# WP2 – BEST PRACTICE REPORT

## EmpowerHer: Enhancing Refugee Women's Skills for the Hospitality Sector

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. The EmpowerHer Erasmus+ Project

The global refugee crisis, driven by conflicts, persecution and socio-economic instability, has resulted in displacement of millions of individuals. Among these, women often face the harshest realities. In many societies, they are marginalized in different ways, e.g. because of their refugee status and/or due to their gender.

EmpowerHer aims to transform refugee women from a “vulnerable group” into a “vital and valued workforce” by offering targeted training, language support and mentorship and effectively bridging the employment gap in host countries, particularly in the hospitality sector.

Together with our EmpowerHer project partners from Germany, Greece and Spain, we develop, test and implement the following: Training Toolkit for Professionals, Profession-Specific Language Training Curriculum”, Peer-to-Peer Learning and Mentorship Model.

## 1.2. The importance of empowering refugee women bridging the employment gap in host countries in the European Union

Empowering refugee women is essential for bridging the employment gap in host countries across the European Union. These women often face unique challenges, including language barriers, cultural differences, and the psychological impacts of displacement and trauma. By providing targeted vocational training and support, we can help them overcome these obstacles and integrate successfully into the labour market.

Vocational education and training (VET) tailored to the specific needs of refugee women can enhance their employability by equipping them with the necessary skills for the hospitality sector, such as digital literacy, interpersonal communication, and vocational competencies. These efforts not only improve their prospects for economic independence but also contribute to the broader social and economic fabric of host countries.

Furthermore, empowering refugee women helps address labour shortages in various sectors, including hospitality, where there is often a high demand for skilled workers. By integrating these women into the workforce, host countries benefit from a more diverse and inclusive labour market, fostering social cohesion and mutual understanding.

Ultimately, the success of refugee women in the workforce represents a critical step towards achieving social equity and economic stability in the European Union, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background, have the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to society.



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## 1.3. Overview of the best practice report and its purpose

The Best Practice Report aims to collate and showcase exemplary practices from the EmpowerHer project partners, which can be applied to empower refugee women in vocational-educational training programs within the European Union. This report serves as a comprehensive resource that identifies and documents effective strategies, innovative approaches, and successful initiatives that have been proven to work in similar contexts.

The purpose of this report is to provide a repository of best practices that vocational-educational trainers and organizations can utilize to enhance their training programs. By sharing these practices, we aim to foster a collaborative environment where knowledge and experiences are exchanged to improve the quality of vocational training for refugee women. This, in turn, will help bridge the employment gap and promote social inclusion in host countries.

The report includes detailed descriptions of each best practice, outlining the specific objectives, methodologies, outcomes, and lessons learned. Additionally, it highlights the impact of these practices on the participants and provides practical recommendations for implementation. By adopting these best practices, trainers can better address the unique challenges faced by refugee women, such as language barriers, cultural differences, and the need for digital and vocational skill development.

Ultimately, this Best Practice Report aims to support the goals of the EmpowerHer project by equipping trainers with the tools and knowledge necessary to deliver effective and inclusive training programs, thereby empowering refugee women to succeed in the hospitality sector and beyond.



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# 2. Description of Best Practices

## 2.1. Magdas Hotel - Refugee Integration through Hospitality Training provided by BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining GmbH

### 2.1.1. Project or program data

Implemented in Austria, Vienna

**Project/program owner:** Caritas of the Archdiocese of Vienna

**Partners**: Tourism professionals, designers, art students, NGOs, and other community organizations

### 2.1.2. Description of the program/project

#### 2.1.2.1. Goal of the project

The goal of Magdas Hotel is to address the **labour market integration challenges** faced by refugees in Austria. Refugees often **lack the necessary certifications and experience** to continue their previous professions, leading to poverty and social isolation. The hotel aims to provide **on-the-job training in the hospitality sector**, helping refugees gain essential skills and employment.

#### 2.1.2.2. Target group(s): which people/groups of people has the project reached?

The project targets refugees entitled to asylum or subsidiary protection, particularly those with **limited access** to the labour market. The hotel employs around **20 refugees** from over a dozen different countries, alongside 10 tourism professionals.

#### 2.1.2.3. What are the special and/or innovative factors/elements/components in this project?

Magdas Hotel is unique in that it operates as a social business, combining economic tools with social goals. The hotel provides **on-the-job training in various hospitality roles, such as housekeeping, kitchen assistance, reception, and bar service**.

Refugee staff **work alongside tourism professionals**, **receiving hands-on training and mentorship**. The hotel also promotes **inclusivity and cultural exchange** by bringing together people from different international, social, and cultural backgrounds.

#### 2.1.2.4. What are the results of the project/program? It is a report available of the project/program?

The hotel has achieved high **occupancy rates (about 70%)** and has successfully **transitioned refugee staff to professional roles**. Many refugee staff members have moved on to work in



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other hotels or become trainers for new staff. The project has also raised awareness about the potential of refugees to contribute to society and the economy.

### 2.1.3. Relevance for our project

#### 2.1.3.1. Why are these innovations or specialities important for us?

The innovative approach of Magdas Hotel in providing **on-the-job training** and promoting **cultural exchange** is highly relevant to EmpowerHer's goals. It addresses the **unique needs and challenges faced by refugee women**, particularly in the hospitality sector, by providing them with **essential skills, language abilities, and community support**.

#### 2.1.3.2. What can serve as a model for us, as an initiative to follow?

The model of integrating refugees into the hospitality sector through **on-the-job training and mentorship** can serve as a valuable example for EmpowerHer. The focus on inclusivity, cultural exchange, and professional development is particularly inspiring.

#### 2.1.3.3. What could we adapt from these projects? What are the consequences for our project?

EmpowerHer can adapt - apart from the fact that there is no possibility to open an own business for partners - the **on-the-job training model** and to find to possibility of this, the **emphasis on cultural exchange**, and the **use of mentorship programs** to support refugee women in gaining essential skills and employment.
This approach can lead to improved employability, integration, and mental wellbeing for refugee women in the hospitality sector.

**Recourses:**
https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/integration-practice/magdas-hotel-refugee-integration-through-hospitality-training_en
https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/integration-practice/magdas-hotel-refugee-integration-through-hospitality-training_de
https://integrationpractices.eu/data/practice/magdas-hotel/
https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/integration-practice/magdas-hotel-refugee-integration-through-hospitality-training_de
https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000017118026/ein-mutmachprojekt-ein-hotel-betrieben-von-asylberechtigten
https://brf.be/international/1504510/
https://changemakerhotels.com/interview/magdas-gabriela-sonnleitner



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## 2.2. Safe Space to Learn: Digital Literacy and Inclusion for Women and Girls in Humanitarian Settings – provided by BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining GmbH

### 2.2.1. Project or program data

Implemented in Yemen (Abyan governorate) and other humanitarian settings

**Project/program owner and partners**: International Rescue Committee (IRC) undid by Fujitsu

### 2.2.2. Description of the program/project

#### 2.2.2.1. Goal of the project

The project aims to bridge the digital gender gap in humanitarian settings by providing digital literacy training to women and girls, ensuring they can safely and effectively use digital tools. By focusing on these key areas, the program aims to **equip participants with the necessary skills to thrive in the digital world, ultimately enhancing their integration and empowerment.** Provide practical skills for employment in various sectors and improved digital skills, increased confidence in using technology, and better access to job opportunities.

#### 2.2.2.2. Target group(s): which people/groups of people has the project reached?

The project targets **women and girls in humanitarian settings**, particularly those who face barriers to accessing technology.

#### 2.2.2.3. What are the special and/or innovative factors/elements/components in this project?

The project focus on safety and gender sensitivity ensures that participants can navigate digital spaces confidently and securely.

It is designed not only to teach essential digital skills but also to empower women by addressing the specific challenges they face in the digital world.

It includes **modules on digital accounts, apps, online safety, social media, and digital employment skills**. Skills for digital job searching, online applications, virtual interviews, and accessing online educational resources. Mock interviews and resume-building workshops tailored to digital job markets. Integration of VR technology for realistic job interview practice and workplace scenarios.



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#### 2.2.2.4. What are the results of the project/program? It is a report available of the project/program?

The project has successfully enhanced participants' digital skills, including online navigation, secure account management, and proactive online safety strategies.

- **Strategies for Enhancing Digital Skills**
  The curriculum covers a **wide range of digital literacy topics, including online navigation, secure account management, and proactive online safety strategies**.
  Interactive and hands-on training sessions ensure participants can practice and apply what they learn **in real-world scenarios**.

- **Safe Learning Environment**
  The program is implemented in Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS), which are physical spaces where women and girls can learn without fear of harassment or harm.
  These safe spaces provide a **supportive environment for learning and foster mutual support** among participants.

- **Focus on Online Safety**
  Training on recognizing and avoiding online scams, maintaining privacy, and managing online harassment.
  Role-playing scenarios and practical exercises help participants develop **proactive online safety strategies**.

- **Use of Technology**
  Practical sessions on using digital tools and apps for communication, productivity, and job searching. **Hands-on practice with mobile devices and other digital tools** ensures participants gain confidence in using technology.

Participants reported an increase in their digital self-efficacy, evidenced by heightened confidence in online engagement. They described feeling empowered and in control of their online experiences, citing their ability to navigate the internet with assurance and manage potential online challenges effectively.

### 2.2.3. Relevance for our project

#### 2.2.3.1. Why are these innovations or specialities important for us?

These innovations are crucial for empowering refugee women in the hospitality sector by providing them with essential digital skills for employment and integration.

The curriculum's focus on **safety and gender sensitivity** ensures that participants can navigate digital spaces confidently and securely, addressing unique barriers such as social disapproval and online harassment.



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#### 2.2.3.2. What can serve as a model for us, as an initiative to follow?

The integrated approach of **combining digital literacy with safety and gender sensitivity** can serve as a model for our project. The innovative **use of VR technology** and **gender-sensitive approaches** has further enhanced the effectiveness of the training. The use of mock interviews and resume-building workshops has also proven effective in **preparing participants for real-world job scenarios**.

#### 2.2.3.3. What could we adapt from these projects? What are the consequences for our project?

We could adapt the curriculum modules and the gender-sensitive approach to our training programs, enhancing the support provided to refugee women in the hospitality sector.

- **Increased participant engagement and retention**
  The integration of interactive and immersive training methods, such as **VR technology and hands-on practice**, will increase participant engagement and retention. This approach will make learning more enjoyable and impactful.

- **Improved employment outcomes**
  With a **comprehensive and tailored training program**, participants will be better prepared for the labour market. Enhanced digital skills, practical experience, and confidence will lead to higher employment rates and positive feedback from employers.

- **Supportive learning environment**
  Creating a **safe and gender-sensitive learning environment** will ensure that refugee women feel supported and empowered throughout their training journey. This supportive atmosphere will encourage active participation and continuous learning.

**Resources:**

https://www.rescue.org/

https://rescue.app.box.com/s/owqe7wpnfzchud59z6trfanqjc18j5uw/file/942240876353

https://www.unhcr.org/gr/en/57033-more-opportunities-for-refugee-women-refugee-women-academy-announces-new-training-initiatives-in-2024.html



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## 2.3. Proyecto COSMI Vallecas 2023 - provided by Asociación Egeria Desarrollo Social (EGERIA)

### 2.3.1. Project or program data

Implemented in Madrid, Spain

Project owner: Mujeres en Igualdad

### 2.3.2. Description of the program/project

#### 2.3.2.1. Goal of the project (why was it planned and implemented)

- Offer personalized itineraries to support job search and career guidance.
- Train and educate participating women, improving their employability, whether self-employed or employed.
- Promote the creation of a support and intermediation network that promotes their professional and personal development.
- Train in digital tools and ICT.
- Actively accompany and advise in the job search process and mediate with companies and labour organizations, as well as in the beginning of a business activity or job retraining process.
- Track the job search process.
- Provide women, during the duration of the courses or face-to-face training, with the possibility of conciliation, through the establishment of a play library service for children under 3 years of age in our centre in Vallecas.

#### 2.3.2.2. Target group(s): which people/groups of people has the project reached?

Women with less opportunities living in Madrid in Vallecas neighbourhood.

#### 2.3.2.3. What are the special and/or innovative factors/elements/components in this project?

They give a complete service which include job searching counselling, training in different areas as soft skills or migration law bureaucracy giving and job intermediation, also they provide caring service for children in the meantime their mothers are busy.

#### 2.3.2.4. What are the results of the project/program? It is a report available of the project/program?

Women receive a complete training, advise and support, they get involved in a community and feel the support of the organization and other women creating a women network to



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empower their self together. They become more prepare to get a job rising their employability but also they learn how to face their daily life in Madrid.

### 2.3.3. Relevance for our project

#### 2.3.3.1. Why are these innovations or specialities important for us?

It is an inspiring project that give a complete service to women merging social inclusion, employability and community building. It merges several services together.

#### 2.3.3.2. What can serve as a model for us, as an initiative to follow?

The model of creating a complete program for women, including soft skills, self-confidence professional training, job searching and empowerment it is an inspiration for our project to take as example of how to combine several goals.

#### 2.3.3.3. What could we adapt from these projects? What are the consequences for our project?

The initiative of creating a space for the children it is a good inspiration for our project as we are planning to work also with women, this idea might help us also in our training sessions with refugees women as most of them they will not have any support network to take care of their children.

Website:

https://www.mujeresenigualdad.com/PROYECTO-COSMI-VALLEKAS-2023_es_351.html



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## 2.4. Mundo de sabores – Social insertion catering service - provided by Asociación Egeria Desarrollo Social (EGERIA)

### 2.4.1. Project or program datas

Implemented in Málaga, Spain

IncluDD

### 2.4.2. Description of the program/project

#### 2.4.2.1. Goal of the project (why was it planned and implemented)

The goal of Mundo de Sabores is to fulfil the need of quality job opportunities of migrant women in Málaga. The majority of most migrant women in Málaga they are from Morrocco or South America and mainly they just get jobs offers as domestic care in a very precarious condition. “Mundo de sabores” created a business to empower them with the cooking skills they already have giving them catering training and job opportunities.

#### 2.4.2.2. Target group(s): which people/groups of people has the project reached?

“Mundo de sabores” give employment to migrant women

#### 2.4.2.3. What are the special and/or innovative factors/elements/components in this project?

“Mundo de sabores” is a social insertion enterprise so it based on a social business and social inclusion.

#### 2.4.2.4. What are the results of the project/program? It is a report available of the project/program?

“Mundo de sabores” in the last year have served 10 caterings and have 5 employees.



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### 2.4.3. Relevance for our project

#### 2.4.3.1. Why are these innovations or specialities important for us?

They have created a multicultural catering where each women prepare dishes from the countries. They feel empowered as they use the skills, they already have to participate in this business project.

#### 2.4.3.2. What can serve as a model for us, as an initiative to follow?

Especially the idea of the only women business, they created a space for women empowerment, mutual support, confidence and mentorship. It is inspiring how a group of women just with home cooking skills created a social business with a cultural exchange. Each of them from a part of the world contribute with the flavours of their country for a cultural exchange creating a multicultural catering.

#### 2.4.3.3. What could we adapt from these projects? What are the consequences for our project?

The creation of a mutual support space for women as the base to grow confidence and empowerment. A group of women can create a space of work, cooperation and contribution, putting each of them their knowledge, skills and soul and can creating a business and a way of living.

Website:

https://includd.eu/mundo-de-sabores/



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## 2.5. Linguacuisine Project – provided by Ekpedeftiki Paremvasi KDVM S.A. (EkPa)

### 2.5.1. Project or program data

United Kingdom, Greece, Italy

Project/Program Owner and Partners: Newcastle University (UK), Action Foundation (UK), Hellenic Open University (Greece), Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia (Italy), and the Workers' Educational Association (UK)

### 2.5.2. Description of the program/project

#### 2.5.2.1. Goal of the project

The Linguacuisine project aims to promote equality of access to learning through digital literacy, language skills, and cultural exchange. It focuses on co-designing apps and social recipes to create a sustainable community of practice, addressing the needs of digitally marginalized groups, including migrants and refugees, and fostering social inclusion.

#### 2.5.2.2. Target Group(s)

The project primarily engages digitally marginalized individuals, including refugees and migrants, who lack access to digital tools and skills. It also targets those interested in learning languages, cuisines, and cultures across the EU.

#### 2.5.2.3. Special and/or Innovative Factors/Elements/Components

The project's innovation lies in its co-designed, user-generated content model that involves participants in creating multilingual, multimedia apps for language and cultural learning. Participants can produce "social recipes" using an authoring tool, blending digital literacy with language acquisition. The app provides interactive, step-by-step cooking guides in six EU languages, with multimedia features like audio, video, and photos, accessible through smartphones and tablets.

#### 2.5.2.4. Results of the Project/Program

The project successfully developed an accessible, free-to-download app and authoring tool for creating multimedia social recipes, which facilitated language and digital literacy learning. It engaged 40 marginalized participants, who gained transferable skills, and built a community of practice in six EU languages. Reports detailing the outcomes and methods are available, showcasing its broad adoption and sustainability.



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### 2.5.3. Relevance for Our Project

#### 2.5.3.1. Why Are These Innovations or Specialities Important for Us?

The Linguacuisine project demonstrates a practical and inclusive approach to language and cultural learning, addressing the needs of diverse communities through co-designed digital solutions. Its blend of interactive tools and community-driven content creation offers a valuable model for fostering integration and skill-building among underrepresented groups.

#### 2.5.3.2. What Can Serve as a Model for Us, as an Initiative to Follow?

The co-design approach and the use of an authoring tool to create user-generated multimedia content offer excellent examples to learn from and implement. This method actively involves participants in the creation process, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement. By combining digital skills with cultural learning, it creates a well-rounded educational experience that is both interactive and meaningful. Additionally, building an online community where participants can share their creations and learn from one another enhances collaboration and inclusion. These elements provide a strong framework for promoting not only skill development but also social integration and a sense of belonging among diverse groups.

#### 2.5.3.3. What Could We Adapt from These Projects? What Are the Consequences for Our Project?

Incorporating multimedia apps for learning, alongside participant-driven content creation, can significantly enhance our project by making it more interactive, inclusive, and engaging. This approach allows participants to take an active role in creating content, which not only fosters a sense of ownership but also encourages cultural exchange and personal investment in the learning process. Focusing on marginalized groups aligns closely with our mission to promote equality and inclusion, while the use of an authoring tool empowers individuals to contribute their unique perspectives and skills. By adopting these elements, we can strengthen the impact of our project, particularly in building digital competencies, encouraging active participation, and fostering a stronger sense of community among diverse groups.

Website: https://linguacuisine.com/



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## 2.6. Greek language lessons and elements of Greek history and culture for adult migrants and beneficiaries of international protection – provided by Ekpedeftiki Paremvasi KDVM S.A. (EkPa)

### 2.6.1. Project or program data

Thessaloniki, Greece

Project owner: Integration Center for Migrants of the Municipality of Thessaloniki
Project partner: Ekpedeftiki Paremvasi KDVM S.A.

### 2.6.2. Description of the program/project

#### 2.6.2.1. Goal of the project

The program includes assessing participants' Greek language proficiency, delivering lessons, and providing certification upon successful completion of the course. Its main goal is to equip refugees and migrants with Greek language skills and certification to facilitate their smooth integration into Greek society.

#### 2.6.2.2. Target group(s): which people/groups of people has the project reached?

The project primarily targets adult migrants and refugees residing in Thessaloniki, including beneficiaries of international protection

#### 2.6.2.3. What are the special and/or innovative factors/elements/components in this project?

The project incorporates several innovative and special elements:

- Blended Learning: Combines traditional in-person lessons with digital tools to create a more flexible and engaging learning experience tailored to diverse needs.
- Group Empowerment: Focuses on fostering a sense of community and mutual support among participants, enabling them to learn collaboratively while building confidence and social connections.
- Cultural Visits: Organizes visits to historical and cultural sites to provide participants with practical exposure to Greek history and culture, enriching their understanding and facilitating cultural integration.



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#### 2.6.2.4. What are the results of the project/program? It is a report available of the project/program?

- Language Proficiency and Certification: 60 participants successfully completed Greek language courses and obtained certifications after passing the required assessments.
- Enhanced Integration: The program improved the cultural and social integration of migrants and refugees into Greek society by equipping them with language skills and knowledge of Greek history and culture.
- Community Engagement: Strengthened connections between participants and the local community through cultural activities and group empowerment initiatives.
- Increased Employability: Language certification and cultural competency enhanced participants' prospects for accessing the labor market.

The final report of the project was submitted to the Municipality of Thessaloniki and included evaluation from participants and trainers.

### 2.6.3. Relevance for our project

#### 2.6.3.1. Why are these innovations or specialities important for us?

- Blended Learning: This flexible approach combines online and in-person learning, allowing for tailored instruction that meets the diverse needs and schedules of participants. This methodology can be a model for effective adult education in multicultural contexts.
- Group Empowerment: By fostering collaboration and peer support, the program promotes confidence, social cohesion, and a sense of belonging among participants. This is essential for smoother integration into the community and workplace.

#### 2.6.3.2. What can serve as a model for us, as an initiative to follow?

- The project's blended learning model, combining online and in-person instruction, can serve as a framework for implementing flexible, scalable, and accessible educational programs.
- The emphasis on diagnosing language proficiency levels before instruction ensures that learners receive targeted, effective support tailored to their needs.
- Promoting group-based learning and empowerment strengthens social networks, builds confidence, and cultivates an inclusive environment where individuals feel supported during their integration journey.
- Offering certification upon completion not only motivates participants but also equips them with tangible proof of their skills, boosting employability and integration into the labor market.



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#### 2.6.3.3. What could we adapt from these projects? What are the consequences for our project?

- Experiential learning could be adapted by using VR technology to offer immersive cultural experiences. Virtual reality can bring participants closer to Greek history, culture, and societal norms, which would enhance their language learning and integration experience, particularly for those unable to participate in physical cultural visits.
- Implementing group-based empowerment activities, such as group discussions or collaborative learning projects, can help foster social cohesion and a sense of belonging among participants. This can also help build stronger community ties and create support networks.
- Certification upon successful completion of language courses and other educational activities would be a great tool for increasing motivation. This also offers participants a tangible credential that could assist them in finding work and gaining further educational opportunities.

Project website:



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## 2.7. Perspektive Zukunft (Perspective Future) – provided by QBS Gewerkstatt GmbH

### 2.7.1. Project or program data

Germany

Project/program owner and partners: QBS Gewerkstatt in collaboration with Federal Employment Agency, Bochum

### 2.7.2. Description of the program/project

#### 2.7.2.1. Goal of the project

The Perspektive Zukunft project was developed to facilitate the integration of refugees into the German labour market and society. Its goals included:

- Assessing and enhancing participants' linguistic, professional, and social competencies.
- Providing practical vocational training tailored to individual skills and aspirations.
- Supporting participants' cultural integration through creative and interactive community engagements.
- Building confidence and fostering independence through personalized internship placements.

#### 2.7.2.2. Target group(s): which people/groups of people has the project reached?

Perspektive Zukunft project, carried out by Gewerkstatt, focused on supporting refugees by combining language acquisition, vocational training, and creative work. Here are the groups it reached:

- Refugee participants, including both men and women, from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skill levels. These individuals were at different stages in their integration journey, with many needing support to enter the local job market and adjust to life in Germany.
- Through practical internships (1.5 weeks) and excursions, the project engaged local companies and cultural institutions. This not only helped integrate refugees into the community but also fostered partnerships and potential employment opportunities.
- The program's public presentations (e.g., exhibitions of creative work) connected refugees with broader community audiences, raising awareness and reducing stigma around refugee integration.
- Social educators, cultural scientists, and trainers (e.g., chefs) actively worked with participants, adapting their teaching to individual needs and supporting both professional and personal growth.



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**2.7.2.3. What are the special and/or innovative factors/elements/components in this project?**

- The project incorporates artistic and creative activities, such as the "Future Box" (Zukunftsbox) and collaborative art projects like "Blow-Up" pop-art pieces. Participants present their creative works and project outcomes in public exhibitions. These activities encourage self-expression, goal-setting, and emotional resilience while fostering participants' confidence and creativity.
- Language acquisition is integrated into daily vocational and social tasks. For example in the kitchen group, participants practice language while preparing meals and communicating about recipes or hygiene. In the creative group, participants discuss art concepts and project execution, using work-relevant vocabulary in context. This practical focus ensures participants acquire communication skills directly applicable to real-world situations.
- Vocational workshops meet the diverse needs and interests of participants, covering kitchen skills (meal planning, cooking, and kitchen management), collaborative art projects that promote teamwork and cultural dialogue, IT skills including resume writing, digital tools for job applications, and creative digital projects like designing recipe books.
- Weekly group discussions and reflective sessions help participants build self-awareness, articulate their goals, and improve interpersonal skills.
- The project organizes weekly excursions to museums, libraries, and social enterprises. These outings introduce participants to local history, culture, and public services as well as provide opportunities to engage with the community, promoting social inclusion.
- Participants receive support in identifying and securing internships tailored to their skills and aspirations. This hands-on experience bridges the gap between training and employment, giving participants a head start in their careers.
- By combining creativity, practical skills, and community engagement, the project fosters both professional readiness and personal development, preparing participants for long-term success in both work and life.

**2.7.2.4. What are the results of the project/program? It is a report available of the project/program?**

- All participants successfully completed internships tailored to their individual skills and career aspirations. These internships provided hands-on experience and helped participants transition into professional environments.
- Participants demonstrated significant improvement in
  - Practical, workplace-specific language and communication skills were enhanced through immersive tasks and interactions.
  - Participants acquired job-related competencies in areas such as kitchen management, IT skills, and creative project execution.
  - Teamwork, problem-solving, and self-presentation skills were strengthened through group activities and public exhibitions.



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- Creative exercises like the "Future Box" and public exhibitions enabled participants to explore their aspirations and express themselves. Public exhibitions of participant projects drew attention from local communities and stakeholders, highlighting the contributions and potential of refugees as active members of society.
- Weekly reflections boosted self-awareness and personal growth, fostering a stronger sense of identity and purpose.
- Excursions to museums, libraries, and social enterprises helped participants familiarize themselves with German culture and resources, enhancing their social integration. Participation in group activities and public events encouraged engagement with the local community, promoting mutual understanding and inclusion.
- Each participant's progress was tracked and guided by a multidisciplinary team, ensuring personalized support for their professional and personal development.
- The program laid a foundation for participants' future employment and social inclusion. Feedback from participants and employers indicated improved readiness for long-term career opportunities.

### 2.7.3. Relevance for our project

#### 2.7.3.1. Why are these innovations or specialities important for us?

Perspektive Zukunft incorporates several innovative elements that align closely with the goals and methodologies of EmpowerHer:

- The project's emphasis on embedding language acquisition within vocational and creative tasks ensures that participants gain practical, job-ready communication skills. Similarly, EmpowerHer aims to integrate profession-specific language training into vocational modules, ensuring participants are prepared for workplace communication in the hospitality sector.
- The program addresses multiple aspects of integration, including professional skills, cultural adaptation, and emotional growth, while tailoring activities to individual needs and aspirations. EmpowerHer can benefit from adopting a similar participant-centered methodology, ensuring that its training modules and social support services meet the unique needs of refugee and migrant women.
- Creative activities like the "Future Box" and collaborative art projects build self-confidence, encourage goal-setting, and foster teamwork. EmpowerHer could integrate creative elements into its peer-to-peer mentorship model or cultural adaptation workshops, helping participants express their aspirations and build confidence.
- Weekly excursions to cultural landmarks and public exhibitions of participants' work foster connections between refugees and the local community, promoting mutual understanding and inclusion. Community engagement activities, such as cultural events or shared learning opportunities, can be implemented to enhance integration and build local networks for EmpowerHer participants.



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- The program's tailored internships provide real-world experience in fields aligned with participants' skills and interests, bridging the gap between training and employment. EmpowerHer can adopt a similar approach by collaborating with hospitality businesses to offer customized, practical training opportunities that lead to direct employment pathways.
- The program leverages a diverse team of social workers, cultural scientists, and vocational trainers to provide holistic support. EmpowerHer's efforts can benefit from a multidisciplinary team structure to address participants' vocational, social, and emotional needs effectively.

#### 2.7.3.2. What can serve as a model for us, as an initiative to follow?

Several elements of the Perspektive Zukunft project offer valuable models for EmpowerHer, providing actionable strategies to enhance training, integration, and empowerment for refugee and migrant women.

- Language learning is embedded into practical, job-related tasks, such as kitchen operations, IT skills development, and art projects. Participants acquire relevant vocabulary while engaging in meaningful activities. This approach can be replicated in EmpowerHer by integrating hospitality-specific language training directly into vocational modules like housekeeping, kitchen assistance, and front desk operations.
- Exercises such as the "Future Box" and collaborative art projects encourage participants to visualize their aspirations and share their stories. Similar creative tools could be used in mentorship sessions or cultural adaptation workshops to help participants set goals, build confidence, and foster emotional connections.
- Weekly visits to museums, libraries, and social enterprises provide cultural immersion, while public exhibitions showcase participants' work to the community. EmpowerHer can include cultural outings and events to familiarize participants with their host culture, as well as public showcases to build connections with the local community.
- Personalized internship placements provide practical experience in fields aligned with participants' interests and strengths. EmpowerHer can partner with hospitality businesses to design internships that prepare participants for real-world roles, leading to direct employment opportunities.
- The project employs a team of social workers, cultural scientists, and vocational trainers to provide comprehensive support for participants' professional and personal needs. A similar multidisciplinary approach can ensure EmpowerHer addresses the full range of challenges faced by refugee and migrant women, including childcare support, social integration, and emotional well-being.
- Training and activities are customized to the unique needs, skills, and career goals of each participant. EmpowerHer can adopt this model by designing personalized training paths for participants, helping them focus on their strengths while addressing their specific challenges.



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- Weekly group reflections enable participants to track their progress, articulate their goals, and build self-awareness. EmpowerHer can implement reflection practices to help participants recognize their growth and adapt their learning experiences effectively.

#### 2.7.3.3. What could we adapt from these projects? What are the consequences for our project?

The project demonstrates several strategies and approaches that EmpowerHer can adapt to enhance the effectiveness of our own initiative.

- We could incorporate profession-specific language lessons directly into tasks related to hospitality roles, such as housekeeping, front desk operations, or kitchen work. Participants will develop job-specific communication skills while learning practical tasks, improving their readiness for employment and confidence in workplace interactions.
- Introducing creative activities like crafting "Future Boxes" or designing collaborative projects could help participants articulate their goals and aspirations. This approach will empower participants, building their confidence, emotional resilience, and teamwork abilities, all of which are essential for personal and professional development.
- We could establish partnerships with hospitality businesses to offer internships aligned with each participant's skills and career goals, such as housekeeping, catering, or customer service. This would provide participants with hands-on experience, bridging the gap between training and employment and ensuring a smoother transition into the labor market.
- Organizing cultural outings (e.g., visits to local hotels or tourist attractions) and hosting exchange events where participants share their traditions with the local community could enhance mutual understanding and integration. These activities will strengthen participants' cultural competence, help them build local networks, and foster greater acceptance and inclusivity within the community.
- Providing practical support services like childcare, transportation assistance, or flexible schedules could help participants overcome barriers to participation. This would ensure higher retention rates and better outcomes by allowing participants to focus fully on their training and development.
- Incorporating structured reflection sessions, such as group discussions, along with a mentorship program where experienced participants guide newcomers, would enhance self-awareness and peer support. Reflection will allow participants to track their growth, while mentorship will create a supportive learning environment and foster lasting connections within the group.
- Hosting public events or showcases where participants present their skills, such as room setups or culinary creations, would highlight their progress and abilities. These events would boost participants' confidence, demonstrate the impact of the program, and engage the local community in supporting refugee and migrant integration.



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## 2.8. Quaz Ruhr Integration Center - provided by QBS Gewerkstatt GmbH

### 2.8.1. Project or program data

Germany

Project owner is QBS Gewerkstatt (Germany), among partners are local governmental institutions, social organizations, and the Chamber of Commerce .

### 2.8.2. Description of the program/project

#### 2.8.2.1. Goal of the project

Quaz Integration Centre was established to address the challenges refugees face in adapting to the local labour market and integrating into society. Its primary goals are:

- To equip refugees with language and vocational skills necessary for employment.
- To foster integration into the local community by building cultural understanding and resilience.
- To provide work-based learning opportunities in real professional settings, preparing participants for seamless entry into the labour market.
- To offer individualized support addressing both professional and personal development needs.

The program bridges skill gaps and overcome barriers such as language proficiency, cultural adaptation, and lack of recognized qualifications, ensuring sustainable inclusion in society and the workforce.

#### 2.8.2.2. Target group(s): which people/groups of people has the project reached?

Quaz Integration Center has reached the following groups of people:

1. Refugees and Migrants:
   - Individuals with limited or no German language skills.
   - Those with low qualifications or non-recognized qualifications in the local labor market.
   - Refugee women who face unique barriers to employment and integration.
2. Employers and Educators:
   - Companies in industries such as hospitality, healthcare, and services that benefit from a skilled and diverse workforce.
   - Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals who are equipped with tools and methodologies to support refugees' integration and skill development.



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#### 2.8.2.3. What are the special and/or innovative factors/elements/components in this project?

Quaz offers:

- Comprehensive vocational training tailored to high-demand sectors, including hospitality (kitchen assistant, housekeeping), logistics (warehouse operations, forklift driving, inventory management), construction and renovation (painting, basic carpentry, electrical installations), craftsmanship (glasswork, forging, and other artisan trades)
- Sector-specific language modules are embedded within vocational training, enabling participants to learn essential workplace terminology and effectively communicate in professional settings.
- Utilizes platforms like Moodle for blended learning, combining online modules with practical workshops and simulations to provide participants with hands-on experience in real or replicated environments.
- The program fosters cultural understanding through diverse events and celebrations, including summer fest where participants showcase their national food, culture, music, and songs, winter fest/Christmas parties that promote social bonding and cultural exchange, ongoing cultural activities, among them storytelling evenings, cultural fairs, and interactive workshops to celebrate diversity and encourage mutual understanding.
- While the program does not provide direct mental health or legal assistance, it offers:
    - Guidance on career planning and navigating the labor market.
    - Workshops and resources to help participants integrate into German societal and professional norms.
    - Assistance with childcare and family-oriented services to enable participants to focus on training and employment opportunities.
- Collaboration with local businesses and public institutions (e.g., healthcare providers) ensures training aligns with industry needs. Upon completing vocational training, especially in healthcare, participants are directly employed by program partners, facilitated through QUAZ's networks and partnerships.
- The program actively supports women and individuals facing systemic barriers, promoting gender equality and diversity in the workplace.

#### 2.8.2.4. What are the results of the project/program? It is a report available of the project/program?

Impact on Participants:

- Over **1,500 individuals** trained across various professions, addressing critical labor shortages in high-demand industries.
- Approximately **70% of participants** secure employment or apprenticeships within six months of completing the program.



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- Participants in sectors like healthcare often transition directly to employment with partner institutions upon completing vocational training.
- Significant improvement in technical skills, language proficiency, and workplace readiness across diverse sectors such as hospitality, logistics, and healthcare.
- Enhanced confidence and social cohesion through participation in cultural events and adaptation workshops.
- Regular cultural events, such as Summer and Winter Fests, foster stronger connections between participants, local communities, and employers, promoting a spirit of inclusion.

Employer and Institutional Feedback:

- Local businesses and public institutions, including healthcare providers, report high satisfaction with the skill levels, professionalism, and adaptability of QUAZ graduates.
- Employers highlight the program's tailored approach and the immediate job readiness of participants as key factors in their hiring decisions.

## 2.8.3. Relevance for our project

### 2.8.3.1. Why are these innovations or specialities important for us?

- The integration of language training with practical vocational skills ensures participants are well-prepared for immediate entry into the workforce. This dual approach aligns closely with EmpowerHer's objective to equip refugee and migrant women for success in hospitality roles.
- QUAZ's collaboration with local businesses and public institutions ensures training is directly aligned with industry demands, particularly in sectors experiencing labour shortages. EmpowerHer can replicate this model to enhance employability in the hospitality sector.
- Cultural sensitivity workshops, including community events such as Summer and Winter Fests, promote mutual understanding and workplace inclusivity. These elements can strengthen EmpowerHer's commitment to fostering integration alongside professional development.
- By addressing practical needs such as job consulting, cultural adaptation, and social support (e.g., childcare), the program enables participants to focus fully on their training. EmpowerHer can adopt similar measures to ensure participants remain engaged and supported throughout their journey.
- The partnerships QUAZ has established with local employers and institutions, such as healthcare providers, demonstrate the importance of creating direct pathways from training to employment. This approach can significantly enhance EmpowerHer's ability to provide participants with meaningful career opportunities post-training.
- The program's use of digital tools like Moodle create a sustainable training ecosystem.

### 2.8.3.2. What can serve as a model for us, as an initiative to follow?

QUAZ project incorporates language training within vocational courses, ensuring participants develop both technical and communication skills simultaneously. EmpowerHer can replicate this model for hospitality-specific roles like housekeeping, kitchen assistance, and front desk operations.



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QUAZ's partnerships with local businesses and public institutions, such as healthcare providers, ensure that training is aligned with labour market needs. EmpowerHer can establish similar collaborations within the hospitality sector to enhance job placement opportunities for participants.

Events like Summer Fests, Winter Fests, and ongoing cultural evenings create platforms for mutual understanding and inclusivity. EmpowerHer can organize similar activities to foster integration among participants and local communities.

QUAZ's use of Moodle and other online platforms combined with hands-on simulations provides a flexible and engaging learning experience. EmpowerHer can adopt similar tools to simulate real-world hospitality tasks, such as hotel check-ins or cleaning protocols.

#### 2.8.3.3. What could we adapt from these projects? What are the consequences for our project?

- EmpowerHer could develop tailored training programs focused on hospitality roles such as housekeeping, kitchen assistance, and front desk operations, similar to QUAZ's approach. Participants would gain targeted skills that directly meet labor market needs, increasing their employability and ensuring smooth transitions into the workforce.
- Incorporating digital tools like Moodle and Virtual Reality (VR) simulations to recreate real-world tasks, such as customer check-ins or housekeeping protocols. Participants would have an immersive, hands-on learning experience, allowing them to practice skills in a safe environment, boosting their confidence and job readiness.
- EmpowerHer could introduce cultural events like food fairs, storytelling evenings, and seasonal celebrations (e.g., Christmas or winter parties), inspired by QUAZ's Summer and Winter Fests. These activities would foster inclusivity, strengthen bonds between participants and local communities, and create a supportive and welcoming environment.
- Establish partnerships with local hospitality businesses and public institutions to guarantee employment opportunities post-training, as seen in QUAZ's healthcare placements. Participants would transition seamlessly into jobs, increasing employment rates and strengthening EmpowerHer's reputation as a reliable training provider.
- Provide practical assistance, including job consulting, childcare support, and cultural adaptation workshops, to address participants' broader needs. These measures would remove external barriers to participation, allowing individuals to focus entirely on their training and improving retention rates.

**Project website:** quaz.ruhr – qbsgewerkstatt.de



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# 3. Conclusion and recommendations

## Summary of Key Findings

The analysis of the eight best practices reveals several successful strategies and innovative approaches for empowering refugee women in vocational-educational training programs. Key insights include:

**On-the-Job Training and Mentorship:**

- Practical, hands-on training in specific vocational roles, such as those provided by Magdas Hotel, prepares participants for real-world job requirements.
- Mentorship and continuous support enhance learning and adaptability. This is exemplified by initiatives like Proyecto COSMI Vallecas and QUAZ.

**Blended and Holistic Learning Approaches:**

- Combining digital and in-person lessons from projects like Linguacuisine and the Greek language lessons programs delivers flexible and inclusive education.
- Holistic models, such as those implemented by Proyecto COSMI Vallecas and Perspektive Zukunft, address multiple barriers by integrating vocational training with necessary support systems, such as childcare and transportation.

**Cultural and Community Integration:**

- Programs like Mundo de Sabores and Perspektive Zukunft foster cultural exchange and social cohesion through community engagements and cultural events.
- Raising cultural awareness through orientation workshops and public exhibitions, as seen in QUAZ and Perspektive Zukunft, helps build social connections and reduce stigma.

**Digital Literacy and Innovation:**

- Initiatives such as Safe Space to Learn emphasize the importance of digital literacy. This is critical for enhancing employability and confidence among refugee women.
- Utilizing VR technology and authoring tools for creating engaging, multilingual content in projects like Linguacuisine improves digital competency and learning outcomes.

**Supportive and Inclusive Learning Environments:**

- Ensuring safe, encouraging, and culturally-sensitive training environments, as observed in Safe Space to Learn, Proyecto COSMI Vallecas, and QUAZ, fosters active participation and retention.



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## Impact Analysis

Overall, these best practices have resulted in significant positive outcomes for refugee women, vocational trainers, and the training environment:

**For refugee women:**

- Enhanced employability due to **improved vocational skills, digital literacy, and cultural knowledge.**
- Boost in self-confidence and social integration through **supportive networks and community engagement.**
- **Language certifications and vocational training** lead to meaningful employment and economic independence.

**For vocational trainers:**

- Access to **structured methodologies, tailored resources, and innovative teaching tools** like VR technology.
- Improved capacity to address the **unique needs of refugee women**, fostering a more inclusive training environment.

**For the training environment:**

- Creation of **inclusive, culturally-sensitive, and supportive learning atmospheres** that benefit all participants.
- Successful **integration of multiple services**, creating **holistic training programs** that cater to diverse needs.

## Challenges and Solutions

Common challenges faced during the implementation included language barriers, cultural differences, digital literacy gaps, and logistical issues. Effective solutions involved:

- **Overcoming Language and Cultural Barriers:** profession-specific language training and fostering cultural sensitivity among trainers and participants, as seen in QUAZ and Perspektive Zukunft, improved communication and integration.
- **Enhancing Digital Literacy and Access:** providing user-friendly digital tools and hands-on training to address varying levels of digital literacy, as demonstrated by the Linguacuisine and Safe Space to Learn projects.
- **Addressing Logistical Challenges:** on-site childcare services, flexible schedules, and transportation assistance, as implemented in Proyecto COSMI Vallecas and Perspektive Zukunft, reduced barriers to participation.
- **Building Confidence and Community Support:** empowerment activities like creative exercises, group discussions, and public showcases, seen in projects such as Perspektive Zukunft, encouraged self-confidence and social connections.



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## Recommendations

To develop a comprehensive and effective training kit for VET professionals, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Adopting co-design and participant-driven content:** encourage participants to contribute to content creation, enhancing their engagement and ownership of the learning process. Utilize authoring tools to develop multilingual, multimedia resources.
2. **Promoting blended learning formats and VR integration:** combine online and in-person training methods, incorporating VR technology for experiential learning to create flexible and scalable educational models and for immersive cultural experiences, enhancing engagement and retention.
3. **Fostering group empowerment and community integration:** promote collaborative learning projects, cultural activities, and community engagement to build social cohesion and support networks among participants.
4. **Recognizing achievements and providing certifications:** provide certifications upon successful course completion and highlight success stories to motivate participants and improve employability.
5. **Providing holistic support services:** offer support systems addressing childcare and emotional/mental health needs, mentorship, community-building initiatives to ensure higher participation and retention rates. Develop adaptable training schedules to address diverse challenges comprehensively.
6. **Foster partnerships and promote scalability:** collaborate with local businesses and organizations to create employment opportunities and hands-on training placements. Encourage the expansion of best practices to other sectors beyond hospitality.
7. **Monitor and evaluate:** implement robust tracking systems to measure program outcomes and ensure continuous improvement and replicability.
8. **Employing a diversified team:** utilize a diverse team of trainers, social workers, and cultural experts to cater to the comprehensive needs of participants.

By adopting these recommendations, future initiatives can further empower refugee women, foster their economic independence, and promote social inclusion within their host communities. This comprehensive approach will equip VET professionals with the tools and strategies needed to deliver effective and inclusive training, ultimately enhancing the skills and employability of refugee women in the hospitality.



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