



FASHION FOR INCLUSION

# COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK AIMED AT VET PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH MIGRANTS IN THE FIELDS OF SEWING, UPCYCLING, FASHION AND DESIGN



Erasmus+ Programme  
KA2: Strategic Partnership Projects  
2020-1-ES01-KA202-082950



Erasmus+



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Fashion 4 Inclusion in a nutshell

Fashion for Inclusion is an Erasmus+ project coordinated by ABD (SP) in collaboration with [IASIS](#) (GR), [Mindshift](#) (PT), [CIEP](#) (BE), [SSF](#) (SP), [BAU](#) (SP), [Mondo Donna](#) (IT).

The overall goal of Fashion for Inclusion is to promote the social and labour inclusion of immigrants and refugees at risk, through a tested VET work-based innovative Training Programme linked to the sustainable fashion sector. Specifically, the project foresees to enhance access of low-skilled immigrants and refugees to high-quality outcome-based VET, through flexible learning paths including key competences (languages and entrepreneurship) in curricula within an intercultural gender framework.

In this sense, social inclusion is the engine of our project. Through innovation and VET, we want to promote equality, social and labour inclusion, diversity, intercultural dialogue and non-discrimination of groups in situations of vulnerability. Furthermore, the project also promotes the professional development of VET trainers, teachers and mentors in NGOs, VET centers, Education centers and Social Enterprises to jointly implement innovative curricula that reach out the aforementioned target and promote their labour inclusion in the fields of sewing, upcycling, fashion and design.

Hence, the Fashion for Inclusion project will increase the labour inclusion opportunities for migrants and refugees, and at the same time will also improve VET professionals' development in the fields of sewing, upcycling, fashion and design.

As a way to achieve this, the definition of a competence framework for the VET professionals working in the mentioned fields –and specifically for those working with refugees or immigrants at risk of exclusion–, is the first step to design the training actions and materials. Also, to deepen the factors that incommode the access of the refugee and immigrant population to VET and the obstacles that trainers face when reaching them will provide a valuable insight when designing the learning approaches.

### About this document

This document is divided into two sections:

- In the first section, **Competence Framework**, we establish the set of competencies identified as most relevant for the field and we present the results of the self-assessment questionnaire addressed to VET trainers.
- In the second section, **State of the Art**, we compile the reports from partner countries and present the main findings concerning the difficulties in the access of migrants and refugees to VET systems. This section is complemented with the answers provided by VET trainers in the questionnaires.

## 2. COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

### Competence framework for VET trainers in the textile sector

According to the CEDEFOP (2009) a competence framework is a generic description of the skills, knowledge and wider competences that teachers, trainers and leaders should possess to enable vocational education and training at a high level. Such a framework can be used when curricula or training programmes are designed for the initial and continuing training of teaching professionals.

The development of a competence framework for trainers working in the field of Sewing, Upcycling and Fashion and Design, aims to provide individual trainers and training providers like organisations, institutions and NGOs, with a common reference when developing training courses addressed to immigrants and refugees. The set of competences included in the framework is based on:

- the previous experience of the partners developing MAMALYONA, FABRIK REPUBLIC and SOCIAL CHIC, different training programmes addressed to migrants and refugees at risk of social exclusion. For the design of the project, an initial set of competences that needed to be strengthened between the organisations' trainers was identified by the partners as relevant to
- brief revision of existing literature on the topic.

As a result, the following competencies have been selected to be part of the framework:

1. Knowledge and use of blended learning methodologies.
2. Knowledge and use of work-based learning methodologies.
3. Knowledge of the labour market needs and job opportunities channels
4. Intercultural sensitivity approach.
5. Intercultural communication skills.
6. Ability to incorporate the social and cultural diversity of the group into the training content and learning processes.
7. Knowledge on how to incorporate the gender perspective into the training content and learning processes.
8. Ability to cope with the demotivation of the students.
9. Ability to manage group dynamics.
10. Mentoring skills.
11. Coaching skills.

This framework represents a comprehensive set of professional and interpersonal competencies that are needed in VET, and specifically in the project areas of interest, when targeting DTE immigrants and refugees. The list of competences that we propose is to be seen as a flexible framework to be adjusted to various training circumstances, strategies and contexts for further discussions and implementation measures.

Therefore, the set of competences is not meant to be a list of competences that every trainer must possess, but rather a tool that helps VET providers, institutions, organisations or individual trainers to better design training programmes for further professional development, that also responds to the needs and the realities of the trainees. Lastly, it is important to note that it is not an exhaustive nor restricted framework, but a proposal that can be expanded, reviewed and enriched throughout the implementation of the project.

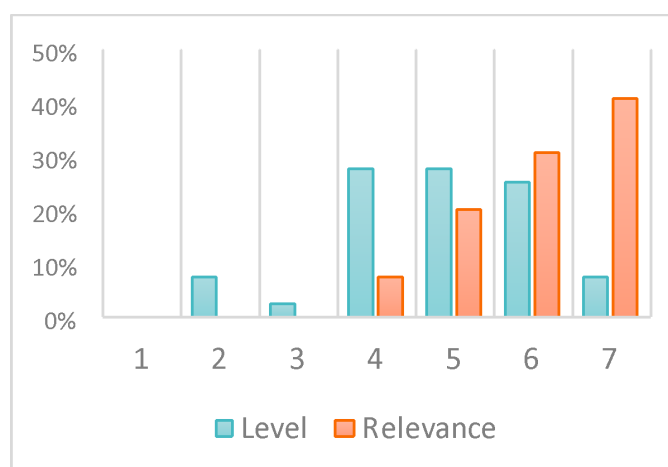
## Questionnaire addressed to VET trainers

For the elaboration and validation of the framework, the partners disseminated a questionnaire among their VET trainers and trainers from other organisations. The sociodemographic profile of the trainers that answered is presented in the Annex 1.

The objective of the questionnaire was to self-assess the level of master in each of the proposed competences, and to determine the relevance of each competence applied to the job performance. The respondents were asked to indicate their level and the relevance given to the competences on a Likert scale from 1 to 7.

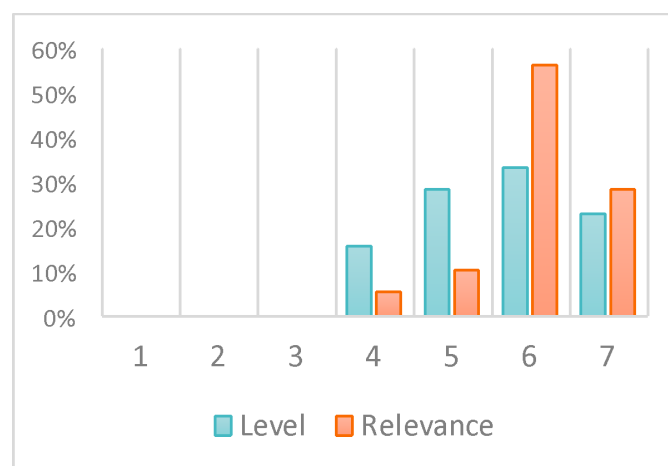
We present the results of the questionnaire on the following pages. For each competence, the level competence average and the relevance competence average are also indicated.

## 1. Knowledge and use of blended learning methodologies (those that combine the use of ICT with face-to-face pedagogies)



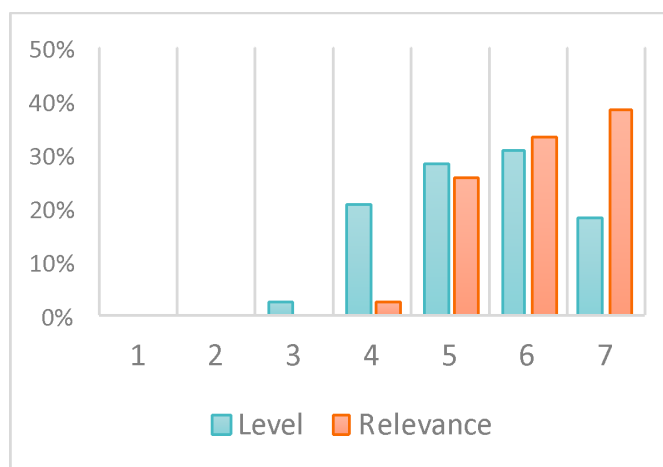
Level Competence Average	Relevance Competence Average
4,85	6,05

## 2. Knowledge and use of work-based learning methodologies (those that recreate a real work environment)



Level Competence Average	Relevance Competence Average
5,64	6,08

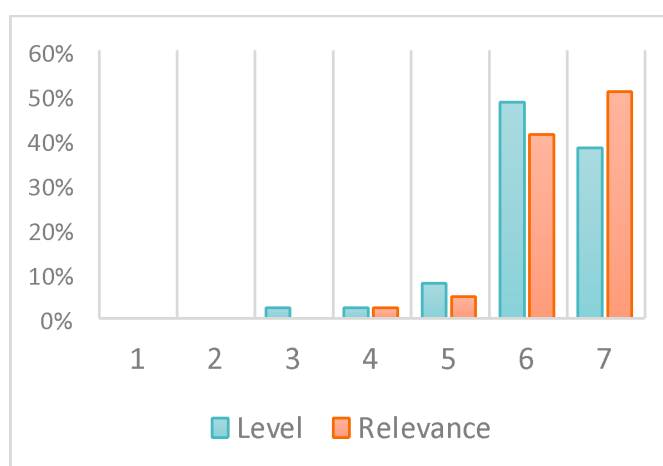
### 3. Knowledge of the labour market needs and job opportunities channels



Level Competence Average	Relevance Competence Average
5,41	6,08

### 4. Intercultural sensitivity approach

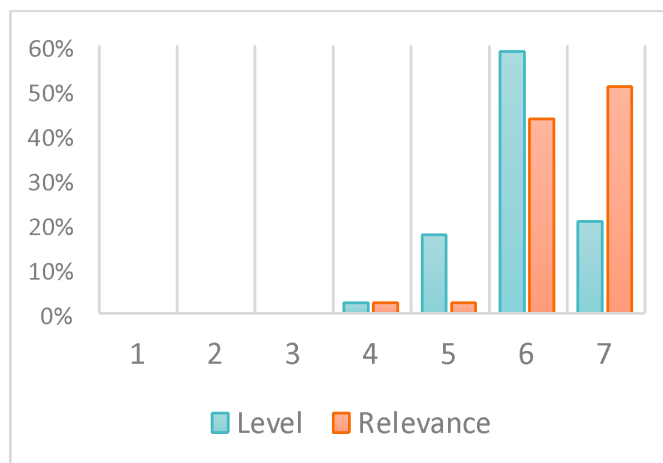
(refers to person's awareness of their own and other cultures, their ability to empathise with people from other cultures, and to look at an event or behaviour from one or more cultural perspectives)



Level Competence Average	Relevance Competence Average
6,18	6,41

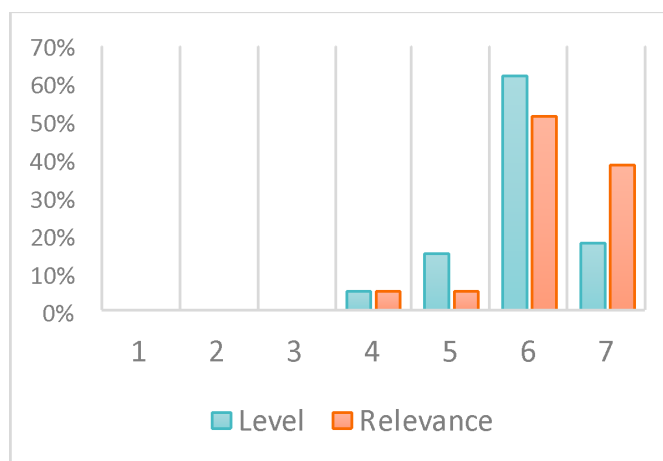
## 5. Intercultural communication skills

(comprehend a set of abilities required to communicate, or share information, with people from other cultures and social groups)



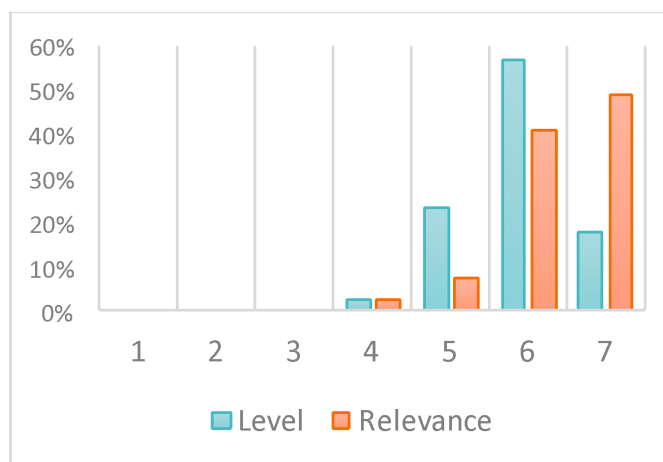
Level Competence Average	Relevance Competence Average
5,97	6,44

## 6. Ability to incorporate the social and cultural diversity of the group into the training content and learning processes



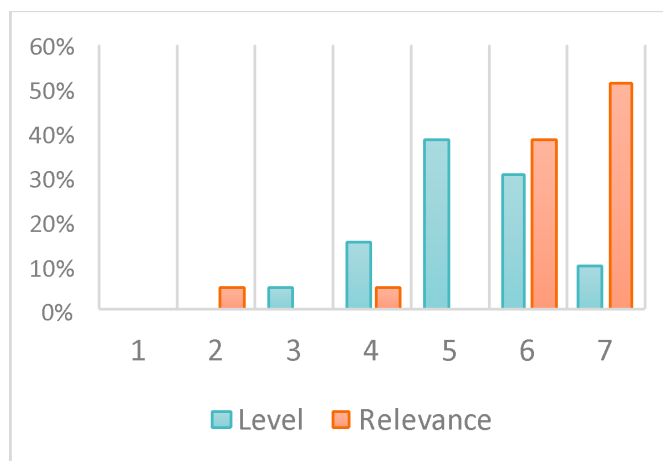
Level Competence Average	Relevance Competence Average
5,92	6,23

## 7. Knowledge on how to incorporate the gender perspective into the training content and learning processes



Level Competence Average	Relevance Competence Average
5,90	6,36

## 8. Ability to cope with demotivation of the students

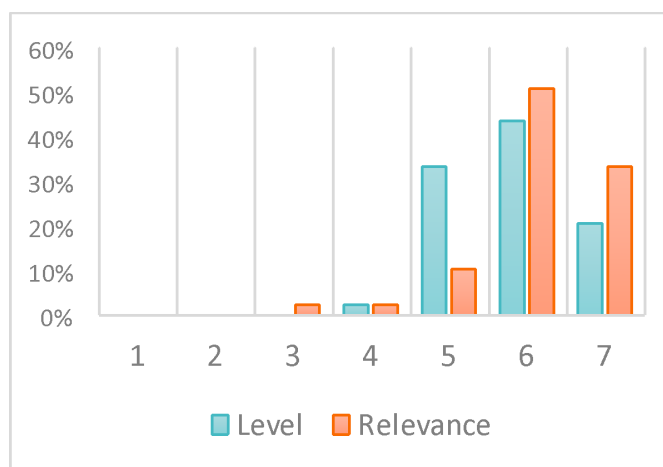


Level Competence Average	Relevance Competence Average
5,26	6,21



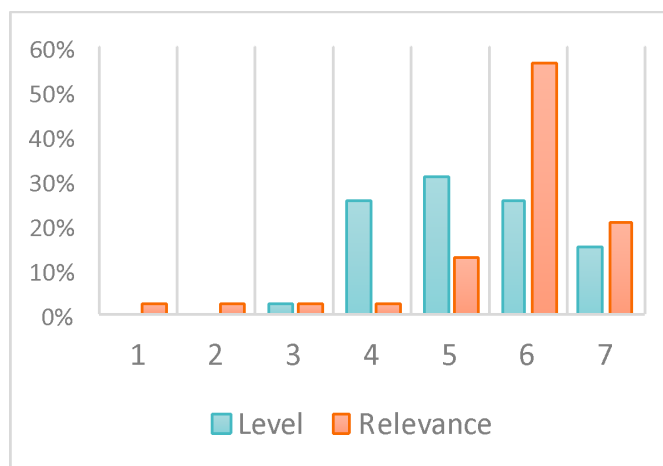
## 9. Ability to manage group dynamics

(i.e. deal with conflicts and disruption in the learning groups)



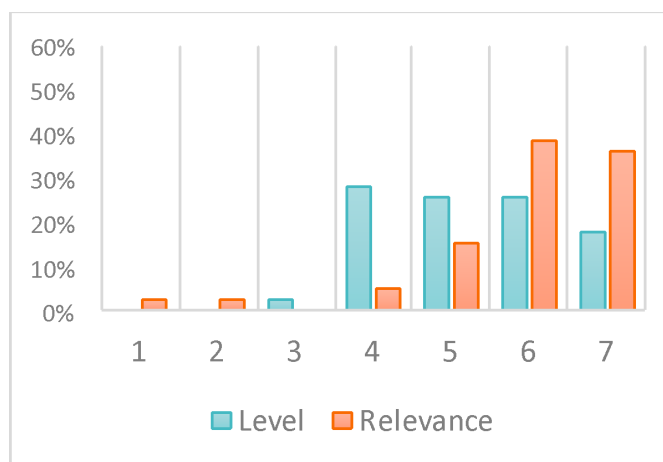
Level Competence Average	Relevance Competence Average
5,82	6,10

## 10. Mentoring skills



Level Competence Average	Relevance Competence Average
5,26	5,72

## 11. Coaching skills



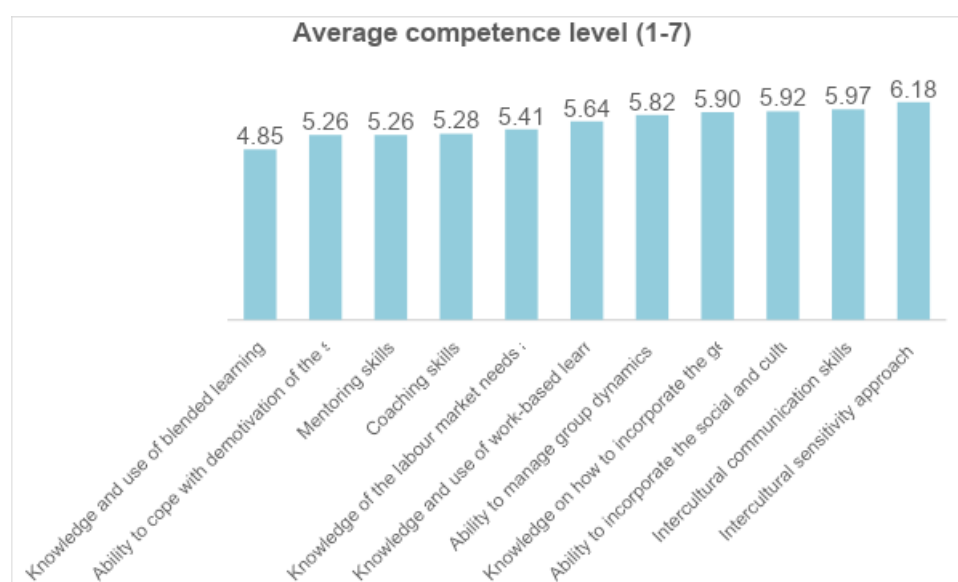
Level Competence Average	Relevance Competence Average
5,28	5,87

### Level competence average

Regarding the level competence average, the competences in which the trainers excel the most according to the questionnaire are:

- *Intercultural sensitivity approach*: average of 6,18/7.
- *Intercultural communication skills*: average of 5,97/7.
- *Ability to incorporate the social and cultural diversity of the group into the training content and learning processes*: average of 5,92/7.
- *Knowledge on how to incorporate the gender perspective into the training content and learning processes*: average of 5,90/7.

The lowest rated competence was *Knowledge and use of blended learning methodologies*, with 4,85/7.

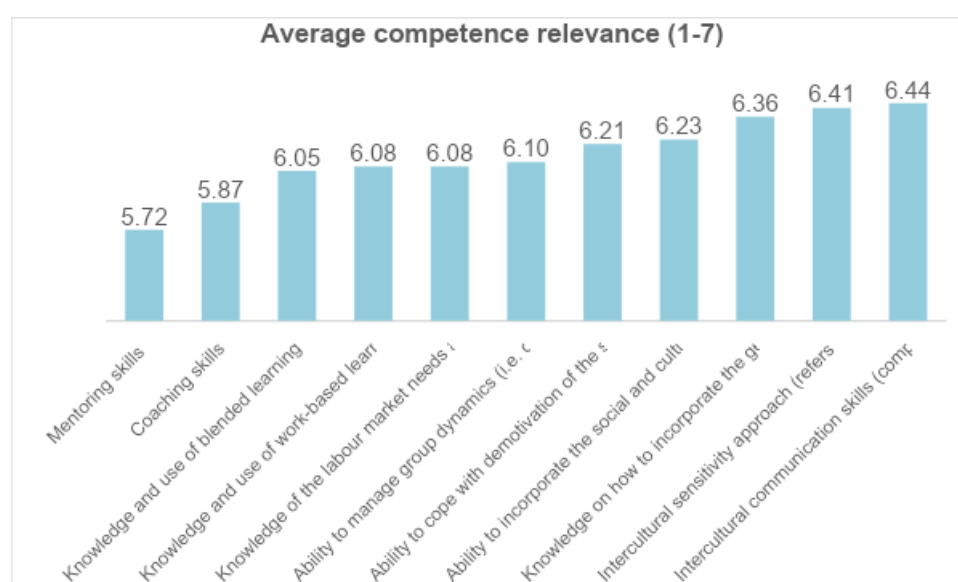


### Relevance competence average

Regarding the level competence average, the competences that the trainers find most relevant for their job performance are:

- *Intercultural communication skills*: average of 6,44/7.
- *Intercultural sensitivity approach*: average of 6,41/7.
- *Knowledge on how to incorporate the gender perspective into the training content and learning processes*: average of 6,36/7.

The lowest rated competences in terms of relevance were *Mentoring skills*, with an average of 5,72/7, and *Coaching skills* with an average of 5,87/7.



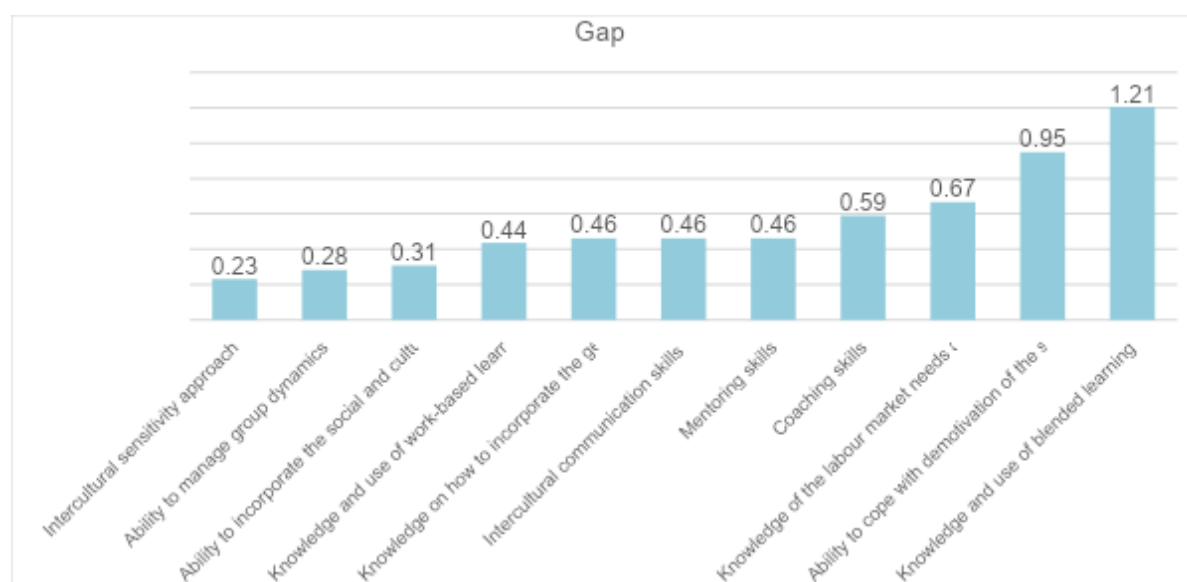
### Gaps detected

According to the answers, there is a concordance between the most relevant competences identified, and the level of competence possessed by the sample of trainers that filled the questionnaire. Both *Intercultural communication skills* and *Intercultural sensitivity approach* were ranked as the highest in the two sections.

On the other hand, the highest gaps between the relevance given to competences and the level assessment is identified in the *Knowledge and use of blended learning methodologies* and *Ability to cope with the demotivation of the students*.

In the following figures we present the gaps between the relevance and the level for all the set of competences:





### Needs for training and obstacles detected

The questionnaire included a section aimed to identify, on one hand, the needs for training of the professionals that could improve their job performance in the field of VET training, social and labour inclusion of migrants and refugees; and on the other hand, the main obstacles or challenges faced when reaching out to this targeted group.

Here we present a synthesized compilation of the answers. The full answers given by the respondents can be consulted in the Annex 2.

- ❖ **Needs for training.** To the question *Do you have any specific need for training that could improve your job performance in the field of VET training, social and labour inclusion of migrants and refugees? If so, what is it?* 23 of the

professionals answered indicating different areas of training that could be relevant to improve their job performance. These different areas are, mainly, the following:

- Intercultural competences. Although intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity were two of the highest ranked competences in terms of level assessment, many of the answers to the needs for training point out in this direction. The need for better understanding the cultural background of migrant and refugees' trainees is often mentioned, such as the acquisition of tools to improve the communication with trainees from different cultural origins.
- Competences related to social intervention. Some of the trainers have identified needs for training related to the fact that the migrant and refugee trainees often face complex and difficult socioeconomic situations. Acquiring tools to deal with these realities is seen as relevant (i.e., containment techniques). So is the ability to deal with conflicts in the group.

Also, the knowledge of the labour market needs and job opportunities channels is as well identified as important by some trainers.

- Training methodologies. Some answers pointed out to the need for training in the use of online methodologies.

❖ **Challenges.** To the question *"According to your experience, what are the main challenges (if there are) you face when reaching out to migrant or refugee trainees?"* 28 trainers answered, indicating the following main challenges:

- Interculturality. The trainers pointed out frequently to the language barriers as one of the main challenges, and also the diversity of the cultural background of trainees was identified as an important and challenging issue. Some answers were in the line of dealing with the intercultural element from a decolonial approach, and not impose the hosting culture. The existence of stereotypes and misinformation about migrants and refugees between the trainers was similarly indicated.
- Need for an integral approach. Understanding the realities of the trainees and dealing with the complexity of these, taking into account the difficulties they face in many spheres of their lives beyond the training context (housing, economic needs...) is also a concern and a challenge detected by the trainers.
- Closely related to the previous point, the actual engagement and involvement of the target groups in training activities (migrants and refugees at risk of social exclusion) is seen as an important challenge. It is indicated that often the economic urgency makes it difficult for them to





### 3. STATE OF THE ART: Challenges and obstacles migrants and refugees face in accessing VET Programs in Europe

In this section, we present the state of the art in relation to the challenges and obstacles that migrants and refugees face in Greece, Italy, Belgium and Spain when they access VET systems. The full bibliographical references used for its elaboration can be consulted in Annex III.

#### GREECE

Undoubtedly, refugees have to encounter a plethora of challenges during VET courses in Greece, therefore, the present article will attempt to highlight the main obstacles and describe the conditions prevailing in Greece in the field of refugee education and VET system.

First and foremost, the vast majority of refugees have **low or no academic background**, as they come from rural communities or have only engaged in manual labor predominated by unskilled or semiskilled workers, where physical effort is more required than mental. Consequently, it is inevitable that refugees will struggle to adjust to unprecedented for them educational environments, much more to settle into a class to absorb, consolidate and operationalize the knowledge they learn.

Disseminating the knowledge and equip refugees with skills attractive to the labor market, presuppose the acquisition of the Greek language. Apparently, the second and one of the most critical issues is the **language barrier** that is present among refugees and the challenges of learning the Greek language, although this concerns more adults rather than the youth. The diverse linguistic background (Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish, etc.) differ a lot from the Greek language, as the principles of the compared languages have significant dissimilarities in terms of morphology and phonology. Regardless the Greek language, the communication barrier is still existent and generic as schoolteachers struggle a lot to communicate with refugee children and their parents in English, thus inducing multifaceted issues<sup>1</sup>.

Even in cases where refugees have prior academic background, there are reports where many discontinued the university education due to the war and never obtained a qualification or degree, others completed their studies but did not manage to bring the qualification documentation with them during the migration, giving rise to other troubles as is the verification of the education, whilst others they do have qualifications in disciplines taught in a manner that contrasts the Education System of Greece and so, making the recognition and the attribution of ECVET points far more complex<sup>2</sup>. **Without**

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2017/16\\_06\\_17\\_Epistimoniki\\_Epitropi\\_Prosfygon\\_YPPEH\\_Apotimisi\\_Protaseis\\_2016\\_2017\\_Final.pdf](https://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2017/16_06_17_Epistimoniki_Epitropi_Prosfygon_YPPEH_Apotimisi_Protaseis_2016_2017_Final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Skleparis-Policy-Brief-GREECE.pdf>



increasing request of refugees and asylum seekers, considering that from the very beginning of 2014 there have been massive flows of foreigners seeking asylum in Europe: about 170.000 people landed in Italy and 65.000 applied for asylum in 2014 due to the Dublin Regulation. As a consequence, the Government, Regions and Local Authorities have set up a national plan and an Emergency (extraordinary) Reception System (CAS) to complement the ordinary system<sup>6</sup>.

Since 2018, several drastic changes have been foreseen to the design of the Italian reception and integration system<sup>7</sup>, which currently draws a clear division between **asylum seekers and refugees or beneficiaries of international protection** in the access to integration services. This unfortunately creates a double standard of quality, mainly based on migrant status, in offering social and economic integration services. Emergency Reception System which hosts asylum seekers foresee the assessment of the applicant's health conditions and potential special needs, but **do not foresee the provision of integration services**. Whereas the declared purpose of the 2018 reform was to reserve resources for the integration of those who will benefit of the international protection permit in Italy, the new law ends up allocating time, energy, and public funds to organising just basic assistance and mere material reception services for asylum seekers hosted in CAS or SAI facilities. This means board and lodging without access to essential services like Italian classes, legal support, work orientation, psychological assistance, which are instead guaranteed to refugees and beneficiaries of international protection only, creating *de facto* a double standard in the Italian reception system.

The first obstacle met by migrants and refugees in accessing VET programmes in Italy is linked to their **poor understanding of the Italian language**. As mentioned above, the current national reception system foreseen the provision of Italian classes only for beneficiaries of international protection, hosted through the SAI reception mechanism. Asylum seekers guested mainly in CAS facilities at the current state of the law have no access to Italian classes. At Regional level, this creates a practical problem in accessing VET programmes, since beneficiaries need to go through a selection process for which a language certificate is needed. This is confirmed by MondoDonna's practical experience as a service provider for integration facilities to asylum seekers in the Emilia-Romagna Region. On the other side, it has been reported - *through the available literature on the subject and confirmed by social workers mentoring asylum seekers within MondoDonna's reception centres in Bologna* - "the difficulty to make newcomers understand the importance of learning Italian. Many asylum seekers would prioritize being employed and earning quickly, without really understanding the importance of learning the language first<sup>8</sup>". Beneficiaries of international protection hosted through the SAI reception system are instead enrolled in Italian classes and accompanied to gain a language certificate, being this a service funded through the SAI Programme itself. Furthermore, even for the people holding a good level of understanding of the Italian

<sup>6</sup> Joint State-Region Conference, 10 July 2014;

<sup>7</sup> Decree-Law converted with amendments by Law 01/12/2018, n. 132 (Official Gazette 03/12/2018 n. 281);

<sup>8</sup> E.Allasino, M.Eve, G.Henry, M.Perino, "L'inserimento sociale e lavorativo dei richiedenti asilo e titolari di protezione in Piemonte" pp. 24, 2018

<http://www.byterfly.eu/islandora/object/librib:953389/datastream/PDF/content/librib%20953389.pdf>

language, the actual participation in workplace training programmes can be practically difficult, due to the use of specific terminologies, which are not always comprehensible to them. To conclude, the actual level of literacy in the Italian language is one of the main criteria for obtaining a job once the workplace training is ended<sup>9</sup>. Good Italian literacy is indeed also one of the main requirements for obtaining the renewal of a national residence permit.

In the framework of accessing VET programmes and employment services (e.g. workplace training programmes), a second obstacle is related to the **poor knowledge of the national bureaucracy/slow bureaucratic procedures**. This is particularly relevant for asylum seekers. Either if by law asylum seekers should remain in the CAS system for a limited amount of time, namely the time necessary to follow up with their request for obtaining the international protection permit - *and being therefore entitled to access the SAI reception system* - normally, due to slow bureaucracy procedures asylum seekers end up staying in first line reception centres up to one year or more. This is indeed the time needed to process their refugee status/international protection request.

A further concrete obstacle related to national bureaucracy procedures is linked to the capacity of the national system **to recognise and convert previous professional/academic qualifications and skills**, which are held by migrants and refugees. In order to be selected to accessing VET programmes and workplace training activities in Italy, migrants and refugees need to **hold and demonstrate their basic academic qualifications** (e.g. **eighth grade certificate**); migrants and refugees do not always have such educational titles, due e.g. to the loss of documents during the migration journey or because they didn't attend/finished primary school in their home country. In addition, to be selected for entering VET programmes, beneficiaries need to hold a **valid residence permit**: showing the receipt provided by local authorities to certify the request of such permit - or its renewal - is not considered to be a valid document for entering VET programmes and workplace training. The receipt is a document issued, among others, to the applicant for international protection by Police Headquarters, but also to those who are in the process of first issuing or renewing a residence permit for another reason, pending delivery of the definitive electronic residence permit. To summarize, selection criteria to enter VET programmes in Italy are particularly difficult to meet by migrants and refugees.

During the COVID19 pandemic, MondoDonna's social workers have observed that beneficiaries normally use smartphones to access online training. However, such equipment is very often not suitable to run distant learning platforms. Furthermore, the actual use of a learning platform for distance learning needs a good level of digital literacy and skills which often migrants do not have.

<sup>9</sup> E. Allasino, M. Eve, G. Henry, M. Perino, "L'inserimento sociale e lavorativo dei richiedenti asilo e titolari di protezione in Piemonte" pp 24, 2018  
<http://www.byterfly.eu/islandora/object/librib:953389/datastream/PDF/content/librib%20953389.pdf>

An additional obstacle, which is reported by migrants and refugees undertaking workplace training in agriculture or cleaning service regards the **lack of transport facilities**, which are important for arriving on time and sometimes are missing (e.g. to reach the workplace in the countryside).

In general terms, it can be considered as an additional obstacle, the cultural difficulty that migrants and refugees often have in **respecting certain rules** (e.g. being punctual) which are considered important for succeeding the training or being hired following a workplace training.

## SPAIN

The right to education and vocational training is set out in the Spanish Constitution of 1978, which includes the right to basic education for the foreign population. Vocational training in Spain has since the 1990s undergone far-reaching changes in an attempt to remedy the shortcomings of the previous educational system when viewed in a new European context. While the present system, which is still in the course of implementation, has cast off much of its former academic bias, there is still room for improvement [1].

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) program is an essential pillar both for refugees and migrants who want to start working in Spain and for retraining those who are already part of the labour market. Without training, the difficulties and obstacles to social and labour insertion increase considerably and without decent employment, social inclusion is impossible. For refugees, social and occupational inclusion is a **difficult long-term goal** to achieve as they must start from scratch for several reasons. In the case of those who do not know the Spanish language, learning the language is the first objective.

**Learning the Spanish language in fact is one of the greatest difficulties in accessing VET training** and occupies a central role for refugees and applicants for international protection and, although it may seem obvious beforehand, this was not always the case. The prioritization of this issue and the growth of the Spanish language teaching sector aimed at foreigners, still with much room for improvement with regard to migrants, has led to the professionalization of the service. These Spanish classes are for most of these people much more than a place for learning the language, they also become a space for meeting, companionship, new friends, freedom.

The average period to achieve effective communication in the new language lasts about 24 months, depending on the profile of the person and their mother tongue. Secondly, **there are hardly any schools, training centers or teachers who are experts in teaching Spanish** to the group of asylum seekers and refugees. Third, the **formation of groups is always heterogeneous** because it responds to the rate of entry of people into the reception and integration program and not to their language level. Fourth, their job expectations mean that **efforts, time and resources are essentially focused on job search**, even when they lack a basic or medium level of knowledge of Spanish

(CEAR 2019)<sup>10</sup>. Studies such as that of Van Tubergen and Kalmijn (2005)<sup>11</sup> show that refugees are less competent in the language of the host country compared to other categories of immigrants. According to his research, only one refugee in two, with more than ten years of residence in a country of the European Union, manages to acquire an advanced knowledge of the language.

Other than the language barrier, there are also other challenges to overcome when accessing VET programs in Spain: **health, housing, security, mobility and family care**. In particular for humanitarian migrants, socio-economic instability may prevent them from investing time in training. Refugees are in general more prone to health problems than the general population and other immigrant groups, and a considerable share suffers from traumatic and often violent experiences related to their forced migration (OECD, 2016)<sup>12</sup>. Refugees who report symptoms of anxiety and depression have considerably lower employment rates, compared with refugees and other migrants without such symptoms (Liebig and Tronstad, 2018)<sup>13</sup>. For both preparatory and VET programmes, refugees are often more likely to drop out, especially when they need to go for regular doctor visits, in addition to taking care of children or working full-time (Mathema, 2018)<sup>14</sup>.

**Lack of access to transportation** – whether because of cost or availability – is also a significant barrier for refugees, limiting access to training classes, schools, especially in big cities like Madrid where it is more expensive to travel from one part of the city to another.

As well, **immediate needs may compel migrant learners to enter work rather than VET**. In fact, many of young migrants who arrive in Spain around the end of compulsory schooling age are keen to enter the labour force immediately, and indeed, higher shares of migrant students perform paid work than native and having paid work has negative correlation with academic proficiency (OECD, 2018)<sup>15</sup>. In this regard, the apprenticeship can be more attractive to young migrants because of the possibility of earning income. It may be more rewarding than academic tracks for those who have a desperate need to secure living expenses or to meet other needs such as paying off debts linked to their journey to safety. However, participation in VET has opportunity costs (such as foregone earnings as an unskilled worker). **Apprenticeship wages are often lower than**

<sup>10</sup> CEAR. Informe 2019 de la Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR)

<sup>11</sup> Van Tubergen, F. y Kalmijn, M. (2005): “Destination-Language Proficiency in Cross-National Perspective: A Study of Immigrant Groups in Nine Western Countries”. American Journal of Sociology, nº 110 (5). 2005. pp. 1.412-1.457.

<sup>12</sup> OECD (2016), Making Integration Work: Refugees and Others in Need of Protection, Making Integration Work, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251236-en>.  
Open DOI

<sup>13</sup> Liebig, T. and K. Tronstad (2018), “Triple disadvantage? : A first overview of the integration of refugee women”, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 216, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/3f3a9612-en>.

<sup>14</sup> Mathema, S. (2018), What Works: Innovative Approaches to Improving Refugee Integration, Center for American Progress, Washington DC.

<sup>15</sup> OECD (2018), The Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background: Factors that Shape Well-being, OECD Reviews of Migrant Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264292093-en>.



**low-skilled jobs.** Such costs may lead to a situation where refugees lower their potential due to their desperate economic needs.

To conclude, Vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Spain helps connect migrants and refugees with the labour market and find jobs matching their skills and qualifications, however, considering the growing numbers of both asylum seekers and refugees, there is a need to upscale, adapt and reinvent VET programmes.

## BELGIUM

The main studies in Belgium are focused on the social and professional integration of migrants, the training in general and the access to vocational training in particular are not addressed separately of this main issue.

The main barriers and obstacles to access vocational training and consequently to integrate the employment market identified by these studies are of different types:

1. Legal/Administrative

Especially related to the recognition of the professional skills and diplomas acquired by migrants in their countries of origin. Also, barriers related to the type of “Residence permit” and “Work permit” which restrict the possibilities to access training and employment.

2. Information

Newcomer migrants are sometimes confused and face difficulties accessing structured and clear information about existing training settings.

The fact that the information is general because addressed to a wide target group makes it difficult to answer individual realities and needs which differ from person to person according to his/her life trajectory and his/her skills, diplomas and experience...

3. Language proficiency

knowledge of the host-country language is an efficient springboard to jump into training and to facilitate and improve social and professional integration of newcomers (migrants). Sometimes, illiteracy (of adults) is also a serious obstacle facing the integration on the training and employment market.

So, the level of language can be a blocking factor when starting training, so it is necessary to work at the same time on learning the language as well as learning.

4. Social and economic conditions

It's important to adopt a holistic approach to consider the target groups, they are not only “trainees” or “migrants”, they are also “parents”, “partners” ...etc.

So, family, financial and health issues could (are) be serious obstacles to work on and to consider when addressing the access to VET by migrants.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The initial set of competences proposed to be part of the *Fashion for Inclusion* competence framework for VET trainers in the fields of Sewing, Upcycling, Fashion & Design contains **11 competences** related to interpersonal, social and professional skills.

These competences were identified as fundamental for the trainers' job performance and for the achievement of high-quality learning outcomes when targeting migrants of refugees at risk of social exclusion.

The **self-assessment questionnaire** addressed to trainers delivered information on a) the average level achieved for each competence, and b) the job-related relevance given. In general, all the assessed competences were ranked highly in both dimensions, with scores above 5 out of 7, except for the *Knowledge and use of blended learning methodologies* related to the average level. This was, alongside with the *Ability to cope with demotivation of students*, the item with the wider gap between the average competence level achieved by respondent trainers and the relevance given.

Having *intercultural communication skills* and adopting an *intercultural sensitivity approach* were both the highest ranked competences, in terms of self-assessed competence level achieved and relevance, and the minimum gap was detected.

Regarding the **needs for training** detected by the respondents, acquiring knowledge and tools for dealing with the intercultural factor, related to the diversity of cultural origins of the trainees, is one of the most evident needs. Alongside with it, receiving training in competences related to social intervention and social education were also frequently mentioned as relevant.

The **main challenges faced and identified by VET trainers and professionals** when working with migrants and refugees at risk of social exclusion are associated, again, with the cultural element (more specifically with the existence of language barriers and lack of tools to understand and integrate the intercultural component in the training and in the learning environment) and also with the complexity of the social realities the trainees face, which often makes it difficult for them to keep up with training programmes.

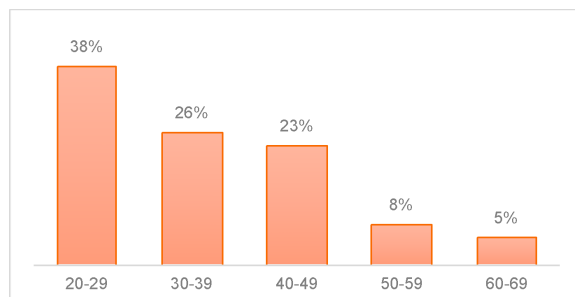
From the State of the Art reports delivered, it is possible to affirm that the **obstacles and challenges that migrants and refugees face when they want to access VET systems in hosting countries are similar** in Italy, Greece, Spain and Belgium.

The following stand out: a) difficulty for learning the hosting language, primary basis to undertake training programmes and foster social and labour integration; b) bureaucratic obstacles; c) administrative requirements for the access to the training programmes, often related to the legal status or the accreditation of qualification; d) difficulty in the recognition of skills or academic qualifications from the origin countries; e) precarious social and economic conditions, f) lack of information of the administrative procedures.

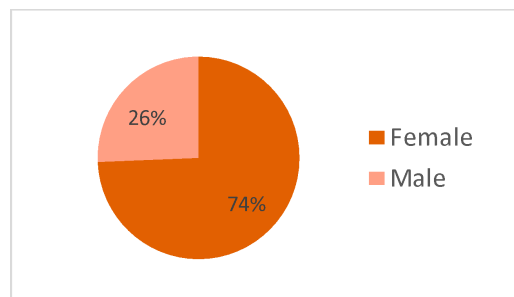


## ANNEX I - SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

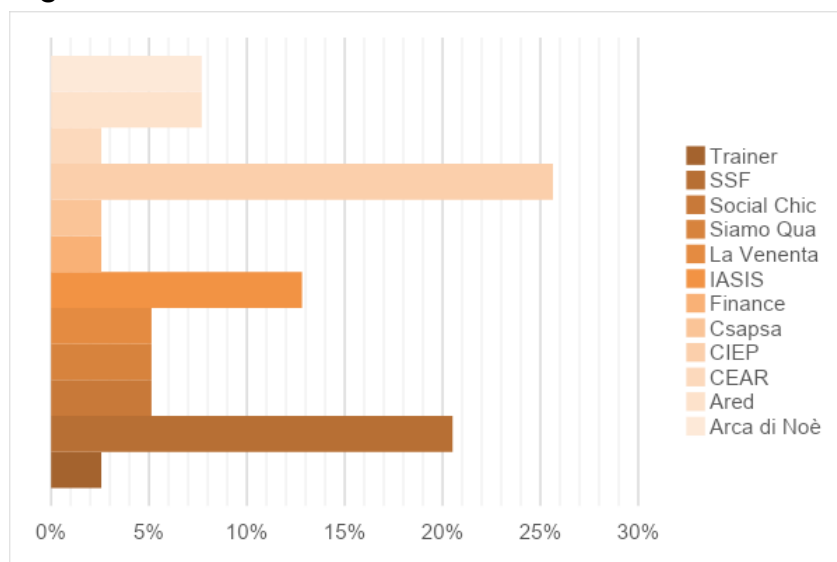
### Age Range



### Gender



### Organisation



## ANNEX II – TRAINERS ANSWERS TO THE OPEN QUESTIONS

### Needs for training

VET professionals' suggestions regarding specific needs for training that could improve their job performance in the field of VET training, social and labour inclusion of migrants and refugees.

- More occasions to meet and work together.
- *Creare più occasioni di scambio e condivisione* (Create more opportunities for exchange and sharing).
- Create more places where we can share and learn together.
- Social pedagogy training.
- How to manage conflicts.
- *Sarebbe necessario un tutoraggio all'operare dei formatori del settore sociale* (mentoring the work of trainers in the social sector)
- I need to deepen the history and culture of people who come to courses to create more empathy and achieve better learning outcomes.
- I think I need to see more videos or learn more about labour inclusion of migrants and refugees.
- Intercultural competences, empathy, communication skills with migrants/refugees, mentoring skills.
- Coping with any kind of human crisis (psychological consequences of covid-19, mental breakdowns, desperation, conflicts).
- Information about how to handle the differences between different cultures.
- Knowledge of the labour market needs and job opportunities channels.
- Participate in workshops on the issues.
- How to improve online teaching/training with our users.
- To adapt the space/resources to migrants and refugees with disabilities.
- Methods to avoid demotivation.
- Knowledge of the current job market and culture.
- Have a better knowledge of other cultures.

### Challenges

VET professionals' responses regarding the **main challenges they face when reaching out to migrant or refugee trainees.**

- Unification of different cultural heritage.
- Migrants or refugees are often not young and have their own idea on how to do things, they have their methods and they are not open to learning new techniques.
- There aren't enough possibilities to carry on creating job opportunities.
- The group dynamics, and empower them with design and work without colonizing them. It is important to know where the limits of colonization are.

- A lot. Understanding their life context, trying to adapt their needs to the programmes.
- *La sfida più importante è la necessità di intervenire sui vari campi contestualmente: cultura, lingua, formazione, inserimento. La sfida consiste nell'accompagnarli in un percorso integrato.* (The most important challenge is the need to intervene in different fields at the same time: culture, language, training, integration. The challenge is to accompany them on an integrated path).
- Understand their way of life and their culture but above all know how to manage often painful stories.
- Create involvement in the project, in order to create a long-term training perspective aimed to the job market, overcoming the tendency to think just about the economic needs of the moment.
- Language and different cultural background.
- Most often language.
- Linguistic barriers.
- *Le sfide maggiori sono il riuscire a integrare tutti e farli sentire a casa rispettando le fragilità di ognuno* (The biggest challenges are being able to integrate everyone and make them feel at home while respecting everyone's weaknesses).
- Cultural.
- Building a professional environment based on mutual trust.
- The only difficulty encountered is being able to understand the emotional state of workers, to know their past without damaging their sensitivity.
- The main challenge is to keep their constancy in all the activities and trainings.
- Lack of commitment, demotivation.
- Fake news, disinformation.
- Culture and language obstacles.
- Informality and illegality, also legal requirements that are impossible for them to fulfill
- Their adaptation to the new environment and culture. The host youth group and their stereotypes and bias.
- Language.
- Cultural beliefs.
- The main challenges are those linked to fill the training gaps of trainees in the training courses followed in the countries of origin.

#### Proposals on how to overcome challenges

VET professionals' responses regarding **how they think they could overcome the main challenges.**

- More occasions to work together.
- I try to understand their methods and only after I have understood them, I can let them see new techniques and try to make them work together.
- Creating new jobs opportunities.
- With a good ethnography investigation from design and pedagogy.
- With experience and more skills.



## ANNEX III – BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES USED FOR THE ELABORATION OF THE STATE OF THE ART REPORTS

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## Fashion for inclusion



Erasmus+

Funded by Erasmus+ SEPIE KA202  
(2020-1-ES01-KA202-082950)

Project coordinated by ABD Asociación Bienestar y Desarrollo, in partnership with the organizations IASIS, Mindshift, CIEP, Solidaridad sin Fronteras, BAU and Mondo Donna.

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the project coordinator ABD Asociación Bienestar y Desarrollo and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



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