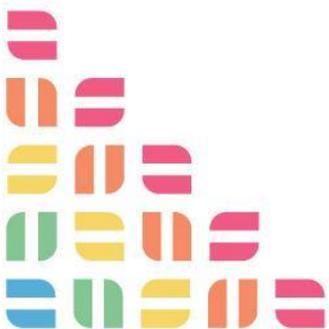


# **Briefing paper on survivor- centered language teaching and labour integration**

***Spain***

June 2022



## Introduction and methodology

This Briefing Paper presents the main results from the two local roundtables that were implemented in Spain (Catalonia) within the framework of EU-funded AMIF project **WINGS – Supporting Women survivors of trafficking through a Comprehensive Integration Programme** (project number 101038321) by project partner [Fundació Surt](#). 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](http://www.socialhut.eu).

## Methods for language teaching to vulnerable groups

In Barcelona, different public institutes and private NGOs offer Catalan and Spanish lessons to the migrant population. Therefore, many women who come to [Fundació Surt](#) have basic Spanish and, in some occasions, basic Catalan. Considering the specificity of [Fundació Surt](#), social workers who support women in their labour integration processes usually use the following **methods**:

- ⊗ **Pictographic and visual resources** related to the occupation they want to access to help them improve their language skills. They believe that being visual and offering specific vocabulary related to the occupation they want to achieve is the key. For instance, it was noted that **storytelling, discussion of films or short videos and group games** were the most effective methodologies they have experienced.
- ⊗ **Involving language teachers with knowledge of women's native language or cultural mediators.** However, for economic reasons, this is often difficult. Hence, involving a **volunteer who speaks the native language** of the group could be a solution. Despite this, it is important to be careful when involving third parties in the services, because there may be risk situations (such as one of the volunteers being a member of the community and stigmatising the woman for being a victim of trafficking or being in contact with the perpetrators' network, among other elements).
- ⊗ **Creation of groups**
  - ➔ Some professionals considered that **homogenous groups** (similar language domain and common native language) **are better** because women feel more confident participating in the class and can receive specific information and support adapted to their needs/knowledge.
  - ➔ For some others, having a **heterogeneous group gives participants the chance to help each other** and learn from women who may have more language skills. In both cases, it is important

to ensure that all courses guarantee that everyone who wants has the chance to participate without unequal power dynamics and receive information appropriate to their level (small groups with more than one professional can help to that purpose).

- ⊘ **Language pair programmes or cultural outings with local people** to practise the language were also identified as an effective tool for many women to whom isolation and lack of intercultural spaces are hindering it.

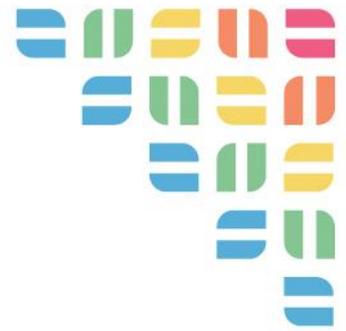
## Gender and trauma-sensitive approaches in language teaching

Professionals noted that a **gender transformative approach** is crucial when working with survivors of trafficking. Professionals should not only address the impact of gender roles and stereotypes on existing inequalities (from an intersectional perspective) but also should support women in identifying, questioning, and transforming inequalities, oppression and violence received as migrant women. Professionals noted that in the integration programmes they usually take the opportunity of **supporting women in setting their labour, social or personal goals to analyse the structural barriers** that might be limiting them from a perspective of empowerment and access to rights. They also offer them individual and group advice and, if needed, external referral to specialised services that can provide them with proper support in phenomena such as harassment at work, discrimination based on race or ethnicity in job interviews, intimate partner violence, others.

Regarding **trauma-sensitive approach**, it was agreed that it is important to take this aspect into account when designing and implementing programmes. Some examples highlighted by the professionals were:

- ⊘ not imposing general rules such as removing the mobile phone or headphones in class, being sensitive to why they are using it, and discussing it with the person if this makes it difficult for them to follow the contents of the course,
- ⊘ allowing participants to leave the classroom if they require it as many times as necessary or have shorter sessions,
- ⊘ having more than one professional in the course, just if any woman requires emotional support or containment,
- ⊘ raising awareness among the group is essential. Sometimes participants question others because they have not experienced a previous traumatic situation, do not understand why someone is acting in a particular way or do not identify this symptomatology in themselves and consider it an individual issue.

Additionally, participants expressed that **non-traditional therapy** may facilitate the willingness of women to receive psychological support. Many women see **mental health as a taboo/stigma/shame**, and sometimes it is not considered a priority due to other immediate needs (i.e. getting a job). Linking psychological support to women's vocational training or labour processes, as an essential part of developing or strengthening competencies and facilitating the fulfilment of their objectives, can reduce the tension towards these professionals. Despite the potentialities of having psychological support integrated into the language course, professionals warned to be careful how this figure is presented to women and which purpose has. They also pointed out that, if psychological support already exists, it is necessary to ensure that the psychological



support included in the language courses does not interfere with the recovery process that the person is already doing as is not presented as a "healing process". The psychologist engaged must be a person who **generates confidence in women**, with group management skills, and capable of establishing a good climate in the classroom. This professional will help women **identify and develop those competencies** that may be limiting the improvement of language skills and access to the labour market practically and experimentally, even if long-term recovery is not feasible. Finally, mechanisms for referral to long-term psychological support services should be established if women request or require it.

### Points to consider when implementing language course with psychological support

Main points that should be considered and noted by the participants of the local roundtable in Spain when designing and implementing a language course with integrated psychological support are the following:

- ⊗ **Considering previous educational level**  
*What level of education and language skills does she have? Has she done any other previous courses? Does she have other qualifications to help us find out what educational needs she may have? Does she need support from a cultural mediator?*
- ⊗ **Capacity to sustain the course**  
*Is she receiving external support that can help her sustain the course in the social, financial, family, and health spheres, among others? Do we need to consider additional support to enhance their engagement and participation? Is she in the right moment of her process to participate in the course?.*
- ⊗ **Providing opportunity to align personal objectives** with the contents offered by the course.
- ⊗ **Considering safety issues** in group settings: space, participants, professionals involved, others.
- ⊗ **Ensuring work-life balance.**  
*Do we have to offer other services for the participant so that she can participate in the course (childcare, financial support, transport, etc.)?*
- ⊗ **Women's starting point for mental health and general wellbeing**  
*Have they received psychosocial support before? Are they still receiving this support?*
- ⊗ **Providing safe and comfortable space.**
- ⊗ **Professionals must be active listeners**, be warm, empathetic, and flexible. Have intercultural tools and specific training in trauma. Have a network of other psychosocial professionals to solve doubts or require external support.
- ⊗ Professionals should always respect the **professional's code of ethics**, ensuring that no abusive or power dynamics are generated, informing the woman about confidentiality, data protection, etc.
- ⊗ **Respecting the rhythms and demands of the woman.**

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

The main sectors in Catalonia are the **service sector** (commerce, tourism, and hospitality) and **industry** (it is not very common in Barcelona city, but it is common in the surrounding industrial cities). The main skills and competencies needed for successful integration into the labour market depends on the women and their labour or educational goals. However, it is usually classified into three types of skills to identify, develop and transfer to the local labour market:

1. **Technical and vocational competencies:** those related to the knowledge and skills necessary for developing a particular work activity, defined by the occupational profile.
2. **Core competencies:** those skills recognised in a particular culture as basic requirements for access to the local labour market: e.g. digital skills, language skills, driving licences, among others.
3. **Transversal competencies:** wide-ranging skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary to respond to work situations of varying complexity. For example, teamwork, responsibility, flexibility, adaptability, and stress management, among others.

Counsellors from Fundació Surt who participated in the roundtable mentioned that they have an assessment tool that facilitates women to identify their competencies, compare them with the demands of the labour market and the specific job in which they would like to be employed, and set the steps to achieve their short, medium- and long-term goals. This tool looks at women's competencies acquired in different spheres of their lives and the personal or structural challenges or obstacles they may face. In terms of job prospecting, professionals highlighted **transversal skills and commitment of women** and reminds companies that technical skills can be improved over time.

## Personalised job counselling for vulnerable groups

Fundació Surt has a specific job counselling programme named RAI. In general terms, it is a long term and **personalised programme** that provide women with two different itineraries, depending on their recovery and autonomies stage:

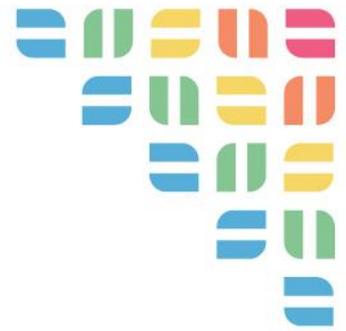
1. **“Pre-labour”**  
Addressed to enhance basic skills (language, knowledge of city and culture of host country, emotional recovery).
2. **“Labour”**  
Focused on the labour insertion (improving soft and technical competencies, professional projects, management of autonomy).

The itineraries are not linear, and are being adapted to the needs and demands of the women. Women may start in one itinerary and move backwards or forwards depending on how we see them evolving. On occasions when women have faced situations of risk of extreme poverty or social exclusion, it was offered for them to return to the programme. The team is composed of a lawyer, a social worker, a social educator, a psychologist, and a job prospector from two specialised organisations: Fundació Surt and Sicar.

## Specific training to employers

Specific training to employers should be provided including information about

1. **Gender and cultural perspective,** managing diversity in the workplace, and improving external communication in a non-sexist, non-racist and non-classist manner.
2. **Corporate social responsibility,** beyond the economic benefits that the state can give them and emphasizing the benefits of promoting plural and diverse companies.



3. **The role of NGOs:** benefits of having a social entity behind them, which can intervene in cases of conflicts or misunderstandings. As entities, we can act as a reference for the competencies that women have and have developed with us.
4. **Potential collaborations:** employers offering training to women, improving the working conditions offered and considering the specific needs of the target group, employers informing us more frequently on the needs they have and the competencies they are looking for in their company, etc.

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