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# National Study Report

## France

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SEPTEMBER 2021



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LET'S **Digital**

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FRANCAIS POUR L'INSERTION SOCIALE ET PROFESSIONNELLE  
EN EUROPE, FRANCE

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## 1 INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

France is a country part of the Europe continent and is one of the founding countries of the European Union (EU), in 1986. Covering an area of 544,435 km<sup>2</sup>, the metropolis stretches over 1,000 km from North to South and from East to West. The French Republic is made up of numerous territories spread all over the world: in Western Europe but also in North and South America, in the West Indies, the Indian Ocean and in the Pacific.

In January 2021, France, excluding overseas communities, has nearly 67 million habitants, including 64.9 million in metropolitan France and 2 million in the overseas departments and regions (DROM).

France has always been an immigration country with 6.8 million immigrants. In 2020, it can be estimated that two out of five people (i.e. 40% of the population living in France) come from immigration over three generations, with 36% of them have acquired French nationality and which 52% of immigrants are women.

This national report is based in desk research at a local, regional, national and European levels.

**For the desk research** our principal resources were the reports, study and the statistics done by some kind of organizations who works with refugees and migrants in France as public institutions, policy authorities and non-profit organisations.

The field research for this report is focus in a local geographical targeting based in interviews and direct contact. **For the field research, we organized** 10 direct interviews with local stakeholders (non-profit organizations, institutional organizations, etc.), and local authorities.

In our research, we were focused on existent barriers, needs, strategies, structures, services, actions and material in 4 areas: labour market integration, entrepreneurship, interculturality and gender equity for the professional inclusion of migrant women.

## 2 MIGRANTS WOMEN AND REFUGEES WOMEN IN YOUR COUNTRY/REGION

### 2.1 Amount of the newly arrived and countries of origins

In recent years, France has seen a reversal of the trend towards a 'feminization' of immigration: whereas until the end of the 20th century the immigrant population was predominantly male, today the French immigrant population is mainly female. Indeed, in 2018 51.8% of the people who arrived in France were women (equivalent to approximately 4.3 million people on French territory)<sup>1</sup>.

France has seen an increase in the “autonomous” arrival of single women or women who have left their country of origin before their husbands to look for work or pursue their studies. For example, the percentage of single women who have left their country of origin for France has risen from 23% to 47%. Therefore, this "feminization" of migration can only be partially explained by the recognition of the right to family reunification<sup>2</sup>, which has been recognized in 1974.

For what concern the access to France to apply for international protection, again, there is an increase in the percentage of women applying for asylum. In fact, in 2019, out of 308000 beneficiaries of protection, 40% were women (3 out of 10 asylum seekers are women). During the same year 33207 asylum applications were submitted by women (32% of the total) and 8270 women were granted international protection (recognition rate of 31.7%)<sup>3</sup>. As for unaccompanied minors, only 5% of them are girls (mainly from China and Nigeria).

As regards the countries of origin of the foreign women present on French territory, they come mainly from Algeria, Portugal, Morocco and Turkey. As far as beneficiaries of international protection are concerned, women come mainly from Albania, Côte d'Ivoire and Georgia.

### 2.2 Integration Programs From Day of Arrival

In France, the integration program promoted by the government is based on three main axes: language training, assimilation of the values and principles of the French Republic and professional accompaniment. Indeed, Law No 2016-274

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<sup>1</sup>COE, [Les femmes migrantes en France](#), May 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Family reunification can be defined as “a ground for allowing immigration of family members to the country where a family member resides”. The requirements to be eligible for family reunification vary internationally and may change overtime through legislation. Source: Unesco, [People on the move: handbook of selected terms and concepts](#), 2008.

<sup>3</sup>OFPPA, [Rapport d'activité](#), 2019.

introduced the “Republican Integration Path”, that regulates the integration of foreigners (non-Europeans) who intend to move to France on a permanent basis and includes the signing of the Republican Integration Contract (“Contrat d’intégration républicaine” - CIR)<sup>4</sup><sup>[OBJ]</sup>.

This “Republican integration Contract” is a contract concluded for one year<sup>5</sup> between the French State and the immigrants and is implemented by the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII). All non-European foreigners admitted for permanent residence in France, including refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, are invited by the territorial directorate of OFII for a half-day reception session during which the person’s training needs and personal situation are assessed. The contract provides for a:

- 4-day civic training course: this course is compulsory and introduces the principles and values of the Republic and the practical aspect of French society;
- Language training: the immigrant is given a French test (written and oral) to assess whether a language course is necessary (to reach at least the A1 level);
- Skills assessment and guidance towards employment service or other programs (e.g. HOPE program for job placement of refugees).

Every year, the “Direction de l’accueil, de l’accompagnement des étrangers et de la nationalité” (General Directorate for Reception, Support of Foreigners) makes resources available through a call for proposals that mobilises actors working in the field of integration of newly arrived foreigners<sup>6</sup>. On 2018, the inter-ministerial committee on integration decided to adopt measures in the framework of the CIR, which include doubling the number of hours of language and civic training, setting up a specific language course for non-readers/non-scribers, and strengthening the professional integration. Regarding the latter, the link between OFII and the public employment service was formalised as early as 2010 with an agreement between OFII and Pôle emploi<sup>7</sup> on the

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<sup>4</sup> The Republican integration contract replaced the Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration (CAI) and the Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration pour la famille( this one was aimed at persons applying for family reunification and had to be concluded before entering French territory).

<sup>5</sup> The contract may be extended for a maximum of one year by the prefect for a reason recognised as legitimate and on the proposal of the Ofii if the civic and linguistic training prescribed and followed are in progress at the end of the contract.

<sup>6</sup> Source : <https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Accueil-et-accompagnement/Les-appels-a-projets/Appel-a-projets-national-2021-relatif-a-l-integration-des-etrangers-primos-arrivants-dont-les-beneficiaires-de-la-protection-internationale>

<sup>7</sup> Institution that is part of the French public employment service. It supports all jobseekers in their return to work or training. To do so, it centralises job and training offers, provides

professional integration of foreigners: through this agreement, the two bodies aim to coordinate in order to better meet the needs of CIR signatories by offering a personalized professional guidance after accomplishing the skills assessment offered by OFII.

Looking specifically at the situation of the foreign female population, 58% of women signatories of a CIR had a job in their country of origin, but only 27% of them found a new job in France. It should also be noted that women are more exposed to professional disqualification: while an increasing number of migrant women arrive in France with an increasingly high level of education (6 out of 10 new migrant women aged 20 to 29 have at least the baccalaureate), most of them find themselves in unqualified jobs, mostly in the personal care sector<sup>8</sup>.

It is also necessary to focus on the situation of asylum seekers. In fact, they are not allowed to work for the first six months after the application for asylum has been registered<sup>9</sup>. Thereafter, he/she may exceptionally be allowed to work, if the examination of the asylum application at OFPRA exceeds one year, for reasons for which the asylum seeker is not responsible. As a result, very few asylum seekers enter the labour market before their refugee status is officially recognized, and those who do are mainly employed in very precarious, short-term jobs. The period during which the asylum application is processed, and thus the period without work in practice, can be longer or shorter (on average from 9 months to 2 years). This often leads to the loss of professional skills acquired in the country of origin and/or the failure to acquire new skills and can cause demotivation and loss of confidence. This hampers a successful integration process, as the pursuit of a professional activity not only allows for financial autonomy, but is also a key element in the social, linguistic, residential and cultural integration of immigrants. Asylum seekers who need to start learning French, or need to improve their level, can start attending language courses organized by local NGOs and associations, as the Law on asylum provides that only asylum seekers whose application has a high chance of being accepted (relocated persons or persons arriving with an asylum visa) can benefit, since their arrival on French territory, of the language courses provided by the government.

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personalised follow-up and offers different types of services adapted to the job-research. It also manages the calculation and payment of unemployment benefits, as well as some specific financial aids to help people return to work or training.

<sup>8</sup> Sources: O. Noblecourt, *L'égalité pour les femmes migrantes*, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile, article L554-1.

### 3 MAPPING STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders involved in work with migrant women in France operating at local, regional and national level are as follows:

In France there many stakeholders and organisation which are involved in work with migrant women. The main governmental organizations that work with migrant women, providing security, healthcare, integration and education are: the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry for Equality between Women and Men, Diversity and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of the Internal affairs, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Economic Inclusion, the Ministry for Territorial Cohesion and Relations with local Government, the Ministry for Solidarity and Health, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Recovery. These organizations are starting to pay attention to the special needs and issues of the target group and some specific programs already are being implemented.

An example is the creation of a special public financial aid, delivered by the [Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Recovery](#) to help women to start or take over a business

There are also some non-governmental organizations and national/local organizations or associations that are working on gender issues (mainly in the areas of healthcare and parenting, women's rights and gender equality, fighting violence against women) and others working on providing support to migrants (newly arrived, long-term residents, refugees, asylum seeker).

Some of these organizations are listed below:

- [RAJFIRE Association](#),
- [Mujeres in Francia](#)
- [AZMARI](#)
- [AFAVO](#)
- AURORE Association
- [Utopia Association](#)
- [France Terre d'Asile](#)
- [GISTI](#)
- [La CIMADE](#)
- [French Red Cross](#)
- [Secours Catholique](#)
- [APIMIG Association](#)
- [AMI](#)

- [KALI](#)
- [ADFEM](#) (Action et droits des femmes exilées et migrantes)
- [Femmes migrantes debout](#)
- [El Mamba](#)
- [Collectif Agir](#)
- GAMS (Group for the abolition of genital mutilation, forced marriages and other traditional practices harmful to the health of women and children, e-mail: [siege-gampaca@laposte.net](mailto:siege-gampaca@laposte.net))

Stakeholders involved in work with migrant women in Italy operating at local, regional and national level are as follows:

In the first trimester of 2021, 275,616 businesses were created in France. This number includes 180,448 micro-entrepreneurs (or 65% of total creation). There has been an increase in business creation, particularly supported by the French government. This one wants to promote the creation and the development of French companies, in particular among women. The theme of the 44th International Women's Rights Day is "Women's leadership: for an egalitarian future in the world of Covid-19".

There are many different organizations, devices and programs, to support entrepreneurship in France: national and local government institutions, education institutions, non-profit organizations, etc.

Please find bellow a non-exhaustive list:

#### **List of government institutions:**

- Ministries of Internal Affairs,
- Ministry for Equality between Women and Men, Diversity and Equal Opportunities,
- Ministry of Labour, Employment and Economic Inclusion,
- Ministry for Territorial Cohesion and Relations with local Government,
- Ministry for Solidarity and Health,
- Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs,
- Municipalities,
- French office of immigration
- [National Employment Agency](#) – *Pôle Emploi*,

#### **Public Institutions:**

- [Public Social Centres Services – CAF](#)
- [CCI Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)
- [CMA Chamber of Trades and Crafts](#)

- [Réseau Entreprendre](#)

#### National Education centres:

- [AFPA - Adults National Educational Centre](#),
- [Centre Européen de Formation](#)
- [Conservatoire national des arts et métiers \(CNAM\)](#)
- [Groupe IGS: les formations professionnelles](#)

#### Non-Profit Organisations:

##### Local

- [Femme Digne Association](#), 17<sup>th</sup> district of Paris
- [Femme Initiatives Association](#), 13<sup>th</sup> district of Paris
- [Haut les filles](#)
- [Provence Pionnières](#)
- [Aix'Elles](#)
- [Potentielles](#)

##### National

- [Élan Intercultural Association](#),
- [GRDR Association](#), witch as a special programm to develope migrant women enterpreneurship, ACME (Accompagnement à la Création des Migrants Entrepreneurs)
- [SINGA Association](#)
- [BGE](#)
- [Adie](#)
- [EGEE \(Entente des générations pour l'emploi et l'entreprise\)](#)
- [ECTI \(Entreprises, collectivités territoriales et insertion\)](#)
- [Action'elles](#)
- [Girls in Web](#)
- [Start'Her](#)
- [Femmes Entrepreneurs](#)
- [Women Business Angels](#)
- [Second Souffle](#)
- [Force Femmes Association](#)

#### European Projects – ERASMUS+ Programs

- Kaleidoscope, <https://www.kaleidoscopeproject.eu/fr/project-fr/>
- MIGRAPRENEURS, <http://migrapreneurs.fr/moodle/>

#### Financial Support French Foundation

- [Entreprendre&+](#),
- [H'UP Entrepreneurs](#),
- [Initiative France](#)

- [France Active](#)

Stakeholders involved in supporting entrepreneurship for migrant women are as follows:

- [Association Femmes d'Ici et d'Ailleurs](#): Association that promotes integration and creation (also entrepreneurial) among women and migrant women
- [CIDFF \(Information center on women's and family rights\)](#): Center that has launched a professional integration project for newcomer women

## 4 BARRIERS AND NEEDS OF REACHING THE TARGET GROUP

### 4.1 Barriers & Needs for Labor Market Integration of Women Migrants

The main barriers that can be identified regarding the integration of migrant women in the labour market are the existence of a language gap, the legal and administrative barriers, the education lack, the difficulties in the recognition of international certificates and diplomas and the non-recognition of their work experience and their softs-kills and competences.

Language is essential for a successful social and professional integration, for the access to legal and administrative documents, for the access to education, and for the access of the labour market. The language gap is one of the most important barriers for the integration of migrant women in the labour market in France. In France the knowledge of French as foreign language is very unequal. While migrants from Central, West and North Africa often master the language well, this tendency decreases among migrants from other parts of the world. Knowledge of French is generally poor for refugees.

The legal and administrative barriers affect and influence directly the pathway of migrant women integration in the labour market, because migrants need a legal administrative status to work in France but in general the administrative procedures are very long and complicated.

The access to education is a fundamental human right, essential for migrants' integration in French society, because it permits more equal opportunities in the access to the labour market. However, migrants face multiple barriers as recognition of the diplomas (a paid service, only free for refugees), their education level, the differences between education systems (methods, language, operation, etc.). In France, the education of migrants is part of their integration process: there are some special education programs and devices to teach French language, values and French history and culture (see paragraph 2.2 of this research).

The lack of working experience is another recurrent barrier for immigrant and refugee women integration, due to different circumstances, such as the situation in their countries of origin, their culture, their education level, their social situation, etc. In France, a large number of migrant and refugee women haven't had official employment, but they are often skilled workers, especially in the areas of caregiving, childhood care and cleaning.

## 4.2 Recommended Solutions

To improve labour market integration process and decrease integration language barriers, it's important to start by the language learning since migrants' arrival. Policy authorities can integrate and invest more in French language courses, there are already some learning programs and devices supported, but there's not enough financial support. The majority of the organisations and structures which provides French language courses are dependent of volunteer work. It means also, that it's also important to invest in professional training for social workers to teach them how to lead with migrants and especially migrant women. By improving their level of knowledge of the language of the host country, migrants and refugees can easily join the school system and the labour market.

The improvement of the actual administrative and legal procedures is important. They should be treated and rethought differently. Policy authorities needs to invest in integration social services support, for example, by opening more social services, supporting existent structures and reducing waiting time to acquire a legal status, because without a legal status migrant people can't work. If there are more trained social workers and services, migrants can be more easily and quickly accompanied. It's important also to develop administrative procedures for non-French speakers, language is also a huge barrier in all the process.

One of the keys to improve the integration of migrants and refugees in the labour market is the recognition of their certificates, diplomas, qualifications and soft-skills. An efficient social and professional integration it's beneficial not only for workers but also for the host country. The recognition procedures can be simplified and can become free or commensurate with each person's financial situation. Nowadays, there's only one centre to recognize diplomas (French Centre ENIC-NARIC) and only refugees can ask for a diploma or certification recognition for free.

To promote migrants' education, it's important to promote French language courses and open the school system for free since their arrival or find good conditions to facilitate access. In fact, most migrant/ refugee women have family and children, so with more free and social childcare services, they can integrate

courses and labour market more easily, because they have more free time. In France there are already some special services and devices, as free French courses in some social centres with childcare service during the sessions, but they're not enough considering the current numbers of migrant women / refugees.

Another key for an efficient migrant women integration is relative to social and professional support after languages courses or studying, is the development of social and professional accompaniment, which need to be included in the integration process, because each country has its own culture and specific needs. Being integrated means more than learn host country language or have a diploma. Governmental authorities should rethink and reinforce monitoring for migrant women's integration in the labour market and invest in social workers training.

## 5 METHODOLOGY/METHOD FOR WORKING WITH MIGRANT WOMEN

### 5.1 Provision of Entrepreneurial Training

In France there are many different kind of entrepreneurship trainings for migrants and some of them specifically for migrant women provided through different methods, in the majority of them are provided by non-profit organisations and based in volunteer work.

- Face to face trainings -> for example, group workshops , <http://www.grdr.org/Accompagnement-a-la-creation-des-migrants-entrepreneurs>,
- Online trainings and programs -> free online courses, <https://www.my-mooc.com/fr/categorie/entrepreneuriat>
- Mentoring programs -> usually a face-to-face and guiding women entrepreneurs by supporting them in their projects, example, Femme Digne Association, <https://www.facebook.com/associationfemmedigne/> , (specific for migrant women)
- Coaching programs -> Afavo Association, <http://afavo.org/>, (specific for migrant women)

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## 5.2 Recommended Training Topics and Methods

In France it is suggested to develop more distance / online learning platforms in mentoring / coaching to train social workers (employees, volunteers, etc) who work directly with migrant women, considering their specific needs in their professional integration by entrepreneurship.

Some specific mentoring areas could be developed as, for example:

- Create a digital platform to centralise the very useful information in entrepreneurship to easily share the information with an easier access
- Train social workers / volunteers in business management, business in legal and administrative procedures,
- Update some of the existent material, as physical and digital guides and trainings,
- Develop public and free devices / projects to improve business development,
- Create a new pedagogical approach and methodology to treat easily and deeply these subjects,
- Involve more stakeholders, by raising awareness about migrant women entrepreneurship,
- Involve many resource persons, in the existent actions,
- Develop the translators support services, in the different kinds of proposed services, and train them to be able to work directly with professionals and migrant people, as mediators, that will permit to create a connexion with communities and social services, workers, structures, public devices, etc.

## 6 MATERIALS AND TOOLS FOR MIGRANTS

For what concern educational materials on interculturality and gender equality, these topics are introduced and addressed mainly through non-formal education activities. The following is a non-exhaustive list of some activities or sites that collect pedagogical tools useful to reflect and discuss on these issues:

- **AFS Vivre Sans Frontière:** The association is participating in the Intercultural Learning Project for Students and Teachers funded by the European agency Erasmus+. The project aims to provide teachers with

- intercultural leaning tools to prepare high school students to live in multicultural societies and work in a globalized labor market. (<https://afs.fr/education/apprentissage-interculturel/>)
- **Le point du FLE:** has developed pedagogical tools on interculturality and totally adapted to a population that does not perfectly speak French. (<https://www.lepointdufle.net/penseigner/interculturel-fiches-pedagogiques.htm>)
  - **Réseau education à la citoyenneté et la Solidarité internationale :** selection of games, educational resources and initiatives likely to help you approach the theme of "LIVING TOGETHER" and "INTERCULTURAL MEETINGS". (<https://red.educagri.fr/kits-et-sequences-pedagogiques/la-rencontre-interculturelle/>)
  - **Le Monde selon les femmes :** Simulation game (4-6 players) – This card game speaks about gender equality in a comprehensive way. It is covering 20 themes ranging from education to equal pay, contraception, parity in politics, the media, violence, etc. It could open a debate on the implementation of practices that guarantee equality between women and men.
  - **EDUCADROIT:** Resources covering many themes (gender equality, discrimination, etc. (<https://educadroit.fr/centre-de-ressources?theme=49%20outils>))

In addition to this, we can mention the [DICE](#) project, developed in the framework of Erasmus+ and in which Eurocircle participated: the project, which mainly targets those working with newly arrived migrants, provides an online platform to develop knowledge on interculturality, intercultural communication and fight against discrimination.

There are many online tools that have been developed, especially during the covid-19 crisis. Listed below are a number of sites offering online learning opportunities (games, courses, tools, etc.) on a variety of topics ranging from learning French to raising awareness of gender issues, from entrepreneurship to analysing one's own skills in order to build one's career path.

- **Carrés genre:** This animation tool is composed of twenty cards, each with a sentence. Players draw one of them and say whether the sentence was said by a man or a woman, then explain the context. A game that allows for awareness: our society, culturally, etc.
- **Matilda platform:** offers more than 80 videos, accompanied by educational resources on the themes of gender equality in all areas

- **Parlera.fr:** This website developed in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes provides resources and up-to-date information on learning French and fight against illiteracy.
- **TV5 Monde:** Developed a website to learn French with many resources to learn French. Other useful links [here](#) and [here](#).
- **Online training proposed by the French government**
- **Français Langue d'Intégration et d'Insertion:** Lists several online resources for learning FLE.
- **Construisez votre projet professionnel:** Free online course that shows how to build a career plan based on personal background and skills and enables users to identify their
- **Focus compétences and Construire son projet professionnel:** two online courses to learn to identify compétences and build a career plan.
- **Je construis mon projet d'entreprise:** online platform that gives support to business creation (definition of a project, market research, administrative procedures, business plan, etc.)

There are many resources, but there is a lack of resources on gender equality (especially online). In addition, resources are not always adapted to migrant women and their integration (for example, most of the activities on interculturality are addressed to students or youth/social workers). As said in paragraph 5.2, it would be useful to train more and better the social workers, for example with distance learning tools and online courses, in order to prepare them to inform and train migrant women on professional development and entrepreneurship.

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