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MIGRATION PROJECTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: A PERSPECTIVE FROM WOMEN'S VOICES

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Currently, there is an intensification of migratory flows related to the search for Higher Education Institutions, to attend bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, doctorates and post-doctorate courses. In Portugal, the migratory trajectories associated with the optimistic search for education have particular significance in the feminisation of migratory flows from Portuguese-speaking countries. Based on the observation of this circumstance emerging from a broader research carried out within the VIW-Voices of Immigrant Women project, the aim of this article is to contribute to the understanding of the migratory experience of immigrant women attending higher education.

The VIW - Voices of Immigrant Women - project has as its main objective: to contribute to the construction of an inclusive higher education system, addressing the major societal challenges represented by migrations and, more specifically, the migratory flows of women in the current European context. It is a project funded by the European Commission, with the participation of several European institutions and civil society organisations, including the Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, Portugal. Following the methodological proposal of the project, immigrant women were interviewed, and from these interviews narratives were constructed, which give an account of the challenges and adversities they encounter, as well as the strategies (institutional and personal) mobilised to overcome them. And, from a larger set, we propose the analysis of seven narratives of women who came to Portugal with the purpose of studying.

The results obtained point to a very positive evaluation of educational opportunities in the definition of migratory projects; to the identification of challenges and difficulties derived from the intersectionality of being a woman, young and immigrant. From the point of view of the strategies mobilised to face the difficulties, there is systematic reference to the support of family networks; strategies related to the reconfiguration of identities are also mentioned (in a perspective of accommodation to the host culture or resistance) to make their efforts of inclusion effective.

The results of this study may contribute to a better understanding of the motivations, challenges and opportunities that studying in higher education may bring to these women. At the same time, it is also important to contribute to the construction of knowledge about the educational processes promoted by higher education institutions in contexts of cultural diversity, consolidating the social function of higher education as an agent of transformation and ensures the fundamental right to development and equal opportunities.

keywords: [gender](#), [migration](#), [higher education](#).