



University
of Glasgow

Social and Economic Integration of Russian-speaking women



Sarah Erdman in collaboration with Bridges Programmes

My Collaborative Masters Dissertation focused on educated Russian-speaking female migrant's employability prospects on the Scottish labour market. The aim was to find out what factors hinder their full economic integration and contribute to unemployment or underemployment amongst the target group and also to map what support exists or should exist for integration of migrant women into the labour market. How effective is it and how can it be improved?

The study also aimed to identify which training (e.g. vocational or language) is available to these women and how far they are useful. For this purpose a number of interviews were conducted with Russian-speaking migrant women and stakeholders dealing with migrants. Furthermore, a comparison was drawn with the situation of Russian-speaking women migrants in Belgium and Germany to see what impact differences in policy can make.

My motivation for applying for the Collaborative Master dissertation was that I thought it was a good way to combine academic work with practical work experience. The collaboration with The Bridges Programmes meant that I was given both academic support as well as useful and practical advice. The Bridges Programmes' EU-wide contacts through EU programmes such as IMPART were very useful in contacting organisations in Belgium and Germany.

Findings of my research

The research found that due to a combination of migration and gender issues Russian-speaking women are disadvantaged on the labour market and suffer from underemployment.

The interviews showed that there are problems with lack of information about the labour market, deficiencies in language training, gender and age discrimination, as well as discrimination against foreign workers. There was also a lack of recognition of work experience undertaken outside the UK.

Similarities in policy also exist between the UK, Belgium and Germany. The effectiveness of integration measures is often doubtful. A major issue is that many of the measures for integration of migrants are not aimed at labour market integration. There are also policy differences: Russian-speaking migrants have fewer difficulties in acquiring recognition of their foreign university qualifications in Belgium and Germany, and the discrepancy between unemployment rates for native-born women and migrant women are not as high.

I will be working as an intern for The Bridges Programmes in Glasgow. I will convert my dissertation findings into a report that can be used to inform stakeholders of the issues with a view to informing long-term policy-making.