

National report on qualitative research in Spain

LLP- Grundtvig Multilateral Project FORWARD

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

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Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to all the migrant women interviewed, the professionals who participated in the focus groups. We appreciate their time and commitment to the empowerment of migrant women.

July 2012



Research and Innovation Area. SURT Foundation

Surt. Fundació de Dones. Fundació Privada

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF MIGRANT WOMEN IN SPAIN

Spain has attracted large amounts of foreign nationals in the last 10-15 years. In this period, Catalan society has been greatly transformed due to migration and currently a 13.8% of the people living in Spain are foreign nationals.¹ In some of Spain's autonomous communities the figure is notably higher: in Catalonia the percentage goes up to 17.5% The economic crisis has led to a new migration cycle stabilising the entry of migrants due to the reduction of job opportunities and stricter entry conditions in Spain.

The legal framework and migration policies have indeed greatly influenced immigration waves in Catalonia and Spain, with frequent modifications of the law on the rights and liberties of foreign nationals in Spain and their integration (2000, 2004, 2009). In general terms, legal provisions have gradually limited conditions of entry, while remaining discriminatory in terms of their denial of citizenship.

Migration in Spain has been mainly for economic reasons and most migrants have integrated in a dual labour market where they carry out under-qualified jobs. Their work has been key to the growth of the Catalan economy in the last decades, but not only this contribution is largely ignored but migrants are often victims of discrimination in a variety of contexts.

Women account for the 47.6% of foreign nationals in Catalonia², even though they remain largely invisible under the public eye and public policies.

Currently the most common nationalities of migrants in Catalonia are Moroccan, Rumanian, Ecuadorian, Colombian and Chinese. However, the most feminised groups are Latin American and Russian migrants, while the less feminised are those of nationals of Pakistan, Senegal, India and, in smaller percentages, Gambia, Portugal and Morocco.

The diversity of migrant women in Catalonia is not only related to their countries of origin, but also to the variety of migratory experiences and causes of migration. In this sense, the fact that very often they migrate alone and may be the pioneers in the migration project of their

¹ Foreign nationality is the most used statistical indicator in official statistics in Spain. Source: Continuing population register, data for 2011. Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE).

² Source: Continuing population register, data for 2011. Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE).

families remains greatly invisible. There is a significant correlation between women's types of migration projects and their countries of origin, but there are other factors involved, such as age, rural or urban origin, and educational level. It is specially known in Catalonia the pioneer role of Latin American women as initiators of family migration projects on their own, while female migration from other areas (Africa, South East Asia) is often part of a family migration project. On the other hand, it should be noted that the number of women from a variety of countries of origin with an individual migration project is on the increase, a reality which remains often invisible due to cultural stereotypes. Similarly, women entering Catalonia via family reunification are often identified as family-dependant women complying with a traditionally feminised role of non-working housewives, when the reality is that very often they also entry Spain with a clear goal of entering the labour market.

The truth is that migrant women have much higher activity, **employment** and unemployment rates than Spanish-born women. They also have the worst jobs: they are mainly employed in low-qualified jobs in specific, highly unregulated sectors with precarious work conditions (low salaries, temporary, part-time, etc.). Migrant women are mainly concentrated in domestic and care work, where they take on the reproductive tasks of society, in a country where there is a lack of a strong welfare system (as in the rest of countries in Southern Europe).

This consistent downgrading of the competences of migrant women is especially more striking when taking into account that 20% of foreign-born women over 14 in Catalonia have higher **education**.³ To the multiple discrimination factors described above that contribute to this situation one should add up the difficult and costly processes of validation of qualifications acquired in home countries, and very recent mechanisms of competence recognition and validation which are still not fully implemented.

It should also be mentioned that recently female migration has experienced some changes related to the economic crisis. Regarding participation in the labour market, there has been an increase in job searching and work participation of women due to the loss of jobs by migrant men, which may itself be an opportunity to promote change in gender roles (Rubio Serrano, 2011).

³ Source: Demographic Survey 2007. Catalan Statistical Institute (Idescat)

As regards the current Spanish political framework on the **integration** of migrants, political measures are theoretically based on an intercultural model, aimed at the construction of an effective relation between cultures, in terms of interaction, solidarity and reciprocity, beyond their mere coexistence. For example, in the Plan Estratégico de Ciudadanía e Integración 2011-2014 integration is defined as a two-way process of mutual adaptation and communication, affecting all citizens, both Spanish and foreign-born, and rejecting a conception of integration as the exclusive responsibility of minorities. Integration, equality and diversity management policies are aimed at all citizens and oriented at promoting and guaranteeing the normalised access of population to public and private services, regardless of their origin. The exception is a specific “welcoming programme” for recently arrived migrants, including welcoming introductory courses and support measures towards inclusion, promoting the autonomy of migrants, their knowledge of existing resources and the local language(s). In Catalonia these measures are described in the Act 10/2010 of the 7th may, on reception for immigrants and returnees to Catalonia (not fully in force yet).

2. INTERVIEWS WITH MIGRANT WOMEN IN SPAIN

For the research activities within the project, 14 women were interviewed at the Surt premises in the centre of Barcelona during May 2012. All interviews were face-to-face and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and were conducted by one of the three members of the team involved in the project.

Women were reached through different occupational integration and empowerment programmes which were on-going at the time of the interviews.

Before conducting the interviews, the guidelines prepared by the partnership were translated into Spanish for its use with interviewees. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed for their analysis.

2.1. Socio-demographic information of respondents

The aim in selecting the interviewees was to reach women as diverse as possible, especially in terms of origin, their type of migration project (individual, family reunification) and their length of stay in the host country.

Half of the women interviewed were born in Latin America and Caribbean countries. This is in line with the high percentage of feminised Latin American immigration in Spain, and also the high participation of Latin American women in occupational integration programmes. Being Spanish-speaking immigrants, they are in an advantaged position to enter and carry out programmes in public and private services, and obviously have an easier access to occupation. Interviews of women with Spanish as their mother tongue also allowed gathering more complete and nuanced information for research.

The rest of the respondents were from some of the main countries of origin of migrants arriving in Spain and Barcelona: Maghreb (Morocco), Sub-Saharan Africa (Senegal and Nigeria) and South Asia (India and Bangladesh). The first two are some of the most common regions of origin of migrant women in Spain, while South Asian migration is highly represented in the Barcelona neighbourhood where Surt premises are. However, it was not possible to interview other important sources of feminised migration, such as Eastern Europe and China.

Ages of respondents ranged from 26 to 49, with an average age of 38. In order to obtain the required information for the research, only women who had arrived in Spain as adults were interviewed; the research team thought that adulthood migration was essential for interviewees to reflect on the competences acquired or developed during their migration and settlement process. All respondents arrived in Spain when they were 18 or older.

Women had been living in Spain for a variety of time periods, ranging from 6 months to 24 years. This allowed gathering for research a diversity of migration experiences. Similarly, respondents had different migration projects: 8 women arrived via family reunification (most of them following their husband and one of them following her father), while the other 6 migrated alone.

Ethnicity was a difficult item to cover during interviews. Some interviewees did not self-identify as members of any ethnic group, while in other interviews the issue was not explicitly raised. For this reason, this category has not been included in the analysis.

Regarding religion, women had a variety of religious beliefs: Catholic, Christian, Muslim and Sikh. Some defined themselves as non-practising, while for others it was an important factor in their identity.

Most of the women were citizens of their country of origin and only 3 had Spanish citizenship. Non-Spanish citizens had a work permit, though many had had different types of permits during their migration process, which allowed gathering during research different experiences in relation to education, work and discrimination.

Socio-demographic information of respondents						
Respondent	Age	Religion	Country of origin	Citizenship – type of permit	Did she arrive via family reunification?	Length of stay in host country
W1	36	Catholic	Dominican Republic	Work permit	Yes (husband)	6 months
W2	44	Christian	Colombia	Work permit	Yes (husband)	10 months
W3	42	Muslim	Senegal	Work permit	Yes (husband)	24 years
W4	43	Muslim	Bangladesh	Work permit	Yes (husband)	3,5 years
W5	31	Muslim	Senegal	Work permit	No	6 years
W6	45	Christian	Paraguay	Work permit	No	8 years
W7	34	Muslim	Morocco	Work permit	Yes (husband)	7 years
W8	40	Catholic (non-practising)	Ecuador	Spanish nationality	No	12 years
W9	36	Muslim	Morocco	Spanish	Yes (father)	18 years

				nationality		(intermittently)
W10	26	Sikh	India	Work permit	Yes (husband)	4 years
W11	31	Christian	Nigeria	Work permit	No	12 years
W12	35	Catholic (non-practising)	Peru	Work permit	Yes (husband)	3 years
W13	43	Catholic (non-practising)	Peru	Work permit	No	3,5 years
W14	49	Christian	Colombia	Spanish nationality	No	12 years

2.2. Migration process

Participants expressed multiple **reasons to migrate**, and even in the case of family reunification their only reason was not the reunion of the nuclear family; some women entering Spain through family reunification also verbalised an economic project or the desire to have an improved future for their children. Some interviews suggested that gender roles associated to cultural backgrounds and power structures in families, among other factors, may limit the degree of freedom women have to actually decide if family reunification suits them as an individual project. This may result in situations where women have no say on this aspect, are forced to adjust to the migration project their family prepares for them, or in fact do not really ask themselves about their own stance.

Some of the reasons mentioned were economic reasons, especially supporting families and children in the home country, and buying a house there. Other women mentioned security reasons and an educational project for themselves and for the future of their children.

It is also important to mention as a push factor the fact that some women had a history of migration among family members, so that it becomes normalised to leave the home country. This also may mean that the number of family members staying in the host country reduces, decreasing the social networks of women there.

W10: “The brother of my husband lives in England and two brothers of my uncle live in another country, in Canada. They are all away. Before the family lives together, then a kid leaves for England and then everyone goes there.”

W13: “In Peru I have very few ties at family level and this allowed me to take this decision [to migrate].”

Participants also mentioned changes in the purpose of the migration project over time. For example, two women entering Spain via family reunion decided to stay in Spain and make

migration an individual project after being victims of violence against women and having separated from their husbands.

Most women verbalised that they had a **role in the decision to migrate**, even though the initial project was defined by their husband, as in the case of family reunification. Some said that they wanted to meet their husband there and others that there was some kind of mutual agreement.

W1: “He took [the decision], but before that there was a mutual agreement. Because he tells me: either we are here or we are there.”

W4: “First my husband decides and I wanted to be with him.

W12: “I fell in love and, well, inside me I really didn’t want to migrate. (...) I didn’t come here looking for opportunities. I came because of love, I left my job and I said: well... It was hard for me to get a job and leaving my job [there] was also hard for me. I went to a psychologist [cries]”.

W7: “My husband was here. It was a joint decision, but I wanted to be with my husband and I came.”

One of the participants had a relevant and difficult **transit** experience before arriving in Spain on an open boat from her home country (Senegal).

W5: “I came with an open boat. (...) We were four girls. (...) Of my family it was only me. (...) Almost eight days on the boat. (...) The trip on the open boat is very hard, but thanks God I arrived. (...) [I arrived] in Las Palmas. (...) We waited there for a week and then they sent us to Barcelona, almost five days. Then everyone looked after themselves.”

Three participants had some relevant migration **experiences in other countries** which should be pointed out to make visible how the migration project does not entail simply a path from points A to B, but integrates into a life project where several migratory experiences may be connected and influence each other. For example, one woman had had another migration experience some years earlier in Argentina which had an effect on her deciding a later migration to Spain. A third one stayed in Switzerland and Germany for some time, as part of their search of economic opportunities.

It is also relevant to mention one case of intermittent migration of a woman arriving first to Spain to join her father and then going back intermittently to the home country for 7 years, marry there and come back later to settle in Spain.

Regarding the **reactions of families** to women's decisions to migrate, most women verbalised objections from the family, especially parents and children (who regretted abandonment in the home country or downgrading in the host country). However, participants also commented on having received support from them to look for better opportunities and an improved future abroad.

Two women specifically mentioned **gender** as an element that increased objections from their families to their migration project.

W8: “[My parents] really took it badly. They didn’t want me to come because none of their children had left and having a **daughter** they said that why did I take the risk to come so far away, without a family, without friends, with anything. Being adventurous.”

W5: “When I came my parents were not aware of this. (...) My mother said: ‘No, you are a girl, not a boy, be careful. You know nothing, there is no need to take the open boat.’”

2.3. Family and household

Respondents had a diverse range of families. All were heterosexual women but one, who was a lesbian. Nine participants had children and seven lived with them.

Different types of households in Spain were also found during research. Seven participants had a nuclear family; some lived with husband, while others also lived with their children and other family members. Two had “monomarental” families (lived alone with their children), and four lived alone or shared a flat.

Economic resources of participants came from three main sources: their work, other people's work (mainly their husband, other members of the family or friends) and payment of social benefits.

As regards housing, most women lived in a rented room or flat, and only two owned their house.

Most women had family members in their **countries of origin** (mainly parents, brothers and sisters) and had contact with them. Three had sons or daughters in the home country and some had family members in third countries.

Distance from them was described as a dramatic emotional experience in some cases, especially in the first phase of settlement in the host country, but for all women this distance did not interfere with their perseverance and adherence to the migration project.

As for the financial assistance of families, most women had contributed at some point to the welfare of their families in the country of origin. In some cases, this contribution has been substantial not only for their survival, but also for generating income resources for them: two women bought one or two houses there and now family members lived off the rent. Another one financed quality secondary and university education of her children.

However, at present, due to a worsened economic situation, most were not able to send money to families in the country of origin or only sent small quantities from time to time.

2.4. Education

The educational level of respondents was diverse, but generally high. All were literate and had formal education in their countries of origin and mainly (but not always) in their mother tongue: seven had secondary education, six had university-level education and just one had primary education.

All respondents acquired formal education in their **countries of origin** and not the host country, which may be in part related to the age of respondents (the selection of respondents was limited to adult women). Some had vocational training on different subjects (sewing, hairdressing, lottery sales) in their home country.

University degrees of respondents tended to be on feminised subjects: Psychology/Pedagogy, Administration, Law, Anthropology, and Commerce. One of them had a master's degree and had started a PhD.

None of the respondents had **validated their formal qualifications** acquired in the country of origin. In fact, they had not even initiated the process and their reasons for not doing so were the following: not being aware of how the procedure worked or thinking that the process might be too expensive or long, and required doing further courses anyway. When coming to Spain, some women did not even take their home country qualifications with them. This suggests that they did not think that validating qualifications would be of any use for their

purposes. Several women said that starting validation may be a good idea, but only one had a clear idea of the validation procedure and it was actually in her plans.

W1: "I haven't tried it because it is expensive. I would have to work and then start the process."

W2: "I didn't worry about that. I just tried to get my daughters' documents. (...) I could do that, but it's a long process. God knows how long it will last."

W7: "First they asked for an official translation, which is very expensive. Then they wanted a lot of papers and at last 2 years of studying."

The only validation experience was with the home country driving licence of one of the respondents, who had it recognised via a bilateral agreement between Spain and Paraguay, and then made use of the licence for her entrepreneurship activities.

One of the interviewees was especially critical about the procedures of validation of migrants' qualifications and related them to having to constantly prove that they are competent in a new context where nothing is taken for granted (on the contrary, for migrant women what is taken for granted is that they have zero competences).

W13: "Here [in the host country] you have to prove everything again, starting with my qualification. I have to have it validated (...) It all adds up to having a paper that says that I have a degree. I spent 7 years at the university!"

More useful than validation of qualifications was the actual testing of competences. Even though none had their competences officially recognised, two mentioned being informally tested before entering a course at Surt and they were clearly very happy to have had that chance.

W6: "She asked me for my high school certificate, but I have it in my country. She asked me if I could validate it and I said that I don't have the money. And it is also a long process and the course will be over before I have it. I asked: 'Is there no hope?' And she said: 'we will give you a test'. My face lit up."

W7: "Implicitly my education is recognised, because I show that I'm willing to learn, I'm intelligent, I've been studying for 5 years... In some courses they give you an entry test and this allows you to demonstrate your level even if you don't have a certificate."

Research also brought light to some devaluation on the part of the same women of their home country education, and this was a factor influencing them to start courses in Spain. The risk is that cultural differences between the home and host countries are identified with lower and

higher educational levels respectively, incurring in self-deprecation of their own competence capital.

W1: “The level of preparation here is very different from that of our countries. (...) In my country I knew a lot of things, I did my job very well, but there is a different reality. (...) I have a lot to learn. (...) Psychology is based in cases, in situations, and they are not similar.

E: But do you think that it is a matter of educational level, then?

W1: Well, it also has to do with you attitude, with learning, with learning a lot and situating yourself in the place. This is also true.”

As regards **education in Spain**, only one of the respondents had integrated into the formal education system in Spain (studying a master’s degree), precisely the only participant whose initial reason to migrate to Spain had been continuing with university education.

However, most women did other formal courses in Spain, mainly with a clear goal to improve their employability. Participants had taken language courses (Spanish and Catalan), some ICT courses and vocational training courses on a closed range of feminised subjects: elderly care, cooking, shop assistant, laundry, and customer support administration. Lack of interest on formal education is related to an understanding of training as closely linked to having access to the labour market, rather than to capacity-building and personal development. Vocational training is considered the most short and effective way for women to achieve their job placement objectives.

This training in many cases implied downgrading the range of skills of women and actually directing their future employment opportunities to a number of feminised, and low to mid qualification sectors, contributing to the occupational segmentation of migrant women in the host countries. It is true that these sectors allow women to have more possibilities of finding a job, which is the goal of many, but it is also true that they provide low working conditions (temporality, instability, low salaries, in the informal economy in many cases) and the upward mobility is very limited.

Most participants wanted to go on with education and do more courses in the future, and some were already doing a course at the time of the interview. Their main reasons for further education were finding a job, obtaining a certificate that allows them to demonstrate that they have the required skills, improving their skills to raise their employability and being active

while they were not able to find a job. Cost-opportunity is an important factor when considering continuing education.

W1: [On a socio-sanitary care course] “I took this course because it was available for free.”

W10: “Because I want to work but first [I must] learn everything. (...) Now there are few jobs and many people. I know how to wash and iron clothes, but they ask me if I have a certificate and I don’t have it. (...) If there are four people without certificate and one with certificate the first that is selected is the one with the certificate.”

W7: “I would like to work, but with the crisis things aren’t going well at all, so if there are no jobs I am thinking about going on studying.”

Structural factors limited women’s ability to pursue further education, especially their limited time availability due to instable or unpredictable working hours and children’s care work.

2.5. Computer skills

With computer skills, participants had generally a good user level: higher levels were mainly connected to formal education received in the home country and work experience. Some had had short ICT courses in Spain too, but they generally stressed self-learning as a powerful tool for them in informal spaces and with the help of family members or community services (libraries, cybercafés, etc.).

W10: “I haven’t done any course. In my country I had a computer and also here. I bought a computer and my husband used it and me too. I saw how it goes and my memory knows what key to hit first and second, then enter the password... Because the computer is not difficult, you just have to learn.”

W4: “I ask my son and he explains it to me and I put it down so that I don’t forget and have to ask him again.

W5: “[I learnt in] the cybercafé. (...) Once a boy opened an e-mail for me and he said that this was my name. I always go in the afternoon, I pay 50 cents.”

Migration is a motivation factor to improve computer skills, mainly related to job seeking and education, but also as a way to deploy living strategies, such as saving or looking for a flat.

W11: “Never in my country. There [I did] typing.”

W1: “I didn’t have an e-mail address. I thought it was nonsense. But now you must have it. (...) Maybe the thing is that there when I had to something with the computer, I used to go to a place and told them to do this and that. Maybe here there are places to that too, but I do it myself to save money.”

PCs and Internet connection are used at home or at libraries, NGO premises or cybercafés. Half of the women often used the Internet (e-mail, social networks, Skype) to communicate with their families in the country of origin and other countries, and it was an important motivation to go regularly use the computer and acquire, develop and put into practice computer skills.

W6: “I was married to the Internet. A whole world opens to you.”

2.6. Language skills

The 6 Latin American women had Spanish as their **first language**. The mother tongues of the rest were Wolof, Susu, Arabic, *Obudu*⁴ (Nigerian language), Punjabi and Bangla. A few women were raised with more than one native language.

For those with Spanish as first language, there had been continuous use throughout all phases of the migration process. For others, native languages were mainly used in communication with the family, home country community and migrant population. With mainstream society, the main language used was Spanish. Level of command was diverse among the women interviewed, but all of them had done several Spanish courses in the home country; lack of regular work, formal learning experience and regular contact with Spanish-speaking people may have limited making progress in their learning. Some of them had also taken Catalan courses.

All learnt to read and write in their home countries, mostly in their native language, except Sub-Saharan women, who had been mainly schooled in English or French and not their mother tongues.

Regarding the **value of language skills for employability**, those who do did not have Spanish as their native language recognised their value for employability, but there were exceptions, such as one of the women who said that for the kind of work she did (cleaning) what was most valued is that she didn't speak at all.

It is important to point out that command of Spanish is related to how command of all other competences is valued in the host society. This was very clear when women described having

⁴ The name of the language was provided by the interviewee.

technical, instrumental or transversal competences in the home country, but with their lack of command of the host country language they were considered less competent.

W4: “I am able to use the computer, but all menus are in Spanish and I knew how they were in English. I have to learn them in Spanish now.”

W10: “It is just the language that changes, but many things are the same. (...) Seams are the same. I learnt them in my country and here too, but the language changes, the name is different. Now I learn what their name here is.”

Some women also spoke some Catalan, which they had learnt in courses and informally through their children. As the official school language is Catalan, helping children with their homework becomes a very important motivation to learn for women, while children also act as informal teachers of their mothers.

W8: “I was forced to learn Catalan because of my son, to help him with homework in school. (...) For the apprenticeship I was with some Catalans and then I realised that it is necessary to learn it for these people. This motivated me more to do it.”

Catalan was also mentioned as having an important employability value by several participants (especially those who had Spanish as their mother tongue and, hence, a command of a more basic competence). This was valued not only as a competence valued to be hired by employers, but also in job search and to provide a good service.

W2: “Companies use Spanish and Catalan and then if they call me it feels awkward. (...) I worked 23 years in Colombia in customer support (...) and if I don’t know how to answer a customer, if they speak Catalan, then of course that would be bad.”

English was also considered to have a high employability value, especially in some sectors like tourism, catering and business. However, the knowledge of French and English of South Asian and Sub-Saharan women was consistently ignored in the host country. This contrasts with how these competences are especially valued in the labour market when those who have to show their competences are Spanish-born or from other OECD countries. Furthermore, this lack of recognition and of opportunities to practice English and French learnt in home countries may mean that migrant women end up losing their competence during the migration process.

W10: “In my country English is spoken a little, but after being here for 4 years and not talking in English at all, I can’t speak English anymore, but I understand it. Who do I practise English with? Now I just speak my language [Punjabi] and the language here, Spanish.”

2.7. Work experience (paid and unpaid work)

Most participants (9) did not work at the time of the interview. Of those who did, most worked only a few hours in low qualification jobs, in many cases in the informal economy (e.g. cleaning private homes, selling homemade food), which did not provide them with enough money for their financial independence. Only one of them had a professional position related to migration reception services. The following quote illustrates the instability and unreliable work conditions of women:

W14: "I work three days a week, just a few hours. It's been two years since I last had a stable job."

In contrast, in their home countries most women had a long experience with paid work, with a variety of qualification levels, formal and informal situations, which were mostly in line with their educational level. Many had an important presence in the labour markets, with many jobs over time and in different occupations: they worked as teachers, seamstresses, in factories, offices, as shop assistants, etc. Some of them had had their own businesses (hairdressing salon, bar, laundry...).

W14: "I started working practically when I was 12 because my parents divorced and I haven't stopped since. I worked at what I found."

W2: "In Colombia I worked at customer support for 23 years. (...). And I didn't quit this job, but I also established a laundry and a tailor shop."

W7: "I taught Arabic to 3 to 7-year-old children at a school for two years, without a contract. It is common in Morocco. I also worked as a secretary in a law firm while I was studying Law, one day and a half without a contract."

W6: "Then I had a hairdressing salon and a bookshop at my house, but there was a national crisis in Paraguay and I couldn't compete with big businesses."

For some women, especially those with a high educational level and arriving in Spain through family reunification, leaving their job in their country of origin was not easy.

W1: "I loved having my job and I did it very well. I worked at a public school and everything was very good. (...) I had a permanent job for as long as I wanted to. I quit the job [to migrate]. It wasn't easy. I had been doing it for 7 years. It was part of me, my day to day... What can you do?"

W12: "I left my job and said: well... It was hard for me to get a job and the decision to leave my job was also hard."

One of them had work experience in a third country associated to a previous migration experience. This allowed her to compare the job opportunities there to her experience in Spain, and put emphasis in how in Argentina her technical competences were more valued in the job market, even if she had no certificates demonstrating them.

W6: “In Argentina it was awfully hard for me to find a job in domestic service, but when I looked for a job at a hairdresser’s, I found a job immediately. It struck me because they tell you that your references are your experience, your hands, so they gave me a test. (...) And Buenos Aires is a cosmopolitan city and all kinds of clients from different nations go there and they said that the more Latin Americans and people from all nations they had the better.”

In Spain, there was a consistent process of downgrading competences, due to the available job opportunities, peer pressure from the migrant community, and even the complicity of women themselves: sometimes clearly identified that specific feminised sectors such as domestic service were the only chances they had to work in the host country and then willingly and consciously adapted to this downgrading horizon as a way to achieve other objectives (e.g. finding a job quickly, obtaining migrant documentation).

W2: “It is discriminating, when you have your education. (...) The people I lived with, from Colombia and Ecuador, said ‘you have to work as a live-in cleaner at a home and make money. (...) In Colombia I was an executive and here I am the woman who does the cleaning. (...) I started changing [downgrading] the curriculum. I started saying that I was a cash collector.”

W6: “I knew what I came from, that I couldn’t work in my profession. (...) They have alerted me that I came to work as a domestic servant. They told me: ‘first you work in domestic service, get your documentation and then you start looking for other things’.”

W12: “The psychologist told me to think about it, that I was going to a country where I wasn’t going to work in what I had done until that moment, but as a housewife. But I said: well...”

However, women were reluctant to accept this downgrading right away and tended to look for other opportunities over time, maybe after partially achieving their objectives or because of health reasons. It greatly depended on the urgency of the need to have income.

W6: “My children do not depend on me anymore. They get by on what they earn. I don’t send any money anymore. I want to think about me. I’m 45 now and I want to change. Besides I possibly have Fibromyalgia and this is all because I worked badly and gave up on my health. (...) I have done everything I had to do for my children. They can no longer say I didn’t do it.”

W14: “Now I’d like [to try with] handling manufactures. (...) It is a change from being all day with the mop. I feel that I’m qualified to do other things, not just cleaning.”

Women **ideally looked for jobs** in the areas they have been trained in and where they have experience in. However, this is not always a realistic goal for a number of reasons (e.g. lack of market opportunities, lack of money to invest in the future). For these reasons, they were also **willing to accept any kind of job**, related to survival in the context of economic crisis. Leaving behind the ideal job objective is sometimes a temporary measure supported by a plan with different objectives in the short and long term: while short-term objectives are related to economic survival, this does not always imply a total abandonment of the goal to find a more fulfilling job in the long term.

W1: “It would like to involve in my area, working for example with children and later on, when I find an opportunity, I want to this course of childhood education auxiliary work, and maybe look for something from there. (...) If the crisis wears off, integrate...”

W4: “I just want a job, cleaning the house, taking care of the elderly. (...) Later on work as administrative officer. (...) I would rather do that, but here you must study more for this job.”

W7: “Right now, [I want] any job, because I need to work. It would be better if you must use the computer. What I would really like to do is being a teacher of Arabic.”

W8: “I really don’t care.”

The limited number of sectors where jobs were found was also striking: cleaning, elder care mainly and some occupations related to commerce, catering and tourism. This is closely related to the occupational segregation of women, and especially migrant women, in the job market. Gender and origin crisscross as axes of inequality limiting the opportunities of migrant women to specific low-qualified sectors, with segregation even affecting the concentration of migrants from a handful of countries of origin in certain jobs. For example, Latin American women tend to work as caregivers, while Maghreb women and sub-Saharan women are more common in the cleaning sector. Segmentation according to origin goes beyond regions and to specific countries.

W6: “Argentiniens and Colombians do telephone sales. Argentiniens do not work as domestic workers. They are women from Bolivia and Paraguay. And women from Peru and Ecuador work as cleaners or work at supermarket or caring old people. “

W5: “I worked [cleaning] at a house. I thought that she was thinking that I was a machine. Sometimes you take a thing which weighs more than 50 kilos and you are told to lift it, put it over there, put this other thing up there... (...) As a machine, because they say that black people put with a lot of things.”

Women were motivated and willing to **find a job in Spain** and put into practice a variety of strategies in job seeking: sending curriculums, looking for job offers in and out of the Internet, going to occupation public and private resources, asking their informal contacts and networks and offering their services to potential employers. Some of the strategies are very creative:

W2: “You have to envision, and search and search. Whenever I see someone and I have the opportunity to talk to her I give her my phone number. (...) It’s just looking for opportunities, seeing people’s needs.”

a) Unpaid work: care work and volunteering

Almost all interviewed women carried out a significant amount of unpaid housework, caring for themselves, their children and even non-family members they lived with. Some seem to recognise this implicitly as a gender inequality related to the sexual division of labour, even though one of them verbalised that migration had improved her situation.

W2: “When I came with my daughters I thought that his father would take more care of them, but he put the responsibility on me. (...) If I only had 50% help from him.”

W5: [On cleaning all rooms of male flatmates]: “As they are men... Men do not how to clean in depth.”

W12: “What I like most is that here things are not so sexist as over there. There are sexist people, and my husband is a bit sexist, but he helps out, he cooperates with housework and this is unthinkable in Peru.”

Sometimes housework competences are recognised as competences that can be transferred to paid work sectors:

W9: [The work I do at home is] “Doing the ironing, sweeping the floor, washing the dishes, everything, taking care of children, washing the clothes. This is my job, every day. The same things I do at home I can do outside.”

W6: “I learnt a lot in the university of life. What I’ve been able to put up with in Spain was because of what I experienced in my country. (...) My mother taught me manners at home. And she told me that the ways I was raised would show outside. I am grateful to my mum because she taught me how to iron clothes on the right side and inside out, to wash white clothes together, to get rid of fluff. And when I worked at multimillionaires’ homes, this was useful for me.”

Participation in the community through unpaid volunteer work was not common among the women interviewed. However, some instances were identified in connection to the church networks and one of the women even cooperated in creating a migrant women support group among church-goers, by the initiative of one of the church nuns.

W6: “I do hairdressing at a charity at church, non-profit, on Saturdays when they call me.”

W1: “This space was opened to listen to experiences, to listen to them telling things that may upset them, to see how we can help them. It has had a lot of results. Because there are people living here for a long time, but they are alone, they have no one to talk to and share their problems with. They have it all in their heads. (...) I love being with the group because you feel useful. You feel that you are doing something for people.”

W11: “At church sometimes they ask for help to clean or something, and I always give my name and my phone number.”

b) Discrimination against migrant women

Most women describe a variety of experiences of discrimination, but others insist that they have never felt discriminated in Spain. Factors of discrimination identified during research are origin (related to legal vulnerability and discrimination in the workplace and public sphere), ethnicity, gender, and religious beliefs. However, women most clearly identify discrimination associated to racism and xenophobia (described by them as racism), but do not describe experiences of gender discrimination.

The main spaces of discrimination were discrimination in the workplace (notably, exploitation in paid domestic work, especially among live-in workers) and in educational and public spaces. Perpetrators were mainly Spanish-born people, and especially powerful figures (e.g. police officers and security guards), but some women also voiced discrimination on the part of other migrants of different origins.

W6: “I didn’t know it, because I am a foreigner and for me everything was new. But she [my employer] did know and she played dumb.”

W6: “When I got off the bus, the police officer held me at the bus stop. (...) And he told me: your documentation? Madam, you are here in an illegal situation.”

W5: “Here people are a bit racist. [When you apply for a job] you go there and they see that you are black and they say: ‘Well, we will call you’.”

W13: “I’ve felt subtle things, rather than because of being a woman, for being a foreigner. (...) In public spaces there is a discrimination mechanism to place you on the social condition of migrant. They always have to remind you that you are a migrant. It is a ritual. (...) I usually ignore this kind of things. I want to live.”

W13: “My level of citizenship is not the same I had in my country at all. I was very sure about it. In my country no one dared talking to me like that. It’s one of the things I’ve lost: being a citizen.”

W12: “During the course, a classmate who receives social benefits said that foreigners should go back to their countries. And I said: ‘hang on, I just came here, I don’t take nobody’s job’.

In the workplace, experiences of exploitation in domestic work (related to origin and ethnicity) and use of the origin factor to exert pressure on domestic workers were described by some of the participants.

W14: [Working in cleaning companies] “The hardest tasks are for the ones from abroad. I have been at several companies now where the same thing happened to me. But, of course, you need it [the money], you don’t have anything else. It’s an income that you won’t have [if you refuse]. So you just have to take the burden. (...) But sometimes you feel very bad because you say to yourself: they are not disabled, they can do it.”

W6: [As a live-in domestic worker] “I woke up at 8 AM and I was back in my room at 12 PM”.

W14: [On taking care of the elderly and preparing the food for them]: “Sometimes they told me: you can’t come to change our things because you come from another country.”

2.8. Settlement, life and culture in Spain as a host country

Most women describe a **difficult first arrival and settlement in Spain** as the host country. Loneliness, missing the family they left in their country of origin and a lack of social network in Spain were the most relevant factors women described. These elements are clearly related to the grief associated to migration as defined by Joseba Achotegui, among others. Achotegui (2002) describes a variety of types of grief associated to migration: grief for living away from the family (children, parents, brothers and sisters), as well as friends, and the blame associated to leaving them; grief for the language, culture, land and traditions of origin; grief for lost status in the host country, etc. In interviews women identified some of these experiences, which may lead to severe depression.

W1: “The nostalgia of the first days, supporting my children, because they also were nostalgic... And I had to make them feel that I was strong, and even if I was burning inside, I had to show a positive attitude in front of them. (...) But well, I have become used to it and this is the reality.”

W4: “When I came to Spain I had many problems with my husband. I couldn’t leave the house. I couldn’t meet anyone.”

W8: “I came with some friends of mine and I had a very, very bad time. Very bad. (...) I didn’t know anyone. I just came here as an adventure. (...) For lunch, the two of us shared an apple. (...) I was anaemic.”

W14: “I was depressed for more than two years. (...) When you come here and you leave your partner you won’t have him anymore. (...) A number of problems came out and I was stuck with these problems. And I said: I’m leaving you. You carry on with your life and I’ll carry on with mine.”

W11: “As they only speak Spanish, not English... (...) Language makes it difficult for me, really difficult.”

W14: “Changing your customs. (...) I had to eat with them [as an elder caregiver in a private home], but I missed things from my country. Until Sunday, when I go to my sister’s. Even if you don’t want it to affect you, this all affects you. It is like when as a punishment you make a child to spend all week without eating what he likes the most. (...) But you gradually adapt.”

W1: [Motivation to create a group of migrant women] “I would have wanted to find a person like that when I first came here. (...) How many things I may have wanted to express and just expressing them made you feel... (...) liberated of being stressed for what you feel. You feel good.”

The **networks** of women are very relevant in their integration in the host country. The church (as seen above in the section on volunteering) and networks related to countries of origin were the two main networks described. Participants gave utmost importance to having especially female friends. Concerning networks of origin, for some women they were problematic and acted as a mechanism of control and reinforcement of cultural stereotypes, and some women tried to find other networks, for example through social care NGOs and residents’ associations. Other kinds of associative networks were uncommon among the interviewed women.

W2: “People don’t mix with Spanish people. They rather spend time with Latin Americans. I see that our people are very hypocritical. And then I think that what does not satisfy me is the environment. (...) Now I want to join a residents’ association. (...) I have to start looking for different things.”

W8: “I know I’m an immigrant but I don’t want to relate to them. I want another life, another environment, other experiences, learning good things and not bad things.”

W5: “Here many of my countrymen don’t know where to go for help or studying or anything. (...) As I’ve seen many negative results, I don’t like to go on with them. (...) [I’d rather be] with Caritas or Surt [NGOs].”

W11: “No, I don’t have a group. I have many girlfriends because we [are] women and then she is a person with friends, talking, talking, talking about the neighbourhood. Friend, I go to your place and you come to mine.”

An extreme case of loneliness was that of live-in domestic workers. However, job searching in the sectors of domestic work and elderly care may also lead to creating networks of migrant women.

W6: "I worked as a live-in domestic worker and I didn't know anyone. (...) [I was] Shut away inside a room. (...) On my day off I was so tired that I went to bed or it was 'me time', I dyed my hair, I took my car and went for a ride to detoxify my mind for another week."

W8: "All [my friends] are from Latin America. I met them all in the [employment] agencies and some of them settled here. Some have gone away, others have stayed, others have gone to Italy..."

As for their **current difficulties**, all women agree that their main problem is finding a job, or one that does provide them with enough income for supporting themselves and their families. **Things that motivate women to go on** are their children, an individual sense of their own strength and perseverance and, for some women, faith and religion associated to a sense of fate.

W9: "I do everything for the future of my children."

W11: "I never thought of going back. (...) I don't give up hope. (...) I'm not tired. I'm always strong."

W2: "I believe very much in God, I'm very Christian and if God gave me the opportunity to come here, to be given my documents, to get a loan, hey, there must be something for me! (...) I just think that things happen for a reason, that is, you don't get here by mistake."

Contact with and use of public and private services was quite widespread among participants. It should be taken into account that these are women who used or were aware of our services at Surt and this implies some degree of knowledge and use of other public resources and NGO services. The main resources these women were aware of were public and non-profit resources, where they used social services (to apply for social benefits and obtain support services, such as food banks), and attended training courses and joined occupational integration programmes.

The **knowledge of Spanish/Catalan culture** was diverse according to the situation of every woman. For some of them, Spanish culture is identified just with attendance to popular and traditional festivals and it is difficult for them to have Spanish and Catalan close friends.

W5: "You don't get to know much [the culture], as I've never had a Spanish or Catalan friend... (...) Here people are very reserved."

Regardless of their knowledge of Spanish culture, they were generally willing to learn more about it, but this willingness did not necessarily imply abandoning the culture and traditions of their country of origin. As one woman said, Spanish culture should not be “learnt”; you just should become familiar with it.

W1: “I think that [I have to know the culture here] because I’m here already. I have to learn the culture. Well, to get to know it, not really learn it. (...) And when I go to work with them, I must learn how they are.”

Participants were also able to make some comparisons between the cultures of the home and host countries. The things that they regret about the host country culture are that people are very direct, that they are sometimes rude and say insults, lack of respect of the elderly, but they also put emphasis on positive traits, such as kindness.

They also pointed out elements common to the cultures of the home and host country, like respect and safety. Knowledge of the Spanish culture was also considered a learning opportunity to improve command of the Spanish and Catalan languages, while exchange between different migrant cultures was also valued as a learning and enriching opportunity.

W2: “Sometimes I think that if I’m already here in this country, why not knowing it? That is, I see this as knowing other cultures, and I like it a lot, because I’ve known this with the facilitator and the other classmates.”

Some women said that they even felt awkward when they went back to their countries of origin, because they were now very used to living according to Spanish customs.

W14: “[I know] much already. If I went back to my country I would miss a lot of things from here.”

W8: “My life is here already, I have already made my life here and when I go to my country for a month... (...) Because I no longer adapt, it’s other customs already. I see people like strange.”

W13: “I came here with my two feet. I don’t have a foot there and the other here. (...) I live very disconnected from the community here and from my country. It’s the only thing that allowed me to keep going here. Otherwise nostalgia would have won me.”

For employment purposes, several women mentioned the importance of knowledge of Spanish/Catalan food as a way to have access to or improve positions in the care work sector. This may imply adjusting competences acquired in the home country and the traditionally feminine private sphere (cooking) to the new cultural environment.

W2: "Among all things, [I know] the food. She [her employer] explained to me all her dishes because I don't cook there, it's her that cooks."

W14: "Yes, because the last house I was in I was with an elderly Andalusian couple. And they told me: 'The meatballs are fantastic. In your omelette you feel the potato. The other girl didn't do such a good omelette. You make them better. (...) Because I've worked in bars cleaning or sometimes also as a waitress, but without a contract. And I ask them how to do things and what ingredients to use. And if I somewhere else at least I am able to do it if I'm asked. And I do it."

In terms of civic values, such as equality, some women valued positively the host country for having these values (some related to gender equality) and public services.

W6: "Here there are things that my country doesn't have: health services, they helped me with the metro card. I bless Spain. I owe Spain a lot of things. I tell foreigners that I don't know why they talk bad about Spain if they eat in Spain."

W8: "Education of children is very good, health is highly valued and I like the atmosphere, the relationship with the people."

W1: [About the workshop Speak out]⁵ "These are patterns you use to not feeling maybe inferior nor better than anyone. (...) That you feel equal, because you are living here with other people, even if you are from another culture, but you have to treat people as equals, to learn, and you must act in certain situations you find both in the family and in cultural terms in the country."

W4: "When I lived in my country, my husband battered me, but I couldn't say anything. (...) In Spain there is a fantastic thing, that I like a lot, and it's that here you have many chances to... In my country when someone wants to fight and say what [she] thinks [she] can't. But here I can say that I have problems and they help you."

W7: "In Spain there are many free services, where you can learn and do courses. (...) In Morocco women work more at home, it's more complicated to work inside and outside the house. Here my husband helps me and I'm more able to combine it."

W5: "I learnt a lot here. In my country there is the custom that when you are older one must respect [you] a lot. If [an older person] says something which is not true, I reply: 'yes, it's true'. But here everyone is equal. They all are 18-year-olds."

Three women had currently multicultural families, but cultural differences didn't cause any particular problems. Two of them were married to Andalusian men, which allowed for comparison between two waves of migration in Spain (internal and external) in the last 50 years; first-wave migrant husbands tended to be more sympathetic allies for migrant women,

⁵ This is a workshop for migrant women on sensitisation on violence against women and migrant women's rights carried out at Surt under the Daphne III project "Speak Out! Empowering Migrant, Refugee and Ethnic Minority Women against Gender Violence in Europe".

and a way to integration. For the participant married to a Catalan woman, culture was not clearly identified as a significant element of identity and of the relationship itself.

One woman lived in a multicultural shared flat and this did raise some difficulties associated to different migrant groups living together.

W5: “By night Dominicans turn the flat into a club. (...) Latin Americans, Dominicans... They are very annoying. They don’t respect people. They just think they are the best, the best in the world. (...) They saw once a film where all the black people lived in the country and then they think that all blacks live in the country. (...) But here not everyone is stupid, not everyone is the same.”

Knowledge of one’s rights was non-existent or scarce among all women interviewed. Many said right away that they were not aware at all of their rights, or only partially knew about their legal situation and the social benefits they were entitled to have, even if they had been informed by public or private services. Some recognised how this increased their possibilities to be discriminated and also mentioned that even if sometimes they had been aware of their rights they did not stand up for them.

W6: “I know little about [my rights] and they did what they wanted with me because I was not aware of them. I should. Sometimes I knew them and I kept quiet. I don’t know if I was good or I was a fool.”

W2: “No [I don’t know my rights]. I just know that you have to pay the metro ticket.”

W5: “As the [immigration] law is always changing, this last one I don’t really know.”

W1: “[I’m] Not really [aware of my rights]. Well, in the family reunification service they give you a series of forms...”.

Only a few women commented on Spanish policies, especially regarding immigration issues.

W8: “Now the government is very harsh on foreigners, because this government doesn’t like foreigners. (...) They look at them as if they were pets. I don’t know why, because we are all people, and we are all immigrants... (...) They don’t remember the years when the Spanish emigrated too.”

2.9. Competence development

Most women described their migration experience as a transforming one, where learning had occurred at multiple levels. As one of the women said:

W1: “To me it has been an unbelievable experience. Because one thing is what they tell you and another thing is reality.”

The terms in which many women described their experience of migration tended to use the words “hard”, “fighting” and confronting difficulties alone. The fact that they are confronted with new and challenging situations creates a good environment for the on-going acquisition and development of competences.

W2: “I think that I have fought. I have learnt to not letting people manipulate me”.

W8: “I have matured very much. (...) I have become a very hard person.”

W5: “I have learnt many things because life is not easy. It is very hard, as it always gets harder every day.”

Research showed that it is difficult to separate the learning associated to migration and to work and other women’s experiences, as they are all part of a life development process. For these reason all competences are analysed on a single section of this document.

Following the **Surt competence-based model**, participants showed having developed all kinds of transversal competences: diagnosis competences, relational competences and especially facing competences.

a) Diagnostic competences

Regarding **diagnostic competences**, women showed **self-knowledge** and the ability to **analyse and synthesise information**, and a development of the **learning to learn** and **motivation for work** competences.

Self-knowledge and evaluation of one’s abilities was often imprecise and identified with a general capacity of perseverance and resilience, the ability to endure difficult situations and surmount all kinds of obstacles.

W4: “I always say: you can carry on!”

In specific aspects women showed a great ability to **analyse and synthesise information**. Concerning the migration project, taking decisions in a new and constantly changing environment allowed for many opportunities to develop and demonstrate this competence, such as changes in the migration project, analyses of previous migration process and analyses of job opportunities.

W2: [I thought about] “What my situation was? How would I improve being here or there? (...) And I said to myself: no, I want a challenge. I want to look around here what the opportunities are.”

W8: "I have to think about it a lot. It's not just grabbing your bags and going away. (...) I reconsider it myself alone."

One of the migrant women, who also works as a facilitator of some Surt courses, specifically referred to the Surt model and how separating structural and individual factors influencing women's lives, develops a very necessary competence of analysis.

W13: "This was useful to me to identify which factors are mine and which are not. (...) And I also think that women stay with this idea. It is so relieving to think that it's not you. It takes away much of the anxiety."

Some of the ways to acquire this kind of self-knowledge were reflection over one's past and relation with other migrants and especially other migrant women, comparing themselves to these women in a similar situation, or contrasting their aims and defining one's own will.

W2 "If I was able to take care of a lady, if I've done *tamales*, if I've done pies... I can do a lot of things."

W1: "I heard so many things that I said to myself: wow, my problems are so small, super small, compared to those of other people."

W2 "And I realised: 'With what you know, with what you have in your personal backpack, I could do it'. What happened is that I was closed because the other girl said to me: 'you can't do that, you just can't'. And I said to myself: 'She says it can't be, so it can't'. But the thing is that you can when you want to do it, and when you stop thinking about other people saying to you: 'walk this way, walk that way'. Not anymore. I myself, I myself am going to lead my life."

W5: [On being aware of available local services] "I know that I'm smarter than them [countrymen]. I know it."

Another of the main competences developed during migration is **learning to learn**. Women show a high motivation to learn in all spheres of life, and in formal, non-formal and informal contexts. Women look for learning opportunities, participate in several on-going courses, and involve in self-learning activities in all contexts. All experiences allow for some learning (from paid work experience to experiences of discrimination), expanding previous knowledge with the host country reality, or incorporating new knowledge.

W1: [On discrimination experience] "Sometimes it's good that these things happen, for you to learn."

W2: "I like being knowledgeable. I just think that our age doesn't matter. I may die at 50, but I want to learn about what I like."

W5: [Her brother told her] "You come to Europe, you don't have money, but you are bright. (...) You [learn] everyday something new. (...) Learn a lot, really a lot."

W7: “I like computers and learning by myself, if things are new and necessary. (...) At work here I’m always willing to learn, because every sector and every job has certain conditions and requirements. (...) You should always be open to learn. There are always things you don’t know and you have to learn.”

Motivation to work is also highly developed. This implies not only implementing all kinds of strategies to job searching (as seen above), but also committing to work by providing added value, even if the available job is not ideal.

W5: “Sometimes you have to do something, as I’m doing now. In the end he helped me to get my documentation.”

W6: [Working as a live-in domestic worker] “I did facials, microderm, because I’m a beautician. I did her hair, her daughters’, her daughter-in-law’s and her mother’s hair. I won everybody’s hearts very quickly. Even nails and pedicure. She gave money aside and she told me: ‘Don’t tell your friend, but she doesn’t do what you do.’”

W8: “I slaved away! [I worked] from Monday to Sunday. I didn’t have a day off. It was all saving.”

Regarding the abilities to **interpret the context and situate in context**, even though women sometimes do not know or have a partial knowledge of the host country context, they are able to identify the knowledge they lack and search for sources of information where they can find it. This applies, for example, to their abilities to searching for employment and educational opportunities, documentation requirements, social benefits, and to identify those elements that may improve their social integration in general. Women also show a general knowledge of the economic crisis context seriously affecting Spain and how it affects the labour market.

b) Relational competences

Relational competences, such as **communication** and **team work**, were especially developed as related to work, both in the experiences in the home and host countries.

Migration allowed for development of communication skills because it implies meeting constantly new people.

W2: “How to get by here. The ability to meet more and more people and tell them how I feel.”

W14: “I’m always asking, I don’t want to have any doubts. Because if I don’t know something, they explain it to me. Or if I know something, they explain it to me too and it’s clear to me. (...) Now I ask more [than when I arrived]. It gradually opened for me.

At first it was hard for me, I was afraid to ask. 'Do I ask or don't I? Maybe they answer back'. I always had this doubt, because some people told you: 'Why do you want to know?'. "

In this sense, command of the host country language is essential.

W4: "When you don't know the language, you can't say that you have problems, what is happening to you. You are not able to fight. Communication is very important."

Communication is a very important competence in one of the sectors employing more migrant women: elderly care. Elder caregiving may allow for the development of empathy and communication skills.

W1: "A person, just because of the simple fact that you are listening, they may change their face. It's like that, because when I arrived she was very sad and she didn't even want to eat, but then I listened to her and I told her: 'You have to eat to get well and if you don't eat you're not going to recover'. And she accepted it". And sometimes it was just expressing what she felt, finding a person that understands you. Even if she wasn't right, but someone that understands you, because at their age..."

W14: "I've worked with several old persons and, knowing their personalities, I'm mentally prepared to handle them."

The team work competence may also be developed through looking for job opportunities.

W2: [Home-made *tamales* business] "They have their husbands who have been here for long and they promote them, they offer them and then I make the product. With them, they help me chop ingredients."

W6: [Looking for a job together] "And I told her: 'why don't we make a deal?' You are from Paraguay and I'm from Paraguay too, and we have our language, the Guarani. Why don't we kneel before God and ask him to give us a job in the same place? You've been her for 4 months, you know Spanish food'. (...) 'I don't know anything, I just came yesterday, but I know how to clean the house and I'm very self-demanding when cleaning."

As seen above in the section on the knowledge of Spanish culture, women show a degree of **intercultural competence** when comparing the cultures of their home and host country. Moreover, migration may provide some opportunities to learning through intercultural contacts.

W5: "You come here and there are many different people. There are all the countries in the world, each one with their ways. Then you look at all the ways and you have to think: 'Is this good? Take it. Is this bad? Throw it out'."

W12: "I won something... Having a mind... I lived inside 4 walls, with one idea, because I had never left my country, and I've come to having a more global idea, because I'm in another country, with different customs. I've acquired another idea, having other

experiences, the ways I see people. That's what I can say. Above all here in Barcelona where there is a plurality of foreign people who now I can say that they do a lot of things to get by and many people are looking for them."

W14: "Because I speak to one and the other. And dialogue is important. If you don't talk, if you don't open to people here, to people from Andalusia, how are you going to know?"

Relativising the importance of culture in intercultural relationships was also raised by one of the women as an important element. It should be taken into account that from ethnocentric positions, the importance of cultural aspects on all spheres on migrants' lives is often overemphasised.

W13: "I think that [our relationship] is not a space with an obvious cultural element. And it's good that this isn't relevant. (...) I don't think that she expects from me that I do things differently. And it's because I'm not so cultural myself."

c) Facing competences

It was especially **facing competences** that women showed having developed through the process of migration.

W13: [The migration process] "Has made me face [situations]."

The development of autonomy, associated to the challenge of managing one's life alone in a new context, was very clear in many interviews:

W1: "It makes you feel stronger, more of a fighter, in the sense of self-improvement. Because there sometimes you had pain in one finger and everyone came to help you and here I have to manage alone with my children and my husband, and you have to learn this, you have to experience it, because this is the reality of life. Maybe one was used to other things, to being pampered. But it was very useful for me and for my children too."

W2: "She [a friend] lowered my level a lot. She kept me very depressed. (...) She handled my life, I was always shaky, until one day I said: 'No, I know how to do this'. (...) I'm going to search. I put some distance from her. "

W13: [The migration process] "Has given a lot of autonomy."

W6: "And I told her [an employer]: 'I'm not staying 25 years in Andorra. Madam, you can't handle my life, no way! I'm not manageable.'"

Increased autonomy is in some cases associated to living in a society with different equality and freedom values. This is important especially among separated women and new monomarental families, where a process of identity reconstruction may be involved.

W4: "I've always wanted to stay here. Now I'm free and I'm able to carry on. This is something I've reflected on here [in Spain]. I couldn't do it in my country."

Autonomy is also related to another facing competence: **initiative and decision-taking**, which women demonstrate in a variety of situations. The first one is the decision to migrate, but also the many decisions associated to the settlement process.

W8: [On migrating alone] "I came here taking risks. (...), venturing. (...) I came with a goal. (...) You decide where you go and who you go with. (...) I want this and that's it. And that's how it was and I always say: I wanted this and I have it now."

W14: [Before migrating] "It was hard for me to take decisions. I had a soft personality, [I was] very sensitive. I said to myself: 'I'm not going to do this', because I didn't feel confident enough. But this journey led me here, being alone, having to do things, having to look for things, finding out how things are, going here, there... I feel better now because I do not depend on anyone. I'm alone and I manage alone. And this was a result of my process of settling here, even if many things were hard."

Other activities where initiative is developed is entrepreneurship ventures (either formal or informal) which often arise from creative strategies developed to face the difficulties women have finding a steady job in the formal labour market.

W6: "I had to go to people's homes [to offer her beauty and hairdressing services]. I got by as I could. When I didn't raise money at home I raised money outside. I had a car and my beautician couch and I went to people's homes to do brides' makeup, beauty treatments and hair. (...) As I also have a lot of baking knowledge, I did wedding cakes, birthday cakes for kids..."

W2: "Yesterday I was at the April Fair. (...) I came up with the idea of setting up a stall with Colombian food and beverages. (...) I did this at a festival in Colombia, but I don't know how this is done here. I should find out how to get a stall and put a table for food."

Adaptability is also one of the main competences identified in the research. Migrant women have an enormous capacity to adapt to a new environment, starting with settling in a unknown country, but also coping with a variety of new and different situations in the workplace (for example, working in a new occupation, probably in a downgraded position and worse working conditions) housing, new languages and learning, experiences of discrimination... Women repeated that they become "used" to these different situations.

W1: "For me the first days were awful and I told my husband: 'buy a plane ticket for me, I'm going back'. But it's ok, I've become used to it and this is reality."

W14: "The truth is that either you get used to it or you have to go back empty-handed. But this wasn't my... [goal] I said to myself: now I'm here, I'm here."

Adaptation may be related to a “there’s nothing to lose” attitude.

W6: “And I told her [a lawyer]: ‘Do whatever you want. I don’t have anything to lose anyway! What are you going to take away from me? So start it, start! [the legal procedure for deportation]”

As one of the women said, developing adaptability competences may be linked to the lack of options migrant women have in the host country.

W13: “I thought that I had been [adaptable] before at work, (...) but now I think I’ve been more adaptable here because, for example, for the first time I’ve shared a flat. (...) I wouldn’t have done that in Peru because I would have had more options. Here you have few options. You adapt, there’s no other way.”

This high degree of adaptability conflicts with the autonomy and initiative competences described above, as it may result in annulling women’s will and conforming to injustice for the sake of adapting to the environment. This is clear in cases of discrimination in the workplace.

W8: [At work] “I don’t like having arguments and quarrels with anyone, because I don’t like problems. Avoiding things and that’s it.”

W14: [Taking care of elderly people] “Until I got used to it. (...) Even if they weren’t right, I always agreed to what they said. Whatever they said it was right and I didn’t say anything else.”

The competence of stress and emotions management is related first to the management of the grief associated to migration (as seen above), which is related to a great many stressing factors. The so-called Ulysses syndrome (Achotegui, 2002) or chronic and multiple stress syndrome typical of migrants, is a form of chronic stress associated to migration and settlement in a new context. According to Achotegui, it is a situation where several stressing factors (loneliness, feeling of failure, fear and fight for survival) contribute to a situation of unbearable stress which paralyses migrants into inaction.

W1: “I had to make them [my children] feel that I was a strong person and even if I was burning on the inside I had to have a positive attitude before them.”

Beyond the initial phase of migration, confronting hard situations during the whole process of migration and settlement, such as lack of income or job opportunities, problems with the intimate partner or even cases of separation and violence against women require a high competence in emotion management. The following quote of a woman who arrived in Spain via family reunification and then separated from her husband shows this evolution:

W4: “At the beginning it was very, very hard. I arrived in Spain and after 3 months I got pregnant my husband told me to get an abortion. (...) And I thought: life is very hard. These were very, very hard months. (...) I’m always saying to myself: ‘You can carry on!’ When I came into Spain I didn’t have much strength, and I’ve lost [some things], but I always thought: ‘You can fight, you have the ability, the education, you may study more and move forward’.

For migrant women, the **problem-solving, mediation and negotiation competences** may be developed when facing conflicts associated to migration, such as experiences of discrimination, difficulties when living in a shared flat, and trying to negotiate in the workplace.

W1: [Reaction to a xenophobic comment at the bank] “I’m paying the same taxes as you. Look at my hands: the five fingers in my hand aren’t equal. In all countries there are people robbing and killing, while others are fighting and working people, do you know what I mean? And she shut up. For me this was dreadful. But if I’ve learnt anything is that from all those things you stay with the positive things and the negative things you throw them out the minute you go out.”

W5: [Conflict management with flatmates] “[I said to him]: ‘I’m the one cleaning. If you eat something, take your things and throw them in the bin, just do this’. And his brother said: ‘Yes, you are right. This boy is a fool’. (...) You have to say things. I don’t like keeping quiet. (...) If I’m living with you and I’ve seen something I don’t like I like telling it straight to you.”

W6: “I told [my boss] that I was Christian and I went to church every day and I told her that I was going to accept having no days off for the moment, but I had to go to the church on Sundays. And on Sundays they drove me to the church in their van.”

W10: “Once a woman at school said that there weren’t many jobs available here and on top of that you have the foreigners coming in. And I said: ‘No, because in many places foreigners do the hard work’. I’ve heard that people here don’t want the hard work. They just want easy jobs.”

d) Other competences

Other competences outside the Surt model appeared during the interviews. One of the most relevant was **perseverance** in pursuing objectives.

W8: “Life has made me a very hard person, (...) but here I am carrying on. I always say to myself: ‘You must always look forward and never backwards’. (...) What I want I find ways to get it. This is my goal. If I want to study, I do. If I want to work, I do.”

W13: “I’m extremely perseverant. (...) I can carry on even when everything is against me and falling apart. (...) In my whole life I’ve never allowed myself starting something and not finishing it.”

Related to perseverance, **resilience** was also a very significant competence.

W8: "I fall and then I stand up and here I am."

W1: "Because if it was like that, a straight line, it would be easy. But sometimes you find many rocks in your way that you have to cross. (...) Sometimes when everything goes smoothly in the end you get no results, because you have to find yourself with obstacles to learn things and this makes you stronger."

W6: "So when people say 'Oh, the crisis', I just say: 'There was always a crisis for me'. In my childhood, my adolescence, my youth. When things looked better, my husband died. I never was affluent. (...) I come from a crisis country. The crisis doesn't scare me because I come from there."

Responsibility also appeared in some interviews, mostly related to taking care of children as mothers and also providing for families in the country of origin.

Finally, **creativity** was also important in job seeking strategies (as seen above), as well as house management and care work in a situation where there is not enough income.

W10: "Here kids wear work coats at school, but in my country they don't. So I went to buy work coats at the mall, but they were 12 euros. I looked around, I bought fabric and then it was all just copying it. Then I sewed the work coats at home. You buy two meters of fabric for two euros and I've sewn two coats and one big backpack and a small backpack."

2.10. Competences women lack to find a job

Women identify a series of important competences to improve their employability. First, **technical competences acquired in the host country** require adaptation to the specific needs and customs in the home country. This implies transferring the acquired knowledge and skills, and developing them in the context of the host country. This adaptation sometimes implies expanding knowledge and skills in relation to cultural differences, but also transferring acquired competences in the home country and translating them into the language(s) of the host country.

W10: "In my country I didn't sew aprons. Here I learnt how to cut and sew aprons. In my country there are different dresses, no trousers. There [in India] there's the sari and other things. I knew how to sew these, but not other things. But I have now photographs of how to cut and sew school work coats and I can do it now."

As we have seen, the command of language(s) of the host country is also considered very important to improve employability, and in Catalonia also Catalan, specifically for certain sectors and occupations (public sector, social sector, customer support).

Women also value the possibility of experimenting competences in internships, as a way to integrate in a company even for a short time and practice learnt competences in a real work situation.

Significantly, when asked the open question “what do they lack to find a job”, not only competence elements arose, but also a variety of structural factors. Some women said that in the economic crisis context it was difficult to find a job for everyone, regardless of their competence capital. Moreover, women identified other structural factors limiting their lack of opportunities, such as lacking Spanish nationality, lacking economic means to improve their training and being responsible of caring for their children (which limits their available working hours to non-school hours and also reduces their mobility).

When asked about the **social recognition of their competences**, women usually denied that they were properly recognised, especially in the workplace.

W6: “For the people I’ve worked for in their houses I’ve just been disposable, like any disposable towel. (...) I am not stupid at all. I may work in domestic service, but I’m not uneducated or ignorant.”

W14: “If you do something well they say: ‘it’s ok’, but nothing else. They don’t thank you for that. They just pay your salary and that’s it.”

3. FOCUS GROUPS WITH PROFESSIONALS

As part of the research activities, a focus group with professionals was organised at the Surt offices on the 30th May. It lasted for 1.5 hours and gathered 6 professionals with a vast experience as labour counsellors and trainers of migrant women. All of them work at the Surt Foundation. Two facilitators from the research team conducted the focus group with professionals.

This section of the report is based on the knowledge and experience of the professionals participating in the focus group, which complements the information directly obtained from migrant women and allows for further analysis of their situation and integration process in Catalonia, as well as of their competences and employability.

3.1. Profile and situation of migrant women

Migrant women generally constitute more than a half of the participants in the occupational integration, training and empowerment programmes in the Surt Foundation. In 2011, the most widespread region of origin was South and Central America (58%), followed by Africa (26%) and, to a lesser extent, Europe (12%) and Asia (4%). In terms of countries of origin, Morocco was the most common one, followed by Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.

As concerns their legal situation, more than half of the women participating in Surt programmes had a residence and work permit, whereas around 18% had Spanish nationality and 12% a Communitarian permit.

With regards to migration reasons, similarly to the findings of the fieldwork with women (see section 2.2), professionals claim that women migrate to other countries searching for better opportunities in order to improve their (or their families') situation. In this sense, professionals outline that the most common reason to migrate is economic. Generally, women migrate to get a job in the host country, earn money and support their families in the country of origin. This support may take the form of merely sending money or of buying a house for them in the home country. This economic migration may be also complemented with a professional project of the migrant women themselves or their family.

Settlement and integration process

Professionals describe the settlement process as very difficult due to multiple and diverse reasons, both practical and emotional. First of all, professionals claim that, when arriving in Spain, migrant women need to *start from zero* in a new, unknown and culturally different country. Migrant women are not familiar with the new context and the functioning of the services and thus they need to understand how everything works and become acquainted, which requires a certain period of time. Furthermore, the lack of social and personal networks makes this process even harder, both at a practical and an emotional level. Actually, another difficulty being outlined by professionals is the fact that, along with the adaptation process, migrant women need to deal with migrant grief, which has emotional effects on themselves.

In parallel, elements such as the lack of knowledge of the country language(s), the lack of recognition of the academic degree (both at a formal and social level), the discrimination they may encounter due to origin and ethnic background reasons, as well as economic need, may also harden the settlement process.

As we have seen, all these elements were, to a certain degree, also pointed out by migrant women themselves in the research fieldwork, since most of them described the arrival and settlement in Spain as a hard process. Elements such as feelings of loneliness, a lack of social network, difficulties to communicate in the country language and a lack of knowledge of the new context were pointed out also by women when remembering their arrival in Spain.

Facing these difficulties, however, may become a powerful process for many women, since as it will be stated in the following section, they develop or strengthen a set of competences that may be helpful for improving their opportunities in the host country. Additionally, professionals are aware that communitarian strategies coming from the migrant women themselves have been developed at a local level in Catalonia. Though these strategies they have created a support network for migrant women and their families, providing resources for subsistence, care and savings.

Another structural factor that professionals identify as a barrier for integration in Spain is the Spanish and Catalan legal framework regarding Third Country nationals. This framework conditions the administrative situation of migrant women and, accordingly, their access to the

labour market, to certain public services and to resources of diverse nature in the country (e.g. capacity for opening a bank account in Spain).

Professionals identify as weaknesses of the legal framework aspects such as:

- The instability of the regulation, which is being changed constantly.
- The fact that it seems that integration is solely linked to employment. Although having a legal permit is an essential requirement for migrant women to enter the labour market, if the legal and political framework only covers this sphere of life, migrants' full integration in the society is not seriously taken into account. Social inclusion of migrants is neither guaranteed nor facilitated by legislation and policies.
- The severe distinction of rights between those with Spanish nationality and non-Spanish citizens. Among other aspects, it implies that there is a black market to obtain the work permit and the Spanish nationality.

In order to mitigate the aforementioned difficulties linked to the settlement and integration processes, practitioners claim that public reception and inclusion policies, which are underdeveloped, are absolutely necessary. In parallel, professionals also outline *group work* as an empowerment mechanism for women in general and for migrant women in particular. Group work allows for reflecting about their situation with a focus on the structural factors that influence their settlement and participation in the labour market and in the host society in general. In doing so, migrant women develop a feeling of belonging to the group, by identifying common experiences and even creating links among themselves, which eventually may lead to the consolidation of personal and informal support networks beyond the formal group.

3.2. Competences of migrant women

Mainstream society usually does not regard migrant women with relation to their life and experience prior to their arrival in the host country. In fact, it seems that we are permanently neither considering nor valuing their previous life experience, education and labour backgrounds, among others.

Thus, firstly it should be noted the fact that, before entering Spain, migrant women have had a life experience and, thus, have developed a set of skills and abilities that are part of their background.

However, in parallel to their previous learning experiences, the migratory process is such a challenging and complex experience that may lead to acquiring new knowledge and skills. This area is seldom explored and it is one of the main focuses of the Forward project.

Thus, focusing on the migration and settlement process, it is important to note that the sole fact of leaving the family and the home country and arriving alone to a new and unknown country clearly shows, among other aspects, a sense of initiative, entrepreneurship and courage. Both the decision-making process, the preparation of the trip and the arrival and settlement itself encompass a range of decisions to take, as well as stressful situations that women need to face and deal with. In doing so, women put in practice and/or develop a variety of **transversal competences**, mainly “facing competences” and “diagnostic competences”, such as the following ones:

- Organisation capacity; e.g. shown in the ability to plan the trip and, once in the host country, in dealing with several procedures and activities to settle in and cover basic needs (searching for housing in the host country, preparing documents to be registered in public services, for schooling of the children, etc.).
- Initiative; e.g. shown in several decision-making processes, such as the decision to migrate and the settling in.
- Problem-solving and management of emotions and stress; e.g. management of migrant grief and other hard experiences during the settlement process (lack of income, instable housing, etc.).
- Adaptability to a new country and labour context; e.g. shown during the mere arrival to a new and unknown country, when facing the professional downgrading, managing change in life-styles due to economic instability, housing or labour situation.
- Learning to learn; e.g. shown in the motivation to work and study in the host country.
- Interpretation of and situation in the context; despite the fact that when arriving in Spain they do not really know the country, the services and the legal system, they show the ability to identify where they are, what information they need and where to obtain it. This competence is developed in several spheres, such as work, housing, education and family.
- Intercultural competence; e.g. shown in the approach and acknowledgement of a new culture, as well as in the analysis of the differences between their culture and that of the host country.

These competences are consistent and coincident with those identified in the research with migrant women. Migration is a learning experience, which clearly allows for both developing new competences and applying the acquired ones. In this way, in many cases, during migration women put in practice and strengthen some competences already acquired in their country of origin but which are now applied in a new context and in new situations and spheres.

In fact, most migrant women have an educational background and work experience in their countries of origin, which allowed them to acquire competences of diverse nature: transversal competences, but also basic and technical competences.

Nevertheless, all this competence background is seldom recognised in the host country. Society generally underestimates both education degrees and work experience from countries of origin. The process for recognising academic qualifications is long, complex, time-consuming and expensive. Professionals are not very familiar with it, though. Migrant women with university degrees are the ones that usually search for information for having their degree validated, but when they get to know the procedure and the time and resources needed, they usually drop out. As a result, most migrant women do not get the official recognition of their degree and thus, their competences are not formally recognised.

Two new systems for recognising and validating competences are being piloted in Catalonia.⁶ However, professionals are a bit sceptical about it and say that at a theoretical level it seems fine, but at a practical level it is still uncertain how it will work.

3.3. Employability

Surprisingly, when asked about the competences that Spanish labour market demands, professionals mention most of the transversal competences that were also outlined as visible competences of migrant women. However, and despite of this rich competence background, migrant women are still very much discriminated against in the labour market due to gender and ethnic background reasons, as stated in the introductory chapter.

According to professionals, competences currently associated to employability are adaptability, flexibility, entrepreneurship, initiative and organisational capacity. Apart from the

⁶ Qualifica't i Acredita't

transversal competences, which are commonly visible among migrant women, professionals also recognise the importance of an instrumental competence when searching for a job: command of Catalan and Spanish. Knowledge of the Catalan language is one of the competences that migrant women usually lack.

Finally, the lack of a technical specialisation may also affect migrant women's employability in Spain.

However, the improvement of their employability is crucial when searching for a job in a context in which migrant women's previous experiences are seldom recognised. In this way, professionals develop programmes and strategies to foster the employability and social inclusion of migrant women through the acquisition of competences. Some of the key and successful elements of these programmes are the following ones:

- Competence-based methodology with an assessment of one's own competences in all spheres of life (work, education, social relations, family, social situation, etc.)
- Empowerment as a core element and group work as a tool for empowerment, developing competences, identifying structural factors, fostering networks, etc.
- Intercultural and gender-based approach.
- Use of experiential exercises to self-assess competences, as well as develop new competences through a learning process.

4. SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding sources of information and using public and private resources. - Knowledge of own competence capital (especially transversal competences). - Establishing personal contacts because they need resources, information or cultural ties. - Planning and preparing the needs associated to the migration process (saving, numeracy, contacts). - Motor and manual skills because in home countries they carry out family tasks and occupations where they need to be good with their hands (cooking, sewing). - They define the need to use technology as an essential way to obtain information, communicate and develop possible occupations. - Ready to learn and participating actively in improving languages to be able to establish social and work relationships and communicate with children at school. - They are aware that their situation may be worse and they value positively how they are, in spite of the difficulties. - Ability to establish goals. The obstacles they overcome gave them strength to face others. - Motivation and will to do things as the elements which allow them to attain their goals. They accept certain activities and/or situations due to structural needs or few options available (limitations in documents, money, etc.) which sometimes makes them confront problems - Ability to identify when they are needed as daughters, mothers and wives, and responding to this need. - Willing to learn from the new context they are in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job search techniques and/or ways to get a job which are different to those in the home country. It requires information and practice. - Lack of knowledge of the labour market, regulation, distribution of subsectors, role of social partners and different names of professional profiles. - Definition of potential occupations which require many transversal and not very technical competences (labour-intensive business), which they choose because they lack the requirements for other jobs and they are not aware of the tasks associated to other occupations. - Lack of knowledge of host country language, which in many cases does not allow them to communicate in their new context. - Use of technology for transnational family communication in the host country. - Migration process experienced as a road full of difficulties and obstacles, as a problem. - Willing to learn only things which give an immediate response to their needs. - Work as a way to obtain income and sustain personal and family needs, as another resource. - They act because of obedience or respect to the family, without considering if it is their option. - Tendency to avoid looking at the process carried out and giving value to what has been learnt.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adaptation to any situations that may arise in order to obtain documents and residence and work permit. - Detecting opportunities and threats in potential migration destinations to determine the viability of the process. - Tendency to look forward. - In situations of stress they are conciliatory and control their emotions. 	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of inequalities between men and women and corrective measures to define them and limiting them, including measures combating violence against women. - Possibility to reunify the family to arrive in the host country with a residence permit. - A much more individualistic social model of family and more coresponsibility in the host country than in the home country. Opportunities for women to argue for distribution of homework because in the host country things are different. - Gaining rights as opportunities they did not have before in education and health. - Access to housing through peer support or parallel network of people with few resources, generating strategies of families sharing a dwelling. - Access to structural economic resources to sustain situations of lack of income. - Systems of free training in the host country, which allow access to vocational training on certain occupations. - Possibility to learn other systems of communication through technology and thus improving skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different legal framework for the settlement of migrants according to origin, which limits the access to rights. - Network in the host country defining opportunities and success in migration in homogenous terms (when they are different for each person) and migrants feel that their countrymen/women deceive them. There are many differences between what they have been told and what they experience. - Decision to migrate linked to giving family support, improving family and/or linked to men's/family will. - Separation of the care roles if the children stay in the home country. Feeling of guiltiness for not carrying out care tasks. - Difficulties to have access to housing regularly. They don't have the minimum requirements to be able to rent housing (documents and payslips). - The peer community and the market define occupations according to their condition of migrants. Segmentation of occupation in low qualification sectors and clear impact of the sexual division of work based in the reproduction of roles. - A recognition framework of education and work experience which is not developed for all countries, unclear, time-consuming and expensive. It is not an option because it does not lead to the recognition of a qualification equivalent to the home country title allowing to carry out the job.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Alternative use of networks to care for family members. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Access to systems of communication through technology which require a learning process.- Reproduction of family and care roles, built from their own culture, which sometimes place them in tensions to adapt to the context.- Lack of social and educational recognition of work experience in home country.- Different levels of classification of citizenship according to origin and legal documents. |
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