HANDBOOK FOR ADULT EDUCATORS

SUCCESS, POWER, EQUALITY, ASYLUM AND KNOWLEDGE: JUST HER

Just Her
Giving Women a Voice

Co-funded by the European Union

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The "**Success, Power, Equality, Asylum and Knowledge: Just Her!**" (Just Her!) project is a comprehensive initiative that aims to empower migrant and refugee women by improving their language and basic skills, providing a sense of belonging and promoting gender equality. This handbook has been developed as an important resource for adult educators working with this vulnerable population.

This **Handbook** is designed to provide educators with the knowledge, strategies and tools necessary to address the unique needs of migrant and refugee women. By understanding these needs, educators can create a **culturally sensitive learning environment** that supports the integration and empowerment of these women. The handbook emphasises the importance of foreign language learning and provides evidence-based teaching approaches tailored to different learning styles and group dynamics.

With this resource, adult educators will be better prepared to motivate and engage migrant and refugee women and help them to upskill, integrate into their communities and take an active role in society. The "Just Her!" project supports educators in **reaching, engaging and empowering these women**, ultimately contributing to more inclusive and equitable learning opportunities.

By following the guidelines and approaches outlined in this Handbook, educators will not only **improve their professional skills**, but also play a crucial role in promoting the inclusion and empowerment of migrant and refugee women. Together, we can create a learning environment where all women feel valued and supported and are able to realise their full potential.

UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will investigate the unique socio-economic difficulties encountered by women who have migrated or sought refuge in new countries.

Based on the latest statistics*, there are **448.8 million inhabitants** living in the **EU** (2023):

27.3 million are non-EU citizens   (6% of EU's total population)
42.4 million were born outside the EU**   (9% of all EU's inhabitants)

The integration of the migrants who arrived in the EU and the host European communities remains a common challenge for both sides. According to an article published by the European Website on Integration, migrant and refugee women face a double disadvantage in the integration process, since they face the double burden of being both women and migrants (EWSI 2018).

Furthermore, in 2019 the OECD shared that immigrant women "remain systematically discounted in the labour market compared to their native peers and immigrant men". Finally, studies indicate that women "frequently receive less integration support than men, both in terms of language training and active labour market measures" (EWSI 2018).

In this Unit, we will identify some of the main difficulties faced by the target group, identified as:

- Linguistic barriers;
- Cultural differences;
- Network access.

We will tell the stories of Esther, Faduma, Amal and Dega discovering how they fixed the challenges encountered along the way.

In the light of these facts, it is crucial to support migrant women's process of social and economic integration. The successful full integration of migrants into their receiving EU countries crucially demands the integration of women, which importantly involves labour market integration, the establishment of a social network, the promotion of employment and economic independence.

In this context, the Just Her project seeks to address gaps in the integration process of migrant and refugee women, seeking to improve their employability and establish and strengthen ties with their new communities.

- By the end of this Unit, you will be able to:
  - Identify the main challenges associated with migration
  - Realise that migrant women are a heterogeneous group and therefore, the legal status, ethnic background and other factors influence the type of obstacles that hinder their social and labour integration in the hosting societies

1. Understanding the needs of migrants and refugees women

1.1. Overcoming barriers through education and empowerment

Providing refugee girls and women with access to education is a key priority with major humanitarian and strategic repercussions. School means routine, normality, purpose, and time away from the pressures and burdens of refugee life – important for all girls and boys but in some cases especially so for girls, who are vulnerable to exploitation and sexual and gender-based violence.

By learning about their rights and how to claim them, refugees are empowered. Education strengthens their resilience in the face of the huge challenges that confront people who have been forced from their homes. Targeted policies, such as accessible education programs, vocational training, and mentorship activities, address the problems that refugee populations deal with every day. These programs not only break down cultural barriers but also teach practical skills to refugees, thus promoting economic empowerment. This effort is significant not only for individual empowerment but also for creating global stability and ensuring the development of future generations within relocated communities.

Promoting the smooth involvement of refugee girls and women in education is critical. By investing in education towards this vulnerable group, we establish the groundwork for economically self-sufficient communities, which helps the overall stability of areas dealing with displacement difficulties. Education is an effective means of breaking the cycle of poverty and encouraging community development.

Empowered women become agents of economic prosperity and social peace, influencing not just their own lives but also the resilience and advancement of entire societies.

Access to education is a fundamental human right, essential to the acquisition of knowledge and to "the full development of the human personality", as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states

More than that, education makes us more resilient and independent individuals. But, for millions of women and girls refugees, education remains an aspiration. Several European countries have implemented initiatives to address the barriers faced by refugee girls and women in accessing education. These plans vary in scope and approach but share the common goal of creating inclusive opportunities for educational and economic empowerment. Some examples:

- Sweden and Norway emphasise integration through education by offering special programs that address the unique needs of refugee students, including language support, counselling services and mentorship programs to ease the transition into the education systems.

- In Germany, the project PerMenti supports newly immigrated women, especially refugees with a higher education level or work experience, in planning their professional careers while they learn German and attend integration courses.

- In Slovenia, some creative and cultural professions do not require prior formal education or recognition of skills, thereby providing greater flexibility.

- In the Netherlands, the University of Utrecht runs the Incluusion project, which allows refugees and asylum seekers to participate in a variety of university courses and organises some ad-hoc training. Although the project does not focus on migrant women exclusively, it has helped to organise a course on ICT skills for women with low computer knowledge.

These specific initiatives demonstrate a commitment to addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by refugee girls and women. By tailoring programs to the specific needs of this vulnerable demographic, European countries aim to create an environment where education is accessible, contributing to their empowerment and integration into their new communities.

> *"Helping people is temporary; empowering people is permanent."*
>
> **-Yvonne Ndaga Endam**, founder of Endam Home of Hope, one of the Women-Led Organisation (WLO) winners for the 2022 UNHCR NGO Innovation Award.

Image 1. Esther Sunday is from Nigeria and now lives in Rome, Italy..
(@ Lena Mucha/UNDP)

Esther: From Nigeria to Italy to reach out full potential

Description: Staying in Africa meant one of two things for Esther: getting married at a young age or getting pregnant at a young age. Both would have shattered her dreams. She did not want to waste her potential.

Scenario: She made her way to Europe via Libya. She spent a year working in Libya as a house cleaner and maid for a Spanish family. They treated her well and saw her as their daughter. When a conflict erupted in Libya, the family had to leave for Spain and they asked her to go with them, but Esther was unable to leave because she did not have enough time to get a passport. She took it upon herself and found her way to Italy where she arrived in 2014.

The main issues she had were the barriers to fully integrate into Italian society, especially the language barriers to study or apply for job.

> *"The main issues I have are the barriers to fully integrate into Italian society, especially the language barriers if I want to study or apply for a job."*
>
> **-Esther**

Solution/ Outcome: Fortunately, she was able to find a job working as a secretary at a government agency. She also sings and writes, so she volunteers at the refugee centre as a choir director, and style hair on the side to earn extra money.

Key Takeaways: Esther aims for greater things in life and her willingness to accomplish her goals overcome this obstacle finding a job in her own language and volunteering. In the meanwhile, she is learning a new language to further her studies and build a professional career.

One of the main obstacles that migrant and refugee women face are due to linguistic and cultural differences between the country of origin and host country, difficulties in validating previous educational and professional skills.

European countries should include language support to address the barriers faced on refugee girls and women in accessing education.
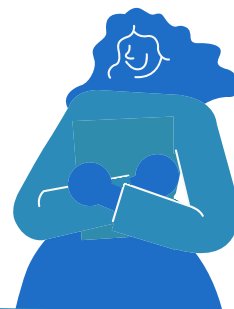
"*I didn't know how to use e-mail or even how to open an account; spreadsheets were unimaginable for me. I can now manage my accounts, keep my financial records and write to neighbours who live further away to offer my empanadas. I can earn a living directly from home and reach people I couldn't before*".

- Desiree Nunez, refugee about digital education.

2. Exploring the cultural challenges of integration

Whereas the concept of integration originates from the assumption that newcomers need adjustment to the receiving society, most researchers understand integration as a multi-dimensional process requiring from immigrants a willingness to adapt, but also from the host society a willingness to facilitate integration. In policy, integration is often aimed at becoming self-sufficient through learning the language and finding paid work, and attention is also paid to teaching newcomers about the host society's culture.

When it comes to the responsibility to achieve those objectives, emphasis is on the efforts made by newcomers. In this way, policy demands for integration can be easily confused with assimilation. To include the target group's perspective, which is often neglected in discussions on integration, earlier studies have examined refugees' understanding of integration and they indicated refugees shared the common dream of equal opportunities and rights, democratic participation, and acceptance.

Based on a mixed method approach the perceptions of 'successful' integration, regards as both means and markers of integration (employment, housing, education, health, and leisure), social connections (bridges, bonds, and links), facilitators (language and cultural knowledge, digital skills, safety, and stability) and foundation (right and responsibilities).

Markers and means	Work	Housing	Education	Helth and social care	Leisure
Social connections		Bonds	Bridges	Links	
Fcilitators	Language and communication	Culture	Digital skills	Safety	Stability
Foundations		Rights and responsabilities			
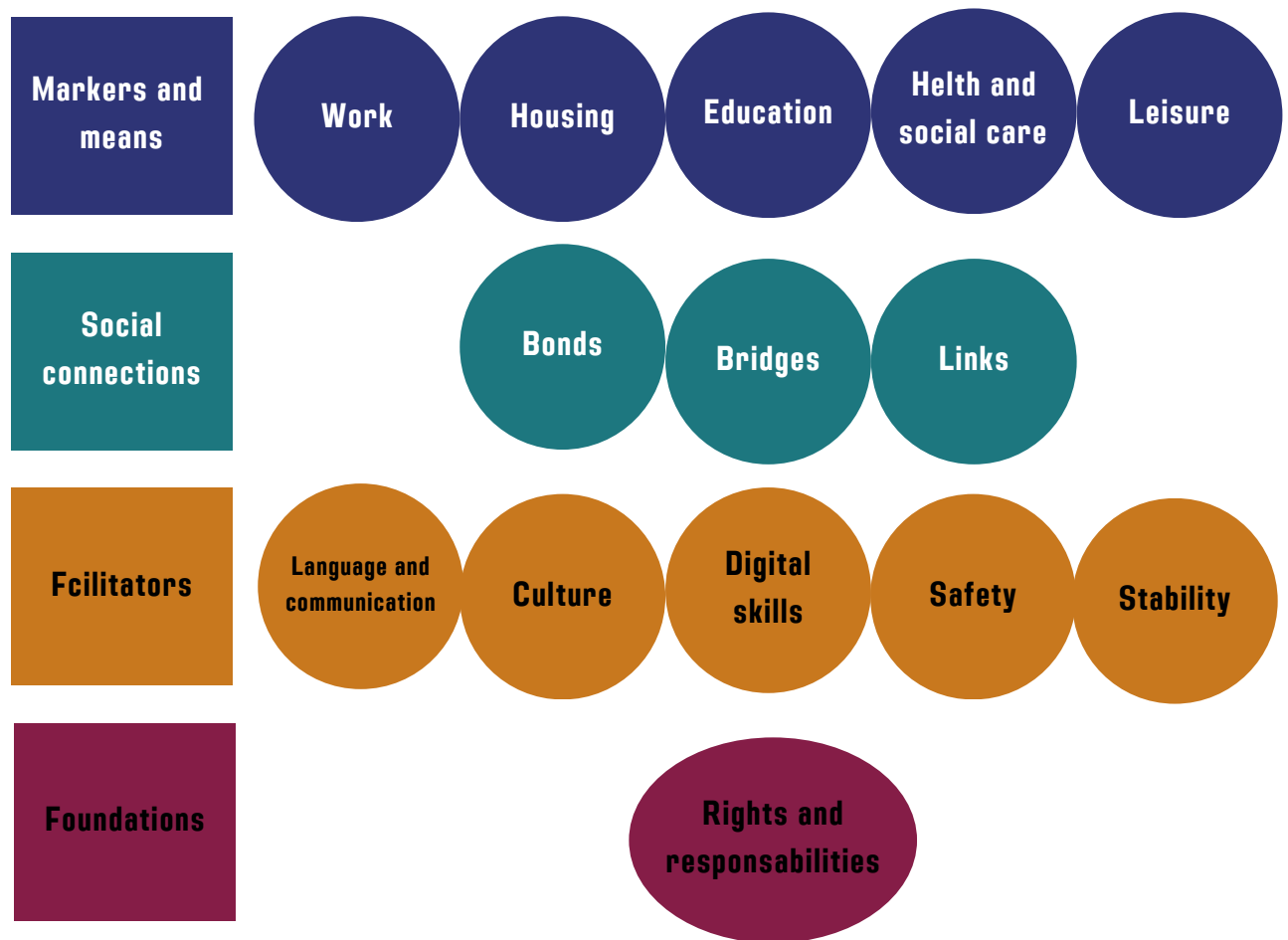
Image 2. Refugee integration framework; source: Ndofor-Tah et al. (2019)

Integration is moreover understood as adapting (to a certain extent) to European society, particularly regarding getting to know and respect norms, values, and customs. However, while few argue for complete adjustment, most refugees stress the importance of becoming part of the receiving society while retaining a sense of their ethnic identity.

2.1 "No one should have to see their dreams crushed by prejudice"

Even if today, there are approximately between 9 and 15 million Muslims in Europe, it is clear that the presence of Muslims and Islam in Europe gives rise to debate. One particularly sensitive topic, attracting strongly polarised opinions, is undoubtedly that of equality between men and women within Muslim communities.

Non-Muslims emphasise the fact that the religious teachings, their interpretation, and methods of applying them, in addition to traditional observances, are jeopardising the still fragile achievements of the struggle for equality between men and women in society in Europe. The picture that usually emerges is a rather negative and oversimplified image of gender relations in Muslim communities. Nevertheless, even deep within Muslim communities, the same debate is going on, examining as much the goals to be achieved (what kind of equality?) as the religious teachings and the strategies to be put in place.

It would be highly inaccurate to describe the current picture of Muslim women in Europe as a field divided into a feminist/modern and a conservative/backward camp. In fact, the situation is much more fluid, complex, and multi-layered, with many opinions and behaviours –often of an opposite nature– coexisting together.

Although archaic and patriarchal features that undermine female autonomy and equality persist among Europe's Muslim communities, many Muslim women are emerging as independent, determined individuals. Empowered by increased levels of education and by independent access to religious knowledge, they have the potential to become important agents of radical transformations from within a tradition that does not need to go through radical means. However, knowledge of the language of the country of residence and employment opportunities are the keys to their full success.

The wishes of Europe's Muslim women for their own future and for the future generations are unexceptionally ordinary. Their recurring dreams are to be respected as individuals, to live in peace and within the law and to feel integrated.

Already at the age of thirteen, fashion designer, business developer and tech geek Faduma Aden knew that she would run a Scandinavian clothing brand for international women from different backgrounds.

Image 3. Faduma Aden, born in Somalia lives in Stockholm, Sweden.
(@Emma Svensson/ELLE)

More people are realising that they should target groups that were previously forgotten.

Description: Faduma studied in Sweden, Business Administration for her bachelor's degree, then she continued with a master's degree in computer and system science. At that time, she saw tech as equal to innovation and entrepreneurship, something that is more future/forward-thinking.

However, she felt boxed in after university working in a consulting firm: she is too imaginative and wants to make an impact through her creative work.

Scenario: Faduma has always loved innovating, and being creative. She had little sketchbooks and would always be inventing new types of products. She started at 7 years old creating solutions and 'inventions'. She felt encouraged at home by her parents - she also loved the arts at school. Then she developed her interest in fashion. Not in trends or so, but more in the development of new product designs. She particularly wanted to create something for women like her mother and always presented as a fashionista in her own way.

<u>Solution/ Outcome:</u> Faduma's first step was just an idea that consumer groups that are forgotten by bigger brands still should be addressed - their needs still should be met. It is very apparent that certain companies do miss these business opportunities simply because of a lack of diverse perspectives inside the companies.

It is not a calculated decision to exclude but simply lack of perspective among leadership and teams to even recognise who and how to include. So, when it comes to fashion, she started attending textile fairs and had a vision or sketched out ideas of what would later become her fashion brand, Jemmila (it means beautiful in Arabic) – a brand that offers a Scandinavian take on Muslim fashion.

Equipped with only ideas and a great ambition, she attended the <u>World Islamic Economic Forum</u> in Dubai and made some great connections - one being the chairperson of the whole event! They started chatting and she explained her ideas to him - two years later in 2016, she was invited back to speak in a panel at their forum that was in Jakarta. When she came back, she was nominated for the Stockholm Innovation awards. These experiences combined gave her the confidence to enter more competitions and pitch the ideas. She realised then that there were many prejudices, not just against her as an entrepreneur but also against her faith.

Jemmila aimed to be more than a simple fashion brand, it wanted to inspire, empower, and create a community based on respect and understanding. The website featured strong, driven, and successful women that embody the spirit of Jemmila and hosted interview series to share the stories of change makers, leaders, and inspiring Muslim women.

Jemmila was created in 2015 and lasted until 2018. Faduma says about this experience:

"It is great to keep a flexible attitude and learn to let things go. For those who feel restricted in where they are and the opportunities there - remember the world is big! Follow your dreams beyond the city and country you are in!"

-Faduma, founder of Jemmila.

Key Takeaways: Build an international network was the key to launch Jemmila's project and overcome prejudices. Now Faduma is specialised in DEI, CSR, business development, storytelling and innovation and received over ten awards for achievements in innovation, impact, and leadership.

Muslim-Arab refugee women have a strong bond to their own culture, faith (religion) and family, which also affects their information practices. While the cultural and religious activities may symbolise women's difference from European society, at the same time, they are part of women's information landscapes, construction of belonging to the place where they live and facilitator to a successful integration.

It is thus important for the host society - including policy makers and other officials - to understand the value of these factors in women refugees' lives in order to establish a society which respects their cultural differences and supports the integration process.

3. Promoting inclusive communities for social Integration

Women refugees experience unique integration challenges that can affect their well-being including, the loss of cultural values, religious customs, social connections (families and friends), adjustment to a new culture, changes in identity, psychological disturbance and stress. Refugees not only face integration challenges but various information challenges, such as lack of information, information overflow, misinformation, lack of information literacy skills, fractured information landscapes and culturally nuanced information upon arriving in an unfamiliar environment. Particularly, women refugees have unique information needs and face challenges in accessing information on health-related issues and women-related diseases.

People gradually build their own information landscapes by developing the ability to understand the discourses and narratives of a social setting to access information. These established landscapes become fractured when refugees are forced to migrate to a new country for new ways of knowing and doing things in an unfamiliar society. Among many integration challenges of an economic, social, political, and cultural nature, the lack of social connections is the most influencing factor, which creates information problems and prevents refugees from taking an active part in society.

3.1 Building bridges into new communities providing a sense of belonging

Integration is possible when a refugee has access to useful, relevant, and right information about everyday life issues and knows how to use this information in different practical matters in early settlement life such as: finding a home, job, medical services, school for children, getting into university, motherhood guide etc.

The cultural landscape gradually helps refugees to reconstruct the fractured landscapes by building bridges into new communities and by providing them with a sense of belonging and identity through psychological and spiritual support from community peers, experienced refugees and newcomers. The activities in these landscapes help them to overcome the stress of past experiences and encourage them to move on. Especially, the veteran refugees, in these communities, are considered the safe, trustworthy, and knowledgeable source of information.

They ease the culturally nuanced information to some extent for the newcomers by sharing their personal experiences in the past, sharing funny stories and jokes (which contain information), and warning of predicted risks in seeking, accessing and sharing information in local society in advance. It is easy for women refugees to understand any information when their own people explain it.

> *"It made more sense to me on how to make a bank appointment when my friend explained rather than browsing the web page which was long enough and confusing"*
>
> **-A woman refugee, about useful information.**

Information seeking, sharing, and using in an unfamiliar society is not restricted to co-ethnic communities However, in general, they trust, rely on and respect the information from refugee women in communities who have more years of experience, particularly when they are in their early few years of the integration process.
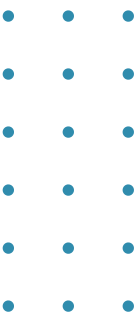
Amal and Deqa help foreign-born women entrepreneurs realise their ideas and dreams.
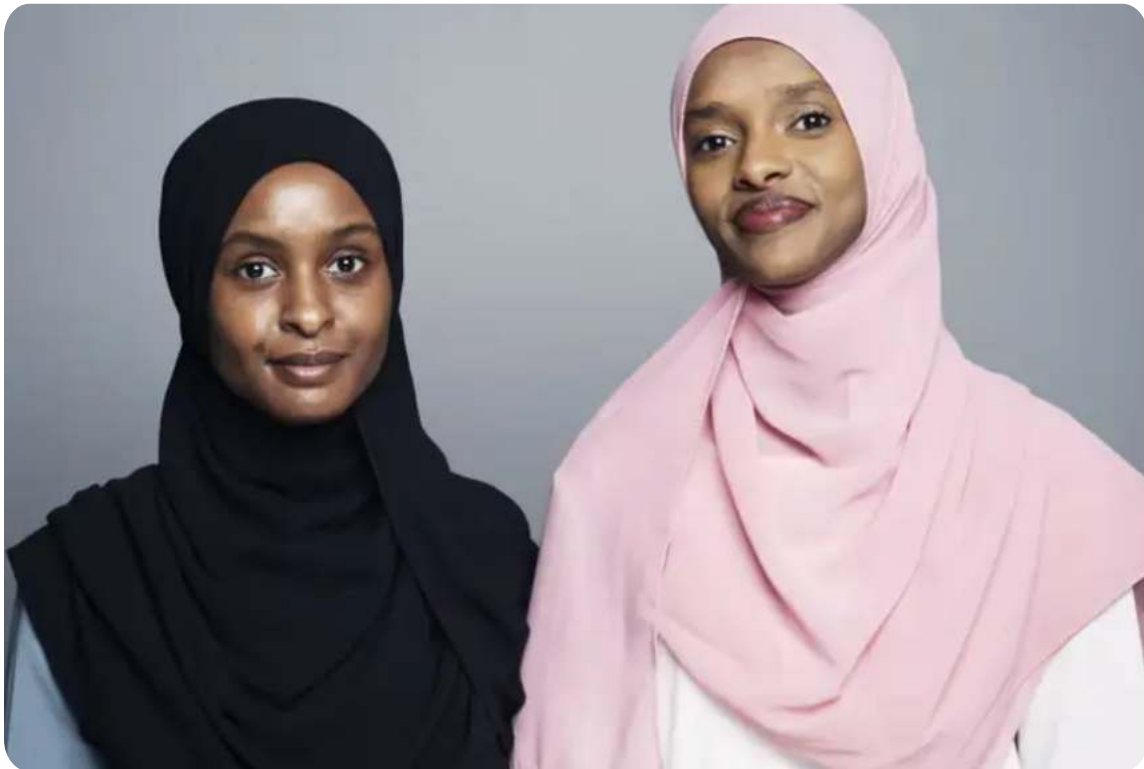
Image 4. Deqa Abukar and Amal Said are the women behind the network Womenisa
(@ Moa Linette/SelmaStories)

You become what you see. If you never see someone who looks like you, doing what you want to do, it makes it twice as hard.

Description: Deqa Abukar says that her parents did not grow up in Sweden, they came here from Somalia when she was seven years old. Many who live in socio-economically vulnerable areas or are born abroad lack those formal contact networks, and they determine quite a lot, in more or less everything you do.

Scenario: Deqa Abukar and Adnan Yousuf in 2014 started the Swedish entrepreneurial network Bling, a non-profit organisation focused on entrepreneurship as a tool to create change and growth in society. They offer free advice, mentoring and networking.

Amal Said worked in a school, and she began to think about how she could arouse interest in the young people who want to create something for themselves - and reach their full potential. She came to Deqa and Adnan with the idea of creating better opportunities for young people through leadership training. She also realised that there were not many women who started businesses or had opportunities to dream in the same way.

Solution/ Outcome: In 2018, Deqa and Amal started Womenisa, a network that is part of Bling but with a focus on women. The goal is to unite women, strengthen them and give them the conditions to network among themselves. Through the Womeneur scholarship, they highlight women who have created positive change for themselves or in society. They also have networking meetings, workshops, and inspiration evenings. In March 2020, they received the feminist award Selma of the Year for their work. During the coronavirus pandemic, when many of their entrepreneurs have had a hard time, they have acted as job brokers and created contacts with other companies that want more diversity and more women in leading roles.

Key Takeaways: Deqa and Amal want to strengthen female entrepreneurship and create more female leaders by reaching out to those who do not feel included. The most important part of that is having a network, and it is a lot about representation: seeing that others who look like them and come from the same kind of background can succeed. "If you can do it, so can I" – it is contagious!

More women dare to believe that they can study, pursue a career, and start their own business.
The lack of social connections is the most influencing factor preventing refugees from taking an active part in society; to promote integration the role of individual intermediaries (and more specifically in the form of friends, service providers and volunteers) for information has generally been acknowledged as a key one.
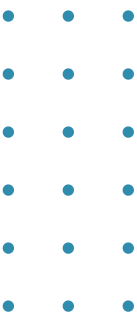
IN A NUTSHELL

Language barriers, prejudices, social isolation, and lack of networks are crucial issues faced by migrant women in the migrant women's process of social and economic integration.

One of the main obstacles that migrant and refugee women face is due to linguistic and cultural differences between the country of origin and host country, and difficulties in validating previous educational and professional skills. European countries should include language support to address the barriers faced by refugee girls and women in accessing education.

While the cultural and religious activities may symbolise women's difference from European society, at the same time, they are part of women's information landscapes, construction of belonging to the place where they live and facilitators to successful integration. It is thus important for the host society - including policymakers and other officials - to understand the value of these factors in women refugees' lives to establish a society, which respects their cultural differences and supports the integration process.
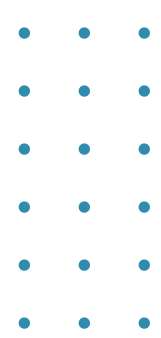
The lack of social connections is the most influencing factor preventing refugees from taking an active part in society; to promote integration the role of individual intermediaries (and more specifically in the form of friends, service providers and volunteers) for information has been acknowledged as a key one.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Education and job opportunities are effective means of breaking the cycle of poverty and encouraging community development.

Empowered women become agents of economic prosperity and social peace, impacting not just their own lives but also the resilience and advancement of entire societies. Additionally, given the global interconnectedness of human well-being, investing in the education and employment of refugee girls and women becomes an essential step toward fostering a more stable and peaceful world in which equitable opportunities are provided to all, regardless of their displacement status.

- How can communities better support and encourage the education and employment of women to foster economic prosperity and social peace?

- What role do education and job opportunities play in breaking the cycle of poverty, and how can these opportunities be made more accessible to vulnerable populations?

- In what ways does investing in the education and employment of refugee girls and women contribute to global stability and the promotion of equitable opportunities?

- Did you know that 18th December is International Migrants Day? Learn more here

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- According to EWSI 2018, what kind of disadvantage do migrant and refugee women face in the integration process?
    - None
    - Gender
    - Age

- To be successfully integrated, which factors are identified as central?
    - Social connections and means and markers of integration
    - Facilitators and foundation
    - All of the above

- When is International Migrants Day celebrated?
    - 18 December
    - 15 December
    - 18 January

UNIT 2: UNDERSTANDING THE IDENTITY OF MIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, migration and forced displacement are realities that affect millions of people around the world. Within this global phenomenon, migrant and refugee women emerge as a particularly vulnerable population, facing a multiplicity of unique challenges and obstacles in their search for safety, opportunities, and a rooted identity. In this context, it is crucial to explore the complexities of the identities, experiences and challenges faced by these women, as well as to discuss issues such as cultural diversity, intersectionality, and the impact of displacement on their identity. This exploration not only allows us to better understand the realities of migrant and refugee women, but also highlights the importance of recognising and respecting their national and cultural backgrounds, thus promoting more inclusive and empathetic societies.

In this unit, titled "Understanding the Identity of Migrant and Refugee Women" we will seek to provide the reader with an understanding of the process of migration and forced displacement, including the factors that drive women to leave their countries of origin, the difficulties they face during the journey and the conditions in host countries; we will explore how migrant and refugee women navigate through the construction of their identity in contexts of cultural and social change, as well as how they negotiate their sense of belonging in new environments. We will look at how multiple dimensions of migrant and refugee women's identities, including their gender, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation, among others, influence and intersect, and how these intersections affect their experiences and opportunities. We will investigate the specific challenges migrant and

refugee women face in terms of mental health, access to health services and emotional well-being, as well as the coping and resilience strategies they develop. Finally, we will analyse the active role of migrant and refugee women in the host society, including their participation in economic, political, and social life, as well as the barriers they face in exercising their rights and contributing fully.

Understanding the identity of migrant and refugee women is crucial for several reasons. First, recognising and understanding their identity is fundamental to treating them with dignity and respect. Each woman has a unique history and identity shaped by her culture, experiences, and aspirations, and it is important to recognise and respect this diversity. Furthermore, understanding their identity can contribute to their empowerment, enabling them to participate actively in society and make decisions that affect their lives. It is also essential to promote their social inclusion, by designing policies and programmes that respect their values and traditions. Identity also plays an important role in their resilience and adaptation to a new environment, and understanding how it is constructed and redefined in the context of migration can support positive and healthy adjustment processes. Finally, understanding their identity is critical in the fight against discrimination and racism, challenging stereotypes, and prejudices to create more inclusive and equitable environments where all people can thrive. In short, understanding the identity of migrant and refugee women is essential to promote their dignity, empowerment, social inclusion, resilience, and the fight against discrimination, thus contributing to more just and caring societies.

By the end of this Unit, you will be able to:
- Recognise the various factors, such as culture, migration experiences and socio-economic context, that influence the identity formation of migrant and refugee women.
- Analyse and understand the individual and collective experiences of migrant and refugee women, recognising the diversity of their cultural backgrounds, life histories and challenges.
- Understand how the identity of migrant and refugee women is influenced by multiple dimensions such as gender, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation, recognising the importance of addressing these intersections in a holistic manner.
- Apply a respectful and empathetic approach: Develop skills to interact with sensitivity and empathy towards migrant and refugee women, recognising and valuing their individual and collective identities, as well as their unique experiences and perspectives.

1. Exploring unique identities and experiences

To understand the experiences and needs of migrant and refugee women, it is essential to explore their unique identities, experiences, and challenges. These women experience a confrontation of factors that influence their integration process, such as gender, migration, legal status, culture, and socio-economic context.

Migrant and refugee women are often victims of gender-based violence both in their countries of origin and in the countries to which they are going. This can include domestic violence, trafficking, and sexual abuse. Traditional gender roles may impose additional responsibilities, such as childcare and household care, which hinder their integration and access to educational and employment opportunities. Because access to reproductive health services may be limited, women may face additional difficulties in receiving adequate medical care.

As a result of migration, these women experience a transformation of their identity, including changes in how they feel in the host society and how they see themselves. They may also find themselves in conflict between their cultural identity of origin and the identity they have developed in their current environment.

Sometimes they have to adapt to new situations and roles that may be very different from those they had in their countries of origin. Rebuilding their image and self-esteem is necessary for this. In certain cases, migration offers the opportunity to acquire greater autonomy and independence, especially if they come from more traditional societies where their roles are more limiting.

Migration status can have an impact on access to basic services, employment, and legal protection. Women without documentation may be more vulnerable to labour exploitation and abuse due to fear of deportation. Migrant and refugee women may find it difficult to access justice, particularly in cases of violence and abuse.

It can be difficult to maintain one's traditions while adapting to a new culture. The pressure to integrate may affect the cultural expectations of their communities of origin. Access to services, employment and educational opportunities and social integration may be hindered by a language barrier. Community networks can be a crucial resource for adaptation and emotional support, but they can also impose cultural norms and expectations that limit women's autonomy.

Migrant and refugee women may face limitations in employment and educational opportunities due to family responsibilities, discrimination in the labour market and lack of recognition of their credentials. Housing conditions may be unstable or insufficient, which has an impact on their physical and mental well-being. Problems of poverty and lack of resources are common. Economic, legal, and linguistic barriers can limit access to services such as health, education, and social assistance.

Many migrant and refugee women demonstrate remarkable resilience and strength despite challenges. To defend their rights and improve their living conditions, they engage in community support networks, grassroots organisations, and activist movements. The promotion of social justice and gender equality requires the empowerment of these women.

It is essential that migration integration policies take into account the unique needs of migrant and refugee women, as well as their contributions to the host society. This may include actions to combat gender-based violence, ensure equitable access to social services, and promote women's economic and political participation.

How is this achieved?

Education and awareness-raising are essential to prevent gender-based violence. implement educational programmes that promote gender equality, mutual respect, and violence prevention from an early age. This includes campaigns in schools, communities, and the media to combat gender stereotypes and promote healthy relationships; All workers in key sectors such as health, education, social services, and law enforcement should receive mandatory training on gender-based violence and cultural diversity. This ensures adequate and sensitive responses to the needs of migrant and refugee women. Community support and social networks: Encourage the creation of community support networks where women can share their experiences, receive emotional support, and obtain information on resources available to victims of violence; Ensure that refugee and immigrant women have equal access to safe shelters, helplines, counselling, and legal services. These services should be culturally competent and available in multiple languages; Promote gender equality and mutual respect as core values in all policies and programmes, both locally and nationally. This includes laws that sanction gender-based violence and protect women's rights.

Equal access to social services, access to culturally relevant information and access to information ensure that information about social services is easily accessible to women from a variety of cultures and migration backgrounds; Help with bureaucratic procedures, interpretation, and accompaniment to important appointments; Help immigrant and refugee women integrate into the local community through the use of programmes that encourage social, cultural and sporting participation.

Promote economic and political participation and provide financial education, entrepreneurship support and job training programmes. This helps women to earn a living economically and reduces their vulnerability to violence; Promotes the active participation of immigrant and refugee women in political and community life. This includes providing them with leadership training, access to information about their political rights and opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives; and supporting and funding community projects led by migrant and refugee women that address specific challenges and foster collective empowerment.

Image 5.Source: Cavan. Mother And Daughter Refugees

Amina's story

Description: In Germany, a project targeting refugee women from various regions has been instrumental in their empowerment and integration. Through intensive language and job training programmes, these women have acquired practical skills such as sewing and cooking, facilitating their access to employment and entrepreneurship. In addition, they receive psychosocial support and legal guidance to overcome past traumas and understand their rights. Thanks to microcredit and partnerships with local businesses, many have launched successful businesses, strengthening their economic autonomy and contributing positively to the community.

Scenario: Amina came to Germany as a refugee three years ago because of the conflict in Syria. Amina enrolled in an intensive German language and job training programme offered by a local centre for refugee women. For six months, she attended regular language classes and also received training in sewing and basic computer skills. Due to traumatic experiences during the war in Syria, Amina received individualised psychological support at the centre.

This helped her manage the stress and anxiety associated with displacement and adapting to a new environment. Inspired by the skills she acquired in sewing, Amina decided to start her own business making traditional Syrian clothes adapted to local tastes. With the support of the project, she obtained a micro-credit and advice on basic business management. Amina actively participated in community events organised by the centre, where she displayed and sold her creations. This not only allowed her to generate additional income but also to better integrate into the local community and share her culture. Thanks to the project, Amina has been able to establish her sewing business, increase her income and feel more confident and empowered in her new life in Germany. She is now exploring opportunities to expand her business and further contribute to the social fabric of her community.

Solution/ Outcome: After successfully completing the German language and job skills training programme and receiving psychosocial support to deal with past trauma, Amina decided to focus on her passion for sewing. With the micro-credit obtained through the project, she was able to set up her own workshop making traditional Syrian clothes adapted to the local market .Amina rented a small space for her workshop and acquired the necessary sewing machines and materials. She started designing and manufacturing unique garments combining traditional Syrian elements with local trends. She participated in local fairs and markets organised by the community and the resource centre, where she displayed and sold her creations. The response was positive, as many people appreciated the quality and authenticity of her work. Over time, Amina's business grew. She hired a local assistant to help with sewing and workshop management. In addition, she began taking custom orders and expanding her product line to include accessories and textile decorations. Amina became a respected figure in the local community. She actively participated in cultural events and collaborated with other local entrepreneurs in community initiatives.

Key Takeaways: Comprehensive empowerment programmes for migrant and refugee women are essential for their successful integration. Training in language and job skills, psychosocial support and access to economic resources are fundamental to improving their autonomy and well-being. Active participation in the community and recognition of their cultural contributions strengthen their social integration. Collaboration between government sectors, non-governmental organisations and civil society is crucial to develop policies that are inclusive and sensitive to cultural and gender diversity. This approach not only benefits migrant and refugee women but also enriches and diversifies host communities.

2. Analysing the impact of displacement on identity

Forced displacement has a profound and multifaceted impact on the cultural identity of migrant and refugee women.

When individuals or groups of individuals are forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence due to factors beyond their control and which endanger their lives, safety, or well-being, it is referred to as forced displacement. Forced displacement forces migrant and refugee women to leave their communities, traditions, and familiar surroundings. Their sense of cultural belonging and continuity may be affected by feelings of loss and nostalgia caused by this separation.

Migrant and refugee women often have to reconstruct their identity in the process of adapting to a new country. The creation of a new identity by migrant and refugee women after forced displacement is a complex process involving a range of personal, social, cultural, and legal factors:

Personal factors:
- How women perceive and reconstruct their identity is influenced by individual experiences prior to displacement, such as education, work, and family roles, and experiences during displacement, such as trauma and loss.
- Resilience, the personal capacity to adapt and cope with challenges, as well as the pursuit of autonomy in decision-making and action, are essential to the reconstruction process.
- Personal self-perception, influenced by how they see and treat themselves in a new environment, plays an important role in the formation of their identity.

Social factors:
- How the local community receives them and is willing to integrate them has a great impact on the process of adaptation and reconstruction of their identity.

- Social and cultural expectations of what it means to be a woman in the new society may challenge or reinforce their previous identity and self-perception.
- The availability and quality of social and community networks affect the ability to make meaningful connections and find emotional and practical support.

Cultural factors:
- Speaking the language of the host country helps to integrate to express and understand significant cultural and social aspects.
- How women construct their identity in a multicultural context is affected by their ability to understand and accept new cultural norms while preserving and valuing their own.

Legal factors:
- The ability to exercise legal rights (such as work, education, and health care) and access economic resources are essential to autonomy and the ability to make decisions that affect their identity.
- The ability to rebuild one's life and identity in a new country is affected by the ability to obtain adequate and stable employment.

How to promote the integration, autonomy and well-being of migrant and refugee women?

Image 6.Source: Canva. Woman in Blue Hijab Sitting on Brown and White Textile

It is essential to address a range of support areas that promote the integration, autonomy and well-being of migrant and refugee women who are forced to create a new identity due to forced displacement. Here are three possible solutions to address this issue:

1. Establish programmes that not only provide basic assistance such as housing and medical care, but also provide psychosocial and emotional support to strengthen the resilience of migrant and refugee women. Such programmes include activities that foster social and community connectedness, specialised trauma therapy, and workshops on self-esteem and coping skills. This would help them regain their cultural and personal identity in a new environment.
2. Develop educational programmes that encourage local language learning and intercultural understanding. This would enable women to express and maintain their cultural identity and improve their integration into the host society. Teach them.
3. Recognise and address through policy the unique needs of migrant and refugee women. This includes removing legal and administrative barriers that prevent equal access to legal rights such as work, education, and health care. Gender-sensitive policies should also take into account social and cultural expectations that may negatively affect the self-perception and identity of these women, fostering an inclusive and accepting environment.

Example 1:

The housing program (refugeehousingsolutions) for migrant and refugee women in Germany is an outstanding example of a real programme providing housing for migrant and refugee women in Europe. The programme, initiated by Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO) in collaboration with the city of Berlin and other organisations, aims to provide housing for refugee and migrant women who face specific challenges due to their gender and migration status.

The purpose of the project is not only to provide safe and stable housing, but also to provide comprehensive support to help these women integrate into German society. This includes educational and cultural programmes tailored to the individual needs of each woman, legal and psychological counselling, and assistance in finding employment.

This comprehensive approach not only meets the immediate need for housing, but also helps migrant and refugee women to rebuild their lives in new and often unfamiliar environments. In Europe, the implementation of programmes such as this one is essential, as the assimilation of migrants and refugees remains a major challenge, especially for vulnerable groups such as women with unaccompanied children.

By fostering social cohesion and intercultural understanding, these projects improve the wider community.

Example 2:

The "Women for Migrant and Refugee Women" project in the UK is an outstanding example of a programme that provides psychosocial and emotional support to migrant and refugee women in Europe. This organisation focuses primarily on refugee and asylum-seeking women, providing them with a safe environment where they can receive comprehensive support.

The project offers a range of services aimed at improving women's resilience and emotional well-being. These services include emotional counselling, individual and group therapy, empowerment workshops, social and emotional skills, and cultural and recreational activities.

"Women for Refugee Women not only provides direct support, but also promotes the rights of refugee and asylum-seeking women by reporting on their particular experiences and challenges. The organisation works with others to change public policies and practices that affect refugee women by listening to their voices and meeting their needs.

Programmes such as this one are crucial because they recognise that refugee and asylum-seeking women can face complex trauma, social isolation, and emotional stress due to their past experiences and the challenges of adapting to a new environment. In addition to improving their mental health and well-being, receiving adequate psychosocial support helps them to rebuild their lives and actively participate in society.

Other European countries also implement similar programmes through non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations and mental health services aimed at meeting the psychosocial needs of migrant and refugee women.

More examples:

Caritas Austria, an internationally recognised charitable organisation, runs several shelters and support programmes for migrant and refugee women in Austria. These shelters offer not only safe accommodation, but also comprehensive services including psychological and emotional counselling, support groups, skills workshops, and legal assistance. Caritas Austria recognises the specific needs of migrant and refugee women, providing a safe environment where they can rebuild their lives and receive the necessary support to overcome trauma and emotional difficulties.

The Norwegian Red Cross has programmes dedicated to the health and empowerment of migrant and refugee women. These programmes include comprehensive health care services ranging from prenatal care to mental health and emotional support. In addition to medical care, the Red Cross provides empowerment programmes that include educational workshops, social and economic skills counselling, and emotional support groups. These services are designed to strengthen the capacity of migrant and refugee women to integrate into Norwegian society and improve their overall well-being.

3. Respecting and recognising diverse backgrounds

According to the literature, the issue of respecting and recognising the diverse backgrounds of immigrant and refugee women is broad and encompasses many aspects.

Diversity of background refers to the variety of cultural, ethnic, national, and geographical backgrounds and experiences of individuals within a community, organisation, or society. This heterogeneity may manifest itself in a number of ways:

- Cultural: Differences in customs, traditions, languages, values, and cultural practices.
- Ethnicity: A variety of racial and ethnic groups, each with their own identities, histories, and experiences.
- National: People living in different countries and having different national histories, political and economic systems, and social contexts.
- Geographic: Differences based on different regions or places of origin in the same country or continent.

Diversity of backgrounds benefits communities and organisations because it provides a variety of perspectives, concepts, and solutions to problems. It facilitates innovation, creativity, and mutual understanding. Moreover, the integration of different points of view and experiences can lead to fairer and more equitable decisions, better reflecting the diversity of society as a whole.

A notable example of an immigrant and refugee woman who has had a significant impact in her adopted country is Ilhan Omar.

Image 7. Source: Google. Ilham Omar.

Ilhan Omar was born on 4 October 1982 in Mogadishu, Somalia. Due to the civil war in Somalia, her family fled the country when she was eight years old. They lived in a refugee camp in Kenya for four years before being resettled in the United States in 1995. They settled in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Omar attended North Dakota State University, where he graduated with a degree in Political Science and International Studies.

She began her political career working as a community organiser and campaign manager. In 2016, she was elected to the Minnesota State House of Representatives, becoming the first Somali-American woman to be elected to a state legislature in the United States.

In 2018, Ilhan Omar was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, representing Minnesota's 5th congressional district. She is one of the first two Muslim women (along with Rashida Tlaib) to be elected to the US Congress and the first woman of Somali origin to do so.

Ilhan Omar has been a vocal advocate for a number of progressive policies, including immigration reform, economic justice, police reform and refugee rights. As one of the first Muslim women in Congress, she has worked to increase representation and inclusion of diverse communities in American politics.

Ilhan Omar is an inspiring example of how a refugee can overcome great adversity and make a significant contribution to her adopted country, advocating for minority rights and promoting social justice and equality. Her story highlights the courage and resilience of refugees and their ability to enrich the societies they join.

Image 8. Source: Google. Malala Yousafzai

Another prominent example of an immigrant and refugee woman who has made a significant impact is Malala Yousafzai.

Malala Yousafzai was born on 12 July 1997 in Mingora, in the Swat Valley, Pakistan. From an early age, Malala advocated for girls' education in her region, which was under the control of the Taliban, who banned girls' education. In 2012, when she was 15 years old, Malala was attacked and seriously injured by a Taliban for her activism.

After the attack, Malala was transferred to the UK for advanced medical treatment. She settled in Birmingham, where she continued her education. Malala continued her activism from the UK, co-founding the Malala Fund, a non-profit organisation that advocates for girls' education around the world. In 2014, at the age of 17, Malala became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition of her fight against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education.

Malala Yousafzai has used her global platform to advocate for the right to education, especially for girls. She has spoken at the UN General Assembly and has worked tirelessly to promote policies that support education and women's rights. She attended Oxford University, where she studied philosophy, politics, and economics, graduating in 2020.

Malala Yousafzai is a global symbol of the fight for girls' education and rights. Her story highlights not only courage and resilience, but also the impact refugees can have on the world, promoting positive change and advocating for human rights wherever they are forced to migrate.

After reading these cases you may wonder how it is possible to address the multiple kinds of discrimination these women face. An intersectional approach is a crucial tool for understanding the complex and multifaceted dynamics of oppression and for working towards a more just and equitable society.

The intersectional approach is an analytical perspective that considers how a variety of social categories and systems of oppression, domination or discrimination affect people's experiences. In the 1980s, scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw popularised the concept by first applying it to the study of gender and race discrimination.

Intersectionality recognises that people are not oppressed in isolation or through a single facet of their identity. On the other hand, diverse identities, such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and disability, interact and generate distinctive experiences of discrimination and privilege.

The intersectional approach:
- Recognises that people can simultaneously belong to several marginalised groups and that human identity is complex and multiple.
- Some systems of power, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and classism, work together.
- It seeks to understand how these interact and affect people's lives in particular ways rather than studying only identities or forms of oppression.
- The aim is to promote greater equity and social justice by recognising and addressing the complexities of people's lived experiences in multiple contexts of discrimination and privilege.

IN A NUTSHELL

By reading this unit, students will explore the unique problems of migrant and refugee women, who face a variety of forms of violence and obstacles. Migration causes their cultural and personal identity to change, and many must adapt to new situations and jobs. Legal and linguistic restrictions can increase their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation, which can have an impact on their integration and access to employment and educational opportunities. To improve their living conditions and empower them in their host communities, it is essential to promote gender-sensitive migration policies and comprehensive support programmes.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- What are the main barriers that migrant and refugee women face when integrating into a new society?
- What kind of inclusive policies are needed to address the specific needs of migrant and refugee women?
- How can civil society influence the creation of more inclusive and equitable policies for these women?

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- Which of the following factors is NOT mentioned as a specific challenge faced by immigrant and refugee women in their integration process?
    - Language barriers that hinder access to services and opportunities.
    - Lack of recognition of their professional credentials.
    - Health problems related to infectious diseases in their countries of origin.

- Which of the following actions can help migrant and refugee women rebuild their cultural identity after forced displacement?
    - Provide only basic assistance such as housing and medical care.
    - Establish programmes that include psychosocial support, trauma counselling and self-esteem workshops.
    - Restrict access to educational and employment opportunities in the host country.

- What is one of the key principles of an intersectional approach to addressing the multiple forms of discrimination faced by migrant and refugee women?
    - Recognises that people can only belong to one marginalised group at a time.
    - It considers how different forms of oppression interact and affect people's experiences.
    - Ignores the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity in society.

UNIT 3: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

In today's connected and fast-paced world, it's really important to focus on creating an inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environment. As our society becomes more diverse, it's essential for educational institutions to adapt and make sure that everyone has an equal chance to learn. This module takes an in-depth look at the elements needed to build this sort of environment in different educational settings. It explores the importance of inclusivity in education, it offers effective strategies for creating a supportive and inclusive classroom that respects all students, and reinforces the need for flexibility in meeting the diverse needs of learners, especially in the field of adult education.

This module hopes to provide you with a helpful, step-by-step guide for creating a welcoming, culturally inclusive classroom, that embraces and celebrates differences and uses them to enhance the learning in the classroom. It looks at three main sub-headings: understanding cultural competence, creating a respectful classroom environment, and adjusting your teaching methods to meet your diverse learners' needs. The module explores the importance of being self-aware in your teaching practice, your understanding of cultural appreciation, and offers advice on personalised approaches to creating positive experiences that encourage your learners on their journey to success. It will show you practical strategies and look at case studies to help you promote respect, inclusivity, and equality in your classroom, with the hope of driving student buy-in and help you to improve learning outcomes in an inclusive environment.

This module is relevant because it helps you create an inclusive learning environment in today's rapidly growing diverse global environment. You will learn about cultural competence: what it means and what strategies you can use within your own setting, allowing you to analyse your own practice and what impact this can have on others in your classroom. It will help you understand that cultural competence should be nestled within the broader curriculum, equipping you and others with the vital skills and knowledge you need to promote a safe welcoming environment for learning.

In completing this module it is hoped you will understand how to adjust your teaching to meet different learner needs. This will hopefully encourage your students to become more engaged in learning and boost their success academically. The module begins by looking at the importance of cultural competence in education: what it is and how do you demonstrate it, then we will investigate creating a respectful classroom for all and look at strategies for adapting your own teaching methods to meet the diverse learners' needs and to ensure that you are encouraging other learners to embrace this diversity. You will find many examples and case studies to help you understand and contextualise each sub-heading. There are "Food for Thought" activities for thinking things over, and chances for self-assessment, plus extra resources if you wish to explore the subject further.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:
- Recognise the importance of self-awareness, cultural appreciation, and respect in creating inclusive learning environments.
- Apply practical strategies and techniques for creating respectful and inclusive classrooms, adapting teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of learners.

1. Understanding Cultural Competence in Education

When it comes to adult education, cultural competence plays an important role in today's classroom, it is about ensuring your classroom is a safe, welcoming encouraging environment for all to learn regardless of culture, background, gender or needs and it is about advocating for all and educating everyone in your classroom to embrace diversity in short it's all about creating an inclusive and fair teaching and learning experience. Cultural competence is not just about tolerating different cultures; it's about genuinely understanding and appreciating the diverse cultural identities and experiences of learners in your classroom. Every learner brings a wealth of culture and perspectives, which can really enrich your classroom and make the teaching and learning so much more interesting.

If you embrace cultural diversity, you create a classroom that welcomes and celebrates differences making the whole experience more valuable. Embracing diversity and using cultural experiences and different perspectives in your teaching encourages your learners to see themselves and their culture reflected in the teaching and learning, giving them a sense of belonging and empowerment. By using teaching strategies and methodology that reflect and respect the different ways of learning, you can improve learner engagement.

Cultural competence isn't just important in the classroom environment, it needs to include your interaction with your learners and in the case of "Adults at Risk" their caregivers, or the local community. By respecting the cultural traditions and values of your learners and their families, you can develop enriching relationships based on mutual respect helping your learners successfully achieve. In developing clear links between everyday life and learning in the classroom the learners will feel more respected and supported.

Crucially cultural competence awakens us to the way that bias and discrimination can inherently become institutional practice. We need to be aware of how our own policies and internal organisational procedures might exclude some people, we must advocate towards making our settings equitable and just. So, how do we do that? We could use teaching strategies that embrace cultural backgrounds and values, we should be planning for a curriculum that includes everyone and challenge the learned behaviour from previous classes.

Cultural competence is not just an "end goal"; it's a continuous journey of growth, personal and professional development. It means realising that at times you will feel uncomfortable, that you should always challenge and question assumptions, and you should welcome complexities that come with diverse cultural backgrounds. We can develop the skills we need to empower all learners, no matter what their background is.

In conclusion, cultural competence is of the utmost importance in education. It's about creating equitable, inclusive, and empowering learning environments. When we immerse ourselves in cultural competence, we're celebrating our learners' experiences and developing nurturing professional relationships. In essence it is ensuring everyone feels respected and valued.

Image 9. Source: Pexels/Credits: Fauxels i

1.1 Cultural differences and cultural competence

Let's take a look at how cultural differences can affect communication, and in turn how the diverse learner behaves and retains teaching in the classroom.

If we break down cultural competence, we understand it's all about self-examination and realisation. If you are honest and examine your own opinions, tendencies and bias you might see that in identifying and understanding these you could improve your interaction with learners in your classroom. It is about a willingness to learn about different cultures, customs, traditions, and seeing how you can use these as enrichment opportunities.

Communication Styles: As we know, cultural customs and values can influence how we communicate, for instance body language, intonation, and other visual cues. Misunderstandings between learners' different cultural backgrounds., their peers and teachers can occur when these differences are not taken into consideration. For example: Imagine you ask a question in class, and you expect an immediate response. Some students, who come from a culture that may value careful thought before speaking, may stay quiet until all aspects have been considered or another class member speaks first. Others from another culture may be quick to answer. As the teacher you may expect quick answers because that's the norm in your cultural environment, where being assertive and quick to respond is respected. But learners from other cultures that value respect for authority and a more thoughtful approach might process things differently. Perhaps they feel like the question needs some serious consideration or are uncomfortable answering without being selected to answer personally.

You might misinterpret the silence as a lack of knowledge, confidence, or interest in the subject, this might leave you feeling frustrated, and the learner may feel misunderstood or excluded if their chosen communication style isn't respected in the class.

Language Proficiency: Non-native language speakers might have difficulties making themselves understood or understanding complex concepts and language. These barriers can really make it difficult for learners to express themselves or demonstrate understanding, this can be frustrating and can impact on their learning. For example, imagine you have an international student. They struggle joining in class discussions and take considerable time to learn more difficult concepts because of their language skills. They might feel embarrassed, disheartened, and isolated in class, affecting their confidence in their academic ability. They might not feel confident asking or answering questions, which could have an impact on their learning and retention of teaching both in class and when working on assignments.

Social Practices and Cultural Etiquette: Differences in everyday social behaviour can have a big impact on classroom behaviour. In a class with a mixture of learners from different cultures, there will probably be differences in how students collaborate or interact. For example, one student might be used to deferring to people in authority and might not feel comfortable challenging them, but another learner might value equality and will expect to challenge any unequal power dynamics. These different points of view could provoke misunderstandings and possibly some conflict within the classroom hindering collaboration and affecting working relationships.

It is vital you are aware of cultural differences in the classroom and try to make sure there is an equitable playing field where everyone feels included.

Learning Preferences: People's cultural influences can have an impact on their preferred learning styles in the classroom or how they respond to teaching practices. Some cultures put more importance on memorising learning and prefer teacher-led learning, others value critical thinking practices and collaborative exploration. These differences can be reflected in how learners engage with your teaching strategies and the learning resources you use. For example: Imagine a classroom with learners from diverse cultures. When a lesson on ancient civilisations begins, the lecturer discovers that learners demonstrate varying levels of engagement which they believe is due to the different cultural backgrounds in the class. Some learners prefer more structured, teacher-led learning and are great at learning and recalling facts, while the other learners respond more effectively to kinaesthetic practical activities and group discussions to really comprehend the learning. These differences can produce differences in the levels of engagement from the learners and the overall achievement in the class. If the teacher is not aware of the differences, they might accidentally exclude some students. It's important for teachers to use differentiation strategies to meet all learners' learning preferences and create an equitable and inclusive classroom.

It's important for teachers to use differentiation strategies to meet all learners' learning preferences and create an equitable and inclusive classroom.

Expectations and Values: Cultural differences can also influence how much students value educational achievement and success.

In a diverse classroom, you might notice that some learners are really motivated to achieve highly in school because their culture believes education is the key to success in the long term future. On the other hand, you might have learners from cultures that value other forms of achievement, like vocational pathways and skills or family/domestic responsibilities, over academic achievements. These differences can significantly affect how motivated your learners are and how much they value achievement in the classroom. Recognising and understanding cultural differences is of the utmost importance for teachers. It helps you create inclusivity in the classroom and provide a supportive culture for all.

Dublin College of Adult Education

Description: Cultural competence helps educators bridge the gap between students' varied cultural experiences and the school environment, thereby enhancing students' academic and social outcomes. This simulated case study examines the implementation of a cultural competence initiative in a diverse adult education facility, highlighting the challenges, strategies, and outcomes associated with this initiative

Scenario: Dublin College of Adult Education is an imaginary college located in a bustling urban area of the city, it serves a student population that is highly diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, language, and socioeconomic background. The centre management noticed significant disparities in academic performance and engagement among different student groups. For instance, Traveller/Roma and Syrian students were underperforming compared to their Irish and Asian peers, and there were frequent incidents of cultural misunderstandings leading to conflicts.

In response, the centre decided to implement a cultural competence program aimed at creating a more inclusive and supportive centre environment. (Adapted from Global Learners Institute. (2024). Cultural competence in the classroom: A case study on adult education. Global Learners Institute.)

Solution/ Outcome: 1. Professional Development for Educators: Educators took training in cultural awareness, communication styles and inclusive teaching.

The learning covered how to recognise and adapt to different communication styles and how to support learners with varying levels of language proficiency. As a result, they were better equipped to create an inclusive learning environment adapting to differing cultural needs.

2. Language Proficiency Support: Recognising the diverse language proficiencies among students, the centre implemented additional support for English Language Learners (ELLs). This included bilingual aides, language-specific tutoring, and dual-language instructional materials. This approach helped ELL students engage more fully in their education and improved their academic outcomes.

3. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: The curriculum was adapted to incorporate diverse perspectives, materials, and teaching methods that reflect learners' cultural backgrounds and learning preferences. For example, literature classes included works by authors from various cultures, and history lessons presented multiple viewpoints on historical events. This made the curriculum more engaging and relevant for learners, helping them see the value of their own cultural experiences in their education.

4. Addressing Social Norms and Values: The centre organised cultural events and workshops where students and staff could learn about each other's cultural norms and values. These events promoted mutual respect and understanding, reducing cultural conflicts. Additionally, the centre established clear guidelines that respected and accommodated diverse cultural practices and values, such as dress codes and holiday observances.

Key takeaways:
- Adaptation to Communication Styles: Understanding and adapting to different communication styles is crucial for effective interaction in a diverse educational setting.
- Support for Language Proficiency: Providing targeted support for students with varying levels of language proficiency ensures that all students can access the curriculum and participate fully in centre activities.
- Incorporation of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Integrating diverse cultural perspectives and teaching methods into the curriculum enhances learner engagement and achievement by making learning more relevant and inclusive.
- Empowerment through Student Voice: Establishing platforms for feedback empowers learners to actively participate in shaping their educational environment, developing a sense of ownership and belonging.
- Respect for Social Norms and Values: Acknowledging and accommodating diverse social norms and values within the centre promotes respect, reduces conflicts, and creates a more positive and inclusive school climate.

2. Creating a respectful and inclusive classroom

In this section you will look at creating a classroom where respect and inclusivity in adult education is at the heart of the teaching and learning environment. It's very important in the current diverse educational climate to make sure every learner feels respected and included. This section will provide you with useful practical tips and strategies to create the kind of classroom, where every learner feels supported and valued.

2.1 . Understanding Respect and Inclusion in Adult Education

Students excel and can learn more effectively when they feel included as part of a class where respect is at the forefront. A positive classroom ethos increases learner engagement and increases the motivation of the group. Having diverse cultural backgrounds in the mix makes for more interesting enriching discussions and more varied opinions and perspectives. When the whole class interacts respectfully, it creates a sense of cohesion and community, which is key for a supportive learning environment.

Key Components of a Respectful and Inclusive Classroom

- <u>Recognising and Embracing Cultural Differences of Learners:</u> Recognising and embracing cultural differences such as beliefs, gender, social backgrounds, language, age, and life experiences is very important. It ensures all your learners have equitable access to the class resources and participation. It is important you use culturally responsive teaching for example adapting teaching methods and using differentiation to meet the diverse needs of all your learners.

- <u>Promotion of Respect and Inclusion in the Classroom</u>
  - Communication Styles

<u>Active Listening:</u> Really listen to your learners in the classroom and show genuine interest in what they say, acknowledge their words by nodding, paraphrasing, and giving them time to talk without interrupting and listening without judgement empathetically. Use reflective listening techniques to help you understand them, for instance, you can paraphrase and summarise what has been said or expand on the conversation by using open-ended questioning.

Clear and Inclusive Language: Instead of using technical language and complex terms, use concise, clear language that is inclusive for all learners, regardless of gender, cultural or social background. You must make sure you have considered the context, age, ability, and educational level of your learners when selecting your language.

Nonverbal Communication: Always consider your body language and facial expressions when interacting with your learners. Try to show respect and openness, try to be aware of cultural differences when engaging in non-verbal interactions with them.

Support for Non-Native Language Speakers: It is always prudent to consider alternative resources for diverse learners' things such as translation tools (google translate etc), bilingual support assistants, and simplified texts for non-native language speakers.

Visual Aids: Pictures, Posters, visual prompt cards, diagrams, and videos are an invaluable aid to help your learners understand and communicate more effectively.

Pacing: It is important when planning your lesson, you consider the speed and pacing of your communication, you must factor in time for reflection processing and understanding to take place in your communication with diverse learners you must be patient and avoid rushing conversation.

- **Cultural Sensitivity:**

Awareness of Culture: Your class will benefit if you take time to educate yourself about the cultural backgrounds of your learners, including their social practices, traditions, beliefs, values, and preferred communication styles.

Cultural Exchange with Peers: Factor time in your planning to encourage your learners to share their cultural traditions and experiences to promote mutual respect and reduce conflict or misunderstanding.

Plan an Inclusive Curriculum: When planning your classes try to integrate diverse perspectives into your teaching materials and examples wherever possible.
Use Different Teaching Methods: Use a mixture of lectures, group activity, hands-on practical activities, project-based learning, real-life scenarios, and technology to meet VARK learning styles.

Learner-Centred Teaching: Wherever possible try to base your teaching around your learners' interests and experiences this will enrich their learning experience.

Feedback Mechanisms: You should plan for regular feedback sessions from learners on your teaching methods and classroom dynamics and use this to inform your future planning.

Establish Clear Expectations and Values in the Classroom: You must establish and communicate clear rules and expectations for behaviour and participation in the class making sure they are inclusive, appropriate for the level and ability of the class, and respectful of all your learners.

Model Respectful Behaviour: You should always set an example for your learners to reproduce. You should model respectful engagements and inclusivity in your own behaviour at all times and challenge and address occurrences of disrespectful behaviour.

Manage Conflict Resolution: You should employ skills in mediating conflict that may arise from cultural misunderstandings and promote a problem-solving approach that respects all perspectives. Use effective communication for open, respectful conversations that educate everyone in the class.

2.2. Implementing Strategies in the Classroom

Building an Inclusive Environment

Use of Inclusive Language: It is important you use language that respects all your learners' individuality, preference, and cultural background. Instead of "boys and girls" or "ladies and gentlemen," you can use terms like "students" or "everyone." For example, say "Good morning, everyone."

Equal Representation: You must make sure your teaching materials are representative of the diversity of your learners. For instance, you could use case studies that represent the learners in your class.

Ensuring Accessibility: you must ensure that all teaching materials and class activities are accessible to students with disabilities or are speakers of other languages. You can use apps like Google Transcribe or Microsoft Translator for this purpose.

Facilitating Active Participation: You must encourage all students to participate in group discussions and practical activities where collaboration is enriching and mandatory. Try using techniques like think-pair-share to involve everyone. https://www.readingrockets.org/classroom/classroom-strategies/think-pair-share

Use Group Work to encourage collaborative engagement: Try forming diverse groups to collaborate on tasks to encourage cross-cultural interactions and peer learning.

Use Recognition and Praise: You must celebrate the achievements and contributions of all students and highlight the value of diverse perspectives through verbal praise and rewarding activities.

2.3. Addressing and Managing Conflicts

Proactive Approaches

Cultural Sensitivity Training: You should ask your organisation to consider holding training sessions for your learners and staff on cultural sensitivity and why an inclusive environment is of utmost importance.

Conduct Regular Check-ins: It is a good idea to have regular check-ins or one-to-one tutorials with your learners to give them a safe nurturing space to address any concerns or issues they may have. This will give you an ideal opportunity to get feedback on how things are going in the classroom and inform you of planning for future teaching.

Manage Conflict Resolution, Listen and Validate Concerns: It is important that when conflicts come up in the class, make sure you take time to calmly listen to everyone involved and understand where they're coming from and the different views. Try to encourage your learners to come up with solutions to resolve conflicts and take ownership of their part in the situation.

Facilitate Mediation: You could step in as a mediator or appoint someone neutral to help learners involved in conflict to have a productive solution-focused conversation.

Use Restorative Practices: Using restorative practices such as "Talking circles" "Apology Letters" "Victim/Offender mediation" can help mend broken relationships and bring back a positive productive ethos in the classroom.

Creating a respectful and inclusive classroom in adult education is always a continuous practice that requires commitment and hard work. It's important to be consistent, persevere and be open to learning and change.

Image 10. Source: Pexels/Credits:Fauxels

"Fostering Respect and Inclusion: A Case Study on Enhancing Cultural Competence in Adult Education at Riverside Community Centre"

Description: In adult education, creating a respectful and inclusive classroom is critical for ensuring that all students feel valued and supported. This case study examines a simulated initiative at the imaginary college of Riverside Community Centre to create such an environment in their Adult Basic Education program. The initiative focused on addressing diverse communication styles, language proficiency, social norms, learning preferences, expectations, and values among a culturally and linguistically diverse student population.

Scenario: Riverside Community Centre education program serves a diverse student body, including immigrants, refugees, and local residents seeking to improve their literacy, numeracy, and job skills. The learner profile spans a wide range of cultural backgrounds, ages, and educational experiences. The program faced challenges such as cultural misunderstandings, language barriers, and varied learning preferences that affected student engagement and success.

To address these challenges, the centre implemented a comprehensive initiative aimed at creating a respectful and inclusive classroom environment. The initiative included professional development for educators, curriculum changes, and support services for students.

Solution/ Outcome: To address the issues raised the centre implemented:

Professional Development for Instructors: The college organised workshops and training sessions focused on cultural competence and inclusive teaching strategies. Instructors learned about different communication styles and how to adapt their teaching to accommodate these differences. For example, they practiced active listening and clear, inclusive language. Training also covered strategies for supporting students with varying levels of language proficiency, such as using visual aids and simplifying instructions. As a result, educators became more adept at recognising and addressing the diverse needs of their students. They were better equipped to create a classroom atmosphere that respected all cultural backgrounds and learning styles.

Language Proficiency Support:

Recognising the diverse language proficiency levels among students, the college enhanced support for English Language Learners (ELLs). This included providing bilingual aides, offering language-specific tutoring sessions, and incorporating dual-language instructional materials. Instructors were trained to use visual aids, repeat key information, and check for understanding regularly.

These measures helped ELL students feel more included and capable of participating fully in their education. Their improved language skills contributed to better academic performance and increased confidence.

Culturally Relevant Curriculum:

The curriculum was revised to include materials and perspectives from various cultures. For example, literature classes featured works by authors from different cultural backgrounds, and history lessons included multiple viewpoints on historical events. This approach made the curriculum more engaging and relevant for students. By seeing their cultures reflected in the curriculum, students felt more valued and connected to their education. This increased their motivation and participation in class activities.

Inclusive Classroom Practices:

Educators adopted various inclusive classroom practices to accommodate different learning preferences and cultural norms. They used a mix of lectures, group work, hands-on activities, and technology to cater to diverse learning styles. Additionally, they established clear guidelines for classroom behaviour and participation that respected all cultural norms and values. These practices created a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment. Learners were more engaged and felt comfortable expressing their ideas and perspectives.

Conflict Resolution and Mediation:

The centre introduced a system for addressing and managing conflicts that arose from cultural misunderstandings. Instructors were trained in conflict resolution techniques and restorative practices. When conflicts occurred, they facilitated constructive dialogues and helped students find common ground. This approach reduced the number of conflicts and created a more harmonious classroom environment. Students learned to appreciate and respect each other's differences.

Key Takeaways: Riverside Community Centre's initiative demonstrates that creating a respectful and inclusive classroom in adult education requires a comprehensive approach. By focusing on cultural competence, language support, curriculum relevance, inclusive practices, and conflict resolution, educators can build an environment where all students feel valued and supported. This leads to improved engagement, participation, and academic success for all learners.

3. Adapting teaching methods to the needs of learners

Education often involves teaching students with varied cultural backgrounds, life experiences, and learning preferences. To create an effective and inclusive learning environment, educators must be equipped with strategies that address these differences. This topic will provide practical approaches and examples for adapting teaching methods to enhance learning outcomes for all students, particularly those with varying cultural backgrounds.

Image 11. Source: Pexels/Credits:Fauxels

3.1 Teaching Strategies for a Diverse Classroom

Differentiation
- Definition: Differentiation involves tailoring teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of all your students.
- Implementation: You must use a variety of instructional strategies, such as direct instruction, collaborative learning, and hands-on activities, real life scenarios, project-based learning, modelling.
- Example: In a class with varying levels of language proficiency, you might provide materials in multiple formats (written, visual, and auditory) and offer different activities (individual tasks, group work, and discussions) to cater to all students.

Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Definition: Culturally responsive teaching recognises the cultural backgrounds of students and integrates this awareness into instructional practices.
- Implementation: Include diverse perspectives in the curriculum and create an inclusive classroom environment.
- Example: In an Art lesson, you could include contributions and artists from various cultures and encourage students to share their cultural perspectives related to the topic.

Adapting Teaching Methods

- Addressing Different Learning Styles

In today's diverse educational landscape, recognising and addressing different learning styles is crucial for creating an inclusive and effective learning environment. A diverse classroom often brings a wide range of experiences and educational backgrounds to the classroom. By adapting teaching methods to meet the varied needs of learners, you can ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

- **Visual Learners**: Visual learners benefit greatly from the use of charts, diagrams, videos, and written instructions. These tools help them to visualise concepts and better understand the material being presented. For those from different cultural backgrounds, visual aids can be particularly helpful in bridging language barriers and making complex ideas more accessible. Providing handouts, visual summaries, and graphic organisers can improve understanding and retention of information.
- **Auditory Learners**: Auditory learners develop in environments where classes, discussions, and audio materials are a big part of the learning process. Incorporating these elements can facilitate the learning of language and improve listening skills. Using audio recordings, podcasts, and encouraging verbal participation in class discussions can help auditory learners process information more effectively. Additionally, combining auditory learning with visual aids can reinforce key concepts and enhance overall understanding.
- **Kinaesthetic Learners**: Kinaesthetic learners excel when they can engage in hands-on activities, experiments, and real-life simulations. Kinaesthetic learning opportunities can make the learning experience more relevant and practical, especially when related to real life scenarios. Incorporating practical activities, role-playing scenarios, and interactive projects can provide kinaesthetic learners with the tactile engagement they need to grasp new concepts. Practical, real-world applications of theoretical knowledge can make learning more meaningful and directly applicable to their daily lives.

Example: For a lesson on budgeting, you might use infographics to explain concepts (visual), host a discussion about personal finance experiences (auditory), and have students create and manage a mock budget (kinaesthetic).

- Flexible Learning Options

Incorporating flexible learning options is essential in meeting the diverse needs of your students, who often juggle multiple responsibilities. By providing adaptable educational pathways, you can create an inclusive environment that supports the unique circumstances of all your learners, enabling them to pursue their educational goals effectively.

- Blended Learning: Blended learning combines online and face-to-face instruction, offering the flexibility needed to accommodate the busy schedules of some of your learners. Many migrant women balance work, family obligations, and other commitments, making it challenging to adhere to a rigid class schedule. Blended learning allows them to access course materials, participate in discussions, and complete assignments at their own pace and convenience. This approach not only provides flexibility but also incorporates the benefits of both in-person and online learning environments, enhancing overall engagement and comprehension.

- Modular Approach: Adopting a modular approach breaks down the learning into manageable units that can be completed at different paces. This method is particularly beneficial for any of your learners, who may face interruptions in their education due to work or family responsibilities. Modular courses enable them to focus on one unit at a time, providing a sense of accomplishment and progress, even when they have other external pressures to manage. This approach also allows you to cater to the individual needs and learning pace of each student.

Example: If for example you are teaching an ICT course you could offer online tutorials (self-paced), live webinars (real-time interaction), and in-person lectures (hands-on practice).

Providing Support for Language Proficiency

Scaffolding: Provide support structures, such as glossaries, visual aids, and sentence frames (https://www.hmhco.com/blog/sentence-frames-for-ell-students#:~:text=Sentence%20frames%20are%20structures%20for,skills%2C%20such%20as%20academic%20vocabulary.) to help students with limited language proficiency.

Peer Support: Encourage peer tutoring and group work where students can support each other. Example: In an ESOL class, an instructor might pair native language speakers with language learners for collaborative projects, using visual aids to support comprehension and communication.

Practical Application and Examples

Practical examples include using real-world scenarios that reflect the diverse experiences of learners. For example, a lesson on "cooking on a budget", you could use peer learning for practical tasks, allowing learners to bring their culture and traditional cuisine into the classroom and pass on techniques to others whilst feeling their culture is valued.

By using these strategies, you ensure that learning is accessible, relevant, and engaging for all students, promoting an inclusive and supportive classroom environment.

"Cultivating Global Perspectives: Adapting Business Education for Diverse Adult Learners at Dundrum Women's Centre"

Description: Using a simulated scenario this case study explores how "Dundrum Women's Centre" adapted its business course to meet the needs of a diverse cohort of adult learners, with a significant number of migrant learners. The focus is on leveraging student's unique perspectives and experiences to enrich the learning process and promote an inclusive atmosphere.

Scenario: Dundrum Women's Centre offers a business course attended by adult learners from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. Among the students are migrants who bring a wealth of experiences from their home countries, ranging from different business practices to unique cultural perspectives. The diversity in the classroom presents both an opportunity and a challenge: how to create a learning environment that respects and harnesses these differences while ensuring all students achieve their educational goals by adapting teaching methods and resources.

Solution/ Outcome: The instructor integrated case studies from various industries and countries, reflecting the global nature of business. These case studies included multinational corporations, small businesses from different continents, and emerging markets. By using examples from around the world, the instructor ensured that the course content was relevant and relatable to all students. Additionally, case studies were accompanied by background information on the cultural and economic context of each example to enhance understanding. Students felt more engaged and valued as their cultural backgrounds were represented in the curriculum. This approach also broadened all students' understanding of global business practices.

Image 12. Source: Pexels/Credits:Thirdman

Sharing Lived Experiences:

The instructor encouraged students to share their experiences during class discussions. For example, a student from Nigeria shared insights about the oil industry, while another from China discussed e-commerce trends. The instructor created a platform for students to share their experiences, such as discussion forums and presentation slots. Additionally, these sessions were structured with guiding questions to help students link their experiences to course concepts. This practice not only enriched the course content but also validated the students' backgrounds and experiences. The classroom environment became more inclusive, with students learning from each other's diverse experiences. This peer learning boosted confidence and participation, particularly among migrant students.

Collaborative Project Based Learning:

Group projects were strategically designed to mix students from different cultural backgrounds. Each group was tasked with solving a business problem that required input from various perspectives. For instance, a project might involve creating a market entry strategy for a new product in an international market, requiring students to leverage their unique cultural insights. The instructor provided structured project guidelines that highlighted the importance of cultural perspectives. Resources included templates for market analysis that prompted students to consider cultural factors and potential barriers. In addition, project rubrics were designed to assess the integration of diverse viewpoints.

- Collaborative projects promoted cultural exchange and teamwork. Students developed a deeper appreciation for different viewpoints and learned to navigate and integrate diverse perspectives in problem-solving.

Supportive Learning Environment:

The instructor created a supportive learning environment by establishing clear guidelines for respectful communication and collaboration. Regular feedback sessions were held to address any issues and ensure that all students felt included and heard. Classroom materials, such as syllabi and course guidelines, were adapted to emphasise inclusivity and respect. These documents outlined expectations for respectful interaction and provided resources for conflict resolution. The instructor also used anonymous feedback tools to regularly gauge the classroom climate. This proactive approach created a respectful and cohesive classroom atmosphere. Conflicts were minimised, and students felt more comfortable expressing their ideas and contributing to discussions.

Key Takeaways: Creating an inclusive and effective learning environment in a business course for diverse learners involves a combination of culturally responsive teaching, building on students' professional experiences, promoting collaborative learning, and maintaining a supportive classroom atmosphere. By integrating these strategies, Dundrum Women's Centre successfully engaged its diverse student body, enhanced learning outcomes, and created a sense of community among students. This case study highlights the importance of adapting teaching methods to meet the unique needs of adult learners, particularly those from migrant backgrounds, to create a dynamic and inclusive educational experience.
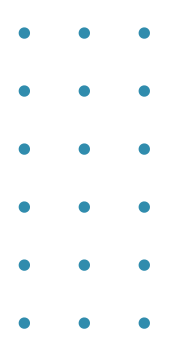
IN A NUTSHELL

In this Unit, we have discussed how important it is to adapt your teaching methods to meet the varied needs of adult learners, especially those from migrant/different cultural backgrounds. We examined the significance of "culturally responsive teaching", drawing from different life experiences, promoting collaborative learning, and creating a supportive classroom ethos. These approaches and strategies are designed to create an inclusive educational experience by including learners' diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences into the curriculum. This enriches the learning environment, acknowledges, and celebrates the diversity of the students.

On completion, you should be able to demonstrate specific knowledge on how to include cultural diversity into your teaching practice and develop the skills needed to provide an inclusive and respectful classroom. You should be competent in demonstrating the ability to design and implement a curriculum that allows for differentiation, use simulated real-life scenarios and project-based learning to engage diverse learners and nurture an environment that values and respects cultural differences.

If you have found this unit informative and it has sparked your interest here are some next steps. You should progress to the next Unit, exploring the subject deeper. You may want to revisit some of the key concepts such as culturally responsive teaching and differentiation to reinforce learning and knowledge. Additionally, you could seek out further resources, there are some suggestions below, on inclusive education practices that will encourage self-directed reading and provide valuable insights and useful practical tools.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In what ways can you assess the effectiveness of a culturally competent learning environment using inclusive teaching strategies? What indicators would you look for to ensure all learners are benefiting?

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- Which of the following strategies best promotes an inclusive learning environment in a diverse adult classroom? (Circle the correct answer)
    - ○ Assigning individual projects to avoid potential conflicts
    - ○ Encouraging students to share their personal experiences and cultural backgrounds.
    - ○ Using only standardised teaching materials to maintain uniformity

- What is the primary benefit of using culturally responsive case studies in learning for diverse adult learners?
    - ○ It simplifies lesson planning for the instructor
    - ○ It ensures that all students are exposed to the same practices.
    - ○ It makes the course content more relevant and relatable to students' diverse backgrounds

- What is a key component of creating a supportive learning environment for migrant and diverse learners?
    - ○ Establishing clear guidelines for respectful communication and collaboration
    - ○ Allowing students to work independently to avoid misunderstandings
    - ○ Concentrating solely on academic content and minimising social interaction.
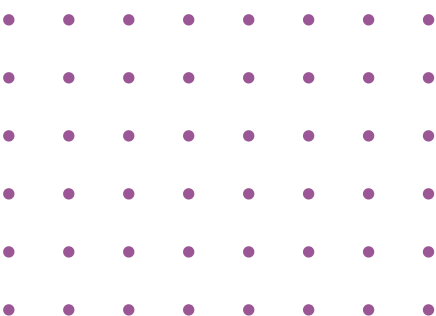
UNIT 4: LANGUAGE LEARNING AND STORYTELLING AS A TOOL FOR INCLUSION
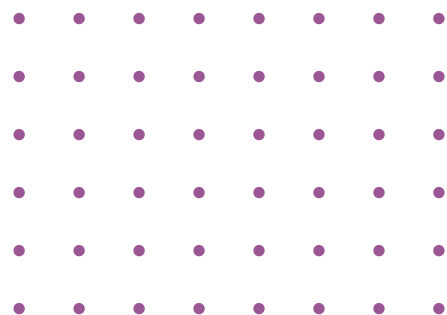
INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the unit "Language Learning and Storytelling as a Tool for Inclusion". This unit is designed specifically for adult educators who work with migrant and refugee women. We will delve into the role of storytelling to equip language learning courses/ programs with innovative resources. Storytelling is a peculiar approach, which entails learners' huge involvement.

Storytelling promotes social inclusion. It makes learners want to fully participate in any educational experiences and enrich them. It allows learners to be more open and empathise with others, share one's own experiences, and develop language skills meaningfully. In this unit, we will explore the diverse facets of storytelling, its benefits, and practical ways to use it.

The scope of this section covers some basic information related to storytelling-oriented language acquisition. First, we present storytelling as a dynamic teaching approach. Then, we delve into the use of storytelling for language learning and practical tips for incorporating storytelling into educational programs. Finally, we share ideas to involve learners through interactive and effective storytelling.

This unit is pivotal since it emphasises innovative ways on how to approach different challenges faced by migrant and refugee women while learning a new language. Storytelling serves to enhance language usage and the consistent exposure to a variety of stories improves the specific literacy skills of vocabulary, grammar, length of utterance and sentence formation. This method is surely propitious for a friendly and effective learning environment.

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Recognise the benefits and pitfalls while using storytelling as a didactic method.
- Incorporate impressive storytelling techniques to reinforce language acquisition and cultural expression.
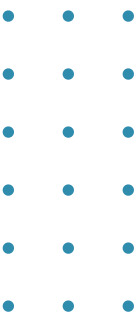
1. Introduction to Storytelling as a Peculiar Teaching Approach

Storytelling is a powerful tool for conveying information and facilitating learning. When designing education and training programs, using storytelling techniques can increase learner engagement, comprehension, and retention. Structuring training content around proven storytelling frameworks provides a template for impactful learning.
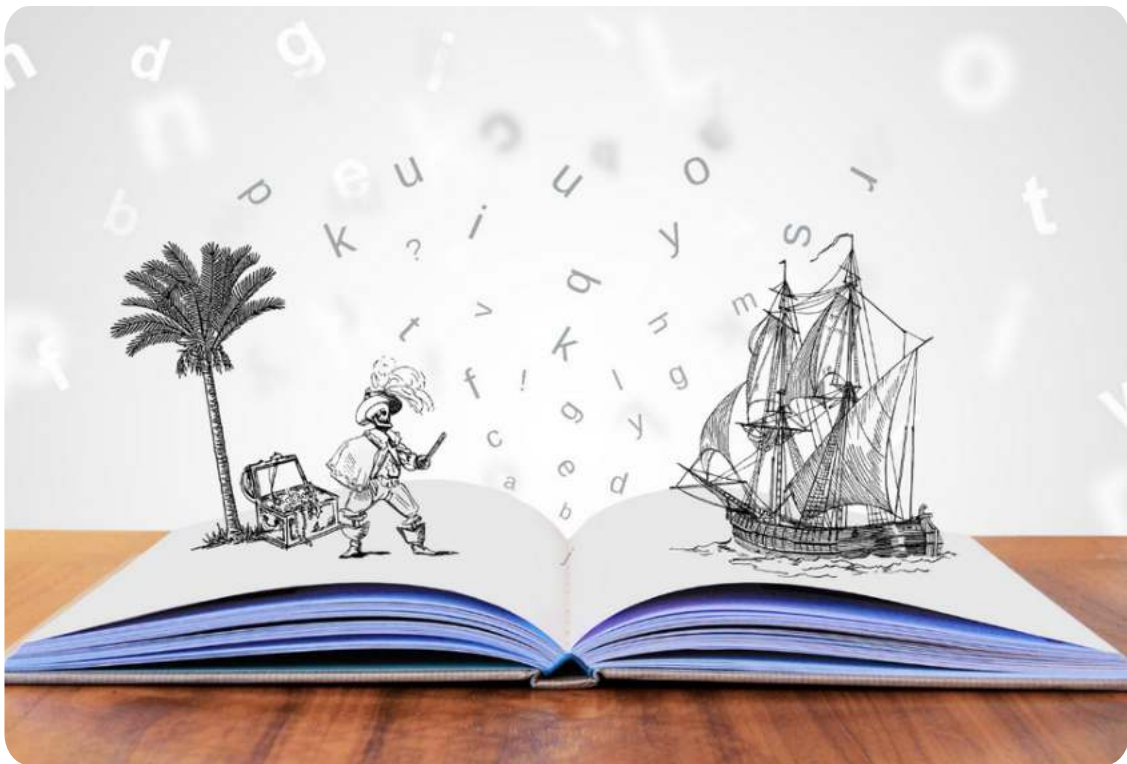

Image 13. Storytelling (source: canva.com)

1.1. Why storytelling?

According to the National Storytelling Network, storytelling is defined as "the interactive art of using words and actions to reveal the elements and images of a story while encouraging the listener's imagination" (National Storytelling Network, 2021). This definition highlights the influential, forceful and participatory character of storytelling, underpinning its role in fostering commitment and inventiveness.

Stories have been used for centuries to pass on customs, traditions, valuable and values. Regarding its educational dimension, storytelling can:
- Attract the learners' interest and keep them active;
- Simplify profound concepts through interconnected narratives;
- Nourish a deeper emotional attachment to the material;
- Spur on learners' active participation and discourse;
- Guarantee a safe space for learners' self-expression and sharing their experiences.

Origin of storytelling as a peculiar teaching approach

Oral storytelling is part of a larger body of word-of-mouth communication known as an oral tradition. This larger oral tradition encompasses all the forms, content, and knowledge (lore) passed along orally within a cultural group from generation to generation. It includes not only stories, poems, and songs but also dramas, rituals, proverbs, jokes and riddles, children's rhymes, and the like. Groups that have no written language are termed preliterate or nonliterate; they communicate almost exclusively by means of an oral tradition. Groups or individuals who are part of a literate culture but who have not learned to read or write are considered illiterate. In the Middle Ages, storytelling went on to be a crucial method for teaching and moral instruction, often through religious folk tales. With the advent of the printing press in the 15th century, written stories became more accessible, yet the oral tradition persisted, particularly in areas where literacy rates were low.

Nowadays, storytelling constitutes a pedagogical asset in education. The growth of narrative-based teaching methods in the last centuries has credited the importance of storytelling in promoting cognitive and emotional commitment.

The dynamic aspect and cultural abundance of storytelling

- The interactive character of storytelling

Storytelling is intrinsically reciprocal, thus involving an energetic exchange between the storyteller and the audience. The responses of the listeners affect the story content and the way it is delivered, creating a collaborative experience. Unlike the plays in a theatre, where the audience is virtually cut off from the actors, storytelling employs the storyteller and listeners who interact with each other directly.

Image 14. Storytelling as a dynamic teaching method (source: canva.com)

The diversification of cultures and contexts impact interactions between the teller and the audience. These factors influence who speaks, how often, and in what manner. This interconnection is a prerequisite to trigger emotional impact, at the same time often tracing a strong bond between the storyteller and the audience.

- Storytelling overwhelms language and words

Storytelling is based on language. It utilises words, involves structured sentences, but it cannot be mixed up with other non-verbal forms of expression, such as dance or mime. The above-mentioned use of structured language is crucial for storytelling, as it helps to convey sometimes complicated ideas.

- **Implementation of actions in storytelling**

Storytelling applies vocalisation, movements, and gestures, thus complementing the spoken or signed language. Whereas some storytellers may use plenty of body movements, others may rely more on their voices and mimics, proving that the use of nonverbal patterns can vastly vary.

- **Story presentation**

It is worth mentioning that storytelling means narrating a story. However, it specifically combines language, synergy, and sensuality. Each culture, to some extent, imposes a story content, resulting in diverse interpretations and forms. Some contexts may invite improvisation, while others might require thorough reiteration of traditional tales

- **Involving the listener's imagination**

Storytelling actively engages the listener's inventiveness. The audience not only witnesses the story visually, but also actively listens in order to emotionally reflect the actions, characters, and events. This storytelling element makes the listener the story co-creator as their own experiences and opinions are taken into account.

- **The multiplicity and value of storytelling**

Storytelling materializes in diverse contexts, ranging from informal occasions to official performances for large audiences. It can be an integral part of religious rituals, daily routines, or professional presentations. This aspect, motifs, and artistic strategies applied can differ depending on the background.

All over the world, various cultures have age-old storytelling traditions. Every form of storytelling holds peculiar value, thus fostering more inclusive communities.

How storytelling reinforces language acquisition

For female migrants and refugees, learning a new language can be overwhelming. Storytelling serves as an extra incentive to facilitate language acquisition:

- Situational learning: Stories provide situations and make new lexical and grammatical structures more understandable and easier to remember.
- Cultural reference: Thanks to stories learners can become more culturally aware and sensitive.
- Emotional commitment: Stories trigger emotions, making the educational experience more impressive and rousing.
- Collaborative learning: Storytelling invites interaction and interconnectivity, thanks to which learners can boost their speaking, listening, and comprehension skills.

Differences between storytelling and other language teaching methods

Many, especially past, language teaching methods offer repetitive drills and grammar-oriented strategies. Storytelling is definitely more communication-oriented and engaging. For example:

1. **Grammar-Translation Method** makes students learn grammatical rules and then apply those rules by translating sentences between the target language and the native language. Advanced students may be required to translate whole texts word-for-word. In contrast, storytelling provides situations and makes new lexical and grammatical structures more understandable and easier to remember.

2. **Audio-Lingual Method**, which is based on repetitive drills, can be tedious and makes learners' emotional connection impossible. Storytelling, however, seizes learners' attention by interweaving language into stunning stories, and thus evoking emotional attachment.

3. **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** underpins interconnectivity and mutual communication but is mostly deprived of the cultural and emotional dimension. Thanks to stories, learners can become more culturally aware and sensitive.

4. **Task-Based Language Learning (TBL)** centres on specific tasks completion. They can sometimes be abstract. Storytelling relies on more realistic and relatable content, which makes the learning process more enjoyable and personal.

5. **Direct Method** highlights immersion and communicating only in the target language, which can be quite uncomfortable for beginners. Storytelling fosters a friendly environment, where learners experiment with the language, eliminating anxiety and building self-confidence

6. **Total Physical Response (TPR)** combines physical movement with language learning. This method is pretty effective, but emotional and cultural engagement can be limited. Storytelling, along with its interactive nature, brings an added value.

Image 15. Building self-confidence (source: canva.com)

7. **Silent Way** relies mainly on visual aids and learner independence and entails lack of collaborative aspects contrary to storytelling. Storytelling fortifies dialogue, collaboration, and sharing educational experiences.

8. **Community Language Learning (CLL)** concentrates on group dynamics and learner-centred approach, which have a lot in common with storytelling. We can say that storytelling strengthens this strategy by adding narratives which can pilot debates and interconnectivity.

9. **Suggestopedia**, which uses relaxation and positive suggestion, is aimed at learning process improvement and reducing anxiety. Storytelling creates a supportive atmosphere but through the inherent interest and emotional correspondence to narratives.

10. **Lexical Approach** highlights learning chunks of language as they appear in context, which is inherently supported by storytelling. Stories naturally present language in context, making vocabulary acquisition more intuitive and meaningful.

Incorporation of storytelling into language teaching process, brings lots of specific benefits and creates a more inclusive learning environment for migrant and refugee women.

Benefits of applying storytelling in adult education

The usage of storytelling in adult education and non-formal education methods offers plenty of benefits. Firstly, storytelling reinforces memory retention. Stories are easier to remember than separate facts – they can be easily associated with some actual events, coherent or meaningful information. Secondly, storytelling builds empathy and develops emotional literacy. By delving into and understanding different perspectives, pedagogical relationships are more powerful and compassionate.

Thirdly, storytelling positively affects critical thinking. Constant analysis of characters, plots and themes motivates learners to think deeply and critically.

Fourthly, storytelling fosters social learning. It opens up opportunities for learners to share their own stories, actively listen to others, and immerse in purposeful discourses.

Fifthly, storytelling popularises cultural understanding. Learners seek different cultures and traditions, broadening their horizons and strengthening intercultural competence.

Image 16. Exploring different cultures and traditions (source: canva.com)

Sixthly, storytelling boosts communication skills. Storytelling activities are propitious for the development of speaking and listening.

Seventhly, storytelling supports self-confidence. Through a supportive self-expression, learners become more comfortable and braver in using the new language.

Ninthly, storytelling employs creativity and inventiveness. Thus, the learning process is more enjoyable.

Lastly, storytelling-focused learning is based on real life situations, which means that the usage of language is much more useful on a daily basis.

By the application of storytelling in your teaching strategies, you will boost, for sure, your learners' involvement, personal growth, and new hitherto unknown possibilities.

Image 17. Using folk tales to teach language(source: canva.com)

Using Folk Tales to Teach Language

Description: This example describes how folk tales can be incorporated into language teaching to enrich this process culturally.

Scenario: An educator presents a series of folk tales from the learners' countries of origin, translated into the target language. Each session is devoted to reading a folk tale, discussing its cultural value, and connecting its themes to the learners' experiences.

Solution/ Outcome: The learners listen to the familiar stories and try to connect them with the new language in a meaningful way. The discussions that follow each story motivate female learners to practice language skills and delve into a given culture.

Key Takeaways: Folk tales are a valuable resource for language teaching, as they contribute to culture-based content, thus making the learning process more engaging and relevant.

2. Using Storytelling for Language Learning and Integrating Practical Storytelling Tips into Educational Programs

Storytelling is the social and cultural activity of sharing stories, sometimes with improvisation, theatrics or embellishment. Every culture has its own stories or narratives, which are shared as a means of entertainment, education, cultural preservation or instilling moral values. An integral part of this approach is the learners' needs and backgrounds. Here, we will handle practical examples and tips for using storytelling to reinforce language learning and its integration into your programs.

At the beginning we present 5 suggestions:

1. **Select relatable stories:** Select stories that are culturally relevant and correspond to the learners' experiences. This can contain folk tales, personal references, and various stories from the countries of their origin.

2. **Inspire participation:** Motivate learners to share their own stories and experiences whether from their personal lives or their cultures.

3. **Use visual aids:** Use images, videos, and other visuals to supplement storytelling. Visual aids help depict the story, and by the way, grasp relevant vocabulary easier.

4. **Integrate repetitions:** Repetition is a fundamental thing in language learning. Therefore, learners should paraphrase stories, trying to remember new language structures and vocabulary.

5. **Foster discussions:** Once a story is heard, learners should engage in discussions covering a given theme and focusing on cultural aspects. This supports deeper understanding and critical thinking.

Image 18. Emotional attachment (source: canva.com)

In order to use storytelling for emotional attachment, educators should create an understandable and sympathetic experience for learners. A good option is to begin with personal anecdotes. Another strategy is using stories with strong, relatable characters that learners can identify with, which helps in fostering an emotional bond. Furthermore, implementation of multimedia elements, such as music or visuals, can reinforce the story impact. Learners should eagerly share their own stories and build a sense of community. Last, but not least, an inclusive environment, where learners freely express their emotions and thoughts about the stories, can deepen their involvement and emotional impact.

Below, we come up with some storytelling strategies for strengthening emotional attachment:

- **Character development:** Base on developing all-around characters in your stories, and thus learners can refer to them in an emotional dimension.

- **Stimulation of senses:** Apply distinctive sensory details to appeal to learners' minds. Sights or sounds will make the story more engaging.

- **Emotional ups and downs:** Choose stories with emotional ups and downs to keep learners interested. It can definitely maintain emotional involvement.

- **Personal reference:** Select realistic stories relatable to the learners' lives. Realism will help learners resonate emotionally.

- **Connective elements:** Encompass interactive and reflection-invoking elements i.e.: pauses for reflection, questions about the characters' feelings, and predicting outcomes. This keeps learners actively engaged and emotionally involved.

2.1 Using storytelling for language learning

Language educators can use storytelling to foster language learning processes by incorporating contextual and linguistically rich stories. To do this, tutors can choose stories naturally incorporating new vocabulary and grammatical structures, motivating learners to boost their communication skills. Tutors can ask learners to paraphrase stories, which also develops their language skills. What's more, using stories from learners' cultural contexts can make grasping the language more engaging. Educators can also offer exercises which require creating learners' own stories. Learners should be encouraged to boost their productivity, and not only receptive skills. This approach accounts for interactive space for language communication practice.

Image 19. Language acquisition (source: canva.com)

Below, we come up with some storytelling strategies for strengthening language learning:

- **Situational vocabulary:** Select stories that integrate new vocabulary in different contexts. Explain the meanings of these words so as to reinforce understanding.

- **Interactive reading:** While reading stories pause to ask questions and motivate learners to predict the outcome. This keeps them involved and more captivated.

- **Sequential stories:** Ask learners to put stories in a proper order, thus teaching sequencing. This helps them understand narrative nature and affects language comprehension.

- **Role-playing:** Get learners involved in role-plays based on the story. This promotes speaking and listening skills in a spontaneous way.

- **Culture-based stories:** Pick up stories from different cultural backgrounds to show learners diverse perspectives. Further discussions foster cultural understanding and language skills.

Practical tips on how to integrate storytelling into adult education

By incorporating storytelling techniques in a dexterous way, educators can vastly support language learning and cultural understanding among migrant women. Here, we provide 20 practical tips to help you put storytelling into your educational practice in a hassle-free way, at the same time creating an energetic and more inclusive learning environment.

Image 20. Practical tips (source: canva.com)

1. **Start with commonplace stories** – Begin with brief, comprehensible stories and gradually shift to more complex ones.

2. **Incorporate multimedia** – Use audio recordings, videos, and interactive apps to augment the storytelling experience.

3. **Use real-life situations** – Connect stories with realistic contexts that learners can identify with.

4. **Adjust stories to learner levels** – Adapt the stories to the learners' language proficiency levels.

5. **Integrate various genres** – To cover different interests and preferences, include diverse genres, such as mysteries, comedies, and dramas.

6. **Use repetition intentionally** – Use key phrases and vocabulary while telling stories to enhance language learning.

7. **Offer peer feedback** – Create a friendly environment where learners can give and get feedback on their stories.

8. **Involve music** – Songs and music engage learners and foster better memorisation.

9. **Plan a storytelling chart** – Specify time constraints for storytelling activities and adhere to your plan to maintain consistency.

10. **Apply technology** – Apply digital storytelling platforms and tools to foster interactive and immersive storytelling experiences.

11. **Keep authentic –** Use newspapers, magazines, and online articles as storytelling sources.

12. **Hearten creative writing** – Propose creative writing exercises where learners can convey their stories in writing.

13. **Foster collaborative storytelling** – Arrange group storytelling sessions to facilitate collaboration and teamwork.

14. **Emphasise culture-based stories** – Highlight stories promoting cultural traditions and practices to enhance cultural awareness and understanding.

15. **Apply visual storytelling techniques** – Involve storyboarding and visual storytelling to help learners structure and pass on their stories.

Image 21. Visual storytelling techniques (source: canva.com)

16. **Guarantee language support** – Provide language support to help learners build their stories.

17. **Inspirit journaling** – Inspire learners to keep diaries in which they can write down daily or weekly stories about their personal experiences.

18. **Offer role-plays** – Use role-plays to materialize stories and facilitate learners to master language in dynamic settings.

19. **Rely on flash cards** – Prepare flashcards with main vocabulary from stories to reinforce language communication skills.

20. **Organise storytelling contests** –Think about enjoyable storytelling competitions to encourage learners and appreciate their progress.

2.2 Incorporating practical storytelling tips into educational programs

Implementation of storytelling into educational programs means more than just telling stories. It needs strategic planning and well-considered enforcement. By incorporating storytelling tasks into your curriculum, you promote language acquisition and boost cultural awareness. Here, we come up with some effective ways to put storytelling tips into your teaching practice, reassuring that telling stories vastly improves your teaching methodology.
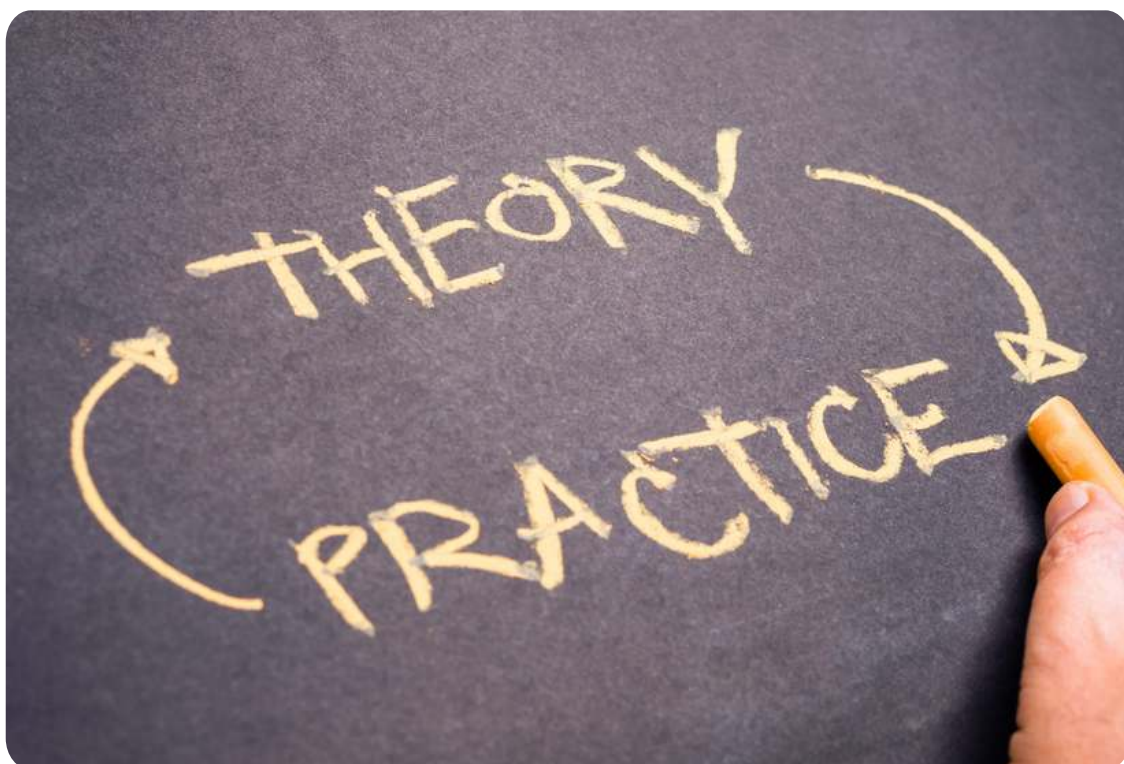

Image 22. Incorporating storytelling into educational programs (source: canva.com)

Projecting subject-centred units pertaining to specific stories or genres can incorporate language skills with defined themes and make classes more cohesive and immersive.

Storytelling is a base for **project-based learning** and enables learners to construct and present their stories, thus mastering language skills. Running **workshops centred on storytelling** caters learners to language practice needs and leads to refinement of their verbal skills.

Supporting **interactive story-based** activities motivates learners to work collaboratively and focus on teamwork and communication skills development. Cultural aspects embedded in storytelling techniques constitute an added value to the learning experience and support cultural expression.

Storytelling can also serve as an assessment method because narratives and descriptive statements provide an alternative to traditional testing methods. Although **storytelling clubs** are still an unexplored area, they foster regular meetings and sharing personal stories, thus contributing to a sense of community and belonging.

Community representatives as guest storytellers make storytelling experiences more genuine and diverse. Equipping learners with **story prompts** boosts their inventiveness and a sense of initiative making the process more accessible and enjoyable.

Integrating **digital storytelling classes,** during which learners build up and share multimedia stories, employs innovative technological components and combines them with language education. That way learners put emphasis on digital literacy along with linguistic skills. **Peer-to-peer storytelling** sessions foster confidence and improve storytelling content creation, simultaneously showing a great potential of web-native storytelling.

Story analysis activities are engaging and fun. Learners' language learning is affected by the promotion of critical thinking and deeper understanding of this approach. **Paraphrasing stories** fosters better memorization, keeps learners more active and strengthens language communication.

Integrating storytelling into **drama activities** promotes learners' involvement and brings stories to life. Learning becomes more interconnected and engaging. The same role can be attributed to **interactive games and activities.**

Arranging **excursions** to cultural sites aimed at highlighting their historical importance provides real-world context. **Guest speakers** who excel in storytelling bring inspirations and different perspectives.

Image 23. Arranging excursions (source: canva.com)

Story-based art activities are also purposeful and impactful in language learning through the visual representations of stories. They mainly appeal to visual-spatial learners. **Learners' reflection on their storytelling experiences** gives a wide spectrum of various perspectives and angles.

The power of storytelling in language learning is substantially underlined through the above practical tips. The tips enrich not only the program itself, but also the learning environment. Let's focus on creating more vibrant learning experiences adapted to learners' expectations and needs when thinking about migrant women as learners.

Image 24. Digital storytelling and storyboards(source: canva.com)

Digital Storytelling for Language Learning

Description: This example scrutinizes how digital storytelling can reinforce language acquisition.

Scenario: Migrant women are provided with digital storytelling tools by an educator, i.e.: video, audio recording apps. The learners create their own digital stories, with the use of images, songs, and narratives in the target language. The suggested tools include: www.storyboardthat.com, or www.createstudio.com.

Solution/ Outcome: Creating digital stories allows learners to master speaking, writing, and listening skills in a relatable and immersive way. The final works can be shared with the rest of learners, supporting a sense of belonging and community.

Key Takeaways: Digital storytelling is an all-around and functional tool making language learning more interconnected. Thanks to this tool learners have an opportunity to develop numerous language skills at the same time.
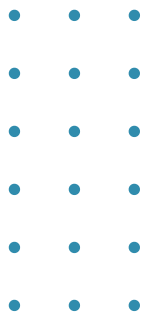
3. Engaging Learners (Migrant Women) Through Interactive and Effective Storytelling Strategies/Activities for Language Learning

In this section we present story-based specific activities and techniques making the language learning process more effective.

In stories emotions are crucial. Stories encourage language acquisition and cultural exploration. Whereas learners identify with characters described in stories, they feel they are closer to them emotionally. Emotional attachment through storytelling vastly impacts learners. It is also worth noting that through storytelling learners pick up new vocabulary and grammatical structures. Besides, using real-life situations, learners come across 'living' language used on a daily basis. Last, but not the least, stories account for a sort of bridge between a wide range of cultures. Therefore, storytelling techniques allow learners to explore and recognise cultural differences, and consequently become more sensitive, adjustable and empathetic.

Interconnected storytelling strategies and activities for language acquisition

In order to prove the potential of storytelling in language education, the integration of different real-life scenarios that learners can identify with is vital. Here, we introduce 20 practical instances of how storytelling can strengthen language learning through its application in your educational curricula.

- **Cultural immersion programmes** – Learners tell traditional stories from their home countries and cultures, based on some rituals or customs, thus appreciating tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This supports cultural understanding and acknowledgement.

Image 25. Cultural exchange (source: canva.com)

- **Paraphrasing** – Ask learners to paraphrase stories. This exercise imposes the necessity to seek and use different language structures and words.

- **Interactive and engaging storytelling** – Learners work in small groups and build up stories. This fosters teamwork, communication skills, and promotes leadership skills.

- **Simulations** – Ask learners to play the defined roles in stories. This helps them refine speaking and listening skills in an enjoyable and immersive way.

- **Circular story puzzle** – Learners sit in a circle and build up a story, adding puzzle by puzzle (parts/ elements of the story) to the content. That way they create a collective story, practice creativity and promote togetherness. Learners also exercise common language use.

- **Visualise prompts** – Use simple and conspicuous images/ pictures to suggest to learners the story content, assisting in vocabulary development and oral skills.

- **Commonplaceness in stories** – Ask learners to bring the group closer to their typical day, creating a new workbook so as to specify daily routines.

- **Sharing personal wisdom and observations –** Ask learners to swap their personal experiences, i.e.: memories, life-time ambitions, events etc., in order to advance storytelling and listening skills.

Image 26. Personal experience sharing (source: canva.com)

- **Breaking news stories** – Actual events can be a foundation for storytelling, helping learners drill past and present tenses, at the same time discussing real-world matters. The news should be very attractive and surprising.

- **Tales and fairy stories** – based on fables, legends or myths, allowing learners to disclose well-known themes and moral lessons when practicing language, mainly proverbs or sayings.

- **Poetry** – Learner's work in small groups and collectively create short stories that rhyme. Seeking good rhymes and well-matched words helps develop language skills. Rhyming facilitates memorization for musical learners, sensitive to rhythm, pitch, meter, tone, melody or timbre.

- **Role-playing historical events –** Act out memorable historical events that are inspired by learners' cultural backgrounds. Thus, learners will become more culturally aware.

- **Pantomime-based language learning** – Come up with drama activities where learners enact stories, reinforcing language acquisition through facial expressions, mimics, and physical movement.

- **Shadow theatre stories** – Learners watch an example shadow theatre video cast. They hear the soundtrack and see images. They are instructed to use only past tenses. Working in sub-groups or individually they create stories inspired by a shadow theatre play, describing the sequence of events.

- **Fictional tales** – Learners contrive imaginary stories, trying to invent neologisms (newly formed words), or coin vocabulary.

- **Podcasting** – Learners create a script and record a podcast with narratives, sharpening speaking and listening skills.

- **Story-inspired writing cues** – Basing on story scenarios learners make up their own narratives, developing their writing skills.

- **Library animated discussions** – Create a sort of library where learners select the story and read it to the audience (the rest of the class). Through analysis of the story content learners reinforce not only reading comprehension, but also critical thinking.

- **Story projecting** – Prepare story projects in the form of a mind map to help learners envision the story structure. It will help them systematize vocabulary, gain ordering skills and consolidate new vocabulary.

- **Interactive storytelling apps** – Interactive apps are extremely helpful in creating digital stories, allowing learners to combine new technologies with language acquisition.

Example scenarios involving learners through inter mutually language activities based on storytelling.

In this section, we will bring you closer to a variety of detailed scenarios aimed at involving learners through storytelling, providing practical concepts and inspirations supplementary to your curricula. These lesson plans tend to develop language skills, highlight cultural understanding, and support a sense of community, which is especially important among migrant women.

Scenario 1: Personal Stories Lap

Objectives:
- To build a sense of belonging in learners.
- To exercise oral skills and new vocabulary.

Learning outcomes:
- Learners will be able to tell a personal story.
- Learners will strengthen their vocabulary, understand language equivalents and increase language fluency.

Time: 90 minutes

Requirements: Comfortable seats, a timer, (optionally) a list of story cues.

Ice-breaker: A brief storytelling game will help learners break the ice and create an open atmosphere. Each learner adds one sentence to a collective story.

Main activity: Learners consider their personal stories they would like to circulate. The educator comes up with story cues if needed (e.g., "The most beautiful memory, "My biggest achievement"). Learners take turns to share their stories in a circle. Invite the group to ask questions and delve into the story. Every learner has 3 minutes to tell their story.

Contemplative practice/ Feedback: This session gives some space for reflection on what learners have grasped, and what added value their personal stories brought to the lesson content. Emphasise new vocabulary and phrases that popped up while telling the stories.

Scenario 2: Cultural Immersion Session

Objectives:
- To support cultural expression, appreciation and language practice.
- To scrutinise diverse storytelling traditions.

Learning outcomes:
- Learners will share stories based on different cultural norms and traditions.
- Learners will refine speaking and listening skills.

Time: 120 minutes

Requirements: A list of cultural tangible/ intangible objects, recording devices (optional).

Ice-breaker: Learners debate on various cultural traditions, including storytelling. At the outset share a brief story from your own culture to give an inspiration to the group.

Main activity: Learners are divided into small groups. Each group member tells traditional stories from their home countries and cultures, based on some rituals or customs. Others listen and proceed with inquisitive questions. Invite using some visuals or props to underpin storytelling.

Contemplative practice/ Feedback: Each group presents one story to the whole class. Learners exchange their personal observations and thoughts on the diversity of cultures. They can use a recording device optionally, to analyse the stories more carefully. Learners reflect on the cultural motifs and accompanying language. Learners sum up the new angles they gained as a result of this exercise. Learners choose the most engaging cultural story.

Scenario 3: Story Projecting and Paraphrasing

Objectives:

- To increase comprehension skills and consolidation of new vocabulary.
- To improve sequencing and verbal skills.

Learning outcomes:

- Learners will build up a story mind map to envision the story outline.
- Learners will paraphrase a story.

Time: 90 minutes

Requirements: Story mind maps, markers, an example story.

Ice-breaker: Read a brief story to the audience. Refer to the main happenings and roles. Underline the distinctiveness of the characters.

Main activity: Circulate the story mind maps/ projects and ask learners to complete the crucial events of the story. After the completion of this task, divide learners into pairs and request them to paraphrase the story with the use of the story project as a kind of prompt. Motivate learners to use their personal references.

Contemplative practice/ Feedback: Learners debate on various versions of the story. They underline the significance of the particular characters. Structure any new words or phrases. Rethink the impact of the story mind maps and rewording in language learning.

Image 27. Story paraphrasing (source: canva.com)

Scenario 4: Digital Stories Hub

Objectives:
- To combine technology with language learning.
- To improve digital literacy and oral/ verbal skills.

Learning outcomes:
- Learners will make up a digital story with the support of multimedia tools.
- Learners will master language skills through the communal creation process.

Time: 180 minutes (or several sessions)

Requirements: Computers/tablets, storytelling apps, Wi-Fi connection.

Ice-breaker: Show the selected digital stories created by others. Delve into the components that make a digital story captivating.

Main activity: Divide learners into a few sub-groups and ask them to contrive a story. Propose a user-friendly storytelling software or app. Each sub-group develops a digital story, including text/ speech bubbles, images, audio, and video material. Provide technical and content-related support if needed.

Contemplative practice/ Feedback: Each group presents their digital story in front of the audience. Contemplate the learning process and have a discourse on how learners develop their language and digital skills. Furnish constructive feedback on the storytelling and technical aspects of learners' e-stories.

Scenario 5: Storytelling through Drama Integration

Objectives:

- To reinforce commitment through gestures and mime-based performance.
- To progress speaking and listening skills.

Learning outcomes:

- Learners will act out a story applying drama techniques.
- Learners will boost their self-confidence in communication skills.

Time: 120 minutes

Requirements: Scripts, props, costumes (optional).

Ice-breaker: Learners are provided with a story script or, alternatively, request them to create their own. Split them into groups and distribute roles. Invite learners to use various props and costumes to make the stories more realistic and engaging. Each group presents their story, using pantomime, voicing, and non-verbal language.

Contemplative practice/ Feedback: Each group enact their story to the class. Learners debate on how the stories portrayed by them affected their linguistic skills. List any new vocabulary or grammatical structures that emerged while playing the stories. Underline any new language skills that could be developed in learners thanks to this drama-based assignment.

Image 28. Storytelling and drama integration (source: canva.com)

Image 29. Story mapping (source: canva.com)

Story Mapping for Better Understanding

Description: This example explores how story mapping can support and progress language comprehension.

Scenario: An educator applies story maps to enable the visualization of the story structure. Each story map has to contain key elements, which is plot, setting, characters, and resolution.

Solution/ Outcome: The story maps assist learners in better comprehension and remembering the stories. A great asset is the above-mentioned visualization because it reminds learners of the story content while paraphrasing.

Key Takeaways: Undoubtedly, language comprehension is reinforced through story mapping. Regarding its visual structure, it is an extremely helpful tool for memorization of key aspects and events in stories.

IN A NUTSHELL

This unit has encompassed the following key concepts:
- The role of storytelling as an emotion-evoking, impactful and expressive teaching approach.
- The benefits of storytelling for language learning and cultural expression.
- Pragmatic tips and strategies for implementation of storytelling into educational curricula.

Once this unit is completed, you have:
- Been more aware of how storytelling can enhance learners' engagement and foster language acquisition.
- Been able to incorporate storytelling into your teaching methods to contribute to a more inclusive learning environment.

To continue your learning path:
- Use the storytelling techniques covered in this unit in your educational curricula.
- Contemplate the influence of these methods and adapt your ideas to your learners' needs when necessary.
- Delve into extra resources and units that can multidimensionally develop your teaching skills in the long run.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Consider the following recommendation:

Your group consists of migrant women who are constantly coping with integration of traditional language learning approaches. Think about the way you may implement storytelling into your program to handle their needs and foster inclusiveness. Take into account learners' cultural contexts, personal experiences, and language proficiency.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- Which of the following is NOT a benefit of using storytelling in language learning?
  - A. Enhances vocabulary retention
  - B. Promotes passive learning
  - C. Fosters cultural under standing

- What is one practical tip for incorporating storytelling into language learning programs?
  - A. Avoid using visual aids
  - B. Encourage learners to share personal stories
  - C. Limit discussions about the story

- Which storytelling activity involves learners acting out scenes from stories?
  - A. Story mapping
  - B. Collaborative storytelling
  - C. Role-playing

UNIT 5: PROJECT-BASED LEARNING FOR LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

INTRODUCTION

Education is a powerful tool in the fight against poverty and social inequality (Junjunia, 2023). Extensive research, including studies by UNESCO, shows how **education can lift people out of poverty.** The statistics are indeed staggering - improving access to secondary education could reduce the global poverty rate by fifty percent. Improving the **literacy skills of adults**, particularly **mothers, increases access to education for their children**, especially daughters, creating a virtuous cycle across generations (UNESCO, 2017).

Migrant and refugee women in particular face numerous challenges that limit their access to education, services and participation in society. **Language barriers** are a major obstacle that exacerbates their **marginalisation** and restricts **their access to education** and, much needed, social services. Language learning is therefore the key to greater self-determination and social integration. Beyond language skills, it promotes **cultural understanding**, empathy and connections with their host communities

In our pursuit of educational equality, **JUST HER!** is committed to advocating for marginalised migrant and refugee women. With this in mind, our goal is to break down barriers and amplify their voices so that they can fully participate in and contribute to their communities. **Language education is at the centre of these efforts.**

Accordingly, we present **Unit 5** of our **Handbook for Adult Educators**, in which we explore the topic of '**Project-based learning for language acquisition**'. This unit looks at the innovative approach to teaching known as **Project-Based Learning (PBL)** as a means of facilitating **language learning** while promoting **cultural understanding** and real-world (practical) application of their knowledge in meaningful contexts.

In this unit, we will explore the integration of the **four language skills** through the PBL approach and provide educators with practical strategies for implementing it in the **foreign language classroom**. From improving **listening comprehension, speaking, reading** and **writing** to exploring cultural issues relevant to language learning, this unit provides a comprehensive framework for designing **authentic tasks that reflect real-life situations** that foster meaningful language acquisition.

This unit gives special attention to addressing the evolving needs of migrant and refugee women learners as they engage in language acquisition. By providing educators with the tools to implement **PBL**, we aim to help foster an engaging and relevant learning environment that is **responsive, inclusive and supportive to the needs** of migrant and refugee women. This approach can not only facilitate the improvement of these types of learners' language skills but also provide them with a deeper understanding of the **cultural differences in their host countries**. While strengthening the **cultural sensitivity** and **intercultural competence** of adult educators.

The unit is organised into three main subtopics:
- On the importance of improving listening, speaking, reading and writing skills
- Implement PBL in Foreign Language classrooms
- Design authentic tasks (real-life scenarios) for language learning

Each subtopic is accompanied by practical **insights, case-studies and ideas for activities** designed to help adult educators improve their language skills.

Learning outcomes of the unit:
- By the end of this unit you will be able to:
  - Develop culturally relevant lessons that enhance learners' understanding of language and cultural contexts.
  - Design and implement authentic tasks that integrate language skills through project-based approaches.

In the view of this, let us explore the transformative potential of PBL for language acquisition.

1. On the importance of improving listening, speaking, reading and writing skills

Language as a means of communication and connection is **crucial for cultural exchange.** When learners embark on the journey of language learning, they acquire not only linguistic skills, but also a deeper understanding of **cultural nuances and social norms** helping them better navigate social interactions. Thus, **language learning** serves as a catalyst for community engagement, participation in civic activities, and the strength of personal relationships.

It is therefore essential to emphasise the importance of **listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing in language teaching.** These skills form the foundation on which language knowledge and fluency are built. Effective communication, whether oral or written, facilitates **meaningful interactions and fosters connections** within diverse communities. Furthermore, the ability to understand and express oneself in a language not only promotes **social integration**, but also opens doors to educational and economic opportunities. Therefore, investing in the development of these **basic language skills** is crucial to enable marginalised migrants and refugees to navigate and succeed in their new environment.

The forthcoming sub-section on "The Four Language Skills" will shed light on the pivotal role these skills play in **second language acquisition (SLA).**

Image 30. Source: Pexels/Credits: Retha Ferguson

1.1 The Four Language Skills

In our quest to use education as an effective tool against poverty and social inequality, we must recognise that, despite many studies, significant gaps remain regarding the language learning challenges faced by marginalised migrant and refugee women. This gap can be attributed to the heterogeneity of these women, who have a wide range of skills and profiles. Some of them are **low literate** (a person that has minimal reading and writing skills) **while others are non-literate** (a person who cannot read or write at all), to name a few examples. Consequently, there is an urgent need for more comprehensive research on **second language acquisition (SLA)** specifically among non-literate and low-literate women adults. It is crucial for adult educators to focus not only on the learners' **language education,** but also on **literacy development. Social variables must also be taken into account** when considering the diverse needs of this population, which, as mentioned above, is very heterogeneous (Van de Craats, I., Kurvers, J., & Young-Scholten, M., 2006).

To move away from discussing the challenges that marginalised migrant and refugee women face in language learning, it is important to stress that, when working with adult (women) learners, educators need to integrate an Andragogical approach. Andragogy, which emphasises the self-directed nature of adult learners and the importance of drawing from their life experiences, provides a framework for adapting language teaching to the particular needs of learners.

In this case, the specific needs of marginalised (migrant and refugee) women are addressed in detail in Unit 1 of this Handbook.

Therefore, integrating the principles of andragogy into the teaching practice, it is critical to successfully create a more **engaging and empowering** learning environment (Bouchrika, 2024). Henceforth, all teaching approaches and suggestions covered in this unit will always consider the Andragogical approach.

Moving forward, to teach a foreign language effectively, it is necessary to understand the four core language skills– **Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing** – and realise their implication in the learning process. These skills are the building blocks of communication and must be developed in a **comprehensive manner**. In the context of **SLA**, each skill plays a vital role in language acquisition and fluency.

- Listening (comprehension): The ability to understand spoken language.
- Speaking: The ability to express oneself orally.
- Reading: The ability to comprehend written text.
- Writing: The ability to articulate thoughts in writing.

Image 31. Source: Pexels/Credits: Thirdman

The ability to understand spoken language (i.e., **listening comprehension**) plays an important role in **second language (L2) learning** and use. It is a necessary skill for real communication activities in the classroom (Ahmadi, 2016). Research by Cheung (2010) even suggests that **listening comprehension should be acquired first**, even before speaking, reading, and writing. This is because listening comprehension is the "blueprint for the later **acquisition of speaking**". Therefore, language teachers should respond to their learners' need to develop better listening comprehension by making it an integral part of their teaching practice (Ahmadi, 2016).

Now, a recent study in Japan investigated whether active learning activities in **group discussions (speaking)** can help to improve the (English) listening comprehension skills of **lower-level learners.** The results showed a significant increase in the participants' listening comprehension scores, suggesting that the teaching of passive skills such as **listening comprehension** can be improved through **interactive methods.** This argues in favour of integrating group discussion activities to listening comprehension lessons (Elmetaher, 2021).

Furthermore, a study on the use of a mobile app (to improve language learning) used by newly arrived migrants engaged in learning the Swedish language and Swedish culture showed that the participants who used the **mobile apps as a compliment to a traditional training course** had better **fluency and intonation** than the participants in the control group. This suggests that **targeted oral practice,** especially when supported by mobile technology, can improve **linguistic confidence** and integration in the host country (Thorén, 2014; Bradley et al., 2017).

Prioritising Different Channels of Information and Learning Styles

Education tends to focus on **text-based practices.** However, teaching using **written language** can become **problematic** when engaging with heterogeneous groups with different literacy skills and, more importantly, taking into account that **written language can be different from culture to culture.** Moreover, educators should bear in mind that when a learner's first speaking skills in a new language are developing, there is no reason to expect the features and use of the new language to be drastically different, in terms of **grammar** and/or **communication style,** from the language the learner already possesses (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010). Understanding these nuances is crucial for educators if they are to effectively teach foreign languages to adult learners, especially those with **little or no literacy skills** (Van de Craats et al., 2006).

A study conducted with **English teachers** in Hungary and Turkey found that learners who were allowed to use English spontaneously, often engaged in the **creative language play** that characterises everyday communication.

This humorous and creative language play activated learners' linguistic resources and <u>metalinguistic abilities</u>. Thus, **unplanned and playful language use** can be a **motivating** force that leads to **active participation** and **increased interest** in classroom communication. Therefore, language teaching should fulfil the requirements of an **interactive and dynamic environment.** Based on these data, educators can take advantage of spontaneous language use and everyday creativity in the classroom (Illés & Akcan, 2016).

Accordingly, in urban contexts across the developed countries, this approach becomes especially pertinent when considering the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of **migrant learners**. The following case study, conducted in one such urban setting provides valuable insights into effective strategies for fostering interactive, dynamic and, more importantly, inclusive learning environments.

Image 32. Source Pexels / credits: rdne

Immigrants and English Language Learners (ELL) in an urban classroom in the USA [[Adams, 2017]]

Description: This case study examines an urban high school near the capital of a large Midwestern state in the United States of America. The study took place during the 2015-2016 course. Previous to the study, the high school (secondary school) struggled with issues such as discipline problems, high dropout rates, bullying, and low academic achievement, especially among **ELL** and **immigrant students.**

Scenario: Over four years preceding the study, the school struggled with low success (pass) rates on the state-required end-of-course test for graduation, with only one in ten students passing, and even lower rates among immigrant and ELL populations.

Solution/ Outcome: In the 2015-2016 school year, the school administration implemented a **co-teaching arrangement** in which teachers collaborated to **integrate academic language and literacy instruction with clear goals that connect to students' experiences and needs.** This innovative approach aimed to address the academic challenges of immigrant and ELL students.

Key Takeaways: The rapid increase in the number of immigrant students in urban schools has revealed a significant gap: many teachers are not adequately prepared to address the unique needs of i**mmigrant** and **ELL students.** This underscores the urgent need for teachers to be equipped with appropriate **tools, skills and best practices.**

Consequently, this case study serves as a model of effective practices and highlights the importance of culturally sensitive instruction and **community-building interventions** to improve the academic success and well-being of immigrant and ELL students.

In the study, teachers integrated **culturally relevant learning resources and experiences** into their lessons and ensured that the content reflected students' diverse cultural backgrounds. They also fostered an environment where students felt comfortable using their native language, promoting acceptance and belonging in the classroom.

In addition, teachers utilised **inquiry-based approaches** to learning and set high academic expectations to encourage students to engage in **critical reflection.** By fostering a community of learners, teachers bridged the gap between immigrant and non-immigrant students by **designing lessons in which diverse students could collaborate and share their personal experiences**, creating an environment characterised by empathy and inclusivity.

To summarise, this holistic approach not only addresses immediate academic needs, but also promotes long-term social and emotional development, making classrooms more **supportive and equitable for all students.** Therefore, this case study is an example of relevant best practice in modern education.

As emphasised in the introduction to this unit, learning a **second language (L2)** is crucial for minority groups of refugees and migrant women who natively speak another language, especially when trying to integrate into a society with a dominant language that is needed for education, employment and other essential purposes. Proficiency in L2 enables these women to **access better job opportunities, participate more fully in their communities** and cope more easily and confidently in daily life. It is not only a means of communication, but also a means of social integration and personal empowerment. Consequently, adult educators have an enormous responsibility to create an environment that helps these learners to acquire L2 in their own way and, above all, to create an inclusive and empathetic atmosphere that provides learners with opportunities for **personal, social and emotional development.**

To effectively integrate the four language skills into the foreign language classroom for adult learners, educators should use (research-based) active learning strategies tailored to each skill, for example:

Educators should focus on **listening comprehension and speaking** before starting reading and writing, especially when working with heterogeneous groups with different literacy levels and learning styles. Multimodal learning strategies that combine audio, speech, music, gestures and other sensory input can provide a meaningful and well-rounded learning experience. Images and videos can serve as engaging hooks to build anticipation and teach basic content and language skills.

The use of **storytelling** can improve **speaking skills.** Group discussions in which learners can tell meaningful stories promote the ability to listen well, which benefits both the narrator and the listener as it creates a **psychologically safe and inclusive environment** (Itzchakov et al., 2014). Designing lessons in which diverse learners collaborate through speaking activities that mimic **real-life communication**, such as role-playing, debates and discussions in which learners share their personal experiences, can improve fluency and increase confidence in using language in practical situations. The use of inquiry-based approaches can stimulate curiosity and engagement, encouraging learners to ask questions and participate in discussions.

For **reading development**, it is important to provide a range of reading materials that correspond to the **interests and language level of the learners**. This can include newspapers, articles and novels that can expand vocabulary and improve reading comprehension. Introducing **multimodal texts**, – reading materials that combine text with images, videos, and other media – make the content more **accessible** and engaging. Collaborative reading strategies such as organising group reading sessions, can also be beneficial. In these sessions, learners read and discuss texts together, helping each other to understand and interpret the material.

Writing tasks such as diary entries, essays, and creative writing exercises (storytelling) encourage linguistic accuracy and stimulate creativity, allowing learners to express themselves more freely in the new language. It is important to use writing tasks that are appropriate to the learners' level of proficiency. For learners with low literacy skills, starting with simple exercises such as diary entries and personal narratives. As their skills improve, introducing more complex tasks such as essays and creative writing. Where possible, introducing peer review sessions where learners give and receive feedback on their writing to encourage **collaboration and critical thinking.**

In summary, it is important to recognise the complexity and different needs of marginalised migrants and refugees in language learning. This requires a comprehensive approach that focuses not only on **language teaching,** but also on **literacy development and cultural sensitivity.** Understanding the four language skills– - listening, speaking, reading, and writing – and how to teach them effectively is crucial for the integration and empowerment of migrant and refugee women.

Image 33. Source Pexels / Credits: Gabby K.

2. Implementing PBL in the foreign language classroom

As portrayed in the case study **"Immigrants and English Language Learners (ELL) in an urban classroom in the USA",** with the increase in global humanitarian migration to countries with high literacy rates (developed countries), there is an urgent need for, and difficulty in providing, language and literacy courses for **adult second language (L2) learners** who have **limited or no literacy skills** (Malessa, 2018). Consequently, educators face the challenge of providing effective language teaching to diverse learners, including **adult L2 learners** with **limited literacy skills**. Project-Based Learning (**PBL**) has emerged as a promising approach to meeting this challenge. In this context, **PBL** can be an effective tool for adult educators to support migrant and refugee women in **language acquisition and cultural integration.**

What is PBL? Project-Based Learning or PBL, is a non-traditional teaching method. This pedagogical approach puts learners at the centre of their learning experience by engaging them in authentic, real-world projects that require **problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration**. In PBL projects, learners put their skills and understanding into practice in **real-life scenarios**, encouraging a deeper engagement with **language and culture**. This hands-on immersion allows them to gain insights into different perspectives, challenge stereotypes and cultivate mutual respect, which ultimately strengthens their cultural awareness. In addition, these hands-on projects facilitate meaningful communication and the integration of language skills (Malessa, 2018; Petersen & Nassaji, 2016).

Having understood PBL, let us now explore its variations that make learning more interesting and practical. In addition to traditional PBL, there are variations such as Community-based Service Learning projects and Arts-based Learning. These adaptations provide diverse learning opportunities that cater to different interests and learning styles, ensuring a richer learning experience for all learners.

2..1 Community-based Service-learning (CBSL) projects

CBSL projects are educational activities that combine community service with "academic" learning, giving learners the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills to address **real-world needs and challenges**. In CBSL projects, learners work with community partners and stakeholders to identify, plan, and implement projects that help improve their communities. These projects are designed to promote **civic engagement, social responsibility, and personal growth** while enhancing learners' understanding of course content and making meaningful connections between classroom learning and community engagement.

CBSL projects are a key component of **PBL** because they emphasise the **application of knowledge** and **skills in authentic contexts** while fostering connections.
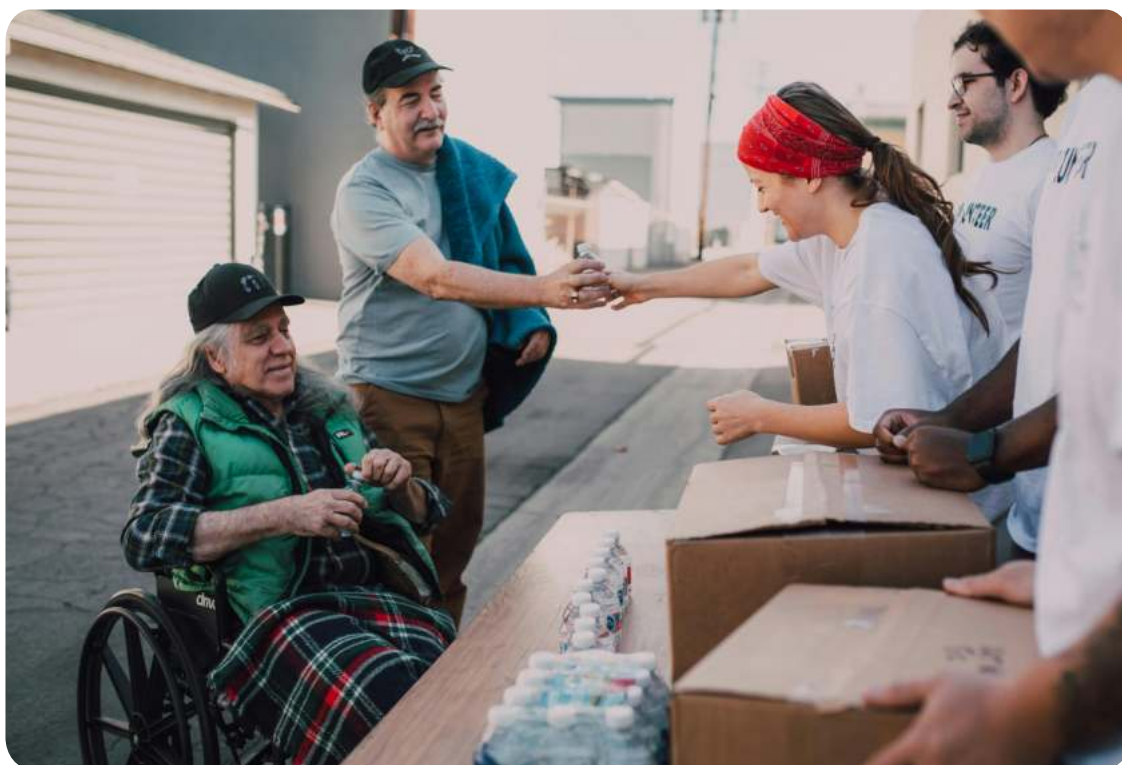

Image 34. Source: Pexels/Credits: Rdne

CBSL is increasingly being used in L2 education to support learners in interacting with target language communities. Empirical studies show that CBSL has a positive impact on **language proficiency, cultural understanding, motivation, and civic engagement of language learners.** Overall, CBSL shows positive results in L2 education (Baker, 2019; Ciriza, 2023).

Even more, according to Sotelino-Losada et al (2021), CBSL has been scientifically supported as a method for acquiring **relational and collaborative skills**. As a teaching method, CBSL integrates real-world experiences that promote community engagement. In the context of language learning, CBSL offers unique opportunities for learners, educators, and community members. It helps develop **civic-minded learners who understand democratic values**, which benefits the broader community.

Language learning through CBSL is especially important for immigrants and migrants because it provides hands-on opportunities for language practice. Real-life interaction with native speakers is crucial for language acquisition and **supports a communicative approach.** In this globalised world, we are forced to acquire **cross-cultural perspectives, ethical knowledge, and problem-solving skills**. Skills and knowledge that are so important to survive and thrive in today's society that they are even embedded in many European university curricula.

Therefore, foreign language teachers face the challenge of creating opportunities for learners to practise their language skills outside the classroom, which CBSL can contribute to (Wehling, 2011).

On the whole, CBSL is an effective method for adult immigrant language learners as it promotes linguistic confidence, social and cultural capital, and positive identity formation. This method is based on respect and agency and promotes community engagement and language use in practice (Riley, 2014).

2.2 Arts-based Learning

Arts-based learning means that art is integrated into the curriculum/curricula to achieve educational goals. Arts-based activities and/or projects are creative learning experiences that incorporate visual arts, performing arts or other forms of artistic expression into the curriculum. These activities provide opportunities for learners to explore their creativity, express themselves, and engage with course content in meaningful and personally relevant ways. Arts-based activities can take many forms, including visual arts projects, theatre performances, musical compositions, and dance productions. By integrating the arts into the classroom, educators can increase learners' engagement, foster connections between academic learning and artistic expression, and promote social and emotional development. Arts-based activities are often integrated into PBL initiatives to facilitate meaningful interactions, foster connections, and enrich the learning experience.

The following case study at UBC Learning Exchange highlights the transformative impact of arts-based activities on language learning among older immigrants. By integrating art into the language learning curriculum, this initiative not only improves participants' language skills, but they also gain self-confidence and build social relationships, enriching their overall learning experience.

Strengthening older immigrants' language learning through Arts-Based Activities at UBC Learning Exchange, Canada (Balyasnikova & Gillard, 2021)

Description: This case study focuses on Jacqui, a participant in the "**Seniors Thrive project**", aimed at aiding immigrant seniors in **learning English** and fostering social connections. Jacqui's involvement in various arts-based activities, such as **creative writing, arts and crafts, and drama club**, helped her overcome language barriers and gain confidence in speaking English.

Scenario: Jacqui initially struggled with speaking English but found comfort and confidence through **participation in English conversation classes and arts-based activities.** She embraced creative expression, incorporating drawing and descriptions into her learning process, showcasing the power of diverse learning methods.

Solution/Outcome: The Seniors Thrive project integrated **language learning with arts-based activities**, providing participants like Jacqui with leadership opportunities and a supportive community environment. Jacqui, along with others, experienced increased confidence in English speaking and expanded social networks. Arts-based activities not only facilitated language development but also amplified the voices of older learners beyond their immediate communities.

Key Takeaways: The case of Jacqui illustrates the transformative potential of arts-based activities in older adult language learning when programs are designed with flexibility and community engagement in mind. By blending language learning with creative expression, Jacqui's journey highlights the significance of diverse learning approaches in fostering self-esteem, social connections, and mutual understanding among immigrant seniors. This emphasises the importance of creating inclusive spaces where diverse learners can thrive and realise their full potential.

At this point, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between PBL and other learning approaches. On the one hand, PBL involves working on comprehensive projects over an **extended period of time, often weeks or an entire course.** PBL is effective because it promotes a deep sense of agency and confidence through intensive and sustained activities. For example, learning a dialogue for a theatre performance can take weeks (Art-based activity). However, it is not always the case that the project needs to last a whole course to be immersive. PBL can also be used as a means of designing a single lesson, for example.

Hence, a similar approach to **PBL** is **Task-Based Learning (TBL)**, which focuses on shorter, hands-on activities such as **authentic tasks and/or Inquiry-based learning activities.** These activities are designed to be completed within a shorter time frame, such as a **single lesson or a few days.** TBL also provides meaningful, hands-on learning experiences that promote skills such as collaboration, communication, and decision-making in an immediate context.

Image 35. Source: Pexels / Credits: Israwmx

Image 35. Source: Pexels / Credits: Brett Sayles

Research-driven task-based L2 learning for adult immigrants in times of humanitarian crisis: results from two nationwide projects in Greece (2017).

Description: The research by George Androulakis et al. (2017) focuses on adult immigrants from **non-EU countries in Greece,** including the **unemployed, mothers, immigrants with disabilities and immigrants without literacy skills.** The main aim was to empower them during their integration process by giving voice to their narratives and developing a specialised Greek language course with a task-based learning approach.

Scenario: The researchers conducted a needs analysis and found that the challenges faced by adult immigrants in Greece included the need to **find employment, improve economic conditions, integrate socially, communicate effectively** with public services and their children's schools, and resolve bureaucratic issues regarding their legal status. Immigrants emphasised that what **they expected most from the language courses was practical knowledge and skills, particularly in the area of formal communication and writing,** in order to claim their rights and fulfil their professional obligations. Practical knowledge and skills that **they could not acquire in everyday language use.**

Solution/Outcome: The **task-based learning (TBL)** approach was chosen because it engages learners through communicative processes that require, among other things, problem solving and decision making. The analysis showed that this approach was effective and led to team building, identity building and empowerment. Learners **shared experiences and feelings, which led to more active participation.** For example, one participant in the language course, a Nigerian woman, shared her experiences of corporal punishment in Nigeria, which encouraged others to participate and share their stories (data from an interview with a 29-year-old woman who had been living in Greece for 5 years at the time of the interview).

Key Takeaways: The study showed that **TBL** is very effective for the linguistic integration and empowerment of adult immigrants. This approach not only met their communicative needs, but also promoted team building and active participation. Above all, the importance of addressing both language skills and social processes was emphasised. The immigrants who participated in the needs analysis **stated that their needs were more related to understanding processes and social skills, such as how to look for a job in Greece or what documents are required to obtain an unemployment card, than to language accuracy.** The main areas identified in the analysis included **school, home and family, mobility, work, health and everyday communication.** In addition, activities where personal experiences were shared were crucial to the success of the language courses as they allowed participants to socialise and learn from each other's stories.

The combination of PBL and TBL provides a balanced learning experience that offers both the depth of long-term projects and the practicality of shorter assignments. This blend provides learners with the skills and confidence they need to succeed in the real world.

Authentic tasks are therefore a component of TBL and are a specific task within this framework that is designed to simulate real-life challenges that professionals might face and that require practical and immediate solutions. That is, they emphasise immediate application in the real world.

2.3 Authentic tasks and Problem-based activities

As mentioned earlier, Authentic tasks are learning experiences that confront learners with real-world problems, scenarios or tasks that require critical thinking, problem solving and creative solutions. These activities engage learners in meaningful, hands-on learning opportunities for practical application and skill development beyond traditional classroom exercises. For example, tasks may include writing a CV (Curriculum Vitae) in English or even writing a business proposal.

Problem-based activities, on the other hand, use **complex real-world problems as a vehicle for learning concepts and principles.** This approach includes tasks such as analysing case studies or role-playing. In the language learning classroom, learners can engage in tasks that mirror real-life scenarios they may encounter, such as navigating public transportation, shopping for groceries, or scheduling appointments. For example, they analyse written case studies to find solutions or improvise role-play scenes based on given character descriptions.

Overall, the core of Problem-based learning remains the same: **applying knowledge to solve a real-world problem.** To summarise in simple terms and in the context of language learning. Problem-based learning is about thinking hard to solve real-world problems, while authentic tasks are about applying language in real, practical ways.

Image 36. Source: Pexels/Credits: Retha Ferguson

2.4 Inquiry-based learning (IBL)

IBL is a pedagogical approach in which learners actively participate by asking questions, searching for answers and gaining new understandings. It focuses on learner curiosity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In **IBL**, learners take ownership of their learning through: **asking questions, researching, developing solutions, collaborating and communicating, and reflecting**. In the framework of PBL, IBL is a central component that drives the learning process.

There are many benefits to integrating PBL into the foreign language classroom, including promoting **meaningful communication, improving language skills, and increasing learner motivation.** Here are some strategies for effectively implementing PBL in the foreign language classroom:

- Design projects/tasks/activities to incorporate all four language skills – **listening, speaking, reading and writing.**
- Encourage collaboration and teamwork among learners by assigning them group projects that require **co-operation, communication and negotiation**. Collaborative projects not only improve language skills, but also promote interpersonal and intercultural competence.
- Plan opportunities for **reflection and self-assessment** throughout the programme cycle. Encourage learners to reflect on their learning process, recognise challenges and successes, and set goals for improvement. Assess learner's performance based on both the final projects or presentations and the process of research, collaboration, and critical thinking.

To sum up, PBL offers a dynamic and engaging approach to language teaching that allows learners to apply language skills in **authentic contexts and develop essential competencies for communication and collaboration**. By integrating PBL into the foreign language classroom, educators can empower learners to become competent and confident language learners who are able to tackle real-world language tasks and challenges.

3. Real-life scenarios for language learning

The introduction of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in language teaching programmes for marginalised refugee and immigrant women is a crucial step in promoting an inclusive and empowering educational environment.

As Adams (2017) points out, it is imperative for language education programmes and government agencies to prioritise professional development and support for educators working with **low-literacy second language (L2)** and **literacy acquisition (LESLLA) learners**. This means equipping educators with the necessary training in research-based methods that meet the specific needs and challenges of LESLLA learners.

By integrating PBL into the language classroom, educators can create **dynamic and immersive learning experiences** that not only facilitate language acquisition, but also promote cultural integration, critical thinking, and community engagement. In addition, PBL empowers marginalised women to take control of their educational journey, fostering a **sense of agency, confidence and belonging**. Going forward, sustained investment in (teacher) training and curriculum development is essential to ensure the continued success and impact of PBL in improving the educational outcomes and social inclusion of marginalised refugee and migrant women.

Authentic tasks or problem activities are learning experiences that **confront learners with real-world problems, scenarios, or tasks that require critical thinking, problem-solving, and creative solutions.** These activities are designed to engage learners in meaningful, hands-on learning experiences that reflect the complexity of the real world. By completing projects and/or authentic tasks, learners develop important skills such as **collaboration, communication, and decision-making** while deepening their understanding of course concepts and content. Authentic tasks are an essential component of **PBL** because they provide learners with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in relevant and meaningful ways, fostering the connection between classroom learning and real-world application.

Incorporating PBL into the foreign language classroom promotes meaningful communication, improving language skills, and increasing learner motivation. Here are some examples of **projects and tasks** for adult refugee and migrant learners to engage with in the **L2 classroom**:

3.1 PBL (Inquiry-based)

Here is a structured approach to the interview project where learners interview native speakers or other migrants/refugees about their experiences:

- **Interview project:** Journeys Unfolded
  - **Objective:** To explore and document personal migration stories to promote empathy and understanding among learners.
  - To practise communication skills (listening, asking questions and summarising).

    - **Instructions:**
      - Learners form pairs or small groups.
      - Each group chooses a native speaker or a migrant/refugee who is willing to talk about their experiences.
      - They arrange an interview with the selected participant.
      - The interview can be conducted in person, by video call or in writing (e.g. email correspondence).

  - **Steps:**
    - **Preparation:**
      - **Research:** learners prepare questions related to migration, cultural adaptation, challenges, and resilience.
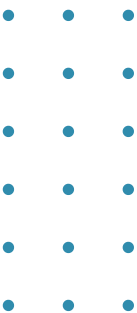
- **Ethical considerations:** In class, discuss with the learners aspects such as sensitivity, respect and consent when interviewing someone about personal experiences.
- **Choose a format:** learners should decide beforehand whether they want to create podcasts, videos or written profiles.
- **Record the interview:** learners should take into consideration the different tools required to record audio, video or written notes. Based on their level of familiarity, they should get themselves acquainted with them before they conduct the interview.
- Conducting the interview:
  - **Active listening:** learners listen attentively and allow the interviewee to talk freely.
  - **Open-ended questions:** Encourage learners to ask questions that elicit detailed responses (e.g. "Can you describe a significant moment during your journey?").
  - **Follow-up questions:** Address specific aspects (e.g. "How did you deal with the language barriers?").
- **Reflection:**
  - After the interview, learners can spend time discussing their impressions and findings with their team members.
- **Creation:**
  - **Podcasts:** Learners edit the interviews into podcast episodes and add context and reflections.
  - **Videos:** Create short documentaries that include visual elements and narration.
  - **Written profiles:** Compose engaging narratives based on the interview content.
- **Sharing and further reflection:**
  - **Presentations:** Each group presents their project to the class.
  - **Reflect:** Groups can discuss with the rest of the class the common themes, emotions and lessons learnt.
  - **Build empathy:** Encourage learners to empathise with the experiences of the interviewees.

- **Language focus:**
  - Active listening.
  - Formulating questions (Wh- questions, follow-up questions).
  - Vocabulary related to migration, emotions and storytelling.

Remember to adapt this project to the language level of your learners and the resources available. It is a powerful way to promote intercultural understanding and appreciate different narratives.

Image 37. Source: Pexels/Credits: George Milton

3.2 CBSL

- **Community Service Project:** work with local organisations. Learners can create language resources (e.g. multilingual guides) or offer language support to other immigrants/migrants.
- **Language Exchange Partnerships:** Pair learners together with native speakers who want to learn their language. They can meet regularly to practise conversation and cultural exchange.
- **Volunteer opportunities:** Connect learners with non-profit organisations where they can use their language skills. For example, they can help at local events, translate documents or tutor others.
- **Cultural presentations:** Organise cultural events where learners present their traditions, music, dances and food. This promotes intercultural understanding and language practice.

Art-based activities:
- **Task:** Seeing things – national stereotypes through pictures (Teaching Culture Project Consortium, 2006).
  - **Objectives:** To get learners to explore and summarise cultural aspects through images.

- To encourage intercultural understanding and discussion.
- To challenge stereotypes.

- **Instructions:**
  - Round one: Learners are instructed to look at pictures without comments.
  - Round two: They are then encouraged to make comments and questions about the pictures.
  - Learners are encouraged to form pairs or small groups.
  - Then, they are encouraged to put together a collection of pictures which they think accurately reflects their culture.
  - Presentation of collages: small groups report to the whole group
  - Group discussion is carried out.
  - Exhibition of collages.

- Steps
  - Teacher's input: Exhibition of _(country's)_ culture:
    - Show a handful of pictures that give an overview of _(same country)_ [a country the group does not know]
    - Exhibition of _(the host country's)_ culture.
      - Use a projector to show the pictures. Alternatively, you can also provide printed photos, newspaper and magazine cuttings for the learners to choose from.
    - Encourage learners to make comments and questions about the pictures.

  - **Create a cultural image summary:**
    - Small groups (up to 4 learners) discuss and select images that accurately reflect their own culture.
      - For hands-on activities: Encourage learners to use paper, pens, crayons, etc.
  - **Group presentation and report:**
    - Each small group presents their collage to the whole class and reports on their picture selection and explains their rationale.
  - Follow-up discussion:
    - Discuss familiar stereotypes portrayed in the selected images.
    - Identify unexpected image choices and their reasons.
    - Compare the choices between natives and migrants/immigrants/refugees.
    - Discuss the difficulty of the image selection.
    - Moderated discussion with the whole group.
  - Exhibition of collages

- Language Focus:
- Active listening.
- Vocabulary development related to cultural aspects, stereotypes, and image descriptions.

Extension:
- Learners can further explore cultural themes by writing essays or reports based on their collage experience (adjust this task based on the level .
- Encourage learners to create digital versions of their collages and share them with other classes or online platforms to promote cultural exchange and understanding beyond the classroom.

This art-based activity helps educators to develop learners' cultural awareness and understanding. By guiding learners to analyse and discuss images that reflect cultural stereotypes and nuances, you will promote critical thinking and effective communication skills. Through collaborative group work and facilitated discussions, learners develop teamwork and empathy while deepening their appreciation for cultural diversity. Finally, remember to adapt these activities to the interests, language level and cultural background of your learners.

3. 4. Authentic tasks

Here is an authentic task for adult refugee and migrant learners to engage with in the classroom:
- **Task:** "My Journey" Timeline
  - **Objective:** practice storytelling, sequencing and using past tenses.
  - **Instructions:**
- Ask learners to create a timeline of their life journey. They should include important events, milestones and experiences.
- Encourage them to use both written descriptions and visual elements (drawings, photos or symbols).
- Remind them to focus on key moments related to their migration or refugee experience.

- **Steps:**
  - **Brainstorm:** Have learners brainstorm individually about their life events.
  - **Drafting:** In pairs or small groups, learners can share their stories and help each other organise the timeline.
  - **Presentation:** Each learner presents their timeline to the class and explains the significance of each event.
  - **Discussion:** Engage the class in a discussion about common themes, challenges and resilience.

- Language Focus:
  - Use of past tenses.
  - Vocabulary related to family and feelings.
- Extension:
  - Learners can use online tools or apps to create a digital version of their timeline.
  - Encourage them to interview each other to gather more details for their timelines.

Image 38. Source: Pexels/Credits: cottonbro

3.5 IBL

Questions that can be used in language lessons to promote learners' intercultural competence:
- *Family structures and roles:*
  - **Question:** what role do the elders play in the family in your country?
  - **Research:** Examine the traditional family roles in Moroccan vs. French families and discuss how they would influence daily life.

- *Cultural celebrations and gatherings:*
  - **Question:** what are the key elements of a Gambian and Cypriot wedding celebration?
  - **Research:** Explore the significance of wedding rituals in both Gambia and Cyprus.

- **Question:** How do the Spanish celebrate Christmas? What role does the "sobremesa" play in Spanish family gatherings?
- **Research:** Investigate Spanish holiday traditions and their cultural significance.

- *Challenge stereotypes:*
  - **Question:** what stereotypes are associated with Italian beachgoers?
  - **Investigate:** Analyse real-life behaviours on Italian beaches and discuss whether they match or contradict common stereotypes.

Again, remember to adapt these activities to the interests, language level and cultural background of your learners.

Image 39. Source: Pexels/Credits: israwmx

In closing, incorporating **real-life scenarios is essential in both PBL and authentic task activities.** These scenarios make learning relevant and practical, increase learner motivation and connect classroom activities to real-life applications. This approach empowers learners, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, by giving them the skills and confidence to navigate their new environment. **PBL,** with its comprehensive and **immersive projects**, facilitates language acquisition, cultural integration, critical thinking, and community engagement. It allows learners to engage in extended, collaborative projects that require continuous enquiry and application of knowledge.

Shorter activities, such as **authentic tasks** and/or **IBL**, also greatly enhance language learning. While **shorter in duration**, these activities provide meaningful, hands-on experiences that reflect the complexity of the real world and help develop collaboration, communication, and decision-making skills.

In summary, by combining PBL with these shorter, focused tasks, educators can create a well-rounded and enriching learning experience. Sustained **investment in teacher training and curriculum development is crucial to maximise the impact of these methods** and ensure better educational outcomes and social inclusion for marginalised refugee and migrant women.

IN A NUTSHELL

This unit explores the transformative potential of **Project-Based Learning (PBL)** for language acquisition, focusing on its integration into the foreign language classroom. Beginning with an overview of the importance of **the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills** in language teaching and learning. The unit highlights the importance of addressing the changing needs of marginalised migrant and refugee women in adult education. It emphasises the role of **language learning** in promoting **social integration and empowerment.**

 Furthermore, it emphasises the need to develop classroom activities and projects that reflect r**eal-life scenarios and promote meaningful communication** and cultural understanding. The unit includes examples of different types of **PBL projects and activities**. Finally, through the practical insights, case studies and hands-on activities provided in this unit, educators will be able to design and implement culturally relevant projects that improve learners' language skills and intercultural competence. To build on this unit, you should continue with **Unit 6 on "Peer-to-peer learning and mentoring programmes"**, which looks at the benefits of peer mentoring for migrant and refugee women. In addition, you should look for further reading and case studies on PBL and its application in the language classroom in the **extra resources section** of this unit.

To deepen your understanding, please complete the **self-assessment section**, which includes three multiple-choice questions to help you review and reinforce the key concepts covered. By following these steps, you will deepen your understanding and implementation of PBL and contribute to the empowerment and social inclusion of marginalised migrant and refugee women.
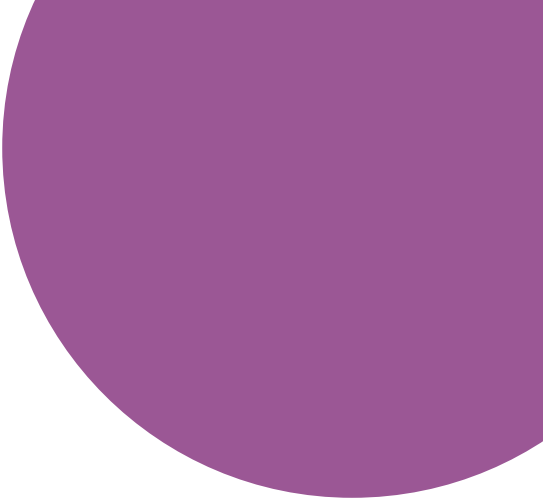
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How might the principles of project-based learning be adapted to better serve the unique needs and challenges faced by low or non-literate migrant and refugee women in language acquisition? What specific strategies or modifications could be implemented to ensure inclusivity, engagement, and meaningful learning experiences for this population?

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- **What is the primary focus of Project-Based Learning (PBL)?**
  - Memorization of facts and figures
  - Engaging learners in authentic, real-world projects
  - Passive consumption of information

- **What is the primary goal of Service-Learning Projects in education?**
  - To promote academic competition among learners
  - To provide opportunities for learners to apply their learning to real-world issues
  - To limit learners' exposure to community engagement

- **Which of the following best describes the role of authentic tasks in language learning?**
  - Authentic tasks focus on rote memorization of vocabulary.
  - Authentic tasks involve real-world scenarios and promote meaningful communication.
  - Authentic tasks prioritise grammar drills over practical language use.
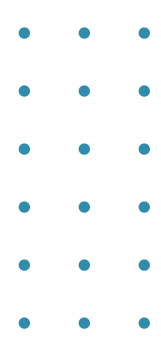
UNIT 6: PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING AND MENTORING PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

Migration, involving the movement of people from one place to another, can present a variety of challenges and problems, especially for migrant women. Migrant women are particularly vulnerable due to a confluence of factors that stem from their gender, migrant status, and often their socioeconomic background. They face social and cultural challenges like limited proficiency in the host country's language, which can hinder their ability to access services, understand their rights, and integrate into the community. Migrant women may face cultural isolation and difficulties in adapting to new social norms, further exacerbating their vulnerability. They often experience discrimination and racism, which can affect their ability to find employment, housing, and social acceptance. Migration can lead to separation of families, causing emotional and psychological stress of relocation. Differences in religion and cultural practices can lead to misunderstandings, prejudice, and social friction between migrant women and local communities.

Mentoring is crucial for migrant women for a variety of reasons, addressing the unique challenges they face and empowering them to succeed in their new environments. There are some key reasons why mentoring is particularly important for migrant women like:

- **Employment Opportunities:** Mentoring can help migrant women understand the job market, develop job search strategies, and improve their resume and interview skills.
- **Skill Development:** Mentoring can assist in identifying and developing necessary skills for career advancement, including language proficiency and technical skills.

- **Cultural Adaptation:** Mentoring can guide migrant women in understanding and adapting to the cultural norms and practices of their new environment and help them to build networks - professional or personal networks, which are crucial for social support and career opportunities.

In this unit, titled " Peer-to-peer learning and mentoring programs " we will present the benefits of the pear to pear learning and mentoring, their advantages and above all their usefulness for migrant women and refugees.

Practical insights, case studies and ideas for activities accompany each subtopic. By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Recognise the benefits of peer mentoring for migrant and refugee women.
- Understand the need of peer mentoring for improving learning and employment opportunities for migrant and refugee women.
- Understand why supportive networks through peer relationships are extremely important and how it works in practice.
- Recognize the goals and benefits of mentoring initiatives
- Understand and apply any of the mentoring initiatives

1. Recognising the Benefits of Peer Mentoring

Peer-to-peer mentoring, also known as peer mentoring, involves individuals at similar levels of experience or social status providing guidance, support, and knowledge to each other. This type of mentoring differs from traditional mentoring, where there is a significant gap in experience or seniority between the mentor and the mentee. Here are key aspects of peer-to-peer mentoring:

Equality and Reciprocity:
Both participants in peer mentoring are generally at similar stages in their careers, education, or life experiences. This creates a sense of equality and mutual respect. The relationship is reciprocal, with both parties contributing to and benefiting from the mentoring process.

Shared Experiences:
Peers often have similar challenges, experiences, and goals, making it easier for them to relate to and understand each other. This shared understanding can foster a more empathetic and supportive relationship.

Collaboration and Mutual Learning:

Peer mentors collaborate to solve problems, share knowledge, and learn from each other's experiences. This collaborative approach can lead to innovative solutions and a deeper understanding of various topics.

Support and Encouragement:

Peer mentoring provides emotional and moral support, helping individuals build confidence and resilience. Encouragement from peers can be highly motivating and can help individuals stay focused on their goals.

Skill Development:

Both parties in a peer mentoring relationship can develop critical skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and leadership. Peer mentoring can also help individuals improve their ability to give and receive feedback constructively.

The Alberta Mentoring Partnership defines mentoring as: "The presence of a caring individual(s) who provides a young person with support, advice, friendship, reinforcement and constructive role modelling over time." Some of main practical benefits of peer mentoring for migrant and refugee women/mentees can be short listed:

- To help with everyday issues, such as getting a doctor appointment or registering children in a kindergarten.
- To provide insight into community, work, and career opportunities.
- To offer practical tips on planning a successful job search for employment.
- To give advice and guidance on career thinking, transitioning to a new job, or setting up a business.
- To develop social and communication skills, along with understanding and problem-solving abilities.
- To encourage reflection and recognise and celebrate effective practices.
- To identify areas for development and improve self-confidence and self-esteem.
- To involve in social activities with host women, promoting inclusion, a sense of belonging, and integration into society as happy members.
- To provide ways and tips on language learning to overcome language barriers.
- To share knowledge and experience gained with migrant and refugee women.
- To provide moral and emotional support.
- To increase motivation and enhance peer recognition.
- To advise and offer guidance to those who have experienced trauma.
- To create informal networks to facilitate introductions and socialising.
- To stimulate knowledge among migrant and refugee women/mentees.

It is important to emphasise the role that peer mentoring has in promoting personal and professional development. Peer-to-peer mentoring is a powerful tool for **fostering growth**, **development**, and **support among individuals** with similar experiences and goals. By leveraging the unique strengths and perspectives of peers, this type of mentoring can create a collaborative and supportive environment conducive to mutual learning and empowerment and gives a new perspective on personal and professional realisation.

The role of peer mentoring and guidance should be that of **a teacher, supporter, wise counsellor, listener, coach, friend, reinforcement**, and **constructive role modelling**. Creating a safe and friendly environment where migrant and refugee women can ask questions about the culture, the differences, and their new life serves as a role model for displaying appropriate behaviour, attitude, and social skills. It helps to support them to have training to increase their skills and empower them to their fullest potential, start a job, and integrate into the community. The aim of mentoring is to ensure the development of a sense of belonging among participants by eliminating exclusion through social adaptation activities. Thus, mentoring helps migrant women to gain the habit of working efficiently and confidently. Mentors should build trusting and respectful relationships with migrant and refugee women, be open to their ideas, respect them and discuss topics on a professional basis. The peer mentors are required to treat the migrant and refugee women fairly and with sensitivity, dignity, respect and in a non-discriminatory manner. In conclusion, the main benefits of Peer-to-Peer Mentoring for migrant and refugee women are:

Accessibility and Affordability: Peer mentoring is often more accessible and affordable than traditional mentoring programs, making it easier to implement in various settings, such as schools, workplaces, and community organisations.

Sense of Community: Peer mentoring can help build a sense of community and belonging, especially in environments where individuals may feel isolated or disconnected.

Personal and Professional Growth: Participants can gain new perspectives, knowledge, and skills that contribute to their personal and professional development.

Empowerment: By taking on the role of both mentor and mentee, individuals can feel empowered and take more responsibility for their own growth and learning.

How is this achieved? Examples of Peer-to-Peer Mentoring.

Social environment: Migrant women and refugees at similar social levels may mentor each other to improve their habits, understand cultural differences, help each other with language barriers, and navigate their new social environment.

Workplace: The migrant women and refugees at similar career stages or education levels may mentor each other to share job-related knowledge and career advice and support professional development.

Community Organisations: Members of community groups may engage in peer mentoring to support personal development, community engagement, and social inclusion.

The non-profit organisation "Women Together"

Image 40. Woman. Source: Pixabey

Description: The "Women Together", launched a peer-to-peer mentoring program to support migrant and refugee women. The program aimed to help these women integrate into their new community, develop professional skills, and build social networks. The main objectives are:

Facilitate Social Integration: Help migrant and refugee women feel welcomed and integrated into the local community.

Enhance Employment Opportunities: Equip participants with job search skills, career advice, and networking opportunities.

Provide Emotional Support: Create a supportive environment where women can share experiences and challenges.

Promote Language Learning: Encourage participants to improve their proficiency in the local language.

Scenario: One notable success story is that of Fatima, a refugee from Syria, and her mentor Anna, a local businesswoman. When they first met, Fatima was struggling with the language barrier and finding employment in her field of education. Through their regular meetings, Anna helped Fatima improve her language skills, understand the job market, and prepare for interviews. Anna also introduced Fatima to her professional network. After six months, Fatima secured a job as a teaching assistant at a local school and started a part-time language course.

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Training on cultural sensitivity was crucial in helping mentors understand the unique challenges faced by migrant and refugee women.
- **Flexibility:** Allowing flexibility in meeting times and program activities helped accommodate the varied schedules of participants.
- **Continuous Support:** Ongoing support and monitoring were essential in addressing issues promptly and ensuring the success of the mentoring relationships.

Community Involvement: Engaging the broader community in the program helped build a more inclusive environment for the mentees.

Solution/Outcome: Social Integration: Fatima feeling more connected to the local community. This results in increased participation in community events and social activities. Many mentees formed lasting friendships with their mentors.

Employment Opportunities: in our case study like many others examples, several mentees found jobs or internships through the network and advice provided by their mentors.

Emotional Support: Mentees felt more supported and less isolated, knowing they had someone to turn to for advice and encouragement.Increased self-confidence and self-esteem among mentees.

Language Learning: Mentees showed significant improvement in their language skills. Mentors helped mentees practise conversational skills and understand local slang and idioms.

Key Takeaways: This case study shows how paired migrant or refugee women with local women who had similar interests can achieve success together. The regular meetings and communication between them helps to discuss challenges, to set goals, and to share experiences. Individual attention on topics such as job search strategies, resume writing, interview skills, and language improvement are crucial for the final goal.

Regular check-ins to discuss progress, address any issues and feedback sessions ensure the pairs were meeting their goals and make any necessary adjustments.
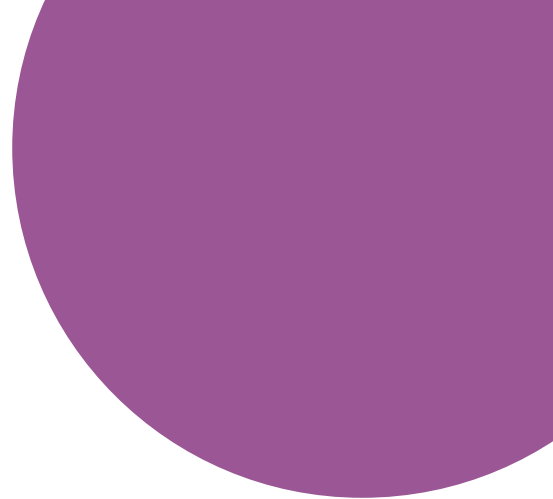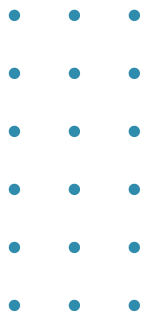
2. Building supportive networks through peer relationships

Supportive networks through peer relationships for migrants and refugees involve creating a community of individuals who provide each other with emotional, social, and practical support. These networks leverage the shared experiences and challenges of migrants and refugees to foster mutual assistance, understanding and empowerment. Connecting with peers with similar backgrounds and experiences can provide a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. Peers can offer encouragement during difficult times, helping individuals stay motivated and positive. These networks facilitate the formation of friendships and social connections, which are crucial for integration into a new community. Engaging in social activities and community events with peers helps migrants and refugees feel more connected to their new environment. Peers can share practical advice on everyday issues such as finding housing, accessing healthcare, and understanding public transportation. Networks provide information about available resources, such as legal aid, educational opportunities, job openings, and social services. Being part of a supportive network can empower migrants and refugees to take control of their own lives and decisions. Networks can collectively advocate for the rights and needs of migrants and refugees, giving them a stronger voice in the community. In practice, there are several main ways for a female migrant or refugee to become part of some network:

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for daily interactions and employment opportunities. These organisations provide basic literacy education for migrant women and refugees who may not have had access to formal education in their home countries. Usually, they cover topics such as understanding the local education system, supporting children's schooling, and continuing adult education. They are useful for assisting with immigration paperwork, understanding legal rights, and accessing legal representation if needed. Some organisations are profiled to assist women in navigating the local healthcare system, including finding doctors and understanding health insurance or to offer information sessions on topics like nutrition, maternal health, and preventive care.

Online Communities: These are social media groups, forums, and online platforms where migrants and refugees can connect, share information, and support each other virtually. Online communities support migrant and refugee women, offering accessible platforms for connection, information sharing, and empowerment. These virtual spaces can bridge geographical distances, reduce isolation, and provide resources that might not be available locally. Here's a detailed look at how online communities function and benefit migrant and refugee women. Online platforms can unite women from diverse backgrounds and experiences, enriching the community with various perspectives. There are forums and chat groups where women can share experiences, seek advice, and offer mutual support. Women can access support and resources anytime that suits their schedule, providing flexibility for those with busy or unpredictable lives. Continuous access to the community can offer ongoing support during different stages of the integration process. Online courses and webinars can help women develop new skills and improve their employability. Access to educational resources can suppor

lifelong learning and personal development. Online communities can often provide resources more efficiently than physical centres, reaching a larger audience without the need for extensive infrastructure.

Examples of Online Communities:

- **Facebook Groups:** Many Facebook groups cater specifically to migrant and refugee women, offering a platform for support, information sharing, and networking. Examples include groups focused on language learning, job search support, and cultural adaptation.

- **WhatsApp and Telegram Groups:** Messaging apps like WhatsApp and Telegram are popular for creating smaller, more intimate support groups. These groups can facilitate real-time communication and provide immediate support and advice.

- **Dedicated Online Platforms:** Websites like Refugee.info and Women for Women International offer tailored resources and support for migrant and refugee women. These platforms often provide multilingual content, legal information, and links to local services.

- **Virtual Mentorship Programs:** Organisations like Techfugees and Women Who Code offer virtual mentorship programs that connect migrant and refugee women with mentors in their field of interest. These programs provide professional guidance, networking opportunities, and career development support.

The Refugee Women's Network (RWN)

Image 41. A group of women takes part in an empowerment class in the centre of JRS Portugal in Lisbon (Photo: Kristof Holvenyi/JRS Europe). Source: official site of JRS/ international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees and others who are forcibly displaced

Description: Refugee Women's Network is a non-profit organisation built to inspire and equip refugee and immigrant women to become leaders in their homes, businesses, and communities. Refugee Women's Network (RWN) is a 501c3 organisations serving refugees resettled in the state of Georgia. RWN provides peer support groups where women can share their experiences, receive training, and participate in social activities. They offer workshops on entrepreneurship, health and wellness, and civic engagement.

Scenario: They offer social adjustment services, provided to help refugees assimilate into their new lives in the U.S. and to encourage self-reliance so that individuals and families can successfully navigate similar situations in the future. Social adjustment services include:

- Needs Assessment
- Work Plan Development and Management
- Integration and Emotional Counselling
- Home Management
- Emergency/Crisis Intervention
- Health and Mental Health Services

Leadership Training gives refugee and immigrant women the skills and confidence to be advocates for themselves, their families, and their communities. The goals of the Leadership Program are to:

- Strengthen women's abilities to be leaders in their homes, businesses, and communities;
- Improve the communities in which refugee and immigrant women live;
- Increase advocacy by the refugee and immigrant women and their community members;
- Increase their capacity to access community resources; and
- Build allies across ethnicities for civic participation and community building

With concerns related to stress-related issues such as depression and reproductive health problems, RWN created a program to train Health Promoters from multilingual refugee communities to be health navigators, helping newcomers adjust to a new health care system, new food, and new physical and mental health challenges. The CHP program aims to be responsive to the unique needs of each community creating multilingual resources and meet ups.

In response to the need to combat vaccine hesitancy and misinformation, RWN partners with the Clarkston Health Equity Coalition membership to provide culturally and linguistically responsive engagement for the refugee, immigrant and migrant (RIM) community. What began as an initiative to do language-specific workshops with healthcare professionals from different language groups to create accessible trustworthy information and Q&A with community members transformed into large health fairs and community vaccination events in schools and local institutions. RWN Community Health Promoters help with translation, communication, partnership, and outreach for their specific communities.

Theresa was born in Burma, one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. For most of the past 50 years, Burma was ruled by military dictatorship and embroiled in a bitter civil war. As part of an ethnic minority, Theresa's people were persecuted – victims of countless human right violations and entirely rejected by their government.

In 2009, Theresa's husband fled Burma, and Theresa followed a year later. Her husband found work at a chicken factory and encouraged Theresa to pursue a career. She began taking English language classes and received leadership and life-skills training from the Refugee Women's Network (RWN). By 2013, Theresa was working at RWN as a community outreach worker.

Since then, Theresa has earned a degree in accounting and now works at a local accounting firm, while still volunteering at RWN. This professional woman exemplifies the strength and resilience in every refugee RWN serves.

Solution/Outcome:
Skills: The organisation runs peer support groups focused on helping refugee women to gain the skills and confidence they need to rebuild their lives.
Social Bonds: The women formed strong, supportive friendships that helped reduce feelings of isolation.
Language Proficiency: Many members improved their language skills, aiding their integration and increasing their confidence.
Employment: Several women found jobs through connections made in the group and the skills learned in workshops.
Community Engagement: Group members became more active in their local community, participating in neighbourhood events and local decision-making processes.

Key Takeaways: This case study shows how important is the role of groups and non-governmental organisations in helping migrant women/refugees and how they organise various events in order to easily integrate women into society, reduce stress and support their physical and mental condition. Peer support groups for migrant and refugee women are valuable in providing emotional support, practical assistance, and opportunities for social and economic integration. These groups empower women by creating a sense of community, fostering mutual aid, and helping them navigate the complexities of their new lives. By participating in such networks, migrant and refugee women can build resilience, gain confidence, and achieve greater well-being and success in their new environments.

3. Establishing Structured Mentoring Initiatives

A mentoring initiative is a structured program designed to facilitate mentorship relationships between individuals, typically within an organisation or community. These initiatives aim to promote personal and professional development by pairing less experienced individuals (mentees) with more experienced ones (mentors). Here are the key components and goals of a mentoring initiative:

- **Program Design:** Establishing the goals, scope, and structure of the initiative, including defining what mentoring will look like within the specific context.
- **Mentor and Mentee Selection:** Identifying and recruiting suitable mentors and mentees. This might involve application processes, interviews, or matching algorithms.
- **Matching Process:** Pairing mentors and mentees based on compatibility, which could include career interests, skill needs, or personality fit.
- **Training and Support:** Providing training sessions for mentors and mentees to set expectations, teach mentoring skills, and outline responsibilities.

- **Resources and Tools:** Offering resources such as guides, templates, or digital platforms to facilitate communication and track progress.
- **Ongoing Support and Check-ins:** Regularly monitoring the relationships, offering support, and making adjustments as necessary.
- **Evaluation and Feedback:** Collecting feedback from participants to assess the effectiveness of the initiative and make improvements.

Goals of a Mentoring Initiative

- **Skill Development:** Helping mentees develop specific skills and knowledge relevant to their personal and professional growth.
- **Career Advancement:** Assisting mentees in navigating career paths, setting goals, and achieving career milestones.
- **Networking:** Expanding professional and personal networks for both mentors and mentees, fostering connections that can benefit their careers, life.
- **Personal Growth:** Encouraging personal development, confidence, and self-awareness in both mentors and mentees.
- **Organisational Benefits:** Enhancing employee satisfaction, retention, and performance by fostering a supportive culture.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Facilitating the transfer of institutional knowledge and best practices from experienced members to newer ones.

Types of Mentoring Initiatives

- **One-on-One Mentoring:** Traditional pairing of one mentor with one mentee.
- **Group Mentoring:** One mentor working with a small group of mentees.
- **Peer Mentoring:** Colleagues, friends, acquaintances at similar career or life stages mentoring each other.
- **Reverse Mentoring:** Younger or less experienced individuals mentoring older or more experienced ones, often in areas like technology or current trends.
- **E-Mentoring:** Mentoring relationships conducted primarily through digital communication tools.

Benefits

- **For Mentees:** Gain insights, skills, and confidence to advance in their careers and personal development.
- **For Mentors:** Opportunity to give back, enhance leadership skills, and gain fresh perspectives.
- **For Organisations:** Improved employee engagement, knowledge sharing, and a stronger organisational culture.

There are four pillars of Peer mentoring: trust, respect, expectation, and communication.

There must be a plan for both the mentor and mentee to follow along and some activities should be conducted. Structured mentoring can lead to developing basic skills, knowledge of legal rights and responsibilities at work, a social network, and overcoming known barriers such as family responsibilities, greater career success, such as promotions, raises, and increased opportunities for migrant and refugee women.

Trust is a fundamental element in mentoring initiatives for migrant women due to several unique challenges and barriers they face. Migrant and refugee women often come from diverse cultural backgrounds with different values, norms, and communication styles. Trust helps bridge these cultural differences, enabling open and honest communication. When trust is established, mentors and mentees can better understand and respect each other's perspectives and experiences. Language can be a significant obstacle for migrant women. Trust encourages them to express themselves without fear of judgement or misunderstanding. A trusting relationship allows mentors to be patient and supportive as mentees improve their language skills. Many migrant women may experience low self-esteem due to the challenges of adjusting to a new environment, finding employment, or facing discrimination. Trust in their mentors can provide the reassurance and encouragement they need to build confidence and pursue their goals. Mentors often act as gatekeepers to resources, opportunities, and networks. Trust ensures that migrant women feel comfortable seeking and accepting help, advice, and introductions to professional or community resources.

Respect and clear expectations are critical components of mentoring initiatives for migrant women because they contribute significantly to the success and effectiveness of the mentorship. Showing respect for their individuality fosters an inclusive environment where they feel valued and understood. Respectful interactions affirm the mentees' worth and potential, boosting their self-esteem and confidence. This empowerment is crucial for their personal and professional growth. Respectful communication ensures that both mentors and mentees feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgement or discrimination. This open dialogue is essential for addressing issues and providing effective support. Respect contributes to a safe space where migrant women can share their vulnerabilities and seek guidance. It reassures them that their experiences and perspectives are valued.

Defining clear expectations helps both mentors and mentees establish and work towards specific, measurable goals. This clarity ensures that the mentorship is focused and productive. Clear expectations outline the roles and responsibilities of both mentors and mentees, preventing misunderstandings and ensuring that both parties are on the same page. When expectations are

clear, both mentors and mentees are more likely to commit to the relationship and hold themselves accountable for their actions and progress. Establishing expectations allows for regular assessment of progress. Both mentors and mentees can review goals, evaluate achievements, and make necessary adjustments to stay on track.

The **3 C's of One-on-One Mentoring/Peer Mentoring**–communication, clarity, and commitment–are essential for an effective mentorship.

Communication:

Effective communication is a critical factor in establishing a productive and meaningful mentor-migrant and refugee women relationship. It allows both parties to gain a clear understanding of each other's needs, goals, and aspirations. It is crucial for mentors and mentees to communicate openly and honestly with each other. This will ensure that they can establish a strong foundation for their relationship and work towards achieving their mutual goals.

Clarity:

Clarity is crucial to establishing a successful mentoring program. It ensures that all parties involved have a clear understanding of the program's focus, problems, intent, goals, and expectations. By providing clear direction, mentors and migrant and refugee women can work together towards a common goal, ensuring that everyone is on the same page.

By having a clear roadmap, migrant and refugee women can identify their strengths and weaknesses and work with mentors to address them effectively.

By providing a common understanding of the intent, goals, and expectations, everyone can work together to achieve their desired outcomes and overcome barriers.

Furthermore, clarity helps to create a positive and productive environment. It minimises misunderstandings, reduces the chances of conflicts arising, and provides access to growth opportunities.

Commitment:

The success of peer mentoring heavily depends on the level of commitment demonstrated by both the mentor and migrant and refugee women. Commitment is crucial for achieving the core objectives and creating a fulfilling experience with concrete benefits.

To be successful, both the mentor and mentee must invest their time, effort, and energy. They must be dedicated to the project's goals and willing to work towards achieving them, even when faced with big challenges or setbacks.

A committed peer mentor provides support, guidance, and feedback to migrant and refugee women, while a committed mentee is receptive to feedback and willing to make the necessary effort to improve.

Overall, mentoring initiatives can be highly effective in fostering growth, building strong relationships, and enhancing the overall development of individuals.

Soroptimist International Turku, Finland

Image 42. Photo by Molly Mullen https://apr.jrs.net/en/story/international-womens-day-recognising-the-strength-and-capacity-of-refugee-women/

<u>Description:</u> Soroptimists are women in professions and businesses who work together at local, national, and international levels to educate, empower, and enable women and girls with the aim of improving their lives.

Since Soroptimist International was founded in 1921, Soroptimists have addressed women's issues in their communities and beyond. Today, they are a strong international network of some 70,000 women who are powerful and effective advocates of women's and girls' rights.

Today, Soroptimist International of Europe, the largest of the five Federations of Soroptimist International, comprises some 30,244 women across Europe, the Middle East and the Caribbean. The national Unions and Clubs of Soroptimist International of Europe initiate, support, finance and implement well over 4,000 projects for millions of euros annually. Their members work in their communities and beyond to provide concrete and practical help to women and girls.

<u>Scenario:</u> Six SI Turku members mentored six highly educated migrant women in southwest Finland in Spring-Summer 2020. They worked in pairs: two mentors and two mentees. The aim was to support international talents' careers and job-seeking skills in Finland and implement the Soroptimist mentoring programme.

This project was organised in cooperation with Turku University of Applied Sciences MESH project https://mesh.turkuamk.fi/. The project lasted six months and there were 8-10 meetings, including training at the beginning and networking events.

The aim of the MESH project (ESF-funded, 2019-2021) is to support individuals with an immigrant background, in other words, international talents, in establishing themselves in the Finnish labour market.

Image 43. Hang Vo. Source: LinkdIn.

Hang Vo, from Vietnam, testifies: "As an international student in Finland, during these 2 years, I have quite enjoyed my life. I love to learn innovative knowledge, get to know more people, and explore new cultures. – However, after graduation, I felt a bit stressed with the current situation. I must accept that finding a job is not easy. This mentoring program helped me to improve my confidence and to stay optimistic for the future. I have met many positive people, and they have motivated me a lot in my job-seeking journey."

Solution/Outcome: Great experience for mentors and mentees
The mentees were job seekers at the beginning of their careers in Finland. They were grateful for the support and sharing of knowledge, competencies, and networks of the Soroptimist sisters. For the sisters, it allowed them to do hands-on work toward women's empowerment. As one of them tells us," It was wonderful to support international talents and to get to know interesting people!"

Key Takeaways: Finding a job for migrant women is crucial for several reasons, impacting both their individual lives and the broader community. Employment provides migrant women with a stable income, helping them support themselves and their families. This financial independence is essential for improving their living standards and ensuring economic stability. Gainful employment can lift migrant women and their families out of poverty, providing them with the means to access better housing, education, and healthcare. Employment facilitates social integration by helping migrant women connect with others in the community, build social networks, and participate actively in local activities. Working in diverse environments promotes cultural exchange and mutual understanding, helping to break down stereotypes and prejudices.

IN A NUTSHELL

This unit will show the participants the benefits of mentoring for mentors and mentees and how important it is for migrant women and refugees to find their mentor in one way or another to easily integrate into the new environment. Finding a job is a critical step for migrant women to achieve financial independence, personal empowerment, and social integration. It benefits not only the women themselves but also their families, communities, and the broader economy. Ensuring access to employment opportunities for migrant women is essential for peer-to-peer mentoring programs and fostering inclusive and equitable societies.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- What are the main obstacles for migrant and refugee women in finding a mentor or a mentoring program?
- What kind of mentoring promotion actions are needed so that more women can understand its benefits?
- How can society be more open and informed about the problems of migrant women?

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- 1What should be included in the main benefits of mentoring?
  - Participants can gain new perspectives, knowledge, and skills
  - Establishing a stronger relationship with the family.
  - Help to build a sense of community and belonging

- Which online communication channel is unsuitable for Online community participation?
  - Facebook Groups
  - TikTok
  - WhatsApp and Telegram Groups

- What are the four main pillars of Peer mentoring?
  - Trust, respect, expectation, and communication
  - Listening, empathy, friendship, acquaintance
  - Attention, trust, mutual help, advice

UNIT 7: UNDERSTANDING COMMON EU VALUES THROUGH STORYTELLING

INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will present a comprehensive overview of core European values laid out in article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

In the early 2000s, Parliament's representatives played a leading role in drawing up the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. For the first time, MEPs joined forces with members of national parliaments, representatives of Heads of State and of Government and the European Commission to draw up a constitutional-style text.

The result of these discussions was a charter containing 54 Articles grouped into seven Chapters. The first six Chapters enumerate all the common values and rights [human dignity, fundamental freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizenship and justice, democracy, and the rule of law]; while the last Chapter contains four horizontal clauses that govern its interpretation and application.
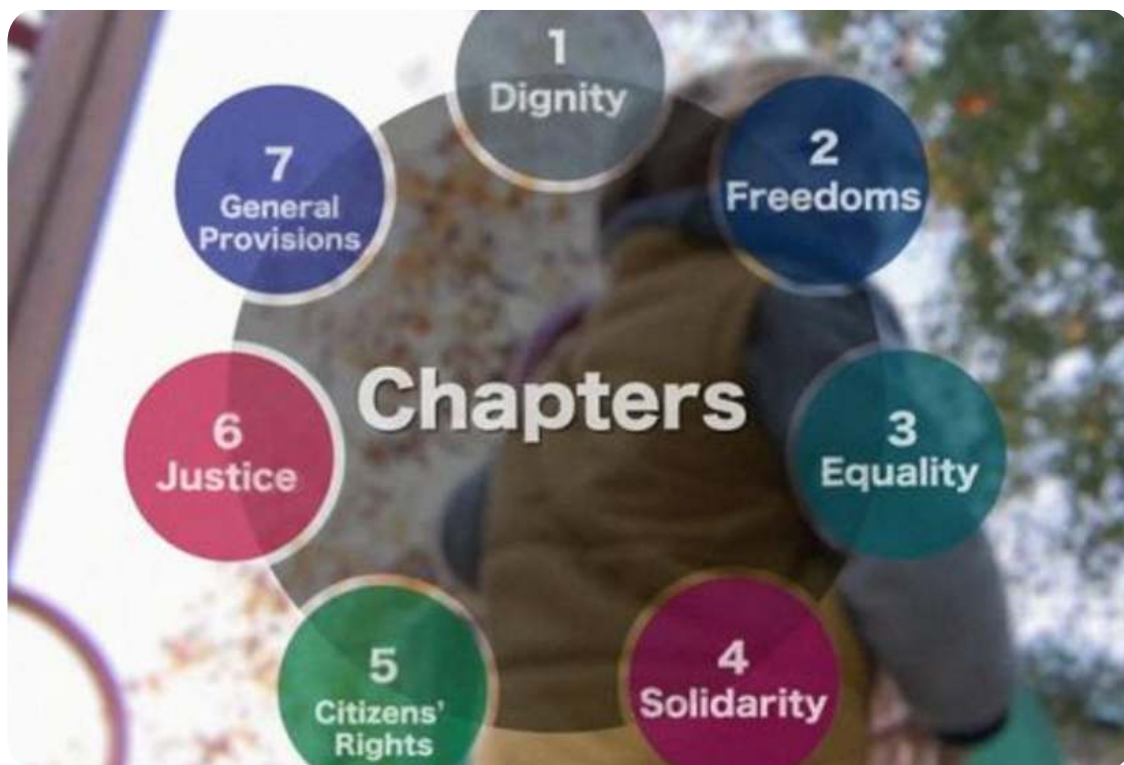
Image 44. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
(@EUAgencyFRA – Agency for Fundamental Rights)

The content of the rights are based on the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter, the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (hereinafter 'CJEU'), Member States Constitutional traditions and pre-existing provisions of European Union law.

While the EU Charter mostly reaffirms rights that already existed in the EU legal order, it also includes some innovative rights that are not directly included in the European Convention on Human Rights. These provisions can assist in the interpretation of the EU asylum acquis. For instance, it includes a right to dignity, the right to asylum, the prohibition of non-refoulement and the right to good administration. It now includes in primary EU law the rights of the child and has a more expansive provision on the right to an effective remedy and a fair trial than its ECHR counterparts. These rights can increase the protection afforded to those in need of protection.

In this unit, we will explore European values identified as:
- Human Dignity;
- Freedoms;
- Equality;
- Solidarity;
- Citizen's Rights;
- Justice.

Through the stories of Emeritha, Shiraz, Tetiana and his son Oleksii, Anzhelika and her daughter Valeria, Agustina and Gobado we will discover how these values guided them in their migrant life.

As European citizens, we benefit from basic things that we often take for granted. These include a region at peace, being part of one of the world's biggest economies and the freedom to live, study, work, and travel in other EU countries. We also benefit from less obvious advantages – everyday things that make a real difference as we can see in the stories we collected. European society is built on the principle that inclusive integration requires efforts from both the person and the host community.

In this context, Just Her projects try to help to knock down the barriers that can hinder participation and inclusion of people with a migrant background by the knowledge and the sharing of EU common values.

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:
- Identify the fundamental values the EU is built upon
- Realise how migrant women may benefit from their existence and application

1. Understanding Common EU values through storytelling

1.1 Exploring European values through narratives: DIGNITY

Image 45. Fundamental Rights Charter: Dignity (@EUAgencyFRA – Agency for Fundamental Rights)

Chapter 1 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is on Dignity. Articles 1-5 protect the following rights:

- **human dignity**
- **right to life**
- **right to the integrity of the person**
- **prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**
- **prohibition of slavery and forced labour**

Chapter 1 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, entitled "Dignity," enshrines the foundational principles crucial to protecting the inherent dignity of every individual within the European Union. This chapter comprises Articles 1 to 5, which collectively establish the boundaries and commitments necessary to uphold basic human rights at the highest standard. These articles specifically safeguard:

1. Human Dignity (Article 1):

Human dignity is a cornerstone value of the EU Charter and serves as the foundational principle from which all other rights derive. It establishes that every individual is to be treated with respect and recognition of their intrinsic value as a human being. This principle is a bulwark against practices that would degrade an individual's sense of self-worth or reduce them to a means to an end.

.2. Right to Life (Article 2):

The right to life is protected under Article 2, asserting that every person has the fundamental right not to be deprived of life arbitrarily. This extends to protections against practices such as the death penalty and euthanasia, ensuring that the sanctity of life is preserved under all circumstances governed by law.

3. Right to the Integrity of the Person (Article 3):

This article protects both the mental and physical integrity of an individual. It encompasses rights against genetic manipulation, making it clear that personal consent is paramount for any medical or scientific procedure. This right ensures individuals are safeguarded against abuses such as medical experiments without consent, and coercive sterilisation.

4. Prohibition of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Article 4):

Article 4 emphatically prohibits torture and any form of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This is reflective of a commitment to uphold the physical and mental integrity of individuals under any circumstances, including during detention or imprisonment. This prohibition is absolute, underlining the EU's commitment to humane treatment across all member states.

5. Prohibition of Slavery and Forced Labour (Article 5):

The final article within this chapter addresses the prohibition of slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour. This article ensures that all forms of modern slavery and human trafficking are recognised and combatted, promoting fair working conditions and freedom from coercion in employment.

The first Chapter, '**Dignity**,' guarantees the right to life and prohibits torture, slavery, the death penalty, eugenic practices, and human cloning.

Emeritha was still a child when she left Rwanda with her family to go to Belgium shortly after the 1994 Genocide.

Image 46. On her latest visit to Rwanda, Emeritha worked in the paediatric ward at the Ndera Neuropsychiatric Teaching Hospital. (@ IOM 2023/ Robert Kovacs)

Emeritha always dreamed of returning home to help fellow Rwandans struggling with mental health and gave them a life in dignity.

Description: "Because we were leaving a situation of war and trauma in Rwanda, we felt like we were going to a great place, even though we did not know the language or anyone in Belgium. But as you grow older, you start to think about where you came from, how you left, and feel like there is something missing."

Scenario: Emeritha's life changed completely when she was just 10 years old. Shortly after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, her family moved to Belgium.
"We just got up and left, we didn't even get to say goodbye to our friends."
While it was challenging moving at a young age, things in Belgium were going well.
"It wasn't all bad, I grew up well, I ate well, slept well and was able to study."

Emeritha diligently pursued her studies and went to nursing school where she specialized in mental health and psychiatry. She delved deeper into her studies further specializing in ethno-psychiatry; a psychiatry approach aimed at understanding the ethnic and cultural dimensions of mental health disorders.

"After I finished school and started working in Belgium, I still felt like there was something missing. I didn't feel at home, so I decided that one way or another I must go back home."

Solution/ Outcome: Emeritha travelled from Belgium to Senegal, Mali, Guinea, and Tanzania, where she was able to provide mental health and psychosocial support to people in need during a few short trips. After some time, she came across a programme seeking to engage Rwandan diaspora in Europe working in the health sector. She applied and came back to Rwanda. On her third visit, she came across a seven-year-old girl who had been sexually assaulted.

"Children communicate differently, so what I did was to play games with her, draw with her or any activity that allowed me to collect bits of information. After this, she opened and told us how she was mistreated at home. When the doctor returned, we held a discussion with the doctor and the child's family to come up with a plan to help her recover."

Being able to help this girl gave Emeritha confidence and reassured her she was back home where she belonged.

Key Takeaways: Violence against women, including domestic violence is a crime in Europe. Education about respect for women might prevent sexual and gender-based violence. It is very important that women who have become victims of (sexual) violence are able to report the crime career and give them back a life in dignity.

Emeritha's commitment to returning home to assist her fellow Rwandans, especially in the paediatric ward of the Ndera Neuropsychiatric Teaching Hospital, exemplifies the upholding of human dignity. By choosing to aid those struggling with mental health issues, Emeritha reinforces the value of each individual's dignity, especially vulnerable populations like children who have faced abuse.

Emeritha's life and career vividly bring to life the principles encapsulated in Chapter 1 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Her actions demonstrate the practical application of these rights, showing how individual commitment can reflect broader human rights standards. Through her dedication to mental health and the wellbeing of her patients, Emeritha not only upholds but also advances the cause of dignity, integrity, and life, echoing the fundamental values championed by the EU Charter.

1.2. Exploring European values through narratives: FREEDOMS

Chapter 2 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is on Freedoms. Articles 6-19 protect, inter alia, the following rights:

- right to liberty and security
- respect for private and family life
- protection of personal data
- freedom of expression and information
- right to education

Image 47. Fundamental Rights Charter: Freedoms (@EUAgencyFRA – Agency for Fundamental Rights)

The second Chapter, '**Freedoms**,' covers amongst others: the right to liberty and security, respect for private and family life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and information and personal integrity, privacy, and the right to asylum.

1. Right to Liberty and Security (Article 6):
This fundamental right guarantees that every individual within the EU has the right to personal liberty and security. This protection ensures freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, laying the foundation for a secure and predictable legal environment where individuals can exercise their other freedoms confidently.

2. Respect for Private and Family Life (Article 7):
Article 7 safeguards the privacy of individuals and their families, underscoring the importance of protecting personal space and familial bonds from undue interference. This right extends to the sanctity of the home and the confidentiality of communications, critical for fostering personal relationships and ensuring personal autonomy in the private sphere.

3. Protection of Personal Data (Article 8):
In an age where data is a powerful currency, Article 8 of the Charter guarantees the right to the protection of personal data. This right is not only pivotal in protecting individuals from unauthorized use of their data but also mandates that data processing be fair, transparent, and with legitimate purposes, thereby fostering trust in digital interactions.

4. Freedom of Expression and Information (Article 11):

This article enshrines the right to express opinions freely and to receive and impart information without interference from public authorities, irrespective of borders. This freedom is essential for democracy, enabling open debate, criticism of governments, and the dissemination of ideas. Additionally, the pluralism of the media is protected, ensuring diverse viewpoints are available in the public discourse.

5. Right to Education (Article 14):

Education is recognised as a fundamental right accessible to all, encompassing the right to free compulsory education and the availability of vocational and continuing training. This right empowers individuals by providing the skills and knowledge necessary to participate fully in society and to pursue personal development continuously.

Finding Freedom to be herself: Shiraz's Odyssey to Türkiye and beyond.

Image 48. The scars on Shiraz's arms silently reveal her struggle to find acceptance.
(@IOM/Olga Borzenkova)

Shiraz has faced family rejection, violence and discrimination due to her gender identity, but despite these challenges continues to dream of a new life abroad.

Description: Originally from Alexandria, Egypt, Shiraz knew she was different from an early age. "I first identified as a girl when I was a child. I yearned to go to school for girls," says Shiraz.

Scenario: Her conservative family, unable to comprehend her identity, responded with violence. Later, in Shiraz's teenage years, they subjected her to painful electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and convinced her that her identity was a mental disorder. "After a couple of sessions, I couldn't take it anymore and attempted suicide. I jumped from the third floor."

Shiraz miraculously survived but continued to endure unimaginable torment, failing to receive necessary support. The difference between her physical appearance and the one on her official identity documents exacerbated her struggle. She attempted to change her gender legally but failed to complete the process.

Solution/ Outcome: After facing threats of violence and rejection from her family, she sought support from an NGO helping people like her find safety abroad – and so began her journey to Türkiye. Shiraz first moved to Istanbul, then to Mersin in the south. Life was also not easy at the beginning. "I was depressed," she admits.

She was referred by a local organization to the Mersin Migrant Municipal and Community Centre, run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, which helps those in need – from psychosocial support to legal counselling and facilitation of essential paperwork.

Over the past two years, the Centre has become a beacon of hope for Shiraz. She received much-needed psychological support and help with accommodation. The Centre further provided her translation support to obtain identity documents and helped her enrol in a university. "I now study at the Programming Faculty, but I want to switch to medicine. I need to improve my Turkish for that," she explains.

Key Takeaways: Shiraz is so much more than her status as a migrant. She is ambitious. She is transgender. She enjoys belly dancing, studies programming, and dreams of becoming a heart surgeon.

"I want to become a heart surgeon, as it is our hearts that often hurt. I want to help people."

Shiraz is currently waiting to be resettled to a third country in Europe and she is eager to start a new chapter in a country where she will be free to pursue her dreams, "like every girl should."

Proficient in Arabic, German, English, French and Spanish, she is confident in her ability to settle in her permanent home in EU soon and be free to express herself as guaranteed from the EU Charter of Human Rights.

Despite her challenges, Shiraz is ambitious and strives to achieve her dream of becoming a heart surgeon.

Organizations and community centres play a crucial role in providing necessary support to migrants and individuals facing discrimination. Shiraz's story highlights the importance of access to education and support in learning the local language for better integration.

Shiraz is optimistic about resettling in Europe where she can fully express herself and pursue her dreams, reflecting the freedoms guaranteed by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Shiraz's journey underscores the importance of the rights protected under Chapter 2 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Her story is a testament to the resilience of individuals and the critical role of supportive frameworks in helping them rebuild their lives and pursue their dreams.

1.3. Exploring European values through narratives: EQUALITY

Chapter 3 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is on Equality. Articles 20-26 protect the following rights:

- equality before the law
- non-discrimination
- cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity
- equality between women and men
- the rights of the child
- the rights of the elderly
- integration of persons with disabilities

Image 49. Fundamental Rights Charter: Equality (@EUAgencyFRA – Agency for Fundamental Rights)

The third Chapter, '**Equality**,' contains the right to equality before the law, the prohibition of all discrimination, including on the basis of sex, race, ethnic or social origin and political or any other opinion. This title also includes the rights of the child and the rights of the elderly.

Chapter 3 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, titled "Equality," encapsulates the commitment of the European Union to fostering an inclusive society where equality prevails across various dimensions. This chapter, covered by Articles 20 to 26, addresses a broad spectrum of equality issues, from general legal equality to specific protections for diverse groups within the EU. The rights enshrined include:

1. Equality Before the Law (Article 20):
This right establishes that all individuals are equal under the law. This principle is the bedrock of fair treatment in the legal system, ensuring that every person, regardless of their status, receives the same legal protections and is subject to the same legal obligations.

2. Non-discrimination (Article 21):
Article 21 prohibits discrimination on any grounds such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age, or sexual orientation. This broad spectrum coverage is crucial for building a society that values diversity and inclusivity.

3. Cultural, Religious, and Linguistic Diversity (Article 22):

This article recognises the richness of the EU's cultural fabric and the importance of preserving and respecting the diverse cultural, religious, and linguistic traditions of its peoples. It ensures that these differences are seen as a strength rather than a barrier to unity.

4. Equality Between Women and Men (Article 23):

Aiming for gender equality, this article mandates equality between women and men in all areas of life, including employment, work, and pay. It supports measures that provide specific advantages to promote full equality in practice, thus addressing historical disparities.

5. The Rights of the Child (Article 24):

This article prioritises the well-being and rights of children, acknowledging their need for protection and care. It asserts that children have the right to express their views freely and that these views should be considered in matters affecting them, in accordance with their age and maturity.

6. The Rights of the Elderly (Article 25):

Recognising the contributions and needs of older adults, this right ensures that the elderly are able to lead lives of dignity and independence and participate actively in social and cultural life, thus safeguarding their rights and well-being.

7. Integration of Persons with Disabilities (Article 26):

This article stresses the importance of integrating persons with disabilities into society. It mandates that they should have access to measures designed to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration, and participation in the life of the community.

Painting through darkness: Oleksii's inspirational triumph.

Image 50. Oleksii and his parents at Mudita foundation in Kraków in front of one of his painting. (@IOM / Alexey Shivrin)

Oleksii has overcome challenges related to both disability and displacement. Through his artwork, he proves that talent and determination know no bounds.

Description: Oleksii, his parents and younger brother came to Poland in March 2022 from Kyiv, just after the start of the full-scale war in Ukraine. Eleven-year-old Oleksii suffers from Stargardt disease, a rare eye condition that causes vision loss in children and adults. Despite it being largely genetic, neither of his parents have the disease.

When her son was first diagnosed, Tetiana was devastated and felt helpless. "I could not believe it or live with it. His vision kept getting worse and there was no clear prognosis or treatment. It was like a nightmare," she says. Today he retains only five per cent of his central vision, but he has full peripheral vision. "When I look at you, I can not see you, but I can see what is around me," Oleksii explains.

Scenario: Tetiana and her husband found jobs in the IT sector and Oleksii attends a Polish school. He adapted quickly to the new environment and learned Polish in just under three months.
"I like living in Poland. I play with the kids and I like my school here," he says.

Oleksii started painting when he was seven, just after being diagnosed with the disease. He discovered his passion for painting using a spatula instead of a brush. In Ukraine, he found a teacher who taught him the basics and ever since, he has not stopped painting.

Solution/ Outcome: Despite the difficulties he faces with his vision, Oleksii is very active. "I used to dance a lot when I lived in Ukraine. Now I enjoy painting, playing chess or the guitar, and listening to audiobooks," he says. During Summer, he used to paint in front of his apartment in Warsaw but now he is practicing his art at a multicultural centre in Prague, where a dozen of his paintings has been on display for several weeks. Fourteen of his paintings have also been on display at Mudita, a Polish foundation supporting children with disabilities and their family.

Key Takeaways: Tetiana hopes Oleksii can be an inspiration to other children, not only in Poland but also around the world. "We have plans for more exhibitions in the future," she adds. Her advice to other parents whose children has Stargardt disease or other disabilities is not to dwell on the disease and look for organizations supporting in the process of integration. "Recently, he even took part in paralympic games for juniors in swimming and won first place," says his mother with pride.

Tetiana is a firm believer in finding strength through adversity and the hardships that life may bring. "Do everything you can for your child in every moment. Live your life happily and never give up. Love your child, trust them, and always support them to develop their talents." While the EU Charter mostly reaffirms rights which already existed in the EU legal order, it also includes some innovative rights that are not directly included in the European Convention on Human Rights: it now includes in primary EU law the rights of the children to protection and care as is necessary for their well-being. The role of community centers and organizations in facilitating integration and development for individuals with disabilities is crucial.

Oleksii's journey showcases the fundamental principles of equality and non-discrimination enshrined in Chapter 3 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. His achievements and the support he received reflect the Charter's commitment to ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background or abilities, has the opportunity to live a fulfilling and dignified life.

Chapter 4 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is on Solidarity. Articles 27-38 protect, inter alia, the following rights:

- fair and just working conditions
- prohibition of child labour and protection of young people at work
- family and professional life
- social security and social assistance
- health care
- environmental protection

Image 51. Fundamental Rights Charter: Solidarity (@EUAgencyFRA – Agency for Fundamental Rights)

The fourth Chapter, '**Solidarity**' covers social and workers' rights including the right to fair working conditions, protection against unjustified dismissal, and access to health care, social and housing assistance.

1. Fair and Just Working Conditions (Article 31):
This article ensures that every worker has the right to safe and dignified working conditions. It includes provisions for reasonable working hours, rest periods, and annual leave, aiming to balance work demands with personal health and well-being. These standards are crucial for protecting workers from exploitation and for promoting a healthy work-life balance.

2. Prohibition of Child Labour and Protection of Young People at Work (Article 32):

This right strongly opposes child labour and ensures that young people who work do so in conditions that are suitable for their age. It safeguards them from economic exploitation and any work likely to harm their education, health, or development.

This article underpins the EU's commitment to protecting its youngest citizens, ensuring that their work experiences are safe and do not hinder their development.

3. Family and Professional Life (Article 33):

Article 33 acknowledges the importance of balancing family and professional life. It supports the protection against dismissal for reasons connected with maternity and provides for paid maternity and parental leave. This right facilitates the integration of family life with professional obligations, reflecting a modern understanding of work-life balance.

4. Social Security and Social Assistance (Article 34):

This article provides the right to access social security benefits and social services that protect citizens in cases of maternity, illness, industrial accidents, dependency, old age, and loss of employment. It underscores the role of social security and assistance in preventing and combating social exclusion and poverty, ensuring a decent existence for all.

5. Health Care (Article 35):

Ensuring access to preventive health care and medical treatment, this right emphasizes the EU's priority of maintaining a high level of public health. It guarantees that health policies provide comprehensive care and that all individuals can access necessary medical services, thus supporting the overall well-being of the population.

6. Environmental Protection (Article 37):

This article commits to a high level of environmental protection and the improvement of environmental quality, integrating these priorities into the policies of the Union. It recognises the need for sustainable development and aims to ensure that environmental considerations are key components of all Union policies.

When the small town of Borodyanka in Ukraine was attacked, Anzhelika and her daughter knew they had to leave as soon as possible. Ten days after first crossing the border with Slovakia, Anzhelika was already working.

Image 52. "Work has kept us from having negative thoughts and reflecting too much about everything we have been through." – Anzhelika. (@IOM/Dušana Štecová)

Even though she is happy to have found a temporary home in Slovakia, the only thing Anzhelika longs for is peace. "Some people may think that it is easy for us here, but it is not. I am here, but my heart is where the bombs are."

Description: Before the war started in Ukraine, Anzhelika and her two daughters, Ruslanka (20) and Valeria (22), had a peaceful life in Borodyanka, in Bucha Raion of Kyiv province. The 48-year-old mother worked at a jewellery store and spent her days daydreaming about her daughters' weddings and future grandchildren – until the 24th of February.

Scenario: When the small town of Borodyanka was attacked, Anzhelika and her daughter Valeria took shelter in a basement nearby for several days until the bombings stopped. Only thinking about the traumatizing events, she endured while in hiding is enough to make her eyes well up.

When the bombings were at their peak, the residents communicated via online chats where they sent a daily plus sign (+) to confirm that they were still alive. As the days went by, there were fewer and fewer plus signs being shared. Anzhelika knew she had to leave Borodyanka as soon as possible to make sure that her daughter would survive.

They left Borodyanka with a group of twenty-one people, including several babies. They wanted to get as far as possible from the bombings. Once they got to Uzhhorod, they realized that they had no place to stay, until a monastery offered to host them. Anzhelika had no idea what to do next or where she should go. A monk explained to her where the borders were and where she could go next. "My daughter advised me to go to Slovakia to be close to home in case we were able to go back in the near future," she recalls. "I agreed, thinking we wouldn't be away for too long."

Solution/ Outcome: Anzhelika and her daughter walked for ten kilometres to reach Ukraine's border with Slovakia. "We were part of a stream of people walking shoulder to shoulder with bags, pets, and belongings – everything we had. After we finally crossed the border, we felt relieved. The volunteers gave us food and comfort." Ten days after first crossing the border with Slovakia, Anzhelika was already working on a farm close to Košice. "Work has kept us from having negative thoughts and reflecting too much about everything we have been through. There is only one land, whether it is in Slovakia or in Ukraine," Anzhelika says.

Key Takeaways: Anzhelika is grateful for the interactions that she has had with the Slovak people and the solidarity received; her only obstacle is now the language. To be able to improve the language skills of all those fleeing Ukraine and further improve their integration and employment opportunities, Anzhelika regularly attends language classes.

She is protected by "non-refoulement" right, a cornerstone of international human rights law, which prohibits states from removing people from their jurisdiction to a place where they would be at risk of serious human rights violations, including persecution, torture, ill-treatment, or other fundamental rights violations.

Anzhelika's story is a powerful example of the principles of solidarity enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Her journey underscores the importance of fair working conditions, social support, and the protection of human rights in providing a safe and dignified life for those fleeing conflict. The solidarity and support from the Slovak people, coupled with Anzhelika's resilience and determination, illustrate the profound impact of community and legal frameworks in fostering integration and hope for a better future.

Chapter 5 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is on Citizens' Rights. Articles 41-46 protect, inter alia, the following rights:

- right to good administration
- right of access to documents
- right to petition
- freedom of movement and of residence
- diplomatic and consular protection

Image 53. Fundamental Rights Charter: Citizen's Rights (@EUAgencyFRA – Agency for Fundamental Rights)

The fifth Chapter, '**Citizens Rights**' includes several administrative rights such as the right to good administration and the right of access to documents.

1. Right to Good Administration (Article 41):
This right guarantees that every person has the right to have their affairs handled impartially, fairly, and within a reasonable time by the EU's institutions and bodies. It includes the right to be heard before any decision that would affect them adversely is taken, the right to access relevant files, and the obligation of the administration to provide reasons for its decisions. This ensures transparency and accountability in EU administrative processes.

2. Right of Access to Documents (Article 42):

Article 42 affirms that any EU citizen, as well as any natural or legal person residing or having a registered office in a Member State, has the right to access documents of the European Parliament, the Council, and the Commission. This accessibility fosters transparency and allows citizens to be more informed about and engaged with the workings of the EU.

3. Right to Petition (Article 44):

This right enables any EU citizen, and any natural or legal person residing or having its registered office in a Member State, to petition the European Parliament concerning issues within the EU's fields of activity. This is a vital tool for direct democracy, allowing individuals to express concerns, propose changes, or seek redress directly at the heart of EU governance.

4. Freedom of Movement and of Residence (Article 45):

Article 45 is one of the cornerstone freedoms of EU citizenship, allowing every EU citizen to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. This right is fundamental to the EU's internal market and promotes personal and professional mobility across the Union, enhancing the economic, social, and cultural integration of its citizens.

5. Diplomatic and Consular Protection (Article 46):

This article ensures that every EU citizen can enjoy protection by the diplomatic or consular authorities of any Member State when in a third country where their own Member State is not represented. This provides a safety net for EU citizens abroad, ensuring they receive necessary support in times of need, akin to the protection offered by their own nation.

At the beginning of 2021, in the midst of the pandemic, Agustina tirelessly travelled through various instances of the public administration in order to present the papers to apply for a Master's Degree in Spain.

Image 54. Agustina's goal at this moment is to get a job, continue studying and grow as a person in Spain. (@IOM/Monica Chiriac)

Agustina left her family behind with dreams for herself and the next generation. Argentina will always be home, but Spain offered her the future she had always hoped for.

Description: Sensing a sharp decline in Argentina's economic and political situation, Agustina decided she had no choice but to leave if she ever wanted to build a better future for herself. "My grandparents' generation was able to afford a house, but those days are long gone," Agustina explains. "Now people worry if they will make rent."

Scenario: At the beginning of 2021, in the midst of the pandemic, Agustina was tirelessly chasing down the public administration to file paperwork to apply for a Master in Public Services and Social Policies in Salamanca, Spain.

Solution/ Outcome: Upon her arrival in Spain, the adaptation process turned out to be smoother than expected as most of her colleagues were studying social policies and she felt they were more open-minded about migrants.

Agustina considers herself to be a fierce activist for women's rights and has already worked with several non-profit organizations. In her province, women are more vulnerable to gender-based violence and abortion recently became illegal. Passionate about migration, she has helped migrant women write their resumes and has raised awareness among teenagers about discrimination and hate speech.

Key Takeaways: "Everyone goes through some sort of challenge when they decide to migrate – navigating the bureaucratic process during the pandemic was my cross to bear," she laughs. "Sometimes I contemplate going back home," Agustina confesses, "but then I hear about the troubles that my friends go through." Many Argentinian youth never get to finish their degree and must find a job at an early age, she explains. "This is not the kind of future that I want for myself or my future family," she says.

Agustina's experience underscores the challenges of dealing with public administration, especially during a global pandemic, highlighting the importance of the right to good administration. Agustina's activism for women's rights and support for migrant women emphasizes the role of community engagement and advocacy in promoting social justice and equality.

Agustina's narrative highlights the practical application of the citizens' rights protected under Chapter 5 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Her journey reflects the importance of good administration, transparency, freedom of movement, and community support in achieving personal aspirations and contributing to societal progress. Her story serves as an inspiration for other migrants and underscores the value of the EU's commitment to protecting and promoting citizens' rights.

Chapter 6 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is on justice. Articles 47-50 in this chapter protect the following rights:

- right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial
- presumption of innocence and right of defence
- principles of legality and proportionality of criminal offences and penalties
- right not to be tried or punished twice in criminal proceedings for the same criminal offence

Image 55. Fundamental Rights Charter: Justice (@EUAgencyFRA – Agency for Fundamental Rights)

The sixth Chapter, '**Justice**,' includes the right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial, the presumption of innocence and right of defence as well as the principles of legality, and proportionality of criminal offences and penalties.

1. Right to an Effective Remedy and to a Fair Trial (Article 47):
This right is central to the justice system in the EU, guaranteeing everyone whose rights and freedoms guaranteed by EU law are violated the right to an effective remedy before a tribunal. It ensures a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law. The article also secures legal aid for those lacking sufficient resources, ensuring that access to justice is not denied to anyone due to economic constraints.

2. Presumption of Innocence and Right of Defence (Article 48):
Article 48 upholds the presumption of innocence until proven guilty according to law. This principle is a cornerstone of criminal justice, ensuring that the burden of proof lies with the prosecution. It also guarantees the rights of the defence, allowing every accused person the right to adequate time and facilities to prepare a defence and to communicate with counsel of their own choosing.

3. Principles of Legality and Proportionality of Criminal Offences and Penalties (Article 49):
This article asserts that no one shall be held guilty of any criminal offence on the basis of any act or omission that did not constitute a criminal offence under national or international law at the time it was committed. It also stipulates that penalties must not be disproportionate to the criminal offence, ensuring fairness in the application of the law and safeguarding against excessive punishment.

4. Right Not to be Tried or Punished Twice in Criminal Proceedings for the Same Criminal Offence (Article 50):
Known as the principle of ne bis in idem, this right protects individuals from being tried or punished more than once for the same offence within the EU. This principle prevents the justice system from subjecting individuals to multiple trials or punitive measures for the same acts, thereby ensuring justice efficiency and fairness.

Facing adversity: a single mother's arduous journey to Justice.

Image 56. At only 17 years old, Gobado, was terrified of becoming a mother – even more so after being abandoned by the father of her baby. (@IOM)

Gobado's love for her son drove her to cross borders and continents to fight for their future, and is now helping other single mothers overcome similar obstacles.

Description: "In 2016, I left for Norway to find the man who had abandoned me during my pregnancy in 2014," says Gobado, a young Senegalese single mother seeking justice.

Scenario: However, plans did not go as she had hoped before leaving her home in Dakar, Senegal. In the first days of her stay in Norway, she found herself in an irregular and vulnerable situation, as the father of her child failed to fulfil his promises and parental responsibility.

Solution/ Outcome: Gobado knew she needed financial support to keep them both alive. Struggling in a foreign land and barely able to provide for herself and her son, Gobado made the decision to return home with support from the International Organization for Migration through Norway's Voluntary Assisted Return Programme (VARP). Thanks to financial support received as part of her reintegration assistance, she started her own textile import-export business. "This gave me a second chance and allowed me to rebuild my life in Senegal," she explains.

While in Senegal, Gobado remained determined to seek justice for her son. In 2018, she initiated legal proceedings against her son's father in Norway, demanding paternal recognition.

Faced with his unwillingness to cooperate, the court issued an ultimatum to obtain his DNA. However, he tried to force and threaten Gobado to cancel the procedure. Despite the threats, Gobado was not intimidated and continued her battle fiercely. "In 2019, I hired a Senegalese lawyer who has worked in Oslo for 30 years," she remarks. "As the DNA test results confirmed that the man was indeed the father of my child, he was obliged to pay monthly alimony for our son."

Key Takeaways: With her legal battle behind her, Gobado began to move forward with her life, establishing a consulting firm aimed at supporting single mothers who are raising their children alone. The story reflects the core principles of justice enshrined in the EU Charter, including the right to a fair trial, the presumption of innocence, and the importance of legality and proportionality in legal proceedings.

Gobado's journey exemplifies the fundamental principles of justice outlined in Chapter 6 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Her story demonstrates the importance of legal support, resilience, and the pursuit of justice in overcoming personal and systemic challenges. By standing firm in her quest for justice, Gobado not only secured her son's rights but also paved the way for supporting other single mothers, embodying the values of fairness, legality, and proportionality that the EU Charter seeks to uphold.

IN A NUTSHELL

In the migrant women's process, the knowledge and sharing of EU fundamental values are the compass for a full inclusive social and economic integration.

In summation, the EU Charter is a powerful instrument that has much potential to firstly ensure that any proposed legislation is in keeping with the rights and entitlements therein, secondly to ensure that Member States implement and apply relevant EU laws in compliance with the EU Charter and thirdly to ensure that EU Agencies act in accordance with the EU Charter. It includes new innovative rights, whose potential are only beginning to be discovered. The EU Charter now is underused, but with better understanding as to how it can be used, it can provide additional protection for girls and women those seeking asylum in Europe.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"UNITED IN DIVERSITY" was adopted as the European Union's motto in 2000.

It signifies how Europeans have come together, in the form of the EU, to work for peace and prosperity, while at the same time being enriched by the continent's many different cultures, traditions and languages nevertheless united by a shared set of values.

In 2012, the EU was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy, and human rights in Europe.

Based on the shared values and legal protections enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights reflect on:

- Considering the protections offered in Chapter 2 on Freedoms, such as the right to personal data protection and freedom of expression, how do these freedoms balance with national security and public order within EU member states?
- In light of the equality rights discussed in Chapter 3, including non-discrimination and equality before the law, what challenges exist in uniformly applying these standards across culturally diverse EU countries?
- From the perspective of Chapter 5 on Citizens' Rights, how does the right to good administration and the freedom of movement reinforce the democratic values and functioning of the European Union?

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- In the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, how many Chapters are there?
  - ○ 3
  - ○ 6
  - ○ 7

- In the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, how many Articles are there expressing EU common values?
  - ○ 6
  - ○ 12
  - ○ 50

- When was the EU awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy, and human rights in Europe?
  - ○ 2012
  - ○ 1993
  - ○ 1958

EXTRA RESOURCES

UN Women

"Around the world, a record number of women are now migrating to seek work and better lives. Women and girls are estimated to make up about half of the world's 281 million international migrants. For many, migration yields these benefits; for others, it carries dangerous risks, such as exploitation in domestic jobs, and vulnerability to violence. Migration policies and practices have been slow to recognize these risks and take steps to make the process safe for women."

Watch video on Migration is a gender equality issue:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWAaSgyCd2Y
Learn more:
https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/employment-and-migration

Women's Refugee Commission: Reports and Resources
The Women's Refugee Commission regularly publishes reports and resources on the specific challenges faced by refugee and internally displaced women, available on its website.
Learn more: https://www.unhcr.org/

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)
UNHCR's website offers a wide range of resources on the situation of refugees worldwide, including reports, statistics, and specific case studies on refugee women.
Learn more : https://www.unhcr.org.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

IOM works on global migration with a focus on the protection and assistance of migrants, including women and girls. Its website offers resources and publications on various migration issues.

Learn more : https://www.iom.int.

Prodigy Game

Culturally Responsive Teaching: Examples, Strategies & Activities for Success

Description: "No single teaching approach will engage each student at once but building a strategy to consistently deliver culturally-responsive teaching lessons will help you appeal to diverse learners with distinct backgrounds." Learn more: https://www.prodigygame.com/main-en/blog/culturally-responsive-teaching/

TPRS Books

TPRS® – Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling®

TPRS® is a method of teaching languages through comprehensible readings and interactive oral stories. Through compelling and repeated tales, students pick up the language – even if they haven't studied grammar and vocabulary yet. Learn more here: https://www.tprsbooks.com/what-is-tprs/

TESOL International Association

TESOL International Association, formerly Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, is the largest professional organization for teachers of English as a second or foreign language. Website gathers lots of recourses on the topic of language learning. Learn more here: https://www.tesol.org/

Storyboard That

An easy drag-and-drop creation platform which allows people of all skill levels to create amazing visuals for teaching, learning, and communicating. Learn more here: https://www.storyboardthat.com/

Teaching Culture Project

Although it is not a resource specifically aimed at migrant and refugee women in an L2 classroom. This project is a great resource for educators. It provides adult educators with lesson plans to improve intercultural competence in multicultural classrooms and enables them to address intercultural issues relevant to life in the growing European community. The lesson plans include various practical exercises such as games, warm-up exercises, getting-to-know-each-other activities, and role-plays, among other relevant activities to improve intercultural awareness and communication.

Learn more here: http://www.teaching-culture.de/en/products/lesson_plans/lesson_plans.htm

Refugee Council

Provides support services for refugees and migrants, including mentoring and employment programs.

Learn more here: https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/

Mentoring Women in Business (Cherie Blair Foundation for Women)

Connects women entrepreneurs from around the world, including migrants, with mentors to help them grow their businesses.

Learn more here: https://cherieblairfoundation.org/

MentorSET

A mentoring scheme for women in STEM, including migrant women, supported by the Women's Engineering Society (WES).

Learn more here: https://www.wes.org.uk/

International Rescue Committee

Offers comprehensive support programs for migrants and refugees, including job placement and mentorship.

Learn more here: https://www.rescue.org/

What are EU values? (EU Parliament)

"All EU countries share certain core values, which form the basis of a free society. The EU safeguards these shared values to ensure inclusion, tolerance, justice, and solidarity."

Watch video here: https://youtu.be/Fh4uX_Grxrg?feature=shared

GLOSSARY

Unit 1: Understanding the needs of migrants and refugees women

Cultural Challenges: These are the difficulties faced by migrants and refugees in adapting to the cultural norms and values of their new countries. These challenges can include language barriers, differences in social behaviors, and acceptance within the local community.

CSR = Corporate Social Responsibility

DEI = Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Economic Prosperity and Social Peace: These terms collectively refer to the desired outcomes of successful integration of migrant and refugee women into society. Economic prosperity relates to the ability of individuals to support themselves financially, while social peace involves harmonious relationships within the community.

Empowerment of Women: In the context of the document, this refers to enabling migrant and refugee women to achieve economic independence and a stronger social standing through education, employment opportunities, and community support.

EU = European Union

EWSI = European Website on Integration

ICT = Information and Communication Technology

Information Landscapes: This concept relates to the environment and framework within which individuals access, process, and use information. For migrants and refugees, these landscapes can become fractured due to the displacement, making it crucial to rebuild them in new settings through community support and integration programs.

Integration: Refers to the multi-dimensional process by which migrants and refugees adapt to a new society. This process involves mutual adjustment from both the newcomers and the host community, and encompasses aspects such as learning the language, understanding cultural norms, and gaining employment.

OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Social and Economic Integration: This term highlights the process through which migrant and refugee women become part of their new communities not just socially but also economically. It involves establishing a social network, becoming economically independent, and gaining access to the labor market.

UN = United Nations

UNHCR = United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Universal Declaration of Human Rights: This is a pivotal document that underlines the fundamental rights and freedoms to which every human being is entitled. It is referenced in the document in the context of education being a fundamental human right essential for personal development.

Unit 2: Understanding the identity of migrant and refugee women

Cultural identity: Refers to the set of characteristics, values, traditions, beliefs, and practices shared by a group of people who share a common culture. The cultural identity of migrant and refugee women can be affected and transformed by forced displacement, as well as by the need to adapt to a new cultural environment. The preservation of cultural identity is important for many migrant and refugee women, as it helps them maintain a sense of continuity and connection to their past while navigating the challenge of integration into a new society.

Intersection of factors: This term refers to the combination and overlapping of different elements that affect a person's life. In the context of migrant and refugee women, the intersection of factors includes gender, immigration, legal status, culture, and socio-economic context. These factors interact in complex ways, influencing their experiences and the challenges they face during the process of integration into a new society.

Intersectionality: This term refers to the interaction and overlap of different forms of discrimination or disadvantage, such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and migration status, which can simultaneously affect a person's experience and opportunities. In the context of migrant and refugee women, intersectionality highlights how multiple factors can influence the specific ways in which these women face gender-based violence, discrimination, and other challenges.

Resilience: Refers to a person's ability to adapt positively and bounce back in the face of adversity, challenges, or stress. In the case of migrant and refugee women, resilience is manifested in their ability to overcome difficulties related to migration, such as language barriers, discrimination, and limited access to essential services.

Aspirations: The hopes, goals, and ambitions that individuals hold for their future. Cultural values and expectations can shape students' educational aspirations and their pursuit of academic and career achievements.

Communication Styles: The ways in which individuals express themselves and interpret others' messages, influenced by cultural norms. This includes verbal and nonverbal communication, tone of voice, and body language.

Cultural Competence: The ability to effectively interact, communicate, and engage with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It involves awareness, knowledge, and skills that enable individuals to respect and appreciate cultural differences.

Cultural Differences: The variations in cultural norms, values, beliefs, and practices among individuals from different cultural backgrounds. These differences can impact communication, behaviour, learning preferences, and educational outcomes.

Cultural Sensitivity: The awareness and respect for the cultural norms, values, beliefs, and practices of individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It involves understanding how cultural differences may impact communication and behaviour.

Culturally Responsive Teaching: An educational approach that acknowledges and incorporates students' cultural backgrounds into teaching practices to create a more inclusive and effective learning experience.

Curiosity-Based Learning: An instructional method that encourages students to explore, ask questions, and engage in problem-solving and critical thinking. This approach values student autonomy and collaborative learning.

Differentiation: Tailoring teaching methods and resources to meet the diverse needs, learning styles, and abilities of students within a classroom.

Diverse Classroom: A learning environment composed of students from various cultural, linguistic, and professional backgrounds.

Diversity: The presence of a variety of social and cultural identities, characteristics, perspectives, and experiences within a group or community, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, and socioeconomic status.

Equity: The principle of fairness in education, ensuring that all students have access to the resources, opportunities, and support they need to succeed, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances. Equity involves identifying and addressing systemic barriers and inequities.

Inclusive Learning Environment: A classroom setting where all students feel valued, respected, and supported, regardless of their cultural, linguistic, or personal backgrounds.

Language Proficiency: The ability to speak, understand, read, and write in a particular language. In educational settings, language proficiency impacts students' ability to engage with instructional content and communicate effectively.

Learning Preferences: The preferred ways in which individuals process and engage with information. Cultural backgrounds shape these preferences, influencing whether students favour rote memorization, critical thinking, curiosity-based learning, or collaborative activities.

Self-Efficacy: An individual's belief in their ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task. Self-efficacy influences motivation, effort, and resilience in the face of challenges.

Social Norms: The shared expectations and rules that guide behaviour within a cultural group. Social norms can influence classroom behaviour, interactions, and relationships, including attitudes towards authority and gender roles.

Systemic Barriers: The structural obstacles that prevent certain groups of people from accessing opportunities and resources on an equal footing. In education, these barriers can include discriminatory policies, biased curricula, and unequal access to resources.

Teacher-Centred Instruction: An instructional approach where the teacher is the primary source of knowledge and authority, often involving lectures and rote memorisation. This approach may align with cultural values that emphasize respect for authority and structured learning.

Language acquisition: The process by which individuals learn a new language.

Role-Playing: An educational activity where learners act out scenarios to practice language skills.

Story mapping: A visual tool that outlines the key elements of a story, such as characters, setting, plot, and resolution.

Storytelling: The act of telling or writing stories, often used as a teaching method to engage learners and convey knowledge.

Andragogical approach: Andragogy, an approach to learning that focuses on adult learners, was first introduced by educator Alexander Kapp in 1833. This approach emphasises the importance of using teaching strategies and learning methods that are applicable to the daily lives of adult learners (Bouchrika, 2024). In other words, Andragogy places more emphasis on the immediate application of what is learnt. In other words, the learning methods for adult learners usually focus on activities, practical applications and problem solving.

Cultural sensitivity: Cultural sensitivity means being aware of and understanding cultural differences, norms, values, and beliefs without necessarily having the ability to interact or communicate effectively with other cultures. It is about recognising and respecting diversity and avoiding behaviours or actions that may offend or disrespect people from a different cultural background. Cultural sensitivity is important for promoting inclusion and harmony in a diverse environment (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2018).

(Inter)cultural competence: Intercultural competence goes beyond cultural sensitivity. It refers to the ability to communicate, interact and engage effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds in different contexts. Intercultural competence means not only understanding cultural differences, but also being able to adapt one's behaviour, communication style and mindset to interact successfully with people from different cultural backgrounds. It includes skills such as empathy, communication, flexibility, and the ability to deal constructively with cultural differences. Developing intercultural competence enables individuals to build meaningful relationships, resolve conflicts and collaborate effectively across cultures (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2023).

English as a Second Language (ESL) /English as a Foreign Language (EFL): ESL refers to the teaching or learning of English by people whose first language is not English. It usually takes place in regions or countries where English is not the primary language. ESL programmes aim to develop English language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, to help non-native speakers communicate effectively in English-speaking environments.

Inquiry-based learning: A pedagogical method developed during the discovery learning movement in the 1960s as a reaction to traditional forms of teaching, i.e. rote learning, memorisation and repetition. It encourages learners to ask questions and investigate real-world problems. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a form of inquiry-based learning that also emphasises active learning through exploration, questioning and problem solving, with learners working on real-world projects or questions that drive their learning process.

Low-level learners: Low-level learners are individuals who are in the first or basic stages of learning a particular topic or skill. In the context of language learning, low-level learners are those who have limited knowledge of the target language, often characterised by basic vocabulary, grammar, and communication skills. These learners require basic instruction and support to progress to a higher level of language proficiency.

Metalinguistic awareness: "a conscious awareness of the formal properties of language as well as its functional and semantic properties. It is associated with a mature stage in language and metacognitive development and does not usually develop until around age 8. The arrival of metalinguistic awareness is often signalled by an interest in puns and word games. Also called linguistic awareness" (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2018).

Passive skills refer to the skills of listening and reading. Learners do not need to produce language to perform these skills; instead, they absorb and understand information. These skills contrast with the productive or active skills of speaking and writing (British Council, s.d.).

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers to the study of people and groups who learn/are learning a language after acquiring their first language in childhood. It also includes the method of learning this new language. This new language is referred to as a second language (L2), regardless of whether it is the third, fourth or even tenth language they are learning (Saville-Troike, 2005).

Cultural adaptation refers to the process through which individuals or groups modify their behaviour, customs, attitudes, and communication styles to fit into a new cultural environment. It involves learning and integrating the norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and social practices of a different cultural context, often when transitioning from one society or community to another.

Legal recognition refers to the formal acknowledgment by a governing authority or legal system that grants certain rights, status, or identity to an individual, group, entity, or document. This acknowledgment typically confers legal standing and protection under the law, enabling the recognised party to exercise specific rights and responsibilities.

Mutual learning refers to a collaborative process where individuals, groups, or organisations engage in the exchange of knowledge, skills, perspectives, and experiences for mutual benefit and growth. It involves an interactive and reciprocal exchange where all parties involved contribute to and gain from the learning process.

Skill development refers to the process of identifying, acquiring, and enhancing specific abilities and competencies that are necessary for personal and professional growth. This process involves a combination of education, training, practice, and experience to improve an individual's proficiency in particular areas. Skill development is essential for adapting to changing job markets, advancing careers, and achieving personal goals.

Cultural adaptation refers to the process through which individuals or groups modify their behaviour.

DNA: Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid is a molecule that contains the genetic code that is unique to every individual. The information coded in DNA is hereditary, meaning that it passes from parent to child.

EU: European Union

MEP'S: Members of European Parliament

Stargardt's disease: is a rare genetic eye disease that happens when fatty material builds up on the macula – the small part of the retina needed for sharp, central vision. Vision loss usually starts in childhood – but some people with Stargardt disease do not start to lose their vision until they are adults.

Transgender: denoting or relating to a person whose gender identity does not correspond with the sex registered for them at birth

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SELF-ASSESSMENT ANSWERS

Unit 1
1) B
2) C
3) A

Unit 2
1) C
2) B
3) B

Unit 3
1) B
2) C
3) A

Unit 4
1) B
2) B
3) C

Unit 5
1) B
2) B
3) B

Unit 6
1) B
2) B
3) A

Unit 7
1) C
2) C
3) A

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