



**Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting**  
Meeting Minutes – 23 February 2023

<b>Meeting subject:</b>	Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting
<b>Time &amp; location:</b>	9 am – UNHCR Krakow Sub-Office
<b>Chaired by:</b>	UNHCR; Open Krakow Coalition
<b>Minutes prepared by:</b>	UNHCR
<b>Participants:</b>	Małopolski Urząd Wojewódzki; All Hands and Hearts; DRC; Federacja Znaki Rownosci; Fundacja Understanding; Halina Niec Legal Aid Center; IB Polska; IOM; Malopolski Fundusz Ekonomii Społecznej; Project Hope; One World One Heart; Salam Lab; UNHCR; UNICEF; VOICE Amplified; Wolno Nam; ZHP Blue Dot; Zupa Dla Ukrainy / Kalina Krakow
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p>Introduction and updates from the co-chairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates from refugee and Ukrainian-led organizations</li> <li>• Updates on funding opportunities from the Marshall’s Office</li> <li>• Updates from Women and Children Working Group (VOICE Amplified)</li> <li>• Presentation of Activities (IOM)</li> <li>• AOB</li> </ul>
<b>AGENDA POINT</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
<b>Introduction and update on points from last meeting</b>	<p>Participants were welcomed to the thirteenth Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IB Polska shared information about a march planned for 24 February to mark the one-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNHCR provided updates about recent activities. All partners have been sent an invitation to the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) Launch which will take place in Warsaw. Partners that have submitted proposals have been asked to participate in person. A livestream link will also be shared. It was also noted that several workshops had previously taken place for participants unfamiliar with the RRP process.</li> <li>• UNHCR shared that an Interagency Working Group meeting would take place in person in Warsaw in the coming weeks. In addition to UN agencies, representatives of the ministries of interior and social integration will also participate. The topic of collective shelters will be discussed, including the recent introduction of payment of 40 PLN/day for some refugees in collective accommodation.</li> </ul>
<b>Agenda point 1</b>	There were no updates provided under the given agenda point.
<b>Agenda point 2</b>	The given agenda point was omitted due to a last-minute change of plans on the part of the presenting party.
<b>Agenda point 3</b>	<p>VOICE Amplified presented on the Women and Children Working Group and on the organization's activities more broadly. The main points of the presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VOICE Amplified is an American organization aimed at connecting grassroots women's' initiatives with larger international organizations. There is a focus on grassroots organizations.</li> <li>• The Women and Children Working Group meets every other Tuesday at 2 pm, at the Voice Amplified offices on ul. Stradomska 15/10 in Krakow. The Working Group is a space for participants to share experience and challenges. Each meeting also includes a 15 minute presentation.</li> <li>• Some challenges and corresponding recommendations were shared. The largest challenge for smaller organizations is lack of longer term support or funding from INGOs. Three- or 6-month humanitarian grants do not provide organizations with the flexibility they need to recruit staff and implement projects. Longer term flexible funding is needed. Short term funding also discriminates against women, who do most grassroots NGO work. Grants should require budget items for staff salaries</li> </ul>

	<p>and provision for psychosocial support. Otherwise the idea is enforced that women are natural caregivers and do not need to be paid for their work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IOM asked what kind of services or support VOICE provides for women who came from Ukraine.</li> <li>• VOICE Amplified responded that the organization does not provide help directly to refugees, but rather to organizations which help refugees. On example is maintaining a knowledge of organizations active in the refugee space and creating referral pathways. Another activity is support for the women who work in the organizations VOICE works with, for example, connecting them with funding opportunities and serving as a networking space. Additionally psychosocial support and training on working in humanitarian contexts is offered. Direct contact with local organizations and partners also allows VOICE to notice new trends early and begin reacting.</li> </ul>
<b>Agenda point 4</b>	<p>IOM presented on recent activities in Małopolska and on newly opened integration centers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IOM has opened centers in multiple cities, including Krakow. The focus of the centers is mainly on including refugees from Ukraine into the job market. In this regard, practical career advice is offered, for example to individuals with high qualifications who want to find work as soon as possible. Intensive language classes in Polish and English are also offered and are a large help, as they allow individuals to find work more closely related to what they had previously been doing in Ukraine. For other individuals – such as those who still have funds and would like to spend time re-skilling – other courses are offered. For example, there will be a course on accounting for women who previously worked as accountants in Ukraine. There is also an Infoline through which all Ukrainians, not just refugees, can get information about finding work. In Krakow, the center is located at ul. Sienkiewicza 4.</li> <li>• UNHCR noted the importance of and reasons for distinguishing between refugees and economic migrants when referring to Ukrainians with international protection needs.</li> <li>• IB Poland asked whether there is a database of job opportunities available for refugees or migrants outside of the opportunities offered by the labor office. This is a question that is heard often at the migration infopoint.</li> <li>• IOM responded that first attempts are being made to make connections with trusted actors in various sectors with which job seekers can be connected.</li> </ul>
<b>AOB</b>	<p>The floor was opened for an impromptu discussion on collective shelters.</p>

- UNHCR noted a media report which stated that only 15% of refugees in the collective site run by Krakow Municipality will be paying maintenance costs of up to 40 PLN a day once new legislation is implemented on 1 March.
- Wolno Nam foundation provided an update about the situation in the organization's centers. The two centers run by Wolno Nam are funded by Krakow Municipality. As such, a number of meetings with the municipality have taken place regarding eligibility criteria for payment. At the current moment, exempt from payment are mothers with 3 or more children, women 60 and above, men 65 and above, and individuals with formal documentation that they are unfit to work – documentation translated from Ukrainian is also acceptable. In addition, unemployed people who are registered at the Grodzki Labor Office in Krakow are currently exempt from payment, but this is a temporary solution. For employed individuals only those making more than the minimum salary of 3490 PLN gross a month will need to pay. As such, out of 129 people in one center on Pilsudskiego street, only 5 will need to pay for their maintenance beginning 1 March.
- Halina Niec Legal Aid Center highlighted that the criteria for who is exempt from payment is codified in law. As such, it should not be up for interpretation. For example, exemptions are only for single parents. Two parent households are not exempt. Exemptions include individuals with disabilities and their guardians, women 60 and up, men 65 and up, pregnant women, a parent with a child up to 12 months of age, a single parent with 3 or more children, temporary guardians of minors, and individuals in difficult life situations which make contributions impossible.
- IB Poland shared the observation that discussions with refugees at the Migrant InfoPoint have shown a lack of information sharing regarding what the new legislation means for refugees in practice. IB Poland encouraged organizations to share up to date information at their information points and with refugees with whom they interact. Additionally, there have been reports that many refugees are considering going back to Ukraine because of the lack of clarity regarding this situation. As it is currently tax season in Poland, many refugees have reported that they would like to complete taxes, close matters in Poland, and return to Ukraine.
- IB Poland also provided updates about the general accommodation situation in Krakow city. In Krakow, several student dormitories housing refugees will be closing. About 1000 people will have to be relocated. Alight is an organization that still provides temporary places for refugees for up to one month through Airbnb. Salam lab also continues to use some grant funding for longer term accommodation. The train station relocation point remains open. However, there has been no news about additional locations for refugees opening. IB Poland asked any participants with additional beds for refugees, even temporary, to reach out.
- UNHCR noted that discussions are also ongoing for an agreement with Airbnb for accommodation for periods of up to one month. Outside of this, questions have also been raised regarding the refugees currently in collective shelters who will be unable to pay for their maintenance. Additional questions exist about the longevity of collective sites and how long they will

remain open. This is important information, even if there is a recognition that collective shelters are short term emergency solutions.

- A participant shared that Alight no longer has a program with Airbnb. Alight is currently helping only with refugees looking to move to the United States. Additionally, at the train station, there are only 50 spaces left where refugees may stay for a period of up to 48 hours. The temporary center at Sniadeckich 3 street, where there are 25 places where refugees can stay for up to 3 days, will close at the end of March.
- Salam Lab shared that the organization's agreement with Airbnb and with hotels remained ongoing, under which refugees can be hosted for up to one month in Krakow and one year outside of Krakow. The program will not last forever, but is still active.
- IB Poland provided clarification that all in all locations being funded by the Municipality, the funds are coming from the Voivodeship office. However, Salam lab has private donors and private contracts.
- UNHCR asked several follow up questions. For partners with collective sites, how will payments function from March? What are modalities - for example what if someone does not pay, either because they do not want to or are unable to? Will there be a grace period or will these people be evicted? What are the views of refugees on the upcoming changes? Are there any plans or indications about what will happen with individuals who will need ongoing social support?
- Wolno Nam highlighted that the Foundation has a specific situation, as the building housing the collective shelter on Pilsudskiego street has a private owner. Therefore, the refugees required to make payments will need to pay the landlord, and the landlord will need to provide an invoice with an individual's name on it. Since the center is financed by governmental support – recently increased from 70 PLN/person/day to 80 PLN/person/day, Wolno Nam would lose the governmental funding for any individual required to pay who fails to do so. Furthermore, from recent experience, there appears to be a general lack of understanding about the new legislation and many things remain unclear. There are also reasons that individuals living in the centers run by Wolno Nam continue to stay there. These are mainly people with specific vulnerabilities, such as mothers with multiple children, and individuals in difficult situations regarding their physical and mental health. In addition, very few of the people working are making above minimum wage. The Wolno Nam centers are not ideal or a long term solution. However, the first priority is assisting refugees with sorting out their paperwork, so that they can begin to function in the Polish system. Otherwise, people have very few options.
- IB Poland asked IOM if their mobile teams travelling outside of cities had any information about places to sleep in these smaller locations. Municipal authorities keep highlighting that there are opportunities in smaller locations for refugees, but is this the reality?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IOM highlighted that the mobile teams are working mainly in and around Rzeszow and Krakow, and not in larger Małopolska region. However, there is a spreadsheet of all of the shelters in the larger region.</li> <li>• UNHCR in partnership with REACH has just completed an Area Based Assessment (ABA) in 5 locations surrounding Krakow. The purpose was to assess the situation in these smaller locations regarding access to services, views of authorities, and the gaps and challenges to receiving more refugees. While the report is not yet public, a meeting is planned with Municipal authorities on 28<sup>th</sup> February to present the findings. While this is a small pilot, it will be able to serve as a model. Results will be presented at future coordination meetings.</li> <li>• Halina Niec Legal Aid Center shared that work is ongoing on a referral system for individuals with heightened needs in 6 cities. The purpose is to assist lawyers in making referrals.</li> <li>• UNHCR shared that there have been discussions with Mapujpomoc.pl about creating a unified service mapping tool.</li> </ul>
<b>AOB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wolno Nam Foundation provided information about an upcoming training on the free play method. The training will take place in Krakow in two parts and begins on 13<sup>th</sup> March. The training is free and includes accommodation, lunch, a per diem, and materials.</li> <li>• IOM shared that their team works in Podkarpackie with basic NFIs.</li> <li>• IB Poland shared that the location jointly run by IB Poland, Soup for Ukraine, and Platform 4 at Sniadeckich 3 street will be closing at the end of March. Szafa Dobra will be moving all activities to os. Goralis and Soup for Ukraine is looking for new locations for the soup program and for temporary sleeping locations.</li> </ul>

<b>ACTION POINTS SUMMARY</b>				
<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Status (as of )</b>
<b>1.</b>				

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