



# BRIDGE4MOTHERS

## Returning to Learning



**Returning to Opportunity.**

## UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES, STRENGTHS AND ASPIRATIONS OF MOTHERS

Every mother's journey matters. Every opportunity counts.

Insights from Surveys and Focus Group Discussions Across Germany, Greece, Bulgaria and Türkiye

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# Introduction

The BRIDGE4MOTHERS project aims to strengthen the participation, employability, and social inclusion of vulnerable mothers through flexible, learner-centred Vocational Education and Training (VET) opportunities. To ensure that project activities are grounded in the realities of the target group, partners conducted surveys and Focus Group Discussions with vulnerable mothers and VET trainers across Germany, Greece, Bulgaria, and Türkiye.

The research explored barriers to participation in education and training, employability challenges, digital skills needs, preferred learning formats, and support mechanisms required to facilitate engagement. While national contexts differed, findings revealed a common pattern: mothers are highly motivated to learn and improve their circumstances, but often face structural barriers such as childcare responsibilities, time constraints, financial pressures, and inflexible training systems.

The findings presented in this report provide the evidence base for the development of the BRIDGE4MOTHERS Competence Roadmap, Learning Objectives, Digital Upskilling Curriculum, and Personal, Social and Learning (PSL) resources.



## About the Project

BRIDGE4MOTHERS is an Erasmus+ KA210-VET project that seeks to empower vulnerable mothers through education, digital upskilling, personal development, and employability-focused learning opportunities.

Recognising that many mothers encounter barriers that limit their participation in education and training, the project is a joint effort to better understand these challenges and develop practical, inclusive solutions.

This Report presents the key findings from surveys and Focus Group Discussions conducted across all partner countries and highlights the common and country-specific needs that will inform future project activities.

Our four awesome organizations:

- Bulgarian Digital Cluster, Bulgaria
- Impact Grid e.V., Germany
- Cradle, Greece
- Nexus Education, Türkiye.

The consortium came together through a shared commitment to supporting vulnerable mothers by creating more inclusive, flexible, and accessible pathways to learning, skills development, and employment.

# Research Methodology

A mixed-method approach was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods.

The research included:

- Surveys with vulnerable mothers
- Surveys with VET trainers and staff
- Focus Group Discussions with mothers
- Focus Group Discussions with VET professionals

The methodology enabled partners to identify common trends, understand country-specific contexts, and gather practical insights into the learning, employability, and support needs of vulnerable mothers.



Each partner country also produced a national findings report, providing valuable insights into the local realities, challenges, and opportunities experienced by vulnerable mothers and VET trainers. While the research was conducted with relatively modest sample sizes, the combination of surveys and Focus Group Discussions enabled the consortium to identify meaningful trends and recurring themes across countries. Findings were reviewed and compared across partner organisations to ensure consistency and strengthen the overall analysis.



# COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS



## Germany

The German research highlighted the experiences of mothers seeking to improve their employability while balancing family responsibilities and, in some cases, integration into a new social and labour market environment.

### Key Findings

- Childcare responsibilities and time constraints remain major barriers to participation in education and training.
- Mothers expressed a strong need for flexible and remote learning opportunities.
- Language proficiency was identified as a significant challenge for mothers with migrant backgrounds.
- Participants highlighted difficulties related to labour market integration and recognition of previous qualifications.
- Digital skills were viewed as increasingly important for accessing employment and flexible work opportunities.
- Many mothers identified confidence-building and professional guidance as important factors for successful re-engagement in education and employment.

### Key Message

Mothers in Germany are motivated to improve their professional opportunities but require accessible, flexible, and inclusive learning pathways that accommodate both family responsibilities and integration challenges.



## Greece

The Greek findings highlighted the impact of economic uncertainty and employment instability on mothers' ability to engage in training and lifelong learning.

### Key Findings

- Financial pressures and unstable employment were among the most significant barriers identified.
- Childcare and time limitations frequently restricted participation in training activities.
- Mothers demonstrated strong motivation to improve their employment prospects.
- Participants expressed a preference for flexible online and blended learning formats.
- Confidence-building and recognition of existing competences were considered important support mechanisms.
- Community-based learning and peer support were viewed positively.

### Key Message

The Greek context highlights the importance of linking training directly to employment opportunities while ensuring flexibility and accessibility for mothers facing economic pressures.

## Türkiye



The Turkish research focused largely on working mothers seeking opportunities for professional development, career progression, and improved work-life balance.

### Key Findings

- Balancing employment, childcare, and learning commitments was identified as a major challenge.
- Single mothers reported additional pressures due to sole caregiving responsibilities.
- Participants expressed strong interest in digital skills, AI-related competences, and technology-based learning.
- Flexible, self-paced, and modular learning opportunities were strongly preferred.
- Mothers highlighted the importance of recognising informal skills developed through parenting and household management.
- Supportive and understanding learning environments were considered essential for successful participation.

### Key Message

The findings from Türkiye demonstrate the need for practical, flexible, and digitally focused learning opportunities that support both professional development and sustainable work-life balance.

## Bulgaria



The Bulgarian findings revealed strong interest in training opportunities that could support employability, digital development, and social inclusion.

### Key Findings

- Childcare responsibilities, financial constraints, and access-related barriers affected participation.
- Digital skills emerged as one of the most important competence areas.
- Participants emphasised the need for practical, employment-oriented learning opportunities.
- Many mothers possessed significant transferable skills developed through everyday responsibilities, although these were often not formally recognised.
- Flexible and modular training formats were strongly preferred.
- Participants valued mentoring, guidance, and supportive learning environments.

### Key Message

Bulgarian mothers seek practical and accessible learning opportunities that recognise their existing competences while helping them develop new digital and employability skills.

Overall, the findings revealed a clear gap between mothers' motivation to learn and develop new skills and their ability to access suitable learning opportunities. Across all partner countries, participants demonstrated a strong willingness to improve their employability, digital competences, and personal development. However, barriers such as caregiving responsibilities, time constraints, limited flexibility in training provision, and insufficient support systems often restricted their participation. These findings highlight a significant opportunity to develop more accessible, flexible, and inclusive learning pathways that respond directly to the realities of mothers' lives.

# CROSS-COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Despite differences in national contexts, several common themes emerged across all partner countries.

## Common Barriers

- Childcare responsibilities
- Time constraints
- Financial pressures
- Limited flexibility in existing training systems
- Difficulties balancing family, work, and learning commitments

## Common Learning Needs

- Digital skills development
- Employability and career development skills
- Personal and social competences
- Confidence-building and self-efficacy
- Flexible and accessible learning opportunities

## Preferred Learning Approaches

- Online learning
- Hybrid learning
- Self-paced learning
- Modular training structures
- Practical and employment-oriented content

## Common Support Needs

- Flexible schedules
- Supportive trainers
- Peer learning opportunities
- Mentoring and guidance
- Recognition of informal competences

## Key Implications

The findings clearly demonstrate that vulnerable mothers are not lacking motivation or capability. Instead, participation is often limited by structural and systemic barriers that can be addressed through more flexible and inclusive learning approaches.



The research directly informed the development of:

- The BRIDGE4MOTHERS Competence Roadmap
- Learning Objectives
- Digital Upskilling Curriculum
- Personal, Social and Learning (PSL) Curriculum
- E-learning resources and future pilot activities

The findings emphasise the need for training pathways that are flexible, practical, digitally accessible, and aligned with real-life circumstances and labour market needs.

# Conclusion

The BRIDGE4MOTHERS research highlights a shared reality across Germany, Greece, Bulgaria, and Türkiye: vulnerable mothers are eager to learn, develop new skills, and improve their employment opportunities. However, their participation in education and training is often constrained by structural barriers rather than a lack of motivation or ability.

The findings underline the importance of flexible, learner-centred, and inclusive approaches that recognise the realities of caregiving responsibilities while supporting personal development, digital competence, and employability. By placing mothers' experiences and aspirations at the centre of training design, Bridge4Mothers aims to contribute to more accessible, empowering, and sustainable learning opportunities for mothers across Europe.

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