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VOC: VOICES OF CHANGE



Voices of Change (VOC):

Enhancing girls with migration background to cooperate in women policies in the European Consultative Body for Migrant Girls Civic Engagement

Embracing a new culture: Adapting young women in a new society

The rapidly changing society represents a challenge for many people. They have to adapt to lots of changes and embrace a new lifestyle. While for others this might be easy, for others it is a very difficult situation. But what about the people who are moving to a new society as an effect of wars, segregation, totalitarian regimes? There are many countries in the world where its citizens are not safe because of the regimes or different conflicts, countries that are not able to offer their citizens the necessary resources, or countries that have a great gender-based segregation of its citizen. In these cases, people are forced to flee the countries and adapt to very different societies and cultures.

Adapting to a new culture and society might be a difficult process for some people, while for others is not. It requires learning a new language, adapting to new customs, searching for a job, following different rules. All in all, the adaptation process is quite complex and it also depends on the skills and personal assets of each person.

Young women in a new culture

In an increasingly interconnected world, many young women find themselves leaving their home countries to pursue education, career opportunities, or personal growth. While these experiences can be enriching, the journey of adapting to a new culture often comes with challenges, ranging from language barriers to social integration and maintaining one's identity in an unfamiliar environment.

The Challenges of Cultural Adaptation

When moving to a new society, young women often face a mix of excitement and anxiety. The initial stages of cultural adjustment can be overwhelming due to differences in language, traditions, and social norms. Many encounter the phenomenon of *culture shock*, which includes feelings of confusion, loneliness, or even frustration when faced with an entirely different way of life.

Additionally, gender roles may differ significantly from one culture to another. In some societies, women enjoy greater freedom and opportunities, while in others, cultural expectations may be more restrictive. Navigating these contrasts requires resilience and an open mind, as young women strive to find a balance between respecting their new environment and staying true to their values.

Finding a Sense of Belonging

One of the key factors in adapting successfully is building a sense of belonging. This can be achieved through:

- **Learning the Local Language** – Language is the bridge to communication and deeper cultural understanding. Enrolling in language courses or practicing with native speakers helps break barriers and fosters meaningful connections.
- **Engaging with the Community** – Joining local groups, volunteering, or participating in cultural events provides opportunities to meet new people and form friendships.
- **Seeking Mentorship and Support Networks** – Connecting with other women who have experienced similar transitions can offer guidance and emotional support. Many organizations and online communities are dedicated to helping newcomers integrate.

Embracing Change Without Losing Identity

While adaptation is necessary, it is equally important to preserve one's cultural roots. Many young women find strength in their heritage, using it as a foundation for personal growth. Instead of viewing adaptation as abandoning one's background, it can be seen as an expansion of identity—embracing new customs while keeping traditions alive.

Moreover, cultural exchange is a two-way street. As young women adapt, they also bring unique perspectives, traditions, and ideas to their new communities, enriching the social fabric and fostering greater cultural appreciation.

A Journey of Growth and Empowerment

Adapting to a new society is not just about survival—it is about thriving. It is a process of learning, evolving, and finding empowerment in new experiences. For young women, this journey can be transformative, allowing them to develop independence, confidence, and a deeper understanding of both themselves and the world around them.

As more women embark on these cross-cultural journeys, societies must also become more inclusive, ensuring that they provide the support and opportunities necessary for them to succeed. By embracing diversity and fostering acceptance, we create a world where young women can confidently step into new cultures while shaping their own paths.

VOC project represents a combined effort of migrant girls and local girls, who are working together to emphasize the importance of cultural challenges in a new society, through participative webinars and other types of exchange activities.

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