

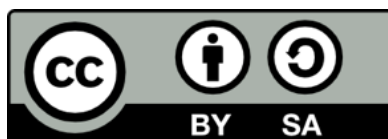


EMPOWER

**Encouraging Migrant women to seize
their Potential and Opportunities
in the World of EntRepreneurship**



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Dear reader!

Welcome to the story collection of the EMPOWER project. The stories we collected were told by amazing immigrant women living in one of the following countries: Italy, Germany, Slovenia, and Sweden. They shared one specific moment with us when they EXPERIENCED SUCCESS in their personal or professional life. After sharing their concrete moment, they gave their story a title or hashtag and reflected upon competencies that led them toward success.

The stories you will read might not be perfectly written because we didn't want to interfere too much with what was shared with us. What mattered to us was to listen to the voices that count and honour the paths and experiences of migrant women.

We hope that stories will speak to you, too and feel free to share them with the ones who need inspiration, hope and empowerment.



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HOW TO USE THIS STORY COLLECTION

There are several ways of how you can use the EMPOWER story collection:

1. Stories can serve as inspiration for anyone who is on their transformation journey and would like to learn from others's experiences.
2. Stories can be used as a learning tool to identify and promote Entrecomp competencies. You can choose one story, invite others to read it and ask them to identify the Entrecomp competencies. The goal is not to identify the same competencies as women who shared a story but to recognise the Entrecomp components in a real-life environment.
3. Stories can be used as a case study for other migrant women starting or already walking their entrepreneurship path. These collected stories can support them in identifying key success factors that enabled others to succeed.

STORY 1

#empower #stronggirl #dream #successful_story #education #challenge

Maya Ali is my name, and I am a young woman in my late twentieth born in Aleppo, Syria and raised in Syria and Turkey, where my family and I migrated to in 2012, running from the brutal war in Syria, not knowing the amount of challenges that are waiting for us. We had to leave everything behind us. It felt so heavy, dramatic, and sorrowful, and I was most upset for leaving my educational life behind me; it was challenging to get back to studying in a new country with a new language. I had quite a few options back then: to accept the situation and be a housewife in a few years or to give it all, try to get into studying again, give it and be a successful woman! Guess what? Yes, I chose the hard way and started to learn the Turkish language and the educational system there! It was tough and hopeless initially, but with a will of steel, I did it and entered university as a food engineer. I got first-class honour for five years in a row among native-speaking students. A few months after graduation, I got a job I liked. This is one of the most successful stories I have been through, and I always try to cherish every woman, not to stop and surrender, give it all, and never give up. The future is bright, but you have to work hard for it.

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning through experiences ▪ Planning and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-awareness and self-efficiency ▪ Motivation and persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spotting opportunities ▪ Ethical and sustainable thinking

STORY 2

Interpreter out of her comfort zone

I want to tell you about a situation during one of my interpretation assignments. I run my own interpreting company as an interpreter in Ukrainian, Russian and Swedish. This time, I was helping a mother and her daughter. The daughter was about to undergo an MRI scan. She had been sick before, and it was necessary to examine her again to see if the disease had returned. I was to interpret the dialogue between the doctor and the mother. Still, for the doctor to assess the results, I had to quickly translate difficult medical papers from Ukrainian to Swedish, which the mother had brought with her. This was something I was not trained for. However, I managed to interpret the text brilliantly, and I am proud that I was able to help in this situation. The girl was healthy, and the doctor, nurse, mother and children stood anxiously around me as I interpreted the medical papers. This is called *prima vista* interpreting, reading and translating directly from the paper. The text was complicated with medical terminology, but I managed it. I am very interested in medicine and have studied it extensively for myself and my profession. I felt very satisfied with my performance and deeply satisfied at having accomplished something beyond my profession's requirements. At the same time, I helped a person who was worried about their child. The child previously had cancer, so it was a reason to worry. Now, the mother didn't have to wait for those papers to be sent to someone else for written interpretation and for the crucial answer about her daughter's health. And since this was beyond my competence, I felt that I managed it brilliantly.

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking the initiative, ▪ Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mobilising resources, ▪ Motivation and persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spotting opportunities, ▪ Ethical and sustainable thinking

STORY 3

#CREATE, #WHYNOT, #FROMSCRATCH

A few years ago, I went through a painful event in my life, and I felt like I needed something to take my mind off it. I remember searching for lots and lots of possible things to do. There were a lot of options- sports, going out with my friends, burying myself at work or joining all-mom activities, etc... These options somehow made me ask myself who I really am. What do I really want in life? Do I want to be “just” a career woman by day and a mom at night? Then I remember, I love creating. I love making something by myself. Anything from scratch is something that interests me. Then I saw this ad on Facebook about a soap-making workshop, and I said, yeah, why not? I’ll do it. After the workshop, I started making soap samples. I gave them to my friends to try, got their feedback, learned from it, and improved. Soap-making became my way of expressing my creativity and passion. In a few more weeks, after juggling soapmaking with my work & mom life, I made a lot! I love creating so much; my soaps piled up, and there was too much! It was never in my plan to make a business out of it. But then, again, I said, “WHY NOT?” So, I launched my brand. I started selling online, joined bazaars and fairs, did some charity (donated my soaps to fire victims), and even contributed to a local TV commercial! As I continue to grow my soap-making business, I also decided to learn candlemaking. However, the pandemic hit, and we all know how it went: everything was paused... I used this time to spend more time with my family and put this personal project on hold. Many more life events have happened, including my family moving to Germany, but my passion for soap and candle-making still burns inside me. I plan to resume my career soon and perhaps teach other women how to create things... from scratch!

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning and management ▪ Taking the initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-awareness and self-efficiency ▪ Motivation and persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creativity ▪ Ethical and sustainable thinking

STORY 4

#Success despite everything

Only several moments when I sat in the office of German ministers, the Minister of Economics, the Minister of Defence or the Minister of Family Affairs, I taught English.

I came to Germany in 1972; I thought I would stay for a year and see if I could get a foothold. I had a university degree in Modern Foreign Languages but didn't want to become a teacher for children. It was too exhausting for me. And I thought, I'll go to Germany and see what happens. Then I came to Germany, to Koblenz, and applied everywhere. At the employment office, they asked: What can you do? I said: I can speak modern foreign languages and German very well. They said: Well, we are here in Germany. We have sixty million people who know German well; what else can you do? Me: Nothing. I didn't have a driving licence; I couldn't type. I had nothing at all. So I just worked, simple things like that, and in the meantime, I learned typing and shorthand and took my driving licence. And then, I found my first job as a secretary. But I wasn't a very good secretary, and at some point, I started teaching at the adult education centre in Oberlahnstein. I liked that. I could do that all the time.

Then I heard about the Federal Language Office in Hürth near Cologne. The thing was, I couldn't have made any progress in the teaching profession because my degree was not recognised in Germany. Today, it's different. However, this Federal Language Office hired educated native speakers and trained them to become foreign language teachers. And that was excellent training. That was the beginning. I then worked for quite a while in Hürth with military personnel. That was somehow quite strange for me as a post-war child. All of a sudden, I'm standing there with lots of Germans in uniform. But it was a lot of fun. At some point, I was sent to the Bundestag in Bonn. That's where I started teaching Members of Parliament and Ministers, and as I said, I could never have done that in England. What happens when a Minister in Germany wants to take English lessons and improve their English? They call the Federal Language Office and ask them to send a good teacher. In England, you have to know people. It's a class society in England, as you can see today. I wouldn't have had the connections; I didn't go to the „right“ schools to meet the “right“ people. My father was a teacher and had a good education, but I didn't have those connections and didn't need them in Germany. Society was open to me. If I had opened my mouth in England, people would have immediately thought: Oh, she doesn't belong to us; she's not upper class. But here, on the contrary, people were always interested; they heard that I speak English, and sometimes I was asked if I was Dutch. It was always a topic of conversation, a good opening, and a very lovely, pleasant and easy. I also taught famous people at the Bundestag in Bonn - maybe I shouldn't mention the names, but there were some prominent people.



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Then, I was supposed to go to Berlin, and I first thought it was terrible to have to move. But then I went, and those were the best years of my life. Then, I retired and ended up in Schwerin. At some point, I missed teaching. That's why I do two evenings a week at the adult education centre now, and it's fun. Yes, that's my story. When I think back, I came to Germany, I wanted to apply for work, and I was asked, What can you do? And I only have my Modern Languages, my university degree from Kings College in London, which I was very proud of. And they asked, what else can you do? Nothing! You have to keep at it and not get discouraged. I was lucky, too, of course. But I have always worked hard. I'm proud when I think about how far I've come in Germany.

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Taking the initiative▪ Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Motivation and persistence▪ Other: using opportunities, ideas, updating skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Spotting opportunities

STORY 5

#The Fighter

I started daycare in 2014. That was in Trier. Why did I choose this direction? Because I love the children. I love them very much. I have two children myself. In 2017, I moved to a new place, to Schwerin. At that time, I couldn't just give up my work. First, I took the B1 language exam for daycare in Trier, i.e. in another city, and then I took the B2 language exam for daycare in Schwerin. In Schwerin, I had little contact at first. But then I met Mrs. Haker from the cathedral parish, who supported me. I wanted to go toward Kita (kindergarten) to develop myself further from daycare. I didn't have the chance to do that.

I would have had to do training in practice and theory for that. I found an internship but no school or training place for the theory. I thought it couldn't stay like this; it wouldn't work without doing something. So I tried again in my old direction of child daycare. And then I started looking for a good premise for a flat. I looked for a commercial space at the (municipal housing association) WGS. They said they had a suitable room in October, but it still had to be renovated. They offered me a tour of the premises. That way, I could see if I liked the space. When we first came here, it was chaos. But SWG said that if I liked the rooms and wanted to take them, they would clean up, renovate and put everything in order. After four or five months, everything was done. Everything was very nice. And on 15 April 2017, I started here. My first child was German. And then it became quite multicultural, with so many different languages and countries, e.g. a child from Afghanistan, then Romania, Ghana and Somalia. Every month, one new child came. Soon, all the places were taken. People are looking and asking for a place, but I only have 5 places; I am not allowed to take more than 5 children. Well, I think. It's a good way for me to have gone in this direction. I think it's not easy; you have to be patient. And then fight, don't let go, and you must have contacts. I think that helps, too. So far, I believe I haven't had any problems. It always works, it works usually, and it has settled in. My husband has decided to work here with me. Why not? After all, I'm here when he needs help. We can complement each other well. Daycare is like being self-employed. I would have to say it's almost like self-employed, not wholly self-employed. You have to do everything yourself. That is often difficult for me. German is not my mother tongue. It's not easy, but I do my best. I give what I can. My husband is my best support. What I can't do, my husband can. And vice versa. If we both get stuck, we have acquaintances who can help us with writing and the like. That's how we managed so far. People even ask for places, although I can't take any more children. This is an excellent proof that our work is good. When I did the training back then, it was not easy. I am a foreigner, I didn't get along with German, I have my language, that wasn't easy. We always had to try to make ourselves understood with a dictionary. If I didn't understand anything, I had to take notes and ask afterwards what it all meant and what was being discussed. Sometimes, I write things down in my language and translate them into German. That's a hassle. But the children don't have a problem with it. For the children, it's quite normal. I have to be very patient at work. That's all you can do. Without love and patience, it doesn't work. But you can never say, I'm here, working and good. But I can't say I have already found my future here. No, I'm still fighting. It's not over.



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It's like this, it's not my home here. You always have to struggle with the language. For example, I signed up for a German course and finished it in several weeks. It was once a week after work. I wanted to improve my reading and writing again. The course was from 6 pm to 8 pm, then I wasn't home until 9 pm. That means I continue to struggle. It was such a beautiful moment when a mum came here for the first time and told me that she wanted a place for her child with us because she felt her child would feel comfortable with us.

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Learning through experiences,▪ Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Financial and economic literacy,▪ Motivation and persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Creativity,▪ Ethical and sustainable thinking

STORY 6

#Powerful lady

My story will be about my personal qualities at the moment of stress. No one puts themselves in stress by the wish. The same was true for me, my family and everyone in my country. I was happy in all areas of life until the war broke out in my country. Then, one day, everything changed - it was necessary to make a huge and important decision to flee and be responsible for the whole family - a small child and elderly and sick parents, WITHOUT any help, alone. Once I realised that one day became an entire year, our family reset to zero in all areas of our previous and usual life - we ended up in a new country where people speak a different language, where the mentality was completely different from ours, where everything that you can do at your work/speciality needs to prove, and it could take a few years. Considering I only speak an international language in my family, I handled all family issues from beginning to end, from small to large (from grocery shopping to communicating with doctors in the hospital in critical health situations with the parents and all current issues with municipalities). One of the biggest challenges was finding a roof for all family members with different health conditions without any help or tips, without saving money, to find work NOT only for myself and one other family member, who only speaks their native language and does not speak an international language. Everything happened because of the influence of stress, depressed parents and worried children. And the most challenging thing is not to go crazy and to be an excellent example for my child. I have managed with all I found a job for myself and my parents, arranged a child in the kindergarten, found housing for myself and my relatives, took time to learn the language and tried to integrate into a new country as much as possible. And still, I'm handling all family issues in all life areas.

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning and management, ▪ Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-awareness and self-efficiency, ▪ Motivation and persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spotting opportunities, ▪ Ethical and sustainable thinking

STORY 7

#FindingMyWayThroughTheMaze

The journey from Ghana to Sweden started with a story of love, which was beautiful while it lasted. Soon, the wicked claws of death will expose me to the harsh realities of living in a foreign land as a widow and single mother, and yes, even in the land of liberation, there could be captivity (of developing the self and breaking through the glass ceiling). But every cloud has a silver lining, and so is my story... Moving from Ghana to join my late husband in Sweden was a very tough decision for me to make. By all standards, I was a very successful young lady as a graduate and an accountant working at the presidency and had my whole future well laid out for me. To leave all these behind – achievements, family, friends, etc. – for the unknown was too much of a price to pay for love. But I had to relocate five years later with a sick husband. The unfortunate demise of losing my husband just five days after arriving to live permanently in Sweden will expose me to the uncertainties, betrayals and harsh realities of being alone in a foreign land. From being homeless to moving from one hostel to the other with a one year three months old toddler, the zeal to succeed was all I had left to make this sacrifice worthwhile. I immediately embarked on climbing higher on the educational ladder by pursuing my master's degree, hoping it could help me secure a bright future in Sweden. But after 9 years with two master's degrees in business management and development and over ten years of experience working as an accountant and still jobless, I knew I had to redirect my path. This was how the journey of establishing the company began. While studying in Sweden, I met a few students from Ghana and Nigeria. This aroused my curiosity about how well-known Swedish education was in these countries. I found out most people confused Sweden with Switzerland, and those who knew the difference would instead choose the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Germany or China as their destination for higher studies. However as someone exposed to the high quality of education in Sweden and the vast comparison in the cost of studying in these countries, with Sweden being the cheapest, I decided to explore the possibility of promoting Sweden as an option for studying abroad for Ghanaian and Nigerian students. Initially, I wanted it to be a collaboration with Swedish universities or institutions promoting Sweden abroad. But with none interested in my proposal, I had to do it alone. But how do I start getting funding to begin with? As a registered job seeker with the job centre, I qualified for financial support to start my own business if I had a viable business idea. But this was denied because I didn't have any income. What do I do next? With the desire to succeed in this field still being my strength, I decided to concentrate on the countries I intend to promote these studies in and recruit from, and that was where all the support I needed came from. Four years on, my company has its own office in Ghana and Nigeria, with over 100 students registering with us every year to study in Sweden. Our hallmark of success has been collaboration, consistency, quality service, courage, and the genuine desire to help people (being the gratifying factor here, not the profits). We have introduced two more services this year: summer camps for children between 10 and 17 years old and the job seekers visa introduced by the Swedish government late last year. Despite the over ten-year gap that I lost from when I left my job in Ghana to when I finally had a career, I still see this as an achievement because despite what happened, I never lost my worth and the zeal to succeed.



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ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and risk▪ Taking the initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Mobilising others▪ Motivation and persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Spotting opportunities▪ Ethical and sustainable thinking

STORY 8

Don't give up when someone says NO

My success story is connected with my children. We didn't have children for eight years, Not because I couldn't have them, but because my husband said we didn't need children and we had to enjoy life. For me, this was hard. I didn't ask him again for eight years because I feared his refusal. I believed that if I waited, his heart would change. But it didn't. I was already almost 40 years old. And everybody in the work asked me: «Why don't you have children? You are getting old.» When they asked me, I burst into tears. At that time, I was also often very bitter. I thought we would be old sitting alone for Christmas, and then He would regret not having kids. And it will be his fault. And I will tell him this: how right I was. Looking back, I see how silly I was thinking like this. There is no victorious me or him. We all only lose if I keep feeling like this. Since then, I have started looking for the answer and praying. One day, I switched my mindset and stopped being bitter and sad. I bought a Christmas tree for the first time (we didn't have it before since we didn't have children). I started wearing skirts like my mom used to wear when I was a child. I began to do things differently. I also decided to talk to my husband again about how much I wanted to have children, even if my heart broke again. I prayed: »God, please protect my heart and talk to him«. One day after lunch, when he was in a good mood, I started to talk with him. And again, he started to ask me. Why would we have children? And I told him:« Oh, you will go to a movie with them or to the restaurant.« This was at the time when all of his friends got married and had children. Therefore, he didn't have company. So he started to think. And he started to smile and said: »But not now«. And it was good enough for me. He went on a business trip to Slovenia. I stayed in Seattle and kept doing my regular work. In Slovenia, he got groups at the beginning of the month and the end of the month. In between, he had one week off. At that time, we decided to save money, and he was supposed to stay in Slovenia in between. So in the week when he was free, he suddenly called me and said: » I'm coming«. I said:« Why are you coming? Why do you need to buy a ticket?«. And he said: »Because we want children«. I almost fell from my chair. So he came to the USA. I became pregnant immediately. He returned to Slovenia, and I told him I was pregnant only when he returned. He told me later that he already knew. My first child was born from this story. When my daughter was three years the wish to have a second child was born. And my husband started again: »You need to go to your art show in France. You are busy. You don't have time.« I told him that I could travel even when I was pregnant. He said: You don't plan anything. You need to plan this«. I told him I would plan. I took the calendar from the wall. Okay. I started to count, having my art show in my mind. I said to myself: «I can travel when I'm seven months pregnant«. I returned and said to him: »On this date, I can get pregnant. You see, I plan everything«, and put a calendar back on the wall. He forgot about this. And when the date came, I showed him the calendar: »Here is the date. Let's go to the bedroom«. And he looked at me like I was crazy. But I had no choice but to take a chance from my "stubborn" husband when he said I have to plan everything. And again, on this day, I became pregnant for the second time. So, these are the two miracles that happened to me. And, of course, now he is the best father. He said: «Nobody told me how fun it is with the kids«. That is my success story that might also inspire and give hope to someone else.



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ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and risk,▪ Other: Change of mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Other: faith and answer to my prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Vision▪ Other: faith

STORY 9

Language success

Six years ago, when I came to Slovenia, I needed a job. I had a breakdown cause I had been working all my life. At that time my teacher of Slovene saw the job advert and gave it to me. So I went there for the interview and met the business owner who had just started her language school, and she offered me to be the teacher of spoken English. So I started teaching. Despite my diploma as a Teacher of the English language (I have more than 20 years of experience in translation), I have always hated doing this and never thought I would be doing this, but I needed money. I had to do something and had no idea how to teach. So, I struggled. I struggled very much and didn't really enjoy it by the end of the day. I had no idea how to create the consequent education program at that time. The company's owner tried to help me (and is still very helpful). She has piles and piles of teaching materials for many languages. I just have to select the ones that suit me, follow the book instructions, and be there listening to my students and correcting and explaining the mistakes. The owner of the language school and I have continued cooperating until now. Because my Slovene has been improving (I am still learning it), I am teaching English to Slovenians, which is not only spoken English anymore. I am capable of explaining English grammar to Slovenians in Slovene.

When I barely mentioned that to my friend in the USA, she said, "That's crazy!". But it had never come to my mind that this is really awesome. And this is what I'm really proud of. This speaks of my current success: teaching English to Slovenians in Slovenia. When I think about it, my brain kind of blows up. That is a success, and it makes me really feel proud. I believe that I have succeeded with the languages. And although I am not perfect at Slovene yet, I know I am good enough to teach native speakers. There is one thing that I have to say about teaching: "I honestly hate teaching". That's why whenever I see the advert about schools or institutions looking for a teacher, it's like, "No, no, no, thank you". That's totally not my thing.

Today, my perception about anything is that I am not teaching but sharing my knowledge. Plus, I like people when it comes to people's stories, lives, experiences and so on. I recently gave a task to my students – "What would you ask your favourite celebrity if you met him or her in the street?". Two guys of different ages selected Luka Dončić, but they asked other questions. One would ask about Luca's career, and another would ask about his personal growth. And this would be about the same person and students from the same country as Luka. But they think so differently, and that's what is amazing.

I look at my students and try to make the classes more personal, even though it's a group. So, I'm asking their opinion, making them involved, and slightly pushing them to share their experience and thoughts. And that's how I get a lot of interesting stories. It's also exciting to see why Slovenians are so different from us, how they're different, and how this nation became what it is now. Everything that we do is a two-way road always. It's nice to be well paid, but if you hate what you do or don't get emotional satisfaction, it's not worth doing it. They say that the best job is a hobby that you are paid for.



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ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Working with others,▪ Other: Being afraid and uncertain but still doing it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Motivation and persistence,▪ Other: taking the most from the opportunity and situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Creativity,▪ Other: not being afraid of the challenges

STORY 10

#GlobalPinay

Personally, one of those moments that is a success for me, or at least part of it, is directly linked to this EMPOWER PROJECT. When I got the job offer here in Germany, I was still back in Manila. It's not the biggest success story, but it started what I know would be more meaningful. It's a success because it's the start of something good for me, my career, and my family. So, the gesture of getting that job offer and having them say, "We're gonna get you for this global post", I don't know, that's one of the biggest successes, but (this happened) recently, and I think this is connected to what happened after, with how our lives changed, especially being a migrant here in Germany. I think for me, that- in recent memory- was the most successful event in my life because it was something that I didn't plan. Just a background: I am in advertising, and ever since, I knew I wanted to work in advertising. I really like it, which I saw myself in back when I was 19 or 20. This is really what I want to do. But it wasn't easy to get a job in advertising then, so there were challenges like "you can't be employed because you don't have experience yet". I had to work for a magazine firm first. I became an AE (account executive) at Hinge Inquirer. (Philippines local magazine). Then, I worked at a PR firm before I got into Saatchi, my first advertising agency. From then on, I only got advertising and account Executive jobs, which I really wanted. I remember when I was an intern, at the end of my internship, my then-boss went to Singapore to work. He was assigned there. That's when I thought that I could advertise in the Philippines and for Philippine brands and make ads that would be viewed in the Philippines and internationally. So, I think that started my career goal: work internationally. But I didn't give much attention to it until I was older. I had offers from Singapore, but then I got pregnant with Lily. There were many (personal) things like that happened. Then there was a pandemic. So, it was back-burned. So, finally, when we thought the pandemic was about to end, maybe this time, it's already possible to have a job abroad. I wasn't really expecting this job here. I was looking for jobs in Asia. So, I guess it's a success because I knew it was a back-burner, which I thought I wouldn't be able to do anymore for many reasons. So, to me, it's a success because it's something that I didn't think I would ever get. But I got this Germany gig, this opportunity. I didn't even know that Germany has Global agencies. I thought that was only in the UK, Amsterdam or the US. I wasn't even a German speaker. So to me, it's wonderful because it's unexpected. It kind of gave me something to look forward to that I can learn more, something that's uncomfortable for me and an adventure for me and my family. It's all wrapped up in one job offer. So I thought, ok, there are a lot of possibilities out of this one thing.

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking the initiative, ▪ Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-awareness and self-efficiency, ▪ Motivation and persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creativity, ▪ Spotting opportunities

STORY 11

Yes, I can

I have been living in Slovenia for eight years. When I came to Slovenia, it was really hard. When I started secondary school, I didn't know a word of the Slovenian language. Two years later, I entered university in Maribor with my matura examination from Kosovo and started my studies there. At that time, I already knew some Slovenian words, but I thought I would never be successful here. Your language, Slovene, is so difficult because you have a lot of suffixes and dual. If someone from here tried ten times, I had to try 100 times. It was so difficult for us foreigners because of the language. We had to try much harder. But I always had it in my head that it's not because I'm less clever; it's because the circumstances are like that. It was essential for me not to give up. Even when it was hard, I didn't stop and look at the positive things because I had the motivation to do what I envisioned. I always had a vision to make something of myself. I wanted to be educated. I did not want to be a woman who came from abroad and did nothing. My goal was also my motivation, and I always believed in myself. Aside from that, I also had people around me who believed in me. They always said: 'Go on, you will make it. Just keep on going.' I had others who believed in me. When I was going through a difficult time, that encouragement always helped me. My first big step was finishing university in Slovenia a few years ago. That meant to me that I was competent. But my most significant success was when I was accepted for a Master's degree here in Slovenia after finishing my Bachelor's degree. That was a significant achievement for me, and I am very proud. I am now finishing my Master's degree, which is fantastic. I have proved to myself that I can be successful also here in Slovenia.

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning through experiences, ▪ Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-awareness and self-efficiency, ▪ Motivation and persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vision, ▪ Ethical and sustainable thinking

STORY 12

#selfmadewoman

I'm Sandra, born in a small village in Romania. I'm 52 years old and opened a tailor's shop in Rome. This has been my goal since childhood when I spent hours watching my mother sew. In my country, I attended a tailoring school, and then I decided to move to Italy, which, if you think about it, is the country of fashion par excellence! At first, I didn't speak the language, so it was difficult, but I worked hard to learn it, also attending several courses. Anyway, I started working in a tailor's shop. I was often complimented and promoted to store manager. This gave me confidence, so I pooled my savings and opened my tailor shop. It was a sacrifice because I had to choose between buying a house and no longer renting and buying the business. But I'm proud of myself; I've dreamed of opening my shop for years, and I couldn't ask for anything better. I'm very popular in the neighbourhood; I have many clients. My work is also tiring, but luckily, my mother spends many months in Rome and helps me. So, in general, I am very satisfied.

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking the initiative, ▪ Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-awareness and self-efficiency, ▪ Motivation and persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creativity, ▪ Spotting opportunities

STORY 13

A Polish woman in politics

I'm Katherine. I'm 48 years old. I'm Polish. So I moved to Italy when I was very young. I graduated in languages at the University of Udine, Italy. I am highly ambitious, have studied a lot, and have always been involved in the front line in the social and political fields. At the university, I was part of the student collective, and I was very followed. So, I immediately understood what my path was: social commitment. I also did volunteer work. Once I graduated, I immediately found a job as an executive assistant in a company. Then, I decided to have children, which led me to quit as it was difficult to reconcile everything. My free time increased as my children got older, and I returned to work. I created my communication agency and resumed my political and social commitment. I was recently appointed city councillor in the province of Udine, and this is a huge recognition for me, especially if we think that I was born in Poland and, therefore, I'm a foreigner.

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning and management ▪ Taking the initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-awareness and self-efficiency, ▪ Motivation and persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vision, ▪ Valuing ideas

STORY 14

Breaking boundaries

I moved from Nigeria to Poland to finish my studies. I did my bachelor’s and master’s together there. At that time, I also met my Slovenian husband, and we decided to move to Slovenia. I had mixed feelings about moving from Poland to Slovenia. I wanted to go home because home is comfortable, everything is ready and waiting for you, and it’s easier to get a job. I also have sisters and brothers in Nigeria; we are a very close family and love each other. I’m the eldest. And when talking to my siblings, I always prefer to feel their presence, not only speak with them. So, my dilemma about what to do was there with me, and I had to decide where I wanted to live. Of course, I contacted my siblings. And they all said, "No, Sharon, you can go to Slovenia. It’s not a big problem. You will make it. You would find a job. You would learn the language.« They were very encouraging. For me, this is the best support system I have in my life. So I decided to come to Slovenia and knew I had to start learning the language again. I thought it would be tough for someone who speaks only English (my mother tongue is Hausa, and I Pidgin English from Nigeria). Of course, I also started looking for a job. First, it was tough to get a job. Whenever I applied for a job and was invited for an interview, everything went okay, but the problem was that I didn’t speak or understand Slovenian. Everyone said to me: »For this kind of work, we need you to have the basic skills of the language at least «. It was so depressing. I came there and discovered that I couldn’t get this job, even if I were overqualified, just because the language was a significant barrier. So, I decided to learn the Slovenian language to communicate and integrate into society. I also have a goal to find a better job for myself. So, no one could tell me I could not get a job just because of my language. Language shouldn’t be something that will stop you from achieving goals. I went to the Slovenian language course, which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided, and I finished it. I went for another one provided by the unemployment office here in Slovenia. And I finished that one, too. After that, I started to look for a job. I could speak basic Slovenian already. At that time, the Nigerian Association, where I still have an active role, got a project. We needed to find a restaurant that could provide us with African food for the guests visiting us from different parts of the world. And that was when I learned about Skuhna, a restaurant and social entrepreneur company. When I arrived, they needed somebody who could work in the bar, deal with the administrative work, and have an idea of cooking. And I never liked cooking. But then I said, «Oh, let’s try it. It won’t hurt«. My Slovenian was useful. They were even surprised that I could speak this so good Slovene then. Everything was successful because I finally got the job and talked in Slovenian and English. So, everything worked out. This was an achievement for me because I thought I would never be able to speak Slovenian the way I do now or be able to get a job. I’m proud that I came this far without giving up and showing that women from different cultural backgrounds can integrate into any society we find ourselves in. From then on, I told myself: »There is no barrier for us women that we cannot break. You have to be determined and follow your goal«.

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working with others, ▪ Taking the initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mobilising resources, ▪ Motivation and persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Valuing ideas, ▪ Spotting opportunities

STORY 15

#rebirth from the ashes

Hi, I'm Michelle, I'm from Nigeria, and I'm in my 40s. I lived in my country until I graduated. I arrived in Italy when I was 20, married an Italian, and had 2 children. Unfortunately, however, it was a somewhat troubled marriage, so we divorced. I suffered because being alone with two children is not easy. I have to say that initially, it was tough for me to start over. But I worked hard to find a job that satisfied me. I have had various positions, and today, I teach English at a private university with a part-time contract. I must say that my rebirth from a very painful period is a real victory for me. Today, I work in a stimulating environment; I am serene. Indeed, I still have dreams to achieve, but to date, this is my most significant victory.

ENTRECOMP competences:

INTO ACTION	RESOURCES	IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Learning through experiences▪ Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Self-awareness and self-efficiency,▪ Motivation and persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Vision

Encouraging Migrant women to seize their Potential and Opportunities in the World of EntRepreneurship

