

A SELF-TEACHING-SCHOOL to prepare for the official Certificate of Care work

An example of good practice from the Basque Country, Spain:
MENTSAD Project of the Group SSI (Bilbao)

Context

Our society is aging and there are more and more elderly persons who need support and care. In the Basque Country and in Spain, the vast majority of elderly and their families want the older person to receive care at home in order to continue living in their usual environment and ideally with their relatives. In order to meet these needs, most families look for a migrant care worker; the vast majority of workers are Latin American women, who are employed as domestic workers, often as interns who are living with the elderly person at home 24 hours a day. Many migrant women have neither training nor qualifications related to the care sector and accept this job because it is the only way for them to live and work in Spain. Although they are very willing to offer the best care to the elderly, the lack of training has a negative impact on the quality of services and also on the physical, psychological and social situation of caregivers.

Due to lack of qualifications and permits, many families “employ” women care workers without a formal contract, creating an “informal” economy: “everyone knows it, but nobody talks about it”. Working illegally, migrant women are very often exposed to disadvantageous working conditions, some face multiple discriminations and all are somehow excluded from society.

In order to obtain a legal contract in the care sector, migrant workers not only have to obtain a residence and work permit, but also have to have a “certificate of professionalism”¹ in home care.

As a society and as individuals, we should be concerned about how we can guarantee quality care for the elderly on the one hand and on the other decent employment and social condition for the care workers. Moreover, the care sector should comply with regional and state laws and values for caregiving.

How can migrants, who care for our elderly, be trained and qualified to obtain the necessary qualification?



Formal training

After 3 years working in Spain, migrants can apply for the residence permit for entrenchments and with it the work permit². Even so, due to their employment situation (very long working hours from Monday to Friday, few resources, etc.), most

¹ *Certificado de Profesionalidad*: Public regularization:

- Law 39/2006, of December 14, on the Promotion of Personal Autonomy and Attention to people in a situation of dependency.
- The Royal Decree 1379/2008, of August 1
- The Resolution of November 3, 2015

² "Authorization of temporary residence for reasons of entrenchments": Social entrenchments: It is obtained from the stay of three years in the state and the signature of a pre-employment contract of at least one year in duration. (Article 124, RD 577/2011)

migrant care workers cannot access formal trainings: the training module is 600 hours³ and it is offered according to the schedules of the public centers that teach it: Monday to Friday. Migrant workers in the care sector lack time and digital skills, and apart from mobile phones, many do not have access to the Internet. In addition, the vast majority does not meet the minimum academic access requirements and are excluded from the selection.

Non-formal training

Another option for training is non-formal: the person can validate their professional skills acquired in a non-formal way through an exam and an interview with an evaluator⁴. Even so, many migrants lack professional knowledge and adequate terminology, do not have supporting documents to prove the minimum professional experience required nor can prove the non-formal trainings acquired.

In conclusion: Neither the formal path nor the non-formal path are adequate options for the vast majority of Latin American migrants to obtain the Certificate of Professionalism, which is why they remain in irregularity, inequality and professional and social vulnerability.

The MENTSAD project - An interview with Susana Moreno Barrio from the Group SSI Bilbao

„We are a self-teaching school.”

„The main idea was to do a project that would allow [home care workers] to obtain the Certificate of Professionalism through the other way that there is, which is via the IVAC “learning recognition calls”⁵ exam. (...) There is the possibility of participating in this exam if you have attended a training that is not official but that trains in the competences, the contents of this certificate of professionalism and the required hours. (...) With all this, we thought about doing MENTSAD project.

„With MENTSAD we created a training that is based on a fundamentally self-training methodology, but using materials and self-learning resources that people find attractive. And on the weekend, when care workers have free time, they attend group classes, face-to-face group trainings as a kind of mentoring: the person has worked on certain content during the week and attends that class with a number of questions or needs to revise certain contents. Each subject is self-evaluated with multiple choice questions about the contents studied (...). The subject to be studied in the following week is also introduced during the class (...).



What does the "educational suitcase" contain?

- guides
- Weekly index cards (multiple choice, match, crossword puzzles, word searches, videos, etc.) on the contents to be worked on individually each week
- Summary cards with pictures

Who participated?

„There have been three editions of MENTSAD (...) but due to the dates of the calls, at the moment we have not been able to get people to have been trained (...) and then immediately after the training they have taken the exam (...). Some of the calls were

³ SSC089_2: Social health care for people at home: 480 hours of theoretical-practical training modules; 120 hours of non-labor internship module.

⁴ Device...?

⁵ <https://ivac-eei.eus/es/reconocimiento-aprendizajes/convocativas/>

almost a year after they ended the training (...). The results regarding the evaluation questionnaire after finishing the course have been fabulous: (...) the participants consider that just by participating, the quality of the work they carry out improves. In each edition, 20 people participated, with one exception, all migrant women. "

Were there difficulties with the language?

„One of the requirements to be able to participate in MENTSAD is that the person has sufficient language skills to be able to work on the contents. (...) But since they all come from Latin America, there was no problem. "

What professional experience did they have?

„On average, participants already have about 7 years of experience working in home care (...), which does not mean that they have done it correctly. (...) This can be seen a lot in mobilization issues and in issues of autonomy and dependency. Very often caregivers favor dependency instead of autonomy, thinking that it is done well, but that is a big problem for the elderly person because the less autonomy you promote, the more dependent become the person(...).

Is cultural bias a topic that you address in your training?

„We talk about the importance of taking into account what are the tastes, what are the preferences of the person being cared for. In another project [Etxean prest]⁶ there was a module to raise awareness of the Basque culture with a practice of expressions that can later be used in their work with the Basque persons. "

What about discrimination?

„In companies that provide home care services, there are far fewer migrants due to the fact that they do not have the Certificate of Professionalism. On the contrary, among the people who work as interns, the vast majority are migrants. But it is not possible to apply to the self-study recognition exam without having a residence permit. "

**Structural
Discrimination**

Success Factors

What progress have participants made after training?

„Over 80% of persons who have taken the exam for self-studied recognitions have successfully done the exam. For those who have not passed the exam, they have been left with some training units.

People who have passed the exam have gone to work in companies that offer home care services (...), some have stayed at the same workplace and some have been encouraged and have also obtained the Certificate of Social Institutions. "

The self-supporting network

„Through the face-to-face classes, women socialize with each other and this is very important for them, especially those who are working as interns at the home of the elderly person. Very often they do not have other contact persons (...). In a more



⁶ <https://grupossi.es/formacion-ambito-sociosanitario/proyecto-etxean-prest-grupossi/>
www.migrantstakecare.eu

informal way, we created a WhatsApp group and in this group certain questions are consulted, answered (...) some participants met each other's."

More information at: <http://grupossi.es/es/grupo-ssi>

Legal aspects



The State Dependency Law and the Social Services Law in the Basque Country are considered as fundamental normative resources in the establishment of public services and financial benefits of the SAAD (System for Autonomy and Attention to Dependency), which promote the recognition of the rights of people in a situation of dependency, and determine the conditions for the private hiring of caregivers in homes or the use of formal public services:

- Law 39/2006, of December 14, on the Promotion of Autonomy Personnel and Attention to people in a situation of dependency.
- Royal Decree 1379/2008, of August 1
- The Resolution of November 3, 2015
- Resolution of December 11, 2017, of the Secretary of State for Social Services and Equality ([BOE No. 317, Saturday December 30, 2017](#))

The Organic law on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social integration:

- Article 36 Residence and work
- authorization Article 38 Residence and workothers

Authorization of temporary residence for reasons of entrenchments: Social entrenchments: Obtained at starting with a three-year stay in the state and the signing of a pre-employment contract of at least one year in duration. (Article 124, RD 577/2011)