FORWARD. Competence portfolio and pedagogical tools to identify, recognize, validate and improve the competences acquired by migrant women in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.

WP1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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Premise

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Premise

The aim of this draft of the Theoretical Framework is to identify the key elements for the development of the Forward model, incorporating the experiences of the various different partners in a common and shared conceptual framework.

We will also present some reflections on specific issues that may provide additional input for the project activities.

The identification, recognition, validation and certification of the competences of migrant women represent various ways of approaching the same, broader issue, i.e. that of policies for competences and competence policies; an issue which, in turn, calls upon European policies, in an ideal-typical way, to support the employability of female and male workers in view of balanced and socially inclusive growth.

Needless to say, the way in which the issue of migrant women's competences has been structured does have a rather comprehensive and articulated theoretical-political background, in which the most important issues are those of the knowledge society, *lifelong and life-wide learning* as well as of human resources enhancement that respects differences.

Therefore, we think it would be useful to briefly revisit some of these issues, which form the basis of the Theoretical Framework of the Forward Project.

Competences: between Scientific Debate and European Policies

At the epistemological level, over the last forty years, i.e. since the essay by Mc Clelland *Testing for Competence Rather than for Intelligence* (1973), the various trends in scientific research in the fields of psychology, ergonomics and sociology have helped define the general paradigm of competence, each from their own perspective.

This work can be taken as a basis for all subsequent studies on competences in general and on professional competences in a particular way that helped to define the general paradigm of competence now more in use. We refer to - and only to remember some of the most renowned internationally - Spencer & Spencer (1993), to Goleman (1995), Le Boterf (1994, 2010a and 2010b) and De Montmollin (1986)

Given their close relationship with the subject matter of our Forward Project and the (indirect but no less important) effect the OECD projects and surveys have on how European policies are designed, we will briefly focus on the role played by the DeSeCo Project[1] [1999-2002] (Rychen & Salganik, 2003), the ALL

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[1] The Project DeSeCo (Definition and Selection of Competencies) was launched by the OECD in 1997 and ended in 2002. The project aimed to provide a more solid conceptual framework of reference compare to what is available so far, from which could lead to international investigation with the intent to ascertain the level of prior learning and possession of several key skills

Survey (2000) and finally by the PIAAC Programme (launched in 2010), which is currently underway and will end in 2013[2].

It has been said that the DeSeCo Project has led to the emergence of a new concept of competence. In fact, it approaches the concept of competence from a holistic perspective, rather than considering it the sum or, even worse, mere list of knowledge, know-how, skills and attitudes. The holistic approach identifies and analyses the conditions and modes of reasoning and behaviour deemed essential for adult life, i.e. those able to determine success, realisation and effective action, in both professional and daily life.

The ALL Survey (Adult Literacy and Life Skills)[3] adopts as its theoretical framework the analysis of the globalised world, characterised by constant processes of change. Therefore, it aims to explore and analyse the competences acquired by populations in a given socio-historical context as well as their development potential and modalities, the cognitive features and socio-economic conditions that determine an adult's performance.

It is quite clear that the paradigms at the base of the exploration and analysis of possessed competencies - depending on the setting of the ALL survey - can also be enlightening considering the identification and certification of competencies and, therefore, the construction of the tools most suitable for this purpose, including the Portfolio of competencies. In particular, this applies to the subject adult-migrant-women whose competencies mature, structure and develop in a procedural way and socio-historical contexts in which the forms and characteristics are defined by the globalized world; defined, rather, by the globalized world that is the first cause of population movements, with the peculiar characteristics by which they occur today (such as the autonomy of the migration project of women; autonomy that is related to, and varies from one ethnic group to another). But in any case it is very significant because it is the basis of any jurisdiction. Furthermore, it is unprecedented in the history of migration until the last quarter of the last century.

The PIAAC Programme[4] (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences), launched in 2010 and to be completed between 2011 and 2013, has been defined by the OECD as the most comprehensive international survey on adult competences ever carried out. The PIIAC examines the results

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[2] **PIAAC** - Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies; http://www.oecd.org/**piaac**

[3] The ALL (*Adult Literacy and Life Skills*) survey was born as the result of collaborative efforts between governments, national statistical agencies, research institutions and multilateral agencies. Development and coordination were supported by Statistics Canada and Educational Testing Service (ETS) in cooperation with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES-US Department of Education), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) the regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC) and the Institute of Statistics (UIS) of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). The survey was designed to answer the following fundamental question that, for brevity, we summarize as follows: is the description of the distribution of competencies of the analyzed adult population here and now sufficient to guide those who have the responsibility to take decisions on social policies and more specifically policies concerned with education and training for the near future?

[4] The direct evaluation of adult competencies is the core objective of PIAAC, the OECD program framework (currently in progress, ending in 2013) to evaluate core competencies and their best use in the labour market, in an international comparative perspective (among OECD countries and even non-OECD members). PIAAC, in fact, aims to achieve a sample survey of a population segment between 16 and 65 years, focusing on the competencies acquired in working life, their implications on income, and other related aspects. 25 Countries are currently participating in the program.

of the DeSeCo Programme in detail, adopting an approach that assesses competences from a broader perspective, i.e. in which competences are understood as complex constructs (integrating interests, aptitudes and skills) that allow individuals who have developed them to significantly and properly use their most valuable socio-cultural instruments, including digital technology and communication tools, to access, manage, select, integrate and evaluate information, to build new knowledge and communicate with others in order to participate more effectively in social life. The most innovative and distinctive feature of the PIAAC Programme is its focus on the collection of information about the relationship between competences and other (demographic, social, employment, etc.) variables as well as on the impact that competences have on economic and social performance.

The PIIAC program, with reference to the DeSeCo Project, arises from this in a position of logical and epistemological continuity (see the common holistic approach to competence). But, above all, it is offered as a further development, allowing the evaluator's lenses to benefit from both comparable tools at European level (the Forward Portfolio will be taken into account), and socio-cultural content and competencies, including: the ability to communicate, how to manage, integrate and evaluate information, how to participate effectively in social life, etc. All this by taking into account the specific nature of the competencies and, therefore, their relationship with demographic, employment and intercultural variables. In practice, the PIIAC program places us within the very same field of action and intervention as Forward.

Common European References

Since the early 1990s, European policies have been putting the issue of competences at the heart of various different initiatives and institutional proposals regarding the processes of the modernisation and reform of education, training and work. The key elements that characterise and distinguish the European Union's competence-based approach and its approach to competences revolve around two focal points, one that is conceptual/semantic and the other functional/language related.

In semantic terms, competence does not correspond as much (or only) to the cognitive acquisitions that take place in formal education courses, but rather to what people are able to do at a professional or, more generally, at the work level. That is, it refers to the set of skills and behaviours that enable people to cope with the complexity of the working world, according to a perspective capable of combining, shall we say, programmatically, work and lifelong learning.

In functional terms, competences have gradually come to be understood as a *language* capable of creating dialogue among different systems (education and qualifications; vocational qualifications; professional figures and work roles; walks of life and other various different individual experiences).

The documents and the most important steps of the Union's policies *for* and *concerning* competences should be evaluated from this perspective, starting with the turning-point and acceleration (because this is what it was) of the Lisbon Strategy (2000) up to the *Recommendation on Key Competences* (2006), the *European Qualification Framework* (2008), the *New Skills for New Jobs* Initiative (2010) focusing on the skills *needed* not only for the current job market but also for future jobs and the *Europe 2020* Action Programme of the European Commission. Within *Europe 2020*, the ESCO Initiative (European Skills, Competences and Occupations Framework) stands out. Its ambition is to create a multilingual classification of skills and competences to facilitate communication and interaction among the various existing national and international classifications.

In this wide range of initiatives, the approval of the Decision on the "Europass" plays an important role. The Europass is a portfolio of documents designed to facilitate the geographical and occupational mobility of European citizens by promoting one's wealth of experience, knowledge and skills acquired over time. It brings together all of the already existing European mechanisms for transparency in a single "framework", i.e. all the tools developed and promoted by European institutions (but also by the Council of Europe and UNESCO) to foster the readability of national certifications. The heart of the Europass portfolio is the European CV, which the other "Europass documents" are connected to (Europass Mobility, Certificate Supplement, Diploma Supplement and European Language Portfolio). The implementation of the Bruges-Copenhagen Process also addresses other issues which are important for the construction of a system for the certification of competences:

- the adoption of a credit transfer system for vocational education and training
- the definition of common principles for the recognition of formal and non-formal learning

However, one critical issue still remains because, regarding non-formal and informal learning, the Council Conclusions on Common European Principles have established some key principles that Member States have been invited to consider, on a voluntary basis only, in order to allow for the transfer and acceptance of all competences in different fields.

Validation of Learning in Community Documents

The terms "non-formal" and "informal" have been defined by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop).[5]

> **Non-formal learning** is what the individual learns voluntarily in planned activities (work, study) that are, however, not explicitly formulated in terms of educational objectives.
>
> **Informal learning** is acquired involuntarily through daily life activities related to work, family and leisure, and is not structured according to educational objectives.
>
> *Terminology of European education and training policy. A selection of 100 key terms, Cedefop,2008*
> http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4064_en.pdf

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The issue of the validation of non-formal and informal learning has been on the European agenda since the early 1990s, in view of lifelong learning. References to the issue of validation can be found as early as 2002 in the Commission Communication on Lifelong Learning and in the Resolution on Enhanced Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (Copenhagen Declaration). However, the key documents are: the *Common European Principles for Identification and Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning* (2004) and the *European Guidelines* (2008). Their principles can be summarised in individual rights (including the voluntariness of the validation process), the obligations of the parties concerned, including provisions for quality assurance, and the values of trust, credibility and legitimacy.

> **Validation of learning outcomes** is the confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.
>
> *Terminology of European education and training policy. A selection of 100 key terms, Cedefop,2008*
> http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4064_en.pdf

The Guidelines contain the *ratio* of validation. To date, however, not all Member Countries have established a validation system at the national level.

The Cedefop articulates the process of the validation of competences in three steps: identification, assessment and recognition (or validation) of non-formal and informal learning.

The first two phases entail reflecting on the learning process and aim at indicating the strengths and weaknesses of the individual's educational career, offering suggestions for personal improvement. Recognition is linked to learning outcomes, to their formalisation and certification[6].

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[5] European Commission DG EAC – Cedefop, 2008

The topic of identification, validation and recognition of acquired competencies and/or increase in informal contexts is the core issue of Forward. Not surprisingly, the most notable resources held by women migrants consist precisely in this kind of competencies. The ratio of the portfolio is precisely their recognition.

The Community method to promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning is based on open cooperation, the exchange of national experiences and the dissemination of pilot testing. In fact, the European Council supports the dissemination and exchange of good practices in member countries, listed in the European Inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The distinction between identification and assessment and recognition is frequently referred to as that between *formative* and *summative* approaches to validation. The primary purpose of summative assessments is to generate a concluding statement about learning achieved to date and is explicitly about the formalisation and certification of learning outcomes. They are thus linked to and integrated into institutions and bodies authorised to award qualifications. The primary purpose of formative assessment is to enable learners to broaden and deepen their learning[7].

Another element emphasised by the Cedefop which is entirely part of the theoretical framework of our Forward Project, is that the labour market in Europe requires and will require more and more soft skills (ways of working, organisational principles, client relationship management, self-organisation, event planning, organisational flexibility, immediate response to a problem). For all these new needs, the job placement of migrant women is one of the key points by which the real effectiveness of all these tools can be measured.

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[6] *European Inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning, 2010;*
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/projects/validation-of-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory.aspx
[7] *Validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe* – a snapshot 2007

The Competence-based Approach and the Cultural Dimension

All recent theories warn that **inter-culturalism**[8] should be reconsidered, as it is a very general approach not to be confused with and limited to the integration process of migrants, and is a valuable concept for the project.

> **Interculturalism** refers to a joint commitment that has as its focus the encounter between subjects with different cultures, open to dialogue, and be willing to adjust to change.

Culture must be regarded as the social heritage of a human group, always open to change, transmitted and at the same time always transformed over generational transfers. Therefore, the term culture refers to the human experience as a whole[9].

Therefore, while this network of meanings is, on the one hand, a context within which their acquisition and interpretation take place, in other plural societies, on the other hand, meanings can be negotiated, created and enriched with new elements and opportunities.

> The notions of **culture** that seem most interesting to us are those that consider culture a "net of meanings" or a "forum to negotiate and renegotiate meanings".
> Source: J. S. Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible worlds,* 1986

Adopting an approach which revolves around the concept of competence allows us to focus on the resource mobilisation capacity of each individual in response to different contexts. Moreover, it offers the opportunity to represent one's own wealth of experience in a legible form, which can be extended to various different potential interlocutors, whether they are firms, training agencies or institutions, allowing for greater transparency of communication.

The link between transparency and competences is evident and it is against this background that the Forward Project has been rightly included in the debate on the measurability, recognition and enhancement of non-formal and informal learning and experiences.

An especially significant competence in the Forward project is **cross-cultural competence.**

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[8] Through the intercultural can achieve transcultural, i.e. the ability to move within different cultures without being totally absorbed by any of them, which is possible only when we recognize each culture as an expression of a common foundation for each person. Being able to pass between the various expressions of human societies have appropriate means of intercultural principles and know how to express in different situations to meet with each other. A reference point can be considered G. Bateson '*Mind and nature. A necessary unity.*' 1979

[9] U. Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity, Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning*, 1992

> ***Cross-cultural competence*** means the ability to identify, understand and interpret the individual prospects of a specific situation and in different contexts, drawing on the appropriate modes of action.
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> Goldstein, D. L. and D. H. Smith, '*The Analysis of the Effects of Experiential Training on Sojourners' Cross-cultural Adaptability',* 1999

The prerequisite for the acquisition of various prospects is self-reflection and/or the conscious recognition of the socialisation of one's own sphere of life. Only after examining one's behaviours and values can prospects be changed. The inclusion of different realities of life and, in particular, of specific migration backgrounds consequently requires different approaches. To be competent from a trans-cultural point of view means knowing how to put the person at the centre, women in our case, with their own history and sphere of individual life.

A personalized methodology with an approach based on human capabilities[10], and a gender approach, are the only combination capable of dealing with the consistency of the questions that women make to orientation and training in adulthood, in times of change and new design.

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[10] M. C. Nussbaum, *Woman and Human Development. The Capabilities Approach*, 2000

Forward Portfolio: the Focal Points of the Gender Perspective in the Migration Experience

Premise

The scale and **gender perspective** of the migration experience of women should be included in a broader context that defines the new phenomenon of international migration. Within it, changes have occurred, and we cannot ignore them if we do not wish to run the risk of having to look at new phenomena from old perspectives (with the risk of not seeing them at all or seeing them distorted) or of confusing related and special issues with what we could define as issues with epoch-making significance. Europe is the area in which the most important structural changes in the migration phenomenon have already occurred, however, not all Member States have proved that they are fully aware of them. In other words, many parties have difficulty recognising that Europe has inevitably developed into a heterogeneous continent from a *racial*, ethnic and religious point of view.

> **Gender perspective is** "[…] a strategy for making the concerns and the experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres."
>
> Economical And Social Council, (ECOSOC), 2005

This is not without consequences for employment and *Skills* as well as for personal life and *life skills*. In more general terms, currently defined post-assimilation paradigms[11] have begun to emerge which, despite their heterogeneity, describe **integration** as an interactive process where the operating logics of the hosting society are as equally important as ethnic affiliations and play a fundamental role in determining the success or failure of people's career paths and walks of life, with significant effects on life skills and job skills.

Not surprisingly, according to a proper post-assimilation perspective, strategies such as that of diversity management are beginning to emerge at work, aimed at creating inclusive organisations capable not only of promoting the specific potential of each worker, but also of turning this into added value. This applies to all specificities, starting with those that are gender related. This is the perspective from which women's migration in Europe must be evaluated.

> **Integration** is an interactive process where the operating logics of the hosting society are as equally important as ethnic affiliations and job skills.
>
> *Source*?

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[11] For this debate see D. Cuche, *La notion de culture dans les sciences sociales*, Parigi, La Découverte, 1996, N. Glazer e D. Monynihan, *Beyond the Melying Pot*, Cambridge, MIT, 1963, A. Semprini, *Le società multiculturali*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2000.

Stories at Border Crossings

There are methods, practices, routes, stories, shared by many migrant women, but to understand migration each migration path and the individual life story should be reconstructed, because paths, histories, biographies, projects and experiences are very different.

Arriving before the husband, arriving before the children, arriving alone, has different meanings in relation to geo-cultural origin, historical moment and family context. The different modes of arrival or the various reasons that push to leave or contribute to the departure, influence and strongly shape the path of individual women in the new context, even when coming from common cultural frames. The individual story, besides being drawn in relation to the place of origin, is affected by the migration project that each woman has matured personally and/or with the help of family and the cultural group she belongs to. Moreover, projects and pathways are affected by class, age, sexuality and ethnicity, among other elements. Projects can be motivated by the need to improve the economic situation, by the desire of freedom or an escape plan, by culture, family strategy, and can be temporary stabilization project, for instance aimed at joining and/or reuniting with family abroad, etc.

Immigrant women not only live between two cultures but are forced to deal with and process constraints and restrictions to which they are subject in their countries of origin and to develop new patterns of behaviour, which are neither those of the country of origin nor of the country of refuge/reception/welcome. They are called to reinterpret the role of women and often their role within the family, according to a *cross-cultural* process. They are called to build a bridge between "here", the host country, and "there" of the country of origin, between "here" represented by the family, when there is one, or the community, and "there" of the work, "public" life in the host country, between "here" of a nearest culture of origin and "there" of an unfamiliar culture of host country.

It is important to highlight the multi-faceted nature of women's emancipation within the feminisation of international migration processes, but also of the maintenance of tradition, the link between individual processes and the context in which these occur. The migration process transforms not only the places of arrival and departure but also the reasons for migration, individual and family strategies as well as the communication structure of the communities of origin.

Through migration, women displace but also hybridise functions and meanings. The migration project and particularly that concerning women's migration varies depending on the nature of *push factors.* According to their migration project,[12] several roles may be identified:

- **Protagonists**, who have left their country of origin with the desire to access greater personal freedom and emancipation;
- **Breadwinners** or trail-blazers, who are able to trigger migration chains for their family and friends;
- **Target-earners**, who have left with a migration project of short duration and are focused mainly on maximising their economic interests;

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[12] Favaro G., Tognetti Bordogna M., *Donne al mondo. Strategie migratorie al femminile*, 1991.

- **Subordinates,** who have left to follow their husbands and are dependent on family ties or some other form of constraint;
- **Co-stars,** who are involved, like their family members, in the elaboration and realisation of the migration project.

Through migration, women may acquire autonomy and spaces of emancipation, even with and at considerable costs, such as the possible suffering associated to transnational motherhood.

They may enhance their status and ensure the survival and a dignified lifestyle for their family of origin and their own family, in addition to procuring resources.

It is precisely because of the intensity of the border crossing experience that, after reaching the destination country, migrant women may become increasingly aware of the discrimination in the labour market linked to their nationality and gender. The "accidental" nature of competences, that is precisely the origin, in non-formal and informal contexts, of many elements of competence, however, makes it possible for them to remain invisible, often also to the women they belong to.

The migration experience and gender specificity are two interrelated elements which are intrinsic to the Forward project. It is essential here to refer to intersectional theory to highlight that gender and migration are not two separate elements adding to the specific situation of migrant women. Instead, these two factors are involved in a more complex intersection which may result in a totally different unequal situation which must be understood by itself.[13]

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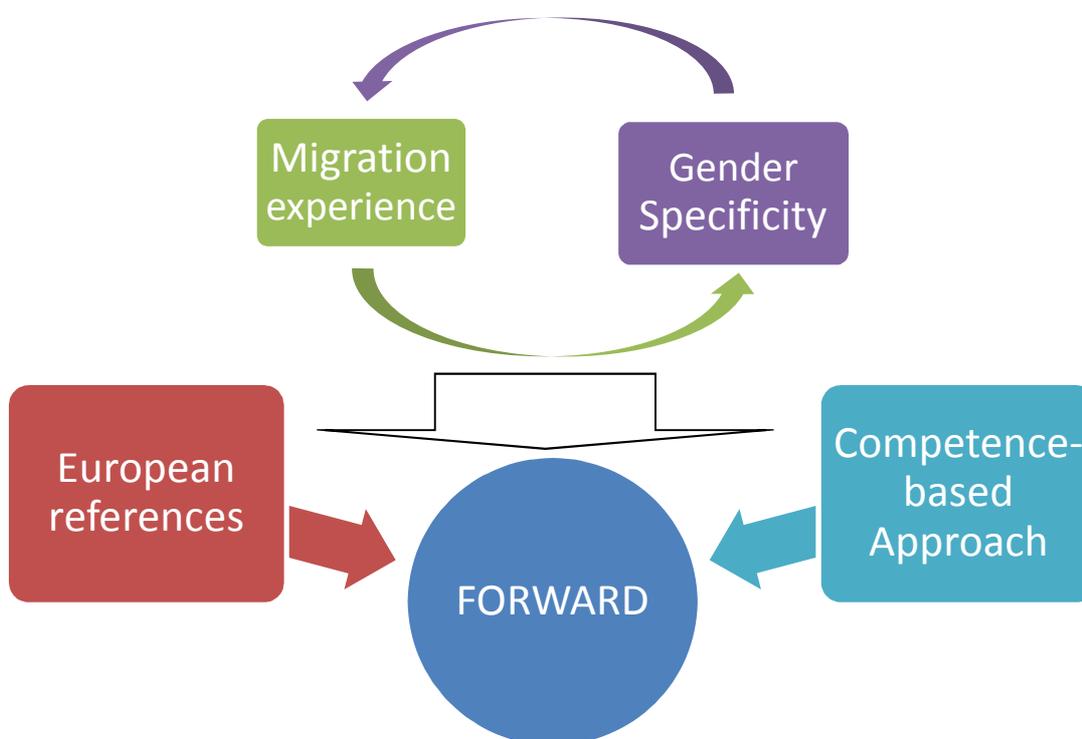
[13] Intersectional theory or intersectionality was first highlighted by Kimberlé Crenshaw and has been extensively used to analyse combinations of gender, class and ethnic inequalities.

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Theoretical-Methodological Premises for the Construction of a Portfolio of Competences according to the Forward Model

Pedagogical principles for the building of a PoC:

From a pedagogical point of view, a PoC may be defined according to two principles:

✓ The person to whom a Portfolio belongs is not simply the repository or holder of a set of documents collected in a dossier, he/she is the author, and essentially the one who gives meaning to the materials it contains and organises them according to a specific development project;

✓ The production of a dossier is the result of a personal effort – made with the assistance of a facilitator, or an expert with supporting functions – of research, analysis and synthesis of professional, educational and social experience, identifying the competences these experiences have helped shape and develop. These competences will have to be effectively acquired and thus demonstrated, and as such they will play a key role in the construction of the project.

The strategic significance of a PoC:

✓ To recover the memory of the individual's evolutionary process from a perspective of growth and continuous enrichment, firmly placing the person in his/her history, time and professional and life prospects;

✓ To reinforce personal empowerment. In the case of migrant women, placing them in a new sphere of meaning that is respectful of their original sphere of meaning;

✓ To increase the individual's range of possibilities, i.e., what he/she **can** do in his/her **job, social life and personal life.**

Specific features of the PoC instrument:

✓ The PoC must be constructed with the intention of carrying out vocational guidance and integration projects in the short and medium term, however, with career and life prospects. The dossier must be procedural in nature and be able to be built upon over the course of the individual's life;

✓ The PoC must be integrated and completely comprehensible, and then appropriated by its holder. This means that all the documents created outside the process of the construction of the Portfolio (e.g. external evaluations) must be intelligibly written;

✓ The PoC must be complete in content and flexible in form.

The FORWARD Project must take into account the following factors, among others, in the construction of a Portfolio:

The construction and maturation processes of migrant women's autonomy. The migration phenomenon may alter the patterns of gender. For example, the formation of transnational families may represent a process of women's empowerment not only because they themselves become income generators, but also because the old patriarchal cultures of their countries of origin are weakened[14];

✓ Migrant women's ability to activate and use transnational networks as well as the dynamics of solidarity, support and connections among people who are having the same experience. Bonds established that allow them to migrate, but then become continuous, although related to national specificity and the historical phase of the migration reality;

✓ Migrant women's ability to network with historical and political projects in their countries of origin, since migration is often determined in close relation with them and also attempts to be a force of change;

The specificity of the migration experience of women is a matter for reflection for the construction of the Forward model

Women's ability to access the public services of the destination countries. In addition to being a sign of inclusion, this is also evidence of their flexibility and their ability to build new and different skills, additional skills according to A. Sen's definition according to which the process of expanding the opportunities and freedoms that people can actually enjoy is the real focus of growth.[15.]

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[14] Linda Lucas, *Unpacking Globalization: Markets, Gender and Work* (2005),

[15] A. Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press (1999): Oxford;

M. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*, (2000) Cambridge University Press.

The project partners have shared the tools they use in their daily practice, and so far some interesting elements that may help in the design of the Forward model have arisen from the work of analysis. In Particular:

> **IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCES**

Biographical Approach. All the partners utilise a biographical approach, and in some cases a peer to peer approach (Monika) in the various services they offer to women. The use of the biographical approach allows all the non-formal and informal dimensions to be fully recovered. In particular, by observing the settings of HIDAEC (Surt), Famcompass (IREA), MIKA and the Language and Qualification Portfolio for Migrants & Refugees (Frauenservice) models it is clear that the competence-based approach is at the centre of their methodology, and that certain modules used by other methodologies, such as the balance of competences, are partly contained in the self-description and narration sections.

This allows for the construction of a common language and a good platform of experience and work tools. A basic conception of competence, understood as the result of an on-going process of interaction between people and the environment from which, starting from their personal and professional experiences, significant elements are selected and transferred into a new context, can be found for everybody.

> *Competence is the ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development)*
>
> Cedefop, 2004; European Commission, 2006a

Classification of competences. However, there are also some differences regarding the criteria for the analysis of the quality and substance of a competence:

✓ HIDAEC proposes a 5-level scale that determines the degree of mastery and complexity, and connects this to the degree of autonomy, responsibility and management of resources, innovation and evaluation;

✓ Famcompass provides for a 0 level that indicates non-competence and 4 levels that identify the ability to use competence in an ever more complex way;

> *This difference in classification is one of the elements that needs to be considered in the construction of the Forward model*

✓ MIKA and SQuP both use descending and ascending scales that indicate the presence or absence, a good or no quality, of competence on 4 levels.

FALTA: These comments on the different ways to measure levels is useful, but something should also be said about the different classifications of competences in the partners's models (definitions of competences, ways of organising competences). The research documents produced by partners may be then attached as annexes.

> ➤ **THE VALIDATION OF COMPETENCES**

The process of validation of non-formal and informal learning is based on some basic principles, shared and guaranteed at European level through specific guidelines and methodological guidelines (European Commission, Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, 2004).

The **basic principles** of the process of validation of non-formal and informal learning are summarized as follows:

The role of the individual: the process of validation of non-formal and informal learning should primarily be based on a precise determination of the individual. The voluntary nature of the process requires therefore a guarantee for all citizens, a fair and transparent access to devices validation as well as the protection of privacy and fundamental rights of individuals.

Reliability of the device: the validation process, the procedures and criteria used to identify and validate non-formal learning and informal learning must be clear, transparent and guaranteed by an effective and shared system of indicators and standards of quality

Due to the fact that a framework of principles is defined, rather than a framework of law, this is a very interesting and complicated aspect of the Project because, in fact, the many different countries of the European Union are very heterogeneous in this regard. The Project partners refer to specific national laws, if not regional. For example, in Spain…

The models under analysis for the Forward Project are all based on self-recognition and self-assessment methods, mainly aimed at increasing women's awareness and autonomy.

In this respect, the validation of acquired competencies in learning contexts other than formal ones, could be aimed at the recognition of credits or the acquisition of a title or a qualification. Or it could be oriented to support projects of placement or re-integration into working life, or to facilitate individual paths of professional self-development and re-employment. The Forward Project refers to all these possible questions of migrant women and therefore the Portfolio's objective is to be able to represent in a transparent manner the quality and consistency of the competencies they possessed

Therefore, so far the tools and procedures for the formal and institutional recognition of competences, which have emerged and been, collected during the orientation and construction processes of the Portfolios, have been tested directly by some of the Forward Partners. For example, Surt is currently

collaborating in a pioneer validation process by the Department of Labour of the autonomous government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya), while IREA is becoming a registered validation institution for the occupation of domestic workers in Romania (?).

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Annexes

Add as annexes the document of the Surt model and the desk research documents of the other partners presenting their models.

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