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ENGAGE Project Newsletter

JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCES: A WAY TO BOOST YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

***“Optimism
is the
force that
leads to
achievement”***

***Hellen Keller, author,
activist & lecturer.***

It's no secret that the professional future of migrant women is often uncertain and challenging, but as long as there are women struggling to find their place in society, there will always be opportunities for positive change, such as this project.

The ENGAGE Project (Development of inclusive iNteGration pAthS 4 miGrant women) pursues positive social change and provides hope for a better tomorrow. Its aim is to assist migrant women in various countries throughout Europe in a comprehensive way, focusing on each of their individual needs and challenges, and tailoring solutions that will help them thrive in this society.

Community support and education, together with career opportunities, make up an excellent substrate on which fruitful initiatives are most likely to flourish.

Hence, partner associations all over Europe got together to coordinate a new activity with a common mission: uplifting migrant women's professional futures and careers, not only with theoretical knowledge but also through hands-on experience, following an innovative *“learning-by-doing”* methodology.

This Job-Shadowing experiences have achieved much more than they originally intended since not only did migrant women improve their job prospects, but also established new professional connections, met new friends, learned about the work culture and regulations in the country and some even found their passion along the way!



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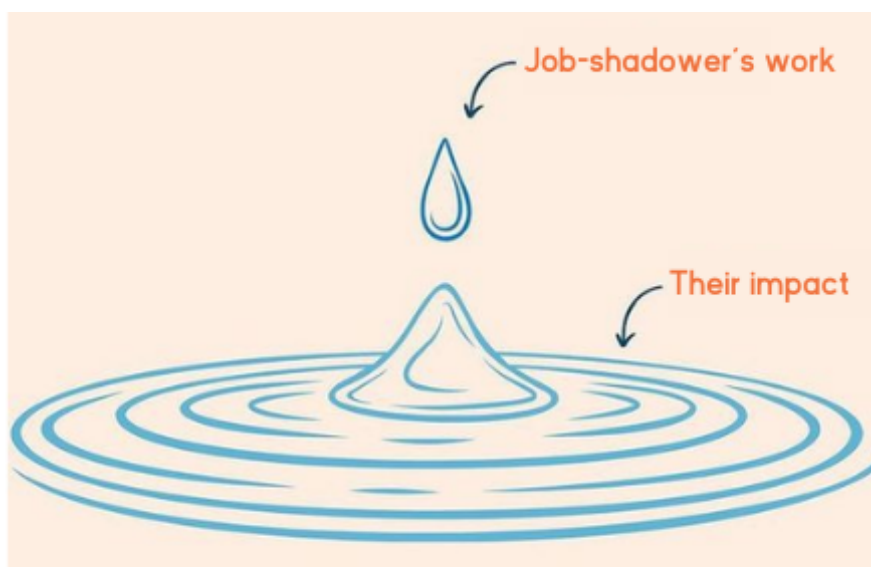
Breaking Down Barriers: The Importance of Job-Shadowing in Supporting Immigrant Women's Professional Growth

These Job-Shadowing experiences have helped migrant women develop confidence in their skills and abilities, which is critical not only to grant their success in the workplace but also for optimal mental health, a critical aspect for migrant women.

Imagine having to leave your home and everything you've ever known behind in search of a better life, only to face discrimination and limited job prospects. This, together with cultural shocks and the language barrier, can make inclusion extremely complex.

Job-Shadowing activities have numerous benefits for migrant women and for society as a whole. In diverse teams, there's always something new to learn and the differences in work culture across nations can make plural teams uniquely rich because of their distinct experiences and knowledge, making everyone involved more open-minded.

Undeniably, the main characters of this activity were women, who benefitted from this experience in plentiful ways. Some of these are only perceived in a long-term window, like the creation of new communities and support systems, improved mental health, and easy cultural acclimation.





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One of these many success stories is starring Svitlana, a photographer from Ukraine who left the country shortly after the war started. Since her arrival in Germany, she's been involved in art events organized by the association Kitev and even participated in an exhibition showcasing her own photos in Unterhaus, Oberhausen.

***“Pleasure in the
job
puts perfection in
the work”
Aristotle***

“After having a talk with Svitlana 3 months ago, I realized she wanted to do something for her professional development as a photographer in Germany, and doing job-shadowing seemed to be a great option for her. Later, we contacted a photographer called Katazhina who was enthusiastic to be Svitlana's host for 2 months.

I remember the day when they met for the first time to sign a contract. There was immediate connection between the two photographers and since then, Svitlana has been spending time observing her work and helping out at the studio”.

Ketevan Mtvarelidze, Kitev





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Not too far from Germany is the Interaktion Association, from Austria. The organization saw a perfect match between the current job market's needs and the skills and potential of the total of eight women who part-took in this job-shadowing experience in the cities of Graz and Linz.

The business chosen to host the participants of the experience was the leading gastronomy group "Dean&David", a company that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion in their practices.

Dean&David provided an optimal work climate for them, adapting business requirements to women's needs through schedules and flexible practices that allowed conciliation of working time with family and childcare obligations, and offering a welcoming and supportive environment in which women could bring out the best of them.

"During the placement, Dean&David have provided support and resources to help these women integrate into the workplace culture and build their skills and knowledge".

Interaktion Association



After the experience, two women were offered permanent positions in the company.

ZRC SAZU, ENGAGE project's Slovenian partners, were also able to manage the job-shadowing experience with great success in a variety of cases, uniting energies with the Municipality of Ljubljana and other associated city administrations, in which two women were able to obtain hands-on experience on complex tasks, ranging from translations to daily reports. Both women also had the chance to meet with the city



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« (It was) Wonderful. They accepted me as part of their team immediately, offered me support when I needed it, but also let me the freedom to do things independently. I would definitely recommend job shadowing to other migrant women or migrants in general because this is a great way to get to know the host country's labor market, to get to know people and improve language and other professional skills that are beneficial for job search».

Sha, Job-Shadowing participant from Slovenia

major, and discuss together their challenges, to explore new areas of improvement in the city.



Another woman from North Macedonia, who already had a background in law and cultural mediation, spent her job-shadowing time in the local Department of Health and Social Affairs, performing a key role in projects in the protection of women's rights.

We shall continue the itinerary reviewing job-shadowing experiences across Europe, jumping from Slovenia all the way to Albacete in Spain, where Claudia, a young lady of Cuban roots lives.

She chose to jump into this new experience to get real insights in a profession she was interested in pursuing: kindergarten teaching. "El Arrullo", a childcare center focused on providing safe and personalized nurture and education for children, was her host during her experience, which she enjoyed from start to end.

As Claudia said herself: **"I really enjoyed my experience at the El Arrullo, the teachers were very welcoming and attentive and they guided me and helped me a lot. I learned how to work in a nursery and the things they do on a day-to-day basis. I especially loved learning about how to take care of children with special needs".**



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“The greatest life lesson that I have gotten from the experience, is that whoever has the will, has the power.

If you’re willing to look for chances, you will succeed.

I have accomplished it.”

Susana, participant from Spain

Susana, another participant in the job-shadowing experiences organized by Dramblys, spent her time in “Amiab”, a local association and corporate group, addressing the needs of disabled people.

Since her arrival, Susana was taught and accompanied by her peers at all times, something that she truly valued, since she hadn’t previous experience in office jobs despite being the career she wanted to pursue.

She decided to onboard the experience to prove herself and those around her that she was capable of achieving her goals successfully. **“Dramblys helped start this experience and land the internship in my ideal job, something that, as far as I’ve seen, it’s not easy to do here in Spain. Hadn’t been for them, I wouldn’t have been able to enter an office and start a job-shadowing experience”**, explains Susana.

One of the challenges that she was able to overcome, was the fact that she felt like an outsider as a migrant women in an office full of very busy and concentrated people. But once she got hands on the daily tasks and met her colleagues and supervisors, the security that her excellent performance at the job gave her outweighed any previous doubts. After her delightful experience, Susana is more motivated than ever. She was able to stablish new connections, learn new skills and build up her resumé. Now, she wants to keep going and exploring this new professional enviroment than was opened to her through the job-shadowing experiences.



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To learn more about the project, visit <https://amif-engage.eu/>



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