



User guide of Whomen self-assessment tool

1. Purpose of the tool

When you are seeking employment, you will be just successful if you have necessary professional skills in combination with transversal and soft skills which play an important role for job interviews and at the workplace.

Soft skills characterize how a person interacts in his or her relationships with others. They characterize the emotional intelligence of a person. Soft skills determine, if a person

-  is able to communicate effectively
-  is a good listener and uses appropriate body language
-  is able to solve problems and find necessary resources when unexpected issues inevitably arise
-  is able to think creatively

The development and strengthening of transversal and soft skills comprised by them are important and essential for women to become and remain an active part of the society.

The problem is, there is a lack of training opportunities on soft skills. For some reason, organizations seem to expect people know how to behave on the job. They tend to assume that everyone knows and understands the importance of being on time, taking initiative, being friendly and producing high-quality work.

WhomeN project aims at the improvement of employment opportunities for women by assessing their acquired soft skills and a following training on those that are required to improve.

Within WhomeN project a multilingual online tool (<http://whomenplatform.eu>) is offered to women at risk of social exclusion and organisations working with them. This tool helps to map out an individual's profile of soft skills acquired in their lives and work experiences.

Based on this evaluation and with the support of a job advisor / social worker/ mentor women at risk can receive personalised advice for further steps towards their labor market integration (validation of skills, recognition of work experience and necessary training or employment support).

The tool is introduced as an example for the support of a recognition tool for soft skills acquired at work experiences.

This self-evaluation was created by WHOMEN Project –Active Socio-occupational integration of Women at risk of social exclusion through the recognition of competences and learning soft skills in order to offer New professional opportunities at home society.

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2. Users

The Tool is flexible and can be used by various organisations in a way that serves their needs in a proper way.

Users can be:

- ▶ national authorities responsible for reception and integration of refugees
- ▶ reception centres
- ▶ employment assistance services
- ▶ education and training advisers
- ▶ social services
- ▶ non-governmental organisations and charities offering services to women, migrant and refugees
- ▶ Women at risk of social exclusion, mainly migrant and women over 45 age and those that need to improve their employment opportunities by soft skills and labour experience recognition.

The users can decide how to fill the self-assessment-questionnaire.

- ▶ A woman and an adviser could complete the questionnaire together. They can work with two language versions available simultaneously on the screen to help to bridge any communication gap if necessary.
- ▶ A woman by her means can fill it in an organization where the tool has been introduced to her and asking for support when she needs it or has a doubt.
- ▶ A woman can fill it by herself, after the tool has been recommended by some organization that attends or advices in her socio-labor inclusion processes.

3. Guide of the assessment process

This tool is very simple. Women have to value their soft skills by 47 items encompassed under 8 main soft skills. Each item can be valued in a scale where 1 is the lowest and 4 the highest level of value. Women who want to complete the assessment will probably need additional explanations and guide to value each item. For that reason, they will probably need approximately one hour to complete the whole questionnaire.

The questionnaire tool will always be completed after a first personal interview. It has the function to structure the information and to give an overview referring to the educational and occupational background of participants, their skills, interests and personal circumstances.

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To ask for skills, interests and personal circumstances it is not advisable to ask directly. That can be counterproductive. The participants should decide what they want to talk about and when. It is possible to control and regulate the conversation with some interposed questions. For example, if the participant talks about his/her education, you can ask for the most favorite parts in his/her education or for school subjects he/her liked most. An also interesting psychological gimmick to ask for personal attributes is to ask what their family and friends really like about them. For example: "Which of your attributes do your family and friends appreciate?" What you will find out with this question is not only what the family and the friends maybe think about your participant. You will also get an idea of his/her ability to reflect, his/her empathy and the capacity of teamwork. (Note: information extracted from pedagogical materials for adult education professionals offered in the WhomeN project and available at: <http://whomenplatform.eu/resources-for-operators/>)

After a first contact making interview, the professional who accompanies /guides the woman will recommend her the tool to evaluate and complete the information for her CV /profile highlighting her skills at workplace.

Women should be encouraged to finalize the whole test. If she wants to get a good result from this tool it is important to be honest and sincere. The professional should explain the woman how these skills are important to complete their resume in applying job-searching processes.

The assessment by the WhomeN tool should take place in a comfortable ambience for the participants to become acquainted and to develop faith in the professional /mentor /job advisor who supports her. It is also very helpful, if the participants are free to decide, if and for how long they would like to participate. Voluntarily participation is an important aspect for the success of the assessment and the following counseling process.

Once a woman begins the questionnaire, the professional should present each soft skill. The presentation document is available at http://whomenplatform.eu/whomen/rsc/Info-soft-transversal-skills_EN.pdf, explaining her in an easy way what is characteristic for each soft skill and how important it is for her professional profile and her development at workplace.

In addition, the professional will clarify and solve any doubt regarding any of the 47 items to value in the questionnaire. The professional should be assertive as much as possible in his/her explanation and give examples.

Once the self-assessment questionnaire is finished, women should complete two steps.

- ▶ **Consent and data protection:** The Consent section asks where the interviewee agrees or not that 1) her anonymized data is used for statistical purposes and 2) that the issuing organisation can share the collected information for career guidance purposes. (Please note that answering the two consent questions (by choosing either YES or NO) is compulsory in order to be able to save or print the filled questionnaire in the computer.
- ▶ **Print Summary/ Certificate:** The certificate summary is produced in the language chosen for the compilation of the questionnaire. The certificate is produced in PDF format and can be saved or printed.

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The certificate will show the results of the assessment in an attractive graphic format.



Once the document was printed, the social worker / mentor / job advisor will validate the document marking the appropriate recommendation and stamping the document for the woman.

4. Recommendation after self-assessment

After finalizing the self-assessment, the educator / job advisor / mentor /social worker analysis the results. For improvement and development of marginal soft skills the professionals will recommend women to follow soft skills exercises and training using the training program for woman offered by WhomeN Project, available at:

<http://whomenplatform.eu/resources-for-operators/>

Also, it is possible to check the available resources in each country for the support and training of women, through the “services for women” link in the platform <http://whomenplatform.eu/services-for-women/>

It is advisable that women, who will complete WhomeN training program (or other training programs on soft skills), should repeat the self-assessment questionnaire after the training to measure the impact of soft skills training programs for women at risk of social exclusion. In addition after a period working developing or improving the transversal skills women could repeat the self-assessment questionnaire to measure their evolution.

After that, women will print the definitive certificate of the self-assessment, annexing the certificate of the training course on soft skills or work life certificate for possible future and desirable recognition.

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