 3.6.4.2. Task “How to Move the Elephant”



### Catching limiting beliefs and breaking them, exploring our leading motivators

#### ➤ Learning objectives:

The exercises in this unit will help trainees to identify the limiting beliefs they have subconsciously developed in their lives and to learn how to reframe them.



### Setting/Materials Needed

- Paper
- Pen



### How to conduct the task

➤ **Task 1: Introductory Exercise – Elephant and Rider metaphor** Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9KP8uiGZTs>

- **Suggested introductory words for facilitators:** Watch the following video and share your comments with the group!

- **Conclusion:** Our mind is moved much stronger by our subconscious beliefs and motivators, than by the arguments of the rational brain. So, if you happen to find yourself into a situation, where you notice you lack energy and motivation to perceive your goal, do not seek too much for rational convincing of your brain, but dive deeper, tap into your motivators – the following exercises will show you how.
- **Advice:** You can turn on the automatic subtitle option on YouTube for this video if there are any participants who do not understand the language of the video.

- Duration 10-15 min, depending on the number of participants.

- **Task 2: “Catch your limiting beliefs”:** Self-motivation through successful identification of own limiting beliefs
  - **Suggested introductory words for facilitators:** Read carefully the Limiting beliefs list and learn about different types of limiting beliefs and how to deal with them effectively. It is as simple as catching them and reframing them towards more motivating ones. The tricky thing is to hunt them before they limit you in your action and motivational power!

Please, after your “hunt”, list three limiting thoughts that you caught and how you reframed them:

First Limiting belief .....

.....


Reframed in: .....

.....

Limiting belief	What can we believe instead?
<b>“I can’t be my real self or I’ll be judged.”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “It is not my job to please people in life.”</li> <li>○ “Be myself; there’ll never be anyone else like me.”</li> </ul>
<b>“I can’t ask for what I want lest I get rejected.”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Rejection is part and parcel of life. Every ‘no’ will lead me closer to a ‘yes.’”</li> <li>○ “I need to first ask in order to receive.”</li> </ul>
<b>“I can’t trust people lest they betray my trust.”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Everyone is deserving of my trust unless otherwise disproved.”</li> <li>○ “Without trust, I can’t form a meaningful relationship with anyone.”</li> </ul>
<b>“I can’t pursue my dreams because I may fail.”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “My dreams are mine for the taking.”</li> <li>○ “Whatever I can conceive, I can achieve. It’s up to me to take the steps to make things happen.”</li> </ul>
<b>“I don’t need to be successful, so I’m not going to strive for success.”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “I succeed simply because I can.”</li> <li>○ “By being successful, I have more resources to achieve my highest goals</li> </ul>

	and dreams and to support the highest good of mankind.”
“It’s too late to pursue my dreams.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “It’s never too late to pursue anything. What’s more important is that I take action now.”</li> <li>○ “Age is just a number. My current age is just a reflection of the number of years I’ve been alive, but not a reflection of my limited power as a being.”</li> </ul>

- **Conclusion:** Breaking the limiting beliefs is not so hard, because they are often irrational. It is just the habit of catching them that we need to develop and continuously implement, in order to not obstruct the way of the “elephant”.


 Duration 25- 35 min, depending on the number of participants.

### ➤ Task 3: The Moving Motivators Game by Jurgen Appello

- **Giving context to the facilitators:** Help your trainees learn what makes them tick, what drives them forward – with the help of the science-based game of moving motivators, derived from some of the leading motivational theories of our days (Daniel Pink, Steven Reiss, and Edward Deci).
- This exercise is not just a game of exploration of one’s motivational forces, but also a great experience of self-reflection, greatly linked to Unit 1 and the skills under the competence of Self-Awareness.
- **Suggested approach for facilitators:** Give time to each participant to define what each motivator means to them. Let them discuss in pairs, compare definitions or let people share openly in the group, going through all motivators, whereby at least two people share their definition for a single motivator. Discuss the role of personal experience, personality etc. in the formation of understanding of such big and abstract concepts like “Power” or “Freedom”. Make them curious to know the other’s perspective, start building bridges for the Unit “Empathy”.
- Ask each participant to define which motivators are most important to them. Ask them to place the cards in order from left (least important) to right (most important.) Let them discuss their ratings in small groups of 2-3 participants. Each group should present their own strategies to activate these driving forces for themselves, **e.g. “If freedom is your top 3 motivator, how do you find freedom in your everyday life? Do you have small rituals that give you the sense of freedom? Share them with the group!”**
- **Conclusion:** The idea of this last discussion is to enable experience sharing and to equip the participants with new strategies for self-motivation (and to make them more conscious for some strategies that they maybe have implemented without realising).
- **Closing words:** “Knowing our leading internal motivators gives us the power to move the elephant.”



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**Curiosity**

Honour/Integrity

Acceptance

Mastery

Power

Freedom

Relatedness

Order

Goal/Purpose

Status

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- Duration 30 – 40 min, depending on the number of participants.

### 3.6.5. Unit 4

#### 3.6.5.1. EQ Self-analysis

The science of psychology is full with abstract concepts like “love”, “emotion”, “motivation”, “stress”. In this unit it is time to fill these words with the personal experience and understanding of every trainee. We move from definitions to measurement – with a real EQ test. But the overall idea is not to exclusively trust this tool, but to rather use it as a starting point for a discussion of self-discovery. Agreements and disagreements with the results are both welcome – as long as they result into increased confidence or into goals for self-improvement.

#### 3.6.5.2. Task “Measure and Get Curious”



### Self-discovery and self-improvement

➤ **Learning objectives:**

This exercise will give trainees the opportunity to test their levels of EQ in the separate subtopics, covered in the units. The results will be discussed and analysed in a group.





## Setting/Materials Needed

- Tests
- Pens
- Flipchart
- Access to a laptop/computer



## How to conduct the task



Duration: 30-40 minutes

- **Suggested introductory words for facilitators:** It is advisable to present the tool as “an attempt to fit the huge variety of personalities and emotional reactions into boxes”, however, it is also a great foundation for self-analysis.
- Encourage participants to ask themselves the following questions after completing the questionnaire:
  - Do I agree with a certain result (my level on a certain EQ scale) and if yes – how does it manifest in my real life, do I want to develop my competences on this scale any further?
  - In case I do not agree with a certain result – have I been conscious about my emotional responses and reactions on this scale in the past? Could I prove this result wrong through self-observation and self-awareness in the way I regulate my emotions/motivate myself/etc?
- The main goal of the test is not to point out a fixed mix of personality traits, but rather to make a momentary snapshot of a person’s learned reactions and provoke a more conscious internal dialogue regarding one’s emotional responses, and how far one is subconsciously led by them.
- You will find [the EQ test on the MyPath platform](#) – print one copy for each participant. The questionnaire follows the 5-step model of Emotional Intelligence. For each question the trainees need to tick the box that comes closest to how they **feel about the answer**. No overthinking.
- **Conclusion:** The test results are just a “snapshot in time”, a good ground for further conversation, nothing set in stone. If you agree with them – manifest your qualities even more confidently. If you disagree with some aspects – find a way to prove them wrong through your everyday behaviours.

### 3.6.6. Unit 5

#### 3.6.6.1. From Inside – out: Solidarity, Empathy and Women-helping-women

This last unit is dedicated to the way trainees connect with others, the way they experience and co-experience their needs and difficulties, the way they form relationships and change the world together. It corresponds to the level of Goleman’s model dedicated to **Empathy**: The Awareness of others’ feelings, needs and concerns. Empathy competencies include understanding others, supporting others to flourish, having a good work ethic, leveraging diversity and political awareness. The current unit will also aim to boost the service-orientation of women-helping-women in

particular. It is crucial to note that the secret to high performance and achievements is **attention**. It is also the basis of the empathic sensitivity that we have. As Goleman says, “*Attention works much like a muscle—use it poorly and it can wither; work it well and it grows*” (Goleman, 2013). There are three types of empathy that we can identify and each one is activated in certain contexts:

**Cognitive empathy** – a natural curiosity about other’s people reality or the ability to see the world through the eyes of others. Cognitive empathy is simply knowing how the other person thinks, what is most important to him, what his models about the world are, and even what words we can use or avoid in the conversation. Sometimes called perspective-taking, this kind of empathy can help in, say, a negotiation or in motivating people. A study at the University of Birmingham found, for example, that managers who are good at perspective-taking were able to move workers to give their best efforts.

**Emotional empathy** – the ability to enter someone else’s emotion in an instant physical connection. This empathy depends on another kind of consideration: adjusting to other people’s emotional needs means reading the mimic, voice, and other non-verbal signs of how they feel at each moment. Research shows that this type of empathy depends on our adjustment to our own emotional signals that automatically reflect foreign emotions.

**Empathic concern** – comes into action whenever someone is concerned about another person. This kind of empathy comes into play when we not only feel the other person’s emotion, but also have the drive to help. It is linked to the empathy of parents, but it also finds a place in the workflow: you may notice it when a leader shows colleagues that they support others, so that there is more space for trust and colleagues feels that they are free to take risks, instead of maintaining a defensive stance.

### 3.6.6.2. Task “Link and Change the World”



#### Forming healthy bonds and uniting for a cause

##### ➤ Learning objectives:

These exercises will help trainees understand the different types of empathy and the way they can for relationships with others in a healthy way. The unit aims to inspire them to pursue future projects and aims to build sustainable connections between the participants – an indispensable resource on their own way to independence and wellbeing.



#### Setting/Materials Needed

- Pen
- Paper



## How to conduct the task



- Duration 20 – 30 min, depending on the number of participants.

### ➤ Task 1: Introduction to empathy

Participants are shown a video and are invited into a group discussion.

- **Suggested introductory words for facilitators:** Have you wondered what exactly empathy is? And do you know whether you are an empathetic person? Watch the following video and share your thoughts: [http://youtu.be/jYc6PmHI\\_Y8](http://youtu.be/jYc6PmHI_Y8)
- Ask participants to share with the groups on a voluntary basis their comments: I've noticed that...; I was surprised by...; I did the test with a friend and I noticed that...My comments and thoughts are...
- **Conclusion:** Present the four types of empathy to the group described above and stress that attention is the key to empathy.

### ➤ Task 2: Launch of group projects

Split participants in subgroups of 3 to maximum 4 people. Let them brainstorm on the question: *“Based on what we have experienced in this learning block so far, what part of it would I want to share with the women in my community and how can I do it?”*

- **Suggested introductory words for facilitators:** Studies show that helping others is one of the four main components of wellbeing. So, we would like to give you the opportunity to transfer a piece of what you've learned to your community and help other women grow more confident and self-aware of their power.
- **Further instructions for facilitators:** Let participants come up with a plan for transfer of knowledge through experiential learning - be it an informal social gathering in their community, a social media clip, a podcast. Encourage them to think about the project in detail:
  - who are going to be their partners?
  - what is the timeframe of the project?
  - who are they going to invite,
  - how are they going to measure their impact and celebrate their success etc.?
- Let each group present their project to the others – it might inspire them to enrich their own projects.



- Duration 40 – 60 min, depending on the number of participants.

### ➤ Task 3: Closing task – “Rain of Confidence”

The whole EQ Block ends with a specifically adapted exercise for boost of one's confidence.



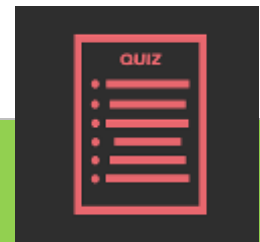
- All participants stand in a circle, one of them stands in the centre with her eyes closed, the others walk past her and whisper “You are beautiful. You are beautiful. You are....” And all the nice things they can think of and would share with her. They swirl in a circle around her and continue until everyone has listed as many good qualities about this person in the centre as they feel.
- The participant thanks everyone and passes her turn to someone else, by pointing at the person next to them, until every participant has experienced “the rain of confidence”.
- **Conclusion:** The trainer thanks everyone for taking part and says “Each of you is an inexhaustible universe of great things...every time you find it difficult to move forward towards your goals, come back to this moment and recall all that you have experienced, heard and lived because this is you! You carry all of these qualities and this power is the source and manifestation of yourself. Always be and remember that you can and are so much more than what you show and think of yourself!”



- Duration 40 – 60 min, depending on the number of participants.

### 3.6.6.3. Quiz for Self-Assessment on the Whole Module

To be answered by participants at the end of the five units



**1. How many are the main systems for information processing in the brain?**

- a) 1
- b) 2

**Answer: b)**

**2. What does our brain do to save time and energy in the huge information flow it is supposed to process?**

- a) It does nothing, we need to take care of it
- b) It uses “shortcuts” for information processing
- c) It shuts down and stops working from time to time

**Answer: b)**

**3. Anticipatory Stress could be best managed by:**

- a) Good preparation and confidence in one’s own abilities and previous experience



- b) Trying not to think about the upcoming stressful event
- c) Not talking with anybody about the stress anticipated

**Answer: a)**

**4. In the “Elephant and rider” metaphor, what is NOT represented by the rider:**

- a) The brain
- b) The ability to move
- c) The rational system
- d) The ability to plan and solve problems

**Answer: b)**

**5. Who is stronger when it comes to following a journey towards a goal?**

- a) The rider
- b) The elephant

**Answer: b)**

**6. What is in the foundation of being empathic?**

- a) Love
- b) Friendship
- c) Attention
- d) Care

**Answer: c)**

➤ **Self-reflection exercise 1:**

The EQ Test from Unit 4 of this block is one of the trainee’s key assessment tools for this topic – it does not aim to measure their level of knowledge, but rather to raise the self-awareness of each participant of their own potential behaviours in different situations, their attitudes on the different subscales of this topic. Such types of assessments are only valuable if followed by a reflective discussion, that allows for analysis of the results, bridging them with real-life examples and even questioning them.

At the end of the block, encourage a self-reflective goal-setting process:

“My highest EQ level score is: .....  
Therefore, I plan to ..... more confidently.

My lowest EQ level score is: .....  
Therefore, I plan to ..... more often, in order to increase it. “

A goal is something very simple – when it comes to emotions, even a small step can actually be a real game changer. A goal can include asking friends, consultants, acquaintances for ideas, searching for interesting materials to read, completing another mission level on this platform, getting feedback from people around you and reflecting on your actions and thoughts.

➤ Self-reflection exercise 2:

The following Case study is based on the life of a woman, who once was economically dependent and did not feel empowered. It deals with the path that took her to shared economic partnership, as she describes it.

- **Suggested introductory words for facilitators:** Read the following short reflection by a woman who has experienced economic dependence and reflect on the notion of “independence” and “co-dependence”: what emotions did the story evoke in you, were you able to identify with her story, the emotions it evokes and to name those emotions?

- **Case study:** *“In recent decades, the role of women has changed, and so have the positions she occupies in society. Although every woman is free to build a career, there are still many women who are economically dependent on their partners or are the only ones taking on caring responsibilities, which may prevent them from pursuing it further. Economic dependence is something that is not talked about but is still widespread among various women. The still existing patriarchal stereotypes and attitudes in our society play a big role in its formation, and they are often not overtly talked about, i.e., are accepted as something that has always been.*

*Let's start from the popular understanding that a woman should take care of home and family, that she doesn't need to work and build a career, and that her only calling is to be a mother and a wife. Of course, there is an understanding that the woman should bear 50% or more of the family expenses. And let's finish with the other extreme, namely – the woman **has to bear** all the family expenses. I asked myself: is it possible to avoid economic dependence, how to find balance in the family and how to be equal in terms of the family budget.*

*Let me tell you a little about myself - I have been married for 20 years and have a harmonious relationship with my husband. It took a certain amount of time until we were able to establish a balanced and harmonious relationship. In terms of finances, we started with a general fund. Regardless of individual contribution, the money was shared and each of us had free access to it. We were doing a joint expenses report. First, we covered the overheads, discussing the big purchases, then the smaller things like clothes, shoes and everyday expenses. In the beginning, our money barely covered the expenses for the month. Over the years, the income increased, and we set aside some of the income as savings. But it so happened that I lost my job, I had no income, and we had to cut costs. During this ordeal, I felt safe and cared for, even though we were living on my husband's salary alone. This difficult period lasted about two years, during which time we found that we could manage on one salary. Quite naturally, we estimated that, with proper planning of income and expenses, we would be able to live with the larger salary and save the smaller one. Today, although my contribution is significantly smaller than my husband's, I feel recognized and appreciated by him. Our cash register is still shared. We still discuss and decide together on the larger purchases. I feel calm, loved and safe. A cohabitation requires compromises on both sides, and not only in terms of the family budget.*

*However, we must be careful not to go to the other extreme – to turn our life into one big compromise and lose ourselves. There needs to be reciprocity, partnership and love. Not perverted, twisted and violent, but trusting love. Does it exist? Yes, we just have to look for it. Let's try to get out of the rut we've fallen into. Because without realising it, we make the same mistakes in our choices, no matter if we are choosing a partner or a job. Can we be happy? YES! I am an example of this and I believe I am not the only one.”*

### 3.7. Block conclusion

The aim of this Module is to underline the importance of emotional intelligence (EQ) for the enhancement of other workspace competences, to turn past experience into resources, and to help participants face future challenges with bigger awareness of their own strengths to tackle them. The focus is on emotional intelligence and increased self-awareness, in order to link more effectively with allies and live impactfully.

The use of these specific methods encourages participants to self-reflect more, to become more aware of their internal resources, increase their confidence and turn it into impactful personal and professional projects.

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## Block 4: Developing/improving cognitive skills

### 4.1. Description

Cognitive skills are essential to a person's entire development because they involve many of the mental processes that are at the heart of problem-solving, memory retention, and decision-making, including thinking, reading, learning, and paying attention. All of this has an impact on how well individuals learn and perform. Throughout this block five cognitive skills will explore, these are visual and auditory processing, working and long-term memory, logical thinking, problem solving, and cognitive creativity. Cognitive skills support a variety of tasks at work, including data interpretation, team goal retention, meeting attendance, and more. These abilities are essential to assist individuals in remembering earlier information that may be relevant to the objectives of their organisation and help them make critical connections between earlier and more recent information to enhance their productivity.

### 4.2. Keywords

Brain-based abilities, knowledge acquisition, information, manipulation, reasoning

### 4.3. Module Goals

Cognitive capacities are brain-based abilities required to complete any task, no matter how basic or difficult. Instead of having anything to do with actual information, they have more to do with the processes by which we learn, remember, solve problems, and pay attention. Throughout this block, the primary brain mechanisms behind cognition also addressing some of the main executive functions will be explained. The aim is to provide trainers with information and tools to explore these concepts — which can be dense and complex for those outside the psychology or scientific arenas — with the target women of the MyPath project. The purpose is to understand how our brain operates whilst learning so that the trainees can then relate this with their own skills and identify ways of learning, recognise patterns to be reinforced or abandoned, and enhance their own way of performing in their lives and in career.

### 4.4. Learning Objectives

This training block encompasses a set of cognitive skills namely visual and auditory processing, working and long-term memory, logical thinking, problem-solving and cognitive creativity. Trainee will be able to comprehend the path that the human brain takes in terms of cognitive learning through the description of these skills, which range from the simplest—recognising or recalling information – to the most complex – using previously learned data to create entirely new meanings. After reading and analysing this block, trainers will be equipped to understand how these concepts operate in the brain and how to use and share this information so that trainees gain awareness about the subject and improve their own cognitive skills, aiming to improve their career prospects.



#### 4.5. Learning outcomes

After the completion of this training block, it is expected the trainees to:

Knowledge	Skills	Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Define</b> visual and auditory processing</li> <li>• <b>Define</b> working and long-term memory</li> <li>• <b>Define</b> logical thinking</li> <li>• <b>Define</b> problem-solving</li> <li>• <b>Define</b> creativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recognise</b> visual and auditory processing processes</li> <li>• <b>Apply</b> exercises to improve working and long-term memory</li> <li>• <b>Apply</b> logic thinking strategies to daily and professional tasks</li> <li>• <b>Apply</b> problem-solving techniques to daily and professional tasks</li> <li>• <b>Recognise</b> creativity as a relevant skill to respond to different challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assess</b> own visual and auditory processing skills</li> <li>• <b>Assess</b> own working and long-term memory skills</li> <li>• <b>Assess</b> own logical thinking skills</li> <li>• <b>Assess</b> own problem-solving skills</li> <li>• <b>Assess</b> own creativity skills</li> </ul>

#### 4.6. Main content

This training block aims to provide professional facilitators (trainers, social pedagogues/workers, VET providers, etc.) with relevant content and a set of practical activities they can use to support skilled women with migration, refugee and ethnic minority background to increase their efficiency and productivity as well as enable them to fully exploit their potential. The training block will cover five cognitive skills, namely visual and auditory processing, working and long-term memory, logical thinking, problem-solving and cognitive creativity.

##### 4.6.1. Cognitive Skills

###### Visual and auditory processing

The brain employs auditory processing to combine, analyse, and split sounds for present or future use in order to make sense of the information that enters through the ears. By analysing and assisting individuals to make effective use of the information they receive, this cognitive skill helps individuals actively listen to other individuals as well as to internalise noises. On the other hand, individuals can more successfully comprehend images with visual processing. They can assess designs, proofread key documents, and make sense of visual data representations like graphs and tables if they possess strong visual processing skills.

So, simply put if someone has good auditory processing, they are able to divide, combine, and analyse sounds. Whereas if they lack this skill, they will probably have trouble reading fluently or

comprehending what they read. By the same token, visual processing encourages the use of mental imagery, however, if an individual has the inability to comprehend what they have just read as well as retain the information, follow instructions, read a map, or solve word problems, they might struggle with visual processing ability.

### Working and long-term memory

The more we study memory, the more we understand how intricate and vital it is for a range of daily tasks. People's work, relationships, and quality of life depend on it. For the purpose of this toolkit, we will only explore working and long-term memory. Most of the knowledge that people are aware of is retained in long-term memory. Our short-term memory stores an array of information, including childhood memories, familiar names, bike riding skills, and many other things. A person's ability to retain information over the long term is crucial to their ability to learn, advance, and pass on knowledge to others. People can also live their lives normally thanks to it. People employ working memory, which consists of a limited quantity of information, to complete the activities at hand. While it shares similarities with the idea of short-term memory, it serves different purposes.

### Logical thinking

Greek roots give us the word *logic*, which means reason. Logical thinking involves using reason for the analysis of a topic or issue and coming up with feasible solutions. Individuals that think logically, acquire all the information they can, evaluate the evidence, and then systematically choose the best course of action. Logical thinking is of capital importance in almost all careers since it is a crucial tool for problem-solving, idea generation, and problem-analysis. Through logical reasoning, people can develop appropriate solutions that are realistic, plausible, and implementable. Workers who exhibit good logical thinking or reasoning abilities are highly valued by employers since they base their decisions on factual information. Most of the time, businesses don't want employees making choices based on feelings rather than logic.

### Problem-solving

Problem-solving is a big aspect of daily living, be it considering whether to buy a house or organise a bookshelf. Problems can be very simple such as resolving a simple math problem when buying groceries or very complex like planning a future career. The fact is all people have decisions to make and questions to answer in their lives, thus problem-solving is crucial. Problem-solving is the capacity to solve complex situations and effectively deal with problems, setbacks, and errors. A problem is something that is challenging to grasp, solve, or handle. It could be a job or other life circumstances. Finding the best answers to challenges requires strategies and skills. In order to tackle a problem, one must first identify its potential causes and then create a plan of action to address it. People frequently apply problem-solving techniques in both their career and personal lives.

### Cognitive creativity

The word "creativity" has gained a lot of popularity in recent years. Psychologists believe it to be one of the most challenging subjects to research and when digging into academic research one thing that is common is that there is no consensus about how creativity works. Perhaps because one of the drives to push science forward is creativity itself. Almost every element of life benefits from creativity, from raising children to running a business. Creativity is extremely vital in all of these areas and is often defined as the creation of something valuable, practical, innovative, original, and/or worthy. In terms of career development, some of the most important qualities that any head-hunter looks for when selecting a candidate is creativity. Consequently, it is essential to comprehend what creativity is and the psychology that underlies it.



## 4.6.2. Unit 1

### 4.6.2.1. Visual and auditory processing

All cognitive skills perform symbiotically, seeing as it is extremely complex to explain how each one function individually. We all have surely experienced a moment, throughout our life, in which our capacities were a little diminished whether because we were in love or because we were really tired due to lack of sleep. Let's imagine one situation in which we have been working hard throughout the whole week, hardly sleeping, and really pushing ourselves to the limits. And then a colleague of ours asks for something neat and simple like "How do we spell the capital of France backward?" and we feel unable to answer or perform the task. In terms of brain activity here is what is happening.

As simple as the task might sound, we ought to be paying attention, and if we are tired our focus will be at a low level; then we need to keep the instructions in mind, meaning that our memory must be functioning properly; in following we:

1. must remember the name of the city (for which your brain uses the long-term memory)
2. determine how we are going to solve the issues at hand (by using logic and reasoning)
3. need to say the words out loud (this is finally where we are using auditory processing)
4. visualise the name and reverse-read it (with visual processing)

If we are really tired our processing speed will be low, and we might even not be able to do it. Mental tasks would be more difficult to complete if even just one of these abilities weren't functioning properly. That is why it is so important to take care of them as a whole. Our brain uses visual processing skills to interpret what we perceive in the environment around us. Learning can take longer and require more cognitive work when a youngster is behind in the development of visual processing skills. This slows down the learning process. Visual processing skills are important for learning in a variety of subjects, including math, reading and writing. Lacking these abilities can be detrimental to a person's self-esteem. Someone who has not mastered good eye teaming, eye concentrating, and eye movement techniques may frequently struggle more with visual processing abilities. Cognitive processes known as auditory processing are responsible for identifying, interpreting, and understanding the sounds that we hear. The subskills of auditory processing can be divided into several categories. This can be quite beneficial when one is attempting to support and repair the cognitive deficits people might have. Auditory and visual integration is the capacity to correctly connect an auditory sound with a visual representation or to combine our senses of sight and hearing. This ability connects to reading music, comprehending phonics, and fluency in reading.

### 4.6.2.2. Task 1



## Training your visual and auditory skills

### ➤ Learning objectives:

This task is divided into two specific exercises that will support facilitators lead the trainees in getting acquaintance with practicing their own visual and auditory skills.



## Settings/materials needed

- Trainees must be seated in a “U shape” format
- Exercise 2: randomly objects (it can be related to the group interestings)



## How to conduct the task

### Exercise 1: Rhyming words in a chain

Organise pairs of two. To start one must choose a straightforward word, such as cat, and take turns adding words that rhyme with it to create a chain of words (e.g., cat, sat, pat, mat, fat, etc.). In alternative this can be done with the entire group of trainees organised in a circle.

### Exercise 1: What’s missing?

Organise pairs of two. One person (the trainers or another trainee) spreads out a variety of objects. Person 1 (one) looks at these for a moment. Person 2 (two) removes one object while making a composition with that objects. To complicate it a bit either use more objects in the group or remove more pieces. Person 2 then makes a guess as to which object-piece is missing after the composition have been revealed. Switch pairs.



- Duration 45 to 90 min, depending on number of participants
- For exercise number two, the facilitator must bring objects to the session. A suggestion is to research about the group interests before and choose objects that the women in the group can relate.

### 4.6.2.3. Case study 1

#### Gabriela, 35, From Mozambique to Portugal

Gabriela moved to Portugal from Mozambique, where she did an MBA to work in the family business owned by her uncle. Gabriela already had a degree in Business Administration before moving to Portugal and, while in Mozambique, she was working for her uncle’s business as a project manager, supervising a team of four collaborators, dealing with clients and prospects. She was very talented and competent in her work, but Gabriela was also responsible, and she knew she needed to evolve, and that required skills and knowledge that she did not have. So, she went to Portugal to do an MBA. Gabriela wasn’t rich and she was used to take care of her brothers and sisters, so she did not have any savings. Once in Portugal she would need to find a job quickly before starting her studies. Thanks to some compatriots, Gabriela quickly found work in domestic service and childcare. She spent

several years working, changing from one unqualified job to another and in quite precarious working conditions. Despite this, she managed to send money to her family and also save something.



Gabriela was a bit frustrated. Back in Mozambique she had a qualified job where she could make good use of her skills to earn money and here in Portugal she was confronted with a difficult situation: although all her professional qualifications were officially recognised, she realized that the market did not. After years of trying, she failed in finding a job that matched her qualifications. More and more she was feeling discouraged by domestic service and childcare, losing her purpose and sense of self-realization. In retrospective she had a good job in Mozambique, she came to Portugal to study to perform more and better in her uncle's family business and in the end she receded. Not only her professional life was going bad but also her life in general. When she moved to Portugal Gabriela focused her life on work because that was her purpose, she would say. But the truth is that more and more she was having trouble following conversations and was very hard to understand people in crowded environments. Gabriela also stopped listen to music, she even didn't enjoy it and while taking care of children she was always frustrated because she could not remember or learn songs or nursery rhymes. All of these she attributed to the abrupt change of life she had. She moved from a medium town in Mozambique to Lisbon, the capital of Portugal. Not only the size of the cities was different but all environment and life in general was much more accelerated and stressful. The way people talked was also diverse. Portuguese speakers talked too fast and with an accent she wasn't used to. And, in the end, in Mozambique she was a middle class self-made woman and here in Portugal she was having a precarious life with meaningless minor jobs that did not make justice to Gabriela's skills and potential. Fortunately, Gabriela had other talents and interests.

Gabriela had always been very skilled at sewing and to make some extra money she mended clothes to her neighbours and compatriots. When she was a child, she used to design models and she started to design and make some clothes for her friends. Little by little she had more clients, a lot of locals as well, and this activity started to become an important source of income. She had found a niche market that wasn't very exploited at the time: traditional Mozambican attires fashioned with a western design. Gabriela wanted to keep doing this activity but legally and started to consider the possibility of setting up her own business. Moreover, she was determined to thrive in Portugal, and

she realised that setting her own business could somehow give other perspective of her professional self to the market.

Gabriela had been attended in a social and labour counselling service for migrants. She was advised on the pros and cons of self-employment, how to design a business plan and entrepreneurship economic aids. There, she had also the opportunity to apply for a fund that would help her to develop her business for a year without having to work at the same time. For this fund she had to make several psychological tests. And it was a surprise when the psychologist told her that the results showed that she had an auditory processing disorder, meaning that she was experiencing some problems in processing auditory information. It took her a while to understand what she was saying. All her life she had good auditory skills, she could listen every tiny noise, she has a very good ear, gifted for music, so it was hard for her to understand what the psychologist was saying. The therapist was very patient and had a big conversation with Gabriela. She asked about her behaviours and if any had changed or at least if she noticed any change. And Gabriela reported all her story since she moved to Lisbon. In was only when Gabriela was moaning about her impatience and failure to sing nursery rhymes that the psychologist started to make some sense to what was going on with her.

By good luck, Gabriela's auditory processing disorder wasn't directly affecting her performance specifically regarding the development of her own business, so her project was selected, and she received the funds to develop her business plan. Besides once she was diagnosed with the auditory processing disorder, the social counselling service for migrants sent her for adequate treatment in the National Health system in Portugal. It took some time and finally Gabriela made one of her passions, her profession, fully recovered from her auditory processing disorder.

#### **Reflective questions**

- 1.** How often you attribute change behaviours to context and/or environment not really paying attention to the subtleties that occur in your life?
- 2.** Each of the women who settled in a new country and gradually built a new home there have an interesting story to tell. How often do you share your story for others be inspired for?
- 3.** When you are in a new country, the fear from others can stop you from developing and discovering yourself. Gabriela was able to thrive by never quitting and asking for help. What about you?

### 4.6.3. Unit

#### 4.6.3.1. Working and long-term memory

Memory is the ability to retain information across time. When one needs a piece of information, one can extract it from storage. However, remembering is trickier than it appears. Some things remain in the mind always. Even if individuals can only remember a small portion of their time in primary school, some facts stick with them for the rest of their life, while others lose their significance over time. The sort of information people get may affect how long their memories last and how much of it they can remember because memories are frequently stored differently.

We have all probably watched the Disney movie Finding Nemo. Do you remember that funny and cheerful character named Dory? Always excited with everything she was discovering because it was always her first time? Well, that's because Dory suffered from short-term memory loss. Despite having trouble with her short-term memory, Dory is a happy, funny, and kind character. Throughout the film, we can understand that she can function quite well and actually help her friend to find his son Nemo.

Working memory is frequently mistakenly thought of as just another name for short-term memory, however this is not totally true. While short-term memory may store information, working memory has the capacity to process and use that information as well. Consider it as a mental post-it note or information "holding cell" where data are stored and processed.

When it comes to career long-term memory plays an important role when individuals remember knowledge from the past. This ability might assist people in recalling the key details from last week's meeting as well as the name of a colleague they first met three years ago. Also, it is thanks to individuals' long-term memory that people can apply previous employment training to present activities, which is of paramount importance to career performance. By contrast, working memory gives individuals the ability to retain information while using it. For instance, a good indicator a strong working memory is when individuals are working on a project and do not need to refer back to the instructions to remember what to do next. Additionally, having good working memory can assist people in remembering details from a recent interaction.

Despite some severe diseases people might have related with memory problems that need medical attention (Dementia, Alzheimer's, Amnesia,) there are some signals we need to be aware that means that our memory skills are performing poorly. In the context of this project, it is likely that people that might experience memory problems might be more due to fatigue, lack of sleep, anxiety, depression, or stress. Nevertheless, it is important to evaluate the situation properly.

For instance, if a woman starts forgetting names or things, she used to know it is a problem related with long-term memory. Whereas if she's having trouble following multi-step instructions when working on a project or forgetting what was recently stated in a conversation, it is her working memory that needs attention.

#### 4.6.3.2. Task 2



### Group conversation

#### ➤ Learning objectives:

In this activity the participants will be challenged to share, in a group conversation, examples of typical life circumstance where working memory might be required. The objective is to lead the participants to reflect on their own mechanisms to improve working and long-term memory.



## Settings/materials needed

- Trainees must be seated in a “U shape” format or circle to share information



## How to conduct the task

Have the group seated in a circle and after introducing the topic as randomly to the trainees to provide a description with an example of a typical circumstance where working memory might be required in your life. Mediate the conversation between the trainees referring to the topics you have previously introduced. In alternative, this activity can be done with one trainee individually.



- Duration 45 to 90 min, depending on number of participants

### 4.6.3.3. Case study 2

#### **Mirabel, 41, From Guinea Bissau to Portugal**

Mirabel is a woman from Guinea Bissau that first came to Lisbon with a scholarship to make her degree in communication studies. Then she returned to her hometown, Bissau, to accept a job as Journalist in the National Broadcasting Television of Bissau; she's been working there for 15 years. Mirabel also got married and had two sons, now 14 and 16 years respectively, and they were the primary reason for her to return to Lisbon again. Although having fairly good conditions to raise her kids in Guinea and happy life there, Mirabel is aware that her sons are getting older and the future perspectives for teenagers are inexistent there. As Mirabel suffered a lot when studying in Lisbon alone with no family to support her, she decided that her sons would have her assistance and guidance. Mirabel has been in Lisbon for six months already. Her priorities were to find an affordable house for them and to enrol her sons in a secondary school nearby. Now that they are finally settled, she started to focus on herself, specifically on her career life. Mirabel knew that would be hard to find a job as a journalist in Lisbon, but she activated her network anyway. In the end, several journalists that now appeared in the news on the main Portuguese TV channels were her colleagues at the university. After several attempts, she finally got a job in her field of work but was far from being as qualified as the position she had in Bissau. She became a bit angry about the situation also because in the position she was in now she was overqualified for the job, and that was influencing her work environment, not necessarily in the best way.





One day she got home really tired and was preparing herself to rest when she got a call from the school of her youngest son. It was the school director asking her if she could drop by the school for a meeting. The director said that she was worried about her son because he was unfocused, inattentive, totally daydreamer. He was always distracted and unable to focus on tasks consistently and also not retaining the information he should. Mirabel almost fainted when she started to listen to the director. But then she recovered and said to her that she was proud to give a close education to her sons: she always helped them with their homework, sometimes she would study with them, and they had a weekly evening of memory games. All of them were very fond of puzzles, scrabble, and chess. Every Thursday the TV and screens were off to play one of these games for which they even organised a championship.

Mirabel knew that playing memory games was a fun way to mentally challenge her kids and sharpen their memory. She was fully aware that the brain needs regular exercise to remain strong and healthy and that this kind of game was adequate for that. She was taught that memory games were mentally demanding and aid in the growth and expansion of the brain's grey matter, which affects the ability to remember things. And that was why she was totally caught by surprise with this news.

Thinking more thoroughly Mirabel recognised that her youngest son always needed much more support from her side, and she would notice quite often that he seemed to forget the things learned repeatedly. Mirabel thanked her director saying that she would take her son to a psychologist.

In the following week, she took her kid to a psychologist who gave him a plethora of tests to do and then talked with Mirabel that had previously reported her conversation with the director of the school to the therapist. He said to Mirabel that he had treated hundreds of kids with impaired working memory, yet not a single one of them has ever had a teacher referring to them as having memory issues. Instead, they were always labelled as being distracted, confused and uninterested. And indeed, that is exactly how they seem. But what Mirabel's son was having was in truth, attention issues, which can result from poor working memory.

Mirabel got emotional for a moment as she knew that this was something that would impact a lot in her son's life. And, indeed, the therapist carried on saying that over time, her son could be struggling at school since it becomes difficult to succeed academically if kids frequently forget the

knowledge required. But he went on to say that, together (parents-therapist and child) they could prevent academic problems down the line by identifying these children early on and then giving them the support, they need to succeed. Before leaving the clinic, the therapist gave a list of steps that Mirabel should follow in order to work together with the therapist to improve her son's working memory.

#### Reflective questions

1. Why do you think Mirabel referred her and her sons would play games such as Scrabble, Chess and Puzzles? What is the importance of those in relation to working memory?
2. Reflect on Mirabel journey and consider her thoughts regarding her new job in Lisbon. Why did she fail to find a job equal to her previous position in Guinea? What measures do you think she could take in order to overcome this situation?
3. What is working memory and how it differs from distraction or lack of concentration?

### 4.6.4. Unit 3

#### 4.6.4.1. Logical thinking

Logical thinking is a rational mechanism that the brain uses that involves a methodical sequence of steps based on reliable mathematical techniques and provided statements. In order to reach a conclusion, using logical reasoning, two ways can be drawn: deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning.

In deductive reasoning, our thinking starts with a general truth that serves as the major premise. For example, all dogs have four legs. A minor premise, which makes a more specific claim, such as a poodle is a dog – is then made. The following is a conclusion: A poodle has four legs. The conclusion cannot be false if both the major and minor premises are true. Inductive reasoning on the other side involves inferring general conclusions from specific observations, that is, conclusions are reached through data. The data will support a theory if it reveals a definite pattern. For instance, we may use inductive reasoning to determine that all zebras have stripes after observing 10 of them. The premises are not necessarily true, but they are true given the available evidence and given that it is impossible to find an instance in which they are not true. This hypothesis is simpler to reject than to prove.

Let's take as an example mystery characters such as Hercule Poirot or Sherlock Holmes. These are fictional personas that solve crimes. In their books as well as TV shows you can see logical skills in action. When Poirot takes advantage of his little grey cells, he's just using reason and logic. To discover the truth, Poirot uses his understanding of human nature, his keen observational skills, and the deductive method. You'll see that he always takes care to make his points and never assumes anything. The book/TV shows provide us with an illustration of extraordinarily wise judgement in this way. In the end, Poirot does manage to decipher the convoluted plot. Although the fiction is about a murder, we may also witness the ability of organised reason to overcome challenging issues and discern the truth.



Sherlock Holmes is another story. In fact, he is known for being a master of deduction when, if you analyse properly — and according to Danielle K. Kincaid, he really applies great inductive reasonings. Although technically both inductive and deductive thinking is employed in Doyle's stories, she argues that Sherlock Holmes' use of inductive reasoning is what makes him famous (and sets him apart from the detective inspector). His vast collection of knowledge allowed him to use his inductive reasoning to reach conclusions that others might not be able to.

When individuals need to solve problems to reach a solution, they need to use a variety of skills, including logical thinking. Problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity and reasoning are all skills that are under the umbrella of logical thinking and reasoning. When people are really tired and fail to understand things repeatedly with a sense of being stuck or overwhelmed this might indicate feeble logic and reason skills.

#### 4.6.4.2. Task 3



### Practicing questioning

#### ➤ Learning objectives:

The aim of this task is to lead the participants to strengthen their logical thinking skills by making questions about things they typically accept as fact.



### Settings/materials needed

- Trainees must be seated in a “U shape” format or circle for group discussions



### How to conduct the task

Making questions is considered to be an effective way to practice or strengthen logical thinking. It helps to put things into perspective by seeing a subject from different points of view. This boosts a person's problem solving skills as well.

#### Step 1

Present to the participants the best practice ahead described: **Case study 3** – The wise girl – a story for logical reasoning.

## Step 2

Conduct a brief group discussion, framed in the following questions:

- Now, imagine yourself standing in a field right now. If you had been the girl, what would you have done?*
- What would you have counselled her if you had to?*

Ask participants to engage in the discussions by presenting their points of view.

## Step 3

After a few sharing's from the participants resume and explain what Arun really did:

*Here what she did,*

*The girl reached into the bag and pulled out a stone. Without even looking at it, she took a stone and immediately dropped it onto the pebble-covered path, where it quickly got lost among all the other stones. Oh, how foolish of me, she exclaimed. However, you can tell which pebble I chose if you peek into the money bag for the one that is still there. It must be presumed that she chose the white stone because the black stone that is still there is. The girl turned what appeared to be an impossible position into one that was highly advantageous because the moneylender dared not his dishonesty.*

## Step 4

As the group again their opinion about the girls' position:

- What do you think is the moral of the story?*
- Which part of the story has logical reasoning embedded?*

Take note of the participants answers and used them to debrief the activity by summing up the importance of logical thinking as a skill they can practice.

## Step 5

At the debriefing stage, make sure to explain that logical thinking skills are very important in a career environment. In almost every job individual need to solve problems that are intrinsic to their field of competence. The ability to think logically forces people to always grow intellectually since they must take into account hard data even while evaluating their own performance. Because people are less prone to allow emotions, like ego, to cloud their judgement, they also help individuals to become better team players. Because individuals try to draw as many logical links as they can between different topics, they also tend to boost their creativity. All of these individual advancements eventually translate to successful organisations. In order to enhance their career, women need to pay attention to their logical thinking skills. Explain them that those can be improved and strengthened by the following techniques:

### **1. Be aware of your statements. Observations or inferences?**

Understanding the difference between observations and conclusions is crucial for developing your logical reasoning skills. Observation is the process of gathering information or facts by using your senses, such as hearing, seeing, smelling, and touching. The inference is what people make as a result of that observation. While inference is one's judgement based on observation, observation is more factual. Try to distinguish between verifiable facts and conjectures in a similar manner. A conjecture is a calculated guess that is based on some prior knowledge or insufficient information, whereas a fact is something that has been

demonstrated or is thought to be true based on actual events. Decision-making will improve after you have a comprehensive comprehension of the facts, observations and inferences.

## **2. Conditional statements give good logical conclusions**

Try to think in conditional statements and identify the causes and effects of minor, even trivial, facts, even though it may sound ridiculous to do so. For instance, let's assume that it is always warm outside when it is shining. It's warm outside if it's shining, that would be the statement. In conditional sentences, the conclusion and premise are both true if the premise (the initial part of the phrase) is true. Try to apply that to other situations as well (if I drop my mobile, it will break; if I don't sleep, I'll become sleepy, etc.), and continually check to see if the premise and conclusion are related.

## **3. The more games you play the better**

Playing card games is not only beneficial for your joy but also increases your memory, focus, and analytical skills. So, the more you play the more you train and improve your logical reasoning.

## **4. Indulge yourself with murder mysteries**

When you watch or read crime fiction your little grey cells, that is, your logical thinking improves. Before the author reveals the plot, try to unravel the puzzle. Use the mojo from Arthur Conan Doyle, that actually is a terrific piece of advice: When you have removed the impossible, whatever remains, however implausible, must be the truth. Eliminate the impossibility, and you might see the answer more clearly.

## **5. Spot the patterns**

To become more logically minded, you must develop your pattern recognition abilities. Your IQ, spatial awareness, and mental powers are all improved through pattern recognition. You must have encountered a series of numbers where you had to predict the following number based on a pattern. Recognizing patterns is essential for making wise judgments and drawing reliable conclusions.

## **6. Have fundamental analytical principles**

Try to make sure that the following principles guide your mental process: anticipating (planning ahead), critical thinking (questioning everything), interpreting (looking for patterns), deciding (coming to a decision), and learning (from your mistakes).

## **7. Debate**

Have you ever been in a disagreement where you were unable to provide a reasonable reason for why something was good or bad? Everybody has. Debates are fantastic because they motivate you to look for causes and effects, turn them into strong arguments and uncover some underlying logic. Debates can sharpen your mind because they call for quick decision-making and logical reasoning. Therefore, you can either organise a debate with your friends or family about any topic you like, or you can join a debate club.



- Duration 45 to 90 min, depending on number of participants

#### 4.6.4.3. Case study 3

##### **The wise girl – a story for logical reasoning**

Once upon a time, in rural land in a small Indian community, a farmer had the unfortunate situation of owing a sizable amount of money to the village's wealthier person, the moneylender. The old and clever moneylender had feelings for the farmer's lovely daughter. So, he then pushed forth a compromise. If he could wed his daughter, he promised, he would pay off the farmer's obligation. The idea frightened the farmer as well as his daughter. So, the clever moneylender advised them to let fate decide the situation. He promised to place a black and a white stone in a bag of cash that was empty. The girl was then required to select one stone from the bag. Three scenarios might happen with the following consequences:

If she took the black stone, her father's debt would be discharged, and she would marry him;

Her dad's obligation would still be erased if she chose the white rock, therefore she would not have to marry him;

However, her father would be arrested if she refused to pick up a stone. They were in the farmer's field, on a path that was littered with pebbles. The moneylender leaned over to pick up two stones as they were conversing. The perceptive girl saw that when he picked them up, he had picked up two black stones and placed them in the money bag. The moneylender then instructed the young lady to select a pebble from the bag.

#### 4.6.5. Unit 4

##### 4.6.5.1. Problem-solving

The word problem-solving in cognitive psychology refers to the mental process that humans go through to identify, evaluate, and resolve difficulties. Whenever individuals are faced with a problem, they go through different steps in the problem-solving process. Under the process of problem-solving there are several mental processes involved to tackle this situation. In terms of cognitive psychology those are:

- the ability to perceive a problem,
- representing the issue in one's head,
- considering information that is pertinent to the issue at hand,
- describe the various facets of the issue, and
- identifying and outlining the issue.

Now let's dismantle this into steps that unfolds several attitudes.

##### **Step 1 Identify the situation**

**To acknowledge the presence of a problem and identify its nature or underlying cause**

**Sometimes we will discover the issue on your own, and other times we are told about it. It's crucial to first comprehend the precise nature of the problem in order to start tackling it. Any attempts to fix the problem will be erroneous or misguided if our perception of the problem is faulty. To identify the root cause of a problem one should request information about the issue, divide the**

problem down into smaller components, analyse the issue from a variety of angles, and conduct research to determine the connections between several variables.

### Step 2 Define the problem

To characterise the problem so that it may be resolved

One should now concentrate on determining which elements of the problem are facts and which are opinions.

### Step 3 Finding solutions

To come up with a strategy or create possible solutions

Once the problem has been determined, it is time to begin thinking of possible solutions. This step typically entails coming up with as many ideas as possible but without evaluating them – that is brainstorming. After various options have been developed, they can be assessed and reduced. The next stage is to create a plan of action to address the problem. The strategy will change based on the circumstance and the person's particular preferences. Heuristics and algorithms are two frequently used methods for solving problems. Heuristics are mental short cuts that frequently draw from previously successful solutions. They are frequently the greatest option if you need a quick answer and can be effective if the situation is identical to one you have already encountered. Whereas algorithms correspond to sequential processes that always result in the right answer. Although this method is very accurate, it can also be time and resource consuming.

### Step 4 Assessing solutions

To sort through the solutions found and eliminate some

There may be some absurd, poor, and ideas that will never be put into practice. One should focus on the concepts that might succeed. Then arrange the information that is already available:

- How much do you know about the issue?
- How much you don't know?

The more information we have, the better equipped we will be to find a precise solution. It is important to make sure that all the data needs are collected and avoid taking a decision without adequate information, this will probably lead to inaccurate or erroneous results. The following step is to set aside resources. At this point, it's essential to take into account all the variables that could have an impact on the current issue. This includes analysing the resources at hand, the dates that must be reached, and any potential hazards associated with each solution. A choice regarding the best course of action can be made after serious consideration.



### Step 5 Monitor the results and evaluate the solution implemented

To follow through the situation to make sure the problem has been resolved and that no new issues have appeared as a result of the suggested solution

Effective problem-solvers frequently track their development as they search for a solution. This allows them to reassess their strategy or search for a new one if the solution adopted is not making much progress toward their goal. After a problem has been resolved, it is essential to spend some time considering the approach that was taken and analyse the results.

#### 4.6.5.2. Task 4



### Brainstorming ideas

#### ➤ Learning objectives:

The aim of this task is to lead the participants into practicing their problem-solving skills.



### Settings/materials needed

- Trainees must be seated in a “U shape” format or circle for group discussions
- Pen and notebooks
- Whiteboard



### How to conduct the task

#### Step 1

Present the following scenario:

*Let's imagine the following situation: a company of which's business has loads of shift scheduling and a manager that is caught up in a situation where three people quit in the same week and two employers are currently on holiday in a department that was already severely understaffed. This manager clearly has a problem to solve and not a simple one. What would you do in this situation?*



## Step 2

As participants to write down the steps which the manager had to comply to solve the problem and describe them as much as possible. This will allow them to track all the mental processes involved in decision-making processes to address problems.

## Step 3

Lead participant's into presenting the results of the previous step.

## Step 4

To wrap-up, present how the manager figured it out:

*we ramped up our hiring efforts, I gained the department head's consent to reward overtime work with bonuses, and then I identified seven employees who were willing to work extra hours this month. Taking the initiative, speaking effectively, and acting fast to address this issue before it grew worse was in my opinion, were the major problem-solving abilities displayed here.*

Do a round of discussions to see if the results match what the participants have presented.



- Duration 45 to 90 min, depending on number of participants

### 4.6.5.3. Case study 4

This case study is based on problem solving story from the blog Purpose Focus Commitment.

Louisa was worried about how much homework she needs to do as she made her way home from school when she saw an accident. By chance, a large truck became caught beneath a bridge in the middle of a road, preventing any other vehicles from crossing the bridge.

Fortunately, no one was wounded. People began to congregate and watch what was happening as time went on. Numerous firefighters and police officers were also working to free the immobilized truck. However, none of them had any idea how to fix this issue because the vehicle was absolutely stuck and wouldn't move.

One of the main roadways into and out of the city was where the vehicle entirely became stuck, and traffic began to build up. After a few hours, the mayor and his entire team arrived to investigate the issue after multiple complaints about the traffic congestion.

However, despite the mayor's assistance, the firefighters and police officers were unable to free the truck. The mayor quickly called on the assistance of all the engineers in the community, but even they were unable to find a means to free the vehicle without endangering the bridge. They brought in big machinery toward the end of the day and attempted to pull the truck out. However, they were still unsuccessful.

Louisa finally addressed the mayor and offered a simple solution, saying, the vehicle is fully stuck the way it is right now. So why not deflate the tyres first before removing the truck? You see, if you deflate the tyres, the truck will drop and become unstuck.

The mayor was astonished at the idea, but at the same time desperate enough to try what the girl proposed. The mayor and his crew discussed the idea and agreed to try it. The completely trapped truck was quickly freed, allowing individuals to continue living their lives. The mayor was surprised that a gathering of adults couldn't understand something that a teenager could.

#### Reflective questions

1. Relate the story with problem solving skill and reflect: the role of the girl and her positioning within the story — did that affect her capacity to solve the problem, in what way? In regard to police officers and firefighters as well as mayor staff, analyse their attitude, and reflect why they failed to come up with the solution.

2. Fit each piece of the story into problem solving steps given above and go in depth finding which skills people used or did not use in order to solve/not to solve the problem.

Moral of the story

We sometimes complicate things excessively. We may be reluctant to look for straightforward solutions due to our age, level of education, social standing, or any other factor. If we feel entirely stuck, we must come up with a "highly smart method" to free ourselves. What's preventing you is that right there.3. What do you think is the moral of the story?

### 4.6.6. Unit 5

#### 4.6.6.1. Cognitive creative

One of the keys to amazing success and extraordinary advancement in one's professional, social, and personal life is having a creative mind. Within societies, people have a lot of respect and consideration for the creative achievements of exceptional artists, designers, innovators, and scientists because they articulate the fundamentals of their culture and make significant contributions to the advancement and development of that culture. As a result, creativity is a key driver of human advancement. Creativity is a characteristic that people often think either is innate or is something that cannot be taught – interestingly so it is not the case. Not all artists, scientists, or innovators share the same levels of creativity, and not all creative (innovation) individuals are artists, scientists, or inventors. Some people are creative in their businesses, their interactions with others, or their everyday lives.

But let's deconstruct the concept: cognitive stems from cognition and cognition is thinking. It is, in a limited sense, the brain's capacity to process, store, collect and keep data. We are aware that we constantly – and sometimes even moment by moment – have thoughts, ideas, views, judgments, and feelings that affect our life. These, in turn, have an impact on our cognitive growth and creativity since, in order to produce something or be original, one must think, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously. Realizing what someone is thinking increases the likelihood of being creative because creativity depends on the use of memory to form new conceptualizations based on insights gained from prior experiences. In terms of one's ability to be creative, cognitive development is centred on the use of imagination and inventiveness, which in turn involves metacognition, or thinking about one's own thoughts.

Thinking outside the box is a common characterisation of someone who is creative. That actually only indicates that one thinks differently than other people. We all have in our lives a friend, a colleague at school, or a familiar who when in face of a situation he/she comes up with a

perspective/solution/insight that is totally different from the overall opinions or statements. As an example, if someone is challenged to draw a hand, the probability of doing a sketch with five fingers and a form that is similar to our own hand is almost 100%. But you might be surprised if someone drafts the spaces that a hand forms as if the hand is in negative and the space around is the drawing as the hand itself.

Understanding the cognitive mechanisms that underlie creative performance is the focus of the field of creative cognition. Some researchers, back in the sixties, in an effort to outline the procedures that form the basis of all creative thought, connected associative thinking and creativity. Later, other researchers hypothesised that associative processes and divergent thinking are closely related. Divergent thinking is simply having a different perspective on the same subject, which is often held by a small number of people.

The research on the topic of Creativity is large and not consensual. Neuroscientists have been focused on how various cognitive processes foster creativity and the neurological underpinnings of these processes. People are familiar with the concept of left-brained and right-brained —the former being associated with people who are more analytical and less emotive and the latter with people with originality, kindness, and enjoyment qualities. Lately, researchers, such as Ryan Hurd, have come across the evidence that not only the right side of the brain is linked to creativity, but that creativity is influenced by a startling number of brain regions, and the regions of the brain that are not engaged during creative reverie are just as significant for the creative process. Another researcher, Rita Carter, reinforces that the degree of communication between the two hemispheres of the brain is more significant to the creative process.

To conclude, and what is certain is that by exercising our brain in a determined way, with specific exercises and activities we can, not only cultivate the creativity we possess but to develop it. For instance, in a learning context, environments where flexibility, openness, receptivity, and tolerance are present, these motivating elements encourage people to accept using their imaginations.

#### 4.6.6.2. Task 5



### Creativity matrix

#### ➤ Learning objectives:

The aim of this task is to lead the participants into fulfilling a creativity matrix.



### Settings/materials needed

- Trainees must be seated in a “U shape” format or circle for group discussions
- Pen, notebooks, post -its
- Whiteboard



## How to conduct the task

### Step 1

Create and present a matrix with the four types of creativity. Use a white board.

### Step 2

Ask participants to reflect on their life experiences and describe two situations for each of the creativity types indicated in the matrix. Also ask them to identify which type defines them better. Handout post its so that participants can write down their answers. Collate the answers in a board.

### Step 3

Debrief the activity by explaining the characteristics of the four types of creativity:

Based on various brain activities that can be spontaneous or intentional, cognitive or emotional, Arne Dietrich (2004) hypothesised that there are four main types of creative insights.

#### 1. Deliberate and cognitive creativity

The kind of creativity that results from cultivating knowledge in a particular field or vocation. According to Dietrich, the prefrontal brain is where this kind of creativity happens (PFC). Your forehead's prefrontal cortex is directly behind it. He clarified that creative thinking isn't always practiced in the PFC. The prefrontal cortex enables you to focus and connect the knowledge you have learned about your chosen discipline to your thoughts. You must already be knowledgeable about two or more issues in your profession before deliberate and cognitive creativity can develop. You combine current information and facts to create new ones when you are intentionally and cognitively creative. It takes a substantial amount of information and knowledge. Time is also needed to connect this prior knowledge. You must provide people with the appropriate resources in order to inspire this level of creativity in them. It would be beneficial if you also provided ample time for them.

For example, an engineer that consistently tests her work develops a corpus of knowledge. She discovers why certain designs pass testing and why some fail. The engineer can deliberately focus her attention on all she has learnt from previous tests when she is presented with a new problem. She can then establish connections between this information to find new concepts that address the situation at hand.

#### 2. Deliberate and Emotional Creativity

Our emotions are the source of this kind of creativity. The mental state allows for some creative expression. The cingulate cortex is where this occurs. These kinds of creativity are sparked by feelings and emotions. We have heard songs that were inspired by joy or sorrow.

The emotions of love, anger, joy, grief, and so forth can inspire creativity. You are not required to have a prior understanding of a particular domain. Your emotions and feelings are what drive this creativity. The same is true of work ethics; some poetry was composed while under the influence. Deliberate and emotional creativity may be a topic when it comes to being able to deliver when it counts. Our ability to perform under stress is influenced by our mental state. Your morale will be raised by excitement, while it will be lowered by grief.

Emotions and feelings, though, may function in opposition to one another. When someone is overexcited, they could feel too at ease to move forward.

A grieving individual could also draw power from it and wish to disprove others. Time is needed for deliberate and emotional creativity. To accomplish this, you can ask yourself or other individuals challenging deep questions.

### 3. Spontaneous and Cognitive Creativity

The third sort of creativity is spontaneous and cognitive creativity. The brain must be in an unconscious state for this to happen. This takes place in the brain's basal ganglia. Your awareness of how the basal ganglia function is subconscious. The conscious brain shuts down when spontaneous and cognitive creativity occurs. It halts so that the unconscious portion of the brain may focus on the issue. Take it off your mind if you need to think beyond the box. The prefrontal cortex links information while performing an unrelated task.

The unconscious mind then suggests a different approach. This kind of inventiveness requires some sort of background knowledge. There is a well-known instance of this: it is the tale of Isaac Newton, who developed the theory of gravity while observing an apple fall. Only stopping the problem-solving process and engaging in some pointless activities will cause it to occur. When the unconscious mind state approaches a problem, solutions will appear.

### 4. Spontaneous and Emotional Creativity

The final sort of creativity is impulsive and emotional creativity. This originates in the brain's amygdala, which is responsible for processing emotions. When the prefrontal cortex and the brain are at rest, inspiration and creativity flow. Great artists and musicians have this kind of creativity. It cannot be planned for in advance because it occurs at different times. There is no prerequisite for spontaneous and emotional creativity in terms of prior knowledge. Individuals with this type of creativity enhanced frequently deal with talents like literature, art, music, and so forth. They are powerful when it occurs since it provides more than you are renowned for. And unlike what artists typically accomplish, this kind of creation cannot be helped by drugs. Many people use drugs as stimulants to lower their level of consciousness and enhance their mental abilities.



- Duration 45 to 90 min, depending on the number of participants

#### 4.6.6.3. Case study 5

##### **The story of Japanese watermelon**

This case study is an adaptation (fictional) of a narrative from Akramulla Syed.

It is not only the country that is small, in Japan space is a sacred thing and all efforts are made in order to save space, accommodate, and store goods. In a small village in the north of the main island of Japan, farmers used to cultivate a nice, round greenish, and reddish watermelon. But when selling their watermelon, grocery retailers were always complaining saying that in spite they were wonderful in taste and highly demanded to exportation they occupy a lot of space that retailers don't have. They are much smaller than shops in the USA and therefore don't have room to waste. Americans would ask for more watermelons that the retailers would have available to sell.

Year by year things were getting worst to a point that sales have halved. Big, spherical watermelons took up a lot of room and farmers were feeling that there was nothing that could be done: watermelons naturally grow round, and no action could be taken to change this. Farmers from the village – that were organised in a co-operative to communicate and negotiate with retailers – were about to inform them they would stop cultivating watermelons when one farmer stood and said: let's have some space to think about it. Maybe we are not posing the right questions, or to put it right, the right answer. In short, if the supermarkets want a square watermelon, how can we provide one? Everyone stood silent and little by little smiles started to appear in Japanese farmers faces. As crazy as it could be, well why not? So, they quickly put their minds to work to create a squared watermelon.

The growers did not assume it was impossible and instead asked how it could be done, which led to the answer to the round watermelon challenge. They discovered that if you grow watermelons in a square box when they are still young, the fruit will eventually grow and take on the shape of the box. The grocery stores were pleased, and shipping the watermelons was also made much simpler and less expensive as a result. Additionally, native consumers favoured them because they required less space in their refrigerators, which were smaller than those in the USA, and allowed the growers to demand a higher price.

#### 4.6.3. Quiz for Self-Assessment

### To be answered by participants at the end of the unit

**1) How do you relate visual and auditory processing?**

A: The ability to accurately link an auditory sound with a visual representation, or to merge our senses of sight and hearing, is known as auditory and visual integration. This skill relates to reading music, understanding phonics, and reading fluency.

**2) Is it correct to infer that people that struggle to follow directions, read a map or recalling what they've read are just lazy for this kind of tasks?**

A: Not really. In fact, they might experience problems with their visual processing skills since the symptoms mentioned are common problems when this brain function is not working properly.

**3) Can you distinguish short-term from working memory?**

A: Working memory is not the same as short-term memory. In fact, there is a contrast between both. The short-term memory serves as a temporary storage space and an anti-chamber for incoming sensory information. Whereas working memory is the system that modifies information temporarily stored in short-term memory and either discards it or speeds up its transfer to long-term memory.

**4) What is long-term memory?**

A: When the information to be learnt is no longer occupying the current train of thought, either because the immediate memory capacity was surpassed or because attention was diverted from the memoranda, it is referred to as long-term memory.

**5) Q5: What is logical thinking?**

A: Is the ability to reason, create ideas and solve problems in order to reach a solution.

**6) Can people improve their logical thinking skills? How?**

A: There are several techniques to enhance people's logical thinking. Some examples are playing card games, read/watch mystery crimes, and cultivate the habit to patterns.

**7) When creating a plan of action to address a problem which methods/strategy people may employ?**

A: Heuristics and algorithms

**8) How can you problem-solving?**

A: Finding the root causes of an issue and creating an action plan to address it are both aspects of problem-solving.

**9) What is creativity?**

A: Broadly speaking creativity can be defined as the application of innovative ideas to a particular area of human effort.

**10) What is cognitive creativity?**

A: Cognitive creativity is based on expertise. People with a high level of this type of creativity combine their abilities and strengths and extensive knowledge of a certain area to plan a strategy for achieving a goal.

#### 4.7. Block conclusion

Auditory and visual processing are intertwined in the sense that are both brain functions that contribute to the way we read and write. There are several tools available in the market that allows not only to test our skills but to improve them. The Test of Auditory and Visual Skills (TAVS), developed by the Alan Heath, BSC. (Hons.) Psych. for Advanced Brain Technologies is an example that is worth exploring.

The TAVS is a flexible screening tool designed to evaluate a number of essential visual and hearing abilities. It is commonly known that the higher-level development of phonological awareness, speech, reading, memory, and attention depends on these fundamental abilities. Many of the foundational sensory abilities required to learn to read, speak, listen, and concentrate are assessed by TAVS.

Working memory is without a doubt one of the most crucial mental processes that have a big influence on learning. Following is a set of strategies you can use during your training activities to improve trainees working memory and, as a result, make it easier for knowledge to go from short-term memory to long-term memory. Working memory has a finite capacity and endurance because it is a component of short-term memory. Because of this, when there is a lot of information coming in, working memory tries to keep only the important information and discard the rest to make way for new information. Based on this, consider the following approaches you can employ in your training activities to manage working memory's finite capacity:

##### 1. Simple goes First

Introduce new ideas, going from the simplest to the most complicated. Start with the simpler concepts first and work your way up to the more tough subject matter if you are working with material that may be more complex. By doing so, your audience may more easily give new knowledge meaning and transmit it to their long-term memory, setting the stage for their understanding of the more difficult parts of the content you're sharing. When a more difficult concept "comes" later, it might be connected to something that has already been mastered, which reduces the chances that it will be neglected.

##### 2. Less is more

Reduce the number of distractions. Keep the working memory clear of unnecessary clutter. Although working memory is a very useful tool, it is also very fragile. For instance, the working memory won't be able to function as effectively if you include a range of pointless pictures and images in your training course or write lengthy text blocks without clearly highlighting the main takeaways. The clutter and disorder on the page will instead divert it, preventing it from effectively processing the information. Make sure that every component of your content relates to the training objectives and goals when you are building it. Balance additional animations, audio, or video to reduce the amount of clutter.

### **3. Practice, practice, practice**

Reduce the number of distractions. Keep the working memory clear of unnecessary clutter. Although working memory is a very useful tool, it is also very fragile. For instance, the working memory won't be able to function as effectively if you include a range of pointless pictures and images in your training course or write lengthy text blocks without clearly highlighting the main takeaways. The clutter and disorder on the page will instead divert it, preventing it from effectively processing the information. Make sure that every component of your content relates to the training objectives and goals when you are building it. Balance additional animations, audio, or video to reduce the amount of clutter.

### **4. Chunking**

Information can only be stored for a brief period of time in working memory. Learners can only manage a certain quantity of new knowledge before experiencing cognitive overload since their brains can typically only keep roughly four to five pieces of new information at any given moment. Working memory capacity is dependent on the sort of information acquired, according to research. For instance, it has been demonstrated that we can recall more numbers than letters, shorter sentences than longer ones, etc. Chunking is a practical method for overcoming the working memory capacity problem. By grouping information into sections that include related concepts or ideas, you can make contents that are easier to understand rather than providing sparse topics. By doing this, the full collection of ideas takes up just one space in working memory as opposed to taking up several locations. This increases the amount of information that can be processed by the working memory while also increasing the amount of information that can be stored permanently in the long-term memory.

### **5. Relevant and digestible**

Present facts in ways that are meaningful and understandable. It is a good idea to break the contents into manageable chunks because this helps the participants working memory to digest the information. This is because shorter words are easier for our thoughts to recall than lengthier statements. Give your audience the chance to pause frequently so they can thoroughly digest the information they have learned by developing discrete learning units with a learning aim or target. Instead of using longer sentences that the working memory may skip over, bullet points are an efficient approach to express key concepts in learning content.

### **6. Go for the long run**

Incorporate assignments that stir up long-term memory schemata. Long-term memory has an unlimited capacity, in contrast to working memory, which has a finite capacity. Working memory aims to access information stored in our long-term memory schemata, which are extremely sophisticated structures that aid us in reducing cognitive overload, to recall



background knowledge we already possess on a given issue. Any effort to connect the newly acquired knowledge in short-term memory to our pre-existing cognitive schemata is helpful for learning because it improves the working memory's capacity to transfer the knowledge to long-term memory as well, either by supplementing an existing schema with new information or by modifying an existing schema in light of the new information. The first step is referred to as association, while the second is referred to as accommodation. In terms of learning, when you include activities that encourage the participants to access their long-term memory banks, like scenarios or simulations that feature previously learned concepts, you significantly increase knowledge retention.

These are few suggestions that you can incorporate as a good practice in your work as professional facilitator to assist you in developing efficient contents that maximise working memory functions without taxing the cognitive capacities of your participants.

Every effective problem solver needs to have a certain set of basic skills. Depending on the industry, different individuals may occasionally require technical abilities. For this reason, it's important to continue learning new things. The most significant abilities to use while approaching a problem-solving process are creativity, logical thinking skills, teamwork, decision making, emotional intelligence, time awareness, research skills, and communication skills. For instance, it takes creativity and unconventional thinking to come up with fresh solutions to persistent issues when trying to solve a problem. Every person who solves problems should be creative because certain problems might be challenging and require logical thinking to resolve. You must swiftly come up with solutions and provide useful comments using the best strategy. The common sense gained from prior problem-solving experiences is the basis for creativity. You can come up with a quick fix because of this. You can learn more about this on Skill 5: cognitive creativity. Tips for who wants to improve problem-solving skills include:

#### **1. Listen carefully and be an active listener**

Great listeners are excellent problem solvers. You must carefully consider a variety of information and opinions when solving problems. It's critical that everyone taking part in the process feels heard.

#### **2. And the problem is...**

Clearly state the issue. A vague problem that you didn't take the time to articulate clearly is difficult to tackle, and there are typically a number of linked issues that can be resolved simultaneously. If you notice yourself becoming overwhelmed or side-tracked during the problem-solving process return to step one and confirm that you are approaching a single problem.

#### **3. Work collaboratively and agree on the process**

Decide on a procedure. It's crucial to establish some fundamental ground rules and procedures before you begin problem-solving as a team if you're doing so. This will speed up the procedure and assist you in averting future disagreements.

#### **4. The solution comes first**

Concentrate on the answer. It's simple to become overly preoccupied with the factors that led to the issue. You can have a more optimistic view and become more open to novel

solutions by turning your attention from the current issue to potential outcomes and solutions.

As stated above, creativity is a multifaceted skill that can be used in the performing arts, science, commercial enterprise, corporate innovation, and wherever it occurs to your imagination. People must use creativity to successfully complete their tasks. This demonstrates that creativity is not reserved for those who are naturally skilled in the arts. To demonstrate the distinction, individuals might use creativity in their line of work. That is to say, you won't stand out from the crowd if you carry out your tasks in a conventional manner. Before you can fully express your creativity, you must understand the kind of creativity that works best for you. Employers today seek out imaginative candidates. It is crucial to comprehend the concept of creativity, its varieties, and the psychology underlying it.

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## Appendix

The chapter will include:

- Competence scanning tool, including
  - Assessment of the professional background of a participant,
  - Assessment of the Digital skills of the participant,
  - Assessment of the soft skills of the participant
- Expectations checklist
- Observations checklist
- Guideline on how to conduct the assessments.

## 1) Competence scanning

This chapter presents the competence scanning system that the trainers will conduct with the target group before proceeding to the training and/or action phase in order to identify the participants' strengths and weaknesses so as to provide each participant with a training program tailored to her needs and to plan a career path that is practical, realistic, and takes into account the participant's professional and educational background.

In order to produce a personalized and customized Training kit, covering the needs, requirements as well as the expectations and the potential of the target group, a questionnaire will be conducted among the end-users - the qualified migrant women, to identify how to best form, arrange and implement the course.

### 1.1. Assessment of the professional background of a participant

Having sufficient levels of basic skills (literacy, numeracy, science and technology) is essential for easy access to the labour market and for retaining employment in high quality and stable jobs. As our target group are qualified women with migration and/or ethnic minority background, it is vital to identify where they stand in their career planning and development ladder so as to provide them a personalized programme. For that purpose, the questionnaire below will enable the professionals working with the target group to get acquainted with the participants and thereby shape their course.



## Educational background

1. For how many years did you visit school?

- Primary school
- Secondary school

2. Did you complete secondary school? (If Yes continue to Q.3)

Yes  No

3. Did you attend university after completing school? (If Yes continue to Q.4, If No continue with Q.6)

Yes  No

4. What did you study at University?

5. Did you graduate from University?

Yes

No

6. Did you do any vocational training? (If Yes continue to Q.7, if No continue to Q.8)

Yes

No

7. What was the profession you did your vocational training on?

8. Have you attended any further educations program? (If Yes continue to Q.9, if No continue to Q.10)

Yes

No

9. Please explain the type of further education program you have done and its outcome.

10. Do you have certificates (school diploma, university degree, vocational training certificate)? (If Yes continue to Q.12, if No continue to Q.13)

Yes

No

11. Are the certificates translated into German/Bulgarian/Portuguese? (If Yes continue to Q.13, if No continue to Q.14)

Yes

No

12. Are the certificates recognized?

Yes

No



## Professional experience

1. Do you have any work experience in your home country? (If Yes continue to Q.2)

Yes

No

2. In which profession did you collect work experience?

3. How many years have you worked?

4. Have you worked in Germany/Austria/Bulgaria/Portugal?

Yes

No

5. In which Profession?

6. For how long?





## Language Skills

1. Did you do a German language training?

Yes

No

2. For how long?

3. Which language level have you reached?

4. Do you have a certificate?

Yes

No

5. Did you do an informal language course? E.g. a language course organized by volunteers, an online language course etc...

Yes

No

6. To what official language level do you rate your language skills?



## Computer/Digital skills

1. Have you done a computer training?

Yes

No

2. How long?

3. Do you have a Certificate?

Yes

No

4. can you operate a smartphone?

Yes

No

5. can you operate a laptop/computer?

Yes

No

6. Are you able to compose, type, edit, and print text documents on a laptop/computer?

Yes

No

7. Are you able to create, write, edit, and print Excel documents on a laptop/computer?

Yes

No

8. Are you able to effectively send and receive email?

Yes

No

9. Are you able to create, edit, and publish videos online?

Yes

No

10. Are you knowledgeable in graphics programs?

Yes

No

11. Are you able to search, filter, and utilize information online?

Yes

No

12. Are you able to detect any potential cyber threats and protect your information while using the Internet?

Yes

No

## 1.2. Assessment of the Digital skills of the participant

In almost every job, employees should have at least basic familiarity of how to use a computer. Experience with word processing and spreadsheet programs, such as Microsoft Word and Excel, can enhance the chance of getting a job. Employers in certain fields, e.g. in offices, expect employees to have these skills as they enable completing certain tasks such as preparing reports, creating spreadsheets, writing letters, etc. Additionally, employees should also be able to search for information, write emails, and even use social media.


In line with this, the following tasks seek to showcase and improve the digital skills of the participants, the level of the intensity being dependent on their initial knowledge and skills

 **Task**


- Create a CV/Resume and a short cover letter
- Search for a vacancy announcement online and filter out the relevant results.

 **Materials needed**

- A computer/ Laptop
- Pen and paper

 **How to conduct the tasks**

- Note down what you would like to write down on your CV and cover letter
- Start writing
- Write down key search words
- Start searching online

 You have 45 minutes to complete this task.  
If there is anything unclear ask for an explanation.

### 1.3. Assessment of the soft skills of the participant

Soft skills can make the difference in the work search. In a 2015 survey by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, 91% of businesses and nonprofit leaders stated that critical thinking, problem-solving and strong communications skills are important for a successful career (Angela Copeland, [7 Essential Skills for Today's Job Market | Jobs | LiveCareer](#)). By the following the trainers can evaluate but on the other hand also improve the participants' soft skills.



#### Task

- Carving out small sculptures out of soapstone.





## Materials Needed

- Rasp/grater
- 100 grit wet/dry sandpaper
- 320 grit wet/dry sandpaper
- 600 grit wet/dry sandpaper
- Oil and water
- Pencil



## How to conduct the task

- Decide what figure you are going to carve out.
- Outline the image on the stone using a pencil.
- Sand the stone to remove cutting and filing marks.
- Use medium-grain sandpaper to start, then switch to finer paper after you have removed the largest marks to refine the stone's overall texture.
- Rinse the stone with water to remove dust from sanding. Let the stone dry completely before polishing.
- Apply oil or furniture polish to a polishing cloth. Use just a few drops of oil at a time.
- Rub the stone with oil.
- Buff the polished soapstone. Rub the stone with a dry, clean rag to even out the distribution of polishing oil and to remove any excess.



You have 1,5 hours to complete this task.  
If there is anything unclear ask for an explanation.

## 2) Expectations Checklist

While the Competence Scanning Tool enables the trainers to identify the knowledge, competences and skills of the participants, the Expectations Checklist helps the participants to express their prospects, outlooks and opinions. Moreover, it is complementary to Competence Scanning Tool, as it can facilitate the trainers to see the participants' knowledge gaps and field of interests.

To be answered by participants at the beginning of the training

### 1. What are the major areas you would like to work on during the training?

- Improving German language skills
- Improving personal skills e.g. adaptability, self-reflection, decision-making ability, ability to move within structures etc.
- Improving social and communication skills e.g. cooperation, verbal and non-verbal communication, intercultural skills, conflict management etc.
- Improving Methodical skills e.g. Planning and organizational skills, time and self-management, handling of various medias, problem solving skills etc.

### 2. What are the outcomes you are expecting at the end of the training?

- Finding resources regarding child care
- Getting informed on the workings of government offices and the different relevant processes e.g. Job center, employment agency, school system
- Getting informed and finding resources in regards to recognition of certificates obtained in other countries.
- Acquiring internship opportunities
- Find ways/ institutions to continue studies/ Vocational training
- Get connected to potential employers

### 3. Additional comments

### 3) Observations checklist

Based on the Competence Scanning Tool and the Expectations Checklist, the trainers are enabled to make a profile of each of the participant in the Observation Checklist, through 2 Tables summarizing the latter's' hard and soft skills. This section should be filled in by the trainers who provide a general evaluation summarizing key strengths and weaknesses of the profile created and make conclusions what the participants should do learn/obtain.

**Table 1. Hard skills/ Professional background**

Tasks	Competence category	Skills to be observed	Yes	No	Comments
Educational background	Hard Skills	Primary school			
		Secondary school			
		University			
		Vocational training			
		Further education program			
		Certificates			
		Translation			
		Recognition of certificates			
Professional experience	Hard Skills	Work experience			
		Work experience in country of origin			
		Work experience in country of residence			
Language skills	Hard Skills	Language training			
		Certificate			
		A1			
		A2			



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		B1			
		B2			
		C1			
		Unofficial language course			





Table 2. Soft skills

Tasks	Competence category	Skills to be observed	Observation Criteria					Comments
Carving out soap stones, digital/ computer skills scan, Initial Biographical interview	Personal skills	Punctuality and reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is on time in the morning</li> </ul>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is punctual after breaks</li> </ul>					
		Willingness to perform	Is willing to undertake the assigned task					
		Diligence	Is devoted to accomplish a good result					
		Adaptability	Has the ability to adjust to changes in their environment					
		Personal responsibility	Has a high level of commitment to complete the tasks					
		Decision-making ability	Has ability to select the best alternatives to reach the best outcome in the shortest time					
		Self-reflection	Has the ability to reflect, assess herself and her ways of working					
		Flexibility	Has the capacity to adjust to short-term change and deal with unexpected problems effectively					
		Ability to take initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can do things without being told</li> </ul>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can find out what she needs to know in order to undertake a task</li> </ul>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>spot and take advantage of opportunities</li> </ul>					



		Willingness to learn	Has the desire to gain knowledge and develop skills to improve performance					
Carving out soap stones, digital/ computer skills scan, Initial Biographical interview	Social and Communication skills	Empathy	Has the ability to perceive and relate to the thoughts, emotions, or experiences of others					
		Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can work together with others to achieve common goals</li> </ul>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers help to others</li> </ul>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepts help from others</li> </ul>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is open to ideas from others</li> </ul>					
		Verbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is able to communicate her ideas in a clear, relevant, concise, and informative way</li> </ul>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can maintain a positive tone while talking with others</li> </ul>					
		Non-verbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can transfer information through body language, facial expressions, gestures, created space and more</li> </ul>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can convey friendliness, acceptance and openness</li> </ul>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens actively</li> </ul>					
		Intercultural skills	Has the ability to understand different cultural contexts and viewpoints					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a positive outlook</li> </ul>					
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is level headed</li> </ul>					



		Conflict management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is open to discussion</li> <li>• Can listen actively and communicate her thoughts effectively</li> </ul>					
		Ability to take criticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accept constructive criticisms as a means of improvement</li> <li>• Does not take a defensive stance</li> <li>• Does not take criticisms too hard and personal</li> <li>• can reflect and uses the criticism to improve results and reduce probability of errors</li> </ul>					
		Tolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows respect and kindness to others</li> <li>• Avoid stereotypes and respect individuality</li> <li>• Sensitively choses the language she uses in communicating with others</li> <li>• Focuses on commonalities rather than differences</li> </ul>					
Carving out soap stones, digital/ computer skills scan, Initial Biographical interview	Methodical skills	Planning and organizational skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the ability to plan work steps ahead of undertaking a task</li> <li>• Can keep her work space organized</li> <li>• Can properly manage time given to accomplish the task</li> <li>• Can establish priorities</li> <li>• Can set up goals</li> <li>• Can think analytically</li> </ul>					

		Media literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Has the ability to access and analyze various media messages</li> <li>● Is competent, critical and literate in various media forms and can make informed judgments</li> <li>● Is able to filter out necessary information online</li> <li>● Is able to detect harmful content</li> <li>● Can Recognizing Bias and fake news and is able to evaluate sources</li> </ul>					
		Problem solving skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can determine why an issue is happening</li> <li>● Can come up with ways to solve issues</li> <li>● Can implement set solutions</li> <li>● Can evaluate effectiveness of the solutions</li> </ul>					
		Logical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can analyze a situation based on structure and facts</li> <li>● Can think critically, processes data and implement reasonable actions</li> </ul>					

#### 4) Training guidelines

Training guidelines enables the trainer to determine the training blocks that the participants of the training go through based on the competence scan to ensure that the participants attend the training blocks that are relevant to them. Additionally, the expectation sheet completed by the participants are be considered to ensure that the participants' wishes are taken into account.

The trainers choose the most appropriate models and approaches to teach based on the state of the art report, the competence scanning of the participants, expectations checklist and the appropriate observations.

Learning outcomes:

Knowledge	Skills	Competences