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PILOT TESTING WP2 – A4

-Comparative report-

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I. INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of WP2, focused on the development of the SMART Volunteering Training Programme, pilot testing sessions have been held in every partner country to assess the contents developed and to gather some relevant feedback to amend and adapt the training to the real needs of the final beneficiaries.

To this purpose, each partner country has implemented one pilot testing with participants from voluntary organisations and NGOs (Target Group 2 – TG2) and another one with participants from businesses, business training organisations and business advisors (Target Group 3 – TG3). Each of the pilot trainings was expected to count on the participation of 8 to 10 people that would follow the training by attending the different sessions organised by the national partner.

After the implementation of the training sessions, partners delivered a National Report about the results obtained in their respective countries.

This report is aimed to compare the information relative to the Pilot testing for Target Groups 2 and 3 organised in Spain, UK, Italy, France, Cyprus and Belgium between March and September 2019 and present the main common conclusions derived from them. In any case, individual national reports with all the details of the specific experiences are also available.

II. ORGANISATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY

According to the proposal submitted by the partnership and approved by European Commission, the trainings included in WP2 were expected to have the following duration:

- Training for Target Group 2: 4 sessions (3-4 hours each)
- Training for Target Group 3: 3 sessions (3-4 hours each)

Always respecting the abovementioned duration, and after consultation with our project officer, partners were given autonomy for the organisation of the sessions. Indeed, most of the partners had showed their concern about the difficulties to engage workers from NGOs and companies in the attendance to several sessions in different days. For that reason, some partners preferred to combine sessions and organise a 2-day training for NGOs (with 2 sessions per day) and a 1-day training for companies where they delivered the 3 sessions foreseen for this target group. This measure improved the level of commitment from participants and assured the indicators and impact of the activities were fully achieved.



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For the organisation of the trainings in each country, local partners were autonomous to use any dissemination and recruitment actions that best suited the potential participants. As already stated, recruitment of participants was considered an important challenge by most partners, who struggled to engage participants. To this purpose, many different actions were taken to spread the open calls for participants, namely:

- distribution of flyers (specific flyers for the different target groups and countries were created by the partnership),
- advertisement at local conferences and events,
- publication in newsletters and partners' websites (news sections and/or popups),
- posts both in the project's and partners' social network pages (Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter),
- emails to potential participants,
- posters,
- creations of specific events in Eventbrite,
- distribution of invitations through local networks,
- snowballing approach to reach other participants, etc.

Additionally, for TG3 trainings, some partners opted for targeting a specific company or group of companies so it would be easier to set the schedule and organise the sessions. In fact, some of them even included this training within their CSR actions. In these cases, a more personalised approach was taken based on the individual contact with the companies subject to their characteristics and needs.

With regards to the number of participants, all partners complied with the indicators already set during the preparation of the project, ranging from 8 to 15 participants.

Facilitators of the sessions belonged to partner organisations, who selected the best candidates to deliver the trainings. They presented different profiles but were experienced professionals who had previous knowledge about the project and were all of them related to the fields of interculturality, migration, volunteering, non-discrimination, human rights, sociology, entrepreneurship or non-formal education.



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III. PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

A total of 127 people participated in the training sessions in all countries, distributed as follows:

	TG2	TG3
Spain	8	11
United Kingdom	13	10
Italy	9	10
France	15	11
Cyprus	10	9
Belgium	13	8
	68	59
TOTAL	127 participants	

Bearing in mind that the project was expected to have a minimum of 48 participants per Target Group, it can be confirmed that partners have exceeded indicators and the obtained results are quite positive for the impact of the project.

Within **TG2 training sessions**, participants presented different profiles although some common characteristics can be drawn. Thus, they actively work or collaborate in NGOs, public entities or even universities. All of them are involved in fields with a particular focus on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers such as welcoming and inclusion of migrants, education and LLL education, volunteering, non-discrimination, minorities, languages or youth. Positions included social workers, intercultural mediators, workers in reception centres, health care professionals, legal advisors or NGOs managers.

Of course, all participants shared great interest on how to effectively involve migrant women in volunteerism and in the local community, while they wished to better understand how volunteerism can empower the female migrants in general.

By and large, in all countries it is remarkable that most participants were women. Additionally, the majority of them were highly qualified.

Regarding their origin, some differences can be appreciated with some partner countries just counting on national participants while in other countries they had a greater variety of nationalities among participants, including African, American, Asian and European who were themselves migrants who had created their own organisations or worked in one of them.



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Within **TG3 training sessions**, participants presented as well very different profiles, with managers, members of cooperatives, lawyers, psychologists and employees from the areas/departments of social responsibility, human resources, diversity and gender equality in the company, etc. Broadly, most of the participants in the trainings in all countries were women.

Participating companies represented very varied sectors and were both small and medium-sized companies and, in some countries, big companies as well, who encouraged their employees to follow these training sessions.

As already explained, business sector is still a very hard target to reach so recruitment process was difficult. However, the participants who finally attended the training were really committed and interested in the topics addressed. They expressed that, after the sessions, they were more aware about the situation of migrant women in the labor market and about diversity in the business sector.

IV. FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

Feedback from participants was obtained through the completion of an evaluation questionnaire prepared by INCOMA and distributed to participants by the organising partner. Data was collected and analysed through the Survey Monkey platform and results can be consulted in the following link:

Target Group 2 results: <https://es.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-HCGZXWJQ7/>

Target Group 3 results: <https://es.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-MZ8LFWJQ7/>

A summary of the most relevant feedback from each target group can be found below.

Target Group 2

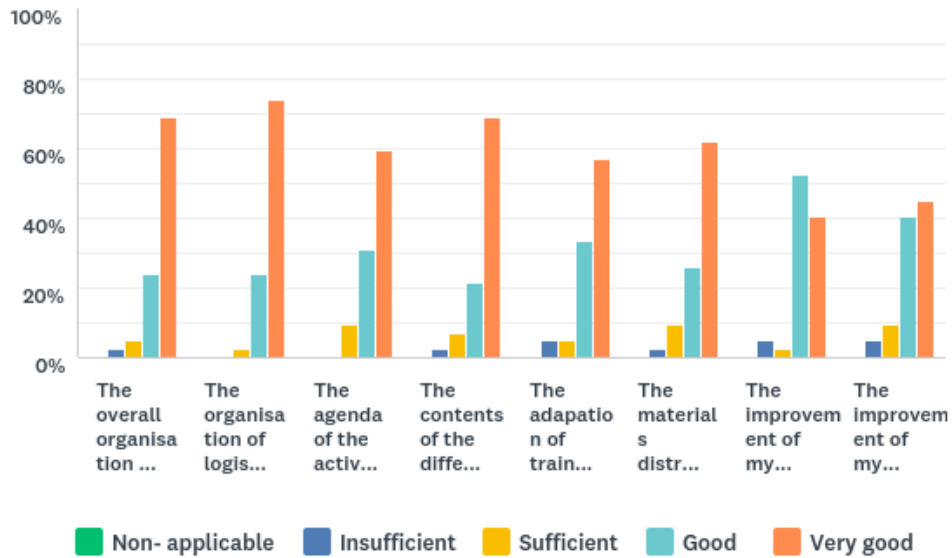
- **How do you assess the following elements related to the preparation and organisation of the training?**

In this section respondents were asked for questions such as overall organisation, logistics, agenda, contents of the sessions, adaptation to the needs, quality of materias and improvement of personal and technical skills.

As we can see in the graphic, all the different aspects assessed received a very positive evaluation, being a great part of the answers "Very good" and "Good" for all the questions.



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- **Main strengths and most positive aspects of the training**

The training was very well valued by participants, who specially highlighted the usefulness of the contents and how they can be adaptable to new circumstances and groups. They also found that they had learnt about volunteering and recognition and monitoring of volunteers' skills.

The quality of trainers and the way they delivered the sessions were very well assessed, as well as the interactive methodology.

Participants treasured the possibility to work with the group, which created interesting interaction and the possibility to establish networks. In addition, the combination of different expert knowledge enriched the sessions.

useful work volunteering participants training
 activities migrant women Group experience trainer



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- **Aspects to be improved**

Most of the aspects that participants think should be improved are related to the timings, as most of them would have liked to have some more sessions. They also suggested to include more practical activities that support skills development and promote discussions. Finally, participants would like to work further in concrete ideas to put into action with beneficiaries.

good groups activities topic time sessions participants

- **Competences to be improved by participants**

In general, participants considered it would be essential to continue learning about volunteering-related skills, such as: skills mapping and development, knowledge about international regulations on volunteering, training and counselling of volunteers, recognition of skills, etc.

Networking was also presented as an important field where they would like to have a better performance. They also expressed their need to improve IT competences and integrate more on-line tools to their daily work.

Volunteering better network learn skills develop

- **Other comments**

From participants' evaluations we can firmly conclude that they really enjoyed the training sessions and had a very good experience. They emphasised the work of trainers and showed great interest in the project and its objectives.



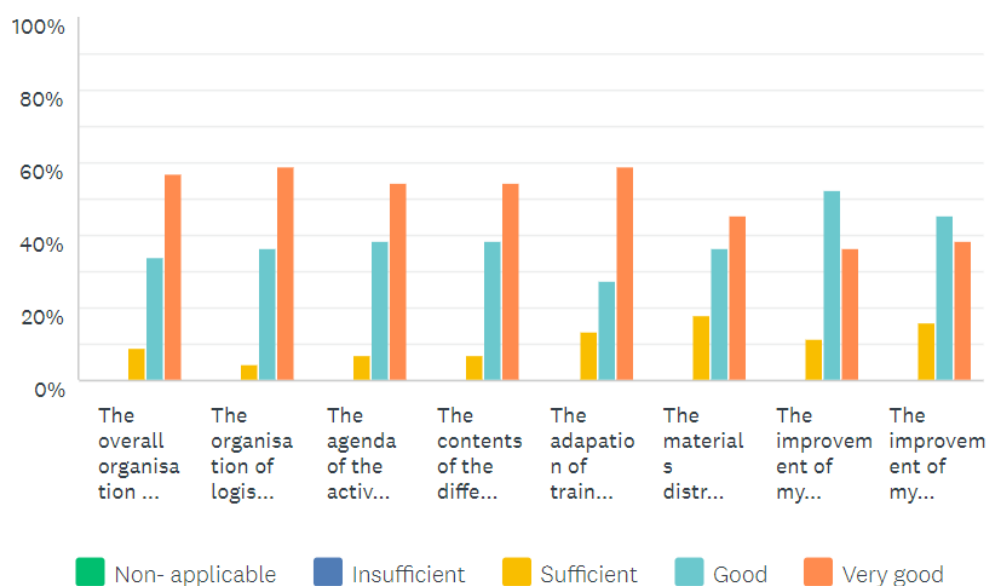
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Target Group 3

- **How do you assess the following elements related to the preparation and organisation of the training?**

In this section respondents were asked for questions such as overall organisation, logistics, agenda, contents of the sessions, adaptation to the needs, quality of materials and improvement of personal and technical skills.

As we can see in the graphic, all the different aspects assessed received a very positive evaluation, being a great part of the answers "Very good" and "Good" for all the questions.



- **Main strengths and most positive aspects of the training**

One of the most valued aspects of the training for businesses was the possibility to interact and discuss with other participants or colleagues and learn from their experiences. The activities were considered as very useful for the improvement of skills related to diversity management and to SCR.

The quality of the materials provided and the expertise of facilitators were mentioned as very positive aspects, as well as the dynamic approach.



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Learned opinions participants session Interactive
discussions activity aspects useful good

- **Aspects to be improved**

Although participants enjoyed the trainings very much, they made some proposals. For example, they would have liked to have more time devoted to the sessions and, specially, to be given the opportunity to have more interaction and group activities.

They would have liked as well to be given practical examples and solutions to be implemented back to work.

It was also suggested that the participation of migrant women to give their testimonial could have been enriching and would have added great value to the sessions.

time migrant women think activities make maybe
practical less

- **Competences to be improved by participants**

Communication, networking, diversity and business management, implementation of CSR measures or active listening and proactivity were mentioned as some of the competences that participants feel they should improve.

people communication good way skills need network

- **Other comments**

Additional comments made by participants were very positive and were aimed at thanking the project and the facilitators for the training. Most of them felt the training had perfectly adapted to their needs and it had been very helpful. Some of them even suggested it would be an interesting proposal to be implemented at an internal level within their companies.



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V. FEEDBACK FROM FACILITATORS

Main challenges tackled by facilitators/partner institutions

- Recruitment of participants for the training. Even when a large number of people signed in not all of them eventually attended the training sessions.
- Although facilitators understand the importance of respecting the contents created and the homogeneity in all piloting sessions, they found it difficult to work on presentations done by others.
- Participants came from different starting points which required careful management to ensure no one was left behind.
- Time management in order to balance the need to leave enough space for participants to express themselves and, at the same time, deliver the scheduled contents.
- Adaptation to priorities and needs of organisations, which sometimes implied some minor modifications of the contents, always respecting the lesson plans and the training modules.
- Even though general evaluation of the training is quite positive and participants enjoyed it, sustainability of participants in four sessions was challenging due to their busy work schedule and limited staff in their organisations.



Recruitment



Use of materials prepared by others



Participants with different starting points



Time management



Adaptation to participants' needs



Sustainability of participants during all sessions



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Positive aspects

In general, facilitators gave a very positive feedback about their experience during the implementation of the training and they found it easy to deliver the sessions, that run smoothly. They perceived participants to have a real interest in the topic and to have showed willingness to learn more about volunteerism and how they can contribute to empowering female migrants.

They felt participants were active, respectful and communicative and participated in activities and discussions. In fact, most of them particularly enjoyed these discussions, as they were very rich and led to sharing of ideas and shared good practice that they could later apply to their professional routine.

With a view to sustainability of the project, it is interesting to highlight that some participants established links that would be used to create networks or common projects.

In most of the cases, participants were very committed to the programme and to exploring the benefits of an intercultural workforce. They recognised volunteering as valuable as any other professional experience/traineeship. However, they have not used practical tools to make volunteering more formal and accountable. Therefore, they took good note of skill recognition and assessment tools, self-assessment and external assessment tools and tools for certification. Participants shared the information and the tools with their colleagues and started practicing them in their organisations.

Supporting materials were very well valued by facilitators, who considered that the facilitator's guide helped a lot during the preparation of the sessions, as it contains all of the necessary information and guidance. It was considered as a real asset for the trainer.

Proposals for improvement

In general terms, most suggestions were related to need of adaptation to the specific realities, which was a bit challenging for facilitators. However, they managed to adapt part of the contents and activities to their national languages and/or contexts. Concrete changes made by facilitators can be consulted in the National Reports drafted by project partners. To bridge this situation, it could be advisable that each country prepared the convenient adaptations, that could be based on the suggestions already made by facilitators and could include alternative videos, tools applicable to national contexts, etc.

Additionally, facilitators proposed to have some more time during the first session to get to know better all the participants and their organisations, including some ice-breaker. In fact, most facilitators prepared an ice-breaking or brainstorming activity for this first session.

With regards to companies, longer sessions, or more sessions, would be beneficial to facilitate the amount of discussions which were required; however, it is understood that those in the private sector



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often have difficulties with getting a substantial amount of time off. The one solution would be to integrate the training programme into the business curriculum, making it a compulsory training day for all businesses. Some participants also discussed implementing a Cultural Awareness Day in their organisations to raise awareness of the topics discussed in this training package.



Prepare adaptation
materials for each national
context



Include ice-breaker activities



For TG3, include the sessions
in the training programmes
organised by companies



Longer sessions to facilitate
discussion



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VI. CONCLUSIONS

SMART Volunteering pilot trainings have successfully been implemented in all partner countries within the framework of the development of Work Package 2, involving a total of 127 participants from Spain, France, Belgium, Italy and Cyprus. After analysing the results obtained at a national level, this report has shown the main common conclusions drawn from the review carried out by all project partners.

The feedback obtained evidences that overall the course was very well received, and it engaged the appropriate target groups, who showed a great interest during the sessions. In fact, it is expected that the learning from the training will be cascaded within the represented organisations and will ensure that migrant women volunteers are supported with their progression and self-development as well as with their integration into companies. The participants expressed their interest to further contribute and be active in future relevant activities of the SMART Volunteering project and similar initiatives.

With regards to NGOs, although most of them already hosted volunteers, the training helped them realise that volunteering opportunities can be much more than giving a little bit of your time: it can also be part of an integration process and a professional experience that can later on help to get on the labor market. Therefore, the training was important in looking at volunteering from a perspective of developing skills and benefiting from practical and efficient tools that we provided.

For its part, TG3 training programme was beneficial to all those involved in the business sector as it placed value on the importance of an intercultural working environment and the advantages this can bring to the company. Intercultural competences are lacking and the management of interculturalism by entrepreneurs is sometimes delicate. Therefore, it is important to raise professionals' awareness about the benefits of integrating interculturality in the company and give stakeholders some tools and knowledge they could put into practice in their daily work.

Third Country Nation migrant women are also final beneficiaries from this new perspective while at the same time they integrate a new society and adapt to a new environment they can practice and develop skills that could be recognize for a further job position.

We can gladly conclude that the training sessions helped participants to change their vision towards migrant women. Our experience has proved that the SMART Volunteering approach is very innovative in all countries and for all target groups.

All in all, we can learn from the project how a cooperation system between the NGO and the private sector could be an interesting collaboration with a concrete impact on how to better host migrant woman in Europe. Continued promotion of this project is essential in order to break down stereotypes and change any misconceptions of NGOs, business advisors and other professionals of third sector across the European Union.