



MEETING MINUTES

ECONOMIC INCLUSION WORKING GROUP MEETING

DATE	23.05.2024	TIME	11.00-13.00	PLACE	Online meeting
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CHAIRS	
1.	UNHCR (Diogo Salema Da Costa Cabral Senior Livelihood and Economic Inclusion Officer cabrald@unhcr.org)
2.	CARITAS POLSKA (Paulina Babis, Project Coordinator Migrant and Refugee pbabis@caritas.org.pl)
PRESENTERS	
1.	Bartłomiej Potocki, Director of the Department of Social Integration - Ministry of the Family, Labour and Social Policy.
2.	Ludovica Efrati, Principal Manager - the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).
3.	Karolina Cikowska, Project manager - Upwardly Global.

PARTICIPANTS	
1.	UNHCR
2.	Caritas
3.	The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy
4.	Save the Children
5.	Alight
6.	Polska Akcja Humanitarna
7.	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

8.	European Lawyers in Lesvos (ELIL)
10.	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
11.	Tent
12.	Fundacja W Stronę Dialogu
13.	American Embassy Warsaw
14.	Dom Otwarty
15.	The Norwegian Refugee Council
16.	Red Cross
17.	Plan International
18.	IOM
19.	CERANEK Kancelaria Radców Prawnych i Adwokatów

AGENDA

11:00 – 11:10 Introductions by UNHCR and Caritas Poland.

11:10 – 11:35 **PART 1:** Presentation on “The Integration Centers for Foreigners under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund”.

(Bartłomiej Potocki, Director of the Department of Social Integration – Ministry of the Family, Labour and Social Policy + Q&A)

11:35-12:00 **PART 2:** Presentation on “Stronger Together: The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development’s (EBRD) Support for NGOs assisting Ukrainian Refugees and Entrepreneurs in Poland”.

(Ludovica Efrati, Principal Manager - the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development + Q&A)

12:00-12:25 **PART 3:** PART 3: Presentation on “Upwardly Global’s Workforce Inclusion Initiative for Ukrainian Refugees - Important takeaways”.

12:25-13:00 AOB

INTRODUCTION

This meeting of the Economic Inclusion Working Group focuses on the presentation of the Integration Centers for Foreigners under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund by the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy; the presentation by EBRD on their support for NGOs assisting Ukrainian Refugees and Entrepreneurs in Poland, and finally the presentation by Upwardly Global on important takeaways on their workforce inclusion initiative for Ukrainian refugees.

OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

I. Presentation of Integration Centers for Foreigners under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund by Bartłomiej Potocki.

The idea of establishing integration centers for refugees in Poland was conceived a few years ago. A pilot program took place in the Greater Poland and Opole Voivodeships. Based on evaluation reports following the completion of the pilot, the Center for European Projects Service at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration and the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Policy created guidelines and prepared a competition to establish a nationwide network of Integration Centers for Foreigners.

❖ Key Information about the Project:

- Tripartite Cooperation: Actions will take place through a tripartite collaboration. An NGO must be a partner in each voivodeship, responsible for reaching out to the migrant community.
- Calls for Partners: Voivodes should currently be in the process of announcing calls for partners on their websites.
- Application Deadline: Applications to the Center for European Projects Service must be submitted by July 31.
- Duration of the Call for Partners: The call for partners should last at least 21 days.
- Number of Centers: There will be integration centers in each of the former voivodeships, resulting in 49 centers. Some voivodeships will have more than one center.
- Target Group: The centers will provide support for all foreigners. The focus is on inclusivity and efficiency in service delivery, with a recognition of the evolving needs of migrants and refugees.
- New Program: The Ministry of Family is preparing another program to support the centers, which will introduce a new profession: Specialist in Migration and Integration.
- New Profession Training: Once the program for new professional groups is established, it will be offered to several organizations, facilitating the training of as many individuals as possible within a short timeframe. The education expenses will be covered for the NGOs partnering with marshals and local authorities, while external participants can also join the course.

- Organizations with Less than 5 Nationalities: Organizations with fewer than five nationalities can submit an offer. However, it is encouraged to collaborate with another entity and submit a joint offer.
- Experience Requirement: Organizations should have at least two years of experience in assisting migrants to submit an offer. Younger organizations are encouraged to collaborate with more experienced units and submit a joint offer.
- Mandatory and Optional Actions: Actions under the AMIF will be mandatory for all voivodeships, with some optional actions that can be chosen. It is important that the centers respond to the needs of migrants.

II. **The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Support for NGOs Helping Ukrainian Refugees and Entrepreneurs in Poland by Ludovica Efrati.**

The EBRD is an international financial institution tasked with promoting the transition to modern, well-functioning markets in over 35 countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the southern and eastern Mediterranean region. The bank's shareholders include various institutions supporting economies in crisis.

The EBRD is owned by 73 countries and two intergovernmental institutions, the European Union and the European Investment Bank, with an authorized capital of 30 billion euros.

As the EBRD aims to enhance the resilience of local economies affected by crises, they are currently supporting Ukraine through refugees aspiring to initiate private sector ventures.

❖ **Support Program for Ukrainian Refugees** → The program consists of three pillars:

1. *Skills development & employment facilitation*
 - Organizing vocational training
 - Professional retraining
 - Providing coaching
 - Job placement services
2. *Supporting Entrepreneurship*
 - Providing mentoring and coaching for those wishing to start a business
 - Offering business advisory support
3. *Capacity Building*
 - Creating new programs for refugees
 - Access to best practices
 - Establishing networks

❖ **Other Ongoing Projects:**

IT Skills 4 U

-Instructor-Led Self-Training: The program provides instructor-led, self-paced training for individuals interested in transitioning to the IT sector or advancing their careers within it.

-Access to Certified Programs: Participants will have access to a certified Cloud Computing skills program along with mentoring opportunities, English language training, and Polish language classes.

-Webinars and Job Offers: The program includes webinars and job placement services to support participants in finding employment opportunities.

Mentorship Program for Ukrainian Refugee Women

- Overall Goal: The program aims to expand the existing mentorship program for women entrepreneurs to support approximately 30 Ukrainian refugee women in starting their own businesses in Poland.
- Scope of the Program:
 - Translation of existing educational materials into Ukrainian
 - Development of a dedicated curriculum in Ukrainian
 - Recruitment of Ukrainian mentors
 - Comprehensive Activities:
 - Access to an online skills platform
 - Workshops on empowerment and soft skills
 - Individual mentoring sessions

Entrepreneurial Skills Bootcamps

- Overall Goal: The program aims to enhance the entrepreneurial skills of Ukrainian refugees in Poland and provide them with support.
- Develop a mentorship program for approximately 100 Ukrainian refugees across three cities in Poland.
- Each city will host a series of workshop sessions during a two-day bootcamp, followed by online classes.

❖ How to obtain support from EBRD?

To apply for support as an NGO or a Polish company employing Ukrainians, the following documents need to be submitted:

- Short description of the organization: Including a presentation of the support programs implemented for refugees and the achieved outcomes.
- Brief presentation of the required support
- Registration document

The funding limit is set at 75,000 per project, with no requirement for a public procurement process, and specifically, language courses are eligible for funding up to 40,000. Projects can span up to 12 months, with the possibility of continuation beyond the initial duration, although each NGO can hold only one contract at a time. Funding, available until 2030, is exclusively for initiatives aiding Ukrainian refugees and must align with one of the designated pillars.

III. Upwardly Global's Workforce Inclusion Initiative for Ukrainian Refugees by Karolina Cikowska.

Upwardly Global (UpGlo) is the first and longest-operating organization dedicated to supporting the inclusion of immigrant and refugee professionals into the U.S. workforce.

UpGlo is actively involved in the development of displaced Ukrainian professionals. To date, hundreds of Ukrainians seeking employment have been assisted in finding professional positions in high-demand sectors such as technology, business logistics and operations, finance, engineering, and healthcare in the USA.

❖ Program Implemented in Poland

- Partnership: Collaboration with FRSI, a non-profit organization
- Duration: The program has been ongoing since October 10, 2022
- Readiness for Employment: Provide job readiness support and coaching to 1,000 Ukrainian refugees residing in Poland.
- Job Support: Assist 500 Ukrainian newcomers in finding employment in Poland.
- Eligibility criteria:
 - having the appropriate authorization to work in Poland and live in the country.
 - being a Ukrainian refugee,
 - being college or university educated or re-skilled,
 - possessing a professional experience/background
 - seeking professional, skill-aligned employment.
 - Speak English and/or Polish.

❖ Important Findings and Recommendations:

- Integration Challenges: Addressing language barriers, cultural differences, and recognition of foreign qualifications are crucial for effective integration into the workforce.
- Targeted Support: Tailored programs that focus on specific high-demand industries can significantly enhance employment outcomes for refugees.
- Collaboration: Successful integration programs often involve partnerships between local organizations, government bodies, and international agencies.

- Continuous Training: Providing ongoing training and upskilling opportunities helps refugees to adapt and thrive in new work environments.'
- Trust issues: there is an overwhelming number of programs for refugees, leading to confusion, and trust issues due to the program's U.S. origins. Engagement drops after acceptance, as many participants are not ready for 1:1 mentorship due to language and psychological barriers. The program offers webinars, email coaching, and has simplified the application process. Companies also struggle to adapt, prompting more mentorship efforts.

❖ **How to get support from Upwardly Global?**

To apply for support as an NGO or a company employing Ukrainian refugees, the following steps are recommended:

- Submit a short description: Provide an overview of your organization, including programs supporting refugees and the achieved outcomes.
- Present your needs: Briefly outline the support required.
- Provide registration documents: Ensure that all relevant organizational registration documents are included.

For further assistance or specific questions, please refer to the Q&A session with Karolina Cikowska.

WAY FORWARD

Initiatives for upcoming meetings and potential presenters are welcome, with encouragement to propose topics related to economic inclusion and livelihoods.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 27th June, 11:00-13:00h.

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY

No.	Action	Responsible
1.	Reminder on registering and filling the information into the 5W platform.	Everyone

