



**STATE-OF-THE-ART REPORT ON THE  
OBSTACLES WOMEN FACE  
TO CHANGE THEIR EMPLOYMENT  
STATUS**

**Result number 1**

**Foundation**  
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## 1. Executive Summary

This is the Country Report under Result 1 of the Project EMPOWERED which analyses the results from the three level report in Greece. The Report is structured in seven sections:

- The first one is the executive summary.
- The second is an introduction to the concept and the objectives of the report.
- The third section analyses the collected responses from the field research carried out by Foundation
- The fourth section presents the feedback collected from the stakeholders who were invited and participated in a focus group, during which the problems that women face to (re-)integrate the labour market face.
- The fifth section provides an overview of the support provided at policy and programmes level.
- The sixth section summarises the conclusions from the three-level analysis and examines the degree to which the project is still relevant and appropriate to address the needs of the target group.
- The seventh and final section presents the references used for drafting this report

## 2. Introduction

The conditions under which women are employed (in terms of schedule, demands, expectations) and them with their professional life form a challenge that they are forced to deal with. If one also considers the existing prejudices in terms of a woman's position, her knowledge and skills, her ability to undertake certain tasks, it becomes a multifaceted problem which, ultimately, impacts their perception of self and worth.

Empower is a multidimensional word including social, physical, spiritual, mental, political and psychological dimensions. Empower means personal growth in decision-making, analysing critical situations, coping with all circumstances and facing challenges.

The objective of the project is the empowerment of women through the development of a training course for their digital upskilling, as well as their psychological empowerment to reinforce their position in the labour market. The course will be based on the Foundation Business Academy (FBA) a tailored professional skills platform developed by the Foundation, which offers structured and dynamic content on emerging technologies, innovation & digital transformation, which can be delivered with great flexibility. The content of the FBA will be adapted to the needs of unemployed women, as well as women who wish to pursue a career change but are reluctant. In addition to the digital skills that will be enhanced, the partners will also develop a horizontal set of modules, aiming at helping women address the psychological factors that demoralise women for claiming a better employment or even daring to. The partners will also develop a handbook to facilitate the delivery of the Empowered course by AE teachers and trainers, career counsellors and CSO representatives aimed at providing the theoretical background, the tools and methodologies of the EMPOWERED training course to facilitate its implementation after the end of the project. The handbook is expected to bring important added value to the sustainability of the results developed. Moreover, a virtual community will be set up, through which the members of the target group will be able to access the training programme and, most importantly, connect with their peers, exchange experiences and thoughts and provide support to one another.

Representatives from the stakeholders of the project will also have the opportunity to connect through the platform with the target group and disseminate information on education, training and employment opportunities, as well as initiatives at local, regional and national level aimed at the facilitation of access to employment and balance of professional with personal life.

This report is part of the first result of the project, a state-of-the-art report focusing on the obstacles women are facing to change their employment status (either access employment, or change career paths). To achieve that, the partners investigated the challenges that women need to tackle, especially in the post-pandemic era, in order to access employment or change their career path. The consortium focused on women in rural areas, women in different socio-economical difficulties, migrant women with different cultural, political and religious background, mothers who were forced to quit the job and now wish to return to employment, divorced women in situation of economic disadvantage who face an even greater challenge to balance their professional life with their personal one.

This report is the Country Report for Greece and it will form part of the Consortium Report, summarising all partners' findings.

## 3. Part A: Challenges for women in their professional life

### 3.1. Methodological framework and objective

The partners of the EMPOWERED Project, as per the provisions of the proposal, developed a questionnaire to for unemployed who wish to (re-)integrate the labour market.

The

### 3.2. Reaching out to the target group and collection of responses

### 3.3. Analysis of responses collected

#### 3.3.1. Demographics

A random sample of thirty (30) respondents selected from Found.ation's network. Table 1 reveals that 53.30 % (n= 16) of the respondents were under 30, 33.30 % (n= 10) were 30-35, 6.70 % (n= 2) were 40-45, and 6.70 % (n= 2) were 45 and above.

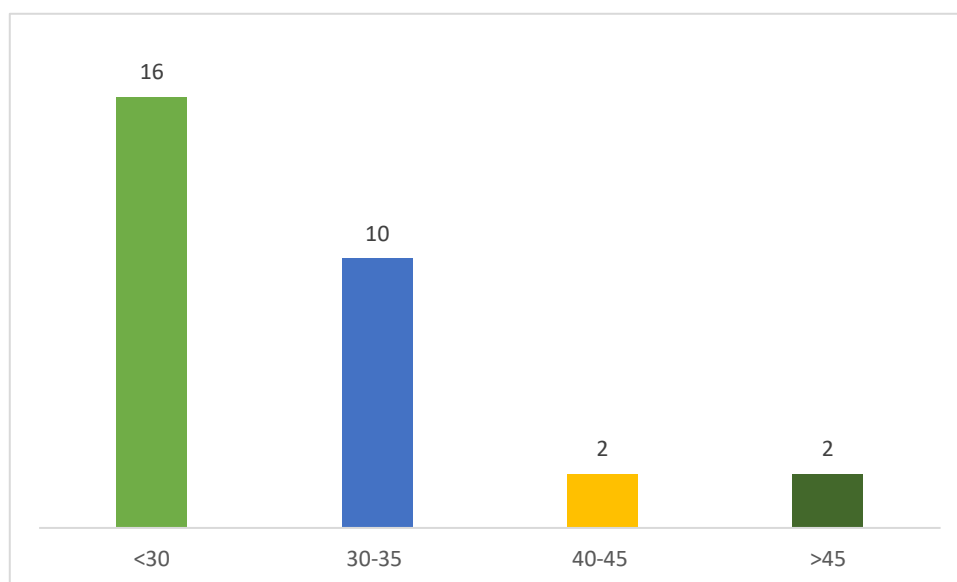


Table 1: Age of the respondents (N= 30).

Regarding the language knowledge of the respondents, all women know English and their level of English is shown on Table 2. From the respondents, 63% (n= 19) speak Very Good English, 27% (n= 8) speak Good, and 10% (n= 3) speak English in a Basic level.

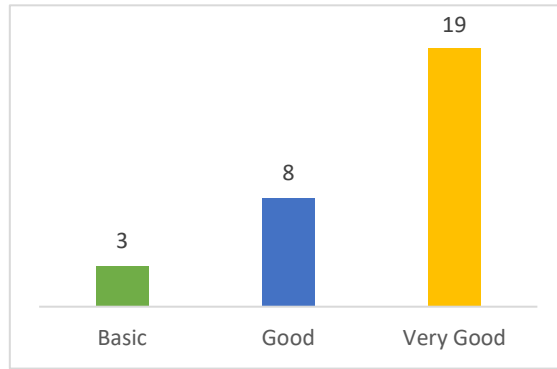


Table 2: English language knowledge (N=30).

From the respondents, 14 women speak more than English. Table 3 shows that 64% (n= 9) speak French, 29% (n= 4) speak German, and 7% (n= 1) speaks Spanish.

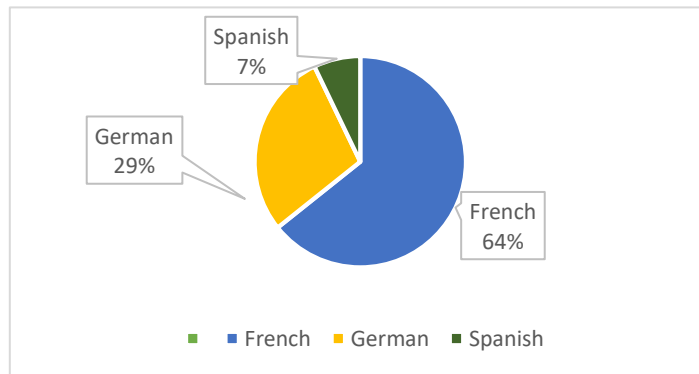


Table 3: Further language knowledge of respondents (N= 14).

The respondents' level of further languages is shown on Table 4, which shows that 37% (n= 5) speak Very Good French, 14% (n= 2) speak Basic French and 14% (n= 2) speak good level of French. While 7% (n= 1) speaks Basic Spanish, 7% (n= 1) speaks Basic German, 7% (n= 1) speaks Good level of German, 7% (n= 1), speaks Very Good level of German, and 7% (n= 1) Native language is German.

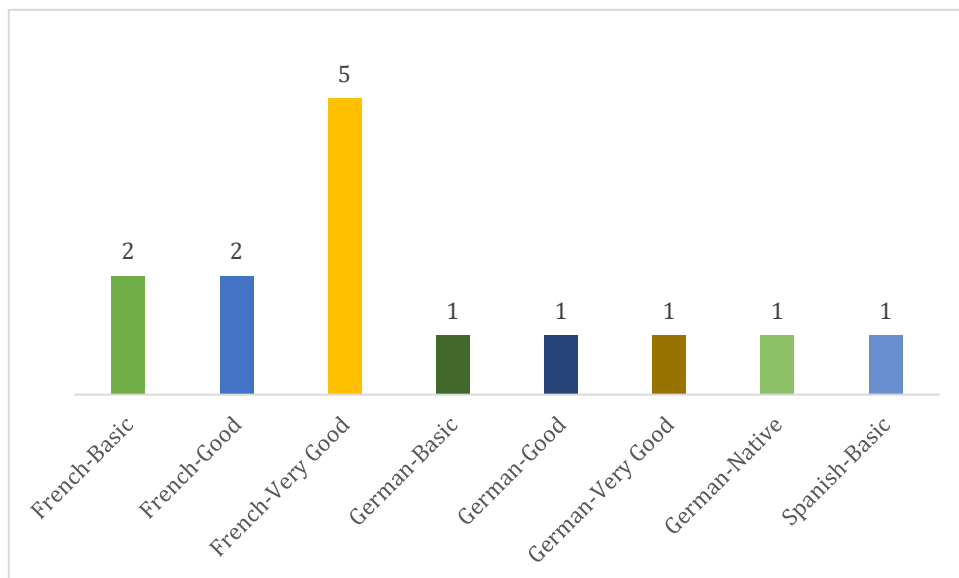


Table 4: Further language level of respondents (N= 14).

The educational level of the respondents, as shown in Table 5, is 70% (n=21) of Bachelor, 23% (n=7) of Master, and 7% (n=2) of Vocational Training.

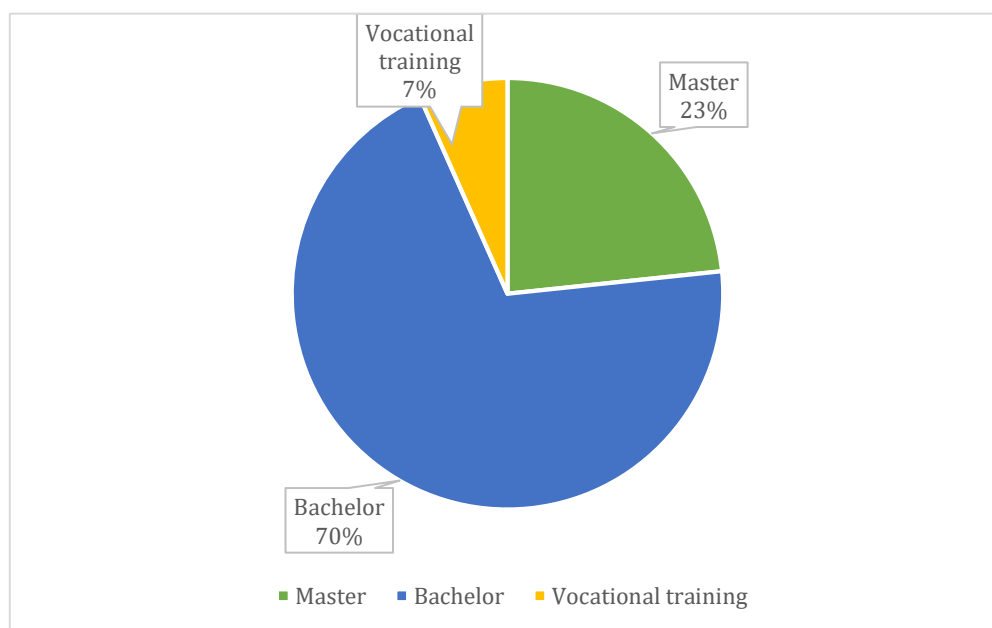


Table 5: Educational level of respondents (N=30).

### 3.3.2. Professional experience

Regarding years of experience, 23% (n=7) of the respondents have 4-6 years, 23% (n=7) have less than one year, 17% (n=5) of 7-9 years, 17% (n=5) of 1-3 years, 10% (n= 3) of 10-15 years, 7% (n=2) of 20 years, and 3% (n= 1) 30 years.

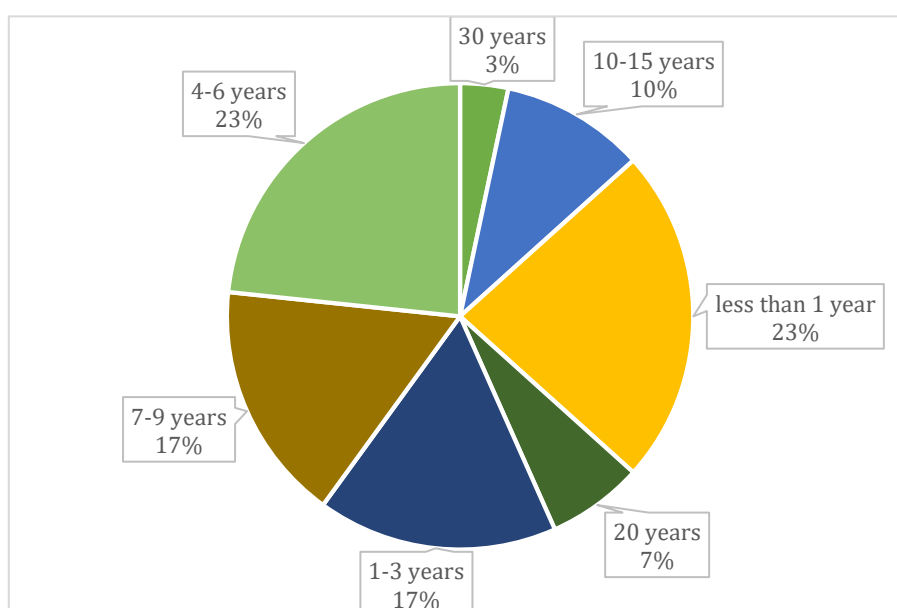


Table 6: Years of experience of respondents (N=30).

Moreover, the current position of the respondents was 87% (n= 26) unemployed, while the rest 13% (n= 4) employed. The employed respondents are working as Assistant, Social media manager and Copywriter, Project manager and Psychologist, and Accounting Assistant. From the four respondents who are employed, only one is working full time, the other 3 are working part time.

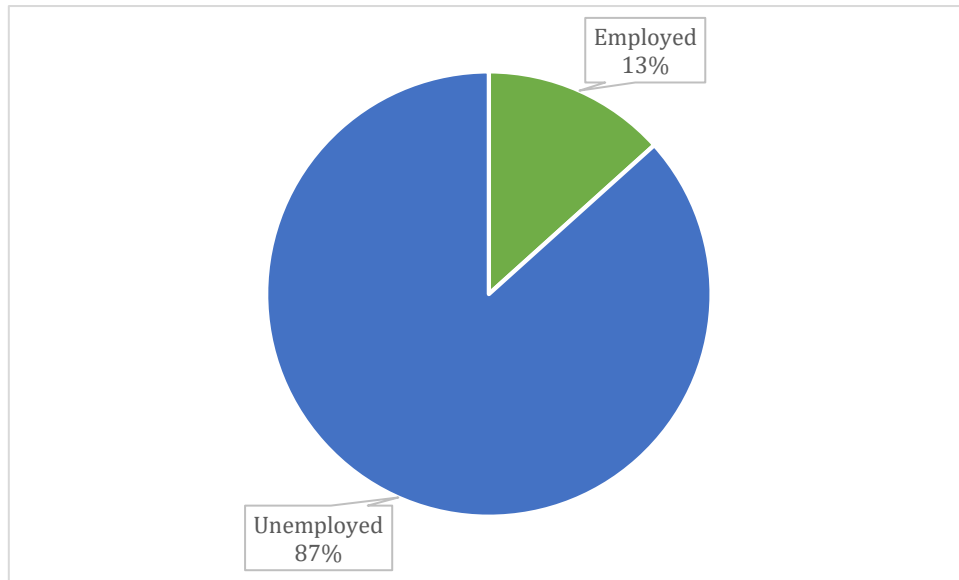


Table 7: Current working status (N=30).

Regarding the question about the difficulties the respondents face in job finding, from the Table 8 we can see that 31% (n=23) of the respondents have lack of opportunities in their areas, 19% (n=14) face difficulties with the life-work balance, 15% (n=11) lack the experience they need for finding a job, 12% (n=9) have to tackle with the difficulties of accessing tools and services for remote working, 10% (n=8) lack of training opportunities, 7% (n=5) lack the knowledge of digital skills, 5% (n=4) have mobility/access problems, and 1%(n=1) thinks there are no enough jobs.



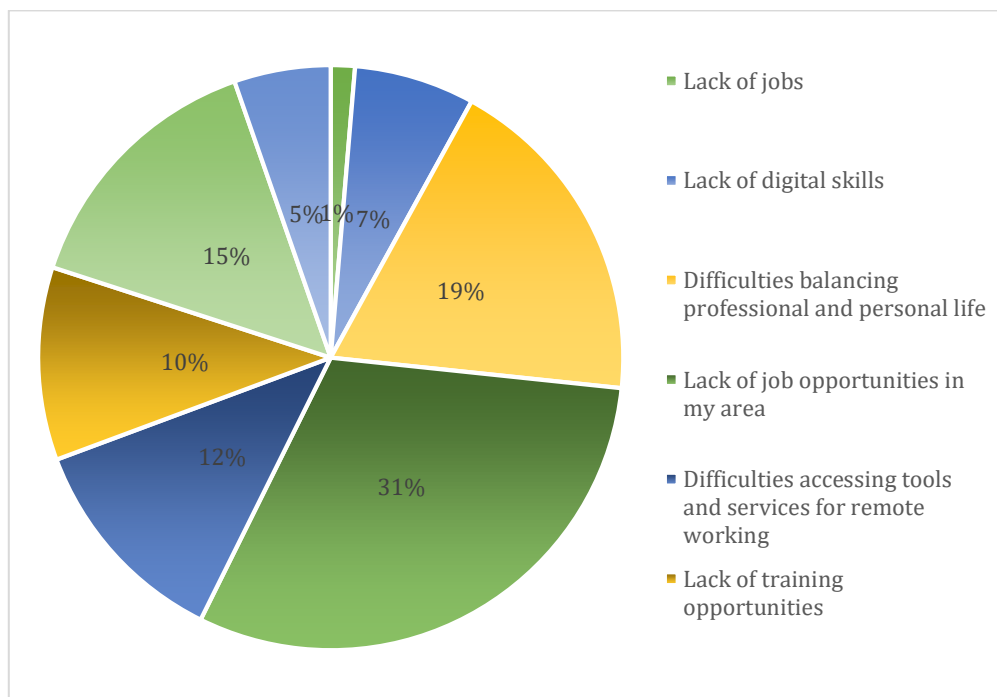


Table 8: Difficulties the respondents face in job finding (N=30).

Regarding the question (Has your way of working or your job changed since COVID-19?), the answers of respondents were 87% (n= 26) of Yes, and 13% (n= 4) of No.

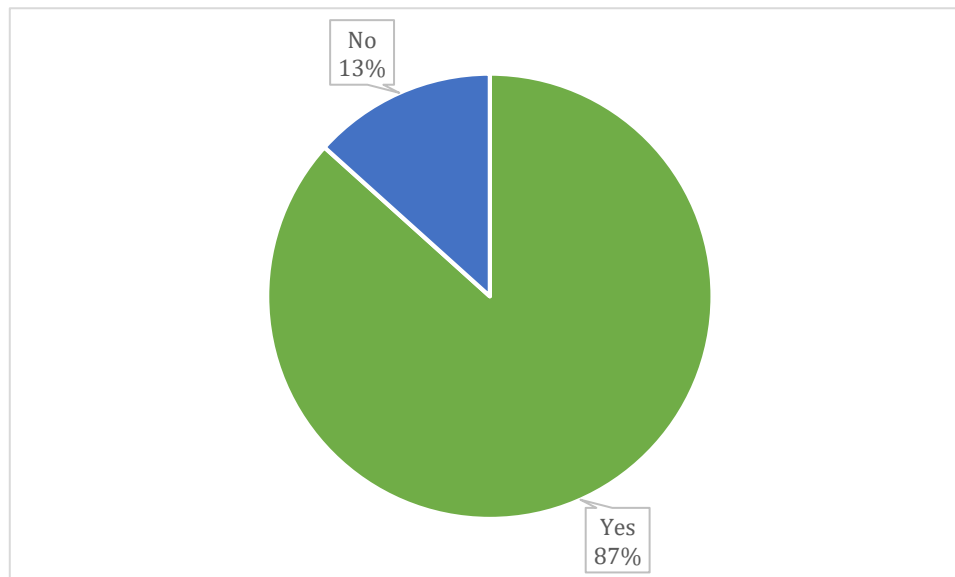


Table 9: Covid-19 impact on respondents' jobs (N=30).

Regarding the question (How did your working or your job changed since COVID-19?), the answers of 37% (n=11) respondents were Work from home, while 23% (n=7) stated that nothing changed, 17% (n=5) stated that there were job cuts while 7% (n=2) transformed their way of work to hybrid, 7% (n=2) stated that there were not enough job opportunities and 3%(n=1) stated that she became a freelancer and 3%(n=1) started her own business, while 3% (n=1) became unemployed.

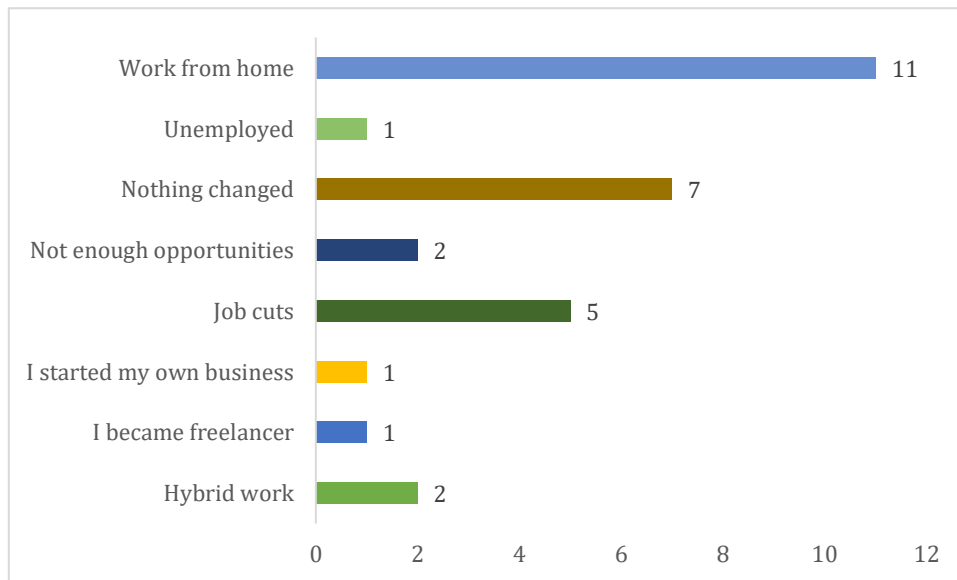


Table 10: Job changes of the respondents (N=30).

Regarding the question (Would you like to change your job/sector?) the answers of 77% (n=23) respondents was Yes, 16% (n=5) was of Maybe and 7% (n=2) was of No.

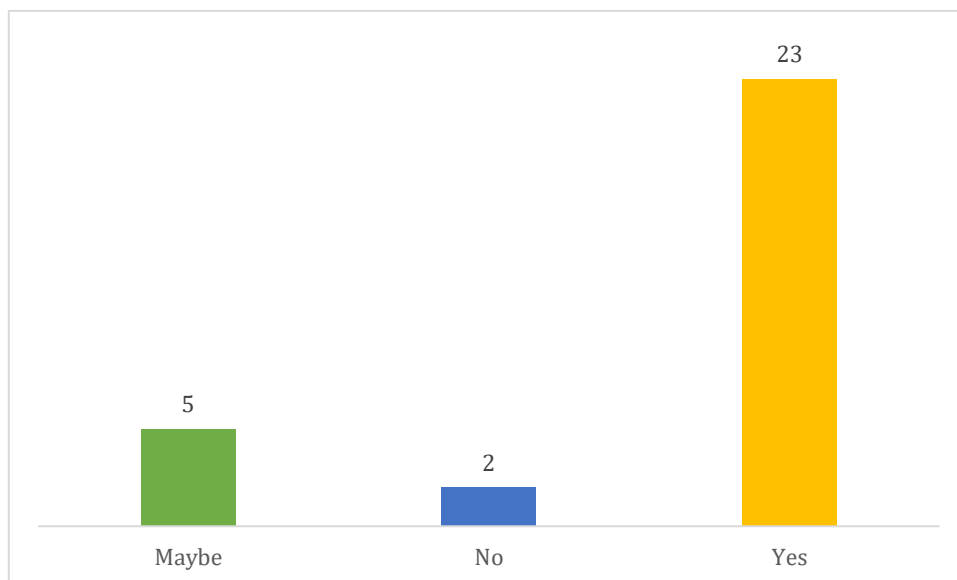


Table 11: Respondents' tension to change their job/sector (N=30).

### 3.3.3. Skills and competencies

As far as the skills and competencies of the respondents are concerned and the question regarding their attendance on upskilling courses or workshops in the last three years, 63% (n=19) stated No and 37% (n=11) stated Yes. The respondents who participated in a course and/or workshop stated that it was on the following topics: Coaching, Project management, Life Skills, Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship, Journalism, Criminology, Mentoring, Soft Skills, Copywriting, Science, Information technology, Digital Marketing, Graphic

Design, Digital skills, Pottery, Public speaking, Marketing, Leadership, Human Resources, Circular Economy, Social Media, Education, Health, Consultancy, Empathy, and Cultural management.

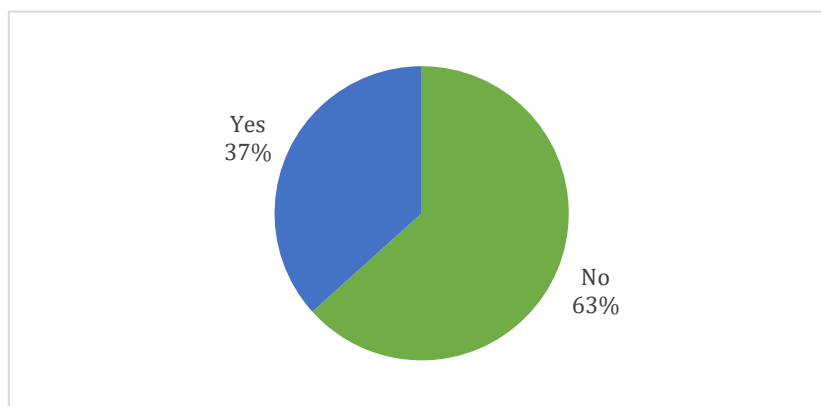


Table 12: Respondents' training the last 3 years (N=30).

The barriers the respondents face in their participation in educational programmes was covered in the next question, where 42% (n=28) stated it's the cost of educational programmes, 21% (n=14) that it's the distance/travel problems, 14% (n=9) the lack of appropriate training material available online, 11% (n=7) the lack of presence of female role models, 8% (n=5) the lack of appropriate and timely information and 4% (n=3) their lack of time.

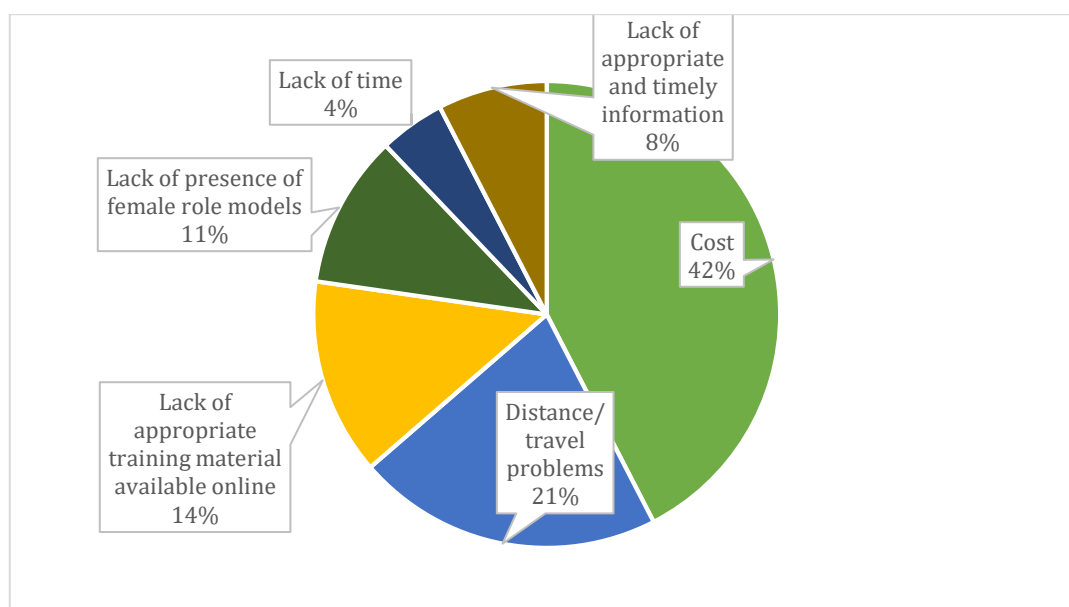


Table 13: Barriers in educational programmes' participation (N=30).

The next session of the questionnaire covers the respondents' digital tools' knowledge. The first question was about their use of computer, laptop, tablet, and any portable device to search for information. 63% (n=19) stated they have very good knowledge, 30% (n=9) good knowledge, and 7% (n=2) basic knowledge.

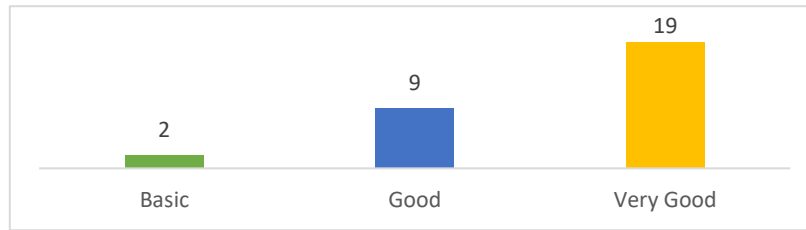


Table 14: Respondents' use of devices to search for information (N=30).

The next question was about their use of digital tools for processing requests/actions related to Public Administration. 37% (n=11) stated they have basic knowledge, 33% (n=10) very good knowledge, and 30% (n=9) good knowledge.

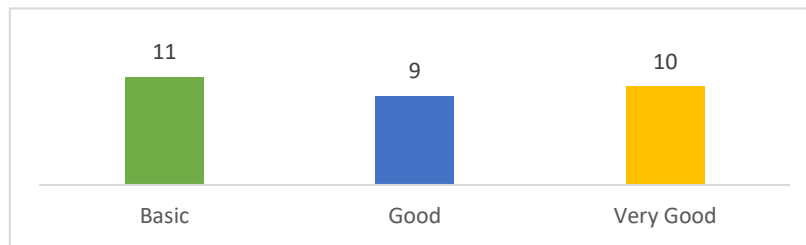


Table 15: Respondents' use of digital tools for processing requests/actions related to Public Administration (N=30).

According to the respondents and the Table 16, their use of digital remote working tools is 47% (n=14) basic, 27% (n=8) good, 23% (n=7) very good and 3% (n=1) is none.

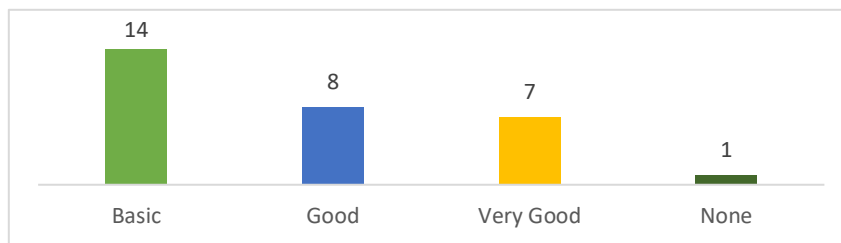


Table 16: Digital remote working tools of respondents (N=30).

According to the respondents and the Table 17, their use of programming and creating application software is 73% (n=22) none, 13% (n=4) basic, 10% (n=3) very good and 3% (n=1) is good.

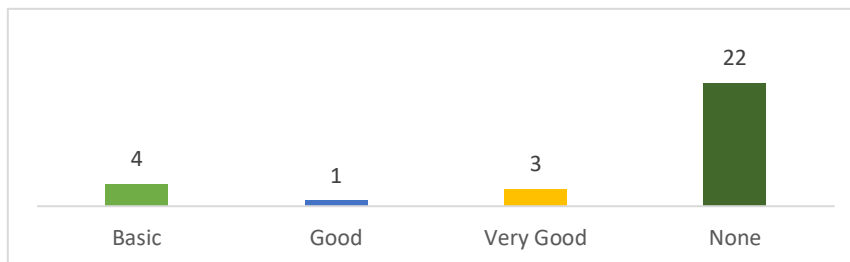


Table 17: Programming and creating application software use of respondents (N=30).

According to the respondents and the Table 18, their use of digital tools for time management is 43% (n=13) basic, 30% (n=9) none, 17% (n=5) good and 10% (n=3) is very good.

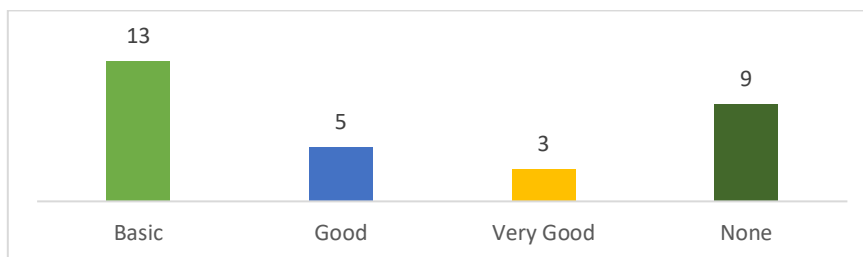


Table 18: Digital tools for time management use of respondents (N=30).

According to the respondents and the Table 19, their use of digital tools for financial management is 60% (n=18) basic, 20% (n=6) none, 10% (n=3) very good and 10% (n=3) is good.

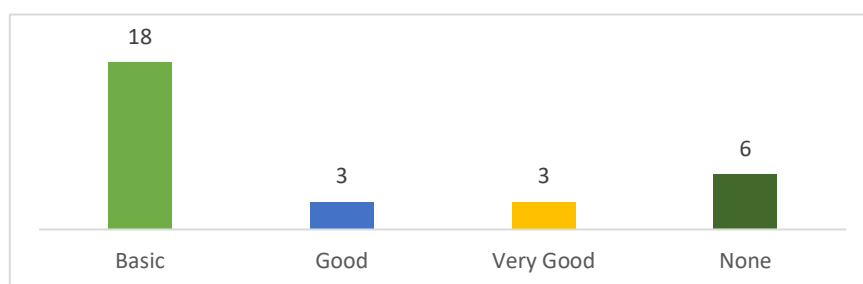


Table 19: Digital tools for financial management use of respondents (N=30).

The software for data analysis use of respondents is 40% (n=12) basic, 36% (n=11) good, 20% (n=6) none and 3% (n=1) very good.

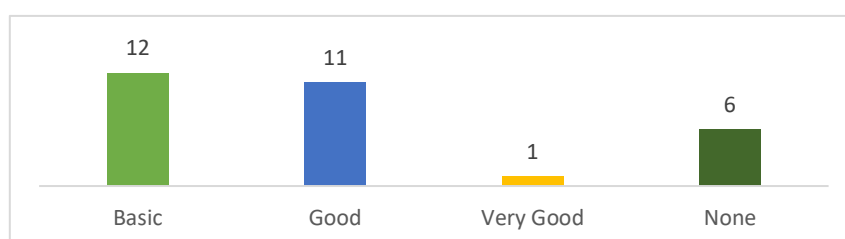


Table 20: Software for data analysis use of respondents (N=30).

The design thinking methodology use of respondents according to the Table 21 is 67% (n=20) good, 23% (n=7) none, 7% (n=2) basic and 3% (n=1) very good.

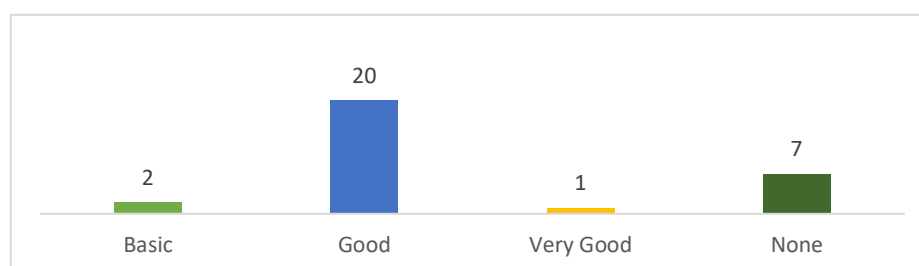


Table 21: Design thinking methodology use of respondents (N=30).

The Marketing strategies use of respondents according to the Table 22 is 37% (n=11) basic and 37% (n=11) none, 13% (n=4) good, 13% (n=4) very good.

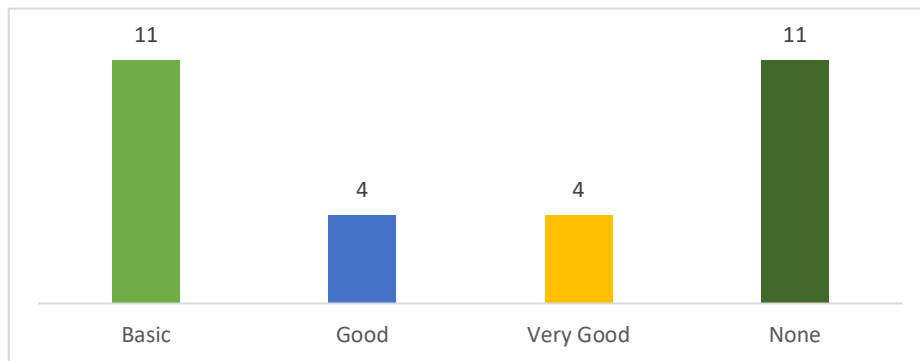


Table 22: Marketing strategies use of respondents (N=30).

The Business Social Media(Facebook-Instagram) use of respondents according to the Table 23 is 53% (n=16) good, 27% (n=8) basic, and 20% (n=6) very good.

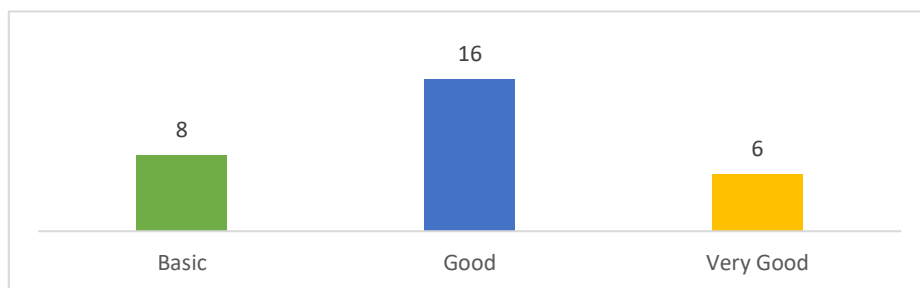


Table 23: Use of Business Social Media (Facebook-Instagram) (N=30).

The use of LinkedIn job research of respondents according to the Table 24 is 37% (n=11) good, 27% (n=8) very good, 20% (n=6) none, and 16% (n=5) of a basic level.

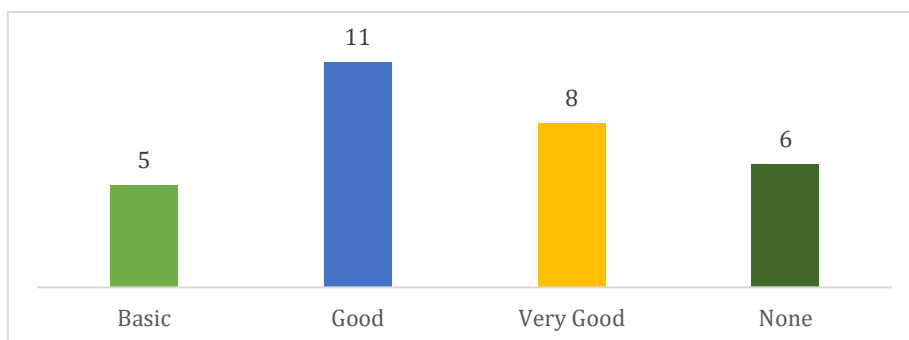


Table 24: Use of LinkedIn for job research (N=30).

The best practices for remote working use of respondents according to the Table 25 is 47% (n=14) none, 27% (n=8) basic, 16% (n=5) very good and 10% (n=3) of a good level.

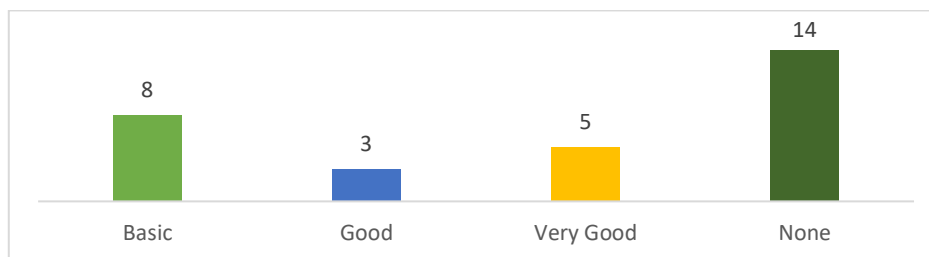


Table 25: Use of best practices for remote working (N=30).

The use of respondents' effective communication according to the Table 26 is 40% (n=12) good, 23% (n=7) basic, 20% (n=6) very good, and 16% (n=5) none.

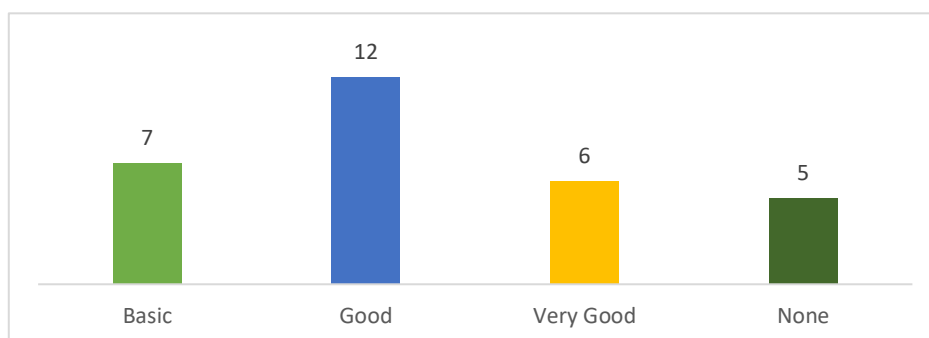


Table 26: Use of effective communication

The upcoming session of the questionnaire covers the respondents' digital learning. The first question, according to Table 27 is about their need of remote working. 77% (n=23) stated that it's extremely important to them, 16% (n=5) important, 3% (n=2) not relevant at all and 3% (n=2) slightly relevant.

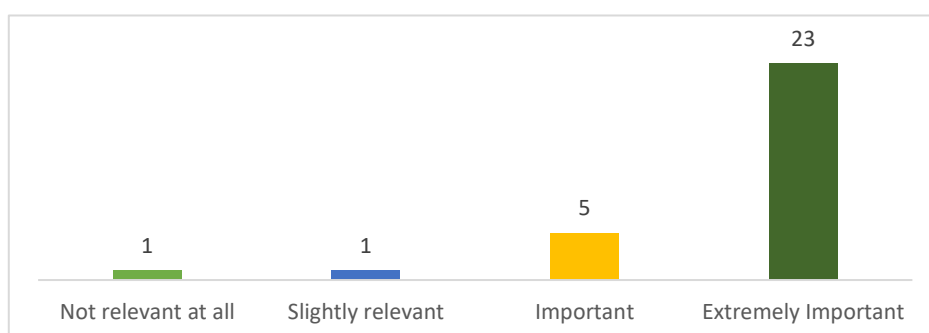


Table 27: Respondents learning need of remote working (N=30).

According to Table 28, the respondents' learning need of website creation is 50% (n=15) important, 30% (n=9) slightly relevant, 10% (n=3) not relevant at all and 10% (n=3) extremely important.

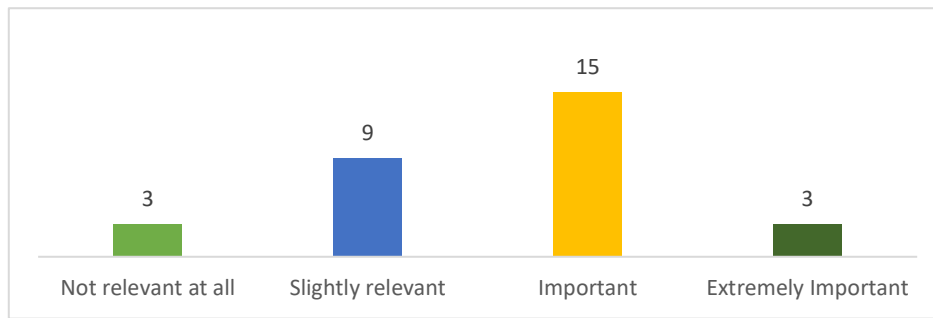


Table 28: Respondents' learning need of website creation (N=30).

According to Table 29, the respondents' learning need of Marketing and Promotion is 40% (n=12) important, 23% (n=7) slightly relevant, 23% (n=7) extremely important and 14% (n=4) not relevant at all.

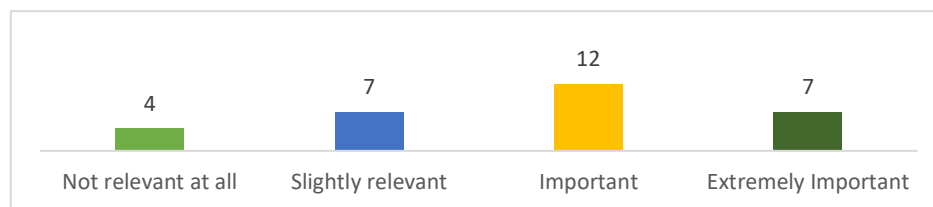


Table 29: Respondents' learning need of Marketing and Promotion (N=30).

According to Table 30, the respondents' learning need of Business Social Media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.) is 57% (n=17) extremely important, 20% (n=6) important, 13% (n=4) slightly relevant and 10% (n=3) not relevant at all.

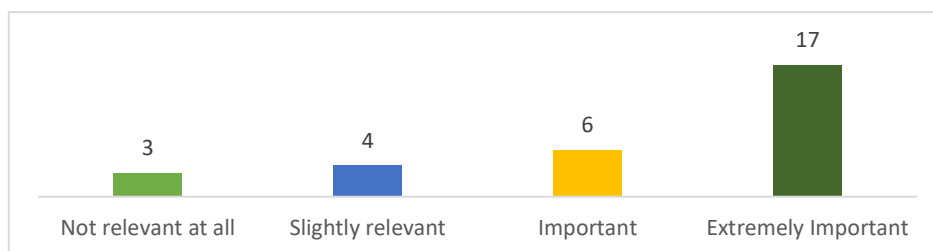


Table 30: Respondents' learning need of Business Social Media (N=30).

According to Table 31, the respondents' learning need of E-commerce is 40% (n=12) slightly relevant, 30% (n=9) important, 17% (n=5) extremely important and 13% (n=4) not relevant at all.

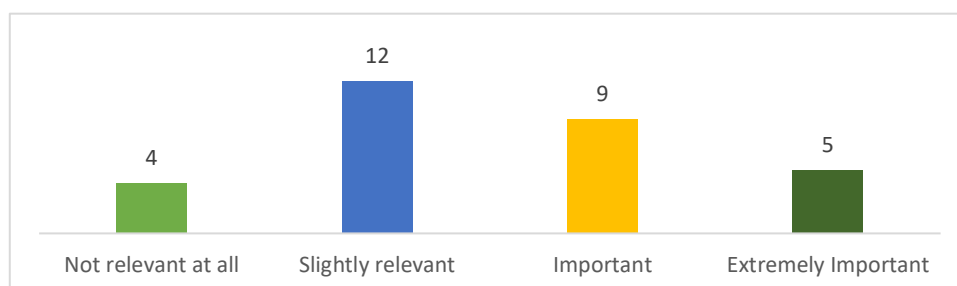


Table 31: Respondents' learning need of E-commerce (N=30).

According to Table 32, the respondents' learning need of Software Development is 47% (n=14) important, 30% (n=9) slightly relevant, 13% (n=4) not relevant at all, and 10% (n=3) extremely important.



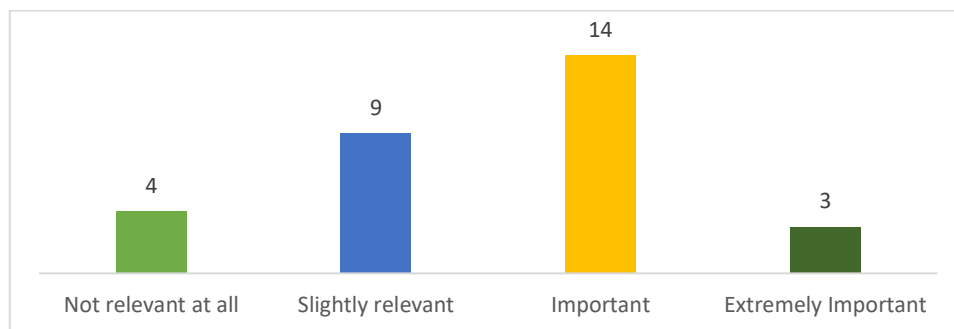


Table 32: Respondents' learning need of Software Development (N=30).

According to Table 33, the respondents' learning need of Creating Presentations is 57% (n=17) extremely important, 33% (n=10) important, 7% (n=2) not relevant at all, and 3% (n=1) slightly relevant.

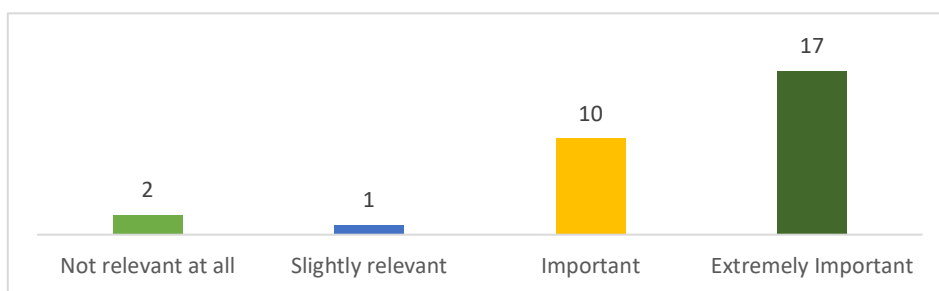


Table 33: Respondents' learning need of Creating Presentations (N=30).

According to Table 34, the respondents' learning need of Design Thinking is 80% (n=24) extremely important, 7% (n=2) important, 7% (n=2) not relevant at all, and 7% (n=2) slightly relevant.

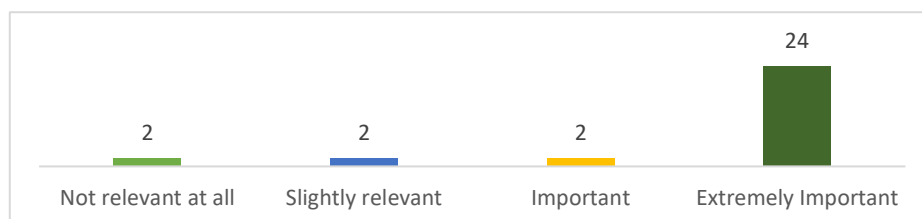


Table 34: Respondents' learning need of Design Thinking (N=30).

According to Table 35, the respondents' learning need of Entrepreneurship and Creativity is 50% (n=15) extremely important, 43% (n=13) important, and 7% (n=2) slightly relevant.

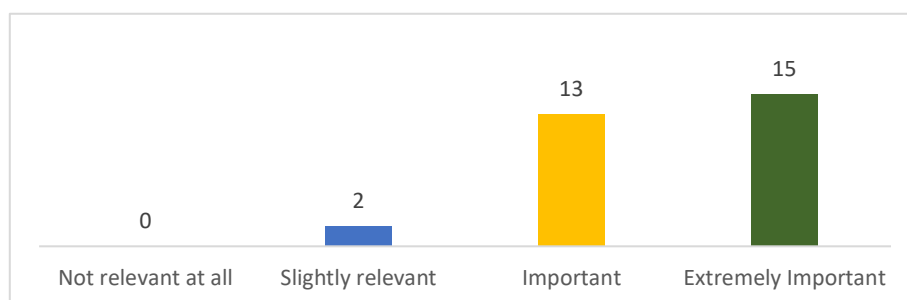


Table 35: Respondents' learning need of Entrepreneurship and Creativity (N=30).

According to Table 36, the respondents' learning need of Financial resources management is 53% (n=16) extremely important, 23% (n=7) important, 17% (n=5) slightly relevant, and 7% (n=2) not relevant at all.

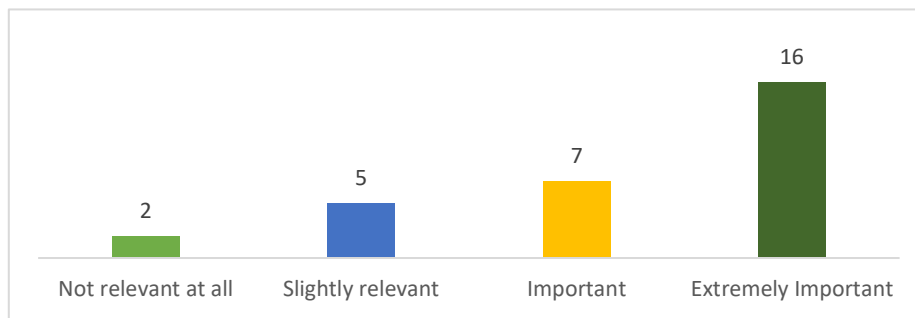


Table 36: Respondents' learning need of Financial resources management (N=30).

According to Table 37, the respondents' learning need of Time management is 67% (n=20) extremely important, 20% (n=6) important, 10% (n=3) slightly relevant, and 3% (n=1) not relevant at all.

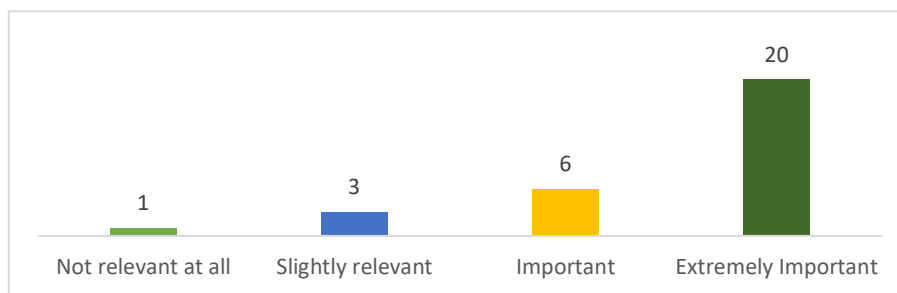


Table 37: Respondents' learning need of Time Management (N=30).

According to Table 38, the respondents' learning need of Strengthening self-confidence/ personal empowerment is 57% (n=17) extremely important, 40% (n=12) important, and 3% (n=1) slightly relevant.

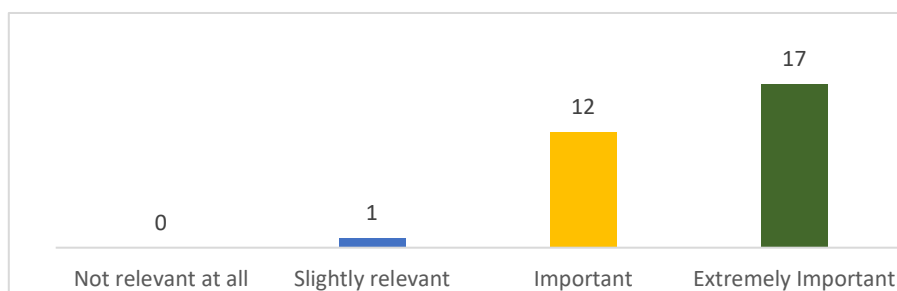


Table 38: Respondents' learning need of Strengthening self-confidence (N=30).

According to Table 39, the respondents' learning need of Targeting is 73% (n=22) extremely important, 17% (n=5) important, 7% (n=2) slightly relevant, and 3% (n=1) not relevant at all.

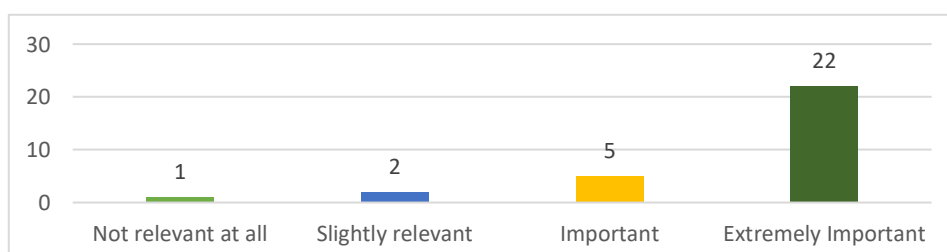


Table 39: Respondents' learning need of Targeting (N=30).

According to Table 40, the respondents' learning need of Creating motivation is 57% (n=17) extremely important, 36% (n=11) important, and 7% (n=2) slightly relevant.

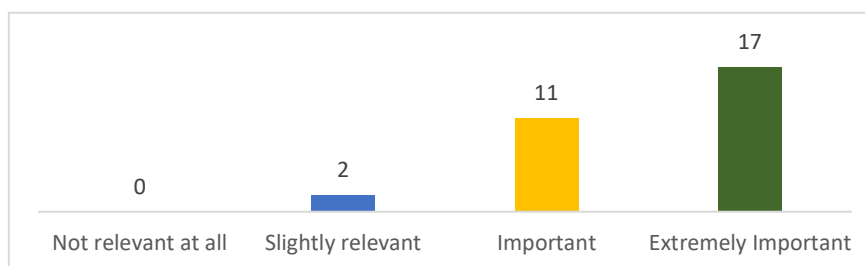


Table 40: Respondents' learning need of Creating motivation (N=30).

According to Table 41, the respondents' learning need of Incentives and motivation is 57% (n=17) important, 33% (n=10) extremely important, and 10% (n=3) slightly relevant.

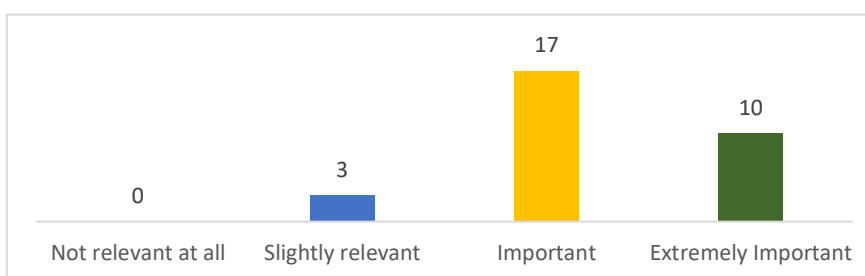


Table 41: Respondents' learning need of Incentives and motivation (N=30).

According to Table 42, the respondents' learning need of Work-life balance is 80% (n=24) extremely important, 10% (n=3) important, 7% (n=2) slightly relevant, and 3% (n=1) not relevant at all.

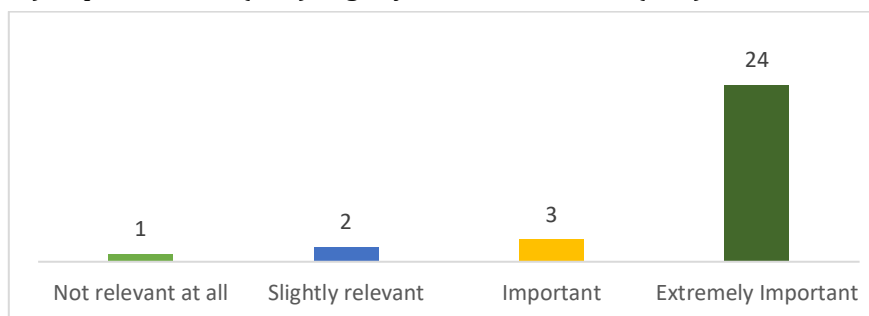


Table 42: Respondents' learning need of Work-life balance (N=30).

According to Table 43, the respondents' learning need of understanding and explaining data (tables, figures, statistics) is 30% (n=9) important, 30% (n=9) slightly relevant, 27% (n=8) not relevant at all, and 13% (n=4) extremely important.

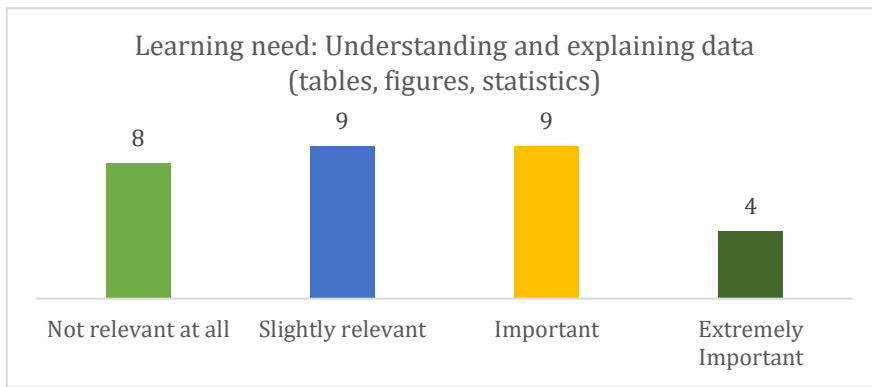


Table 43: Respondents' learning need of Data analysis (N=30).

According to Table 44, the respondents' learning need of active listening, empathy and feedback is 40% (n=12) important, 33% (n=10) extremely important, 20% (n=6) slightly relevant, and 7% (n=2) not relevant at all.

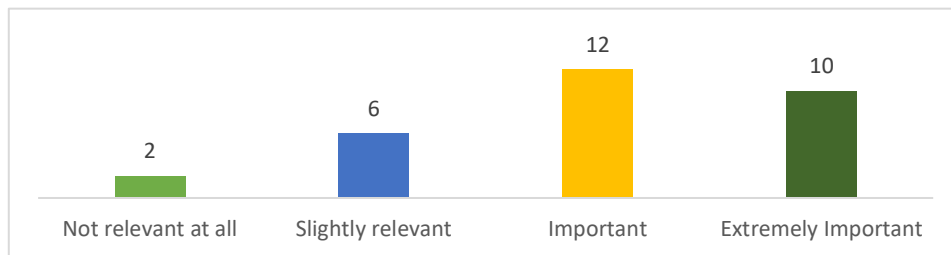


Table 44: Respondents' learning need of Active listening, empathy and feedback (N=30).

According to Table 45, the respondents' learning need of digital tools related to public administration is 36% (n=11) not relevant at all, 36% (n=11) slightly relevant, 18% (n=5) important, and 10% (n=3) extremely important.

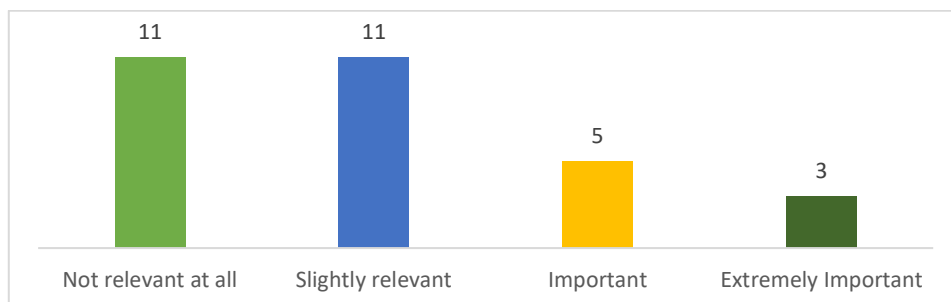


Table 45: Respondents' learning need of Digital tools related to Public Administration (N=30).

According to Table 46, the respondents' learning need of CV Preparation is 50% (n=15) extremely important, 30% (n=9) important, 17% (n=5) slightly relevant, and 3% (n=1) not relevant at all.

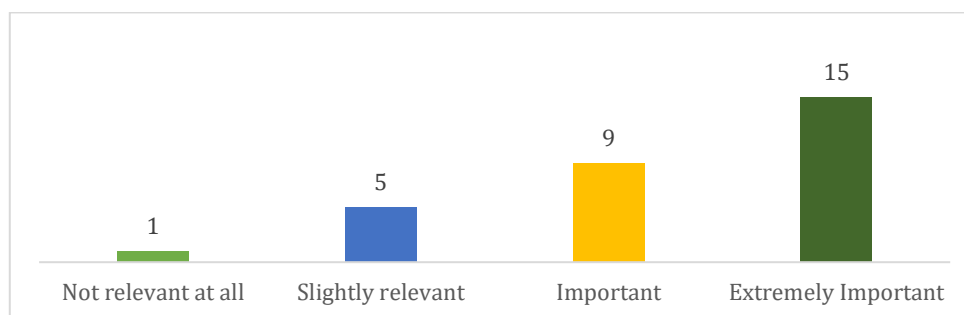


Table 46: Respondents' learning need of Preparation of a CV (N=30).

In accordance with the findings of the research, women from a variety of specialties believe that they must be trained in digital tools to further develop their digital skills and (re)enter the labour market. This belief is based on the lack of support for digital tool training, their inexperience with designing and implementing digital courses, and their limited use of digital tools throughout their working experience

## 4. Part B: the point of view of the stakeholders

### 1.1. Methodological framework and objective

The second part of the research focused on the collection of feedback on behalf for the stakeholders, as they have been identified at proposal level. In particular, Foundation reached out to AE providers, career advisors, CSOs. The objective was to collect the opinions and expertise from professionals who work with women who wish to (re-)integrate the labour market and the challenges they face. Feedback from professionals who work at grass-roots level is essential to be able to validate the obstacles, as these were identified by the women and to understand the options which are available, as well as the tools that these professionals have at their disposal.

### 1.2. Reaching out and engaging the stakeholders

In the context of this part of the research. Foundation organised a focus group inviting selected stakeholder representatives. The focus group was held online and lasted for 3 hours. To organise it, Foundation reached out to their direct network of collaborators and asked for their contribution. The discussion was quite productive and validated to a significant extent the inputs provided by the respondents of the questionnaire.

### 1.3. Proceedings of the focus group and feedback collected

To conduct the focus group, the partners developed a questionnaire, which was used as a guidelines document to initiate and guide the group throughout the session. The moderator, a representative from Foundation, followed the structure that was created by the consortium to guide the participants through the discussion and to ensure that all topics were addressed.

Regarding the support from policies and the legal framework, the participants unanimously agreed that women are not quite supported by the existing policies and laws, especially the mothers. All relevant stakeholders agreed that the system does not cater for working mothers who do not have extra support by their family environment or paid help. In the same context and with the absence of a concrete legislative

framework related to flexible working methods, women are faced with the dilemma of becoming stay at home mothers or lose most part of their income at day care.

When it comes to the labour market, the position of women, both in terms of the pay gap, as well as the glass ceiling, is not secured by the legislative framework; they both remain as objectives in the strategy for gender equality, though.

Finally, no specific provisions are made for women in terms of their training/ learning or psychological support, when it is considered necessary.

The integration of young women into the labour market in Greece is disappointing. Even before the pandemic, more than 40% of young women aged 25-34 did not work. The absence of women, especially younger ones, is a significant structural problem of the Greek economy and limits its development prospects. The government, even though undertook measures to manage the impact of the pandemic, it did not make any specific provisions for women, who had to undertake the management of the household and many of them were forced to quit their paid job. The stakeholders all agreed that the situation for women, following the pandemic, seems to be much worse when they need to access the labour market.

As far as stereotypes are concerned, it was mutually corroborated by the participants that the Greek society is a quite patriarchal one, This reflects on the fact that many women still are forced to leave their job in order to take care of the family and the household, they face limitations in terms of their career development (the so-called glass ceiling), as well as the income they receive for same or similar positions as those held by men. In this context, the stakeholders mentioned that the most frequent obstacles they face when working with women who try to (re-)integrate the labour market are:

- Lack of digital skills, which would increase their employability potential.
- Lack of information in terms of available trainings/ seminars, which could help them, enhance their skills and improve their chances of finding a job.
- Lack of sufficient and appropriate opportunities, especially for women who live away from big cities.

In addition, the stakeholders implied that government support is not sufficient to ensure that women, especially in the regions, have enough employment opportunities, especially ones that would help them achieve meaningful professional objectives. Another point made by the stakeholders during the meeting was the fact that the majority of Greek employers prefer men for top/ management/ leadership positions, leaving for women more procedural/ administrative ones. The glass ceiling is even more pronounced, as a phenomenon, in the regions, where the stereotypes are much more asserted.

Some participants mentioned that these social stereotypes have also affected how women see themselves and the goals they set for their professional lives. This has led them in being discouraged and not pursuing a better professional future for themselves. They do not seek to acquire and/ or enhance marketable skills and they are much more focused on getting any job, to be able to contribute to the family income, while having as main obligation their household.

Civil Society Organisations even though they undertake significant field work, they usually lack sufficient funds to provide concrete solutions to the women they work with. Therefore, their work is limited to the provision of guidance and counselling services, and is therefore not extended to the provision of concrete solutions of labour market integration. The same applies to career counsellors and AE providers. All focus groups participants agreed that more should be implemented at policy level to support women who wish to integrate the labour market and, most importantly those who wish to pursue a career fulfilling for them, in terms of their personal goals.

Apart from the issues with funds, stakeholders indicated as additional obstacles to carry out the lack of specialised personnel and difficulties in professional development trainings for their current personnel, lack of state support for their operations and professional development.

## 5. Part C: Analysis of interventions at policy and institutional level

### 1.4. Statistical data on women employment

Women's participation in the labour market is lower than men's in all EU countries, according to European Commission. Women tend to work fewer hours, in lower-paying industries, and in lower-paying professions than males, resulting in a considerable income and earnings difference. These disparities are a result of the conventional roles of women and men, as well as economic incentives. Therefore, increasing women's labour market engagement and employment rates is critical to meet Gender Equality Strategy's priorities of 2020-2025 (1) and the Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the United Nation (2), to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. This can help to improve economic growth while also reducing the hazards that an aging population poses to society and public finances.

Gender equality is not just a basic human right, but also a prerequisite for a world that is peaceful, affluent, and sustainable, therefore efforts are also required to address gender inequities and progress toward a two-tier paradigm in which both men and women can be working parents who also care for dependents. With a combination of legislation, policy guidance, and financial support, the EU encourages greater gender equality in the labour market (3).

As for Greece, the academics emphasize the urgent necessity to take measures to boost the income of women employee, while Eurostat data shows that women workers have been struck harder than males by the pandemic's consequences. (4). Given the economic and social consequences of the 2010s crisis and, more recently, the pandemic, a robust economic recovery on a sustainable route is a task that Greece must address immediately. To that aim, human capital mobilization must be a primary policy focus. More than 40% of young women aged 25 to 34 were unemployed even prior to the pandemic, making women's absence, particularly among young women, a key structural problem in Greece's economy, limiting its growth prospects (5). This issue is further illuminated by a new study on the youth inclusion and gender equality in the Greek labour market by ELIAMEP and the Norwegian research institute Fafo (6).

According to the research, due to negative demographic trends and the wave of migration that occurred during the crisis, Greece's youth population has decreased over the last two decades. As a result, the number of young people employed in Greece has decreased substantially. The reduction in participation rates has been more gradual and concentrated among younger age groups (15-24), who stay in school longer and hence enter the labour market later in life. Young people nowadays are clearly better educated than past generations, despite their small populations. The proportion of workers with a high school diploma or less has decreased, while the proportion of economically active tertiary graduates has climbed dramatically. Furthermore, for highly educated young people, both employment chances and unemployment protection improved during the 2010 crisis(6).

Despite the fact that young women are still less economically active than males, their share of the labour market has risen in the last two decades. Two factors may contribute to this trend in the future: (a) young women have more educational qualifications than young men, accounting for roughly 60% of recent post-secondary vocational and higher education graduates; and (b) increased opportunities for flexible employment following the crisis may also contribute to a higher female employment rate, as women tend to work part-time (5). Both criteria are linked to gender discrimination in some way. Leaving the labour market because of family obligations is linked to patriarchal values that are still prevalent in Greek society. The situation is worsened by the lack of adequate governmental support services for young families, which forces many young women to leave the workforce to care for their children. The low demand for female labour is also linked to the issue of maternity leave, as many employers are hesitant to hire young women who are expecting to have children in the near future.

Discrimination, on the other hand, is not restricted to the labour market. Even once they have found work, women face discrimination. Pregnancy/maternity issues appear to be the most common source of dispute

between working women and their employers, according to official complaint data. Furthermore, there is a pay disparity between men and women that is estimated in the study to be roughly 10% without taking into consideration other criteria (e.g., age, educational level, etc.) (5).

Another intriguing conclusion is that employed women consider all forms of discrimination (e.g., racial, age, sexual orientation, etc.) to be more significant barriers to advancement in their careers than men. To the extent that this conclusion implies that women are more sensitive to all forms of discrimination than men, it implies that gender functions as a "filter" for all forms of discrimination, leaving women more vulnerable to discriminatory behaviours overall.

Young women are unable to enhance their skills due to the problems they confront in integrating into the labour market. This is not only unjust, but also counterproductive, because young women are the most educated segment of the population, accounting for 60% of recent post-secondary vocational and higher education graduates. As a result of all of this, and despite their improved educational levels, 39% of women aged 30-34 claim they are still financially supported by their family in the opinion study (6).

Under these conditions, Greek society suffers twice, because, in addition to having a significant negative impact on the economy's performance and prospects, underemployment of young women undermines their economic autonomy and, as a result, their ability to achieve their goals and ambitions, not only professionally, but also personally and familiarly, with wider negative social - and demographic - consequences. Women's and young people's underemployment are a great disadvantage for Greece, while their incorporation into the workforce would enhance their well-being, fostering social and intergenerational harmony, and providing significant resources to the economy, boosting their productive capacity and growth potential.

## **1.5.Support provided at government level**

Based on the monthly data on the mobility of the ERGANI system that has been supplied to date, recruitments decreased by 29.83% in 2020, dismissals decreased by 29.96 basis points, and new positions (balance of recruitment and dismissals) increased by 27.14%. Statistics show significant differences in new jobs by gender (-30 % for men and -24% for women), age (+32% for 55-64 year olds, +9% for 45-54, -15 % for 35-44, -29 % for 25-34 and -24 percent for women), age (+32 % for 55-64 year olds, +9% for 45-54, -15 % for 35-44, -29 percent for 25-34 and -24 percent for women), age (+32 % for 55-64 36 % for those aged 15 to 24, as well as their employment status (+32 % full-time, -72 % part-time). (7).

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant negative influence on the labour market, particularly in new employment involving women aged 25-34 years (-185% from 2019), primarily in the occupation in the provision of personal and catering services. Occupations involving 35-54-year-olds, particularly women in the health and public administration, had a beneficial impact on full-time jobs because of the pandemic (7).

There are statistically significant differences in new positions by sector (+576% for Public Administration, +107% for Construction, +50% for Health, -176% for Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, -92% for Accommodation and Food Services), -186% Sales Specialists, Brokers, Real Estate Agents, -136% persons engaged in scientific, artistic, and related activities primarily actors and directors, +87% street vendors, domestic helpers, primarily cleaners and removers, +89% drivers, + 83% technologists and technical assistants biological and health science technicians, +124% building construction and finishing tradesmen and other construction works (7).

The Report on the Greek Economy's Development Plan (8) recognizes that women's poor participation in the labour force is a serious issue for the Greek economy, one that has a significant impact on productivity due to the high average education level of those who are unemployed. The low participation rate is due to women's historically low involvement and early retirement, as well as prejudice experienced by women of childbearing age from both men and women of working age. Moreover, women are more than twice as likely as men to be employed, according to the Greek National Statistical Service (ELSTAT), with 32% versus 14.6%, respectively (2018).



Career disruption is a unique issue. Women are more likely to take time off work to care for their children (49.7% vs. 4%), with 10.9% of women having never worked because of this. Based on the above facts, we can understand that due to low unemployment and a lack of suitable jobs, women are underrepresented in the workforce.

The solution to that is the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025 (9), which was developed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025's four Priority Axes has a distinct focus and addresses a different component of gender equality policy. Preventing and combating gender stereotypes and discrimination is woven into all axes because it must be considered and emphasized in all topical policies and efforts. The thematic priority axes are as follows:

- Priority Axis 1 focuses on measures to protect women from all sorts of abuse, such as public education and awareness-raising, as well as education and training for individuals in positions of responsibility. The Istanbul Convention's principles and criteria guide this priority axis.
- Priority Axis 2, Equal Participation in Decision-Making, and Leadership Roles, emphasizes increasing women's representation and power in political and social arenas, as well as increasing their participation in public life, empowering girls, and highlighting role models of successful women who have developed their activities and distinguished themselves in all areas.
- Through equal pay, the prevention of discrimination based on maternity and childcare, and the balance of professional and private life, is the focus of Priority Axis 3 which aims to achieve equal participation of women in the labour market to reduce a wide range of disparities in employment and occupational segregation.
- Integration of a gender perspective into all elements of sectoral policies is the fourth Priority Axis, which requires close engagement with key ministries and public organizations, as well as local governments. Gender equality is promoted in budgeting and policy planning for specific disadvantaged social groups and populations, as well as in the realms of education, health, sport, and culture, as well as in the media. Priority 4 on the Gender Equality axis includes, among other things, enhancing the provision of gender-sensitive data and surveys to aid in the monitoring, planning, and design of measures to achieve gender equality.

Through the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025(9), emphasis is placed on the effort to highlight the new challenges in view of modern technological developments and the fourth Industrial Revolution, which create new demands in the field of the economy, education, labour and technology, in order to make the importance of women's involvement in this new environment, and the multiplier effects that are expected to result from the increase in the number of women's presence in all these areas.

## 1.6.Support provided at Programme level

Each thematic axis of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025(9) is expressed in terms of precise aims that, to the greatest extent possible, meet all or some of the fundamental qualitative features of effective target setting and they are quantitative, relevant, realistic, and attainable within a specific time frame. Some of the initiatives offered are mentioned below:

### 1. #GIL4W

The Ministry of Development and Investment is working closely with and supporting the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs' initiative to establish the "Innovation Centre for Women - #GIL4W," led by Deputy Minister of Labour in charge of Demographic Policy and the Family, Ms Maria Syrengela. This initiative intends to bring together governmental and social partners, stakeholders, and market actors on a thematic level, while also assuring them that the adoption of technology and innovation will not create social and economic inequality.

The initiative aims, among other things, to:

- Enhance the innovative actions to encourage more girls to study STEM and aim to increase the number of girls studying STEM subjects, increasing the participation of women in research-based businesses.
- Establish a platform for entrepreneurship growth that will allow equal participation in the development of high-tech-based businesses in the new environment defined by constant technological evolution, with a focus on female talent.
- Use a data-based approach for examining the gender impact of policies.

In addition, the Ministry of Development and Investment plans and implements a range of actions to promote gender equality and strengthen the eliminating gender discrimination, including:

## **2. National Council for Research , Technology, and Innovation (NCRI) (10)**

Reconstitution of the National Council for Research, Technology, and Innovation (NCRI), as the State's highest advisory body on research and technology innovation, with the participation of 7 women from the field of Research and innovative enterprises.

## **3. Creation of the National Register of Start-ups "Elevate Greece" (11)**

Elevate Greece is the gateway to the Greek's start-up ecosystem. It aims at strengthening, developing and extroversion of Greek start-ups. Its main objective is to promote start-ups' networking at international level. It also records their progress based on critical indicators, making start-ups an attraction for investment angels and businesses from Greece and abroad. The aim of Elevate Greece is, among other things, to highlight start-ups involving women entrepreneurs. In this context, the first Elevate Greece Start-up Entrepreneurship Awards are planned, with a specially designed award for Women's Innovative Entrepreneurship.

Regarding start-ups, according to the European Start-up Monitor, only 8% of start-ups have an all-female founding team and 25% have a founding team with at least one woman. According to the first findings, the situation in Greece is expected to be similar or even worse (Elevate Greece has not yet completed the research of start-ups).

This disparity can be reduced through the promotion of international initiatives such as:

- Women Tech (12) EU programme, which could help towards empowering women in positions around technology and science.
- The European VC Fund Managers Group (13)
- HORIZON (14) programmes that exclusively target women with aiming at strengthening self-confidence.

The Ministry of National Defence participates in the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025 with the following proposed actions:

## **4. Creation of an office for the prevention and treatment of sexual violence**

The prevention and treatment of sexual violence office will be aligned with the US Army methodology (SAPRO), with appropriate organization and channels of communication (by telephone or via the Internet) with the employees who want support for incidents of harassment or abuse, taking place in the work environment. The staff of the office will be scientists from various disciplines (lawyers, psychologists and sociologists) ensuring that reports are properly managed and the support of victims who will need assistance.

## **5. Systematic human resources development (training)**

Additional systemic human resources training as a "Gender Advisor," leading to subsequent positions of management of gender issues. Their job is to advise and guide management to ensure that the gender component is properly integrated into all elements of military life (training, missions, operations, thinking). The Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO) in Sweden is responsible for the training of Gender Advisors (GENADs).

## **1.7.Support provided by CSOs**

Women are supported by Civil Society Organizations in a variety of ways. In 2021, the EU's gender equality report featured the following good examples from Greece:

### **1. Supporting victims of gender-based violence**

The SURVIVOR Project in Greece, which is co-funded by the EU's Rights, Equality, and Citizenship project, has been strengthening services for refugee and migrant survivors of gender-based violence since 2018. Women who are refugees or migrants are more likely to be victims of violence and have fewer options for self-defense. Many women and girls are unaware of their rights, unable to inform themselves, or socially isolated, which contributes to their increased susceptibility. The SURVIVOR project's goals were to improve the quality of services for refugee and migrant victims of gender-based violence in Greece, as well as their accessibility to such services. The Survivor Website offers toolkits and other tools for European agencies and practitioners working on refugee integration and resettlement.

### **2. DIONE: DIsmissal & unfavourable treatment of wOMen in Greek Workplace : Adopting an INtegrated and SystEmic approach of intervention**

Indicatively, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs participated as a partner in the implementation of the project co-funded by the European Commission (GRANT AGREEMENT - NUMBER - 831636) within the framework of the RIGHTS EQUALITY AND CITIZENSHIP 2014-2020 programme of the Directorate General Justice and Consumer Affairs Directorate General of the European Commission. DIONE (15) attempts to address issues such as women's dismissal during and after pregnancy, as well as their mistreatment while on parental leave. The initiative intends to assist not only women who have been victims of discriminatory practices, but also competent public agencies and other labour market actors, by developing an online information portal. The target group of the project is:

- a) Women who require accurate information about the laws that protect them from any violation or attempt to violate their rights in the workplace due to motherhood or pregnancy.
- b) Working parents who require individualized assistance in determining whether they have been discriminated against.
- c) Government officials and professionals, as well as human resources employment companies, who may require a practical tool in their work.
- d) Private entities, employers, human resources executives, career counsellors, start-ups, and others who require specific information and help to comply with the legal framework governing pregnancy and maternity protection.

DIONE takes an integrated ICT-based and systemic approach by bringing together an interdisciplinary group of partners to develop common solutions in a social, legal, and political environment marked by unpredictability and volatility.

### **3. Support of employability and social entrepreneurship**

The project was funded by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) (16) and focused on two goals.

a) On empowering and supporting women from refugee backgrounds, as well as motivating community members in refugee camps and the city.

b) The goal was to provide support for company ideas produced by the participants themselves after a series of workshops on employability difficulties. Then, using specialized cognitive tools, we attempted to link the participants' existing skills to the demands produced from the labor market. Simultaneously, project members improved their organizational abilities, which they put to the test by organizing events such as International Women's Day.

The project's working cycle was completed by adapting it to the conditions and requirements of the pandemic period. In reality, with the kind support of the UUSC, a portion of the money was used to satisfy the demands of a fundraising campaign launched by the Greek Forum of Refugees to combat pandemic concerns that afflicted the most vulnerable.

### **4. Improving work-life balance and narrowing the gender care gap**

Greece launched the "Neighbourhood Nannies" project in July 2020 as part of a policy to seek a better balance between work and family life. It provides licensed nurse-led childcare for infants up to 2.5 years of age, with the goal of implementing it across the country between 2021 and 2027. The project gives financial assistance to parents as part of a pilot phase in several cities, which can be used to pay for a qualified nurse to care for their new-born at their house or at the nurse's site. This project aims to help parents achieve a better work-life balance. It also creates job possibilities for jobless childcare experts and promotes pathways to official employment for people working in the childcare sector, lowering the amount of undocumented work in the industry. A specialized platform has been established to offer service employees with the necessary credentials to secure the safety of the youngsters in their care.

### **5. Womentors**

WOMENTORS (17) is a programme that aims at the multifaceted empowerment of young women through education and capacity building for greater participation, decision-making, power and action, in order to take full control of their lives in relation to their economic activity, the public/political space at their disposal, the harmonization of work with personal time, the safeguarding of their rights at work and in all areas of their life and health.

As far as the decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic is concerned, seven Member States have so far adopted mandatory national quotas for the under-represented sex for listed companies with Greece being the latest addition to this list in 2020.

## 6. Conclusions

The analysis of the findings from the three level research carried out in the context of the EMPOWERED Project, validate that much needs to be done in Greece to start dealing with the gender inequalities, especially in the labour market. The stereotypes that the Greek society still hasn't found a way to break, create important obstacles for women. These have been even further aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the adopted measures to contain its spread. The way that people work has changed, as has the way that people connect with each other. The pandemic has brought about the urgent need for digital upskilling that has been on the table for over a decade, and which has not been quite sufficiently addressed.

It is one of the reasons why (re-)integrating the labour market has been challenging for some population categories, and especially long-term unemployed women. Having spent a long period outside work and training, they need a different skillset to be in the position to achieve employment status. Reskilling and upskilling training programmes, as it has been indicated by the questionnaire respondents, are either too expensive or too far from the women who wish to attend them.

The strategy for gender equality, which was developed during the lockdown period, highlights the importance of addressing the gaps created both by the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution and the pandemic and put much effort on addressing them. What can be deduced is that the problem has been identified and the need to tackle it has been manifested, however, what now needs to be undertaken is concrete action towards this direction.

The EMPOWERED project remains relevant in terms of its objectives and in alignment with the Greek Strategy for gender equality. In addition, based on the replies of the respondents, the training topics identified are also validated.

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**The EMPOWERED consortium:**

