



## **MIGRANT WOMEN AND THE LABOUR MARKET: DIVERSITY AND CHALLENGES**

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### **MIGRANT WOMEN INTO WORK – WHAT IS WORKING?**

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*The views expressed are those of the author and do not engage either the OECD, the European Commission or the national authorities concerned.*

## **SUMMARY**

This paper presents some examples of initiatives which have fostered the labour market integration of migrant women with less than a tertiary education in six OECD countries (Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK). It is based on case studies from several OECD countries of a number of projects run by government, non-government and private organisations. By way of introduction, it provides a short summary of the main factors affecting migrant women's employment as identified in the literature, and some general background information on the countries covered. It then identifies and discusses key features emerging from this small-scale study which have contributed to projects' success and which are common across countries and projects, for example, the use of work placements to provide host country work experience. Other less frequently used approaches, such as mentoring schemes, are also examined as tools which may be effective in assisting project participants into work. In conclusion, a number of areas for more thorough evaluation are proposed, for example, the most effective ways of linking language acquisition for work with other preparation for labour market participation, such as training and work experience. Similarly, the nature of the supports contributing to positive outcomes for project participants needs further attention, such as the accessibility and affordability of childcare.

## MIGRANT WOMEN INTO WORK – WHAT IS WORKING?

### 1. Introduction

1. This paper analyses various approaches taken by a number of projects assisting migrant<sup>1</sup> women with less than tertiary education<sup>2</sup> into work, and their degree of success. It aims to identify - in so far as is possible from a small-scale survey - what appears to constitute good practice in the field. It draws on case studies from several OECD countries (described in the Annex)<sup>3</sup> of a number of such projects run by government, non-government and private organisations. The paper focuses on women who have arrived in the host country other than as the principal applicant (for labour migration). That is to say, they have migrated to accompany the principal applicant, or for family reunion purposes (including family formation), or as refugees or asylum seekers. The countries surveyed are Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, so as to achieve a balance between traditional immigration countries and other OECD countries, as well as to include both European and non-European examples.

2. The projects described are not necessarily representative, nor does this paper provide an overview of all programmes in the six countries covered. Indeed, most national governments do not have a comprehensive overview. Projects were identified by internet search and by responses from governments, non-government/voluntary sector agencies (NGOs) or those working on EU initiatives.<sup>4</sup> The descriptions of the projects are based on published reports, where available in English and/or on telephone interviews with the organisations running the projects described.

3. The paper is structured as follows. The background section provides a summary of the main factors affecting migrant women's employment as identified in the literature, and some general background information on the countries included. This is followed by a discussion of the general features of the "into work" programmes examined, a review of how outcomes are measured and a concluding section containing a summary and recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> Migrant is used here to mean a person not born in the host country (foreign-born). Projects in many countries do not identify participants in this way, but by whether they are, for example, from a visible minority, an ethnic minority or of a non-English speaking background. Such projects are included where it is likely that a significant proportion of the participants are also migrants or, if this is not known, if it seems the experience of the project may nevertheless be relevant. Most projects are women-only ones or provide a gender breakdown of their clients (though they cannot always identify which of their women clients are migrant or ethnic minority women).

<sup>2</sup> This term is used to mean those with 0-12/13 years schooling.

<sup>3</sup> The author is grateful to the many women and men running these projects, who spared the time to discuss them with her.

<sup>4</sup> Mainstream public employment services are not included.

## 2. Background

### *Factors affecting employment*

#### *Overview*

4. Considerable research has been done in recent years to provide a better understanding of the barriers to **labour force participation facing women of working age** (OECD, 2002a; OECD, 2003a). Major determinants of women's labour force participation include the presence of children, levels of education, disincentives in tax and benefit systems, the availability and affordability of childcare, parental leave policies, the level of the national unemployment rate, the availability of part-time work (in some countries) and cultural attitudes to women working. For **migrants, both men and women, employment rates are influenced** by the acquisition of language skills, their education levels, the extent to which work experience and qualifications gained in the country of origin are accepted in the host country, the extent of their host country work experience and discrimination (OECD 2004b; OECD 2005a). Other factors such as the acquisition of social capital which, for example, assists the creation of social networks to improve job seeking, have also been identified as affecting employment opportunities. The factors affecting the labour force participation of migrant women in OECD countries are similar to those faced by native-born women as well as to those faced by migrant men. But the combination of both sets of factors poses particular problems for migrant women who wish to enter the labour market.

5. In the following sections, several factors affecting either women's or migrants' employment are examined in more detail, with a focus on how they affect migrant women in particular. By way of background, Table 1 presents the 2003 employment to population ratios for foreign-born and native-born women and men. It also identifies the differences in these ratios between foreign-born and native-born women (the women's gap) and men and between foreign-born women and men as well as between native-born women and men (the gender gaps). In all six countries, the proportion of foreign-born women in employment is substantially lower than the proportion of the native-born.<sup>5</sup> The foreign-born gender gap is also wider than that for the native-born population. The women's gap is over 10% in all countries except Australia and the foreign-born gender gap is wider than this in all the countries, except Australia and Sweden. However, examining one gap in isolation from the other can be misleading. For example, in Sweden, the foreign-born gender gap is low but the women's gap is relatively high. A number of factors affect these outcomes. These include the selection processes for migrants, the extent to which migrants' characteristics match host countries' labour market needs and the nature of the labour market access permitted in the past to certain categories of migrants.

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<sup>5</sup> This difference would be greater if adjusted for the foreign-born women's younger age structure, but less if adjusted for years in country.

**Table 1: Employment to population ratio, 16-64, (%), men and women by country of birth, selected OECD countries, 2003**

Country	Foreign-born women	Native-born women	Foreign-born men	Native-born men	Gap between foreign-born and native-born women (1)	Gap between foreign-born and native-born men (2)	Gender gap for foreign-born (3)	Gender gap for native-born (4)
Australia	64.9	72.3	74.1	78.7	7.4	4.6	9.2	6.4
Canada	60.7	70.1	77.2	79.1	9.4	1.9	16.5	9
Germany	43.4	60.2	64.1	71.3	16.8	7.2	20.7	11.1
Netherlands	51.6	68	68.4	83.1	16.4	14.7	16.8	15.1
Sweden	60.1	74.4	64.6	76.5	14.3	11.9	4.5	2.1
UK	54.6	66.6	72.2	78.5	12	6.3	17.6	11.9

Notes : (1) The difference between the employment rate of foreign-born and native-born women.

(2) The difference between the employment rate of foreign-born and native-born men.

(3) The difference between the employment rate of foreign-born men and foreign-born women.

(4) The difference between the employment rate of native-born men and native-born women.

Source: calculated from OECD 2005a.

### *Childcare*

6. Of the institutional determinants of women's and migrants' labour force participation, there is evidence that amongst the most significant for migrant women is the availability and affordability of childcare.<sup>6</sup> For women in all OECD countries (except Belgium, Denmark and effectively Sweden)<sup>7</sup> the presence of children has a dampening effect on women's employment rates, (OECD, 2002a).<sup>8</sup> Such caring responsibilities pose problems not only where children are not yet at kindergarten or school, but also where there are school age children, as school hours and holidays rarely coincide with working ones. Foreign nationals are more likely than nationals<sup>9</sup> to cite family responsibilities (32% as against just under 20%) as a reason for remaining outside the labour force (OECD, 2005a).<sup>10</sup> One analysis (OECD, 2005a) indicates that in Germany, the Netherlands and the UK<sup>11</sup> the presence of children (where the children were aged under three – under six for Germany) is strongly associated with inactivity for foreign women in couples.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> But note, for example, that the employment rate of Black Caribbean women (proportion of migrants unknown) with children in the UK was higher in 2000-02 than for White women, including higher full-time employment rates (Lindley *et al.*, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Five other countries show a slight increase in employment rates for women with one child but a decline with two.

<sup>8</sup> If the average age at which migrant women have their first child is significantly lower than for native-born women (as in the Netherlands), this may mean that they gain less, if any, work experience before they have children. This may adversely affect their subsequent opportunities to enter the labour market.

<sup>9</sup> Figures for foreign-born and native-born were not available.

<sup>10</sup> Calculated for 10 EU countries from the European Labour Force Survey Figures.

<sup>11</sup> The other 3 countries examined in this paper were not included in this analysis.

<sup>12</sup> Figures for foreign-born and native-born were not available.

Even in the case of Sweden, where childcare facilities are amongst the most available and affordable of all OECD countries (Immervoll and Barber, forthcoming) foreign-born women's employment rates (though high internationally) lag those of the native-born (see Table 1 above). This indicates that though important, other factors may have an equally important affect on migrant women's entry into paid employment. It is also possible that migrant women may have different attitudes to the use of formal childcare than native-born women.

### *Language fluency*

7. Fluency in the language of the host country is important for a migrant's integration, especially into the labour market. While not the only factor affecting integration, the degree of fluency is a strong predictor of the chances of obtaining and keeping employment and of increased earning levels (OECD, 2003b; Dustmann and Fabri, 2003). The opportunity to practise the host country language which employment provides, reinforces language proficiency (see *e.g.*, Chiswick and Miller, 1994; Beiser and Hou, 2000) and also facilitates social integration.

8. Beiser and Hou (2000), drawing on a 10-year study of the resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees who arrived in Canada between 1979 and 1981, looked specifically at gender differences in language acquisition and resulting employment outcomes. They found that the women in the study started acquiring English from a lower base than the men, both in terms of prior knowledge and their level of education, and that a decade later their English language skills remained considerably lower than those of the men. They attributed this largely to the fact that the women had fewer opportunities than the men to learn English. It appears that this was due, in part, to government policy which was then targeting language training towards those who seemed most likely to enter the labour force (*i.e.*, excluding many women with young children). The authors also found that whilst employment increased English fluency for both men and women, it had a particularly beneficial effect on women's proficiency. However, women were far less likely than men to participate in the labour force, probably because of childcare responsibilities. As in other research, it is reported that host country language proficiency became an important factor over time - for both women and men - explaining long term labour force retention and income levels (see also OECD, 2005a).

9. Given the importance of host country language acquisition, Table 2 contains a brief overview of the basic<sup>13</sup> language tuition made available to new (and some long-term) migrants in these six countries. It summarises the duration of the tuition available, how classes are organised, provides a general idea of who may participate, fees, and of the availability of childcare and transport assistance.

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<sup>13</sup> In particular, it does not cover any extra tuition which may be available to those receiving government funded financial assistance for the unemployed.

**Table 2: Overview of government funded provision of language tuition for migrants (1)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Duration of tuition</b>	<b>Organisation of classes</b>	<b>Cost of classes and eligibility criteria</b>	<b>Childcare and other assistance</b>
Australia	510 hours + up to 400 extra for some humanitarian entrants  Must register within 3 months of arrival or gaining permanent residence (deferral possible). No time limit for completion of the 510 hours.	Full-time, part-time, evening, weekend and possibility of home-based tuition (by trained volunteer or materials for distance learning).	Free (some skilled migrants without functional English may pay a larger visa fee to contribute to tuition costs).  Newly-arrived adult (some 16-18 yr olds) permanent migrants including humanitarian entrants, those switching from temporary to permanent status, those on temporary visas which lead to permanent ones and family reunion and formation entrants.  Must not have functional English.	Free. Offered to all clients taking classroom-based provision who have under school age children. To be offered within 3 months of registering for tuition.
Canada (Enhanced (more work-focused) Language Training was launched in 2003/04)	Three years is the usual participation length, regardless of number of hours weekly, but this can be extended till migrant reaches functional English or French level.  Available in English and French.	Full-time, part-time, evening, weekend and possibility of home-based study or distance learning.	Free.  Newly arrived immigrants who have/will receive permanent residence, government assisted refugees and other permanent residents (not citizens). Migrants who have been long-term permanent residents may have less priority for a class.  Must not have functional English or French.	Free childminding assistance provided to clients who show such funding will make a difference as to whether they can attend classes.  Transport assistance may be available including for children who must accompany parents to classes <i>e.g.</i> , during school holidays.
Germany	600 hours (language) + 30 (orientation education)  Must begin within two years of arrival. After commencement, the course must be finished within 12 months.	Flexible courses, full-time, part-time, evenings and weekend classes.	Payment of about one euro per hour, but may be waived.  New non-EU migrants are entitled, including refugees, and courses are compulsory in many cases where there is an integration need.  Limited availability for non-EU longer-term migrants due to resource constraints, though where they are in receipt of social assistance, courses may be compulsory.	Limited childcare funded by the provider of the integration course is available if the providing agency thinks it is necessary. In practice this is likely to mean that there must be sufficient women needing childcare to make up a class, before it is made available.
Netherlands	500 hours (language) + 100	Full-time, part-time, some	Free.	Childcare during classes is provided for new

(2) (Combining language classes with vocational training/work/work experience is possible)	(civic education) is the average provided. Maximum of 1 year's training is available.  Must begin within about 6 months of grant of residence permit. Exemptions/deferrals possible.	evening classes.	Classes are available to those new migrants assessed as needing them. If they are assessed as needing them, the classes are compulsory. Those eligible to be assessed are new non-EU permanent and most temporary migrants (of 16 years+), including refugees, many asylum seekers, and family reunion and formation entrants.  Must not have functional Dutch.	migrants. Fees are means-tested.
Sweden	Unlimited until at a level considered work ready.  No time limit to begin or complete.  (Introduction Programme intended to last 18-24 months but can be extended, and is full-time)	Full-time, part-time and evening..	Free. All migrants who are permanently resident and many temporary ones  Introduction Programme (language programme often with additional instruction with a view to transition to work) provides a means-tested allowance per family for those eligible for it (mainly recognised refugees, and family members arriving within 2 years of grant of permanent residence to the refugee they are joining).  Asylum seekers have access to similar classes.	No childcare provided by the class providers, as participants can rely on provision made by their municipalities. This is available at low, means-tested fees for all legal residents (including many temporary ones) for all children of 12 months and older.
UK	Unlimited till pass NVQ 2 equivalent. (3)  No time limit to begin or complete.	Full-time, part-time, evening, weekend.	Free to all over 16 including UK and EU citizens, refugees, many asylum seekers, others who have been resident for 3 years (or one year for family reunion/formation with UK citizens, permanent residents and refugees).	No government funding for childcare or travel expenses for the classes unless the agency providing the course makes special provision (which some do for refugees or other hardship cases).

Notes:

1. This table does not include additional programmes available to those in receipt of government financial assistance for the unemployed.
2. Significant changes will be implemented in 2006.
3. This would be equivalent of job ready for most jobs. It is the third level of language qualification (foundation level and the NVQ 1 equivalent have to be passed first).

Sources: Information provided by national or municipal governments.

### *Lack of host country work experience and qualifications*

10. Employer preference for host country qualifications, and work experience<sup>14</sup> appears to work to migrants' disadvantage in the labour market (see Haque, 2002 for the UK; OECD, 2004a for Sweden; OECD 2005b for Germany).<sup>15</sup> Employment opportunities also appear to be affected by how soon after arrival migrants begin working and start to accumulate work experience in the receiving country (see OECD, 2004a, for Sweden, where early employment - within the first year of arrival - seems to have the most significant effect on employment four years later, outweighing the impact of language and, to a lesser extent, vocational training, including for women). Migrant women who delay entering the workforce (or vocational training), for example for childcare or eldercare reasons, may face particular difficulties when they do try to do so later.

### *Educational levels*

11. The *labour force participation rate* for foreign citizens (men and women) in OECD countries (2002-03 average), with less than upper secondary education (*i.e.*, less than 12/13 years schooling) is much the same as that for nationals or higher, except in Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK and, to a lesser degree, Belgium. For those who have completed upper secondary education the situation is not the same, as in only seven countries do foreign nationals participate as much as, or more, than nationals. However, in only 5 countries is their participation much lower. Tertiary educated foreigners invariably have lower participation rates than tertiary educated nationals, but nearly always have higher rates than foreign citizens with lower educational attainment (OECD, 2005a).

12. In all OECD countries, except Japan and Korea, *employment rates* for tertiary educated women are much higher than for women with less than secondary education (nationals and non-nationals taken together). Increasing the level of education of women from less than upper secondary to tertiary education, always has a positive effect on women's employment rates (both for women with and without children) (OECD, 2002a). It has been suggested that policies designed to increase female education levels could have a major impact on the level of women's employment (OECD, 2003a). A similar effect could be anticipated for migrant women, particularly if they obtain their educational qualifications in the host country.

13. Table 3 (below) presents the *labour force participation rate* for foreign and national women by education level for Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom.<sup>16</sup> Foreign women at all educational levels have a lower participation rate than national women with the same educational level. But as with national women in these countries, the activity rate of foreign women increases with their level of education, except for tertiary-educated foreign women in Germany. However, the gap between native-born and foreign-born women with the same educational levels does not necessarily decrease as educational levels increase. This issue is explored further in Dumont and Isoppo (forthcoming).

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<sup>14</sup> Some countries provide the means to validate foreign qualifications and evaluate skills and work experience, though such procedures are not necessarily straightforward or effective (*e.g.*, for Sweden, see OECD 2004a; for Canada, see Ray, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Iredale, (2005) discusses on-shore assessment of qualifications to analyse where gender bias in these processes may occur.

<sup>16</sup> Data for Australia and Canada are not available.

**Table 3: Female labour force participation rate by education level for selected OECD countries (25-64). Average 2002-03.**

Country	Less than upper secondary		Upper secondary		Tertiary level	
	Foreigner	National	Foreigner	National	Foreigner	National
Germany	46.5	50.9	66.3	71.4	65.2	83.9
Netherlands	37.2	49.1	57.6	74.3	70.2	84.2
Sweden	54.2	65.7	68.4	83.6	77	90.5
United Kingdom	31.9	54.1	73.7	78.5	80.6	88

Source: Dumont and Isoppo, forthcoming.

### *Discrimination*

14. Studies indicate that discrimination is an enduring fact in the labour market (e.g., Zegers de Beijl, 2000 regarding ethnic minority/migrant men and hiring decisions in four EU countries and ethnic minority/migrant women in one). OECD (2002a) comments with regard to women that “there is continuing gender differentiation in job opportunities, pay and working time arrangements”. It has been noted that women from ethnic minorities face discrimination on the basis of both ethnicity and sex (Agocs, 2002a). Similarly, migrant women also suffer from sex discrimination and discrimination on the basis of being foreign-born and/or on the grounds of their ethnicity (if different from the predominant one in the host country). Discrimination may be direct (intentional) or indirect (e.g., a practice which adversely affects a group such as women or migrants significantly more than men or non-migrants). The latter includes practices by an employer which may make the employment of migrant women less likely to occur, e.g., seeking new employees informally from friends and family of existing employees, imposing unnecessarily high language requirements.

15. Laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex and ethnicity exist or are in the process of being implemented in all six countries covered in this paper. In addition, in several of them, laws exist requiring the active implementation of policies to promote equality in employment for categories of employees (e.g., ethnic minorities, women) by specified employers (e.g., public employers, employers of more than a specified number of employees). In a survey of the literature, Agocs (2002a) concludes that “formalised equity programs with mandatory goal-setting and vigorous and continued enforcement by government authorities make a significant difference in results” to employment outcomes for the groups designed to benefit from them. There is some UK evidence that the adoption of voluntary equal opportunities policies may lead to reduced discrimination against ethnic minorities in hiring (referred to in Barnes *et al.*, 2005). To give an idea of some of the methods used by laws promoting employment equity, Table 4 outlines some of their most significant requirements.<sup>17</sup> They impose a duty to promote employment equity and as tools for achieving this may require, for example, that individual employers keep statistics of the gender or ethnic breakdown of their workforce and/or to set targets (not quotas) for the employment of certain groups. The effectiveness of these laws cannot be reviewed here, and it is evident that none of them specifically promote employment equity for migrant (or visible or ethnic minority) women as a group. But the existence of such laws for particular groups illustrates another potential strategy for assisting migrant women into work. That is, one which requires employers to actively plan to attract them into their workforce, rather than relying solely on the women themselves to overcome the barriers to their workforce participation.

<sup>17</sup> As they apply to women and/or groups whose definition (e.g., those of non-English speaking background for Australia, visible minorities in Canada) ensures they will include many migrants.

**Table 4: Overview of Laws Requiring Active Policies to Promote Equality in Employment**

Country(1)	Groups covered	Employers Covered	Legal duty to promote equality in employment	Monitoring statistics must be collected and made available to public	Compliance monitoring	Sanctions (effectiveness not evaluated)
Australia(2)	Women and men, and migrants of NESB(3) and their children	All government departments; public agencies with 50+ employees.	Yes (numerical targets for NESB and their children set)	Yes, annually: number of employees, by occupational group, wage levels, part- or full-time hours, <i>etc.</i> , by target groups.  Compiled and published by government on internet.	Employer must submit statistics to government monitoring agency.  All government departments and public agencies of 100 employees or more must also prepare an action plan usually for 3-5 years and submit it to monitoring agency which must advise whether it is supported. Large public agencies must submit review report at end of plan's life.  All departments and public agencies of 250 employees or more must report annually to monitoring agency that they have complied with the equal employment law.	Yes. Legal proceedings possible. (Non-enforceable recommendations can be made).  Agency not submitting statistics named publicly.
Canada	Women and men, and visible minorities	All federal government departments; public agencies with 100+ employees.  Some private employers of 100+ (includes most of those bidding for federal contracts (4) of 200 000 Can dollars or more).	Yes (numerical targets set, including by FCP employers)	Yes, annually: number of employees, by occupational group, wage levels, hires, promotions, dismissals, part- or full-time hours, <i>etc.</i> , by target groups.  Each employer's annual report published in full on internet by the government.  Not applicable to FCP employers.	Employer must prepare action plan for 1-3 years and review it. It must submit annual report to government with statistics and progress report.  Monitoring undertaken by CHRC.  Not applicable to FCP employers.	Yes. Legal proceedings possible. Publicity used in relation to non-FCP private employers (public rating system).  FCP employers subject to compliance reviews with sanctions possible.
NL (relevant law expired at the end of 2003).	Foreign-born persons from designated	Public and private, both where over 35 employees	Yes (numerical targets set)	Yes, annually: number of employees by grades and part- or full-time work, by country of birth (and that of parents).	Employer had to submit annual report with statistics and action plan, to government.	Yes. Legal proceedings possible. Publicity also used to

	countries and their children			Annual action plans with statistics publicly available.	Monitoring was undertaken by the Labour Inspectorate.	identify companies which had not reached their targets/filed their action plans.
Sweden	Women and men and all ethnic groups	Public and private, with at least 10 employees.	Yes	No collection (except for pay equity between men and women), or publication required (though collection may be advisable to comply with the duty).	Annual active equal opportunities plan (men/women)/active promotion of equity amongst all ethnic groups at the workplace required (latter less rigorous). No requirement to lodge information with central monitoring body. Employers self monitor in co-operation with employee representatives; Ombudsmans for sex and ethnic equality proactively monitor compliance with the duties.	Yes. Legal proceedings possible. (Fines).
UK	All racial groups	Public authorities (PA).  Private employers where performing public procurement contracts.	Yes	Yes for most public sector employers. Annually: number of employees and applicants for jobs, promotion and training by racial group. More statistics (e.g. re training, disciplinary action and performance appraisals) required from employers of 150+.  Published by each PA.	No requirement to lodge information with central monitoring body.  Major PAs must publish a race equality action plan and a self review after 3 years.  Commission for Racial Equality must proactively monitor compliance with the duty.	Yes. Legal proceedings possible.

Notes:

1. Germany does not currently have such legislation in relation to ethnic minorities.
2. Information in this table is for the State of Queensland and references are to the State government and State departments and agencies.
3. Non-English speaking background.
4. The Federal Contractors Program (FCP) is established by policy not law.

Sources: Queensland State Government (Australia) Office of Public Service Merit and Equity; Canadian Human Rights Commission; Glastra *et al.*; Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (Netherlands); Swedish Offices of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman and the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination; Commission of Racial Equality (UK) website.

### *Host and home country effects*

16. An additional factor affecting migrant women's labour force participation rates may be the cultural attitudes towards women working which existed in the country of origin, if these were unfavourable to labour force participation (Antecol, 2000).<sup>18</sup> However, comparing women's employment rates in their country of origin with those they exhibit in some receiving countries, it appears that migrant women are participating more in certain host countries' labour force than they did in the country of origin (Dumont and Isoppo, forthcoming). These differences will be partly affected by reasons for migration and also how well foreigners' characteristics match the labour market needs of the host country. Additionally, participation rates may be influenced by individual factors, for example, very low levels of education amongst Turkish and Moroccan women in the Netherlands (just over 60% had only primary education in 2002, for men the figures were 43% and 53% respectively) (Snel *et al.*, 2004). A discouragement effect may also contribute to a low participation rate by women from certain countries of origin, if a particular ethnic group faces disproportionately high unemployment rates (*i.e.*, they will not make themselves available to work) (Harzing, 1995). For example, in the UK, Bangladeshi women's unemployment rate was 21% in 2000-02, whereas that for white women was 4% (Lindley *et al.*, 2004). In Germany in 2004, the unemployment rate for Turkish national women was 24%, whilst for German citizens it was 9.7% (their participation rates were 39% and 67%, respectively) (OECD Secretariat calculations from the European Labour Force Survey).

### *Job search networks and other factors affecting employment*

17. A significant institutional obstacle facing migrants in the labour market is the fact that jobs in many countries are filled through informal networks (see *e.g.*, for Sweden, OECD, 2004a). This disadvantages those without access to these networks. Migrant women may have fewer of these networks than men or, where they do have them, the variety of occupations to which they provide access may be restricted. Migrants also face institutional barriers where their right to work is restricted by law. For example, in Germany, it is only since the beginning of 2005 that family reunion migrants have been able to have the same type of labour market access as the principal migrant, immediately upon arrival. Previously many had to wait a year for any access at all and then faced other restrictions. In many countries asylum seekers cannot work for long periods, which may inhibit later labour market integration.<sup>19</sup> These types of restrictions, as they may specifically affect women's labour force participation, need further examination as they may be more harmful than realised. With regard to other factors, it is unclear the extent to which the elimination of disincentives in tax and benefit systems to second earners compared to single earners, the availability of (short) paid parental leave and the availability of part-time work (in some countries) would boost migrant women's labour force participation in particular.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Attitudes in some host countries, too, can be hostile to women working or working full-time if they have pre-school children (ISSP, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> An example of such a provision occurs in Germany, where asylum seekers must wait one year and are then able to work subject to labour market testing. In Sweden, the delay in seeking work can be shorter. There, asylum seekers may work if it is considered that the assessment of their application will take longer than four months.

<sup>20</sup> Reviews of work-life balance in all the countries covered in this paper (except Germany) have been undertaken by the OECD (OECD 2002b; OECD 2005c).

### 3. Key features of the country case studies

#### *Introduction*

18. The projects reviewed in this paper all fostered the labour market integration of migrant women with less than tertiary educational qualifications,<sup>21</sup> though not all targeted them exclusively. The projects are described in the Annex to this paper and the 15 examined in most detail are summarised in Table 5 below. They range from small-scale projects catering for about 20 participants, to intermediate ones of 50 or more, to a few larger ones with over 500 participants. Although the initiatives may not necessarily be transferable across countries, some key features are evident in many projects, as the discussion below highlights. Their identification is intended to contribute to understanding how to improve the labour market integration of migrant women. For example, all the projects helped with finding childcare for participants and most provided supported work placements to gain work experience. Most also linked language acquisition with work training and/or work experience, a practice which is not yet necessarily integrated into the basic national language programmes in the countries covered.<sup>22</sup> Emphasis was placed on confidence building and the availability of a range of support mechanisms for participants. Many programmes were relatively lengthy, requiring participation of six months or more. Some of these common themes reflect issues highlighted in the literature discussed above. For example, the link between the importance of host country work experience and labour market integration. Others seem to have been less explored, such as the importance of confidence building and support during time spent gaining host country work experience.

19. The projects described measured their success in various ways (discussed below, in section 4, in **Outcomes**). This was largely done by examining outcome data and using other assessment measures (e.g., external qualitative evaluations, client satisfaction surveys) rather than in experimental settings using control groups. Project success rates were variable and affected (inter alia) by the pre-existing skill levels and host country language fluency of participants. It is worth noting that significant commitment is demanded of the migrant women who are expected to participate in these programmes and courses. They are often dealing with an alien culture and a language they are unfamiliar with; leaving their homes to go out may itself be a major challenge. The expectations of their partners and family - and their own expectations of their role - may be different from those which the host country has of them, and may be difficult to reconcile. They may also be dealing with a large family in economically stringent circumstances and bearing the primary burden of settling their children in a new environment and of other domestic labour. These less measurable factors are also likely to affect outcomes

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<sup>21</sup> The large-scale European Community EQUAL initiative has a number of projects with this focus and has contributed funding to some of the projects considered here. For a general description of Equal, see (downloaded on 6/07/05) at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/equal/index\\_en.cfm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/index_en.cfm)

<sup>22</sup> But see the introduction of the Canadian Enhanced Language Training intended to provide job-specific language training with professional mentoring and job placements in an immigrant's profession, (downloaded on 6/07/05) at: [http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/eppi-ibdrp/hrdb-rhbd/elt-clna/description\\_e.asp#g1](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/eppi-ibdrp/hrdb-rhbd/elt-clna/description_e.asp#g1)

In the Netherlands, combining language classes with vocational training/work/work experience may be possible.

**Table 5: Summary of Projects described in the Annex**

<b>Project and administrator</b>	<b>Participants' characteristics</b>	<b>Type and size of project and employment/training outcomes</b>
<b>Australia</b>		
Given the Chance (AUS 1)	All refugees, mostly women. Five had tertiary education. Varied English language skills.	NGO. 19 participants, 16 women. 3 months after end of 12 week course, 58% were in paid employment, education and training, at 12 months, 73% were.
Behind the Label (AUS 2)	Clothing outworkers, mostly migrant women. Poor English language skills. Mainly from East Asia and Indo-China.	Government. 1 000 (approx) attended training courses over 4 years of project (some double counting). Project aimed to upskill, reskill and improve English language skills; detailed employment outcomes difficult to measure but long-term outcomes likely to be positive.
<b>Canada</b>		
Working Women's Centre (CAN 1)	Migrant women.	NGO. It estimates that of the women they place in work experience, approx 50% find work quickly after completing it.
Womens Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor (CAN 2)	Women only, 80% (approx) migrants.	NGO. Aug 2004-March 2005, 165 prepared job action plans, 57 found work experience and 61 found jobs (some double counting).
<b>Germany</b>		
Project on Vocational Training for Refugee Women, Berlin (GER 1)	Refugee women. Varied educational levels. Had basic German language skills.	NGO. 44 over two 12 month courses. 16 found jobs, 11 went into training.
Paritätisches Bildungswerk, Bremen (GER 2)	Migrant women. Approx a third have tertiary education. Had basic German language skills.	NGO. 31 in 2003/04 for 12 month course. Approx a third find jobs, a third undertake vocational training and most of others go into adult education.
Women's Computer Centre Berlin (GER 3)	Migrant women. Varied school or professional education.	NGO. 20 in a 6 month course in 2004/05. 15 into paid work or training.
Bremerhaven - Retail Customer Orientation Project (GER 4)	Migrant women. Varied educational levels. All had largely fluent German. 14 of the group of 15 were born in Russia or Ukraine.	NGO. 25, 15 in 16 month course, all in short supplementary training. 75% of the 15 were in work 6 months after end of course.
<b>The Netherlands</b>		
Different (NL 1)	Migrant women. Low education levels.	Government. 180 in groups of 20. One group had a control group. After 2 years, 27% of the experimental group had jobs but none in the control group did.
Stichting (Foundation) AKROS - Vrouwen Atelier Mozaiek (NL 2)	Migrant women. Varied educational levels.	NGO. 30 in a 7 month course in 2004/05. 14 into paid work or training.
<b>Sweden</b>		
Avanti (SW 1)	Migrant women. Low education levels. Poor Swedish language skills.	Government. 11 month programme for 24, of whom 17 completed course and 11 found work.
Wordpower (SW 2)	Migrant women. Low education levels. Poor Swedish language skills.	NGO. May 2002-May 2004 for 68 women. 11% in jobs in May 2005, 15% dropped out due to pregnancy, others have had temporary work.
<b>United Kingdom</b>		
Account 3 Women's Consultancy (UK 1)	Women only, 80% from ethnic minorities (many Bangladeshi women) and substantial proportion foreign-born. Most with less than complete secondary education.	NGO. May 2004-May 2005, 596 women assisted with job search and/or training (some double counting). Various outcomes recorded, e.g., June 2001-March 2003, 140 women participated in a number of in-house training courses with 62 (44%) then finding jobs.
Ethnic Minority Outreach Project (UK 2)	Ethnic minority men and women, about half were women. Most had upper secondary education or less. 58% were Asian or Asian British, 24% were Black or Black British.	Government. 20 projects assisted 4 000 clients over 2 years with finding jobs and training. Outcomes measured 13 weeks after first contact with a project: of the women clients, 25% found work and 8% began training.

Workplace Programme (UK 3)	Co-ordinators	All local population, 50% of total were from Black and ethnic minorities (BME) and 50% of total were women. Many have less than complete secondary school education.	Government, private, and NGO partnership to assist with job search and job readiness. Between 1999-2004, workplace co-ordinators assisted 579 people into work, of whom 424 (73%) were from BME groups. It is estimated that about 70-80% remain in employment though they may move to other jobs.
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### ***Host country work experience and links with work skills and language acquisition***

20. Most of the projects examined incorporated work experience for participants into their programmes. This was considered to be crucial to enhancing clients' chances of obtaining a job: several projects reported that clients regularly continued on as employees in the workplace which had provided their placement. Some projects conducted classroom-based teaching in parallel with work experience, dividing the week or month up between the two (*e.g.*, AUS 1, GER 2, GER 4). For these projects, this enabled ongoing training (for language and other workplace skills) and the provision of support to participants during the work placement. Other projects arranged work experience at the end of the project when they considered the participants ready for it (*e.g.*, GER 1, SW 1). In most of the latter type of projects, client support was provided by contact between a project staff member and the client and the employer. In both situations, projects reported providing advice to clients, for example, interpreting what was happening at the workplace, or mediating problems arising from a placement. These included those due to intercultural misunderstandings. Of the few projects whose focus was not on providing work experience, similar support was provided by at least three, after a client had successfully found paid employment (CAN 2, UK 2 informally in some situations,<sup>23</sup> and UK 3). The projects considered that this in-work support aided employment retention.

21. Most projects also forged a link between language acquisition and preparation for entering the workplace. Language training took place at the same time as training in job search, employment readiness and/or in other work-related skills (*e.g.*, pre- or vocational training) occurred. It then often continued whilst programme participants were on work experience. Several projects placed an emphasis on the importance of acquiring language competency which was specifically work focused.

22. A period in work experience assists a participant in "marketing" themselves as job ready to host country employers. In the projects examined here, it appeared also to provide a number of other significant benefits. These included the chance for a participant to improve work-related language skills (several projects commented on how marked an improvement in language skills was achieved by clients during work experience), to acquire the self-confidence needed to hold down a job and to obtain an understanding of how the host country workplace operates and its expectations of employees – as well as how to manage her personal work/family life balance. In many cases, though, the process was relatively lengthy. This was the case either for the classroom-based aspects of the programme, or for the work experience period, or for both. Programmes of six months or more were not unusual (*e.g.*, CAN 1, SW 2).

In summary:

- supported work experience appeared frequently as a component of "into work" programmes;
- language training went hand-in-hand with work skills acquisition/work experience;

<sup>23</sup> This project's evaluation (Barnes *et al.*, 2005) commented on the need to assist clients through what it termed the "grey area" of temporary, short-term and low quality jobs, by ongoing support.

- work experience was reported to improve host country language proficiency;
- many training programmes required relatively long-term participation by clients.

### ***Combining childcare and work***

23. The ‘into work’ programmes described in the Annex all, in one way or another, addressed the issue of the childcare needs of their target group. They acknowledged that childcare responsibilities could pose a barrier to participation in their programmes and assisted with overcoming these, as their own resources or public provision permitted. Either childcare provision was built into the support available from the project, or clients were helped to find it through such public provision as was available.

24. Certain projects provided clients with free childcare, either on-site (*e.g.*, UK 1, GER 1) or by way of sessions bought by the project from external childcare providers (*e.g.*, AUS 2). Other projects benefited from publicly funded provision which their clients could access at a low cost. This took the form of either comprehensive national provision for which clients were eligible<sup>24</sup> or participants met specific eligibility criteria for public funding of their childcare needs (*e.g.*, AUS 1, NL 1). Another approach (sometimes in combination with the earlier ones mentioned) was adopted where projects acted as childcare brokers. These projects had developed an expert knowledge about the local availability of childcare and any publicly funded childcare subsidies which might be available to clients, and advised them on how to access these. One project tailored its programme to fit in with kindergarten and school hours so that its clients did not need to arrange childcare. Another (GER 4) reported that its clients preferred to use their extended families for childcare.

In summary:

- childcare issues are addressed as comprehensively as possible by “into work” programmes to maximise participation,<sup>25</sup>
- the service provided by some projects to assist clients in finding childcare and related publicly funded subsidies, can be important in making the best of what is on offer in a national system.

### ***Work skills training and the significance of confidence building***

25. A variety of skills-based training was made available to clients through most projects, before or during work placements. These often included intensive training in job search skills, in curriculum vitae/resumé (CV) preparation and in interview skills (in at least one project (CAN 2) suitably smart interview clothes were found for clients). Practical work preparation skills were also often provided as well as providing an understanding of employer expectations and employee rights and responsibilities. Pre-vocational skills and/or vocational training were offered by many projects. Many projects enabled clients to have the opportunity to obtain a labour market recognised certificate, even if it was a low level one. This could then be built on in later training undertaken by the client. Career advancement issues were factored into one or two projects rather differently, by offering further training once employment had been taken up. The factors governing the mix of training on offer were varied. They included the education and

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<sup>24</sup> In Sweden, there is a legal entitlement to childcare once a child is 12 months old (OECD, 2005c).

<sup>25</sup> In one project, clients could access subsidised childcare for the classroom part of the programme, but they could not always do so for the work experience placement organised by the project. Where other arrangements could not be made by the clients, as happened from time to time, some could not undertake that aspect of the programme.

skill levels of the client group, the nature of the local labour market and the types of funding available for programmes. Overall, what was on offer had similarities, though emphases differed.

26. The widespread availability of training in personal development, so as to build up programme participants' self-confidence, was marked. This indicated how significant projects considered it to be to the success of their programmes. How it was undertaken varied. Sometimes individual plans were prepared to motivate and guide participants through the course and subsequent work placements. This process also ensured that project staff had a good understanding of their clients. Fostering a supportive "team spirit" in the group receiving training together was important to increase motivation and retention during a course. It also assisted clients with learning to speak out in front of others, but in a safe environment. Identifying clients' existing skills – possibly unrecognised because they were not ones associated with paid work experience – was another element in building self esteem. Work placements were also critical in increasing participants' self-confidence, with some projects remarking on the sense of achievement felt by clients after their initial workplace experience.

27. A few projects reported a tension between channelling women into traditional women's jobs and trying to provide them with a wider choice of futures. Whether this was feasible partly reflected what was possible in the local labour market. For example, one London-based project (UK 1) made driving instructors' training available where client demand and language proficiency made this feasible, driving skills being in demand in London. Another project (GER 1) offered increased opportunities for training in medical and laboratory assistant work. Others were concerned to offer possibilities other than childcare work. This was not a comment on the nature of that work, but on the assumptions some participants initially had that this would be the most appropriate work for them – when often this was not the case.

In summary:

- varied combinations of work-related skills were taught on the "into work" programmes, but significant similarities appeared to exist across countries;
- confidence building was seen by most projects as an essential building block of "into work" programmes;
- widening women's choice of job options was only occasionally addressed by the projects examined.

### ***The local labour market: understanding it, changing it***

28. To provide the best assistance to clients, including identifying options for upgrading skills, most projects had developed an expert knowledge about their local labour market. Often they had close links with local employers; inevitably they had a strong feel for the types of jobs available and the level of skills needed for them. They understood how to access appropriate training for participants and any necessary supports (funding, childcare), as well as the ability to obtain or facilitate work placements. Successful work placements could lead to clients continuing in them as employees, assisting client outcomes. Some projects provided a free job search facility for employers, formally or informally (*e.g.*, UK 3). This was a significant incentive to employers to use the project's services when they had job vacancies, and again optimised client outcomes.

29. Other projects assisted employers in developing their diversity management capacity (*e.g.*, UK 2, GER 2, GER 3). This included training employers in relation to their human resource management so as to assist them in adopting strategies to recruit and retain employees who were the client groups of the projects delivering the training (see Barnes *et al.*, 2005, for a description of the practical aspects facing one group

of such projects in engaging employers). Some projects reported engaging with individual employers on behalf of those in work placements to negotiate misunderstandings arising due to cultural differences.

In summary:

- nearly all the projects examined had developed links with local employers in the areas where they were operating;
- a few projects engaged formally in assisting employers develop diversity management strategies.

### ***Reaching the hard to reach***

30. Outreach work was undertaken by several projects to make their services known to the population with whom they wished to engage. It featured strongly in two (UK 2, AUS 2). Such work involved project employees working in the community settings where their potential clients lived. They targeted those who were unlikely to know of the support systems they could access to help them to engage in language or other training – or who may not have previously considered undertaking these activities. Both projects making most use of this approach commented on the importance of using bilingual outreach workers. This was because such workers were familiar with the community they were working with and knew how to find and approach their prospective clients. Social events were used to encourage engagement with the projects. Two Dutch projects (NL 3, NL 6) referred to the importance of visiting women in their own homes to maximise the chances that they would participate in the training offered. Another project sought out the most socially isolated migrant women in their community through their children's schools (SW 2).

In summary:

- outreach work was undertaken to enable some of the most socially isolated migrant women to be given the chance to participate in activities leading to training and employment;
- bilingual community workers were seen as crucial to the success of both the projects reviewed which had a large outreach component.

### ***Other support mechanisms available to course participants***

31. *Mentoring.*<sup>26</sup> The provision of mentors for course participants was arranged by two projects. One project provided it through volunteers external to the workplace (but with extensive work experience) of the client receiving mentoring (AUS 1). In another project (SW 1) the mentor was a co-worker at the participant's work placement and provided with a small financial bonus for undertaking this role. In both cases the mentors were given training and in both instances, the participants viewed the mentoring positively. Several countries provide some general mentoring schemes.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Only briefly mentioned in the Annex (as they were not primarily work-focused) are two Dutch projects which engaged migrant woman in social and language acquisition activities, as a first step towards engaging with training and work. These arranged Dutch mother tongue speakers to befriend/mentor migrant women to assist with learning Dutch. Both requests for such assistance and the response to advertising for local people to help with this project, were high. EMPLOOI a successful Dutch project assisting refugees into work also makes extensive use of mentors (see Dutch Council of Refugees (2005)).

<sup>27</sup> Though not explicitly work-focused, the Host programme in Canada links new migrants with volunteers who help them settle in. See (downloaded on 30/06/05) at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomer/host-fs1.html> (The new work-focused ELT programme has a mentoring component, see footnote 18). In

32. *Social work support and welfare rights advice.*<sup>28</sup> Many projects provided such assistance formally and informally, and had the knowledge to refer clients to other sources of expertise. In one project (AUS 2) the bilingual community workers organised social outings for course participants, as well as undertaking the more traditional role of advising on appropriate training courses and childcare options. Some projects provided welfare rights' advice on site (UK 1, GER 1, AUS 1). Such support tackles issues (e.g., housing problems, debt, childcare issues but also feelings of social isolation) which may cause such personal difficulties to clients that they drop out of a course.

33. *Engaging with other family members.* Another type of support provided by a few projects was to engage with the partners and other family members of the proposed participants. In one project (NL 1) husbands were invited with their wives to the initial meeting for participants where the project was fully explained, and questions answered. The project noted the subsequent strong encouragement which husbands gave their wives during the course. A language learning project also successfully engaged husbands' support for their wives' participation (NL 5). However, another project reported less success with their attempt at such engagement. Yet another (UK 1) remarked that its women-only service was reassuring both to clients and to their families, in that the women would be undertaking training only with other women. The projects which reached out to migrant women's partners acknowledged the different expectations a host country often has of them as well as their wives. Some projects found this approach assisted their clients to participate.

34. *Transport and wage subsidies:* These were offered by at least one project (AUS 2) as far as financially possible, to participants in certain courses. Their research, prior to establishing this initiative, had indicated that these were barriers to participation in training courses. The evaluation of another project (UK 2) also refers to the possible need to meet transport costs, childcare help and sometimes to pay a financial incentive for attending training, to assist the most disadvantaged jobseekers. Whether such help may be necessary will depend upon a number of factors including what is provided to clients as a matter of course by way of, for example, cheap public transport and government financial support.

In summary:

- where mentoring programmes were run, these were viewed positively;
- a range of social work support may encourage participation and help retention rates on courses;
- active engagement with the partners and families of women on training courses was seen as aiding participation, where this was undertaken successfully;
- transport and wage subsidies were seen as removing barriers to participation by a project which paid these.

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Sweden, government policy is to encourage a similar scheme by municipalities who run the migrants' Introduction Programmes. See (downloaded on 30/06/05) at: [http://www.integrationsverket.se/upload/5160/overenskommelse\\_eng.pdf](http://www.integrationsverket.se/upload/5160/overenskommelse_eng.pdf). In Australia, the Volunteer Tutor Program is part of the Government Adult English Education Programme and matches migrants with tutor/mentors to help with learning English and about Australia. For the State of Victoria, see (downloaded on 5/07/05) at: <http://www.ames.net.au/articleZone.asp?articleZoneID=35> In the United Kingdom, Time Together (part of a wider national campaign to promote volunteering) matches UK citizens as mentors with refugees and is due, with Government support, to expand significantly. See (downloaded on 5/07/05) at: <http://www.timebank.org.uk/mentor/>

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The latter term includes advice about e.g., how to manage debts and access legal advice and how to access social provision including government social payments, health services and housing help.

#### 4. Outcomes

35. Martin and Grubb (2001) reviewing the general evaluation literature<sup>29</sup> on active labour market programmes, concluded<sup>30</sup> that it indicates that women (in particular women re-entrants and often sole parents) benefit from training programmes (though more in terms of improved employment outcomes than higher earnings),<sup>31</sup> on-the-job training, job search assistance including job clubs and individual counselling<sup>32</sup> and short, targeted subsidies to private sector employment. Training programmes should be well targeted, small-scale, provide certification recognised and valued by the market and have a strong on-the-job component (requiring the need to establish links with local employers). Regarding training, HRDC (2002) in a review of research into how training programmes affected women's employment chances, found that employment-related training involving new job skills, academic upgrading or language training, was particularly beneficial. It also noted that adequate childcare, transport and other financial supports were necessary to enable women to access training. Such training should also be geographically accessible and sensitive to cultural and family-related obstacles.

36. The nature of the evaluations of the impacts of the projects described below are varied. Most do not involve comparing participants with non-participants with similar characteristics, or comparing one area where a programme has been implemented with another similar one where it has not (OECD, 2005d). One Dutch project was evaluated using a control group (NL 1). Otherwise, the evaluation measures referred to by projects were a variety of outcome monitoring measures. These included monitoring whether training is completed, competencies and/or certification achieved, or employment, further training or education entered into immediately following an intervention and/or after some period of time. In some cases (*e.g.*, UK 2) an independent examination of outcomes was commissioned together with a qualitative evaluation. Client satisfaction surveys were administered by some projects, with their results being fed into project development.

37. The apparent success rates of the projects vary considerably. Many factors appeared to influence their outcomes.<sup>33</sup> For example, the local and national job markets as well as the education levels, host country language proficiency, and previous work experience and training, of the participants. Many projects had formal and informal eligibility criteria for participation. These related to, for example, being in receipt of a welfare assistance payment, or having a certain level of knowledge of the host country language, or being able to make private arrangements for childcare. Other projects relied on women knowing about them and having the skills and confidence to apply to participate in them. These criteria were part of the way the particular projects concerned were established and had to operate. In contrast, some projects targeted women who were very removed from the possibility of workforce participation, with low levels of educational qualifications, poor fluency in the host country language and little or no

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<sup>29</sup> Which is often of US or Canadian programmes.

<sup>30</sup> Caveats made to these conclusions include the small-scale nature of many evaluations and that the effect on outcomes of any compulsion to participate is usually not captured.

<sup>31</sup> OECD 2005d cites evidence that employment-related training programmes can in some cases be quite strongly positive over the long-term.

<sup>32</sup> An example of the potential benefits of support and counselling is demonstrated by a Canadian income supplement programme (voluntary for sole parents). This programme which also provided intensive individual support (*e.g.*, job search help) and counselling (*e.g.*, advice about childcare and transport) has been shown to have positive effects on employment outcomes and income levels compared to a programme with the supplement but without the supports (OECD, 2005d).

<sup>33</sup> The skills and dedication of the staff of the projects is one of these, though an unmeasurable one. For example, an evaluation of one project encapsulated this by referring to its staff's "positive "can-do" spirit (which) is essential to the success of their work".

previous work experience. Discrimination, too, may have influenced outcomes. All these factors will undoubtedly have affected the end results of a programme. Thus direct comparisons between these projects are not appropriate.

## 5. Summary and recommendations

38. This paper has presented an analysis of selected initiatives in six OECD countries which have fostered the labour market participation of migrant women with less than a tertiary education. It was undertaken by way of a desk-based survey of a small number of projects and the conclusions drawn below must necessarily be limited. However, despite the lack of experimental evaluations, many of the programmes<sup>34</sup> described above implemented the strategies identified as successful for women in the evaluation literature. Moreover, Martin and Grubb (2001) note that even rigorous evaluations rarely measure the social benefits which may flow from programme participation. In the projects described, this factor was often commented on, particularly in relation to the participants' increased self-confidence, changed attitudes and behaviour. The key features common to most of the projects were:

- supported work experience;
- addressing participants' childcare needs;
- linking work training, work experience and language acquisition, in varied ways;
- providing work skills training linked to confidence building;
- a close understanding of, and links, with the local labour market;
- participation for six months or more.

A few projects provided:

- mentoring schemes;
- active engagement with the partners and families of the women on the "into work" programmes;
- support through the initial period in work;
- outreach work to reach the most "hard to reach" women;
- a variety of social work supports;
- opportunities for upskilling and career advancement as well as entering less traditional areas of work ;
- diversity management training for employers.

39. **Work placements** appear critical for enhancing the future work or training participation of migrant women generally, including those with low educational qualifications. They provide not just much-needed host country work experience but also the self-confidence to pursue these avenues. To

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<sup>34</sup> Some of which are participants in the EU Equal programme and will be subject to review and evaluation against a range of key objectives set by that programme (e.g. empowerment of target groups, innovation).

achieve a successful work placement a range of supports needs to be provided to participants by “into work” projects. Anticipating and dealing with childcare needs is very important. Linked to this is resolving other practical issues such as transport problems (are subsidies needed and/or an introduction to how to use the public system?). Prior to or during a work placement, projects seek to equip clients with the initial skills essential to make the most of what the placement has to offer. Usually this is done in a holistic way. Building self-confidence goes hand-in-hand with the practical aspects of work readiness programmes. Work readiness programmes integrate language training with other work preparation skills. Support is provided to clients (and employers) during work experience.

40. It is recommended that further evaluation of these strategies should be undertaken to assess the best combinations of approaches for different groups of women with less than a tertiary education. Programmes for some women may need to be relatively lengthy and incorporate a long-term approach to labour market integration. Qualitative aspects such as continuity in the support staff allocated to a client may be important. Consideration could then be given to mainstreaming successful strategies into national job search, training and placement programmes, where this is not already underway.

41. Linked to this is the need to assess the current availability and effectiveness of **language classes** for migrants so as to understand the reasons why women migrants do or do not access them, and how successful they are in facilitating labour force participation. Some of these programmes currently aim at language acquisition which may not enable the participant to be work ready or enter further education or training. The value of this may be questionable, particularly as it appears that programmes do not necessarily integrate intensive language practice in real life settings such as work experience or training. As Spencer and di Mattia conclude in their survey of introductory programmes and initiatives for new migrants in Europe (MPI, 2004), “there is some evidence that language tuition is most effective when set in the context of work or higher education” (p.10). It is suggested that analyses, including by gender, of who is eligible for classes (*e.g.*, whether family formation migrants access such provision on arrival in the host country), who participates, reasons for non-participation and outcomes, in terms of proficiency achieved and labour market participation, would be useful. These would assist in gaining a clearer understanding of the reasons why women migrants do or do not access language training,<sup>35</sup> how successful it is in facilitating their labour force participation and highlight where improvements could be made.

42. Restrictions on migrants’ **eligibility to work** upon arrival need to be examined to assess their effect on migrant women’s long-term labour market participation. A similar review of restrictions on eligibility for entry into “into work” programmes and for supports such as childcare, is suggested to identify (with a view to removing) barriers to work participation by migrant women. Since studies have shown that early employment improves long-term labour market integration significantly, these sorts of restrictions may be more harmful than is realised.

43. **Childcare** availability and affordability, is being actively addressed by several of the countries examined in this paper. It also needs to be assessed for its availability and affordability to low income migrant women (this may include looking at its cultural appropriateness). Public childcare provision may be particularly important to migrant women’s labour force participation, as they may lack the financial means and family/social support networks enabling them to make private arrangements. Outcomes from the most successful “into work” programme may be adversely affected if the national childcare system is inadequate. Active work and family life reconciliation debates are occurring in many OECD countries<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> A small study of 23 Muslim women in Australia, described in Rida and Milton (2001), discusses why some Muslim women appear not to access language training there, proposing that catering for their specific needs (*e.g.*, women-only classes) may increase their access.

<sup>36</sup> See OECD, 2002b (Australia and the Netherlands) and OECD 2005c (Canada, Sweden and the United Kingdom) for OECD reviews of work and family life reconciliation policies those countries

and policies (such as childcare provision) are under consideration to promote such reconciliation and facilitate women's employment. These could usefully be examined from the perspective of migrant women and adapted where necessary, to optimise their employment opportunities as well.

44. Other issues are also worth further consideration for inclusion in the range of strategies for assisting migrant women into work. Supporting the greater use of **mentoring** schemes (as provided by an Australian (AUS 1) and a Swedish (SW 1) project) at the workplace should be considered. This could tap into community goodwill and facilitate workplace integration at the same time as creating host country social networks for the migrant woman who is mentored. Several countries have some general schemes in place which might provide models. The value of support during an initial period in work (possibly through a mentoring programme) could also be explored. Strategies to reach those women most isolated from host country social and work networks should be pursued. These could include outreach programmes, and engaging with their partners and families as well as the women themselves.

45. Successful programmes have a good understanding of their **local labour market** and engage proactively with employers to create job opportunities for their clients, at times providing a free employee search service. Supporting project staff to acquire the skills necessary to do this and to provide diversity training to local employers and/or to engage with them to resolve misunderstandings arising from cultural differences between employers and those on placements, are other potentially useful tools for "into work" programmes. Spencer and di Mattia (MPI, 2004, p.9) comment that integration "requires the migrant to adapt *and* the host country to address the barriers that can prevent full economic and social participation". It appears that laws requiring active policies **to promote employment equity**, and possibly voluntary diversity management programmes, could facilitate the organisational change needed at the workplace to improve the labour force integration of migrant women. It is recommended that their implementation and/or extension, including their specific targeting of migrant women, should be evaluated and considered. Strategies for engaging with employers about employing migrant women and the nature of the work on offer to them should also be explored, not simply to understand where openings for clients may exist, but whether these can lead to ongoing training and advancement and, possibly, into less traditional – and better paid - fields of work.

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## ANNEX COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

### AUSTRALIA

#### *Given the Chance<sup>1</sup> (AUS 1)*

This project is run by the Brotherhood of St Laurence<sup>2</sup> and began in October 2002. Its aim was to provide an intensive, full-time twelve-week employment training programme specifically for refugees. Of the 19 participants, 16 were women, most were under 25 and had been in Australia between three months and six years. Educational and language backgrounds were very varied in that at least seven had not completed secondary education, only five had completed any form of tertiary/professional education and only two had previous work experience anywhere. The course was essentially work preparation and a preparation for further training. It was full-time but only purely classroom-based for the first three weeks. During these first three weeks, confidence and capacity building took place (which was adapted and sensitive to refugee experiences) and participants were each introduced to an Australian-born volunteer mentor whom they then met, in most cases, initially weekly, then fortnightly, over the following year.

In week four, each participant began a work placement for two days each week, continuing with the classroom-based course for the remaining three. The work placement was brokered either by the project co-ordinator with her links in the local area or by the mentors.<sup>3</sup> The following weeks demonstrated the importance for the participants of the interplay between the classroom, the workplace and the mentors. During the classroom-based part of the course, considerable training was given to participants about employer expectations and local workplace culture. Such expectations included that employees should show initiative and enthusiasm on the job, characteristics interpreted as infringing on a manager's prerogative in some other cultures. The ability to self-advocate and talk objectively about themselves and their skills, and present with self-confidence in job interview and workplace situations, was practised through role-play. Health and safety issues, timekeeping and the importance of networking were amongst other issues explored. The mentors – all experienced in the workplace - also played a significant role in interpreting what was going on at the workplace to the persons being mentored and helped them in a variety of ways. It should be emphasised that the mentors themselves received training from the project prior to taking on their role. They also received ongoing support organised by the project, by way of monthly mentors' group meetings to share experiences and develop their skills.

Combining the teaching of job search skills with work experience was considered critical to putting lessons learnt immediately into practice. The continuation of classroom-based learning also provided a place to iron out difficulties which might have occurred during the previous days spent at work. The co-ordinator also mediated between participants and employers where necessary, for example, if misunderstandings arose (which were sometimes attributable to cultural differences). The combination of classes with work experience was also critical to the rapid improvement of language skills which in most cases was very marked. The classroom-based learning was focused on oral language acquisition. The project also supported (as necessary) certain participants when they had to prepare written reports during their work placements. Childcare was an important issue for several participants. All, except one, of those who needed it, were entitled to childcare due to their humanitarian visa status, which resolved the problem

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<sup>1</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Carr (2004).

<sup>2</sup> An NGO with strong Anglican and community links.

<sup>3</sup> More recently, the Good Company Website has been set up to put companies interested in assisting NGOs and NGOs, in touch with each other. This has proved a fruitful source of work experience opportunities for this project.

for them. For the one not entitled, it was expensive and only an anonymous donation to cover the costs meant that that mother could participate in the course. Settlement case work services were provided by the project, *e.g.*, counselling or housing advice.

After this initial course, the project continued only by finding work placements and mentors for new participants. In mid-2005, funding was made available by the State Government of Victoria in Australia to run the intensive work preparation course again, twice yearly for three years.

**Outcomes.** The pilot course has been subject to an evaluation (See Kyle *et al.*, 2004). This compared the capital costs and outcomes three, six and 12 months after completion of the course with the then available data for the government funded (but privately run) part of the public employment service for the unemployed, then known as Job Network Intensive Assistance.<sup>4</sup> This was the programme for those most disadvantaged in the job market. It could include specific provision for clients of non-English-speaking background most in need of help, for up to 12 months. The Given the Chance project, presumed by the evaluation to be catering for persons with similarly difficult employment search problems (as refugees, the target group of this project, are in a particularly disadvantageous situation in the job market) compared favourably in terms of cost and outcomes with the government scheme. At three months, 58% were in paid employment, education and training, at six months 68% were and at 12 months, 73%; the government scheme showed 54% of clients had such outcomes three months after receiving assistance for varying periods of time up to 12 months. Only 42% of the most disadvantaged in the Job Network Intensive Assistance scheme showed such positive outcomes.

The co-ordinator reports that in late 2004, over 18 months after completing the course, three of the five participants who were accepted as trainees with a multinational retail company are continuing with the same employer, another has been promoted by the organisation where she gained a job during the course, whilst 10 former participants were in a variety of vocational training in order to enter professional work.

### ***Behind the Label*<sup>5</sup> (AUS 2)**

This was a government run, three year project (2002-2004, with the vocational training element extended to mid-2005) undertaken by the New South Wales State Government in Australia. Its purpose was to address the issue of exploitation of outworkers (employees who work at home rather than in a factory) in clothing manufacturing and foster an up-to-date competitive industry complying with the employment conditions required by the law.<sup>6</sup> Although not directly targeted at women, the majority of such workers are migrant women of East Asian origin (Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Korean). They often have poor language skills, a lack of other training, few social contacts and low self-confidence. However, they have a strong need for paid work, which leads to their undertaking sewing work at home for small contractors usually of their own ethnic origin. The project developed various strategies to enforce compliance in the industry. But it linked this work with a pro-active training programme intended to provide skills recognition and to upskill workers in the clothing trade, or retrain them in other areas. The purpose was to provide better paid jobs and other work options as the clothing industry is declining.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This labour market programme has since changed.

<sup>5</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the NSW Office of Industrial Relations (OIR).

<sup>6</sup> In 2000, in New South Wales, there were c. 17 500 clothing factory workers but, possibly, up to 50 000 clothing outworkers. For some years prior to the project, there had been evidence of their employment at sub-legal standards.

<sup>7</sup> An separate but similar initiative has occurred in Canberra, the national capital. It has been led by the trade union representing cleaners and the employer association for the local cleaning industry and aims to

One of the biggest obstacles to making a success of the training programme (as well as the enforcement programme) was difficulties in contacting the outworkers. Their lack of English, their isolation and their distrust of “officialdom”, meant they were very hard to contact to inform about training opportunities, nor were they in a position to seek these out themselves. Once contacted, they needed support and encouragement to undertake training and to continue it, as well as help to resolve practical problems. Outreach work was therefore seen as essential to contact them and to provide the ongoing necessary support. This part of the project was undertaken by working through well-established ethnic-specific community groups and by recruiting several bilingual community workers from the communities to be served. These workers knew and understood their community as well as the outworking industry and were able to gain the trust of outworkers whom they actively sought out. This was critical to generating a response to the availability of the training courses. The community workers helped the outworkers to learn how to use existing community and government resources, including the transport system, and to find childcare, as well as discussing with them their choice of training. They also provided personal support on a wide range of issues to many individuals, and organised social events.

The community workers were complemented by a vocational training specialist who could identify appropriate courses and sources of funding, and facilitate the adaptation of courses to suit individual outworkers. It was particularly important for participation rates on the courses that they were located in the geographical areas where the outworkers lived, and at times and places which facilitated attendance. Also significant for retention rates were factors such as planning the courses in consultation with outworkers themselves, using materials relevant to their work experience and providing the community worker support mentioned above.

The outreach work generated a substantial demand for the training programme. English language courses specific to participants from a particular language group (e.g., Chinese) were run frequently as these were initially in great demand - language was perceived as a major barrier to participation in other courses. Over the early years of the project, skills recognition courses in the clothing trade were offered with the later addition of courses to upgrade skills including in the more advanced areas of patternmaking and computer assisted design. Training programmes to enable participants to change employment direction were also run. These aimed at matching participants’ preferences, pre-existing skills, funding availability and labour market demand. As a result, the skills included various childcare and eldercare courses, courses in information technology and in beautician skills as well as food preparation for eldercare facilities. Participants usually completed language training first, followed by skills training, due to the constraints imposed by their need to continue working, at least during the language courses. During the last 12 months of the project, retention rates on courses were nearly 100%.

Research into barriers to participation had been done early in the project and these were found to be principally language, childcare, transport and loss of working time and thus of income. The first was addressed by the tailored English language courses described above. Free or very reasonably priced childcare was costed into all these programmes by way of subsidies to buy sessional childcare from childcare providers, for participants to cover the hours they spent at a course. This support was

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persuade cleaning companies to comply with legal work conditions and upskill their workers. There are about 2 000 employees in the industry locally. Most are women of non-English-speaking background, largely first-generation migrants with less than a tertiary education. A company’s commitment to this initiative is signaled by signing a Code of Best Practice and offering accredited training in cleaning skills to provide a recognised certificate to employees. The implementation of the Code improves employees’ wages and working conditions. The acquisition of a certificate following the training, enhances employability. (Description drawn from information provided by the Assistant Secretary of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union).

substantially used. Transport subsidies were available and also, for those on clothing skills courses, funding for a \$5 per hour supplement to make up for lost wages.

**Outcomes.** Some 1 000 outworkers attended training courses over the four years of project. There were 31 vocational courses for clothing industry skills, 26 for new skills and 69 English language training courses. Some workers attended more than one course, for example a training course and then an advanced training course or a language and then a vocational training course. All resulted in some form of certification for the successful participant which is recognised on the labour market. Information about the employment trajectory of these individuals has not been provided. However, the public service department with overall responsibility for the project is confident that most of the participants would never have taken part in the other available language and training courses, for the sorts of reasons described above.

Job placements were only added to the training courses in 2004. It had become obvious that succeeding at job interview to get new jobs, outside the clothing industry, was not proving easy for those who had completed earlier courses, despite their enthusiasm and commitment (*e.g.*, one course for 12 participants in family daycare resulted in 25% obtaining work at the end of the course, although it is likely more found work over the following months). The project then linked up with another government training programme which operated closely with employers. As a result, later that year, courses began to be run which combined training and work experience. These were followed up for some participants by job seeking skills workshops. The courses were in food technology for elder care facilities (two courses) and in childcare (two courses). Work placements were found by the course providers and were undertaken for two weeks as part of the eighteen-week training course. Of the 17 outworkers who participated in the first food technology course, six obtained jobs in the industry straightaway and all the others went on to job seeking skills workshops.

In the long-term, the way in which the project worked by initially encouraging outworkers to join social networks and activities before moving into training, was considered vital to obtaining and retaining their participation on training courses. The OIR considers it very likely that their employment opportunities in the long-term have been considerably enhanced by their gains in self-confidence, language skills and vocational training. Even when these have not led immediately to new types of employment, their enhanced abilities have often enabled them to improve their existing working conditions.

***Other voluntary organisations short one-off projects.*** An unquantifiable number of these exist or have done so, as in many EU countries, targeting culturally and linguistically diverse women, not always exclusively first generation migrants. Two of these are mentioned briefly to provide an illustration. They each successfully assisted a significant proportion of the women attending the courses they ran. One in **Sydney** provided a three week training to eight (five of whom were migrant women) women whose linguistic skills were sufficient (not a very high level was required) to become dental assistants. Such was the demand for the skill, that six (four of the five migrants, the fifth had to return to her home country before taking up work) of the participants found jobs as dental assistants straightaway. Another in the remote area of **Broken Hill** had 84 migrant women coming to register their interest in participating in an “into work” programme which could provide only 20 places. They undertook a twelve-month job readiness programme, and at the end of the course three obtained full-time employment and five part-time work. Several are undertaking voluntary work only, as their husbands are not keen on their entering paid employment.

## CANADA

### *Working Women's Centre*<sup>8</sup> (CAN 1)

The *Working Women's Centre* is an NGO, founded in 1976 in Toronto whose principal mission is to assist immigrant women find employment. It provides substantial job search assistance. In addition it runs a large variety of programmes providing settlement services, health and well-being groups and community development projects, as well as the government funded language programme for newcomers (LINC). Part of its remit is also to provide welfare rights advice *e.g.*, regarding housing problems, debt and government payments.

Its various employment programmes consist of personal career counselling to help clients decide what their skills are and in which employment areas their job search should be directed. They receive help in assessing what they need to do to get into work. If this is simply job search instruction, there are four-day workshops available. These provide participants with an understanding of how to do this in the Canadian job market and build up their confidence in their abilities to undertake it successfully. Intensive assistance is given with coaching for job interview, as well as assistance with preparing a professional CV and appropriate cover letters for different jobs. Help is given with preparing an individual's action plan for employment.

Where skills need to be developed or language training undertaken, participants can be assisted to find appropriate courses, although basic computer skills are provided as part of some programmes run by the WWC. Where a woman is entitled to the LINC programme (for which the Centre also provides free childcare) she may do this part-time and participate part-time in the job search programme. Although the job search programmes do not provide childcare, the Centre has playrooms with activities for children. The Centre is child friendly and the workers are familiar with providing clients with advice with children present.

A significant part of the job preparation help provided by the Centre is the work placement programme. The WWC has good relationships with employers locally, both large and small, *e.g.*, local pizza franchises. These have been built up over 30 years, and so the Centre has no problem finding sufficient work placements for their clients. The placements are usually all paid at the minimum wage by the employer and last up to 12 months. A WWC employee works exclusively on finding these for clients. Considerable support during the placement is provided by the Centre. It is regularly in touch with the client on placement and every three months talks to the employer. Its role is to assist the client adapt to the workplace *e.g.*, help her understand her rights and legitimate employer expectations. Where necessary, the support worker will mediate problems between the client and her employer. The Centre considers this is important in facilitating client retention. The women participating in the work placement scheme have very varied language skills and educational backgrounds. About 60% would have no more than the leaving school certificate *i.e.*, 12 or 13 years of schooling

There are a variety of conditions imposed upon the different job search and work placement programmes. For some, women must be on social assistance. For others, they must have been in Canada no more than either three or 10 years. There are a range of subsidies (federal, provincial and municipal) available to help with childcare during the job placements. The WWC workers have a detailed knowledge of these and are skilled in advising on their availability and helping clients access them. Public as well as home-based care options exist.

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<sup>8</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the Working Women's Centre.

**Outcomes.** The experience of the Centre is that about half of those found placements are either kept on as employees at it, or else they find a new job quickly once it is completed. The Centre considers that the work experience provided by the placement and their support during it, to both the person placed and the employer, contributes substantially to this outcome.

### *Womens Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor<sup>9</sup> (CAN 2)*

*Womens Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor (WEST)* is an NGO which assists women exclusively, both Canadian-born and migrant. Windsor is a small regional centre in Ontario about 300 km south of Toronto. Overall, approximately 80% of its clients are migrant women. About half have a tertiary qualification and the remainder, less. WEST provides LINC language programmes and accompanying free childcare. The LINC programme provides a twelve-week full-time training course for 55 women at a time. Once a certain language level is achieved, the women who wish to seek work, are assisted by WEST's job search and employment preparation programmes. Work placements cannot be undertaken whilst undergoing language training.

The most popular individual service is career counselling leading to the preparation of an individual's action plan for finding employment. It may or may not be linked with more intensive help. Such help may include more detailed employment counselling and/or pre-employment/ job readiness sessions. These comprise teaching the personal development skills of interview techniques and communication skills, building confidence and emphasising the importance of networking, as well as job search techniques. Advice about accreditation and further training is provided. Training is given so clients can achieve basic and intermediate computer skills, and appropriate certification is awarded when the different levels are successfully achieved. WEST also provides smart, high-quality new and "gently used" clothing which is appropriate for a job interview, which it considers is a real boost to women's confidence when attending these.

Childcare at a means-tested fee is provided for participants for most of these courses through municipal funding.

A job placement service is funded by a variety of provincial and central government sources. The placements found are unpaid and last about six weeks. These can be part-time where appropriate, and often lead to jobs at the same workplace for clients. The project puts a lot of effort into finding placements and ongoing jobs which clients can apply for, using its local connections. They do their best to place women in the best possible jobs, enabling them to use their skills to the full. The project follows up to see a work placement is going well, provides advice and support if necessary and does the same for a short time after employment is obtained. Work placements are essential to get vital Canadian work experience; the project also finds that it greatly improves their language skills. However, participants have to make their own arrangements for childcare during the placements, often relying on family members to help out. As a result a proportion of women cannot take up potential placements if such arrangements prove impossible to make.

**Outcomes.** Between August 2004 and March 2005, 165 clients were helped to prepare an employment action plan, 84 had more intensive employment counselling and 41 had taken pre-employment sessions. Fifty-seven women have been found job placements and 61 have obtained jobs which they were in for at least three months. (There may be some double counting where women have received several services).

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<sup>9</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor.

## GERMANY

### *Project on Vocational Training for Refugee Women, Berlin.*<sup>10</sup> (GER 1)

This voluntary sector project in Berlin, which works with women refugees and asylum seekers, has existed since 1990. The project has 2 teachers, a social worker, a child care worker, and an hourly paid legal adviser. There are no eligibility requirements for joining the course as to immigration status, unemployment registration, or a particular level of training or education (except for basic German language skills, see below). The educational level of participants is very varied, with some having had no schooling, whilst others are much better educated.

Initially, the project trained women in traditional areas such as home economics and childcare. In 1994, course content changed to respond to labour market opportunities, particularly in the medical and eldercare fields. Because the women often have low levels of education or qualifications, the aim is to map out a future for them once the course is finished. If they cannot get a job immediately at the end of the course, then the aim is to place them into education or training – usually in a medical field such as nurse training, laboratory technician/assistant training, fields such as medical assistance and pharmacy-related ones.

The project offers a ten-month course of 30 hours per week for about 20 women at a time. They must have a basic knowledge of German, that is achieved A2 level.<sup>11</sup> The course is free of charge and childcare is also provided free of charge during class time. The course is flexible, and so are the teachers because of the different origins and levels of education of the participants. German language, medical-related studies, civic education (e.g., German law and the systems of social welfare, politics, school and vocational training and the labour market) and computer training are undertaken throughout the course. Some maths, English and German history are also taught

Assistance is given during the project to help find and renovate an apartment, deal with accommodation contracts and the availability of housing benefit. This is included as part of the German language tuition, for example, practice in understanding abbreviations in advertisements for housing. Similarly, how to deal with social welfare agencies is also covered and the participants are given training in how to find their way around the city.

Extensive job search and job preparation training is provided including how to write a CV, and training in office procedures including using the telephone. Much use is made of role play, both in relation to dealing with German government authorities and, importantly, to practice interview skills. It is crucially important for job market success to build up such skills and with them the confidence of the participants. Other support is provided by the availability of a lawyer for a period each week to help the participants' with a wide range of legal problems, including about employment rights, housing problems and residence status.

Work experience of three weeks full-time at the end of the course is found by the project, which has good links with hospital, childcare, eldercare and retail workplaces locally. It is usually offered in one of those settings. A meeting between each proposed workplace and the participant is held before the placement to discuss the expectations of both parties. The social worker attends such meetings. Although short, as the placement takes place at the end of the course when participants are ready for it, it is found to

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<sup>10</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the Project on Vocational Training for Refugee Women, Berlin.

<sup>11</sup> A2 level is not considered to be job ready. The job ready level is B1. The grading of language proficiency starts with A1 followed by A2, then B1, then higher levels.

be successful for most participants. Feedback is sought from the employers too. During it contact is maintained by a teacher to assist the client or employer where needed.

**Outcomes.** Follow up surveys of all the participants' satisfaction with the course is undertaken and adjustments to it made as appropriate. Of the 2001/02 and 2002/03 participants (44), 16 found jobs ranging from laboratory work, nursing and other care-related work to community translators, restaurant work and one into cleaning. Eleven went into training, one to become accredited as a doctor and others into care/medical related vocational training and other courses. Four had babies.

Employment outcomes immediately after any course are affected by the fact that not all the clients have legal permission to work. Sometimes a client returns some years later to say she has finally received this and is in employment. Because the participants have often been through imprisonment and torture, just being able to look forward and feel more confident (especially in language skills) is a big gain and one without which eventual training and/or employment would be impossible.

### ***Paritätisches Bildungswerk, Bremen***<sup>12</sup> (GER 2)

The ***Paritätisches Bildungswerk, Bremen*** (the PBW) is an NGO which is a further education institute focused on social and intercultural issues. It runs the *Modular training course for professional orientation and practice for migrant women*. It has run this project each year for 10 years. During the 2003/2004, programme, 31 women attended, with a wide variety of educational backgrounds. About one third would have completed tertiary education. Nearly all the rest will have completed 12/13 years of schooling and have a school leaving certificate. They also have differing German language skills. Some are new migrants (e.g., marriage migrants) but some have lived in Germany for a long time. Because of the modular nature of the course, it is possible to cater for the differing education and language levels.

The project runs for 12 months, 25 hours per week over five days, coinciding with school and kindergarten hours so childcare is not necessary. (This means that all participants must have at least kindergarten age children). It is free of charge. The availability of the course and its good reputation are well known in the local migrant communities and there is always a waiting list to be accepted on to it. There is a minimum German language requirement (A1, see footnote 11) but this is not a requirement to have the degree of language efficiency which is considered as job ready. A woman must be recommended by the government job search agency, that is be registered as seeking work but not necessarily in receipt of a government payment. Those in receipt of government payments continue to receive these throughout the course including the work placements. During the first few weeks, concentrated work is done on understanding each woman's education and skills, and her ideas for her future employment. German lessons at different levels are commenced and computer skills and general job readiness preparation are studied. This last comprises generic work skills, for example, how to use the telephone and record information received, how to search out information, expectations in the German workplace such as taking the initiative and displaying critical and creative skills. Interview training is also included. Women work on different subjects in groups of different sizes, learning to adapt and form relationships within each. The strong relationships they develop with their teachers enables individuals to achieve considerable personal development.

The project includes two separate work experience placements. The first takes place for four weeks, approximately two months after the course has begun. During the work experience period, the participants meet once, for a social evening together. They are usually extremely nervous before starting but feel a great sense of achievement after finishing it. There is also a noticeable improvement in German language ability. This first period serves to focus the participants' ideas about what they wish to do in the

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<sup>12</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the Paritätisches Bildungswerk, Bremen.

workplace. Many, being mothers, have focused on working in childcare but after doing practical experience in childcare work, many revise their aims. During the next few months, the participants continue acquiring the skills mentioned above. They also spend time researching where they would like to spend the next work placement of 12 weeks, and setting this up. Both work placements are found by the women themselves. They are assisted and advised by the project but it is considered extremely important that they find their placements independently. In doing this, participants assist each other. Local employers are also of happy to provide the (unpaid) work placements. Their awareness of diversity management is enhanced by another project run by PBW on this subject, for local private and public organisations. During the second work placement, one day per week is spent in the classroom. This is found to be important to provide project and peer support to the participants during this workforce experience.

**Outcomes.** Approximately 35-40% of participants obtain jobs arising from their work placements. These include jobs in the retail, hospitality and health sectors. About a third are able to start vocational training in a range of skills including as medical or childcare assistants. The rest find that their educational level is not recognised or sufficient to enter vocational training. As a result they take up adult education to obtain the necessary qualifications before beginning further training. Only one or two do not continue with employment or further education, often for family reasons to do with childcare. The relatively high educational levels contribute to these outcomes. The intensity of the course and the level of commitment required of participants (including being able to handle direct challenges to their behaviour, e.g., poor timekeeping, unwillingness to speak out in groups) is a factor in its success. Participants' self-confidence increases considerably during the course. In addition, its two separate work experience components, enabling participants to change direction in terms of the type of employment chosen, is also considered to be important. Most women achieve good language skills by the time they have completed the course.

### ***Women's Computer Centre Berlin (GER 3)***<sup>13</sup>

The ***Women's Computer Centre Berlin (FrauenComputerZentrumBerlin)*** has existed since 1984. It runs a variety of information technology training schemes including shorter (six months) courses for 20 foreign-born women with different levels of school or professional education, to provide them with information and computer technology (ICT) skills. They have a strong emphasis on enabling women to find strategies for teaching themselves (self-organised learning), particularly through ICT. This extends to teaching German through a computer programme, though with some classroom-based learning as well. Participants undertake work placements of at least two months. The focus is on assisting them find their own internships rather than doing this for them, though the project actively supports their efforts in doing this. The project also discusses how to implement diversity management with some of the personnel departments of receiving employers. This, through their experience, facilitates the success of work placements. Of the course which lasted from October 2004-March 2005, outcomes were 15 participants into paid work or training. The project noted that women with large families (of which there were several on the course) may have particular difficulty combining work force participation with their domestic responsibilities, even in Berlin where school hours have been extended into the afternoon and childcare provision is amongst the best in Germany. The Centre does not provide childcare but advises participants on how to find appropriate childcare. It also provides advice to companies on the issue of work/life balance for employees and how to promote this.

### ***Bremerhaven - Retail Customer Orientation Project (GER 4)***<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the Women's Computer Centre in Berlin

<sup>14</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the Bremerhaven - Retail Customer Orientation Project.

The ***Bremerhaven - Retail Customer Orientation Project*** was run by a non-government educational institute. Twenty-five foreign-born women took part in it, most of whom were more or less fluent in German.

The training provided to 15 of the participants was to enable them to obtain the appropriate vocational training to work in the retail industry. Of these 15, 13 were born in Russia and one each in Ukraine and Turkey. Three of those from Russia had tertiary education. The course was full-time at 38 ½ hours a week. Three days a week were spent at a work experience placement, found by the institute as it has good labour market contacts. Two days a week were spent at the institution for the classroom-based training. The group was a cohesive one which worked well. Confidence building was an important part of curriculum, especially at the beginning of the course, as some participants had found the migration experience particularly difficult. The training covered the skills needed for the retail industry and some basic computer training, job search and interview skills and a short 50 hour language training module which was work focused. The course lasted 16 months.

The other 10 participants already had a retail vocational qualification. They, with the 15 in full-time training, received 120 hours training to obtain a customer care qualification (classes were in the evening or at weekends). The vocational training results in a full vocational qualification and the customer care aspect of the course in a special certificate.

Help with finding childcare provision was available through the project. However, as the participants tended to live in big family units, none of them needed childcare as their families helped out. Had childcare been necessary, funding would have been available from the local Labour office and/or from the European Social Fund. A very basic sum of money for expenses was available to participants from the same sources but this was means-tested on family income.

**Outcomes.** The institute helped the women find subsequent paid employment. Of the group of 15, 80% found a job immediately after the end of the course with 75% still working 6 months later. Good grades were achieved by the participants in the vocational training part of the course.

## NETHERLANDS <sup>15</sup>

### *Different*<sup>16</sup> (NL 1)

The *Different* project provides a return to work programme specifically targeting low-educated migrant women who are on disability insurance. The participants had lost their jobs because of disability occurring through manual work such as cleaning. Drawing initially on the experience of the reintegration companies (private reintegration agencies which have contracts with the UWV (the Dutch social security agency) to reinsert persons on unemployment or disability benefits into employment) a pilot project with 60 participants (20 in three different municipalities) was run using methodology prepared by the project's director. Using the information gained from this pilot to refine the methodology design, a second pilot was run, also of 60 participants. Now (June 2005) a third pilot, further refined from the experience of the second pilot and with a similar number of women, is underway.

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<sup>15</sup> Dutch Council of Refugees (2005) contains numerous other examples from the Netherlands of good practices in social and work integration from the network of the Dutch Council of Refugees.

<sup>16</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the Project Director.

Each participant (who continues receiving disability insurance payments) is provided with up to 12 months education and training with the aim of reintegrating her into work at a somewhat higher level than her previous job. For three or six months depending upon her level of language ability, she learns Dutch in a work-focused way for two days a week. This education may also include and be followed by some training in, for example, telephone work and some computer training, leading to a professional certification, albeit at a low level. During the course, each participant attends a voluntary and unpaid work placement. The area in which a participant does her work placement is found after discussion with her and is usually in workplaces such as in hospitals, childcare, eldercare – in a range of low-skilled work, such as kitchen work, but not cleaning. It is seen as critical to continued participation that the participant's preferences are discussed and catered for. Often, for example, kitchen work is well regarded, possibly because it is less isolated work than cleaning. An important aspect of work placements undertaken at the same time as training is that it provides a forum both for a gradual return to work and daily practice of Dutch. Problems with work can also be discussed the following week at the project centre during the training days. The course, however long it lasts, may be full-time or part-time in relation both to the training and work placement aspects. This depends on the strengths and capacities of each individual.

Childcare is needed by a number of project participants. This is facilitated by the UWV. The costs of childcare are based on a participant's income, which will mean for most women, that it is almost free of charge.

It has been crucial to the project that each woman participating has had the same case manager throughout, to build up trust and to ensure that the person representing the project to her fully understands her situation. When a woman is accepted into the project, there is a very comprehensive intake procedure. Part of the intake procedure is a kick off meeting (maximum 6 women) where the women are invited to bring their husbands/partners. During this kick off meeting (viewed by the women as the official start of their return to work process), the women and their husbands/partners are informed about the whole project by their case manager. Time is included for discussions and questions. It has been found that the husbands have been very supportive of their wives' participation in the project and subsequent work experience and other work/training outcomes. This is attributed to their inclusion in the project from the outset. The thorough intake procedure has also included employing an official translator rather than using a family member. This has meant that participants, when interviewed (alone, as the husbands have come to the kick off meeting) have been able to be far more honest in their responses.

Another highly significant aspect of the project has been that every four to six weeks the women meet together in groups of five or six, as a form of peer support. They themselves decide what to discuss, learn processes for reaching these decisions, and decide on how they want to use the group. This usually involves both discussing and supporting each other in their work placements, as well as how to use the group to inform themselves better, *e.g.*, about how to fill in official forms, how to learn about various workplaces by organising to visit police stations, employment offices etc. This has been very positive form of mutual support, about which the participants have been very enthusiastic.

**Outcomes.** At the beginning of the project, two years ago, a control group was established of 20 women also on disability insurance, with similar profiles to those who were to participate in the programme. It was not an entirely random control group as the first 20 appropriate insurance recipients were all placed in one of the pilot programmes and then the next 20 were assigned into the control group. The results, nevertheless, are telling. None of the control group (who received help from various other reintegration companies using their usual procedures) have obtained work after two years. In contrast, 27% of the 20 women used as the experimental group in the same area, in the first pilot, obtained employment within the same two years. Half of the experimental group participants are still undertaking training, either in mainstream education or in the project in special training, and it is projected that half of these should obtain work within the next year.

### ***Stichting (Foundation) AKROS – Vrouwen Atelier Mozaiek<sup>17</sup> (NL 2)***

The Stichting (Foundation) AKROS – Vrouwen Atelier Mozaiek is an NGO in Amsterdam which is contracted by the government to assist migrant women with job search. They all have to be in receipt of welfare payments and be required to undertake the programme, to be eligible to participate in the one run by the The Stichting (Foundation). A recent seven-month course provided training for 30 women of varied educational levels. They undertook 10 hours per week in a voluntary work placement and spent the rest of the week training at the centre in Dutch as a second language and in office skills including the use of a computer. The centre has on-site childcare and is able to place women in the work areas in which they express an interest. Of the 30 participants in the most recent course, 12 found employment, three by establishing their own enterprise, two went into training and 16 continued on in voluntary work experience.

### ***Other Dutch projects<sup>18</sup>***

The ***Pavem Commission*** which is a high-level national commission established to assist migrant women integrate into Dutch society, socially and economically, has made agreements with 29 of the largest local municipalities. They have committed themselves to implementing programmes to progress this aim. The Commission is winding up in July 2005 after two years in existence. Certain municipalities are concentrating on reaching the migrant women most remote from mainstream Dutch society – those with few Dutch language skills, and almost no formal schooling or work experience. An emphasis has been placed on reaching out to them, rather than expecting them to come and seek out what help might be available to them to learn Dutch and work skills. Outcomes are not clear yet from many of these projects, but often they aim at moving the women involved some way towards work readiness, rather than directly into work.

One municipality (***Nijmegen*** NL 3) commented on the strong positive response from women who were visited by outreach workers in their own homes and offered Dutch classes. Another (***Breda*** NL 4) plans to run language classes from premises near the homes of the women most in need of these. The municipality will also link participants with Dutch speakers in their own area to practice language skills and to start to form Dutch social networks. It is also involving local migrant women in policymaking. One of the aims in doing this is to develop more appropriate programmes to enhance the labour market participation of women from different cultural backgrounds, as well as to aid their social participation. It is also intended to increase the participation of migrant women in policymaking. ***Nijmegen*** is running lengthy training and work readiness courses for long-term migrant women residents even where they do not receive social payments, which would normally exclude them from an entitlement to such help. Another municipality (***Hengelo*** NL 5) is also focusing on facilitating the social participation of migrant women who are not in the paid workforce and have low education levels and Dutch language skills (185 are enrolled so far). The Dutch language training they provide is always done in conjunction with another activity ranging from sewing to sport. They too matched women with Dutch native speakers; they matched 40, that is to say, nearly all the migrant women asking for such a social contact, and had a good response from the Dutch population when seeking volunteers to assist in this. This project also involved the husbands in discussing what the project was doing which made a big difference to their attitude to their wives' participation. Childcare is available at a very low fee for the duration of the activities.

The private reintegration agencies which have contracts with the UWV (the Dutch social security agency) to reinsert persons on unemployment or disability benefits into employment, also work with

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<sup>17</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the Stichting (Foundation) AKROS – Vrouwen Atelier Mozaiek.

<sup>18</sup> Descriptions drawn from information provided by the organisations concerned and the NGO E-quality, see at: <http://www.e-quality.nl/e-quality/home.asp?paginaam=home&metnaam=e-quality>

migrant women in difficult economic circumstances, who have low educational qualifications, little work experience and who often lack fluency in Dutch. One (*Co-Factor* NL 6) described that a worker from the agency visits the women referred to the company at home. It was decided to do this as it removes the first hurdle to participating in what Co-Factor has to offer, in that they do not have to come out of their home and find their way to the office. It ensures they are seen and also that they are able to explain what their problems are. In addition, the worker can also see what the particular woman has to deal with in her social environment. It builds confidence and trust in the agency because the client is acting as the host and the worker as the guest. Another (*Centrum BOA* NL 7) emphasised the need to talk to each client about her hopes and the opportunities available to her, as well as what is realistically possible. The chance to practice her skills and Dutch in work settings are an important part of the training courses, and engender a sense of empowerment for the participant. This assists her in maintaining her momentum. Staying on these 1-2 year courses is very demanding of women who may never have been much out of the home before. Outcome rates for placing clients in ongoing employment are around 30-35%.

## SWEDEN

### *Avanti*<sup>19</sup> (SW 1)

*Avanti* is one of the several women-focused activities offered through Huddinge Municipality's Introduction Programme (IP).<sup>20</sup> It was run as a pilot project initially, with special funds from the Swedish Integration Agency. It is focused exclusively on migrant women. It ran for the first time between January 2002 and June 2003. It catered for 24 women, of whom 17 completed the course. The women targeted for the project were those who had never had paid work in their country of origin and most had not expected to enter the workforce. The participants' education levels were generally between 5-9 years of schooling, (2 had 12 years) and their age range varied from 25 years upwards, although most were women over 45. They all had poor Swedish language skills. Any non-EU migrant (not asylum seekers) who had received her permanent visa within the previous three and a half years<sup>21</sup> was eligible to participate, provided she was in receipt of the government, means-tested financial assistance for IP participation. This meant that the income of the family had to be below a certain level.<sup>22</sup> Childcare was not a problem for participants: this is available for all legal Swedish residents whose child is over 12 months of age. It is cheap for lower income levels.

**Classroom based learning:** The first group in this pilot project participated for approximately 52 weeks. They spent 20 hours per week on "classroom" learning with extra activities sometimes programmed in as well. In addition, they continued to attend the mainstream Swedish for immigrants (SFI) classes, for 15 hours per week. The programme at this stage involved work-related Swedish language tuition with additional input on work-related activities, such as how to prepare CVs and present oneself at interviews. A wide spectrum of information regarding life in Sweden was also included in the course,

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<sup>19</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the Programme Manager for Newly-Arrived Refugees and Immigrants of Huddinge Municipality.

<sup>20</sup> These include 15-30 hours per week language training courses, delivered by Swedish municipalities with largely central government funding. Students complete the basic "Swedish for immigrants (SFI)" course within 6-24 months. Those attending can receive a means-tested financial allowance if attendance is part of the IP for migrants and if the participant is not self-sufficient. Self-supporting migrants (that is someone who is not eligible for the means-tested financial allowance) may also attend SFI classes free of charge. In Huddinge, work experience is included in the IP, although in some municipalities, it is not.

<sup>21</sup> This is the same requirement for eligibility to participate in an IP.

<sup>22</sup> The exclusion from *Avanti* of participants where no-one in the household receives the IP financial allowance, is under discussion.

including regarding housing, schooling and taxes which is similar to the mainstream IP as it is today. The more unique part of the programme content focused on personal development and motivation to assist participants' in clarifying their expectations of their integration process and of their life in Sweden. As in the regular IP, individual plans were developed for participants to follow.

As part of this initial period, one week's internship was arranged in the sort of work where previous experience and higher education levels are not necessary. In Huddinge, this included eldercare, working in the retail trade and restaurant work. After this week, the participants returned to the classroom situation and continued with more intensive Swedish language classes, oriented to the preferred job within one of these three fields. Much more learning about what to expect at the workplace occurred, including employee rights and responsibilities. Employers attended sessions to describe their expectations. All these elements were crucial in contributing to making the second period of internship work well for the participants.

**Internship:** after the 20 weeks' classroom-based course, the half of the participants with better language skills were placed in an unpaid six months internship (though all continued to receive government financial assistance for IP participants). The other half of the participants became interns after 12 months in the classroom. Both groups had three hours per week of ongoing work-oriented Swedish language training during the work placements and were thus active for 40 hours per week. A project manager – who remained the same throughout – was assigned to support each participant during the classroom-based course and the work placement (which she/he found for the participant). This manager had contact with the employer and the intern, as and when required. For each intern, a personal mentor at the workplace was appointed. This mentor was trained by the project and received a small financial bonus for the role. In most cases, the mentor met the intern prior to the placement. Most of participants found the assistance of mentors helpful. The regular IP programme's two internship managers have generally strong contacts with local businesses and other employers, including in the public service. This is an important factor in finding and matching internships to participants, though this is not always easy to do. Finding employers willing to provide internships can at times involve discussions with them as to what kind of local community is desirable, and challenging negative perceptions of migrants

**Outcomes.** Of the 17 participants who completed the course, 9 obtained paid employment immediately after the internship ended. Some were kept on by the firms where they had been interns (the project managers made efforts to find internships where this could be a possibility – *e.g.*, work in retail chains with multiple outlets all over Sweden). All the other participants wanted to continue working, that is to say, the original expectations of not being in paid employment had changed due to their experience on the programme. Their difficulties in finding work related either to language problems and the need for further work experience, or to difficulties in finding work in their chosen field. Three of those who did not find jobs at the end of the course, looked for work independently. Of the remainder, half were considered to need more language tuition. They therefore continued in the IP, spending half the week in Swedish classes and half continuing as interns. Shortly after this process began, two more obtained jobs.

A subsequent, rather more intensive, twelve-week programme was run for 13 women, full-time (40 hours per week and no parallel SFI classes). This was not as successful in terms of employment outcomes. Overall it was felt that the longer fifty-two week course is necessary if the classes and internships are to be productive. The longer period is needed to acquire the necessary language and work-related skills and to make the personal changes necessary to enable participants feel confident that they have a future in the workplace. Organisationally, it was considered that internships must follow on straight from the "classroom" part of the programme, without a break between the two.

**External evaluation.** This was conducted through interviews with participants and programme providers. It confirmed that the goals of the project were met. That is to say, work language skills were

significantly increased for all participants, as was knowledge of Swedish working life. Finally, it was clear to the programme providers that participants underwent an important attitudinal change. They attributed this to the provision of professionally taught motivational and personal development classes, where discussion and reflection on participants' past lives and future plans were encouraged. They considered these classes to be the most important single element of the programme, and that simply offering work-related Swedish classes and internships is not sufficient to meet the needs of the women participating in Avanti.

### ***Wordpower***<sup>23</sup> (SW 2)

The *Wordpower* project which ran from May 2002 to December 2004, involved migrant women in the town of Helsingborg who were mostly aged between 25-35 with poor Swedish language skills and (usually) low education levels (between 4-12 years schooling). Many had been in Sweden a long time (up to 12 years) and were very isolated. Its purpose was to improve their chances of obtaining employment by combining work experience and work-focused language training. Ninety-two women participated in the project, but there was a high dropout rate (about 15%) due to pregnancy. They were all contacted through the schools or preschools attended by their children and all expressed an interest in learning Swedish and in entering work. During the first year, participants began a Swedish language course for four days per week. Study visits to the post office, banks, museums etc., were arranged for them as well as introducing them to activities which they could undertake with their children, for example going to the ice rink. On the fifth day, the project arranged for them to spend one day per week in their children's school, assisting there in various ways and practising their language skills. Many of the women were concerned they were too old to train to work and such concerns had to be regularly addressed. Building participants' confidence in their abilities to meet the challenges of work was an important initial part of the course.

During the second year, they began to map out their work aims and obtained job search training. Work-related skills were more intensively taught related to their work placements (see below), e.g., some office skills such as basic computer training and also employer expectations (time-keeping, the need to speak out at work and understand that this is seen as appropriate). This also ensured that their language acquisition was work-focused. Also during this year, the monthly time spent on language practice increased to half of the course time. Those participants interested in working went for their language practice not to a school, but obtained (with the help of the project) work experience in workplaces. These were in work areas in which they were interested, e.g. retail work, hairdressing, eldercare and childcare. Two weeks per month were spent there and two weeks at the project.

Apart from teachers on the project, there was a mentor/supervisor (a paid employee). She mapped the women's interests and then found employers willing to provide placements, introduced the women and established the arrangement. She then regularly visited a group of trainees. Each trainee kept a daily diary of what she had done and learnt. The mentor read this when she visited and gave her feedback on it. She also kept in touch with employers about any concerns they might have about how the placement was progressing. She observed trainees as they worked, so as to develop work relevant language exercises for the teachers to use. Over time, the project's knowledge of the labour market and local employers increased significantly.

Social contacts with Swedish women were arranged (and these still continue) through their association Bilahodod. Interest in this has developed gradually with the help of local women's voluntary organisations.

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<sup>23</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the former Project Leader of the Equal Wordpower project.

**Outcomes.** Of the original participants, 24 are still in training as the group of 92 was taken in during two successive years, the second one being smaller than the first. Of the 68 who completed the first two years training, some 9 (13%) are now working (June 2005), but all in low-skilled jobs including cleaning and packing. Seven are in household help training or considering establishing a business to provide these services to elderly migrants. Some others have held temporary jobs and some 15% overall dropped out due to pregnancy. Language skills improved substantially in one particular group of 26 participants (some of whom had more than 13 years education and some, prior knowledge of Swedish). Of these, 11 (42%) obtained the employment office's minimum requirement of language competency for work after 14 months and another three were nearly at this level.

Family commitments weighed heavily on the participants. As mentioned above, a number became pregnant during the project. Others had large families and a 30 hour per week programme placed heavy demands on them. In addition, although the project leaders had discussed the course with partners and other family members prior its start, the commitment of a significant number of them to the women's participation appeared low, and this created some retention problems. Attempts to tackle this issue were not very successful.

A qualitative evaluation by means of interviews with participants and other stakeholders was prepared after its first year.<sup>24</sup> Following this, improvements were made to the vocational-based language training provided and the office-based skills training. Teachers and participants discussed together their goals to clarify these and ensure the women felt fully involved in the direction of the course. The project only lasted 30 months in total. Those running it felt that they did not have enough time to put into practice much of what was learnt from their early experiences, which could have improved the course. Nevertheless, much positive personal change occurred for many participants in terms of increased self-confidence and language skills, *e.g.*, the ability to discuss their children's progress at schools directly with teachers without the need for partners or others to translate for them.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### *Account 3 Women's Consultancy*<sup>25</sup> (UK 1)

*Account 3 Women's Consultancy* (Account 3) is an NGO founded in 1991 and has 20 staff. It is exclusively a women's service but not specifically for migrants or ethnic minorities. Its location, however, in the East End of London, means that the majority of its users have an ethnic minority background and many are first-generation migrants. Over the past year, approximately 80% of the Centre's clients were from an ethnic minority. There is no monitoring whether a client is foreign-born, but it is likely that a substantial proportion of the clients are first generation migrants. Most clients would have less than a complete secondary school education.

The Centre provides a one-stop shop for the women in its locality on many matters of social and economic concern. It is situated on good transport routes and is well-known. Among the functions it is funded to provide is a range of welfare advice relating to housing, financial social assistance payments from the government, debt problems, health and education issues and family matters. On the same site it provides advice about its employment and training services; clients can be referred across the office to access these (and the programmes are also run in the same building), after having initially used the service for a social welfare problem. In fact, a considerable number of employment and training clients contact the

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<sup>24</sup> See summary English version, downloaded on 8/07/05, at: <http://www.in2work.org/pdfs/Evaluation%20of%20Equal%20Ordkraft.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Description drawn from information provided by Account 3 and from its website, downloaded on 8/07/05, at: <http://www.account3.org.uk/html/aboutus.php>

service initially for welfare advice. (Women in the employment programmes may also be referred for welfare advice where this is necessary, thus providing help with practical problems which might stand in the way of participation in job search and training).

The employment and training services have been delivered over the past few years through a variety of funding programmes and are all free. Job search assistance is provided through groups which provide help with application forms and CVs, role play interviews, *etc.* and also by way of one-to-one career advice from a qualified careers adviser. Confidence building is emphasised throughout all the assistance given to clients.

The Centre also provides a range of in-house training courses. These include basic skills and English as a second language (ESOL). These programmes are not provided as stand alone ones but are linked to the subsequent jobs/further training which participants intend to do. For example, part-time ESOL courses can be combined with part-time training courses. Training programmes provided are up to NVQ level 2<sup>26</sup> in information technology, childcare and, depending upon demand, driving instructors' training. Courses such as training in working with those with special needs, first aid work, and food hygiene courses are also offered.

Work experience is regularly arranged by the centre either as part of its training courses, or is facilitated by for example, providing it through work placements at Account 3 itself and by providing a room one day a month to Volunteer Action, which arranges work placements. It is acknowledged as essential to subsequent success in seeking paid employment. The Centre also advertises itself to employers as having a pool of skilled, experienced workers seeking employment in a range of activities. It manages to place many of the graduates from its training courses, in jobs. This is assisted by its excellent contacts with local public and private employers.

Childcare is available free on site for all the courses provided. It is also available for clients on work placements. Once a client obtains paid work, Account 3 assists in identifying alternative childcare provision.

Career progression is encouraged by sending former clients information about opportunities to take up professional development courses and higher level qualifications at local colleges, and by inviting them back for events at which they can get such information

**Outcomes.** Identifying factors for the success of the Centre, the independent evaluation<sup>27</sup> commissioned in early 2003 specifically noted the one-stop shop service provision, the excellent crèche, the availability of bilingual staff which reduces the stress of initial contact with the Centre, the women-only environment which many women and their male relatives feel more comfortable with, and the pro-active outreach work. The evaluation comments that the Centre is “highly successful in attracting women from black and minority ethnic groups, and particularly those from Bangladeshi communities,<sup>28</sup> a group identified by all major strategic and funding bodies in London as being at high risk of exclusion and underrepresented in the take-up of learning and training”. It also notes the continual readiness of the staff to be as flexible as possible to client needs on a day-to-day basis, and also to adapt their programmes to the emerging and changing needs of the community it serves.

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<sup>26</sup> National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 qualifications are often sufficient to enable their holders to obtain work in the local job market.

<sup>27</sup> Downloaded on 8/07/05, at:  
[http://www.account3.org.uk/documents/HO\\_Opportunity\\_for\\_Women\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://www.account3.org.uk/documents/HO_Opportunity_for_Women_Evaluation_Report_Final.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Nearly 60% of clients for the 2004/2005 year were of Bangladeshi origin.

The project measures its outcomes by way of keeping records of which and how many services are accessed (e.g , number of job search training sessions delivered) and success rates in training courses and employment outcomes. The independent evaluation referred to above was very positive. It notes that, for example, between June 2001 and March 2003, 140 women participated in a number of in-house training courses with 62, (44%) moving into employment (half into working with children, about a fifth into administration and just under one-sixth into community development). The Centre's report to the Learning Skills Council for the period October 2002 to June 2004 refers to 264 trainees enrolling in computer/administration and childminder/childcare related courses. Qualifications were achieved by 83.5%. In another project which involved employment search advice sessions from October 2003 to March 2004, 251 advice sessions were delivered. Thirty-five women gained employment which was 15 less than the target the Centre had set itself. A major reason for this was that the clients seeking help to get into work were lower skilled than anticipated, but 58 of these were guided into training opportunities which will enhance their employability. During the past 12 months, 150 women have completed childcare-related courses and 88 have been placed in employment. Overall between May 2004- May 2005, over 1200 women have used Account 3's services and of these 596 have been assisted with job search and/or training (some of both these figures will be double counts).

The Centre sends out feedback questionnaires every six months. The response rate of 20% is, unsurprisingly, low but is mostly positive. If a client drops out of a course or does not return after a first appointment, they are all followed up and the reasons given discussed at staff meetings, which is a useful tool for keeping the quality of services provided under review.

### ***Ethnic Minority Outreach Project<sup>29</sup> (UK 2)***

The ***Ethnic Minority Outreach Project*** is an (ongoing) initiative by the Department of Work and Pensions and is intended to assist jobless persons from ethnic minority groups in finding employment and training. Initially, 52 projects (run by voluntary sector and private providers, *i.e.*, not delivered by Jobcentre Plus, the public employment service) were established in five urban areas with high ethnic minority populations. An independent evaluation, undertaken by the Policy Studies Institute (Barnes *et al.*, 2005) covering the first two years of the project, sampled 20 projects to provide a quantitative and qualitative analysis of outcomes for the nearly 4 000 participants of whom 58% were Asian or Asian British and 24% Black or Black British. For the half of the participants for whom qualifications data was recorded, approximately half had no qualifications whilst for the other half there was a wide range up to NVQ level 4 or 5<sup>30</sup> (9% of those with data recorded). As part of the qualitative analysis, the study had a longitudinal aspect and project workers and some participants were interviewed in-depth up to three times. Interviews with other stakeholders were also undertaken.

The nature of the outreach was assessed as extensive and innovative, including arranging activities such as beauty courses to attract participants before introducing the idea of job search, using the media (including radio and SMS text messaging) and providing advice sessions at a range of organisations. Referring clients to other organisations which would provide appropriate training and language courses was an important aspect of outreach work. Clients were also helped to find work placements, childcare, and funding for courses, as well as given general support in job search. Many clients were visited in their homes or met at places nominated by them. Some projects worked with employers to facilitate the employment of ethnic minority jobseekers. One of the ways in which this was undertaken, was to offer training in diversity human resource management to employers so as to assist them in adopting strategies to recruit and retain ethnic minority jobseekers. Of the employers approached, most were small businesses

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<sup>29</sup> Description drawn from information taken from Barnes *et al.*, (2005).

<sup>30</sup> NVQ level 5 is equivalent to the end of secondary level education (UK A levels). (Some participants had degree level qualifications).

(50 employees or less). Although data on employment take up was missing for half of these, where recorded, 26% had taken on a client from the project.

The evaluation pinpoints a number of factors which contributed to successful projects. Recruiting bilingual workers who understood the situation of their clients, could speak their language, were sensitive to their culture and “whose personal commitment often far exceeded their contractual obligations” (Barnes *et al.*, 2005, p.174) was crucial. Many providers used their own employer networks enabling them to meet specific employee needs such as those with serious language problems, those requiring a women-only workplace, or family friendly hours. Considerable personal support was provided to clients, including in some instances once they had become employed. The evaluation refers to the need to acknowledge employment retention and employment advancement issues when seeking to attach hard-to-reach groups to the labour market. It refers to a need to move them through what it terms the “grey area” of temporary, short-term and low quality jobs. It also pointed out the need for additional funding to assist the most disadvantaged jobseekers. For example transport costs, childcare help and sometimes the payment of a financial incentive for attending training.

**Outcomes.** From the point of view of the Department, outcomes were measured 13 weeks after a client was first in contact with a project. On this measure, just over 25% of the women clients (who made up just over 50% of project participants overall) found work and at least 8% began training. Inevitably, those finding employment were the more job ready *e.g.*, those with recent work experience and/or marketable skills. Women who had been out of the labour market for some years engaged in full-time childcare, some of whom also needed English language training, were harder to place so quickly. The evaluation emphasises, however, that the projects were very successful in reaching many of those who were unaware of the opportunities for work and training, particularly for example, Indian and Pakistani women. It indicates that a proportion of clients were a considerable distance from the labour market and that it was not possible to enable them to access work within 13 weeks. Various providers emphasised that 10-12 months or even longer, was more realistic for achieving an employment outcome for many clients and produced records to indicate subsequent success with placing clients, even though these did not appear in the statistics mentioned above. In addition, outreach workers noted that clients showed marked improvements in self-confidence and other “soft” skills. These changes were likely to increase the chances of participating in training and employment successfully in the future.

### ***Workplace Coordinators Programme (WCP)***<sup>31</sup> (UK 3)

The ***Cross River Partnership*** is a public, private and voluntary sector partnership established to promote physical and economic links between the poorer areas just to the south side of the Thames in London and the economically dynamic areas of central London. In 1999, it created the **Workplace Coordinators Programme**<sup>32</sup> (WCP) to use this partnership to benefit the unemployed by finding jobs in the

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<sup>31</sup> Description drawn from information provided by the Programme Manager of the Central London Employment and Enterprise Renewal Programme, Cross River Partnership and from Fair Cities: Employer-led Efforts that Produce Results for Ethnic Minorities, March 2004, downloaded on 12/07/05 at: <http://www.nationalemploymentpanel.org.uk/publications/nep/2004/faircities.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> ***Skillsmatch*** also works closely with employers to help its clients find work. It is a job brokerage team established by a London municipality, with significant funding from central government, for the area of Tower Hamlets. This is an area of high unemployment, a high concentration of ethnic minorities and a high number of job vacancies in the finance, construction, hospitality, health, teaching (including teaching assistants), retail and administrative sectors. Skillsmatch not only provides support and training to jobseekers but offers local employers a free recruitment agency service. This aspect of their work involves a range of services one of which involves giving a variety of free customised pre-employment training to candidates both before and after they have been accepted for employment This is often in line with a particular employer’s requirements and wherever possible leads to an industry recognised certificate, *e.g.*,

growth industries of construction, finance, arts, hospitality/tourism and health, and to assist employers in those industries which have problems recruiting and retaining employees with the appropriate skills.

The WCP has focused on responding to the skills requirements of growing industries in central and south London. It was identified that despite high local unemployment, workplaces had difficulties recruiting staff. Some of the problems identified were that jobseekers had insufficient basic language and maths skills, lacked work experience, lacked “soft skills” such as interview skills and personal presentation, and faced employer discrimination. As a result, the WCP focuses on skilling up employees to meet local employer requirements. It does this by, for example, providing skills training (before job interview) in basic qualifications in first aid, food hygiene and health and safety certificates for a range of industries. “Soft skills” such as curriculum vitae (resume) preparation, interview skills and what to wear at interviews, are also covered. Language problems have not been a big issue but a programme of basic skills was implemented in 1999, focusing particularly on the needs of the hospitality industry. This course combines English as a second language and IT training, on a part-time basis. For some of the course the employer allows the employee to take paid time off work, and the rest is undertaken in the employee’s free time.

A key part of the work of the WCP is aftercare for employees. Intensive support is offered to enable the employee to remain in the job by giving them support and advice during the initial crucial period, *e.g.*, on “soft skills”. Help is given acclimatising them to the work culture of the particular industry *e.g.*, the health sector. Both the employee and the employer may be in touch with the WCP to resolve initial difficulties at work and employers gain a better personnel competence and understanding through working with the WCP. Clients often return to the WCP for career development advice which WCP provides by *e.g.*, by advising him/her how to obtain qualifications to help career advancement.

WCP co-ordinators are skilled at helping employers access public training initiatives. They have worked in the growth industries where employees are in demand, so they can give a tailored advice to both jobseekers and employers. Physically, they are often located in the personnel departments of big employers participating in the scheme, or else they are in agencies that service several employers in one particular industry. This enables small employers to have access to co-ordinators who are specialised in their own field. The co-ordinators’ locations are also chosen so as to be accessible to jobseekers. Each co-ordinator has their own discretionary training budget and is the person who provides mentoring and career advancement advice after employment has been secured.

Childcare issues are expressly addressed. A survey of childcare needs was carried out by the London Development Agency in 2004, with several hundred participants chosen from a cross-section of the local population. It found that up to a third of parents were considering giving up work because of childcare problems. This issue is worse for the lowest paid and also has an impact on retention rates. There is a considerable childcare shortage, particularly of full-time places, in Lambeth and Southwark (the London areas where most jobseekers live). To address this need, Cross River Partnership has developed a project for encouraging the growth of the childcare industry. They put jobseekers in touch with registered childminders who work by caring for children in their own home, or by going to the jobseeker’s home. The focus has been on the availability of atypical hours childcare, anything from 5 a.m. to midnight. Funding for the project pays staff who work at developing childcare places and who help people access the available tax credits or benefits to help pay for childcare. They also work with employers to make them

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in customer care or health and safety in food preparation. In the 2004/05 year, the agency found 524 local residents jobs, which they kept for a minimum of 13 weeks. Of these clients, 74% were from black and minority communities and 62% were women (a significant proportion of clients would have been foreign-born and many of those women).

aware of the childcare problems which employees face, and to give them the skills and knowledge to advise employees about childcare options and how to make applications for financial government aid for it.

**Outcomes.** Approximately 50% of jobseekers are from black and ethnic minorities (BME) and about 50% are women. In the key sectors of health, hospitality, arts & culture and finance & business, from 1999-2004, workplace co-ordinators assisted 579 people into work, of whom 424 (73%) were from BME groups. It is estimated that about 70-80% remain in employment though they may move to other jobs. During the same period, 591 employees were helped to progress in their careers (232 BME – 39%). There have also been significant successes in enabling women to enter the construction industry and obtain training leading to well-paid jobs in, for example, plumbing and carpentry. Many of those assisted into work by the WCP have less than complete secondary school education and benefit from further, vocational training. There is no set limit for ongoing work with clients, but a timeframe of 3-6 months is usual. Women particularly benefit from the WCP approach as it ensures employers have the understanding of their needs from the outset.