



EMPOWERING FOREIGN-BORN WOMEN TO ACCESS UPSKILLING PATHWAYS

WHY?

STUDY
COMPETENCE

SELF - MOTIVATION

RESILIENCE

IMPROVED
LANGUAGE
PROFICIENCY



For foreign-born women, it can be **difficult to find one's way up the education path**, especially when the learning culture and language of the education is not the same as in your home country. This can have a negative effect on who gains access to upskilling pathways. Standard group language courses for newly arrived people usually provide the individual with a basic proficiency level, which may be sufficient for simple everyday conversations and simple task-related communication, but when facing higher education, this is not sufficient. We could say that the language will improve over time, but when dealing with adult learners, language

acquisition is much slower than with children, and for an adult to acquire a sufficient level without a dedicated approach is highly unlikely. Consequently, diversity in the labour market will be directly affected. When **newly arrived people**, such as low-skilled refugees, are guided towards and held in low-wage, low-skilled jobs, they also **lose access to positions** in more influential fields, such as decision making, and other areas which influence the composition of our lives, it does not reflect the diversity of European society.

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WHAT?

The UPSIM platforms

The UPSIM project mission is to create inclusion for foreign-born women in European society. When women, and especially those with minority backgrounds, are not equally represented in the different workforce sectors, they are not given a fair opportunity to influence the societies in which they live, but they still have to adhere to the norms dictated to them by these very same societies. Furthermore, in areas where women have a high rate of being financially dependent on a spouse, we also see higher levels of spousal violence and abuse of power. And finally, the consortium is interested in seeing a more **equal distribution of women with minority backgrounds** across societal layers. Current integration programs for foreign-born people direct them to specific sectors where there is a demand for their labour, and in this way these are only short-term solutions to a long-term challenge at the cost of diversity and equal opportunities for minority women. How can we help foreign-born women find their identity in the labour market, rather than just being there because the government otherwise will punish them financially?

The mission of the UPSIM project is to contribute to the development of a sustainable, healthy and harmonious integration strategy, by creating an approach, which can be helpful in counteracting such as the above described tendencies. The UPSIM project is therefore going straight to the root of the problem, by removing the barriers that are keeping women from **accessing pathways for further education**, through goal-directed

and **intrinsic motivation**. The UPSIM approach enables foreign-born women (with a minimum **A1 language proficiency level** in the host language and **minimum of 7 years of schooling**) in European countries to become **self-regulated learners** and to further develop their **language skills**.

When moving to a new country, it is not just the language and day-to-day life that can be challenging to adjust to. The way educational institutions expect learners to learn can be quite different from what the learners are able to deliver at the moment. For example, a person who has experience from an education system which is based on a patriarchal and hierarchical culture, will typically expect learners to adhere to inflexible instructions, while most European education institutions expect students to be autonomous, at various levels, in their own learning process.

To open up existing, but sometimes unattainable, pathways for foreign-born women, the UPSIM concept is based on knowledge from studies about self-directed learning. Inspired by **learning-to-learn theories** from developmental frameworks for collaboration, creativity, communication, and self-direction, the **UPSIM self-mentoring resources** provide users with tools and methods which help foreign-born women in the **transformational learning process**. Through these processes, they will not only learn **how to become self-directed in their own learning**, but also in **developing resilience** and **becoming intrinsically motivated** to rapidly improve their language skills.

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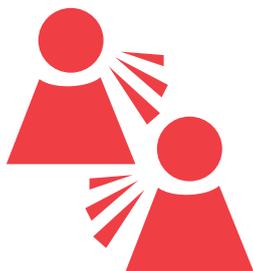


**LEARNING TO
LEARN PLATFORM
FOR FOREIGN-BORN
WOMEN**



A toolkit for foreign-born women to help them prepare for upskilling pathways through the development of:

- Learning to learn competence through simple and easy-to-use self-mentoring steps;
- The ability to improve own language proficiency in the host country language;
- Self-efficacy, resilience, and intrinsic motivation to pursue an education / new career goals.



**MENTORING
TOOLKIT AND
TRAINING PLATFORM
FOR MENTORS
& SOCIAL**



A toolkit for mentors who work with social integration of migrant women, specifically aim to support them in the achievement of upskilling goals, through the development of their:

- Learning to learn and study competence;
- Language proficiency in the host country language;
- Self-efficacy and resilience competence;
- Ability to set and achieve long and short-term goals, stay motivated, and increase their chances of gaining access to upskilling pathways.

The platform also includes training materials for the professional development of mentors and consultants working with social integration of migrant women.

The UPSIM resource platform consists of **two learning zones**.

One part is a **“development of learning” platform**, where foreign-born women have access to resources, which they can use independently to develop their learning-to-learn competence as well as working on improving their language skills, through self-mentoring processes.

The second area is designed to **train mentors and social workers involved in the social integration of foreign-born women**. The resource contains training material and access to the tools for use during Mentorvention phases. The tools provided and presented herein have a circular approach, designed to help create healthy habits for becoming self-directed learners and slowly building up resilience.

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SELF-AWARENESS

- reflecting on past experiences;
- evaluating own strengths;
- evaluating own limitations;
- understanding own motivations;
- locating own interests;
- evaluating own aspirations.



GOAL SETTING & PLANNING

- developing long term goals;
- locating meaningful learning targets;
- identifying effective strategies;
- planning out steps.



INITIATIVE & OWNERSHIP

- taking responsibility for learning;
- finding driving questions;
- seeking input from others.



ENGAGEMENT & MANAGEMENT

- seeking out relevant resources and information;
- supporting own learning goals;
- refining strategies;
- maintaining pace;
- reaching short-term goals;
- reaching long-term goals.



MONITORING & ADAPTING

- evaluating progress;
- adapting strategies;
- growing from mistakes;
- attributing success to effort;
- developing persistence, seizing opportunities, gaining access with help and over time.

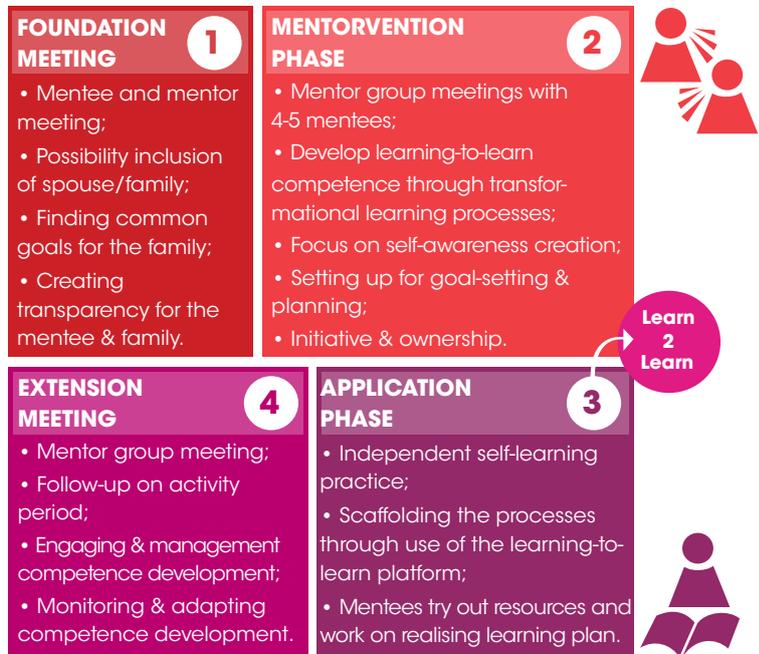
MENTORVENTIONS

The UPSIM project mission is to create inclusion for the mentoring program is designed for **mentors, social workers and others involved** in social integration of foreign-born women. In the UPSIM approach we call these **Mentorventions**. The project has developed a **resource tool kit**, based on the five dimensions of self-directed learning. To ensure that end users will be able to successfully implement the concept, the consortium has developed a **training resource for employees** to complete.

Through a holistic and circular process, the mentorventions take mentees through **five dimensions** for the development of self-directed learning competences, focusing on a circular transformational learning process.

Through this process, women are guided by the mentor to implement situations which bring about transformational learning. These processes are kick-started in the **Mentorvention phases**, where tools and activities are presented and completed in a protected environment, before being developed and applied, on a trial basis, in real life. During **extension activities**, mentees are supported with help and guidance from the mentor to adjust to challenges, accept failure, and develop mastery of new competences.

The UPSIM mentorventions, which take place through a series of **mentor group meetings**, will in their entirety support mentees on their journey of becoming self-directed learners to acquire **better language proficiency**, while at the same time becoming **self-directed adult learners** in a 21st century European educational context.



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LEARNING-TO-LEARN

The **acquisition of learning-to-learn competence** is a central aspect of the project. Through the process of developing and internalising self-awareness raising, goal setting and planning, initiative and ownership, engagement and management, and monitoring and adapting skills will help users through the transformative process of learning.

Users have direct access to tools which will help develop these competences, through a **self-mentoring and language learning platform**, specifically designed for **foreign-born women** who wish to gain access to higher/further education. To further support foreign-born women in achieving the best possible results, a mentoring program has also been designed, which is supported by mentoring sessions.

The **stand-alone learning resource platform** has been designed to support **foreign-born women** in the process of **self-mentoring**, and becoming **self-directed learners**. The resource can be used independently from the mentoring sessions, but it is an integral part of the mentoring **phase of Application**. This is the phase where the mentees try to work on their **Goal-learning** achievements on their own. The platform provides **support and scaffolding** to the processes they can choose to go through, and includes suggestions to additional tools and resources they can use to achieve their learning goals.

This platform has the added value of providing individuals, who **do not have the opportunity to attend a mentoring group**, with a simplified, **user-friendly** version of the Mentorvention sessions. The

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user is guided through the process of creating/sticking to learning goals, with access to strategies and tools needed to achieve them, in order to develop intrinsic motivation, a stimulus which can have a positive impact on **perseverance and the ability to seize opportunities**.

The platform also provides the scaffolding for mentees who can continue to work on the processes and ideas that have been used during the Mentorvention phase. In conjunction with the mentoring phases, the application phase is supported by regular extension meetings, where the participants are guided through the process of analysing and adapting strategies and recognising achievements.

The project is developed in collaboration with partners from Sweden, Denmark, Guadeloupe (France), Portugal, and the Czech Republic.

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