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Valuing Gender Equality: Ideas, Practices and Actors in Everyday Integration Work — Integration and the Value of Gender Equality in Germany, Hungary, Po- land and Sweden

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Key observations

Following the refugee reception crisis of 2015, migration and integration have continuously been placed in the media and political spotlight in Europe. Part of the attention has been on how new residents in the European Union might best be enabled to take part in society, and how to mediate potential conflicts between the newly arrived immigrants and the autochthonous population. Some of these conflicts have been framed as value conflicts, and particular attention has been paid to issues of gender equality and gender relations. Gender equality as a value is one of the core founding values of the European Union and as such incorporated into the legislations of almost all member states.

This report investigates how the value of gender equality is understood and conveyed in integration work in Europe. In this context, we approach gender equality not as a fixed concept, but through the ideas, practices and actors involved in the value transmission processes related to integration work. Integration work includes a multitude of actions and actors differing across national contexts. These include state organised civic education courses, language courses, facilitating meeting points, NGO and volunteering work, bridge builders and many more. This report explores which role values play in everyday integration work in Germany, Hungary, Poland and Sweden, especially after the increase in state and non-state initiatives to integrate newcomers.

Gender equality allows for a variety of interpretations depending on local, regional, and national context. Important to consider is that the four countries considered in this report have very different experiences with migration and integration, and, while they have all incorporated to gender equality in their national legislation), the social practices and norms pertaining to gender equality look very different.

The ideas, the practices, and the actors of gender equality evolve over time and throughout different national and local contexts. Norms and values continuously transform within and beyond integration work, both in individuals and in societies. Their meaning is contested and constantly (re-)negotiated. Time and trust, and tools to create awareness of one's own values are essential for the value of gender equality to make a meaningful impact in integration work.

In line with the key findings of our field research in Germany, Hungary, Poland and Sweden, we recommend policy makers and integration workers to:

- ◆ Present gender equality as a value which is universally fought for, rather than dependent on a national, European or Western context and thereby account for the diversity of the value itself and the struggles for gender equality in and beyond the West.
- ◆ Offer conditions for integration work which foster trust and provide space for mutual communication and reflexivity among newcomers and society at large.
- ◆ Safeguard all women's rights, including migrant and refugee women.
- ◆ Empower migrant and refugee women, through facilitating access to integration activities.
- ◆ Be attentive to the needs of all different target groups in which gender plays a particular role, such as the LGBTQI+ community, parents, women, and men.
- ◆ Promote academic research on gendered migration and integration including studies of masculinities.
- ◆ Increase project and NGO funding for sustainable work with the empowerment of migrants and refugees.
- ◆ Enable reflection among the educators and integration workers to account for the fact that value transformations are long term processes.

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Introduction

*‘Gender equality is one of the biggest challenges [in integration].’
‘Well, how to define the term gender equality ...? [laughs] like, what you think is gender equal, compared to what he or she thinks gender equality is ...’*

‘Gender equality is a very difficult topic to convey because I feel so stupid talking about it. in the books it is so obvious what they want to say “we in the west are so gender equal”.’

The statements above come from integration workers interviewed in the course of this study. These quotes illustrate the diversity of the value of gender equality and at the same time emphasise its centrality and priority in the field of integration across the European Union. Gender equality is one of the core founding values of the EU and is also included in most member states’ constitutions. Rather than a common history, common values are what constitute the basis of the European Union. These values are enshrined in founding treaties and charters, most prominently in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and thereby make up the Union’s legal structure and operational basis. Moreover, this value framework is an integral part of the European self-image.² Following the refugee reception crisis of 2015, migration and integration have continuously been placed in the media and political spotlight in Europe. Part of the attention has been on how new residents in the European Union might best be enabled to take part in society, and how to mediate potential conflicts between the newly arrived immigrants and the population at large. Some of these conflicts have been framed as, precisely, value conflicts, and particular attention has been paid to issues of gender equality and gender relations when it comes to the challenge of integration.

This report looks at how gender equality figures as part of particular member states’ integration work, by discussing how actors understand and practice this value. Important to consider is that Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Sweden — the four countries considered in this report — have very different experiences with migration and integration. While all four countries adhere to gender equality as a legal norm (through their legislation), the social practices and norms pertaining to gender equality look very different. Gender equality as a European value thus takes different shapes and has different implications in each of the countries. Ultimately, the report also provides recommendations for the way forward in regard to reaching gender equality within the European context at large — both within integration work and beyond.

² A. Dimitriadi and T. Malamidis, ‘Talking of Values: Understanding the Normative Discourse of EU Migration Policy. On (Value-Based) EU Policies on Migration,’ *NOVAMIGRA*, D2.1., September 2019, <https://doi.org/10.17185/dupublico/49360> (accessed 3 July 2020).

The report is based on the following questions:

First, how does gender equality as part of the (European and national) self-image play out in everyday life encounters through integration work?

Second, how is gender equality practiced in these encounters?

And, **finally**, how do the actors involved (integration workers and participants) impact the role of gender equality in integration work?

These questions are posed as part of an ethnographic research approach, which adopts a bottom-up view, basing itself largely on the experiences and ideas of those individuals that meet and interact with immigrant newcomers on a daily basis. In other words, the research material consists of the perspectives of language teachers, civic education trainers, course providers, and volunteer workers from different civil society organisations — the frontline workers of integration.

This report has been drafted as part of the Horizon 2020-funded project *Norms and Values in the European Migration and Refugee Crisis* (NOVAMIGRA), which asks whether and how the large arrival of asylum seekers in 2015 has had an impact on European norms and values. In this report we approach the above questions through the lens of integration work, which is constituted, broadly speaking, of all kinds of state and civil society activities that promote the integration of newcomers into society, often recognising integration as a two-way process. In line with academic literature on the civic turn,³ we see integration work — especially state-led initiatives — as arenas where the nation is reproduced and negotiated. Ideally, integration can be seen as an arena where the line is drawn between who belongs within a nation state and who does not.

The report includes the following sections: The background section provides brief presentations on gender equality, norms and values, and the impact of the refugee reception crisis. After an equally brief presentation of the data and methodology, the report presents its main part, the Evidence and Analysis section with the three themes that emerged from fieldwork. The first theme, *Promoting Gender Equality as a Value*, is concerned with the practices and ideas of transmitting gender equality as a value. The material in this section is drawn from interviews with practitioners in civic education courses for refugees and other migrants. The second theme, *Practising Gender Equality in Integration*, presents everyday practices and ideas in integration work aimed at enhancing gender equality. It is largely clustered around two areas of focus, namely the individual and structural factors of women's empowerment, and the inclusion of men and people of non-binary gender identity as part of the struggle towards achieving gender equality. The third theme, *Gender Equality Actors*, discusses the impact of the integration workers' identities and also looks at positions on how gender equality is dealt with. In the next section, the key points are summarised and discussed. The report ends with recommendations for integration workers, policy makers, researchers, and research funders at the European Union level.

³ The civic turn designates the shift in European integration policies in the 2000s that introduced civic education as part of the integration courses. See: K. Borevi, K.K. Jensen, and P. Mouritsen, 'The civic turn of immigrant integration policies in the Scandinavian welfare states', *CMS*, vol. 5, no. 9, 2017.

BACKGROUND: The Refugee Reception Crisis, Gender Equality and Values

The refugee reception crisis of 2015 impacted countries in the EU in very different ways, and the ways in which the crisis was addressed politically were therefore equally diverse.⁴ Overall, 2015 meant an abrupt increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving to Europe, igniting discourses of alarm, invasion, and fear across the EU, but also vast political and social mobilisations of solidarity.⁵ While a massive number of people did, in fact, arrive in particular countries — such as Greece and Malta, which continue to receive high numbers of refugees to this day — for many countries an objectively high increase in newcomers was far from a reality. Nonetheless, the discourse about this increase shaped political responses in most, if not all EU states, prompting widespread actions and reactions in civil society. Some of the main changes in the countries under study include the following:

Germany became one of the main actors throughout the refugee reception crisis and was among the countries that received the most refugees per capita.⁶ Indeed, the number of asylum applications rose significantly between 2014 and 2016.⁷ As a response to the rising numbers of asylum applications and political pressure to settle asylum cases, the government passed a more restrictive Asylum and Integration Law in July 2016. Additionally, individuals that originate from one of the countries deemed ‘safe’ are immediately rejected and scheduled for deportation. Another change is the rising popularity of the right-wing party AfD,⁸ who saw the government’s response to refugees as a political momentum to increase their advocacy for cultural homogeneity and more restrictive immigration policies. Utilizing discourses of fear and threat in their campaigns, the party has gained significant electoral support since 2015.⁹

In September 2015, the **Hungarian** government declared a ‘state of crisis due to mass migration,’¹⁰ and in the subsequent months introduced several concrete measures: closing of its borders, amending the Hungarian Criminal Code to make unauthorised crossing in addition to causing damage to the physical border closure punishable by three to ten years imprisonment.¹¹ The new policies were quickly put into effect and a couple of thousand migrants were convicted of unauthorized border crossing¹². The government took further measures to deter potential asylum seekers from trying to enter

⁴ It is important to keep in mind that the refugee reception crisis is only one of several crises that the European continent faced in the past two decades. Europe experienced a financial crisis, a security crisis, a refugee reception crisis and is currently in the midst of yet two other crises – the Covid-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. These crises further exacerbate existing inequalities, including those based on gender.

⁵ 1.3 million asylum seekers arrived in Europe in 2015, see Pew Research Centre, ‘Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015’, 2nd August 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/>, (accessed 1 May 2020).

⁶ 540 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2015, see Pew Research Centre.

⁷ The number rose from below 175,000 in 2014, to 440,000 in 2015, reaching a peak at 720,000 in 2016, see European Parliament, ‘A Welcoming Europe? Asylum Applications’, *News*, European Parliament, 2019, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/infographic/welcoming-europe/index_en.html - filter=2015, (accessed 1 June 2020).

⁸ Alternative für Deutschland (*Alternative for Germany*).

⁹ G. Wiegel, ‘Family and Gender politics of the right wing “Alternative for Germany”,’ in Luxemburg Magazine. Gesellschaftsanalyse und linke Praxis, September 2018, Berlin, Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung.

¹⁰ In 2015, about 391,000 refugees and asylum seekers entered Hungary through its southern border, most of them intent on transiting the country to get elsewhere in Europe.

¹¹ E. Goździak, ‘Using Fear of the “Other,” Orbán Reshapes Migration Policy in a Hungary Built on Cultural Diversity’, *Migration Policy Institute*, 19 October, 2019, Migration Information Source, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/orban-reshapes-migration-policy-hungary>.

¹² The Hungarian government also implemented so-called ‘border hunters’ for the same reason. (ibid)

Hungary, and rejected participation in the EU's refugee relocation scheme. As such, the refugee reception crisis has deepened the political divide between Hungary and the rest of the EU, while it has also intensified the Hungarian government's rhetoric regarding who belongs and who does not.

In **Poland**, since 2015, the general public attitude towards receiving refugees has become largely negative, especially among young people,¹³ hailing from anti-refugee media campaigns orchestrated by the newly elected government.¹⁴ Poland experienced a political shift as a result of the election of the Law and Justice (PiS) party into government. The party's campaign has been one of the motors of change in the country in regard to migration and integration politics. The refugee reception crisis was mediatized and, for the first time in Polish history, refugees were politicized.¹⁵ Although Poland signed the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention in 1991, the country has one of the lowest recognition rates of asylum claims in the whole EU: Only a small number of asylum seekers received international protection. The majority of asylum seekers moved on to other countries.¹⁶

Sweden initially welcomed refugees at the start of the refugee reception crisis. However, parts of the political spectrum expressed fear of saturating the reception system and welfare provisions. Political pressure led to significant policy changes. Border controls were established between Sweden and its neighbouring countries in November 2015. Thus, on the political level, the refugee reception crisis has meant a rejection of the previously cosmopolitan Swedish approach to migration and refugee policies, and led to more inward-looking policy making.¹⁷ At the same time, only small policy changes have been seen in the field of integration.¹⁸ More actors have been included in the field of integration work, including civil society, and more public funds have been allocated for integration-related activities. In all four countries, the reception crisis also ignited movements of solidarity. At the beginning, when movement through Europe was relatively unrestricted, civil society volunteers stood in ports and train stations providing those travelling with food, clothing, a place to sleep, and other humanitarian emergency aid. Moreover, changes in legislation and policies affecting asylum seekers and refugees in a negative way have also been met with resistance from civil society. In the course of the refugee reception crisis the visibility of gender equality as a European value has been reinforced. At the same time, the normative power of gender equality in the EU has changed: gender equality has been instrumentalized to, for example, justify the quasi-closure of borders in Sweden, or by European politicians to argue for the difference between Europeans and non-Europeans.¹⁹

¹³ A. Pilat and D. Potkańska, *Local responses to the refugee crisis in Poland. Reception and integration*, NIEM Analyses, Warszawa, Institute for Public Affairs, 2017.

¹⁴ I. Main, 'Proclaiming and Practicing Pro-Immigration Values in Poland: A Case Study of Poznan', in E. Goździak, I. Main, and B. Suter (eds.), *Europe and the Refugee Response: A Crisis of Value?* London, Routledge, 2020, pp. 269-285.

¹⁵ M. Krzyżanowski, 'Discursive Shifts in Ethno-Nationalist Politics: On Politicization and Mediatization of the "Refugee Crisis" in Poland', *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1-2, 2018, pp. 76-96.

¹⁶ European Parliament, 'A Welcoming Europe? Asylum Applications', *News*, European Parliament, 2019, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/in-fographic/welcoming-europe/index_en.html - filter=2015, (accessed 1 June 2020).

¹⁷ C. Fernandez, 'Cosmopolitanism at the Crossroads: Swedish Immigration Policy after the 2015 refugee crisis', in E. Goździak, I. Main, and B. Suter (eds.), *Europe and the Refugee Response: A Crisis of Value?*, London, Routledge, 2020, pp. 220-235.

¹⁸ R. Scaramuzzino and B. Suter, 'Holding course: Civil society organisations' value expressions in the Swedish legislative consultation system before and after 2015', in E. Goździak, I. Main, and B. Suter (eds.), *Europe and the Refugee Response: A Crisis of Value?*, London, Routledge, 2020, pp. 166-184.

¹⁹ E. Edenborg, 'Endangered Swedish Values: Immigration, Gender Equality, and "Migrants' Sexual Violence"', in A. Hellström, C. Norocel and M. Bak Jørgensen (eds.), *Nostalgia and Hope: Intersections between Politics of Culture, Welfare, and Migration in Europe*, Amsterdam, Springer Publications, 2020.

Gender Equality as a Value in the EU

Values commonly denote what a community or an individual deem desirable. Hence values provide a personal or a socially, culturally or politically shared orientation, not only regarding what is worth striving for, but also what one *is*; one's identity. Norms and values are crucial components of the self-image of both people and nation states. However, this self-image does not develop in a vacuum, rather it is reinforced in reaction to what is identified as *Other*.²⁰ Put differently, the national self-image provides an idea of an 'us' versus 'them'.

When it comes to gender equality as a European value, the European Union has a long history of gender equality promotion. Since the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1999, gender mainstreaming²¹ became the main tool for achieving gender equality in the EU. Evaluations of this approach to gender equality, however, have shown that gender mainstreaming has lacked actual political power, and thus left institutional structures that reproduce gender inequalities unchanged.²²

Thus, while gender equality is a fundamental concept in EU and national law, its scope, meaning, and the strategies to achieve it remain highly contested.²³ Gender equality has several dimensions, each of which is the product of historical struggles and reinterpretations. Among these are women's fight for access to the labour market, equal pay for equal work, and the struggle to level the imbalance between paid and unpaid work — such as housework or caring for children, the elderly and the sick. Other central struggles have been, and continue to be, accessing the right to vote and political representation, sexual and reproductive rights, and ending gender-based violence.²⁴

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in Vilnius measures EU member states' progress towards gender equality in its Gender Equality Index (GEI) by investigating the varying levels of achievement of women and men in six core domains: work, money, knowledge, time, power and health. Feminist scholars argue that the EU has strongly sided with the economic (neoliberal) dimension of gender equality.²⁵ The dimension accentuates women's inclusion in the labour market, rather than the social aspect of gender equality in which the valuation of care figures more strongly.²⁶ As a result, gender equality becomes simply a tool for economic growth. This approach fails to recognise

²⁰ 'The Other' is an academic term for grasping the image that is created of those that are perceived strange or foreign and consequently seen as not belonging to 'us'. A concept which gives space to the problematic, often racist or stereotypical conceptions of who or what is an inherent part of European identity.

²¹ 'Gender mainstreaming is an approach to policy-making that takes into account both women's and men's interests and concerns, aimed at designing better policies.' See Council of Europe, 'Gender mainstreaming at the Council of Europe', *Council of Europe*, Strasbourg Cedex, France, 2020, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-mainstreaming>, (accessed 3 July 2020).

²² A. Gregor, 'Who is for Sale? Challenging the commodification of gender equality in the European Union', in E. Kováts (ed.), *The Future of the European Union. Feminist Perspectives from East-Central Europe*, Budapest, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, 2017.

²³ A. Petö, 'From women through gender to unconscious bias: changing terminology about gender equality in the EU', in E. Kováts (ed.), *The Future of the European Union. Feminist Perspectives from East-Central Europe*, Budapest, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, 2017.

²⁴ A. Van der Vleuten, *The Price of Gender equality. Member States and Governance in the European Union*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2015.

²⁵ Indeed, this is reflected in the formulation of gender equality as a core value of the European Union, in article 2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which states that: *Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay.* (Art 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000/C 364/01).

²⁶ A. Elomäki, 'The economic case for gender equality in the European Union: Selling gender equality to decision-makers and neoliberalism to women's organizations', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2015.

gender equality as a goal in itself, leaves the origins of the inequality unaddressed, and does little to recognise the value of care.²⁷

Country Specific Approaches to Gender Equality

Gender equality as a value and norm is present in nation states across Europe, but its interpretation and representation differ according to the country in question. Overall, gender equality as a value and norm is present in all four countries studied here.

In **Sweden**, gender equality permeates many, if not most, aspects of society, including the organisation of the welfare state. The government and its foreign policy are declared ‘feminist’ and in 2018 the Gender Equality Agency (*Jämställdhetsmyndigheten*) was established.²⁸ Generally, Sweden’s policy on gender equality aim for equality of opportunity where women and men equally shape society and their lives.²⁹ While gender equity is arguably one of the most salient Swedish values, scholars have pointed out that the value is often used interchangeably with Swedish identity and even serves as an ethnic signifier to draw boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’.³⁰ At the same time, the definition of gender equality is contested by conservative political movements, such as the Sweden Democrats party.³¹ This shows that norms and values — even when established as part of a nation — are always open to definition and redefinition.

In **Germany**, gender equality is a fundamental right.³² While gender mainstreaming has been implemented at federal level in Germany, it has not been fully successful in specific policy areas. Policies oriented towards both equality in general and family matters in particular, have not been consistently oriented towards reaching gender equality. According to some scholars, the latter policy area has thereby also undergone a re-traditionalization, in which, especially in low income households, women are responsible for the majority of care work at home, often at the expense of their own careers, resulting in no paid work or part time paid work only.³³ Another step pursued was the 2014 introduction of a quota law for the private sector to tackle women’s underrepresentation in decision-making positions. As such, gender equality in the German context is to a large extent a value that is represented in legislation targeting different forms of discrimination, but it often remains limited to economic rather than social aspects of equality.

²⁷ E. Kováts, ‘Preface: The need for feminist and East-Central European reform perspectives for the EU’, in E. Kováts (ed.), *The Future of the European Union. Feminist Perspectives from East-Central Europe*, Budapest, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, 2017.

²⁸ This agency works towards implementing the government’s key pillars of gender equality: equal division of power and influence, economic equality, gender equal education, division of paid and unpaid labour, gender equal health, and the elimination of men’s violence against women. See Swedish Gender Equality Agency, *Sweden’s Gender Equality Policy* [website], <https://www.jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se/en/about-gender-equality/swedens-gender-equality-policy>, (accessed 3 July 2020).

²⁹ Righard, H. Emlisson, and T. Gudrun Jensen, *Gender Dynamics in Integrating Refugees and Other Migrants in Sweden*, GLIMER, WP6 report, Sweden, 2020.

³⁰ D. Mulinari, ‘Women friendly? Understanding gendered racism in Sweden’, in K. Melby, C. Carlsson Wetterberg and A.-B. Ravn (eds.), *Gender Equality and Welfare politics in Scandinavia. The Limits of Political Ambition?* Bristol, Policy Press, 2009.

³¹ The Sweden Democrats is a populist right-wing party which has experienced increased popularity since 2010. It is highly polemic within the Swedish political scene, especially when it comes to questions of migration and integration. The party has increasingly gained both seats in parliament and power to partake in setting the political agenda.

³² Fundamental rights are anchored in the German Basic Law of 1949. Article 3(2) states: ‘Men and women shall have equal rights. The state shall promote the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men and take steps to eliminate disadvantages that now exist.’

³³ E. Botsch, *The Policy on Gender Equality in Germany: In-depth analysis for the FEMM committee*, Directorate General For Internal Policies, European Parliament, Brussels, European Union, 2015, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA\(2015\)510025_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA(2015)510025_EN.pdf), (accessed 3 July 2020).

The **Polish** Constitution of 1997 declares equal rights to women and men in all spheres of public and private life.³⁴ However, while gender equality was part of the official state ideology during communism, there has been a backlash against women's equal position in society since 1989. From the 1990s onward, government support for gender equality has remained mainly on a declarative level. Moreover, the Law and Justice (PiS) government, in power since 2015, promotes policies in support of traditional gender roles.³⁵ Under the current government, the anti-gender campaign has gained momentum. The government introduced measures that curb reproductive rights, undermine initiatives addressing violence against women, hinder sexual and reproductive health education, and denigrate women's and LGBTQI+ rights. Gender equality in Poland does arguably remain a value and a legal norm, albeit a contested one, and is far from reaching the mainstreaming politics observable in Sweden and, to an extent, in Germany.

Similarly, gender equality as a value was institutionalized in **Hungary** during the time of the socialist regime. After its collapse in 1989, the issue of gender equality politically stagnated and was only reinvigorated during the country's preparation for the accession to the EU in 2004. The situation was exacerbated in 2010, when the Fidesz-led government (informed by nationalism and conservatism) began restructuring various public offices responsible for the promotion of equal opportunities and made them lose their status, financial base, and staff. In 2014, Viktor Orban announced his plan to build a new order and set up a new direction for Hungary — one of illiberal democracy. Family became a central political topic, and 'family mainstreaming' a strategy to cope with the country's demographic challenges. In this strategy, women are primarily seen as wives and mothers whose role it is to uphold the Christian family values. Various regulations and laws were indeed amended to support this stance. For instance, in 2012, the Fundamental Law replaced the constitution and brought in explicit information about family as the basis of national survival and the state as a defender of the institution of marriage (defined as a union between a man and a woman). The values represented and promoted by the government are often depicted as endangered by liberal, destructive principles, which in recent years have often been framed as 'gender ideology'. It is in this spirit that the Istanbul Convention was never ratified by Hungary and that Gender Studies were banned from Hungarian universities. Consequently, gender equality has never been a clear priority in Hungary, and the legal norm — if upheld as such — does not seem to have translated into a strong social norm. However, gender equality is still part of social practices in Hungary in some parts of society, showing, once again, how norms and values are contested both within and beyond nation states.

³⁴ Art. 33.1: 'Women and men in the Republic of Poland have equal rights in family, political, social, and economic life.' (Constitution of the Republic of Poland 1997).

³⁵ A. White et al., *The Impact of Migration on Poland. EU Mobility and Social Change*. London, University College London Press, 2018.

Data and methodology

The data this report is based on provides evidence of how gender equality is dealt with in integration work of refugees and migrants. The collected material provides an insight into the varying integration spheres in Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Sweden and the ethnographic data collection mirrors the respective context of the country. The material is presented through the voices of the integration workers interviewed in each context, so that their approach to their work has informed the analytical lens used in this report. Integration work is broadly defined to include all formal and informal programmes, activities, and actors aimed at facilitating integration, among them state-organised, NGO, voluntary, or solidarity work. Integration work is organised differently in the four countries, as is sketched out below.

In Germany and Sweden integration work is formalized and institutionalized to a large extent. Both countries provide civic education and language courses to those who have received residency. Since 2015, state-funded integration activities have increasingly also targeted registered asylum seekers. All courses address gender equality as a value and a practice, though the manifestation of this varies greatly between the course providers and even among individual teachers.

In Germany, the boundaries between the third and the public sectors are at times diffuse when it comes to, precisely, integration work. The state outsources responsibility for integration courses to civil society organisations. As such, the practices of value transmission and negotiation presented below at times represent both German authorities and different civil society organisations that perform the integration work 'on the ground'. The federal system of integration courses provides comprehensive access to language and civic education and includes various specialized courses. For example, the state provides courses exclusively for women, parents, or a literacy course. For the majority of refugees, the courses are mandatory and non-compliance may be sanctioned by restricting financial benefits.³⁶ All courses conclude with an exam, and the certificate awarded allows earlier application for permanent residency.

In Sweden, many civil society organisations provide informal spaces where refugees and other migrants can meet local people to practice Swedish and receive assistance with e.g. paperwork and provision of clothing. Both formal and informal meeting places address and practice the value of gender equality in different ways. While Sweden has gender mainstreamed all policy development, a recent report by the GLIMER project contends that activities towards gender equality for foreign-born women are often relegated to the third sector which relies on (predominantly female) volunteer workers and lacks financial support.³⁷ While integration work is, by and large, organised and carried out by local, regional, and national authorities, the number of civil society organisations involved in integration work (often with government funding) has increased in the aftermath of the refugee reception crisis. Most of these organisations are study associations, folk high schools, and other idea-based organisations. In some municipalities, parenting support courses have become part of the official integration

³⁶ N. Funk, 'A spectre in Germany: refugees, a 'welcome culture' and an 'integration politics'', *Journal of Global Ethics*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2016.

³⁷ E. Righard, H. Emilsson, and T. Gudrun Jensen, *Gender Dynamics in Integrating Refugees and Other Migrants in Sweden*, GLIMER, WP6 report, Sweden, 2020, <http://www.glimer.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WP6-Report-Sweden.pdf>.

programme.³⁸ The courses usually discuss the division of work between the spouses, gender roles in society, child rearing, and norms on sexuality, including honour-related norms.

In both Poland and Hungary, integration work is largely excluded from the public system, and is, therefore, almost solely carried out by civil society. At times it is done in the form of a humanitarian response, as seen, for instance, during the refugee reception crisis. At other times it is part of political work, as a way to differentiate from and provide an alternative to the politics of the government. NGOs and activists in Hungary that defend the rights of refugees and migrants experience significant obstacles in their work. For example, because the Orban government regards human rights activists receiving foreign funding as a threat to the nation's sovereignty they have to pay a special tax. The research material for this report also shows that they experience personal threats.³⁹ These restrictions diminish the activities of civil society significantly. Poland sees itself as a transit country and not as an immigration country, which is reflected in the absence of a national integration policy.⁴⁰ However, there are some integration measures for recipients of international protection, although most activities are organised and executed by NGOs with funding from the EU.⁴¹ As will be reflected below, due to the current climate regarding gender-related politics in both Poland and Hungary, the extent to which gender equality figures as an explicit goal of integration work is limited in these countries. However, different practices do reflect this value, and these will be pointed out.

Fieldwork and Ethical Considerations

This report relies on fieldwork, interviews, statistics, documents, and secondary data, such as published and unpublished reports and academic journal articles.⁴² The material was collected between 2017 and 2020 and includes more than 120 in-depth ethnographic interviews, numerous participant observations and field trips, including casual conversations with a number of stakeholders, one workshop with integration workers (at a conference for integration workers in Sweden), and five focus group interviews (two of which were brainstorming sessions in Malmö and in Poznan).⁴³ The interviews focused largely on issues pertaining to the national self-image, the large arrival of asylum seekers in 2015, and solidarity and integration work. Issues of gender equality were discussed with all of the informants.⁴⁴

We have received ethics approval from the Regional Ethics Board at Lund University in Sweden and the Ethics Board at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. All data has been anonymised to guarantee

³⁸ Parenting support courses are generally seen as an instrument to prevent domestic violence, violence against children and violence in general (criminality), based on evidence that gender equality between partners generally reduces violence.

³⁹ A. Bíró-Nagy, 'Illiberal democracy in Hungary: The social background and practical steps of building an illiberal state', in P. Morillas (ed.), *Illiberal democracies in the EU: The Visegrad group and the risk of disintegration*, Barcelona, CIDOB, 2016.

⁴⁰ A. Solik, 'Poland's dual approach to migration', in WIDE (ed.), *The Europe we want? Feminist approaches to gender, migration, and democracy*, Vienna, WIDE, 2018.

⁴¹ A. Pilat and D. Potkańska, *Local responses to the refugee crisis in Poland. Reception and integration*, NIEM Analyses, Warszawa, Institute for Public Affairs, 2017.

⁴² The material on Poland and Hungary has been collected and provided by Elżbieta M. Goździak, Izabella Main, Izabela Kujawa, Centre for Migration Studies (CeBaM), Adam Mickiewicz University.

⁴³ NOVAMIGRA Policy Research Alert No. 2 "Multicultural Education in Poland" and NOVAMIGRA Policy Research Alert No. 3 "The Role of Values in Swedish Integration Practices", both available on <http://novamigra.eu/index.php?id=12>.

⁴⁴ Other specific issues discussed with all informants regarded freedom of religion and hospitality. See A. Dimitriadi and T. Malamidis, *Humanitarianism and Hospitality in Civil Society: Practices during the European 'Refugee Crisis'*, NoVaMigra Deliverable D3.3a, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.17185/duublico/72832>, and in Goździak, E., Main, I., and Kujawa, I., *The 'Refugee Crisis' and Religious Tolerance in Europe: Plurality of Perspectives*. NOVAMIGRA Deliverable D3.3 b, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.17185/duublico/72833>.

the privacy of the informants and all informants have given informed consent to take part in the publication of our research. In ethnographic fieldwork, however, ethical considerations often go beyond interview situations (for example, attending conferences and stakeholder meetings), and our ethical considerations have been extended to also cover these situations.

GENDER EQUALITY IN INTEGRATION WORK – A Bottom-up Perspective

This part presents evidence and analysis in three different sections: Section one, *Promoting Gender Equality as a Value in Integration Work*, looks at the transmission of gender equality as a value in integration courses in Sweden and Germany. It focuses on the teachers' experiences and highlights how gender equality is taught and negotiated in the courses. Section two, *Practising Gender Equality in Integration Work*, presents evidence of civil society organisations acting upon the value of gender equality in their (daily) activities with refugees and migrants in Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Sweden. The third section, *Actors: Identities and Positions in Integration Work*, discusses the impact of integration workers' identities and positions on how gender equality is dealt with.

I. Promoting Gender Equality as a Value in Integration Work

Many Western European countries include issues of norms and values in their integration courses — and sometimes even make the granting of residence permits subject to individuals' agreement with the country's alleged norms and values.⁴⁵ Integration courses can be understood as 'symbolic politics'⁴⁶ but they also provide opportunities for encounters between the newcomers and the state.⁴⁷ The large arrival of asylum seekers in 2015 intensified this development. In many countries, reference to national values in political and public debates became more explicit after 2015.⁴⁸

Germany and Sweden have a long-standing policy focus on **integration**. Both countries engaged early in **civic education**, albeit in different forms and with different conditions.⁴⁹ Most researchers agree that the content of integration courses often reproduces the national identity of the receiving society and that such programmes generally run the danger of 'reimagin(ing) a progressive, modern, and always superior community in contrast to the "backwards" and "static" non-European cultures'.⁵⁰ The value of gender equality with its attached discussion on sexual rights is one of the core values in such courses. In the aftermath of the events in Cologne and various festivals in Sweden where 'foreign/Muslim men have molested/sexually harassed native women',⁵¹ political and public calls for increased gender equality education for (male) immigrants became more prominent.

The role gender equality plays in representing the nation in these countries cannot be overstated.⁵² Consequently, the image of successfully integrated migrants depends on how a country defines and

⁴⁵ See P.W.A. Scholten, et al., 'Integration from Abroad? Perception and Impacts of Pre-entry Tests for Third-Country Nationals,' *PROSINT*, WP4 report, 2012, <http://research.icmpd.org/projects/integration-non-discrimination/prosint/>, (accessed 2 June 2020).

⁴⁶ J. Mourão Permoser, 'Civic Integration as Symbolic Politics: Insights from Austria', *European Journal of Migration and Law*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2012.

⁴⁷ S. Wallace Goodman and M. Wright, 'Does Mandatory Integration Matter? Effects of Civic Requirements on Immigrant Socio-economic and Political Outcomes', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 41, no. 12, 2015, pp. 1885-1908.

⁴⁸ R. Verwiebe, L. Seewann and M. Wolf, 'Werte und Wertebildung in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft,' in R. Verwiebe (ed.), *Werte und Wertebildung aus interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, Wiesbaden, Springer, 2019.

⁴⁹ See C. Joppke, 'Beyond national models: Civic integration policies for immigrants in Western Europe', *West European Politics*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2007, pp. 1-22; K. Borevi, K.K. Jensen and P. Mouritsen, 'The civic turn of immigrant integration policies in the Scandinavian welfare states', *Comparative Migration Studies*, vol. 5, no. 9, 2017.

⁵⁰ E. Edenborg, 'Endangered Swedish Values: Immigration, Gender Equality, and "Migrants' Sexual Violence"', in A. Hellström, C. Norocel and M. Bak Jørgensen (eds.), *Nostalgia and Hope: Intersections between Politics of Culture, Welfare, and Migration in Europe*, Amsterdam, Springer Publications, 2020, p. 111.

⁵¹ see Edenborg for similar events in Sweden. Edenborg, 'Endangered Swedish Values,' 2020.

⁵² Edenborg, 'Endangered Swedish Values,' 2020; N. Yuval-Davis, *Gender and nation*, London, Sage, 1997.

values gender equality — and how this value is positioned in relation to other values, such as freedom of religion, or individualism/collectivism. In both Germany and Sweden, immigrant women living self-determined and gender equal is seen as a sign of successful integration, since both countries weigh gender equality highly.⁵³ Other research also points out that gender equality is used as an indicator of being able to live democratically.⁵⁴

Both Sweden and Germany understand their self-image to lie partly in their strong efforts towards becoming a gender equal society. The state has multiple ways of transmitting gender equality to its citizens, residents, and newly arrived immigrants. One way are integration courses specifically designed for newly arrived immigrants. Curricula and textbooks include gender equality to varying degrees as legal norm (legislation) and social norm (as something that ‘normal’ people do), or even as a value (described as something that is worth striving for). Importantly, the research material shows that teachers have substantial leeway as to how they want to present gender equality. This is most pronounced in the courses offered by study associations and folk high schools in Sweden, who belong to the civil society but receive funding from the state to run these courses. In the case of German integration courses this is less pronounced, due to a test that must be passed at the end of the course which leads to a higher level of standardisation.⁵⁵ However, in the interviews all teachers foregrounded their *own* assessments — based to a large extent on their *own* experiences — of how to present gender equality.⁵⁶

The narratives gathered on how gender equality is dealt with in everyday practices of integration work show that the self-image of the nation that is presented to newcomers in the courses takes a variety of forms and is far from homogeneous. What is more, the image of what defines the nation is also negotiated in the interaction with the newcomers, and thus takes different forms depending on the situation.

Conveying Gender Equality as a Legal Norm

All our material univocally identifies gender equality to be one of the topics that gives rise to controversies and discussions in the classroom.

One of the municipality employees we interviewed works in a small town in mid-west Sweden. She had been central in designing the civic education course, in hiring appropriate staff (civic educators in different languages), and has continuously been engaged in following and evaluating this course. She maintained that gender equality is one of the most difficult topics for the civic educators to teach.

⁵³ I. Wunn, ‘Neue Wege für Musliminnen in Europa,’ *Politik und Zeitgeschichte: Frauen in Europa*, Bpb, vol. 37-38, 2011; A. Johansson Heinö, *Hur mycket mångfald tål demokratin? Demokratiska dilemman i ett mångkulturellt Sverige*, Ph.D. diss., University of Gothenburg, 2009, <https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/20038>, (accessed 6 July 2020).

⁵⁴ B. Rommelspacher, ‘Feminismus, Säkularität und Islam. Frauen zwischen Modernität und Traditionalismus,’ in M. Selçuk and I. Wunn (eds.), *Islam, Frauen und Europa: Islamischer Feminismus und Gender Jihad - neue Wege für Musliminnen in Europa*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 2013; P. Rostock, and S. Berghan, ‘The ambivalent role of gender in redefining the German nation,’ *Ethnicities*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2008.

⁵⁵ At the successful completion of the test, consisting of a language part and a civic orientation part the participants receive the integration course certificate which can positively influence one’s residency permit decision and allows one to apply for citizenship one year earlier than without the certificate.

⁵⁶ This is generally the case in Swedish value education (also in primary schools), see: R. Thornberg, ‘The lack of Professional Knowledge in Values Education,’ *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol. 24, 2008, pp.1791-1798.

'The question of gender equality is highlighted in every lecture, it's so all-permeating. You cannot just treat it as a theme, no, the gender equality perspective has to permeate and be there all the time. Because it is a challenging question.'

One way that teachers deal with the topic of gender equality in integration courses is to present it as a legal norm by referring to the legislation.⁵⁷ Here the teachers usually point out the national legislation that addresses gender equality. According to the teachers, this approach informs newcomers about the law so that they can avoid breaching it or facing legal consequences. Furthermore, it avoids stigmatisation of newcomers, who at the same time are taught their rights with reference to these same pieces of legislation. A dean at a folk high school in the Swedish city of Malmö referred to the anti-discrimination law, especially when gender equality becomes a question of the equality of all genders.

The civic educators represent the nation to newcomers, and their interpretations of the nation vary widely.

'We refer to the law. Like ... we have a law that says that trans people cannot be discriminated against. So, there we can always simply say: it is against the law. [...] So, with the legislation you have the possibility to steer which values are good, and it's the same for us. We have the education act and we have the discrimination law which is really important for us.'

A teacher and coordinator of the general integration course at a language education centre in Cologne, Germany, provided a similar perspective. When talking about gender equality she describes same-sex partnerships as a value since these partnerships are anchored in law.

'So, I usually tell my students that you have the freedom to have your opinion about things and do not have to like it [same-sex relationships], but it is allowed by law.'

Discussing Gender Equality as a Social Norm

In Sweden, and to a slightly lesser extent Germany, gender equality (between women and men) is indeed deemed a social norm. On account of this, integration teachers often engage in discussions on gender equality with the course participants by referring to their own personal practices in their daily life as a way of representing the national mindset. A language teacher in a small municipality in southern Sweden said: 'I usually tell them that my husband cooks and I do the dishes, and that we share all of the housework.' While her colleague added: 'I talk about my teenage daughter having a boyfriend and how we discuss contraceptives.'

Some aspects of gender equality are thus 'personalised' — such as equality between women and men, equal rights and opportunities, equal division of household chores, raising children, and sexuality between men and women — while others are not. This is commonly the case for LGBTQI+ rights issues

⁵⁷ A legal norm is manifested in a body of rights, such as the constitution or national legislation.

that usually only go beyond references to the legislation when LGBTQI+ people in the classroom share their stories. Teachers who are homosexual, however, stated that they feel reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation in class.⁵⁸ This mirrors the official presentation of gender equality by the state and in public discourse in both Germany and Sweden, which emphasises the relationship between women and men. Interestingly, gender equality is often presented with a direct or indirect link to the nation, as national legislation, or in the form of a personalised story representing the perceived typical Swede/German.

However, as our material shows, it would be wrong to assume an overall homogeneous view of the nation. Many educators have diverse images of what the nation is and how they see their own and the newcomers' position in it. One of the teachers in Sweden reflected:

'I don't see myself as the average Swede, so when the course participants ask me how something is done in Sweden, I usually say that "many Swedes would do like this, but I would do like that".'

Teachers also differ in their understanding of how the nation relates to Europe as a political or cultural community, or to some bigger universal global community. Overall, they vary in their understanding of the role of gender equality in society.

None of the teachers spontaneously referred to the values they presented and discussed as 'Swedish values' or 'German values', although they recognised that the general meanings attached to these values were sometimes specific to their countries. Instead, rather than talking about values, they referred to them as 'important aspects of life in the Swedish or German society' or 'Swedish and German culture'. The dean of the folk high school in Malmö mentioned above, pondered to what extent a piece of legislation on discrimination based on gender or gender expression can be said to be a 'Swedish value':

'Well, obviously it is about Sweden [as it is a national law]. Then again, it's really about the law and not about Sweden: The law is a way to steer people's values, because Swedes don't automatically think that homosexuals or trans persons have the same rights.'

Interestingly, while many teachers perceive the values to be typically Swedish or German, they experience that for many of the pupils in their classroom (and also for many of their fellow teachers) these values come to represent European values. A Swedish language teacher at a municipal school for adult education in Malmö pointed to the very diverse composition of language classes in terms of the participants' geographical origin. As the language classes are open for everyone who does not master a Scandinavian language, the classes are composed of refugees, as well as labour, family, and student migrants, and the nationalities include, Turks, Iraqis, Pakistanis, Indians, Thais, Americans and nationals of various European countries.

⁵⁸ For a similar finding, see R. Fornoff, *Migration, Demokratie, Werte*, Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2018.

This teacher thus points at the way in which values — such as gender equality — may appear as Swedish, German or European, depending on the situation and depending on the composition of the group she teaches.

‘Sometimes you can feel that the non-European pupils expect that those coming from Europe have exactly the same values. [...] the teachers as well — they have the same assumption that those from non-European countries (have different values), but the pupils too: “ah, you’re from France, so it is the same” while “I am from Pakistan, so it is totally different.” Those thoughts exist. The further away, the more difference.’

Framing Gender Equality as Universal

While Europe – or the EU – is thus seldom evoked as a point of reference, some teachers present gender equality as a universal or a global issue. According to them, framing gender equality as universal rather than national offers, at least in theory, a more inclusive understanding of the value.

‘Gender equality is a very difficult topic to convey because I feel so stupid talking about it, in the books it is so obvious what they want to say: “We in the West are so gender equal”.’ – German integration course teacher

The teacher and coordinator of the self-organised integration association in North Rhine-Westphalia says that she feels uncomfortable presenting gender equality solely as a German trait.

This way of presenting carries an underlying assumption of a superiority of the West that does not correspond with how she sees the world. Further, it makes it difficult to convey the content in a way that does not stigmatise the course participants.

Another teacher at a folk high school in Malmö explained that framing gender equality as a national value and struggle can invoke an image of ‘us’ and ‘them’ that separates rather than unites people. The school she worked at received money from the government in 2016 to offer a language and civic education course for newly arrived refugees, and together with a colleague she was tasked to design and later teach such a course. From her experience, values — such as gender equality — that are touched upon in the course should be presented as universal values rather than Swedish. If participants feel excluded from this ‘imagined community’ (Sweden), it allows them to think that it is not applicable to them. The teacher explained:

‘I have many friends from Syria, and they often say “yes, you, you Swedes do like this, but we would never be able to do so, even when living in Sweden”...and because I am a teacher, I am Swedish, I am seen as belonging to a different [social] rule, so it doesn’t make a difference if I say “we are gender equal, we are this and that”, because it doesn’t exist [for them] ... it becomes like a “yes, but we are not”.’

Framing gender equality as a universal value (independent of a national context) instead makes the idea of it accessible to the course participants in a different, more inclusive way. Furthermore, it does justice to the struggle for gender equality that many women and men all over the world partake in, as

the same interviewee above reasons. She recalled a previous colleague of hers, who was from Lebanon and who, when they discussed the rights of homosexuals, burst out:

“But this is nothing specific for Sweden, this is not why we should be for the right to marry, this should be in the whole world, not only in Sweden,” so this was food for thought for my colleague and me. You often end up saying to the course participants that “in this country these rules apply,” and by framing it as something national I am afraid it also gets reproduced as such [which is contrary to what we want to achieve].’

Notwithstanding, this teacher realized that the national framing often occurs as the ‘easier way’ and that a discussion on the universality of gender equality and various other values would require a course budget that is not realistic for an introductory course.

Value Transformations through Time, Trust, and Encounters

Despite the strong focus on legal norms discussed above, familiarity with the law does not automatically lead to the value transformation that is often the stated intention of politicians and the public when it comes to integration courses. This was reiterated by all of the teachers, deans, and other stakeholders who informed this report.

A teacher and coordinator of integration courses at a self-organised integration association in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, who has a background in adult education and came to Germany as a refugee herself, expressed the conviction of many:

‘[...] value transfer in a course doesn’t work, you have to experience it. We therefore organise a lot of excursions and of course we transmit values or how we deal with each other every day in the German course. So, every day, every hour, every minute.’

Other integration workers point at encounters that create trust between newcomers and the receiving society as a precondition for value adaptation.⁵⁹ Such encounters and trust-building are enabled and shaped over time. One interviewee, who had been a language teacher at a municipal school for adult education in Malmö for several years, reflected on her long-term involvement in teacher training and the implementation and evaluation of her school’s equality policy. She reported:

‘You have to consider that things take time. If you let these things come in naturally and you have time to process, then you can change your way of thinking. [...] When you just get rules of how to behave or not, you will not change your way of thinking. Instead, transformation comes through the encounters with others, in discussion. So [as a teacher] you have to balance a bit. With reprimands you don’t change somebody’s prejudices.’

Time also matters in a different way, in that taking into account an historical perspective is important. In many of the newer methods of value education, gender equality as a value is not presented just as an abstract concept without embeddedness in a particular society’s history, but as the result of historical events, political conflicts, and social struggles. A scholar employed by a Swedish university has

⁵⁹ The NOVAMIGRA Policy Research Alert No. 3 of 2019 already points out the need to establish spaces for encounters for the purpose of forging trust between migrant and resident individuals in society, <https://doi.org/10.17185/dupublico/70361>.

been centrally involved in the government’s strategy on civic education and developed a module on gender equality. The scholar maintains that civic education needs to be based on the fundamental laws and Sweden’s commitment in international and European conventions and treaties, and how gender equality as a value has emerged over time and through political struggle. He contended that ‘presenting such things in a historical context is in stark contrast to how this has been presented in other textbooks before.’

Incorporating a historical perspective in integration courses not only helps the course participants to understand the background of the values taught, but it also enables reflection among the educators — that value transmission and value change have an important temporal dimension — and enables educators to reflect upon the expectations they bring into the courses. In the words of a Swedish language teacher:

‘we demand of them that they should live like us, while they are [like we were in the 1960’s]. And so immediately also (snaps her fingers) they should be like us.’

Embracing gender equality as a value through experience, encounters, and time does not happen in a vacuum. It requires that the surrounding society treats it as something more than a legal norm, that gender equality is adhered to, lived, discussed, and treated as a social norm because one sees the moral implication of doing so. It is then considerably more likely that migrant individuals will adhere to gender equality, not only because of legal norms but also because they experience it as a value important in social life in Sweden. The teachers generally agreed that teaching values as part of an introduction course cannot do more than ‘plant a seed’ — true value transformation is an inner journey that goes beyond just acting in accordance with the law. However, integration courses are a first step to ensure familiarity with the law and societal expectations regarding gender equality.

**Information is key
to empowerment**

Communication Tools: Mutual Respect through Conversation and Reflection

The material thus univocally shows that teachers consider the provision of comprehensive information regarding the rights affiliated with gender equality (as a legal norm) to be one way of empowering newcomers. This last sub-section on promoting gender equality turns to the experiences and reflections regarding the methods of doing so. In order to generate a change of heart through new insights, i.e. an actual value transformation, teachers and participants engage in a number of cognitive and communicative methods, which are presented below.

Generally, the teachers and course leaders pointed at the importance of communication and a space for reflection as tools for prompting the embrace of new values among newcomers. Communication serves as crucial in doing away with mutual prejudices and, as a result of this, removing perceived boundaries between the course participants and the teachers. Communication, thus, is the cornerstone upon which trust is built. A Swedish language teacher in a small municipality about two hours by train from Malmö shared some of what she had learned to be crucial in this sense. She had been a

teacher for much of her professional career, only starting to teach Swedish to immigrants three years ago. In her experience,

‘Communication is so important and so difficult, even between Swedes. So, I think irrespective of whether we talk about rules, values, politics, emotions: ask if you are not sure! Make sure we don’t just misunderstand each other.’ (SFI teacher in a small municipality in Southern Sweden)

Moreover, the course providers generally agree on the importance of daring to address conflicts and problems – as long as it is done in a respectful way. For instance, Swedish parenting courses offered by study associations and other actors emphasise the space for reflection and conversations at eye-level between course providers and participants as key to their pedagogical methods.⁶⁰ The practice of reflection is used as a cognitive means of becoming more aware of one’s own values and behaviour, from which then crucial, transformative insights can emerge. This pedagogical tool is seen by some teachers as important in order to avoid the impression that gender equality is a national (Swedish, German) or Western value, as this understanding would reinforce (social) boundaries between Europeans and refugees. Indeed, course leaders pointed to respect, democratic participation, and a feeling of safety and trust as core aspects of the ‘good conversation’ in which everybody is listened to and gets to speak. Furthermore, all teachers agreed that respect plays a key role in communication, as this is key to fostering trust in the classroom and beyond.

II. Practicing Gender Equality in Integration Work

Gender equality cannot be achieved solely through a top-down approach; values are negotiated and internalized through experiences, and actual integration work happens on the ground and in day-to-day encounters. This second section is concerned with how gender equality as a social norm and a value is practiced in integration work ‘on the ground’. Two central themes have come out as particularly relevant in the research material. One is the empowerment of women to reach gender equality and gender equity. As a second theme, the targeting of *all* genders in measures towards gender equality is discussed. This theme includes reflections on how negotiation of masculinity and inclusion of men in measures towards gender equality are becoming salient in integration work, and how LGBTQI+ related issues are managed in integration work.

Empowering Women to Reach Structural Gender Equality

One central way in which gender equality is promoted in practice through integration work is through efforts to empower refugee and other foreign-born women. This report provides insight into a range of empowerment efforts in integration work from the four countries, showing both how the work is done and how integration workers reflect on it. Attention is paid to activities of both public authorities and civil society organisations. A number of different types of initiatives have been detected.

⁶⁰ The courses provided by the municipalities tend to convey more information, and are less conversation-based.

Information about rights, services, and society

A fundamental aspect of empowerment in integration work lies in making sure refugee and migrant women are informed of their rights and get the information necessary to steer their own lives and well-being. In Germany and Sweden, this work is done by public authorities – particularly through civic education and language courses – and civil society organisations, while in Poland and Hungary it is mainly civil society organisations who carry out such efforts.

Often, as many of the language and civic orientation teachers recognized, the gender roles the course participants live in their families may constitute a real contrast to what the law stipulates in Germany and Sweden, and many of these rights are far from being practiced. In Germany, we met with a cultural mediator of a language and civic orientation course to individuals in the asylum process. Arriving in Germany as a refugee from Syria himself just a few years ago, the young man stressed the significance of making sure (asylum seeking) women understand that they ‘are allowed to decide for themselves in accordance with the law’, and to ‘know their rights’, irrespective of what their family members and relatives might say. An important aspect of promoting gender equality was that women are provided information about these rights.

Several actors in the Polish civil society organise around women’s and LGBTQ rights and their intersection with migrant and refugee rights. One example is *Karat*, a regional coalition of associations that have been carrying out activities on gender equality on the local, regional, European, and global levels since 1997. *Karat* influences the shape of the feminist movement in Poland and actively supports women experiencing discrimination, in particular multiple discriminations. During the last two years *Karat* participated in the project ‘Women’s Empowerment Integration and Participation,’ co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the European Union aiming to provide migrant and refugee women in four EU countries (Spain, Italy, Poland and the UK) with enhanced opportunities for integration. Another problem women and refugee women in particular face in Poland is domestic violence. One of the NGO’s activists supporting women stated:⁶¹

‘Mothers, especially those who raise boys as a single-parent, in addition to struggling with past violence, sometimes experience it from teenage sons. Patriarchy is so deeply rooted that it makes them despotic heads of the family. This is an important, multidimensional problem that we must work on.’

Despite – or rather because of – the lack of government support, migrant and refugee women in Poland are starting to organise themselves and are becoming quite visible in the public sphere. *Kobiety Wędrownie* (Travelling Women) is a foundation established in 2018 to support refugee and migrant women. The Club of Ukrainian Women, an informal group, was established in 2014 as part of the Ukrainian House in Warsaw. Some of the organisations that support migrant and refugee women and men in Poland like the *Polish Migration Forum*, the *Legal Intervention Association*, the *Migrant Info Point*, *Nomada*, and the *Homo Faber Association* also offer programmes and activities promoting gender equality. This is also done mainly through informing about rights and opportunities.

⁶¹ M. K. Nowak, ‘To system obliczony na wykończenie przeciwnika. Życie uchodźczyń w Polsce,’ *Oko Press*, 9 November 2019, <https://oko.press/to-system-obliczony-na-wykonczenie-przeciwnika-zycie-uchodzczyn-w-polsce/>, (accessed 5 August 2020).

On a more practical level, there are many Polish activist groups and more formal civil society organisations motivated by their aim for a gender equal society that provide services which support and empower women with a foreign background. These activities include not only refugees, but any women who face discrimination due to their religion, nationality, ethnicity, or sexuality. Such initiatives include providing information and healthcare services to expectant mothers and infants, including specific support for migrant women, as is provided by the Polish Migration Forum. Moreover, the *Ocalenie Foundation* tailors courses and therapeutic workshops for women on safety and parenthood.

Assistance in accessing the labour market

Apart from empowerment through information on the society and knowledge of one's rights, an important element of integration support is assistance in accessing the local labour market. This largely intersects with efforts of women's empowerment, since in all four countries under study, refugee and other migrant women have been shown to face more difficulties in successfully entering the workforce than the men. In Germany and Sweden such support is, to a large extent, incorporated into the state integration programmes, and a discourse on underrepresentation of foreign-born women in the labour market permeates many of the official discourses in these countries. As can be seen below, nonetheless, civil society in these countries also engages with this issue.

Box 1: Region Skåne's project 'Come in! A mentorship programme for foreign-born women'

The mentoring programme⁶² for foreign-born women with a university degree is a European Social Fund-financed project run by the Region Skåne office for regional development between 2019 until 2022. Its aim is to facilitate labour market access for these women through the mentor as a 'door opener'. The mentor is somebody with a large professional network that can act as a 'door opener' for the participants. The project also sees a positive reward for the role of the mentor: 'It is fundamental for the role as the mentor to have a significant network, engagement for society as well as the willingness to get involved in someone's integration journey in our country, which is also developing for the mentor', the project coordinator explains. In the first round of the project (in 2020), the project managed to gather mentors from the public and the private sector. The 18 participants of Middle Eastern and Central American nationalities had their educational backgrounds in chemistry, IT, economics, literature or law with bachelor, master and doctoral degrees. The mentorship-programme started in February 2020 and some of the participants have already received an internship as a result of the relationship with the mentor.

Local and regional authorities in Sweden have in recent years organised several projects targeting foreign-born women. Often the projects have been financed through the European Social Fund. Sometimes the projects are aimed at women with a specific skill level, such as illiterate, low-skilled, or high-skilled women. Commonly, the (female) participants receive coaching, go on study visits, and are personally mentored by a professional from the private or public sector in order to expand their social

⁶² <https://www.esf.se/Resultat/Projektbanken-2014-2020/Alla-Projekt/Kom-in/>.

and professional network. In Germany such projects are also common. One example of such projects from Sweden is described in box 1 on the left.

Furthermore, courses directed at the immigrant population focus on empowerment. Instead of providing a one-size-fits-all approach, empowerment here is understood as providing the tools to become an independent part of society and to enact one's own dreams and unlock one's individual potential. A study association in Malmö offers a course that aims to improve the participants' language skills and civic knowledge, directed at individuals that have limited opportunities to enter the labour market; both those newly arrived and individuals that have been in Sweden longer. Many of them are women with a low educational level. As the course developer reasoned, the participants often lack the self-esteem they need in order to make actual use of the knowledge attained in this course, for example information about how to find employment:

'(Therefore) we have started to work with self-esteem. We have material on empowerment, the women talk about their dreams and they draw and write, and we discuss what goals they have. So, we work with this – self-esteem, self-confidence – and we work with Swedish (language) and civic information at the same time. They are happy when they learn new words, new sentences ... even if it's often simple things, it strengthens their self-confidence.'

Moreover, the Church of Sweden has in the last couple of years employed several individuals who arrived as refugees as 'bridge builders' – linguistic and cultural interpreters who work part time in different congregations in order to facilitate integration work with newly arrived refugees. The Church stresses that the aim with these positions was predominantly to focus on recruiting women. The initiator and organiser of this programme was originally himself hired to do this type of work in the Church on account of his Middle Eastern background, academic knowledge of the region, and knowledge of several relevant languages. He explained why he decided to focus on women when he himself got the opportunity to organise a *bridge builders* group and hire people to take part in it:

'We have almost six or seven bridge builders at the moment. Because... I personally think that I only focus on women getting out [of the home], they shouldn't sit at home and watch the children all the time. And I thought, "what should we do now?" And if the women go out [to work], it will be better for the men too. That's why I hired women as bridge builders.'

Similarly, NGOs in Poland often function as a first step into the labour market for migrant women. In Warsaw, a pilot programme assisting immigrant communities offered consultations and individual employment training to migrant women to increase their chances of employment – especially for Chechen women with a low level of education and Muslim women who face discrimination in the labour market. However, there are not many places that offer such possibilities for employment and the PiS government's restrictions on EU and state financing for NGOs supporting migrants further decreased chances of such pro-employment programmes.

Access to integration courses

Administrative Adjustments: One of the central measures taken by public authorities has been the continuous adjustment of state integration programmes aimed at newcomers with regards to access and target group.

In 2010, Sweden introduced a change that effectively tied the integration allowance to the individual instead of to the household. This economic incentive aimed at increasing the women's labour market entry by reducing the family's impact over their lives,⁶³ while refraining from stigmatising specific (immigrant) groups. Furthermore, in 2012, Sweden decided to opt for an 'extended target group' (*utvidgat målgrupp*) for its integration courses, which came to include *all* third-country nationals with a residence permit instead of only those who had protection status. Above all, this came to include many of the women that arrive in Sweden as a family migrant (either through family reunification or family formation). The idea behind this expansion, as one person in operational capacity revealed, has been to be able to 'inform women directly instead of through their husbands'. This aim was based on the fundamental assumption that access to information allows a person to develop skills and acquire a more empowered position in society.

In some places in Germany, integration courses specifically targeted at women are offered. These courses have the same curriculum as the regular integration courses but provide more room for discussion of topics of particular interest for the participants. One teacher explained that she understands the rationale behind these courses as a way for the government to ensure support to women, irrespective of their family context, because she argues that:

'women coming from some countries may not know as much about the authorities and municipal offices and which work opportunities there are for them. That's why we have these courses to focus on this specifically.'

This teacher, who works with integration courses and the coordination of these courses at a language education centre in North Rhine-Westphalia, is a trained translator and underwent advanced training because she wanted a 'new challenge' and thought integration courses could be an interesting opportunity for her. The courses aim to provide a space in which women can learn and discuss freely amongst one another. Amongst several interviewees this is interpreted to be a way of supporting women who are not comfortable speaking openly around men. Moreover, these courses provide space for more 'women-related' content, regarding topics mentioned in the former section, such as women's education or labour market integration, children's education, and women's rights. While women-only courses are made available in Germany, in Sweden many interviewees expressed a strict principle of maintaining co-gendered education as a basis for democracy.

Creating welcoming spaces: The material gathered throughout the fieldwork imparts an understanding that empowerment measures are often also about fostering environments in which women feel comfortable engaging in discussions and state their opinions as a means of developing their (citizenship) skills. As implied above, in order to create such an environment, course organisers engage in different

⁶³ B. Suter and M. Qvist, *Study on the National Frame for the Integration of Newcomers – Sweden*. PROSINT Country Report. International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), 2011.

practices of creating spaces separated according to gender. In many teachers' and coordinators' experience, a woman will often refrain from participating in general discussions if her husband is present and would rather let him speak. One integration worker in Dresden, Germany, who has a background in German studies and worked previously as German teacher and now teaches the general integration course at private training academy, reported that:

'When I have married couples on the course, I always see that the woman is looking at her husband. They don't really dare to speak up. Especially the women that are less educated. They always sit next to their husband. I always try to separate them, for example in group work.'

In both Germany and Sweden, informal strategies are sometimes taken in order to produce spaces in which newly arrived women can fully engage in their education. One such practice is to separate married couples so that husbands and wives attend different classes. This becomes a way to 'allow the women to speak', as one Swedish interviewee expressed it. At a national stakeholder meeting in Stockholm in autumn 2019 this was repeatedly discussed.

Civil society organisations also work to facilitate separate spaces in which women can interact and discuss without the presence of men. In the Swedish context, such initiatives are often overtly gender separatist (in contrast to those organised by state actors). Several congregations in the Church of Sweden, the country's largest civil society organisations, coordinate interethnic 'women's groups', which are spaces in which refugee women can meet with female Church volunteers. These spaces are sometimes organised together with other organisations, such as *Save the Children*, or with the municipalities. Church volunteers explained that the aim of these spaces is to provide a context in which women can relax, discuss among themselves, and meet across sociocultural and linguistic boundaries. These groups have also organised events specifically aimed at women, such as potluck dinners and celebrations of the International Women's Day on 8th March. Also, the *Association of Unaccompanied Minors* in Malmö, Sweden, conduct gender-separated activities aimed at providing 'an environment in which girls would more easily dare to raise their voices', as a long-term representative of the association stated.⁶⁴

Such activities are also part of refugee women's empowerment work in Poland. In Warsaw, one informal group of women, *Smaczne mamy*, organises cooking workshops in cooperation with the NGO *Kuchnia Konflikту*. These informal initiatives provide refugee women with the possibility to socialize, but also to

'Not everyone speaks Polish well, [...] sometimes there are misunderstandings hindering the activity. All cultural and linguistic differences as well as gender issues are inherent in the nature of this initiative. However, this can also be inspiring and — as evidenced by two years of activity — all these types of problems are resolved' – Activist from *Kuchnia Konflikту*

⁶⁴ Male refugees are heavily overrepresented among the unaccompanied minors that arrived in Sweden and among those that frequent the meeting place arranged by the association.

earn money. As noted by one activist, they not only learn to cooperate with Poles but also with other refugees and migrants representing different cultures.

Remedying gendered obstacles to access integration provision: In the material, various obstacles to people making use of integration provisions have been detected. From a gender perspective, the most commonly named obstacle by far, when it comes to attending and making use of other integration provisions, is to what extent childcare is made available to course attendees. While such services are important to families as a whole, in practice it is often women whose access to education is hindered when such services are not provided.

In Germany, several integration course coordinators reported positive results from implementing child care services as part of their programmes. Finding a day-care place for a young child can be difficult in Germany due to long waiting lists in some regions. One interviewee, a teacher who is also the manager of a self-organised integration organisation, active in local networks of integration workers in North Rhine-Westphalia, explained that they are fortunate to be able to offer childcare during the courses:

‘The participants are very happy about the childcare opportunity. Some even come to our institution even though they live on the other side of town just because we are one of the few institutions that offer childcare’.

In Sweden, children have the right to attend publicly funded preschools from the age of one year old, and, as such, the need for childcare is largely covered in this context, also for newly arrived families. In addition, language cafés targeting new mothers on parental leave are also a popular civil society group initiative. Municipal authorities also promote *open kindergarten* where parents on parental leave can spend time with others in similar situations and practice their Swedish. While such venues have existed for a long time, since 2018 the employer organisation of Swedish municipalities and regions (SKR) actively promotes them as a means to aid the integration process of foreign-born women.⁶⁵

Targeting all Genders in Measures towards Gender Equality

The second central theme in the material points to the position genders other than women occupy and the role they play in measures on gender equality. More specifically, below we address, firstly, ways in which men and masculinities have appeared in the research material, and, secondly, efforts in integration work that target either LGBTQI+ people in particular or work towards increased acceptance and awareness of their situations.

Political and social efforts towards gender equality often stress the difficulties and barriers women face, and gender equality has thus, historically, been conceptualised as an issue that mostly concerns women. Hence, for decades, the empowerment of women has been the most common issue and the most central remedy for achieving gender equality. This has, however, generated a perception that achieving gender equality is only beneficial for women, and even detrimental to men’s interests. However, creating awareness of gender specific challenges that men face to a higher degree than women

⁶⁵ Sveriges Kommuner och regioner, ‘Om satsningen öppen förskola för språk och integration,’ 2020, <https://skr.se/skolakulturfratid/forskolagrundochgymnasieskola/forskolafratidshem/oppenforskolaforprakochintegration/omsatsningen.25946.html>, (accessed 3 August 2020).

– such as lower life expectancy, worse psychological and mental health, higher frequency of suicide, lower education levels, and more rigid norms when it comes to gendered roles⁶⁶– makes clear that working towards gender equality benefits men as much as women. Furthermore, the way that gender equality is not only a matter pertaining to men and women, but also includes other genders, must be considered when political efforts are made to promote gender equality. Gender inequality affects everyone in very different ways depending on each individual’s situation and context. However, mental health issues and a high suicide rate are among the factors that are significantly more widespread among members of the LGBTQI+ community.⁶⁷

Redefining masculinity

Research has shown countless times how a one-sided image of male migrants, often fuelled with stereotypes, informs integration policies.⁶⁸ While female refugees, especially those perceived as Muslim, struggle with being imagined as a victim by the host society, men often struggle with being seen as patriarchal figures or even perpetrators or troublemakers, especially those perceived as Muslim. However, the need for research on gendered challenges that arise for male migrants and refugees is increasingly being pointed out by researchers. Achieving gender equality cannot be done without engaging men more in family life in general, and specifically in exercising a ‘caring fatherhood’ for their children. Such changes have the potential to reduce women’s labour market discrimination, as well as the cost of health care for men.⁶⁹

Just as women do, men have different roles as individuals – they are fathers, sons, brothers, spouses. Each role comes with their own ascribed norms and all of them intersect with racial, ethnic, religious, and class-based stereotypes. The roles can play out in different ways when it comes to migration.⁷⁰ Due to experiences and expectations of fulfilling a breadwinner role for one’s family, more men than women experience a loss of social and economic status on account of migration, which can have profound implications for their wellbeing. In the interviews, one civic education teacher, who is the founder of an independent integration centre working actively with support beyond the integration courses, such as counselling, legal advice, mental health support, social gatherings and child care facilities in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany relayed her impression that:

‘The men experience so much nostalgia, and pain to return. They experience a lot of pressure to earn money with precarious jobs.’

One Swedish language teacher also reflected on her experience of introducing Swedish history and current ideas of gender equality to her students. She realised that the idea and the opportunities to

⁶⁶ EIGE, *Gender Equality Index*. European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019, <https://eige.europa.eu/about>, (accessed 6 July 2020).

⁶⁷ A study by the National Alliance on Mental Illness shows that LGBT individuals are at least twice as likely to experience a mental health condition, NAMI, <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/LGBTQI>, (accessed 3 August 2020).

⁶⁸ Male immigrants are presented as a threat in the media on the grounds of stereotypical imaginations of masculinity, they can even be presented as violent or terrorists. See P. Scheibelhofer, ‘Integrating the Patriarch? Constructs of Migrant Masculinity in Times of Managing Migration and Integration,’ in F. Anthias and M. Pajnik (eds.), *Contesting Integration, Engendering Migration*. Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship Series, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 185-201.

⁶⁹ Currently, such fatherhoods and caring male roles are not available to all men. As it seems, the ability to combine men’s ‘traditional and newly emerged caring responsibilities’ is often a privilege of the middle class. See A. Gregor, ‘Who is for Sale? Challenging the commodification of gender equality in the European Union’, in E. Kováts (ed.), *The Future of the European Union. Feminist Perspectives from East-Central Europe*, Budapest, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, 2017.

⁷⁰ K. Wojnicka and P. Pustulka, ‘Migrant men in the nexus of space and (dis)empowerment,’ *NORMA*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2017, pp. 89-95.

live a (more) gender equal life that Sweden arguably offers, can often lead to rupturing experiences regarding an individual's self-understanding, gender roles and partnerships:

'I often feel pity for the women; there are a lot of women that are very ambitious because they notice "wow, what opportunities there are!", while the husband feels a bit threatened, I think, because he notices the changes at home but also in the wife, and what happens then with him? This is ... not easy for them, neither for the woman nor for the man.'

At the state level in Sweden and Germany, gender roles are discussed as a theme in integration courses. In both Germany and Sweden, integration activities – either in the language, the civic education or the parent support course – rely on research that makes a correlation between traditional gender roles (gender inequality) and violence against women.⁷¹ Stakeholders in Sweden recognize a greater willingness from the government to fund such courses as a result of the refugee reception crisis in 2015 and the increased political and public discourse on gender equality as a result of this. As

'I always talk about what tasks I do at home or the fact that I bake cookies for Christmas. That often surprises the participants and they find it disconcerting that a man does all these things. Then I say "this is our reality in Germany".'
– Male integration course teacher

one course leader in a small municipality in Southern Sweden remarks: 'it is nice that the topic of gender equality has received more attention, but ideally we should work on gender equality with *all dads* and *all men*.'

In Poland, civil society members also engage with the topic of gender roles in their integration work. The Polish Migration Forum engages with migrant and refugee women and men on the topic of parenthood. They publish educational material, such as *'We are parents in Poland'* and *'I am a mother in Poland'* in a range of languages (Polish,

Russian, English, Vietnamese, and Arabic) to support migrant and refugee men and women with information concerning their reproductive rights and parenthood. These brochures include information about the Polish education and care system, child healthcare and the potential of multicultural families and how to support multilingualism in children. Although the material is not exclusively targeted at men, the fact that men are included in their audience and framed as parents alongside women, is in line with the findings from Germany and Sweden.

Integration work in a course context also provides a space for men to discuss with the teacher and amongst one another. One of the few male teachers, who transitioned from language teaching into integration work in 2015, set up a section at the adult education association to also provide integration courses, as well as specialised labour market integration courses in Bavaria, Germany. He reported that they engaged in many conversations about his personal role at home, doing house and care work, which is met with surprise.

⁷¹ Swedish government's office, *En nationell strategi för ett stärkt föräldraskapsstöd*, Department of Social Affairs, Stockholm, 2018, <https://www.regeringen.se/4a6017/globalassets/regeringen/dokument/socialdepartementet/barnets-rattigheter/en-nationell-strategi-for-ett-starkt-foraldraskapsstod-webb.pdf>, (accessed 1 June 2020).

In Sweden, there is at least one course that has been developed specifically for immigrant fathers, see Box 2 below. The project takes its inspiration and collected experience from ‘daddy groups’ that have been organised by the civil society organisation *MÄN* for years, both in Sweden and abroad.⁷² Their stated aim is to ‘redefine masculinity’ to stop violence perpetrated by men. In these groups, men who are fathers meet to discuss their role as a father and a spouse. Similar development can also be seen in other countries, such as Poland, where civil society organisations that engage with redefining masculinity norms along a more feminist orientation are starting to engage with integration work.⁷³

Box 2: Project – Daddy, Come Home

The project ‘Daddy, come home’ (*Pappa kom hem*) has been arranging discussion rounds for newly arrived refugees since 2017. It is usually held in Swedish and accompanied by an interpreter. In an interview the course developer states that ‘all dads want to be “nice dads”,’ Sweden-born and immigrant fathers alike. The course takes up raising a child (including setting boundaries, violence, children’s rights), household work, spousal relations, as well as honour-related aspects and domestic violence. Apart from these themes, each group is free to decide what to discuss. ‘So, the courses can have a different shape every time, depending on the group and the participants’ interests, questions and problems,’ the course developer explains. The aim of the course is to allow for increased awareness of the participants’ gender roles and to change attitudes. The methodology is a reflective conversation technique that builds on mutual respect and avoids judgments or instructions.

‘There is a dire need for men to talk about emotions, so once we get the conversation started, the group usually opens up very quickly, even the ones who are a bit sceptical in the beginning’

In the course leader’s experience, the most difficult part is to make the men attend the courses, not the conversations in themselves. Many municipalities now organise this type of course within the framework of the obligatory introduction programme for newly arrived migrants (refugees and their family members).⁷⁴

Including a non-binary understanding of gender

As fieldwork revealed, implementing gender equality as a core value in European societies often goes beyond a binary understanding of gender and includes addressing ways in which gender in its different expressions, articulations, and lived experiences comes to matter for different people. While this report does not fully reflect all the ways in which the LGBTQI+ experiences are relevant in questions of gender equality, below are some examples of how these issues have surfaced throughout the research.

⁷² Män: For equality, against violence, redefining masculinity, <https://mfi.se/om-maen/man> [website], (accessed 1 June 2020).

⁷³ K. Wojnicka, ‘Men’s Pro Gender Equality Initiatives in Europe’, *Časopis za kritiko znanosti*, vol. 267, 2017.

⁷⁴ ABF, Studiematerial Pappa kom hem, (n.d.), https://webbutik.abf.se/product/samhalle_och_politik/foraldratbildning/0/pappa_kom_hem, (accessed 1 August 2020).

'It is just like in any other society, in all groups, all people — no matter how you want to make those divisions — there are those that are more open to [...] believing that everyone is worth the same, no matter if it's an LGBTQI+ person, if it's a Muslim, or if it is a woman or a man. Of course, we have met resistance. It would be stupid to say we haven't. So, it is about how we as an organisation need to find a way to talk about these different [issues], for instance LGBTQI+ or gender equality, or honour-related violence, and so on. We need to find a way to talk about it [...] in a way that suits the specific [target group].'

– Activist in Budapest

First and foremost, LGBTQI+ issues have come up as topics that integration workers reflect on in the activities they undertake. Many integration workers experience the topic of LGBTQI+ rights as challenging. Consider, for example, the experience of a Muslim study organisation in Sweden. The organisation runs on public funds and is required by The Swedish National Council of Adult Education to engage with democracy-related questions, which is generally seen to include LGBTQI+ issues. There is, therefore, an expectation from society at large to engage in these questions and to be explicit about their commitment for LGBTQI+ rights as part of their commitment to democratic principles. The director of the organisation itself, however, recognizes that working towards a broader understanding and acceptance of these principles in certain parts of the Muslim local community must be done in a long-term perspective and cannot be rushed.

The situation looks different in Poland, where, following the coming to power of the PiS government, an anti-gender campaign has gained momentum, and has been exacerbated in parallel with anti-immigration policies in the years following the refugee reception crisis. Right-wing activists and conservative politicians use it to stimulate support for measures that curb reproductive rights, undermine initiatives addressing violence against women, hinder sexual and reproductive health education, and smear women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights activists. In public speeches and in the media, government leaders, politicians, and 'anti-gender' activists propagated extremist misinformation vilifying women's rights groups and associating them with a deterioration of 'morality.' This shows how the fight for women's rights and the rights of others experiencing discrimination and violence on account of their gendered practices are connected.

In Hungary, the research material shows that antagonism towards what is considered 'gender ideology' is widespread and shapes the access both citizens and refugees/migrants have to their rights. One activist who worked for two important LGBTQI+ organisations within the Hungarian LGBTQI+ community, the Hättér Society⁷⁵ and the LGBT Alliance, maintained that:

'that's how political homophobia comes in, that people just cannot believe that with such homophobic political leadership in the country the laws are actually still in place.'

⁷⁵ Hättér Society, [website], <https://en.hatter.hu/>, (accessed 7 July 2020).

[...] Because there is such pervasive homophobia and transphobia coming most importantly from the pro-government politicians and newspapers. And it is really now like every week something happens. Maybe there is a TV discussion about curing the homosexuals or most recently the speaker of the parliament, he basically equated homosexuality with paedophilia. So now like every day you open a newspaper and you read some of this nonsense. Of course, that influences how people perceive the situation, perceive their rights. And many people are fed up and they are like “ok, I am going”. And that’s an issue... for out-migration.’

The material presented thus indicates that LGBTQI+ issues are treated in very different ways across the studied countries – often in accordance with the government and general public’s most prevalent stance when it comes to questions of gender and gender equality.

III. Actors: Identities and Positions in Integration Work

In this third section of our analysis we take a closer look at the actors with whom this research has been carried out. Before getting ‘on the ground’, a look at the institutional actors is warranted: while the government in Sweden and to a large extent also in Germany is a driving actor in working towards gender equality, gender equality in Poland and Hungary is currently more dependent on the activities of civil society organisations. Often, they receive funding from the EU or other international donors. Also, in Sweden and Germany the civil society organisations conduct essential work in achieving gender equality, especially for foreign-born women.⁷⁶ However, this work stands on shaky ground since the activities are dependent on project funding and on volunteer work. The current political developments in Poland and Hungary also make it increasingly difficult to carry out civil society work related to gender and immigration.

Turning to the integration workers on the ground, our material shows that their identities and positions impact on how gender equality is being practiced as a norm and value in European integration work.

Gender in Integration Work

Much research has underlined that women are more likely to act altruistically than men, when it comes to investing both time and money in others.⁷⁷ Women are more likely to work in sectors that involve engaging with other people, while they also generally take on more unpaid work than their male counterparts.⁷⁸ While research of the nexus between gender and unpaid work has often focused on care-related labour — such as general housework, child rearing, tending to ill and elderly family members, and administering the family home (the so-called ‘third shift’⁷⁹) — less research has been carried out

⁷⁶ E. Righard, H. Emilsson, and T. Gudrun Jensen, *Gender Dynamics in Integrating Refugees and Other Migrants in Sweden*, GLIMER, WP6 report, Sweden, 2020.

⁷⁷ M. Dittrich and B. Mey, ‘Gender differences in volunteer activities: Evidence from German survey data’, *Economics Bulletin*, AccessEcon, vol. 35, no. 1, 2015, pp. 349-360; N. S. Themudo, ‘Gender and the Nonprofit Sector’, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2009, pp. 663-683.

⁷⁸ See for example, the German Gender Equality report: Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, ‘Zweiter Gleichstellungsbericht der Bundesregierung. Eine Zusammenfassung’, *BMFSFJ*, Germany, 2019, <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/serie/publikationen/zweiter-gleichstellungsbericht-der-bundesregierung/122402>, (accessed 5 June 2020).

⁷⁹ N. Gerstel, ‘The third shift: Gender and care work outside the home’, *Qualitative sociology*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2000.

on how volunteer work in civil society is also gendered. This work is often done as an extension of the paid work already carried out in the third sector. This is, for instance, observable in our research material on church volunteers accompanying church employees in their diaconal work in Sweden, who often spend their time supporting initiatives that the Church deacons are in charge of. In the case of integration work, volunteer work can often also be understood as a supplement to those efforts put in through the public sector. In Sweden and in Germany, while language training is provided by the state, opportunities for conversational practice are often offered through civil society based overwhelmingly on volunteer work.

As this report has shown, integration work is to a large extent done within either the public or the third sector. In both sectors women are generally overrepresented. Sweden, for example, has a highly gender-segregated labour market, with the majority of all employees in the public sector being women. This is one of the factors contributing to the significant income disparity between men and women, despite the country's mainstreamed gender equality politics. The picture is similar in the other three countries under study.

Volunteer work — an important component of the third and non-profit sector — is also a greatly feminized form of labour. However, women do not generally carry out all types of volunteer work, nor do they fill all types of role. Rather, one study found that women tend to undertake volunteer work that helps 'the poor and the elderly'.⁸⁰ Importantly, gender roles are also likely to be mimicked when it comes to both volunteering and paid work.⁸¹ Moreover, previous studies show that feminized labour market sectors, such as (health) care work, are becoming increasingly racialized in the current increasingly precarious economy.⁸²

During the summer of 2015 in Hungary, both women and men volunteered providing support to refugees, but it was the women who were in charge of volunteer operations. They organised food, financial resources, took care of logistical issues, while the men tended to perform tasks to support the women's work. One volunteer in Debrecen relayed how women's ability to lead this work was intrinsically linked to their experiences from traditionally ascribed gender roles:

'women who are mothers and grandmothers and know how to run households were much better equipped [than the men] to think through the food items and other necessities that were required.'

The same woman jokingly continued by explaining that:

'this was probably the first time that my husband did not question my authority and my orders. He and all the other men carried and transported what needed moving to a warehouse, they even swept the floors and cleaned the makeshift kitchens we erected to prepare hundreds of sandwiches.'

⁸⁰ M. Dittrich and B. Mey, 'Gender differences in volunteer activities', p. 2.

⁸¹ E. Wemlinger and M.R. Berlan, 'Does Gender Equality Influence Volunteerism? A Cross-National Analysis of Women's Volunteering Habits and Gender Equality', *Voluntas*, vol. 27, 2016.

⁸² I. J. Ramsøy, *Expectations and experiences of exchange. Migrancy in the Global Market of Care between Spain and Bolivia*, Ph.D. diss., Malmö University, 2019.

This way of structuring work — where men are included in a space dominated by women to take on subordinate positions and roles within the work structure — stands out in the Hungarian context. This volunteerism thus presents a (at least temporary) shift in the traditional gender roles when it comes to leadership, and presents an opportunity to empower Hungarian women vis-à-vis the men. However, this temporary shift of leadership took place utilizing the gender ascribed capacities. It thus provides an example of how intrinsically tied (gender) identity is to the roles women might play in integration work. This is in line with previous research which found that in many contexts traditional gender roles seem to mediate which organisations women or men choose to volunteer in.

In Sweden, gender roles are also a prevalent matter within civil society and volunteer work. One vicar in the Church of Sweden expressed how he could not explain why ‘women hear God’s calling more easily than men,’ and confirmed that most integration activities in the Church, such as language cafés, clothing drives, and other initiatives, are run by women. When asked about this, volunteers in the same congregation confirmed that the vast majority of their fellow volunteers were women, also in other organisations they were involved in, such as the Red Cross and Save the Children. They reasoned that integration work demands the use of one’s ‘social abilities,’ alluding to the same gendered roles as the volunteers in Hungary. These abilities to collaborate and communicate have been identified as key components of integration work.

Box 3: Portraits of teachers with refugee experience

Three *cultural mediators* who hold signposting courses in Georgian, Greek, Arabic, and English:⁸³

All teachers worked as cultural mediators in signposting courses in the federal state of Saxony, Germany. The course provides daily life orientation for asylum seekers in their mother tongue. Information is provided about asylum procedures; pathways to employment; the German education system; fundamental rights, values and norms; practical orientation in the area (public transport); and health and environment. Organised by the municipalities, the stated aim is to create an atmosphere of empathy and trust where teachers with migration experience inform newcomers and share their own experiences; they are seen as mediators between the state and the newcomers as they have the possibility to focus more in-depth on specific questions the participants have which otherwise fall short due to language barriers. The courses last for two days.

- ◆ Teacher one stated that his motivation for doing this work was to make the asylum period easier for others. The man, who is in his thirties and who lives with his family in Saxony, having come to Germany six years ago in search of a better future for his children, lamented the fact that that when he arrived such courses did not exist. Instead he had to find out a lot of information on his own, which was very difficult. He does not fully see himself as a teacher, and states: ‘we have a lot of discussions, a lot of freedom, it is not like a lesson, more like a dialogue and exchange. I want my courses to be like that, where everyone feels comfortable to exchange their thoughts. People will benefit more from these courses like that.’
- ◆ Teacher two lives and works as an artist in Saxony. Eight years ago, he came to Germany as a refugee from Syria. He already had friends in Germany and expressed his gratitude for the help they extended to him, which he deemed essential. Now he wants to ‘give back’, and sees his involvement in the course as an opportunity for this. In his understanding, the course ‘is not about integration, it is simply very crucial information for the beginning of a new life in this country’.
- ◆ Teacher three, who has been involved in the *Signposting* courses for five years, and has lived in Germany since the eighties, sees this as a good opportunity to help the newcomers by ‘sharing one’s own experiences of immigration’. He considers himself as belonging to both Germany and to Arabic countries, and he sees himself as a ‘bridge builder’ between German society and the newcomers. He highlights the difficulties newcomers face in adapting to even little things, and stresses how useful the courses are for understanding the particularities of life in Germany.

⁸³ The position as a cultural mediator is remunerated with a small symbolic fee. As such, the position is thought of as a ‘volunteer position’ rather than a professional position.

Role model function

In the German context, where integration courses are often outsourced from the state to civil society organisations, the majority of teachers are women. One teacher, who is Muslim herself, working for a Muslim women's organisation providing such courses relayed her understanding of the role she holds vis-à-vis the course participants. She sees herself as a role model for other women, and thereby implicitly transmits the idea/value of gender equality through her work. In her view it is important for the course participants to observe other Muslim women who are religious but also work and have successful careers in a meaningful field, so that they might see

'that Muslim and religious women too can have a successful career and do good and that this does not have to be mutually exclusive.'

This example shows yet again how integration workers' own identities matter to the message that is received by those who attend integration related services. In this case the fact that the teacher was both a woman and someone who belonged to the same religion as many of the course participants served as a way to connect and guide them in understanding their new sociocultural context. The same has been noted about the civic educators in Sweden.

Migrants and minorities in integration work: As has already been pointed out, the workers interviewed in this study do integration on both a paid and a voluntary basis. When it comes to the latter, studies have shown that volunteerism can serve as a stepping stone for immigrants as it might often enhance a person's human and social capital, both when it comes to 'bonding' (with other immigrants) and 'bridging' (with the receiving society), depending on the organisation within which a person volunteers.⁸⁴ Volunteerism has even been suggested as a way out of labour market discrimination.⁸⁵ Among the integration workers with some sort of personal experience with migration taking part in our study, their current job was, for most of them, the first qualified employment they had obtained within the German or Swedish labour market.

In Sweden, civic orientation courses are provided in the participants' mother tongue by a native speaker, and the Church of Sweden also employs 'bridgebuilders' to ease communication between Church volunteers and refugees receiving assistance from the Church. In the German state of Saxony, the *Signposting* course provided to asylum seekers is also led by native speakers in the attendees' mother tongue. So, generally, these teachers are people who have migrated themselves or are descendants of migrants or of mixed marriages, and therefore possess cultural and linguistic knowledge similar to the course participants. They are called civic educators (*samhällskommunikatörer*) in Sweden and cultural mediators (*Kulturmittler*) in Germany see Box 3, previous page.

A civic educator working in several municipalities in Southern Sweden, who offers courses in Farsi, Dari and Pashto, usually meets groups of newcomers from Afghanistan and Iran. He arrived in Sweden as a young adult himself and reported that:

⁸⁴ F. Handy and I. Greenspan, 'Immigrant volunteering: A stepping stone to integration?' *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 6, 2009.

⁸⁵ S. Baert and S. Vujić, 'Immigrant volunteering: a way out of labour market discrimination?' *Economics Letters*, vol. 146, 2016.

'The biggest difference between a native Swede and me is that I can understand them, I understand how they think, what is behind a question. So, I can show the real picture of society, or as close as possible at least. It is the same language, the same background ... and they dare to ask questions, they see me as one of them because I speak the same language. [...] and there is a trust also. I am representing Sweden and I talk about Sweden, but to speak that language creates trust – to talk in Arabic to Arabs induces trust that is difficult to attain in other platforms.'

Providing civic education in a language in which everyone present can communicate enables more in-depth discussions of themes that can be emotional and conflicting and would not be possible if the courses were done in, for instance, Swedish or German. As seen above, teachers employed in these courses state that they often enjoy greater trust than their 'native' peers and are able to communicate important aspects of life in the new countries in a way that makes more sense to newcomers from a similar cultural background. Drawing on the cultural, social, and linguistic resources that minorities and people with migration experience can provide, is therefore key not only to effectively transmitting information about the different European receiving societies to newcomers, but also to enabling discussions about important matters of social development possible, such as gender equality and other key values.

Considering the roles both women and people of minority background take when it comes to integration work, it becomes important to consider what sort of impact specific identities might have on conveying and practicing gender equality through such work. Here we have considered different ways in which identity has come to matter in the research material in regard to the transmission of gender equality as a norm and value.

Refugees, migrants, and minorities as integration workers: As a last point, we underline that it is not only the identity of integration workers that matters when it comes to incorporating gender equality as a value in integration work. Refugees and migrants participating in the different integration initiatives provided by both public authorities and civil society also influence how such work is done.

In Poland, several mainstream organisations promoting women's rights or feminism in general, have now widened the scope of their programmes to include integration work. As seen above, migrant and refugee women-led organisations are an established part of public initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality. Using social media, especially Facebook, several migrant-led initiatives are co-operating with municipal councils and NGOs to promote gender equality and women's rights in different cities and smaller towns. *Children from Brest Railway Station* [Dzieci z dworca Brześć] is a group that organises activities for migrant and refugee children and women. Another activist we spoke with, originally from Ukraine, cooperates with informal groups of female entrepreneurs, a cultural centre, and local foundations in a small Silesian town. Through a small grant from municipal authorities she organised integration and education activities to show common aspects of Slavic cultures. Some of these activities particularly focus on mothers and daughters.

The tendency of broadening the range of beneficiaries of different initiatives is also visible in Sweden, where the aforementioned 'Daddy, come home' courses have shifted their focus away from (native) fathers to recently arrived refugee or migrant fathers specifically.

Course participants shaping integration work: Furthermore, course participants also influence the way that integration education is being carried out. Through their engagement in class discussions, they provoke new thoughts and ideas in the teachers, and this can, over time, influence their pedagogical practices, and thus contribute to how values are transmitted in these courses. A study conducted with Arabic-speaking Swedish language students confirms the importance of communication and giving space to discuss and negotiate to make sure the values are not rejected by the course participants.⁸⁶ The author of this study contends that most immigrants show a general openness towards possibly new norms and values, but reminds the reader that '(i)n order to trust their new society, the newly arrived migrants need to participate in the construction of the "good" citizen, and in their own future, as concerns, among other things, their occupation in Sweden. This does not allow for any "pre-packaged boxes", with roles that are predetermined.'⁸⁷

The importance of this is reflected in the experiences from the integration courses that were relayed to us. Many teachers, course designers, and implementers talked about their view on the course participants and how this might influence the way teaching is done. While some stated it as a matter of fact, others reflected on and problematised their own view and that of their colleagues, and how these views have been challenged by the participants themselves. For instance, one interviewee said:

'I feel that in our view on families from the Middle East [as patriarchal and oppressive of women – the authors], what we do is to devalue the women's work.'

Another teacher, in Germany reported that:

'Some of my colleagues feel pity for the women because they know that they have many children and are responsible for the household chores, so they do not demand the same as they do from the men. I feel, in contrast, that these are strong women, so we should expect the same from them.'

While yet another teacher – a civic educator in Sweden – expressed something that was often stated during fieldwork:

'There is a large degree of heterogeneity in the classroom concerning nationality, urban-rural origin, class, age, gender and – connected to this – values, and we should acknowledge that more'.

The research material thus demonstrates that there are more ways of bringing the course participants into the community of values – be it national, European or universal – through recognizing the diverse knowledge and experiences that migrants bring with them to their new places of residency, also when it comes to values such as gender equality. Highlighting the migrants' experiences and discussing what can be learned from them in the new context could further contribute to the work towards a gender equal society where everyone is included.

⁸⁶ A. Abdulla, *Readiness or resistance? - Newly arrived adult migrants' experiences, meaning making, and learning in Sweden*, Ph.D. diss., Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning, Linköping University, 2017.

⁸⁷ A. Abdulla, *Readiness or resistance?*, p. 150.

Key discussion points

Our key discussion points revolve around the structure of this report which has observed integration work in relation to gender equality as a *value*, an idea or overarching ideal that is conveyed, in relation to *everyday practices* that are enacted as a way of achieving gender equality, and in relation to *actors* who engage with gender equality through integration work.

Gender equality as a core value of European societies has been an ambiguous project.⁸⁸ While on the national level gender equality is valued differently throughout the union, in the field of migration, many actors across the political spectrum have instrumentalized gender equality into a divisive line separating ‘Europeans’ from ‘non-Europeans’.

Gender equality as a value has a central place in various integration courses. As this report has shown, most teachers are as adamant about the importance of this value as they are about presenting it in both a neutral and an inclusive way. Examples include referring to national and international legislation or highlighting the universal bearings of gender equality by emphasizing our common humanity. Generally, it was emphasised that value transformation needs time, experience and trustful encounters, and that the courses were seen as a starting point and not endpoint of this process. Further, the report points out that while many teachers see themselves as representatives of the nation, they showed great reflexivity concerning how to represent the nation, or any other community they felt part of. Europe – or the EU – seldom figured as a frame of reference.

The struggle for gender equality originated from the unequal treatment of women compared to men, and as a result of this, gender equality has come to be seen as an issue that concerns women more than men. Indeed, a majority of practices of integration work aimed at achieving gender equality are concerned with migrant and refugee women and their empowerment. The measures discussed and highlighted here reflect the importance of taking into account the heterogeneity of the target group. Being sensitive to specific needs and subjective positions of individuals is seen as essential for empowerment work to prosper. Aspects of age, skill level, family constellation, and health conditions, for example, may create different needs and concerns. The report also shows that issues concerning masculinity and non-binary gender identities in relation to gender equality are significantly more marginalised but have increasingly found their way into integration work. The challenges men and LGBTQI+ people face in the migration process in regard to their (gender) identities are increasingly recognized and thematized.

The gender and ethnic identities and positions of the actors involved in integration work matter. Integration work is predominantly carried out by women, both in the public sector and in the third sector through paid and unpaid work. To a large extent this division of labour corresponds to traditional views on gender roles, with women doing the work in the lower paid or unpaid care sector. However, we have seen that this type of work also offers pathways to empowerment for women, people with migration experience and other minorities. Furthermore, the role model function that some of these people come to hold is not to be underestimated, from both a gender and an integration perspective.

⁸⁸ A. Petö, ‘From women through gender to unconscious bias’, 2017.

Also, it is indisputable that the type of actors — states, state institutions, NGOs and NGO funders — heavily steer the course of work towards gender equality in their framing and funding of work that aims to achieve it.

So how can the view from below that this report offers inform our understanding of gender equality as a European value?

The report has shown that as a value gender equality in integration work plays out in a multifaceted way. And yet, following the integration workers' reflections and experiences, their ideas and practices, a series of recurring invariable points crystalize: First, the meanings of and struggles for gender equality are dependent on class, 'race', ethnicity, sexual orientation, bodily ability, and other social markers of the actors — in this case, both the integration workers and participants. Second, how gender equality as a value is seen — as European, as national, universal, or not recognised as a value at all — may change from one situation to the other, and is dependent not least on which issues of gender equality dominate the political and public debates in a given place. Following from this, expressions of gender equality and practices towards reaching gender equality can take different forms in different contexts and in different situations. Third, equally relevant is the insight that specific ideas of gender equality do not emerge in a vacuum but are historically embedded. The ideas of gender equality we hold today have evolved over time and through various struggles whose perspectives have shifted over time, but in particular over the last hundred years. Fourth, the transformation of norms and values, both in individuals and in society, takes time and is not a static process. It is continuously under construction and undergoing constant (re-)negotiation. For integration work, time and trust, and tools to create awareness of one's own values are essential.

The report also neatly points to issues that transcend refugeehood or migranhood. Child care arrangements, for example, not only result in a higher participation of refugee women in integration courses but also supports women's access to the labour market in general. Another example is work on masculinity that recognizes that gender equal relationships decrease men's violence against women in general and not only among the foreign-born population. Issues pertaining to the value of gender equality are therefore intrinsic to society at large, and not only to the field of integration. This perspective is important to keep in mind when addressing gender equality in integration work, not at least in policy-making.

The EU as one policy realm has committed itself to gender equality as a value — an overarching ideal — and the lessons from this report aim to support the EU in living up to these commitments. The current crisis can be seen as an historical conjuncture for paving a new way for gender equality to gain its full potential as a European value. We see the lessons learned from the ground as a small but important step in this direction.

Policy recommendations

Based on our field research on integration and gender equality in Germany, Hungary, Poland and Sweden, we provide some policy-relevant recommendations, drawing on findings from the interviews with integration workers.

Present gender equality as a value which is universally fought for, rather than dependent on a national, European or Western context and thereby account for the diversity of the value itself and the struggles for gender equality in and beyond the West.

- ◆ Gender equality is often presented as a national trait, as a Swedish or German (European) value (national culture, national value or national norm). This risks rejection and may exclude individuals who may not feel part of the nation. Gender equality should be presented as a value independent of national cultures. Conveying gender equality should allow for varying interpretations of the value itself. **Stakeholders: National, regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, especially integration workers.**

Offer conditions for integration work which foster trust and provide space for mutual communication and reflexivity among newcomers and society at large.

- ◆ Value transformation at adult age is an inner journey that cannot be imposed from the outside. It engenders a process that allows for the making conscious of one's own values through reflections on the topic in conversation with others. The conversation should be based on mutual respect and an openness towards different opinions. The aim of the conversations should be to build trust rather than to impose certain values. **Stakeholders: local authorities, civil society organisations.**

Safeguard all women's rights, including migrant and refugee women.

- ◆ National governments should continue and increase their efforts in safeguarding women's rights and in enabling gender equality for all women, including refugee and migrant women. This includes enforcing the legal norms enshrined in European and national legislation, and working towards implementing gender equality as a social norm. **Stakeholders: National, regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, integration workers.**

Empower migrant and refugee women, through facilitating access to integration activities.

- ◆ Migrant and Refugee women are among the most vulnerable groups in society. Empowering migrant and refugee women in particular through information on society, rights, and obligations is of high importance to facilitate their fair access to opportunities. It is essential to have access to integration courses, the labour market, health care facilities, legal representation and so on. To ensure this access, knowledge about one's rights and opportunities is of utmost importance.

- ◆ One practical aspect is to provide childcare opportunities in integration work where women receive information, learn the language and are empowered to build networks in their new surroundings. Providers of civic orientation, language courses and other integration activities should consider childcare opportunities in order to enable more women to participate in these courses. While such services are important to families as a whole, childcare arrangements especially result in a higher participation of refugee women in educational and labour opportunities in the countries they reside in. **Stakeholders: National, regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, integration course providers.**

Be attentive to the needs of all different target groups, such as the LGBTQI+ community, parents, women, and men.

- ◆ Migrants and refugees are a heterogeneous group; their social markers (age, ethnicity, race, class, religion, sexual orientation and gender identities), their experiences, and their struggles differ. Integration work should be sensitive to the needs of all genders by being attentive to context, situation, people's identities, and social positions. Providing opportunities for example for men to share experiences and voice vulnerabilities, including LGBTQI+ issues in the discussion on gender equality in general, and providing gender-separate spaces are three ways to develop tools for gender equal value transmission through integration work which recognizes individuals needs for safe spaces and facilitates cultural sensitivity. **Stakeholders: national, regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, integration workers.**

Promote academic research on gendered migration and integration including studies of masculinities.

- ◆ Integration work should include men – refugee and migrant men as well as men in general – in the debate on gender equality as individuals (not only as husbands or fathers) that both benefit from and contribute to challenging rigid gender norms. This includes shifting the public debate beyond single narratives toward the heterogeneous experiences of men and the multitude of migrant masculinities. This also warrants a greater academic focus on gender equality to engage with men and masculinities in general and in regard to migration in particular. **Stakeholders: European commission, funding bodies on national, regional and local level, civil society organisations.**

Increase project and NGO funding for sustainable work with the empowerment of migrants and refugees.

- ◆ In many countries, civil society organisations are crucial actors in working towards the gender equality of men, women and LGBTQI+ people with migration experience. The work conducted by NGOs is often conducted on a project basis and often relies on funding from the EU, from regional governments or other local bodies. Strengthening these actors necessitates measures to remedy some of the issues that these organisations

struggle with: the uncertainty pertaining to future funding, a lack of continuity, and unstable work conditions for staff. **Stakeholders: European commission, national, regional and local authorities.**

Enable reflection among the educators and integration workers to account for the fact that value transformations are long term processes.

- ◆ Facilitate space for reflection among educators and other integration workers involved in value transmission to promote an understanding of the significance of time and sensitivity to historical trajectories when discussing and promoting value transmission and changes. Educators should therefore be encouraged to reflect on the expectations they themselves bring into the courses and how these might influence their pedagogy and encounter with course participants. **Stakeholders: national, regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, integration workers.**

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About NOVAMIGRA

Several, partly interconnected crises have profoundly challenged the European project in recent years. In particular, reactions to the arrival of 1.25 million refugees in 2015 called into question the idea(l) of a unified Europe. What is the impact of the so-called migration and refugee crisis on the normative foundations and values of the European Union? And what will the EU stand for in the future?

NOVAMIGRA studies these questions with a unique combination of social scientific analysis, legal and philosophical normative reconstruction and theory.

This project:

- Develops a precise descriptive and normative understanding of the current “value crisis”;
- Assesses possible evolutions of European values; and
- Considers Europe’s future in light of rights, norms and values that could contribute to overcoming the crises.

The project is funded with around 2.5 million Euros under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme for a period of three years.

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