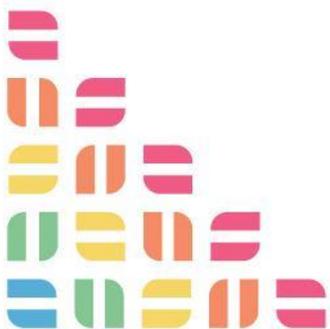


Briefing paper on survivor- centered language teaching and labour integration

Italy

June 2022



Introduction and methodology

This Briefing Paper presents the main results from the two local roundtables that were implemented in Italy within the framework of EU-funded AMIF project **WINGS – Supporting Women survivors of trafficking through a Comprehensive Integration Programme** (project number 101038321) by project coordinator [CESIE](#). The local roundtables had the aim to exchange needs, ideas and good practices among experts in the field of support to women and girls’ survivors of trafficking and gender-based violence at an early stage.

The findings from the local roundtables will be used to develop the **WINGS generic framework on survivor-centred integration** which includes the implementation of a language course integrated with psychological support and an employment counselling programme for the integration of **women survivors of trafficking** into the labour market, and consequently **4 WINGS local Comprehensive Integration Support programmes** that will be run in Italy, Spain, Greece and Belgium in 2023.

For more information about needs and good practices in working towards the social and labour integration of women survivors of trafficking Italy, Belgium and Greece read the Briefing Papers at www.socialhut.eu.

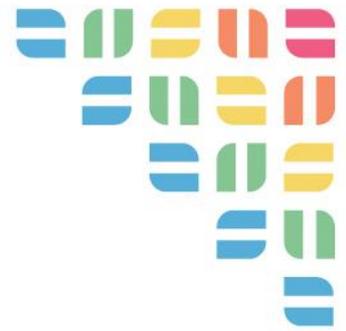
Methods for language teaching to vulnerable groups

The **peer learning** as a non-formal method for teaching language to vulnerable groups was highlighted by the professionals who participated in the local roundtables. According to them, peer learning could allow the beneficiaries to learn from each other in an informal and spontaneous way. Thus, for example, in a context in which one participant is more proficient than the other in the language of the country of arrival, the spontaneous exchange of language knowledge could guarantee a **spontaneous learning environment** and could contribute to the creation of a **safe learning atmosphere**.

Moreover, **workshop set-ups** are preferred to frontal teaching. Indeed, frontal teaching might put pressure on those who do not feel confident in a language different from their mother tongue.

In general, when working with a heterogenous group it is important to pay special attention on how **cultural differences may interfere with the language learning process**. For instance:

- ⊗ Depending on the **cultural frame of reference**, some people are more comfortable with participative teaching methods, while others may prefer a learning path that does not force their contribution and participation.
- ⊗ Within a multicultural group there may also be **different styles of participation**, some being more expressive and others seemingly more passive. Thus, for example, a participative teaching method might inhibit and intimidate those who are not accustomed to easily expressing their point of view in front of a large group of people. In this case, it would be preferable to adopt an individual teaching approach.



Therefore, if someone notice that the non-homogeneity of the group could interfere with the learning process an effective strategy could be to **divide the group into small groups according to their language abilities and cultural affinities.**

Gender and trauma-sensitive approaches in language teaching

Any teaching strategy that take into account a **gender and trauma-sensitive approach need to be built on trust.** The trust that is created in a learning process is indeed able to provide a feeling of well-being and safety. The classroom environment should be a **place of comfort and safety** and this help to create feelings of success and self-efficacy. The language teacher can foster a caring atmosphere where peers support each other as well as modify the physical environment by considering light colours, desk arrangements, relaxing music, alternative sitting positions.

Generally, people who have experienced trauma may have some difficulty forming healthy relationships. Aspects that can help and professionals should take into the consideration are:

- ⊗ **Supportive relationships** can promote healing and growth, indeed significant learning can take place only with significant relationship.
- ⊗ Language teacher **actions that demonstrate care and respect**, including **verbal and nonverbal signals**, such as calling them by name, answering their questions, talking respectfully to them, noticing their progresses, and greeting them could help to develop positive relationships and connections.
- ⊗ **An ethnopsychological approach** that takes into account the cultural background of the people involved in the language learning process is highly recommended. It considers the psychological discomfort that may arise in people with migrant background when their own cultural models clash with those of the country of arrival. This kind of psychological support in the language learning process could help to understand which are the most effective teaching strategies considering the cultural framework of the beneficiaries who take part in the language course.

Points to consider when implementing language course with psychological support

Experts in contact with women in the language learning course should pay attention to:

- ⊗ any manifestation of discomfort that might arise.
- ⊗ should be aware that the speed of learning and manifestation of language skills also depends on the level of confidence and awareness that the beneficiaries have.

The role of the psychologist during the course is crucial to identify possible manifestations of trauma. However, in order to propose a trauma healing path and ensure women's wellbeing during the course, **individual sessions with the psychologist are also recommended.** An effective trauma healing path must be based on a relationship that must be deepened outside the language course if there are any manifestations of trauma.

The main skills and competencies for successful integration into the labour market

In the Italian local context, the **caregiving** is an important sector in Italy. Currently there are some professional courses to cover this professional role and to be hired in private and public sector.

Professionals noted that work activities in the field of **child education and care** could be suitable for women survivors of trafficking. This because the working hours of an educator are often convenient for those who have a child (from the experience of the experts in the local round a high percentage of the beneficiaries are single mothers). The **tailoring sector** could also be considered, since for those who are going through a healing process a private and intimate dimension of the work activity should be preferred to front-office kind of jobs.

The main competences to be considered concern:

- ⊗ the strengthening of **language skills** in order to communicate effectively in the working context and,
- ⊗ the strengthening of **intercultural competences** in order to interact effectively with the culture of the host country.

Furthermore, a training course informing them about their **rights and duties in the local labour context** could help to successfully integrate them into the local job market.

Personalised job counselling of vulnerable groups

Some professionals had experience in individual job counselling for vulnerable groups. The main challenges they noted was the **difficulty** to integrate these people into a legal job market since some of them were still waiting for **documents** to be officially recognised in Italy. Indeed, when dealing with people which recently migrated in the host country one has to consider that it might be difficult for them to enter the local market if they are still waiting for their legal status to be recognised.

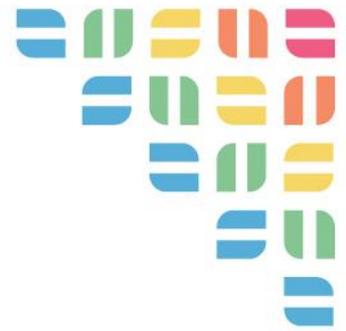
On the other hand, noted advantage of individual counselling was the **opportunity to investigate women's competences and aspirations** to guarantee that their future career path meets their expectations.

Finally, individual counselling allows possibility to establish a good level of communication with women that is necessary to create a relationship based on trust: asking women what their expectations are and allowing them to express their preferences helps to establish a degree of self-esteem and mutual trust.

Specific training to employers

It was agreed by the professionals that employers should be involved in a **specific training to work with women victims of trafficking or violence**. This training should be structured around the following main topics:

- ⊗ dealing with people from **different cultural and social backgrounds**,
- ⊗ **characteristics and needs of the women survivors of trafficking** and gender-based violence. *This training should be addressed to all the employees working in the company.*



- Ø **gender issues** (how to break down stereotypes about gender) and **intercultural competences**.

Furthermore, it should be also important to prepare the employers and employees about any unforeseeable reactions that the women involved in the work activities could have and finally employers and employees should be informed about the main services dedicated to women survivors of trafficking in the local context.

The content of this Briefing Paper represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.