

# Ukreate<sup>HUB</sup>

**Entrepreneurship as a solution to overcome labour market integration barriers:** a case of Ukrainian Women Entrepreneurs in Lithuania

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CONNECT

**Eugenija Kovaliova** Ucreate Hub CEO /  
International Projects Lead at OLF

Background:

- interdisciplinary MA in African Studies (Copenhagen university)
- Manager of 1st legal migration pilot (EC) between Nigeria and Lithuania (“Digital Explorers”)
- 2 years work with displaced Ukrainians in Lithuania



Oleksandra  
Cherednichenko



AGNIETĖ KAUFMAN  
PROGRAM MANAGER



**Ukreate Hub** was created by Open Lithuania Foundation to support displaced Ukrainians, of whom majority are women.

Within the last 2 years Ukreate Hub has built a community of 350 active Ukrainians and has developed programmes that support their professional development and civic engagement, while contributing to their smoother integration in Lithuania.



# Ukreate<sup>HUB</sup>

A Vilnius based competence centre, dedicated to displaced Ukrainians in Lithuania, equipping them with knowledge, skills, network, and other tools to unleash their potential for the future of Ukraine.



# WAR REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE

Feedback/Questions: [ukraina@stat.gov.lt](mailto:ukraina@stat.gov.lt)

LT EN

Numbers

Age/Sex

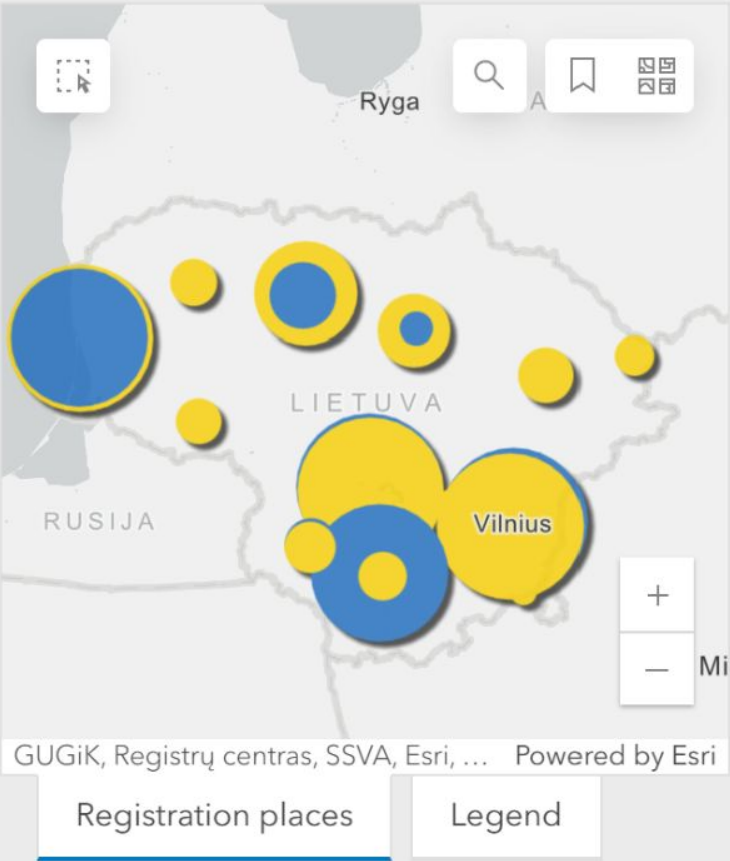
Professions

Map of the war

Registration place:

Search...

- Lithuania total
- MD Alytus
- MD Kaunas
- MD Kaunas (Elektrėnai)
- MD Klaipėda
- MD Marijampolė
- MD Panevėžys

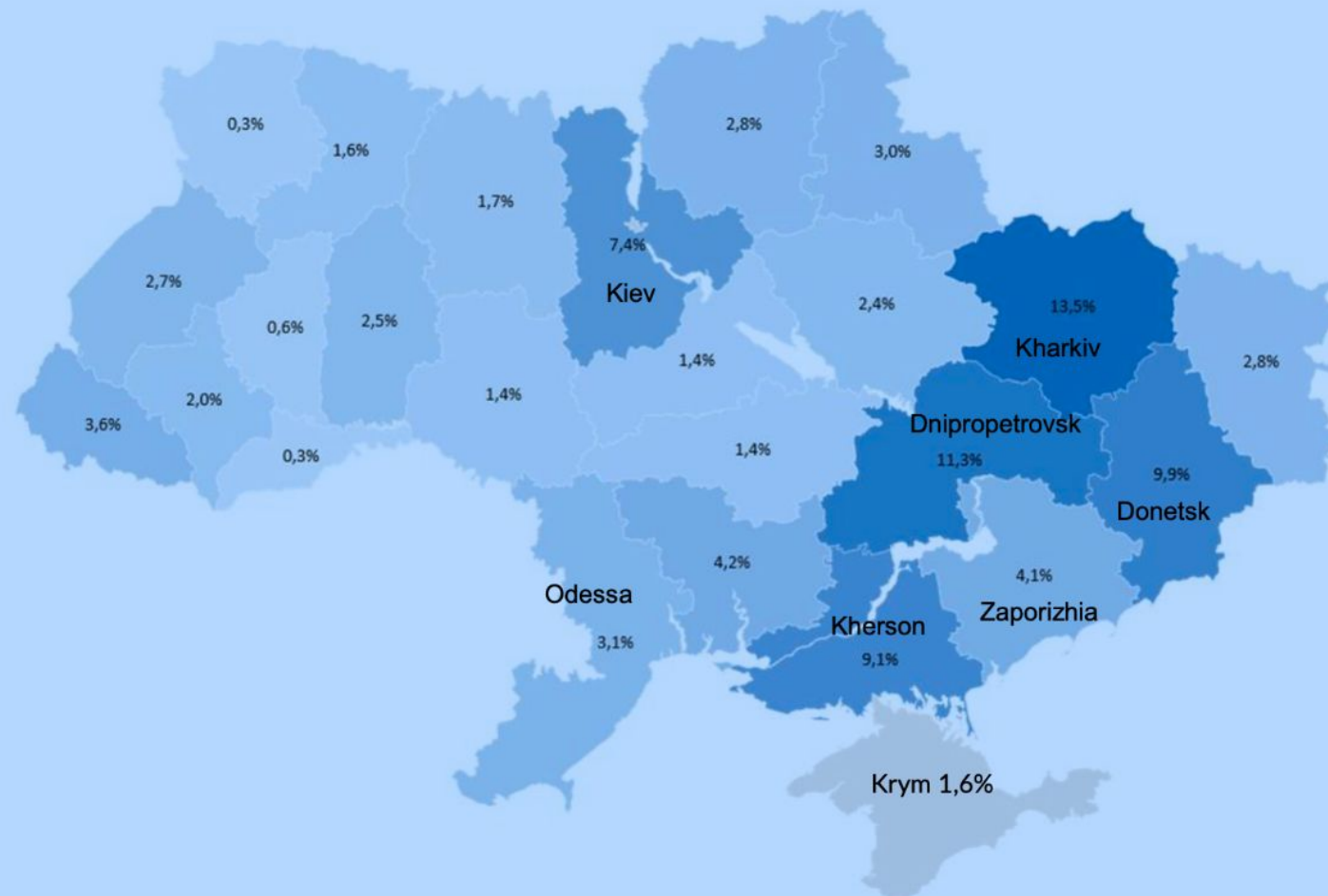


All-time	0-5	6-17	18-64	65+
90,857	5,110	21,987	58,433	5,327
Ukrainian citizens 99%				
Lithuania total				
Yesterday	0-5	6-17	18-64	65+ yea
35	4	5	26	0
Ukrainian citizens 97%				
Lithuania total				
Last 7 days	0-5	6-17	18-64	65+ yea
196	14	32	137	13
Ukrainian citizens 97%				
Lithuania total				
Previous 7 days	0-5	6-17	18-64	65+ yea
186	19	31	125	11
Ukrainian citizens 97%				
Lithuania total				

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## UKRAINIAN REFUGEES ORIGINS BY OBLAST

Each shaded region represents the specific Oblast from which these households have been displaced.



Majority of Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania Originate from Oblast Kharkiv (13,5%), Oblast Dnipropetrovsk (11,3%), Oblast Donetsk (9,9%), Oblast Kherson (9,1%) and Kiev (7,4%).

# Ukrainians in Lithuania

**~60-76 000** Ukrainians (refugees, temporary protection, others)

+ 200 new arrivals per week

55,8% of them are at the age 18-65 years old  
of them 75,5% are women

81% have higher education

over 40% officially employed

21-37% have no intentions to return to Ukraine



## PROBLEM I

UKR women struggle to professionally integrate\*

- ✓ Ukrainian women of 30-49 years old are the biggest group of unemployed Ukrainians in Lithuania.
- ✓ Many displaced Ukrainian women report that they had to take employment lower than their qualifications (in Lithuania only 8% of Ukrainians work highly qualified jobs, 25% work unqualified or low qualification jobs).
- ✓ Professional integration barriers include: care obligations, limited knowledge of the local language, skills mismatches, difficulties in skills recognition, risk of exploitation, breakdown of family units, and uncertainties about the length of stay

\* Sources: OECD, Užimtumo Tarnyba, OLF & UWE hub research

## IMPACT OF POOR INTEGRATION

Failure to successfully integrate into labour market of host country has this impact on Ukrainian women:

- Inadequate income to satisfy individual and family financial needs.
- Loss of professional identity.
- Additional psychological burden.



## PROBLEM II

There could be as many as **10 000** unemployed Ukrainian women in Vilnius\*

Programme participant is

- ✓ A Ukrainian women of 30-49 years old (66%)
- ✓ Resides in a city (Vilnius or other major city)
- ✓ Most likely is alone with one or two kids (41%)
- ✓ Is unemployed (33%) or self employed but not operating profitable business (39,2%)
- ✓ Strong motivation for financial stability (64,7%)

\* Based on available statistics of number of Ukrainians registered as employed, number of women among those residing in Vilnius.





## SPECIFIC PROBLEMS



### BARRIERS FACED BY UKR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS IN LT\*

**Access to financing / seed funding\*\*** -  
from 90 Ukrainian businesses only 1 has  
received funding from state programme.

**Access to relevant business networks and  
female role models** – half of surveyed  
women said they don't know any other  
female entrepreneur.

**Lack of knowledge on business  
development**, both more general (how to  
develop a business plan) and local context  
(legal business forms, taxation, business  
culture & rules in Lithuania).

\* Based on survey of 46 Ukrainian women in Lithuania, surveyed in August 2023 by Ucreate Hub and U&WE hub. Some insights can be found in this interview of U&We hub director Maryna Saprykina – <http://bit.ly/3wf38B3>

\*\* 46% of surveyed women identify this as top 3 challenges. Also, despite seemingly available loan programme, it is not accessible to Ukrainians.  
Source: <https://bit.ly/49aSdqA>

## Our Solution

### UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION TO UKRAINIAN WOMEN

- ✓ Most of content is provided in **Ukrainian language**;
- ✓ **Mentorship by female role models** from Lithuanian business community;
- ✓ Designed for **mothers with kids** (Childcare provided during trainings and events);
- ✓ Being part of a growing and **vibrant community**;
- ✓ Hybrid programme accessible for Ukrainian women from **regions**
- ✓ Access to **seed funding**.

4 months-long comprehensive educational & mentorship programme for displaced Ukrainian women in Lithuania, designed to enable women to start their own business or further develop currently owned small businesses.







Pitching Competition

Ukrainian Women Entrepreneurship Programme







“Now I understand what I need to do next, where and how to find customers; how and where to get grants or financial assistance for development; and how to develop and find partners. I also learned what tools can be used to facilitate and improve my skills and process.”

Nataliia Akishyna, creator of felt animals

Source: <https://shorturl.at/WDXft>

## Some reflections

- ✓ Employment first approach does not necessarily guarantee long-term better integration into labour market
- ✓ Entrepreneurship promotion oriented programmes single out STEM or IT sector
- ✓ Understanding the specific challenges faced by particular migrant group (women) is essential in designing impactful interventions
- ✓ Training alone without access to seed funding/capital is likely to produce minimal results
- ✓ High motivation of public institutions and politicians can have long term positive spill-over effects for larger migrant community







LET'S INVEST IN UKRAINE'S  
FUTURE TOGETHER!

Ukcreate<sup>HUB</sup>

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## Pitching Competition

## Ukrainian Women Entrepreneurship Programme

