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## FOCUS GROUPS REPORT

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**Young Women for Grassroots Engagement Actions  
617587-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBY-ACPALA**



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## Introduction

During the initial phase of the *W4GEA* project, partners underwent a qualitative and quantitative analysis in order to gain specific knowledge of the current state of the art in partner countries concerning the fields of *digital, entrepreneurial and peacebuilding skills* that will be the core themes of the three training courses and grassroots projects; as well as of local engagement activities.

The aim was also to have a thorough overview of women social and cultural conditions in partner countries.

A quantitative and qualitative approach was adopted:

For the quantitative aspect, questionnaires were distributed amongst young women. The results collected, which can be consulted [here](#) served as the basis for a deeper analysis through focus groups: 13 focus groups were carried out in all the consortium countries, with more than 100 young women involved in the process!

Focus groups were conducted following specific guidelines, aiming to investigate the following items:

**Situation of women living in project countries; circumstances that hinder job opportunities and active participation in their community**

**Perceptions of Young Women on the Role and Importance of Digital, Entrepreneurial, and Peacebuilding Skills in Their Country and Local Community**

**Key Contributions of Digital, Entrepreneurial, and Peacebuilding Skills**

**Good practices examples**

**Training needs – focus on the needs to join training courses, key characteristics to suit participants' needs**

**Main trainings and educational resources available in partner countries**



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**What is the situation women live in your country? Are there circumstances that hinder job opportunities and active participation in their community?**

*(Report examples, specific situations and elements that might be useful for the creation of the trainings)*

**Italy**

In Italy, female empowerment faces significant challenges, including low employment rates, high wage inequality, and barriers to career advancement. A concerning issue is the disproportionately high percentage of women forced into involuntary part-time work, which far exceeds the EU average. Despite progress, harmful stereotypes, discrimination, and violence persist, impacting various aspects of women's lives such as employment, political participation, education, healthcare access, and overall treatment. Gender disparities are evident in unemployment rates, pay gaps, and political representation, with women earning 20% less than men on average and holding only 35% of parliamentary seats. These disparities stem from entrenched gender stereotypes, workplace discrimination, and the prevalence of violence against women. Addressing these issues requires continued efforts to challenge stereotypes, combat discrimination, and prevent violence, aiming towards a more equitable and inclusive society in Italy.

**Iraq**

In Iraq, women face significant challenges that hinder their effective participation in the workforce. Some women express reluctance to interact with male colleagues at work due to societal pressure, while others fear for their safety if they wear designated work uniforms in certain areas. Employment in Iraq is heavily gendered, with societal norms often dictating which professions are deemed suitable for women. While there may not be overt discrimination in employment, social biases impact women's ability to work effectively, leading to instances where a woman's work may be perceived differently

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than a man's, even if they handle the same tasks. This gender-based social resistance to women in the workforce undermines their effectiveness and limits their opportunities for career advancement. Additionally, a lack of adequate communication skills and awareness of workplace rights further exacerbates women's vulnerability to exploitation at work. Overall, these challenges underscore the need for greater gender equality and support mechanisms for women in Iraq's workforce.

### **Lithuania**

Upon joining the EU in 2004, Lithuania was required to implement gender equality policies and legislation to conform to the founding principles of equal treatment for all. The Lithuanian government has been making efforts to prioritize gender equality in its strategic plans, specifically in the economic sector. In 2018, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour approved a plan for implementing equal opportunities, reducing segregation, and promoting inter-institutional cooperation. Projects have been initiated to promote equality at the local level, raise awareness in the public and private sectors, fight against discrimination and stereotypes. However, according to a survey by the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, there is still a gender pay gap, and women are more at risk of poverty or material deprivation than men, especially single women of retirement age, due to a pay gap and family responsibilities. According to the Gender Equality Index 2021, Lithuania is ranked 16th out of 27 EU Member States in terms of gender equality. While the country has made progress in the areas of education and employment, there are still significant gender gaps in areas such as power and health. The Lithuanian government has taken steps to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, including the adoption of the National Action Plan for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for the period of 2020-2022. The plan aims to address gender inequality in various areas, including education, employment, and political participation.

### **Colombia**

In Colombia, women report facing significant challenges in accessing job opportunities due to gender bias and societal expectations. There's a prevalent preference for men in certain roles, leading to unequal pay for women even when they perform the same tasks. This discrimination stems from entrenched machismo, which limits women's perceived capabilities to traditional roles like homemaking. Balancing work with childcare and family responsibilities is particularly difficult due to the lack of flexible job options. For this reason, many women end up carrying out undeclared work, being largely underpaid.

Many women, despite being skilled and motivated, struggle to participate fully in educational and training programs because of childcare constraints. To address these issues, training programs should prioritize creating inclusive spaces where women can attend with their children, thus enabling them to contribute their talents and skills



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without sacrificing their caregiving duties. Additionally, efforts should be made to challenge gender stereotypes and promote equal opportunities for women in all sectors of society.

### **India**

Education: While there has been significant progress in girls' education, disparities still exist, especially in rural areas. Access to quality education can directly impact women's job prospects and participation in society.

India has been grappling with gender inequality for a long time. While progress has been made, disparities in income, education, and access to resources between men and women persist. Women, in many cases, have faced systemic discrimination. Women in India often face challenges in accessing job opportunities, particularly in certain sectors and leadership roles. This is partly due to traditional gender roles and societal expectations, which prioritise women's roles as homemakers. Discrimination and harassment at the workplace were, and in some cases still are, issues that many Indian women have faced. This includes sexual harassment, unequal pay for equal work, and limited opportunities for career advancement. Gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment, has been a serious concern in India. These issues can greatly affect women's physical and mental well-being, as well as their ability to engage actively in their communities.



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## **How do young women find the role or the importance of entrepreneurial, digital and peacebuilding skills in their country and local community?**



### **Italy**

The women interviewed report and confirm how the European Institute for Gender Equality underscores the persistent gender gap in STEM education access, particularly in Italy, where only one out of eight girls envisions a career in STEM fields. Moreover, the "leaky pipeline" phenomenon indicates a significant exit of women from academic careers after university. Despite this, young Italian women recognize the importance of digital, entrepreneurial, and peacebuilding skills for personal and professional development. However, there's a prevalent underestimation of entrepreneurial skills, although interest peaks when provided with information. Italy ranks sixth in the Gender Diversity Index, showing improvement yet lagging in female leadership outside boardrooms. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) addresses these issues but falls short in providing a disruptive impulse to challenge entrenched gender inequalities. Additionally, peacebuilding, initially perceived as distant, is increasingly seen as a valuable conflict resolution method in daily life by Italian women. Overall, young Italian women acknowledge the necessity of digital literacy, entrepreneurial acumen, and peacebuilding skills for navigating modern challenges and contributing positively to society.

### **Iraq**

Carrying out experiences in the digital field provided job opportunities for some women, and training also provided job opportunities and had a major role in developing women's work. Digital platforms helped develop their CV and find suitable training they needed, thus increasing the job opportunities. New technologies enhance and promote the cultural heritage of the city and allow to learn about other cultures through platforms, VR experiences, they believe the W4GEA project can have a great role in improving cultural heritage promotion and create jobs in the field. Some of the women said the consortium needs to organize new projects at the local level because the increase in projects leads to competition and thus leads to employment.

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It was highlighted that while having a cultural background may be beneficial, it alone is not sufficient to foster creativity and innovation in entrepreneurship. There is a need to cultivate and strengthen an entrepreneurial culture that encourages risk-taking, creativity, and innovation.

*" We must promote entrepreneurship as individuals, because the government will not be able to hire everyone. And we have many women who have ideas in a variety of fields, but they do not have the appropriate tools and environment to develop their work"*

Peacebuilding plays a critical role in fostering business growth and employment opportunities by creating a stable environment for businesses to flourish. Specifically, in areas affected by conflicts like those with ISIS occupation, peacebuilding efforts have led to noticeable improvements in entrepreneurship, especially for women. For instance, in formerly tribal and extremist areas, peace-building exercises have catalysed positive changes, facilitating increased entrepreneurial activities and economic empowerment for women.

### **Lithuania**

Digital skills are seen as essential for enhancing employability, as many industries require digital proficiency. Additionally, young women understand that digital skills foster independence, facilitate communication, and provide a platform for self-expression.

Entrepreneurship is seen as a way to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes, allowing young women to showcase their talents and skills. Moreover, entrepreneurial skills promote problem-solving abilities, resilience, and adaptability, which are highly valued in today's rapidly changing world.

The peacebuilding topic addressed during the focus groups did not find much place for discussion, not many examples were given, as it is a less common topic of Lithuanian young women. However, they emphasised the fact that improving peacebuilding skills, including conflict resolution, mediation, and empathy may benefit finding a job.

### **Colombia**

Colombian women emphasize the crucial role of entrepreneurial skills, peacebuilding efforts, and digital literacy in fostering economic independence, community development, and personal growth. They recognize that acquiring these skills is essential in today's society, as they open up opportunities for income generation and contribute to the well-being of communities. Despite facing challenges, such as limited access to technology and job requirements demanding digital proficiency, women stress the importance of continually learning and improving these skills. They highlight the



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significance of leveraging their community involvement and leadership roles to create positive social impact and contribute to peacebuilding initiatives. Overall, they view entrepreneurial, peacebuilding, and digital skills as indispensable tools for navigating the digital era, enhancing employment prospects, and promoting community development.

## India

### Digital Skills

*Country perspective:* In India, digital skills are increasingly recognised as essential for career growth and economic empowerment, especially in urban areas. Many industries are digitising, India is a growing country in the IT field and proficiency in digital skills can enhance employability. Young women often view digital skills as a means to access education, job opportunities, and entrepreneurship.

*Community Perspective:* Digital skills can be a valuable asset for young women in urban poor communities. They may see these skills as a way to bridge educational gaps, access online resources for self-improvement, and explore work-from-home opportunities. However, access to digital infrastructure and affordable internet remains a challenge for many in such communities.

### Entrepreneurial skills

*Country Perspective:* Entrepreneurship is gaining popularity among young Indians, including women. Many see it as an avenue for financial independence and pursuing their passions. Women's entrepreneurship is actively encouraged through various government initiatives and support programs.

*Community Perspective:* Entrepreneurial skills can be a game-changer for young women in urban poor communities. They may recognize the potential for small-scale businesses or micro-entrepreneurship to improve their financial situation. Training and access to resources, including microloans, are vital in this context.

### Peacebuilding and participatory democracy skills

*Country Perspective:* Peacebuilding skills may not be as commonly discussed among young women in India in comparison to digital and entrepreneurial skills. However, given the diverse cultural and religious landscape, the importance of conflict resolution, intercultural understanding, and tolerance is gradually gaining recognition.

*Community Perspective:* In urban poor communities, the importance of peacebuilding skills can be more immediate. These skills can help mitigate conflicts arising from overcrowding, resource scarcity, and social tensions. Young women may recognize the role they can play in fostering harmony within their communities.



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**To which aspects may these skills contribute the most?**

### **Italy**

Finding jobs, being independent from family/husbands/society. These skills can improve significantly the life of young women looking for a job. Digital Skills are requested in any kind of labor areas and related jobs. Peacebuilding could improve communication skills too, for example in the area of fighting hate speech and cyber bullying.

Digital skills, entrepreneurial skills, and peacebuilding skills can contribute to a wide range of aspects, according to the women interviewed: Finding jobs, being independent from family/husbands/society. These skills can improve significantly the life of young women looking for a job. Digital Skills are requested in any kind of labor areas and related jobs. Peacebuilding could improve communication skills too, for example in the areas of fighting hate speech and cyber bullying.

More in depth, other aspects mentioned were:

- **Economic development:** These skills can help young women to find jobs, start their own businesses, and contribute to the economy.
- **Education:** access educational opportunities, learn new things, and develop their knowledge and skills.
- **Health:** Access healthcare information and services, and to promote health and well-being.
- **Gender equality:** Challenge gender stereotypes, combat discrimination, and achieve gender equality.
- **Peacebuilding:** Resolve conflict, build relationships, and promote understanding.
- **Sustainability:** These skills can help young women to develop sustainable solutions to problems, and to protect the environment. In addition to these specific aspects, digital skills, entrepreneurial skills, and peacebuilding skills can also contribute to a more general sense of well-being and empowerment for young women.

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### **Iraq**

According to Iraqi women, the creation of new employment prospects is closely linked to the promotion of peacebuilding, which not only fosters entrepreneurship but also enhances individual stability, thereby fostering creativity, progress, and overall community development. Moreover, fostering a competitive environment in entrepreneurship leads to increased job opportunities and economic growth. Additionally, investing in digital skills, peacebuilding, and entrepreneurial capabilities can contribute significantly to various aspects of societal advancement. Digital skills enable individuals to access job opportunities, promote businesses, and engage with online platforms, thus facilitating economic participation and growth. Peacebuilding efforts not only ensure stability but also create conducive environments for entrepreneurship to thrive, fostering innovation and societal progress. Furthermore, entrepreneurial skills empower individuals to start and grow businesses, which in turn contribute to job creation, economic development, and the preservation of cultural heritage within communities. Overall, investing in these skills facilitates holistic development, promoting economic prosperity, social cohesion, and cultural preservation.

### **Lithuania**

Women shared how the above-mentioned skills can help young women in NEET. The experts highlighted the significant contributions these skills can make to empower and uplift young women in NEET. Entrepreneurial skills were identified as a pathway to economic empowerment, job creation, and critical thinking abilities. Digital skills were seen as crucial for accessing opportunities, expanding employment prospects, and ensuring digital literacy and safety. Peacebuilding skills were deemed essential for conflict resolution, social cohesion, and advocacy for social justice. Overall, investing in these skills can equip young women in NEET with the tools to overcome obstacles, seize opportunities, and become agents of positive change in their communities.

### **Colombia**

The participants emphasize the importance of acquiring digital, entrepreneurial, and peacebuilding skills for various aspects of personal and collective empowerment. Digital skills are seen as essential for accessing job opportunities and promoting businesses through online platforms. Entrepreneurial skills are valued for starting and improving businesses, providing a clear understanding of managing social networks and offering benefits to potential clients. Additionally, peacebuilding skills are recognized as crucial for creating a stable environment for business growth, especially in communities



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affected by conflicts. Moreover, the participants express a desire for training that encompasses not only technical skills but also knowledge of women's rights and spaces for participation, highlighting the importance of personal growth and empowerment. Overall, these skills contribute significantly to individual life projects, such as starting businesses or pursuing personal goals, as well as collective endeavours, such as group learning initiatives and community projects aimed at empowerment and social change.

### **India**

Access to Information and Education: Digital skills enable women to access online educational resources, including e-learning platforms, which can help improve their knowledge and skills, potentially leading to better job opportunities or entrepreneurship.

Communication and Networking: Digital skills facilitate communication and networking, allowing women to connect with potential employers, customers, and support networks. Social media and online platforms can be used to promote businesses and build professional relationships.

Financial Inclusion: Digital literacy can help women access financial services, including mobile banking and digital payment systems, making it easier to manage finances and save money securely. Entrepreneurial Skills Entrepreneurial skills can empower women in urban poor communities to start and manage their small businesses. This can lead to increased income, financial stability, and economic independence. Women with entrepreneurial skills can potentially create job opportunities not only for themselves but also for others in their communities, contributing to local employment. Community Development: Successful businesses run by women can have a positive impact on the overall economic development of their communities, leading to improved living standards.

Peacebuilding Skills - Conflict Resolution: Peacebuilding skills can help women mediate conflicts within their families and communities, promoting understanding and harmony. This is crucial in densely populated urban areas where tensions can arise due to resource scarcity and cultural differences.

Community Cohesion: Building relationships and fostering a sense of community is an essential aspect of peacebuilding. Women with peacebuilding skills can play a vital role in creating a supportive and unified community.

Safety and Security: Promoting peace and resolving conflicts can enhance the safety and security of women in urban poor communities, ensuring that they can live without fear of violence or discrimination



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**So, what?**

Overall, the main points and aspects in common to which digital, entrepreneurial and peacebuilding skills and knowledge might contribute to are:

**Economic empowerment:** These skills enable young women to access job opportunities, start businesses, and contribute to economic development. Digital skills facilitate online job searches and business promotion, while entrepreneurial skills empower women to create their own ventures.<sup>4</sup>

**Independence and empowerment:** Developing these skills allows young women to become more independent from their families, husbands, and society. They gain the confidence to pursue their own paths, make decisions, and shape their futures.

**Access to education and information:** Digital skills provide access to online educational resources, improving knowledge and skills. This access to information enhances their ability to make informed decisions and pursue further opportunities.

**Communication and networking:** Digital skills facilitate communication and networking, enabling women to connect with potential employers, customers, and support networks. This helps in promoting businesses and building professional relationships.

**Gender equality and empowerment:** These skills challenge gender stereotypes, combat discrimination, and promote gender equality. They empower women to advocate for their rights, participate in decision-making processes, and contribute to societal change.

**Community development and peacebuilding:** Entrepreneurial and peacebuilding skills contribute to community development by fostering economic growth, resolving conflicts, building relationships, and promoting understanding. They create safer, more cohesive communities where women can thrive and contribute positively.

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<sup>4</sup> Immagine di [https://it.freepik.com/vettori-gratuito/illustrazione-di-alzata-di-spalle-design-piatto\\_24195997.htm#query=donna%20cartoonpunto%20interrogativo&position=16&from\\_view=search&track=ais&uuid=208792eb-b901-4be7-b253-9da2baf53d61](https://it.freepik.com/vettori-gratuito/illustrazione-di-alzata-di-spalle-design-piatto_24195997.htm#query=donna%20cartoonpunto%20interrogativo&position=16&from_view=search&track=ais&uuid=208792eb-b901-4be7-b253-9da2baf53d61)>Freepik</a>



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## Examples of good practices

### Italy

The following examples were discussed during the Italian focus groups, with the aim of proposing them as initiatives to replicate on a smaller scale throughout the W4GEA project activities:

#### ***Futurae***

National initiative to support the development and consolidation of migrant entrepreneurship, in order to foster inclusive growth also in terms of job creation opportunities for foreign nationals or Italians;

#### ***Women Enterprise Fund***

The Women Enterprise Fund is the incentive of the Ministry of Economic Development that supports the development and consolidation of women-led businesses through grants and soft loans.

#### ***Digital Women Award (AIDDA)***

Organised by the Association of Women Entrepreneurs and Business Managers, this award recognises and promotes female entrepreneurs who distinguish themselves in the use of digital technologies for the development of their business.

#### ***Mi Garba Roma***

This project promotes education for active citizenship and participatory democracy through civic engagement initiatives and active citizenship workshops aimed at young people and women.

### Iraq

The ***Nakhla Foundation*** is an organization that takes care of palm trees that are canned and exported to the rest of the world. Palm trees are an essential part of the country's cultural and economic heritage. This foundation demonstrates a commitment to environmental conservation, sustainable agriculture, and economic development through its efforts to care for and export palm trees. The women discussed it as a good



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practice example by showcasing how technology can be leveraged to promote traditional industries and preserve cultural heritage.

**Dalal Restaurant** was presented as a local business that had a positive impact on the community: how digital marketing, social media management, and online ordering systems can be utilized to promote and expand a business; local cuisine as a cultural heritage element.

The **Nimrod Cultural Festival** and **Peace Festival IQ** are events that promote cultural exchange, understanding, and peacebuilding in Iraq. These festivals bring together people from diverse backgrounds to celebrate their shared heritage, showcase traditional arts and crafts, and foster dialogue and reconciliation.

Cultural events can be powerful tools for promoting social cohesion, reconciliation, and peace in post-conflict settings. The young Iraqi women suggested how digital platforms developed within W4GEA project could foster similar initiatives, even only in a digital environment, to promote cultural exchange, and facilitate dialogue among diverse communities.

Direct experiences testified how **digital skills and platforms contributed to refuting the negative outlook that people took on some cities liberated from ISIS**, such as the presence of artists in the city of Anbar, sending the world a positive message of safety, and this thing contributed to the city's economy.

Social media platforms have contributed a lot to women's economies because most women have established businesses through social media pages. The waterwheels were very neglected, but as civil activists, they began to photograph and publish them on electronic platforms. This publication and claims contributed to its inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage, and support for the establishment of a hotel and support for tourism there was obtained. Fallujah Corniche attracted families and became an outlet for women to entertain. When Oyoun Hajlan Park was neglected, it became a tourist resort for families and women, and it provided job opportunities for young people. Al-Mutanabbi Street was restored, and because of this and people spreading about this news on the platforms, some girls have had a continuous and prosperous work in it.

## India

**Digital Skills - Online Education Initiatives:** Many Indian women, including those from urban poor backgrounds, have taken advantage of online education platforms to upskill themselves. They sign up for courses related to various fields, such as IT, digital marketing, and data analysis, to enhance their employability.

**Social Media Entrepreneurship:** Women in India have leveraged social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook to showcase their creative talents, whether it's in fashion design, art, or home-based food businesses. These platforms provide visibility and access to potential customers.



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**Digital Literacy Initiatives:** Some women have initiated digital literacy programs within their communities to teach fellow residents, including elderly individuals, how to use digital tools and access online resources for education and information.

**Entrepreneurial Skills - Micro-Entrepreneurship:** Women in urban poor communities have established micro-enterprises, such as tailoring, small-scale catering, and handicraft businesses. These ventures not only generate income for their families but also create local job opportunities.

**Self-Help Groups (SHGs):** Women in India have formed SHGs, which are community - based organisations aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and financial inclusion. These groups provide access to loans and offer a support network for business development.

**Skill-Based Ventures:** Some women have honed skills like stitching, embroidery, and soap-making and have turned them into profitable businesses. These skill-based ventures allow them to earn a livelihood and contribute to their family's income.



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## **Training needs**

***(Please specify whether participants feel the need to join a training course to improve or enhance their skills, what are the characteristics that would make a training suitable to the participants' needs)***

### **Italy**

The main training needs to develop skills in Italy are:

- **Digital skills:** These skills are essential in today's world, as more and more activities are conducted online. Digital skills include the ability to use computers and other digital devices, to access and manage information, and to create and share content.
- **Language skills:** Fluency in Italian is essential for anyone who wants to work or live in Italy. However, knowledge of other languages, such as English, can also be beneficial, especially in the business world.
- **Technical skills:** These skills are needed for a variety of jobs, such as engineering, IT, and manufacturing. Technical skills can be acquired through formal education or on-the-job training.
- **Soft skills:** These skills are not technical in nature, but they are essential for success in the workplace. Soft skills include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking.
- **Intercultural skills:** These skills are important for anyone who wants to work or live in a multicultural environment. Intercultural skills include the ability to understand and respect different cultures and perspectives. In addition to these general skills, there are also specific training needs that vary depending on the industry or occupation. For example, people who want to work in the healthcare industry need training in medical procedures and patient care. People who want to work in the tourism industry need training in customer service and languages.

Furthermore, the focus groups highlighted the importance of features such as flexible schedules, practical content, mentorship, affordability, and networking opportunities in making training courses suitable and effective for Italian women. These features ensure that training programs meet the needs of participants and enable them to maximize their professional and personal growth.

Besides these main groups of skills to be trained, women mentioned how information should be spread and measures shall be taken on topics such as abortion (an increasingly denied right, gender-based violence, Gender inequality at work, lack of maternity assistance and welfare policies that burden the care work of elderly and fragile family members on the shoulders of women.

It was highlighted how not only women shall fight for these rights: men shall be included, being informed starting from an early age.



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### Iraq

- English language training;
- Computer skills training;
- Education on women's rights and empowerment: Empowering women with knowledge about their rights and providing training on advocacy and empowerment strategies are vital for promoting gender equality and enhancing women's agency in society;
- Training on promoting cultural heritage (tools to do it): Given the rich cultural heritage of Iraq, training on promoting cultural heritage can help preserve and celebrate traditional arts, crafts, and practices;
- Language of dialogue: Effective communication skills;
- Time management;
- Negotiation skills;
- Emotional intelligence;
- Opinion exercises and cryptocurrency training: this indicates a desire for training in emerging areas that could offer new opportunities for economic empowerment and financial literacy.

### Lithuania

- How to start the **business idea**: design thinking, business canvas, brainstorming tools;
- **Gender equality at work**;
- **Digital skills**.

### Colombia

Participants expressed the desire for further training in **culinary arts**, particularly in pastry and bakery, as they aspire to start their own gastronomy-related businesses, and they were already trained partially on the topics during the grassroots project, that happened prior to the focus groups. They seek expertise in various areas of the kitchen to offer a diverse range of food options to clients, including savory and sweet foods. Additionally, participants recognize the importance of entrepreneurship training to strengthen their personal resources and facilitate economic independence. They emphasize the need for training that aligns with their interests and motivations, enabling them to pursue entrepreneurship ventures that resonate with their passion and skills.

Besides that, they expressed the strong need of learning about their **rights as women and spaces for participation**, especially taking into account the vulnerability in which they are sometimes exposed and the risks.

So other training geared towards learning these **tools for empowerment** would also be vital.



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## **India**

### Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development:

- Business planning and management;
- Marketing and branding;
- Access to credit and microloan management;
- Mentorship and networking opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs;
- Skill-Based Training;
- Food processing and catering;
- Handicrafts and artisan skills;

### Education and Literacy:

- Adult literacy programs for women with low literacy levels;
- Continuing education to complete secondary or higher education;
- English language skills, which can enhance employability;
- Soft Skills;
- Communication and interpersonal skills;
- Time management and organisation;
- Problem-solving and critical thinking;
- Legal Rights and Awareness;
- Workshops on legal rights, including property and inheritance rights;
- Training on how to access legal aid and support services.

In a nutshell, the training needs across different countries encompass a wide range of skills and knowledge areas tailored to the specific contexts and aspirations of the participants. In Italy, there is a demand for training in digital skills, language proficiency, technical expertise, soft skills, and intercultural competence, alongside a call for measures to address pressing social issues such as gender inequality and reproductive rights. Iraqi women seek training in English language proficiency, computer skills, women's rights and empowerment, cultural heritage promotion, and emerging areas like cryptocurrency. Lithuanian participants prioritize training on starting a business, gender equality at work, and digital skills. Colombian women emphasize culinary arts and entrepreneurship training, along with empowerment education. Indian women express a need for entrepreneurship and small business development training, education and literacy programs, soft skills development, and legal rights awareness workshops.

The key characteristics for effective training programs are: practical content, flexibility, mentorship, affordability, and networking opportunities, tailored to the participants' interests and motivations.



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## What are the main trainings and educational resources available in your country?



### Italy

In Italy, various formal and non-formal training opportunities exist for women, focusing on entrepreneurship, digital skills, and cultural heritage promotion. Initiatives include incubators like BASE Milano, mentorship programs such as WE-Women Entrepreneurship, and online resources like Cultura Italia. NGOs like Cittadinanzattiva also offer training on civic participation. These efforts aim to empower women by providing them with the necessary skills and resources to participate actively in society and the economy, fostering a more inclusive and equitable future.

### Iraq

Some trainings are provided at governmental level in some difficult environments. However, generally speaking women do not have the right to participate in training. As for the private sector, they have to look for trainings by themselves and rely on those developed by NGOs and associations as it is not provided freely. Peacebuilding training is provided in Iraq by civil society organizations, along with language and computer exercises, but there are no informative campaigns in this regard.

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### **Lithuania**

Different trainings organised by a variety of institutions in Lithuania: government, municipality, NGO, private sector, others.

### **Colombia**

There are entities such as the SENA that provide training on different topics, among them there is a course on baking and gastronomy that could contribute to the enrichment of the knowledge of the women participating in the process. There are also entities in the local administration such as the women's house called "casa matria", which is part of the gender subsecretariat and provides training for empowerment and access routes for women in terms of demanding their rights. Some social organisations are concerned focus exclusively on gender issues.

### **India**

Many universities and colleges offer distance education programs that allow women to continue their education while balancing family and work responsibilities.

Online platforms like Coursera, edX, and Udemy offer a plethora of courses on diverse topics, and are widely used by women to access education freely or in an affordable way.

Other organisations and entities offering course are:

- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC): NSDC offers various skill development programs, including Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), which provides training and certification in various trades and sectors.
- National Literacy Mission (NLM) runs adult literacy programs to improve literacy rates among women in rural and urban areas.
- Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) is a government initiative focused on empowering women through skill development, digital literacy, and gender sensitization programs
- Government Skill Development Schemes like Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) and Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) provide skill development and training opportunities to rural women.
- Microfinance Institutions and Self-Help Groups (SHGs): Some microfinance institutions and SHGs provide financial and skill-building support to women entrepreneurs.



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