



MEETING MINUTES

ECONOMIC INCLUSION WORKING GROUP MEETING

DATE	26.09.2024	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 (Michał Korzeniowski , Project Coordinator, mkorzeniowski@caritas.org.pl)
PRESENTERS	
1.	George Ailiotis, Associate Protection Officer, UNHCR.
2.	Marta Babecka, Skills Alliance Secretariat Coordinator, CARE Poland.
3.	Illia Markowski, Information Management Associate, UNHCR.

PARTICIPANTS	
1.	UNHCR
2.	Caritas
3.	Tent
4.	IOM
5.	Habitat Poland
6.	International Rescue Committee
7.	Fundacja Polskie Centrum Pomocy Międzynarodowej

8.	Fundacja Innowacja i Wiedza
9.	Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego (FRSI)
10.	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy
11.	Care Poland
12.	International Finance Corporation
13.	Spanish Red Cross
14.	U.S. Embassy in Poland

AGENDA

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

11:10-11:35 **PART 1:** Presentation on the Conclusions Extracted from the RR Workshop on Economic Inclusion + Q&A.
(George Ailiotis, Associate Protection Officer, UNHCR).

11:35-12:00 **PART 2:** Presentation on the Employment and Upskilling Initiative for Ukrainian Refugees led by the Skills Alliance in Poland + Q&A
(Marta Babecka, Skills Alliance Secretariat Coordinator, CARE Poland).

12:00-12:25 **PART 3:** Update on the achievements reported by RRP partners in relation to livelihoods and socio-economic activities for the first and second quarters of 2024.
(Illia Markowski, Information Management Associate, UNHCR).

12:25-13:00 AOB

INTRODUCTION

This meeting of the Economic Inclusion Working Group focused on several key presentations. First, there was a presentation on the conclusions extracted from the RRP Workshop on Economic Inclusion, delivered by the LEI team of UNHCR. This was followed by a presentation on the Employment and Upskilling Initiative for Ukrainian Refugees, led by the Skills Alliance in Poland. Lastly, the Information Management team from UNHCR provided an update on the achievements reported by RRP partners in relation to livelihoods and socio-economic activities for the first and second quarters of 2024.

OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

I. **Presentation on the Conclusions Extracted from the RRP Workshop on Economic Inclusion**

The RRP is an inter-agency planning, coordination, and fundraising tool. It covers key sectors such as shelter, education, health, livelihoods, and protection. The RRP is led by UNHCR with governments, UN agencies, NGOs, and stakeholders.

The recent planning workshop concerning RRP in Poland for the 2025-2026 period was held 18-19th September 2024. The Polish RRP chapter aligns with the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Ukraine. The extended timeframe for the RRP provides more time to achieve strategic objectives. Simultaneously, it enables sustainable programming and better alignment with government cycles.

This presentation is an overview of the outcomes of discussions surrounding RRP planning in areas of concern for Livelihoods & Economic Inclusion (LEI). LEI falls under the category of the second Strategic Outcome of the RRP:

“Support host countries in their efforts to include refugees in national systems – decent work, social protection, health, education, child protection services – with a particular focus on outreach and inclusion of vulnerable groups and including, age gender and disability considerations.”

Key findings from Day 1 of discussions:

Discussions on the importance of identifying vulnerable groups did not differ from discussions held last year by the working group. People with disabilities, ethnic minorities, female-headed households, unaccompanied children, and individuals with prolonged stay in collective shelters remain to be particularly vulnerable.

While economic inclusion was identified as a priority in the context of protecting and providing agency to these vulnerable groups, other crucial avenues for delivering support included:

Priority Services:

Healthcare; education; economic inclusion; social protection; child protection services; gender-based violence (GBV) prevention; support for youth nearing conscription; Roma children and refugees in rural areas.

Key Areas of Support:

Language courses; validation of qualifications; private sector incentives; support for women, youth, and vulnerable individuals; free legal advice and awareness of refugee rights; programs addressing discrimination; integrating out-of-school children.

Collaboration:

Local authorities, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and refugee-led organizations for inclusive local integration strategies and social cohesion.

Key findings from Day 2 of discussions:

Day 2 was filled with discussions placing LEI in the spotlight. Country indicators for LEI were reviewed and some changes were proposed, albeit they largely remain the same as in the previous RRP. The issues of persistent needs and connected activities were revisited.

Country Indicators 2024

1. # of individuals who received support in access to mid or long-term independent housing

Indicator to be moved under → Shelter. While crucial for economic inclusion, housing is fundamentally a shelter-related issue, as it does not address economic or employment aspects. Removing this indicator from the LEI assessment will ensure tight focus on issues directly related to job market integration and fostering individual self-reliance.

Discussion:

- Programs like cash-for-rent take a holistic approach, pairing housing assistance with job support and language training. Still needed.
- Concern: Refugees moving into independent housing face risks like exploitation (long hours, unfair contracts).
- Suggested follow-up: Assess the percentage of refugee income spent on housing to understand financial burdens (SEIS Questionnaire included – final report will cover this).

2. # of individuals who received support in language training to access livelihood and job opportunities

Persistent need → indicator remains.

Discussion:

- Language proficiency is crucial to accessing employment.
- Programs should focus on advanced and professional language training that is tailored to specific industries or vocations, not just basic language skills.
- Certification (state-recognized) often comes with fees and challenges. Improve access.
- Reporting: Report on both enrolment and completion of language courses.
- 2025-26: Follow up on how language training activities directly impact job outcomes.

3. # of individuals who received support in accessing employment (information, counselling, coaching, mentoring, job-matching) and skills (skills assessment, skills recognition, upskilling)

Persistent need → indicator remains.

Discussion:

Programs could track the full employment journey with an individualized approach starting from skills assessment and support to actual employment outcomes. Location is important (rural vs urban residence) as well as membership of ethnic group, gender, age, etc.

- Skills recognition (e.g., nostrification) often requires financial support.

- Indicator should capture all stages: information provision, job coaching/mentoring, job-matching, and upskilling.

Reporting: numbers do not differentiate between basic assistance (like info sessions) and more resource-intensive activities (like mentoring). Program/services description is important.

4. # of individuals who received support in entrepreneurship and financial inclusion

5. # of individuals benefitting from support for entrepreneurship, business creation, and financial inclusion

Both indicators (4 & 5) to be merged into one indicator → Employment.

- Many refugees start one-person businesses for lower taxes (could be self-employed). They still need support to navigate legal frameworks. All persons who received support are reported.
- Programs should offer mini-grants or legal guidance to assist refugees in setting up businesses.
- Awareness campaigns, especially on tax obligations and business management.

6. # of private sector actors capacitated to better address and facilitate the socio-economic inclusion of refugees in the communities

Suggestion to remove: indicator insufficiently centred on refugees. Indicators need to track outcomes for refugees rather than intermediary outputs (e.g. capacitation of private sector actors). General advocacy efforts and engagement with private sector actors can still continue as part of program strategy but do not necessarily require a specific indicator. Including too many indicators can dilute focus and create unnecessary complexity.

Discussion:

- Aimed at sensitizing private sector actors or institutions working with private sector on fair working conditions, contracts, and anti-exploitation measures. Refugees often work without contracts or have unofficial cash payments, leading to lower income and difficulty securing housing (this can be under housing – incorporated in legal advice projects – general advocacy efforts).

7. # of assessments on labour market demand and private sector needs in areas with high concentration of refugees

Suggestion to remove: See as above → does not guarantee concrete improvements for refugees, risk of diverting resources away from activities directly facilitating employment, skills development and self-sufficiency for refugees.

Redundancy with broader market research and partnerships: Labor market needs can be continuously monitored through existing government statistics, private sector partnerships, or collaboration with local agencies.

Discussion:

- Improvement in dissemination of results for already conducted assessments to support better planning and response.

Proposed indicators for 2025-2026 RRP:

- # of individuals who received support in language training.

- # of individuals who received support in accessing employment (information, counselling, coaching, mentoring, job-matching) skills (skills assessment, skills recognition, upskilling); and entrepreneurship (information and counselling, business skills training, business incubators).
- # of refugees belonging to minority or vulnerable groups who benefitted from livelihoods and/or economic inclusion interventions.

Added to enable activities and programs specifically addressing the needs of vulnerable groups requiring specialized approaches, e.g.: ethnic minorities, PWD, older persons, GBV survivors, etc.

It is important for indicators to be simplified and easy to report on – key in enabling donors to understand where the gaps are and for partners to

Cross-Sectoral Reflections on Indicators

- **Legal Support:**
 - Refugees need comprehensive legal advice on employment rights and working conditions.
 - Focus on labor law education and contracts, helping refugees avoid exploitation.
- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention:**
 - Female refugees face risks in workplaces, including harassment.
 - GBV prevention programs should target workplaces where refugees are employed, focusing on single women and those from female-headed households.
- **Childcare and Employment Stability:**
 - Limited access to affordable childcare is a barrier to employment, especially for refugee women in low-wage jobs.
 - Cross-sectoral input to improve childcare access and reduce employment instability.
- **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS):**
 - Tailored MHPSS programs are essential for overcoming emotional barriers to employment activation.
 - Targeted support for young refugees and recent graduates can boost confidence and career planning.

After the presentation, the attendees were reminded about upcoming sessions on detailed, interactive guidance for RRP Planning Submission, to be held 26-27th September in Polish and English.

II. Presentation on the Employment and Upskilling Initiative for Ukrainian Refugees led by the Skills Alliance in Poland

The Skills Alliance was initially launched by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine at the Ukraine Recovery Conference 2024 in Berlin. It is a regional multi-stakeholder initiative involving over 50 donors, international organizations, private sector companies, and civil society groups, aimed at supporting Ukraine's recovery.

Poland plays a key role in this wider regional initiative, focusing on building training and upskilling programs to enhance employment opportunities for Ukrainian refugees.

These efforts address unemployment and barriers to education for refugees, promoting their socio-economic inclusion in Poland while preparing them for their eventual return to Ukraine.

- **Secretariat and Key Roles**

The Secretariat, composed of CARE, Tent, and UNICEF, coordinates the alliance and collaborates with the Ministry of Labor and Education to ensure the program's effectiveness. It is important to note that the Skills Alliance Secretariat does not have financial resources of its own and cannot provide project funding. Each organization plays a distinct role:

- **Tent** engages with the private sector, providing guidance on hiring Ukrainians, delivering HR training, connecting businesses to refugee talent, and offering mentorship. They also support communication about efforts to integrate refugees into the workforce.
- **CARE** supports the employment of Ukrainian refugees in the Polish education and health sectors, focusing on diploma nostrification for teachers, nurses, and midwives. This ensures that these professionals can secure employment in their respective fields of specialization while gaining access to upskilling and certifications recognized in Poland and the EU.
- **UNICEF** provides capacity development for Ukrainian teachers, focusing on supporting quality learning and promoting psychological well-being in schools that are receiving new refugees. Additionally, UNICEF supports out-of-school youth, helping them access skills-building programs to enhance their employability and integration into the workforce.

- **Main Aims**

- ✓ **Integration Centers:** 60% of the refugees and migrants residing in Poland are reached by the services offered by foreign integration centers.
- ✓ **Job Counseling and Upskilling:** At least 50,000 refugees are expected to access job counseling, upskilling programs, traineeships, and internships offered by the initiative.
- ✓ **Employment Outcomes:** 30% of the clients of integration centers are anticipated to find safe and dignified employment.

- **Objectives**

- ✓ **Identify Legal and Safe Jobs:** To identify legal and safe job opportunities for Ukrainian refugees that align with labor market needs.
- ✓ **Connect Unemployed Refugees with Employment:** To connect unemployed Ukrainian refugees with job opportunities, creating better connections with companies in Poland.
- ✓ **Support Inclusive Employment Policies:** To support the private sector in developing inclusive employment policies.
- ✓ **Encourage Training Programs:** To encourage the private sector to establish and deliver training programs specifically for Ukrainian refugees.
- ✓ **Foster Cooperation:** To foster cooperation between the private and public sectors, as well as NGOs serving Ukrainian refugees, particularly those who are vulnerable.
- ✓ **Support Young Refugees:** To support young Ukrainian refugees in continuing their education and skills development, facilitating their transition into the labor market.

- **Key Indicators**

The Skills Alliance aims to report on the following indicators related to Ukrainian refugees:

- ❖ The number of Ukrainians supported in vocational training and upskilling programs.
- ❖ The number of Ukrainians engaged in higher education opportunities.
- ❖ The number of training programs that specifically address vulnerable groups.
- ❖ The number of diploma nostrifications completed by Ukrainian professionals.
- ❖ The number of Ukrainians who gain legal and decent employment.

Next Steps

Organizations are invited to email their expressions of interest to the Skills Alliance in Poland Secretariat Coordinator, Marta Babecka at marta.babecka@care.org . A plenary meeting for new members will be organized this fall to review progress and gather feedback, ensuring the Skills Alliance remains responsive to the needs of its members and the refugee population.

III. Update on the achievements reported by RRP partners in relation to livelihoods and socio-economic activities for the first and second quarters of 2024.

The dashboard has been developed to harmonize responses from partners implementing socio-economic activities in Poland this year. Although reporting levels in Poland are currently low, the Information Management team is actively capturing the available data.

Non-RRP partners can also be included in this dashboard, provided they are part of the Working Group and have submitted their information on the relevant indicators through the 5W tool on the Activity Info Platform. Organizations are encouraged to report their activities. If an organization is not represented, it may be because the team has not received their information.

The dashboard comprises four sections:

1. **Appeal:** Contains the appeal submission form, along with general information on RRP partners involved in different sectors such as Education, Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Inclusion, and Child Protection. It also includes general data on the funding required by sector, with Livelihoods representing the largest portion.
2. **Key Information:** Includes indicators such as the number of people targeted, the number of implemented projects, and demographic details like the percentage of women, children, and adults reached.
3. **Sectoral Response:** Displays sector-specific information, including percentages by gender and age, and various reported indicators on livelihoods, such as the number of individuals benefiting from support for entrepreneurship.
4. **Organizations Presence:** Lists all reporting and implementing organizations from this sector, categorized by the regions of Poland where they are active.

Organizations are encouraged to reach out to be included in this dashboard. Non-RRP partners can contact the Information Management team to request access and report their activities.

WAY FORWARD

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

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 31st October, 15:00-17:00h

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY

No.	Action	Responsible
1.	Reminder on registering and filling the information into the 5W platform. Point of contact: Ilia Markowski (markowsk@unhcr.org).	Everyone

