

## **Improving Digital and Soft Skills for Socially Excluded Women**

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**Report on Activities related to the identification of areas along with  
participants and focus topics**

**Report on the target group**



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## **1. Conduction of the report based on the survey in Bulgaria**

The following report presents an analysis of the responses gathered from a survey conducted by the IDEAS4WOMEN project. The project aims to empower women in Bulgaria by providing training and education programs focused on improving soft skills, digital skills, financial literacy, and career guidance. The responses shed light on the participants' backgrounds, barriers to education, skill proficiency, training needs, and preferences, as well as their expectations from the project.

The survey collected information from women residing in Bulgaria, primarily falling within the age range of 18 to 30, with a smaller representation from the 31-44 and 45-64 age groups. These participants hold diverse qualifications ranging from high school diplomas to master's and PhD degrees. Their employment statuses varied between part-time, full-time, self-employed, and students.

Several participants reported facing barriers that hindered their access to education and training programs. The most commonly mentioned barriers included lack of financial resources, lack of time, lack of information about available programs, family responsibilities, and language barriers. Transportation issues were also highlighted by a few respondents as a significant challenge.

Participants indicated areas in which they considered themselves proficient, primarily in soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and entrepreneurship, along with digital skills like Microsoft Office, email, and internet usage. Financial literacy was also identified as a proficiency area by some respondents. Identified areas for improvement included conflict resolution skills, leadership skills, time management skills, and financial planning and budgeting. Many participants expressed a desire to enhance their digital communication tools and social media management skills.

Several participants reported prior participation in training or education programs related to the identified areas. The preferred methods of learning varied between in-person workshops, self-directed learning, and online courses. This diversity underscores the importance of providing multiple learning avenues to cater to individual preferences.

A substantial number of participants expressed keen interest in participating in training programs that align with their interests and preferred learning formats. The prospect of accessing these programs free of charge was particularly appealing, indicating the significance of affordability in facilitating participation.

Participants highlighted several ways in which the IDEAS4WOMEN project could effectively support them. These included providing training and education programs tailored to their needs, offering career counselling and guidance, connecting them with potential employers or job opportunities, offering financial support or scholarships for training/education programs, and providing access to mentors or role models.

The survey responses collected from the participants provide valuable insights into their backgrounds, challenges, aspirations, and expectations. The IDEAS4WOMEN project can leverage this information to develop targeted training and education programs that address the identified barriers and skill development needs. By offering a range of learning methods and focusing on areas where participants seek improvement, the project can contribute significantly to enhancing the employability and empowerment of women in Bulgaria. The expressed enthusiasm among participants indicates a positive reception for the project's initiatives. The project's commitment to addressing these needs will likely result in a meaningful and positive impact on the participant's lives and their broader communities.

## **2. Conduction of the report based on the survey in Cyprus**

This report presents an analysis of participant responses collected as part of the IDEAS4WOMEN project, a comprehensive initiative aimed at fostering skill development and employability among women. The survey data offers valuable insights into the demographics, skills, challenges, and preferences of the target audience. By examining these responses, we gain a deeper understanding of the unique needs of women in Cyprus and can better tailor the project's offerings to address those needs effectively.

The survey garnered responses from a diverse group of participants based in various regions of Cyprus, with Nicosia and Larnaca being the primary cities represented. The participants were categorized into two age groups: 18-30 and 45-64, reflecting different life stages and experiences. The sample encompassed a wide spectrum of marital statuses, education levels, and employment statuses, encompassing students, unemployed individuals, full-time employees, and housewives.

The data shed light on the common barriers that have hindered participants from accessing training and education programs. Key obstacles include limited financial resources, a lack of

awareness about available programs, family responsibilities, transportation challenges, and time constraints. These barriers underscore the complex interplay of personal, economic, and societal factors that can impact women's pursuit of skill development and training opportunities.

The participants demonstrated varying levels of proficiency in distinct skill categories, including soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and entrepreneurship, as well as digital skills like Microsoft Office proficiency, email usage, and internet navigation. The survey captured a range of proficiency levels, spanning from beginner to advanced. This diversity highlights the potential for growth and development in these skill areas.

The survey participants indicated specific areas where they perceived the need for improvement or additional training. These areas included communication skills, teamwork capabilities, leadership development, time management, conflict resolution abilities, digital communication tools, financial planning, budgeting, and entrepreneurship skills. These identified areas of improvement align closely with the skills that are highly valued in both professional and personal contexts.

Respondents shared their preferred modes of learning, citing in-person workshops, online courses, and self-directed learning as their preferred approaches. This diversity of learning preferences underscores the importance of offering a range of educational formats to cater to individual needs and lifestyles.

A notable finding was the strong interest expressed by participants in engaging in training programs tailored to their interests and learning preferences. Many participants indicated their willingness to participate in these programs, particularly if they are provided free of charge. This enthusiasm emphasizes the potential impact of well-structured training initiatives.

Participants provided insights into how the IDEAS4WOMEN project could best support them. Common suggestions included offering training and education programs that align with their needs, delivering career counselling and guidance, facilitating connections with potential employers or job opportunities, providing financial support or scholarships for education, and offering access to mentors or role models in their respective fields.

We can conclude that the analysis of participant responses highlights the diversity of needs and aspirations among women in Cyprus. By understanding their unique challenges and preferences, the IDEAS4WOMEN project can craft targeted interventions that empower women to enhance their skills, broaden their employability, and advance their personal

growth. The commitment of the participants to self-improvement and skill development underscores the importance of initiatives like IDEAS4WOMEN in enabling women to overcome barriers and reach their fullest potential.

### **3. Conduction of the report based on the survey in Greece**

This report presents an analysis of participant responses from the IDEAS4WOMEN project, focusing on individuals from Greece, specifically the Thessaly region. The project aims to empower women by addressing barriers to education and training, enhancing their skills, and increasing their employability. The responses provide insights into participants' demographics, educational backgrounds, employment statuses, barriers they face, skills proficiency, training preferences, and expectations from the IDEAS4WOMEN initiative.

Participants in this study belong to different age groups: 18-30, 31-44, and 45-64, reflecting a wide range of life stages and experiences. They hail from the Thessaly region in Greece.

The participants exhibit diverse educational backgrounds, ranging from High School Diplomas to Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Employment statuses vary widely, encompassing full-time employment, part-time employment, student status, self-employment, and unemployment. Some respondents are housewives, while others are engaged in full-time careers.

A significant number of participants face obstacles hindering their access to education and training programs. Common barriers include lack of financial resources, limited information about available programs, family responsibilities, and language barriers. These challenges have contributed to a gap in their skills and hindered their potential for professional development.

Participants report proficiency and interest in various skills. Soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and entrepreneurship, as well as digital skills like Microsoft Office and internet usage, were frequently mentioned. Many participants expressed a desire to improve skills in areas such as conflict resolution, social media management, leadership, and financial planning.

Several participants have engaged in training and education programs in the past, opting for self-directed learning, online courses, and in-person workshops. A majority of respondents

indicate their willingness to participate in free training programs tailored to their preferred formats and interests.

Participants expressed enthusiasm for the support provided by the IDEAS4WOMEN project. They highlighted various forms of assistance they are seeking, including career counselling, connections to potential employers or job opportunities, access to mentors or role models, and financial support or scholarships for training and education programs.

We can conclude that the participant responses from the IDEAS4WOMEN project provide valuable insights into the unique challenges and aspirations of women in Greece's Thessaly region. The diversity of backgrounds, educational levels, and employment statuses underscores the need for tailored interventions to bridge skill gaps and overcome barriers to education and training. The IDEAS4WOMEN project, with its focus on enhancing skills, fostering career development, and promoting employability, has the potential to make a meaningful impact on the lives of the participants by addressing their specific needs and aspirations.

#### **4. Summary of the reports from Bulgaria, Cyprus and Greece**

The following report presents findings from a survey conducted among women participants aged 18-30 from three different countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Greece. The survey aimed to assess the education levels, skills proficiency, challenges, and preferences of these women regarding training and education programs related to soft skills, digital skills, financial literacy, and career guidance.

Most participants (75.2%) fall within the age range of 18-30 years. The distribution across countries is as follows: Bulgaria (31.4%), Cyprus (28.3%), and Greece (15.5%). The educational background of the participants reflects a well-educated group: 41.5% have a high school diploma, 35.4% possess a bachelor's degree, and 21.5% hold a master's degree.

A significant proportion of participants, 41.8%, reported facing challenges related to a lack of time and information regarding available training or education programs. An additional 32.8% cited a lack of financial resources as a barrier. Interestingly, 22.4% indicated not encountering any problems in accessing such programs.

Participants displayed a strong proficiency in various skills. 80.6% claimed proficiency in soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and entrepreneurship. 44.8% felt proficient in



digital skills, including Microsoft Office, email, and internet usage. However, only 11.9% expressed proficiency in financial literacy.

Despite the reported proficiency, 55.2% believed that further training in financial literacy was necessary, closely followed by 50.7% seeking improvement in digital skills and 40.3% desiring enhancement in soft skills. Career guidance was identified as a priority by 38.8% of respondents.

A significant proportion of participants, 71.6%, expressed a preference for in-person workshops, while 40.3% indicated a willingness to engage in online courses. Notably, 71.6% would participate in a free training program tailored to their interests and preferred format.

An overwhelming majority, 67.2%, anticipated the project's potential benefits if it provided training and education programs. Additionally, 56.7% recognized the potential for career counselling, guidance, and connections with employers or job opportunities.

In conclusion, the survey sheds light on the educational backgrounds, skills proficiency, challenges, and aspirations of women participants aged 18-30 from Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Greece. The findings highlight the importance of addressing challenges related to access and affordability of training and education programs, especially in areas such as financial literacy and digital skills. The participant's preference for in-person workshops and interest in free, tailored training programs underscore the potential impact of initiatives that address these needs. Furthermore, the desire for career counselling and connections with employers indicates the broader benefits such a project could bring to the participants' professional development. This report provides valuable insights for the design and implementation of programs aimed at empowering and equipping young women in these countries with essential skills and education.