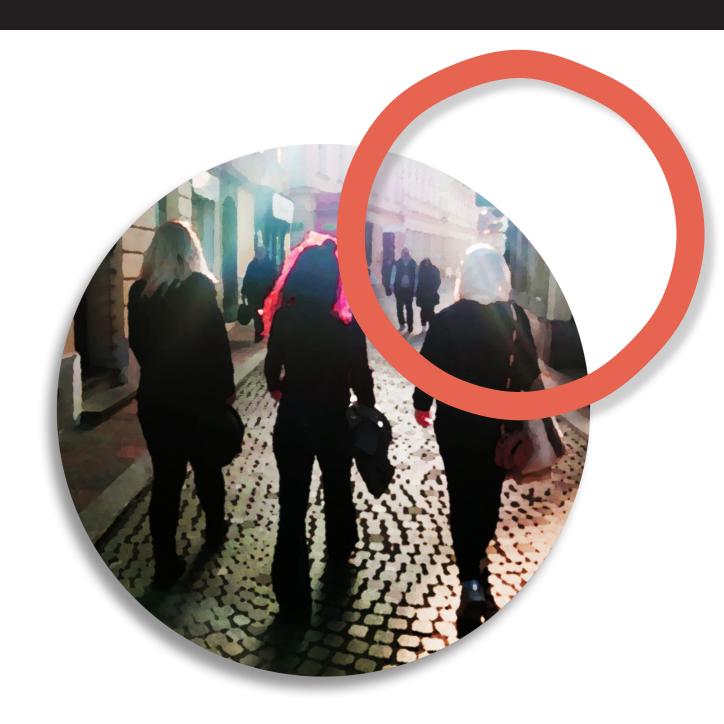




Gender-responsive implementation of Agenda 2030, for gender equality in migration and integration



1 INTRODUCTION

The social and labor integration of migrant women is an important starting point for equity and for closing the socio-economic gap between women and men in general. It is also an important driving force for the inclusion of the overall migrant population¹. The gender gap in the labor market is larger among migrant communities born outside of the EU than that among native communities born in the EU. The EU-27 employment rate for persons born outside the EU was 19.7 percentage points higher for men than for women in 2019². Across OECD countries, the unemployment gender gap among immigrants is particularly high in the Czech Republic, Portugal, and Slovenia. In these countries, immigrant women are more likely to be unemployed than immigrant men³. Ensuring gender equality and equal opportunities is a precondition for the achievement of sustainable development and Agenda 2030. Gender mainstreaming is legislated in Slovenia. It is implemented through action plans in two years national programs where the government reports to the national assembly on its implementation. Gender equality is a crosscutting issue in the Slovenian development strategy that works towards achieving Agenda 2030. In 2019, employment was the top reason for immigration to Slovenia; followed by family reunification; the majority of foreign workers are men⁴. The National Council of the Republic of Slovenia asserts that women who are partners of foreign workers have fewer opportunities for social integration outside of their home environments⁵. This hinders the integration between migrants and the hosting society, and it contributes to social inequalities.

2 AN APPROACH TO INTEGRATION THROUGH GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND THE GENDER-RESPONSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGENDA 2030

Social inclusion, economic independence, a knowledge society without stereotypes, and combating violence against women are among the priorities that shall be fulfilled for the achievement of the Slovenian resolution on gender mainstreaming. Yet, the strategy on migration lacks any persistent measures for gender mainstreaming and the gender impact assessment of integration policies. Since 2012, the Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has held panels and consultations on gender issues, including gender perspectives in migration, yet this approach should be sustained and integrated in migration and integration policies. The policies on integration are gender-blind; even the gender budgeting is based only on gender statistics, whereas gender analysis, gender impact assessment, and consultations with gender stakeholders are absent. Further, Slovenia's approach to integration is classified by MIPEX as "equality on paper" 6.

¹ OECD, Migration and Policy Debates, 2019, page 1

^{2 &}lt;u>Eurostat, Migrant integration statistics, 2019</u>

³ OECD, International Migration Outlook, 2020

^{4 &}lt;u>Stat, International Migrants Day, 2020</u>

⁵ National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, integration, 2018, page 7

⁶ Migrant Integration Policy Index, Slovenia, 2019

The national program for gender mainstreaming in Slovenia, 2015-2020, indicated that immigrant women and women from ethnic minorities need extra support for social inclusion and equal opportunities, yet in practice the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants is only responsible for beneficiaries of international protection; meanwhile the majority of immigrants in Slovenia are not from this target group. The majority of immigrants in Slovenia come through regular migration and from the former republics of Yugoslavia. In 2018, 92.4% of all men in this population were employed, and 73.6% of women from the same population were inactive jobseekers. Assessing inequalities and vulnerabilities among migrant communities is essential for the achievement of SDG5, where **migrant women shall not be defined by their relation to men** like partners or family members, but for their individualistic realities and capacities. Meanwhile, the data on migration in Slovenia mainly describes the demographic statistics, and it lacks both gender analysis and a gender impact assessment. This makes the policies for integration and family reunification gender-blind. The Gender-Responsive Implementation of the 2030 Agenda is essential for the achievement of all the SDGs. To achieve this, there shall be gender-responsive data collection, follow-up, and review processes; and the national institutional arrangements shall be strengthened.

According to NGOs the current measures for integration in Slovenia are showing inconsistency⁹. Strengthening the coordination between the local and national authorities responsible for the integration programs is essential in analyzing and combating inequalities within migrant communities. Gender analysis and gender impact assessment are essential for the development, implementation, and evaluation of successful integration programs and policies. In brief, to combat inequalities among migrant population, integration programs shall respond to the principles of gender mainstreaming and to the gender-responsive implementation of Agenda 2030 that conforms to the recommendations of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)¹⁰. To integrate gender perspective in policymaking and program design, gender shall be considered in all the aspects of policymaking, which includes four stages: Define, Plan, Act, and Check. In the define stage there shall be gender statistics, gender analysis, gender impact assessment, and a consultation with gender stakeholders. In the plan stage there shall be gender budgeting, gender procurement, and gender indicators. In the act stage there shall be gender equality training, gender-sensitive institutional transformation, and campaigns aiming to raise gender awareness. Finally, in the check stage, there shall be gender monitoring and gender evaluation.

3 ANALYSIS OF INTEGRATION MODELS IN SLOVENIA FROM A GENDERED LENS

The gender-responsive implementation of Agenda 2030 is essential for the achievements of all SDGs and it clearly requires a holistic approach of gender impact assessment and gender mainstreaming in the development, implementation, and evaluation of all policies and programs that aim to eradicate all forms of inequalities. It also requires strengthening the cooperation between different local and national institutions and stakeholders. The social integration model in Slovenia is mainly coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior, with responsibilities delegated in each field to the ministry concerned. There is weak coordination between national programs and authorities who work with migrant communities and with migrant women. This inconsistency is prevailed in NGOs reports and cases studies.

The initial integration program entitles all migrants in Slovenia to language courses and courses introducing them to Slovenian society. The allocated hours are based on the migrant's legal status and documents of residency, beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to more hours. This approach might sound intersectional at first glance, but it is overlocking the effect of gender and the fact that the majority of migrants in Slovenia are not

^{7 &}lt;u>Keuc, Migrants and Refugees in Slovenia 2020, page 25</u>

^{8 &}lt;u>Gervais and Sinha, eds, Migration in the 2030 Agenda, 2017, page 7</u>

⁹ Maja Ladič et al., National Mechanism for the Evaluation of Integration SLOVENIA, Report for 2019 [NIEM National Report 2020], Peace Institute, 2020.

¹⁰ UN Women, DRIVING THE GENDER-RESPONSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA, 2016

beneficiaries of international protection and they come from former Yugoslav republics. 73.6% of women from this population are inactive job seekers. 63% of all students in the initial integration program, during the five years after it was launched in 2012, were women. This indicates the target group's willingness and need for joining social and educational programs. The initial integration program is not concerned only with language but also with social and cultural education, which creates social opportunities for inclusion. The government office for the integration and support of migrants is responsible only for beneficiaries of international protection. Therefore, limiting opportunities and support according to the type of residency will affect primarily migrant women from TCNs, most of whom are not beneficiaries of international protection and do not have an active share in the labor market, taking into consideration the high unemployment and inactivity rates of migrant women from TCNs in comparison to migrant men from the same population.

Integration is included as one of the main pillars in the Republic of Slovenia's migration strategy. This is a milestone, yet to realize its full potentials in the field the integration programs should include a gender impact assessment. Meanwhile, in the national program for equal opportunities for women and men in Slovenia, 2015-2020, "the ministerial body responsible for gender equality has adopted several methods and tools for gender mainstreaming, such as gender awareness-raising, gender budgeting, gender impact assessment, gender indicators, gender planning, gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data. However, according to the Guidelines, gender budgeting is not in practice, while gender impact assessment remains in its infancy and is currently systematically used in only three ministries"¹¹.

The Economic Migration Strategy for 2020-2030, responds to the labor shortage of human resources in Slovenia. In 2019, most foreigner workers were employed in construction, manufacturing activities, transport, and storage¹². Due to gender orders most of the foreign workers filling these occupations are men. Immigrant men from TCNs also face a plenty of issues of exploitation, precarious jobs and overqualification, yet this policy paper addresses particularly the needs and realities of migrant women from TCNs. High unemployment and inactivity rates among particularly migrant women from TCNs shall be analyzed through gender responsive data and gender impact assessment, without overlooking the different harmful practices and believes that hinder gender equality in each concerned culture in the heterogonous migrant communities. Yet, research shows that stereotyping migrant women as passive and oppressed fuels discrimination and xenophobia. Xenophobia hinders labor integration and the achievement of SDG8, decent work, and economic growth. Target 8.8 of SDG8 aims to protect the rights of migrant workers; combating xenophobia is essential to protect these rights.

Integration shall be a two-dynamic process in order to combat xenophobia and enhance social inclusion. Gender sensitivity learning is essential for address the various forms of gender inequalities in different cultures. On one hand, case studies show that migrant women are subjected to xenophobia and social exclusion in relation to their religious and ethnic backgrounds; on the other hand, patriarchal models and gender inequalities migrate with people to the countries of destination. Further, gender inequalities in the hosting society affect the migrant population and visa-versa. Therefore, gender sensitivity learning and gender mainstreaming shall be included in various educational programs designed for different cultural groups. A knowledge society without stereotypes is one of the priorities in the national program for equal opportunities for women and men 2015-2020. This priority requires programs that combat gender-based discrimination and glass ceilings. In the case of migrant women, integration programs shall combat stereotypes based on gender and ethnicity.

Slovenia scores above the EU average in terms of general gender equality. The gender gap in the labor market is decreasing, yet it is persistent among migrant communities from TCNs. To assess this phenomena gender responsive data is required and not only gender statistics. The council of Republic of Slovenia asserted that the unemployment of migrant women affects the overall integration of migrant families. Yet, it is very important for achieving SDG5 that we break out from this approach. The approach where migrant women's integration is valued through their partnership to men or to families. **Migrant women shall be addressed in action plans as a human independent force for sustainable development.**

Language is one of the main barriers for social and labor integration. The ministry of culture is responsible for the development of Slovene language courses and courses to get to know the Slovene society. The language courses shall respond to the various needs of different women based on their individualistic realities. The holistic approach is still not fully fulfilled in the design and implementation of these courses. Evidence from NGOs and case studies show that migrant women are coming from various backgrounds. Illiterate women need a tailor-made program; meanwhile women with more education need language courses that lead them towards communicative efficacy in order to help them realize their opportunities in the labor market. The individualistic approach for designing and implementing language courses shall be therefore strengthened.

The Slovenian government's tenders fund support for migrant integration. Yet, there is no strategy to systemize and sustain these programs and its outcomes. Many of these programs are supported by external funds such as EU fund. There shall be a systematic coordination to sustain and follow up on these programs that are mostly ran by NGOs. Cooperation between NGOs and governmental offices such as the employment office and the government office for the support of the integration of migrants should be strengthened. This will increase cost efficiency where the outcomes of these programs can bolster research on migration, integration, and gender mainstreaming. Further, gender budgeting shall be designed based on gender analysis, gender impact assessment, and gender stakeholder consultation, and not only based on gender statistics.

The role of the council for the integration of foreigners should be activated. The council consists of three elected foreign citizens. One represents US citizens, one represents the former territories of Yugoslavia, one for the rest of TCNs, and one for NGOs. The council operates under the Ministry of the Interior and it gives consultations for the development of integration measures. In practice, different commissions and interest groups in the National Council asserted that the Council for the integration of foreigners should strengthen its roles and activities¹³. Further, the geographical representation in this council is not enough; **gender balanced representation should also be present**. Gender mainstreaming should play a key role in the work of the Council for the integration of foreigners. This is important for developing integration policies from "equality on paper" to equality in practice. Gender stakeholders such as the informal group "No-Border Craft" that is led and founded by migrant and Slovene women, or organizations like the Slovenian City of Women Organization, which runs programs to support the integration between migrant women and Slovene society, could provide priceless advice for the development of integration measures.

4 CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Slovenia's national resolution on gender mainstreaming holds important priorities that are essential for the achievement of Agenda 2030, yet in its implementation it does not comply fully with the gender-responsive implementation of Agenda 2030. This can be reflected in the integration measures of migrants in Slovenia. Gender mainstreaming is not systematically employed in the current integration measures. The integration measures of migrants in Slovenia are still "equality on paper" with their inconsistencies addressed by NGOs. The establishment of the national council for integration of foreigners is a good step, yet its role has still not been defined or strengthened in practice. Further, the representation in this council is addressing geographical balance and not

taking into consideration gender-balanced representation. In order to maintain gender equality improvements in Slovenia, the government shall take concrete actions to assess gender inequalities and vulnerabilities among migrant communities in Slovenia. A knowledge society without stereotypes is one of the priorities in the Slovenian resolution for gender mainstreaming. Case studies show that the patriarchal model and culturally harmful views on women exist among migrant groups with similar views in their home countries. Research also shows that stereotyping migrant women as passive and oppressed fuel xenophobia and discrimination. Therefore, a holistic approach toward gender sensitivity learning shall be enhanced in order to combat stereotypes based on gender and ethnicity.

Cultural norms and gender roles impose burdens on women in general, including migrant women as well. The Knowledge Society without stereotypes is one of the priorities of the Slovenian national program for equal opportunities between women and men 2015-2020. Cultures are diverse, though gender-based discrimination is a universal issue, and not only associated to a certain group or culture. Therefore, educational programs to combat gender inequalities should be compatible with the needs and realities in each culture and society, including subsocieties. Promoting stereotypes against migrant women as submissive and oppressed fuels discrimination and xenophobia against them. Therefor gender sensitivity learning and intercultural learning should be addressed in integration programs and should be directed to both hosting societies and migrant populations

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Activate the role of the council for the integration of foreigners with concrete action plans that integrate gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessments in their consultations and work.
- The election of council members for foreigners' integration shall not be only based on geographical representation but also based on gender-balanced and sensitive representation.
- Increase the support in the initial program for integration to provide civic engagement education for migrant women from TCNs regardless of their legal documents.
- Provide support for grassroot initiatives established and maintained by migrant women.
- Integrate gender mainstreaming in the define, design, implementation and evaluation of integration programs.
- Enrich the approach of public tenders through systematic coordination and follow up support to the NGO sector who implements these programs
- Employing intercultural mediation as a tool for gender sensitivity learning and advocacy for migrant women.
- Gender budgeting for research that analyses the situation of migrant women as an independent human force for sustainable development, and not by defining them in their relation to men or families.
- Strengthening the coordination between different stakeholders who work with migrant women, including NGOs and the employment office.
- Increase public awareness about laws that forbid discrimination in employment in connection to gender and ethnicity.
- Integration programs shall be addressed to Slovenian society and migrant population to debunk stereotypes and prejudices based on gender and ethnicity.



