

October, 18th 2024

9.00 – 17.00 h

TU Berlin, Room
H1035



Conference: The Impact of Gendered Migration Cycles on the Labour Market Integration of Female Migrants in European Welfare States – Developing Pathways towards Gender-responsive Policies

Presentation: Female Immigrant Integration in Europe: What Specific Policies Have International Institutions Recommended for Reducing Gender Gaps in the Labour Market?

Presenter: Natalia Vershinina

Audencia Business School



Paradigm shift_new Outlooks



Female Immigrant Integration in Europe: What Specific Policies Have International Institutions Recommended for Reducing Gender Gaps in the Labour Market?

Prof. Natalia Vershinina

Audencia Business School

Nantes, France

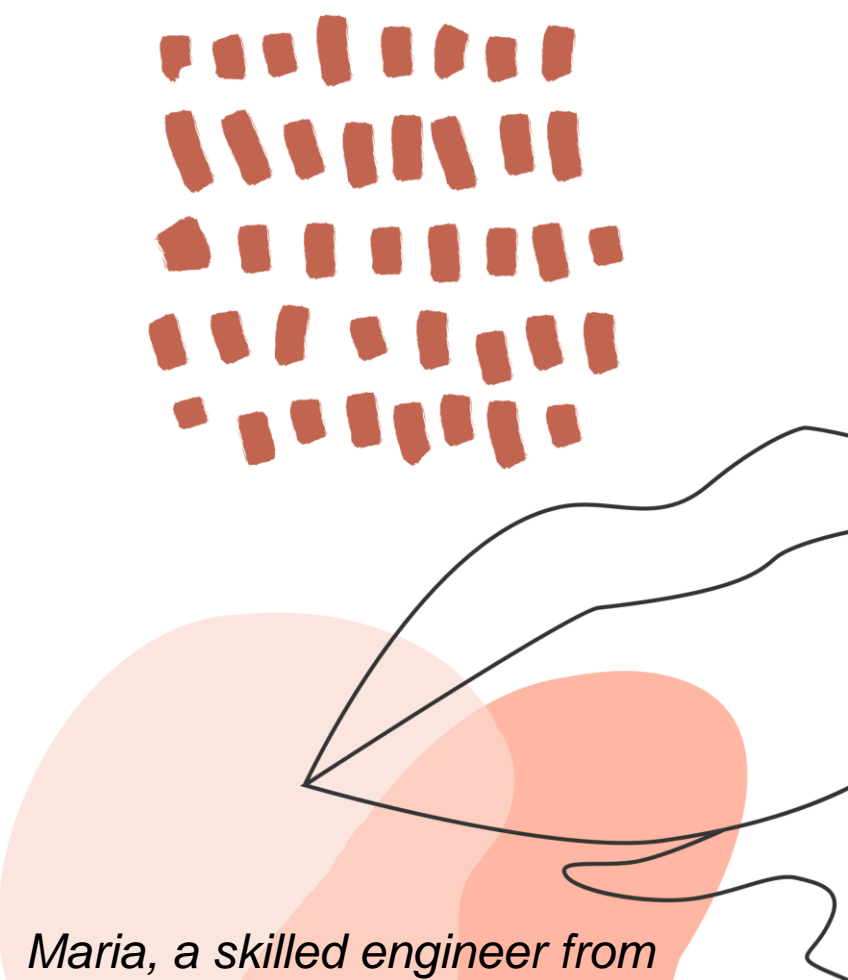
nvershinina@audencia.com

Introduction

- **Growing proportion of female immigrants in Europe**
 - **Unique challenges faced by female immigrants**
 - **Importance of addressing specific integration needs**
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- Women account for approximately 48% of all immigrants in the EU (Eurostat, 2021b)
 - Challenges rooted in gendered societal norms, discrimination, and inadequate policies
 - Labour market integration is critical for successful immigration

Eurostat. (2021b). Migration and migrant population statistics.

Kofman, E., & Raghuram, P. (2015). *Gendered migrations and global social reproduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.



Maria, a skilled engineer from Colombia, arrived in Germany full of hope. However, she soon found her qualifications weren't recognized, and she struggled to find work while caring for her young children

Introductory Narratives

The experiences of female immigrants in Europe are diverse and complex, as illustrated by the stories of women like Olena, Amira, and Layla. These personal narratives highlight the multifaceted challenges and entrepreneurial resilience of female immigrants in Europe despite the existence of gendered barriers to their integration.



Olena, a Ukrainian software developer, finds herself working remotely for her home country while struggling to learn Polish and integrate into her new community in Warsaw.



Amira, a Syrian refugee in Germany, transformed her pharmaceutical background into a successful skincare business in Berlin.



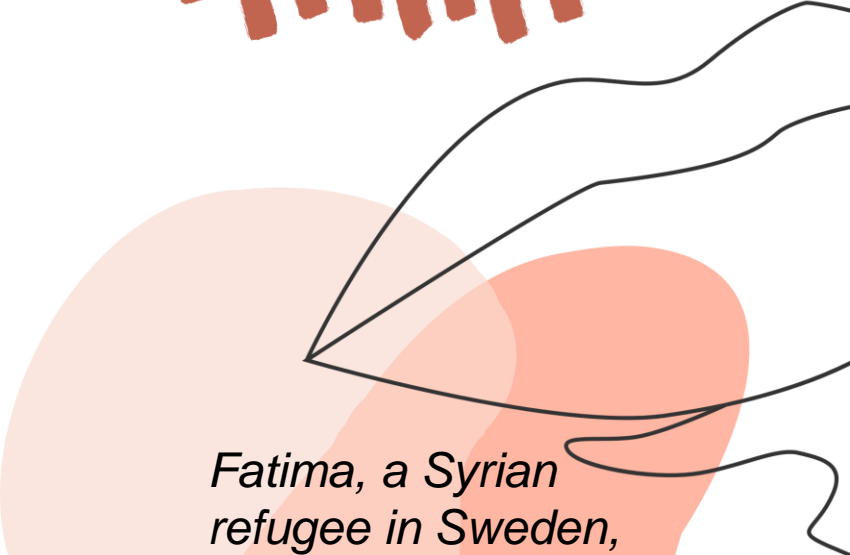
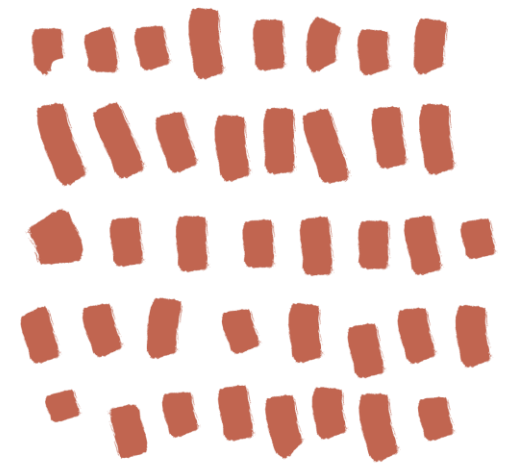
Layla, a Lebanese café owner who fled to France, grapples with the loss of her business and family while trying to rebuild her life in a new country.

Labour Market Integration Challenges

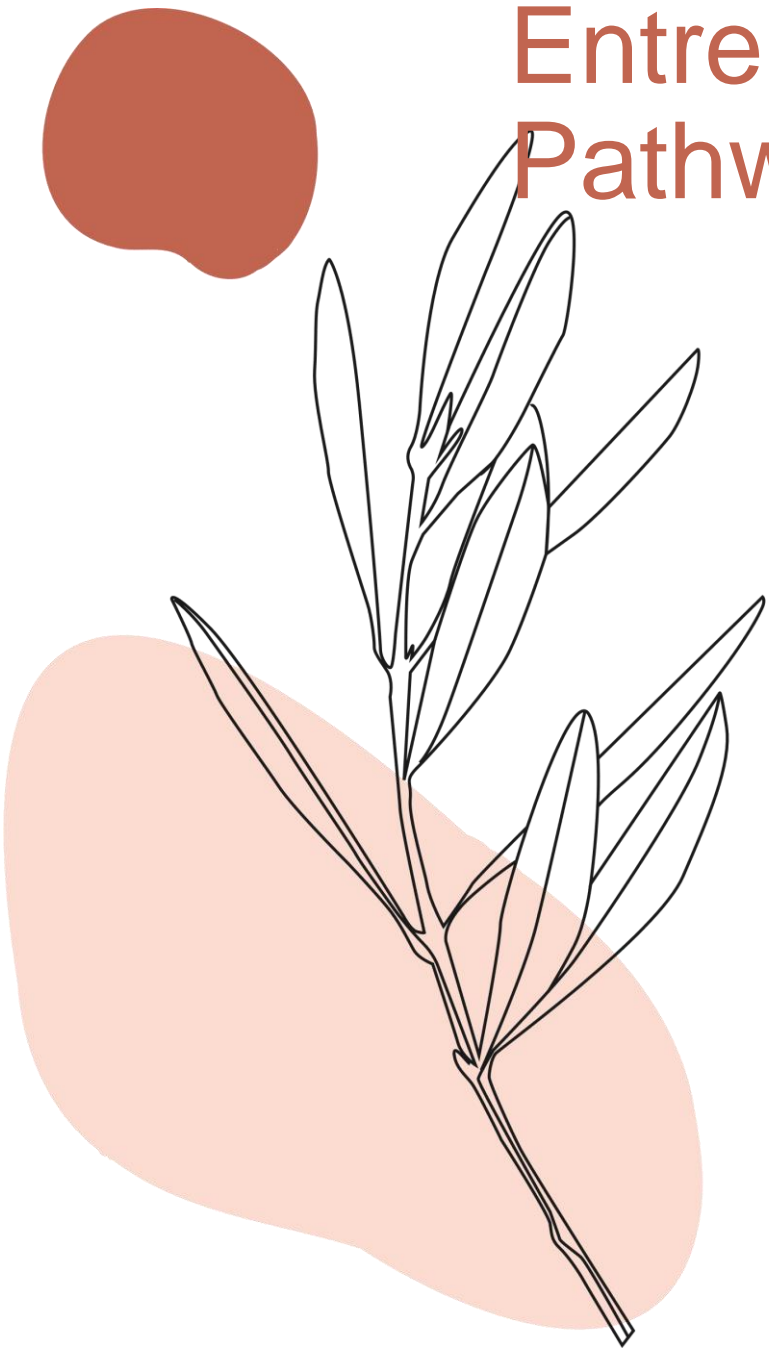
- **Limited recognition of foreign qualifications**
 - **Language difficulties**
 - **Workplace discrimination**
 - **Balancing work and family responsibilities**
-
- Female immigrants often face a "triple disadvantage" of being female, immigrant, and ethnic minority
 - Overrepresentation in low-skilled, low-paying sectors with high job insecurity

Liebig, T., & Liebig, T. (2021). The labour market integration of immigrants and their children. *OECD*.

International Labour Organization. (2018). Global estimates on international migrant workers.



Fatima, a Syrian refugee in Sweden, faced discrimination when applying for jobs. Despite her fluency in English, employers were hesitant due to her hijab...



Entrepreneurship as an Integration Pathway

Benefits:

- **Financial independence**
- **Social mobility**
- **Empowerment**
- **Flexibility for work-life balance**
- Entrepreneurship allows women to circumvent formal labour market obstacles
- Can reinforce traditional gender roles if confined to low-profitability sectors

Challenges:

- **Unfamiliarity with regulatory environments**
- **Limited access to financial capital**
- **Weak business networks**
- **Discrimination**

Baycan-Levent, T., & Nijkamp, P. (2009). Characteristics of migrant entrepreneurship in Europe. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 21(4), 375-397.

Ram, M., Jones, T., & Villares-Varela, M. (2017). Migrant entrepreneurship: Reflections on research and practice. *International Small Business Journal*, 35(1), 3-18.

Entrepreneurship as a Pathway to Integration

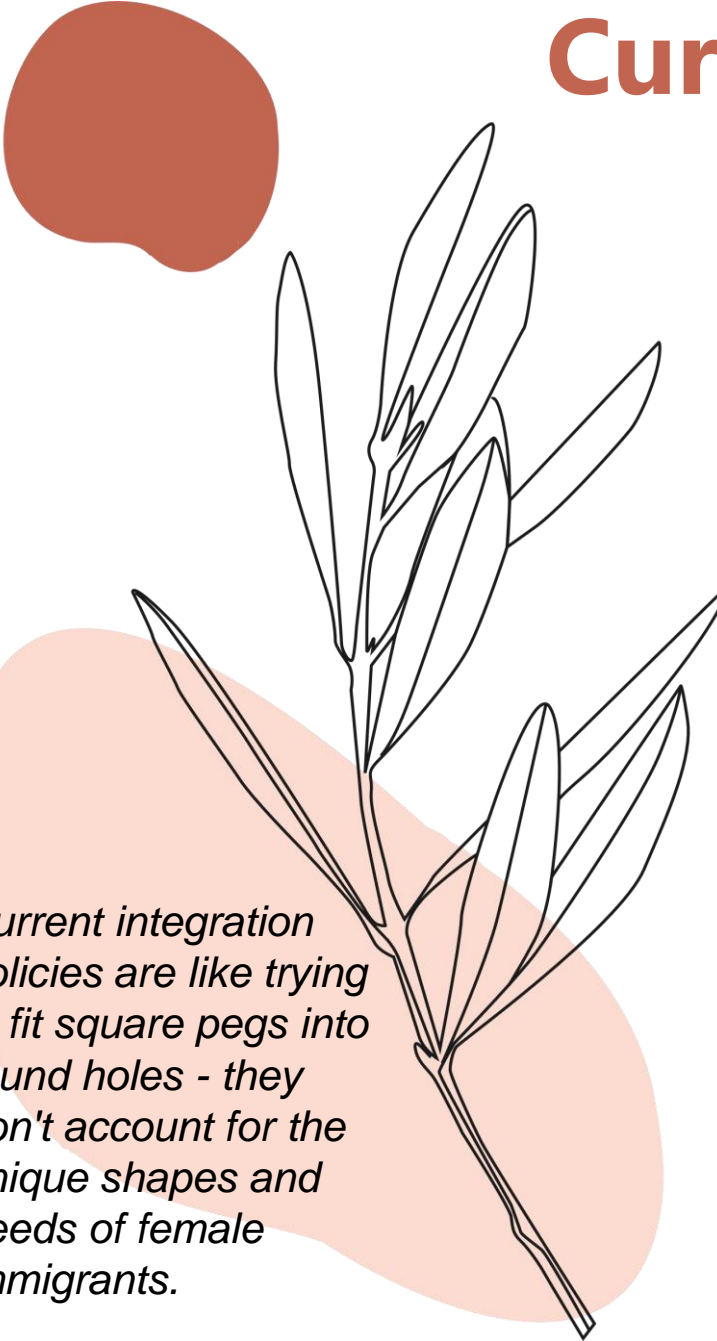
Amira's story of transitioning from a pharmacist to a successful skincare entrepreneur in Germany exemplifies how entrepreneurship can provide a path to economic integration. Her journey illustrates the importance of targeted support programs, such as the entrepreneurship workshop she attended, in helping immigrant women leverage their skills and knowledge in new contexts.



However, Layla's struggle to recreate her café business in France highlights the challenges of transferring entrepreneurial experience across borders and navigating unfamiliar regulatory environments.



Current Policy Discourse - A Critique



Current integration policies are like trying to fit square pegs into round holes - they don't account for the unique shapes and needs of female immigrants.

- **Male-centric or gender-neutral perspective**
- **Emphasis on rapid labour market entry without addressing dual burdens**
- **Lack of attention to structural barriers and intersectional inequalities**
- Policies often assume strategies designed for male immigrants are equally effective for women
- Assimilationist approaches may reinforce patriarchal structures

Kofman, E., Saharso, S., & Vacchelli, E. (2015). Gendered perspectives on integration discourses and measures. *International Migration*, 53(4), 77-89.

Collins, P. H., & Bilge, S. (2020). *Intersectionality*. John Wiley & Sons.

The stories of Olena, Amira, and Layla underscore the limitations of current integration policies

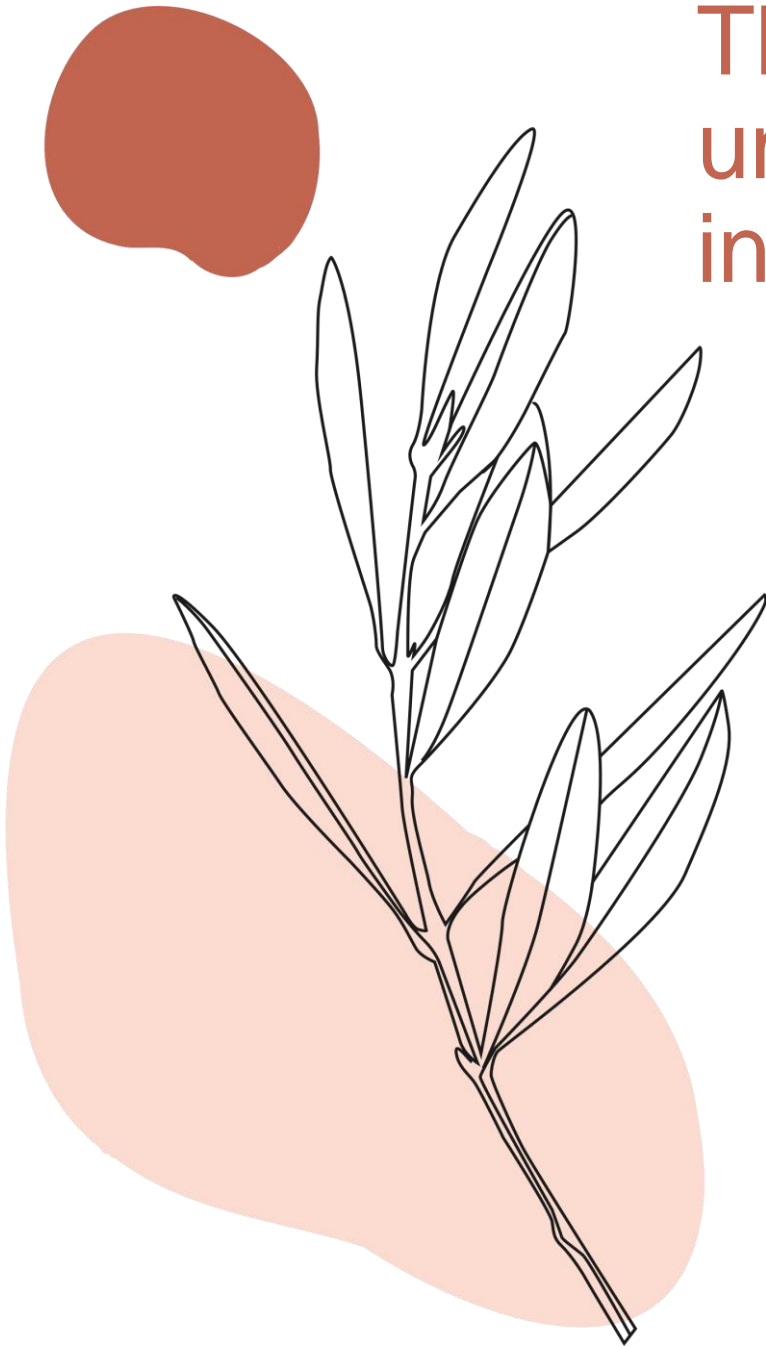
Olena's struggle to balance remote work, language learning, and family responsibilities illustrates the need for more flexible and comprehensive support systems.



Amira's entrepreneurial journey highlights both the potential of immigrant women and the obstacles they face in establishing businesses.



Layla's difficulties in having her professional experience recognized in France demonstrate the inadequacy of current qualification recognition processes.





Recommendations for Policy Improvement

1. **Gender-sensitive integration programs**

2. **Targeted support combining:**

- Language training

Vocational education

Recognition of prior learning

Access to affordable childcare

3. **Address structural factors perpetuating inequalities**

Policies should recognize and address intersectional inequalities

Focus on enhancing labour market outcomes for female immigrants

Strang, A., & Ager, A. (2020). Refugee integration: Emerging trends and remaining agendas. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 33(4), 714-730.

Rubery, J., & Tavora, I. (2021). The COVID-19 crisis and gender equality: risks and opportunities. In *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020*. ETUI.

Before the introduction of subsidized childcare, Marta from Poland struggled to attend job training. After the policy change, she was able to complete a vocational course and secure full-time employment.

Supporting Female Immigrant Entrepreneurship

1. Improve access to finance

- Microcredit programs
- Alternative funding mechanisms

2. Provide culturally sensitive business training

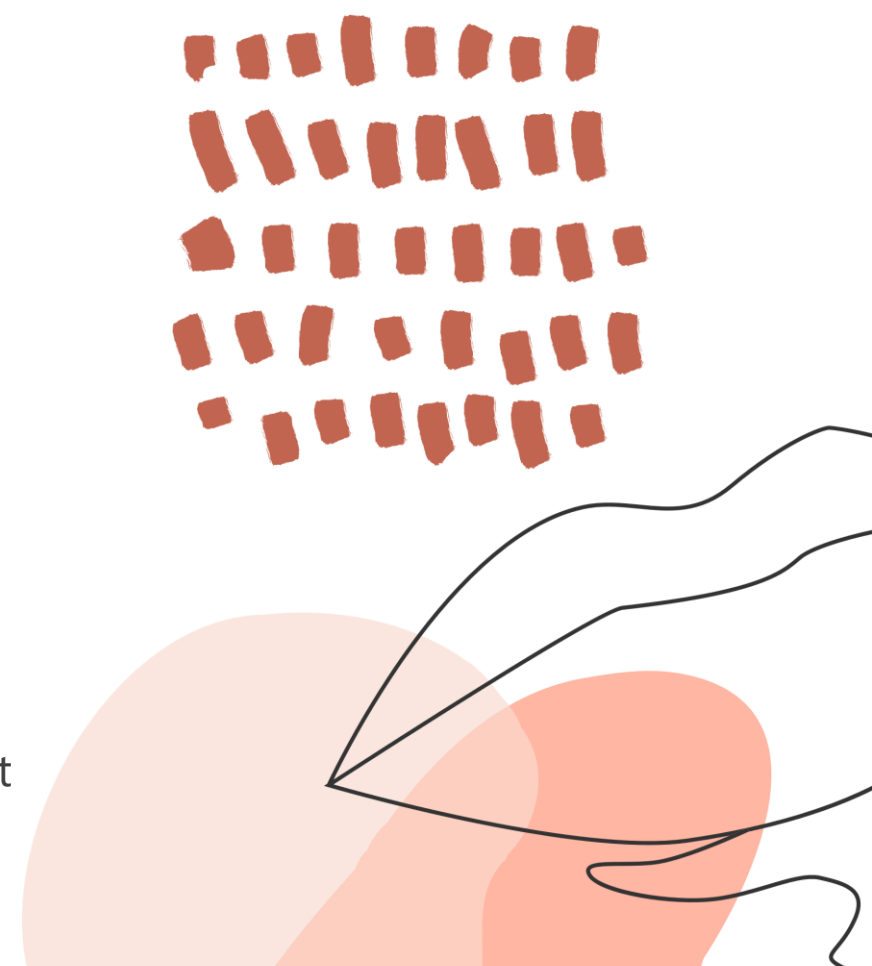
3. Establish mentorship schemes and networking opportunities

4. Address legal and institutional barriers

- Tailored support programs considering specific needs of female immigrant entrepreneurs
- Fostering an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem

González-Pérez, M. A., Velez-Calle, A., & Cathro, V. (2019). Entrepreneurship and gender: differential motivational factors for new venture creation. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, 31(6), 477-492.

Vershinina, N., & Rodgers, P. (2020). Symbolic capital within the lived experiences of Eastern European migrants: a gendered perspective. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 32(7-8), 590-605.

An illustration on the right side of the slide. It features a stylized hand with a black outline, holding a stack of five red coins. The coins are depicted with a grid of small squares on their faces. The background behind the hand consists of several overlapping circles in shades of red and orange.

After participating in a microcredit program, Amina from Morocco started a thriving catering business in Paris, employing five other immigrant women.

Access to Social Services

As Ling from China explained, 'I didn't know I could access free language classes. Once I learned about the service, it changed everything for me'

Challenges:

- Legal restrictions
- Language difficulties
- Cultural misunderstandings
- Healthcare access is particularly critical for female immigrants
- Underutilization of services due to fear, lack of trust towards institutions, lack of information, or previous trauma

Recommendations:

- Culturally sensitive services
- Improved information dissemination
- Addressing legal barriers

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2019). *Integration of young refugees in the EU: good practices and challenges*.

Bradby, H., Humphris, R., Newall, D., & Phillimore, J. (2020). Universalism, diversity and norms: Gratitude, healthcare and welfare chauvinism. *Critical Public Health*, 30(2), 166-178.

Access to Social Services

The experiences of women like Olena and Layla highlight the complexities of accessing social services in new countries.



Olena's difficulty in focusing on language learning while managing work and family responsibilities underscores the need for more integrated support services.



Layla's challenges in navigating the French bureaucratic system for asylum and qualification recognition demonstrate how administrative hurdles can impede integration efforts.

Conclusion

- There is a need for adopting a set of comprehensive, intersectional approaches
 - Importance of tailored policies addressing unique challenges of different migrants, despite the costs
 - Recognising and resourcing entrepreneurship as an integration tool
 - Continuous evaluation and adaptation of integration strategies, as nature of migrants and their migration trajectories changes
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- Involving already integrated migrants with new groups through volunteering efforts
 - Huge necessity for gender-sensitive and culturally aware policies - lobbying the interests of these groups at EU level
 - The role of both governmental and non-governmental organizations in supporting integration and as a strategic partner in lobbying and raising awareness

Ataç, I., Rosenberger, S., & Sauer, B. (2020). Intersectional approaches to the study of migration governance. *Politics and Governance*, 8(1), 1-6.

OECD/European Union. (2019). *The Missing Entrepreneurs 2019: Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship*.



Questions & answers

Invite questions from the audience

