



MEETING MINUTES

ECONOMIC INCLUSION WORKING GROUP MEETING

DATE	27.06.2024	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.	Anna Ścibior-Butrym M.A. in Sociology; fourth-year doctoral student at the University of Szczecin School of Management and Career counsellor at the Centre of Assistance to Migrants and Refugees in Szczecin, Caritas.
2.	Dr. hab Łukasz Arendt Prof .UŁ., Institute of Spatial Economics; Department of Economic Policy; Faculty of Economics
3.	Dominik Durma, Project Implementation Specialist, Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer at the Medical University of Łódź

PARTICIPANTS	
1.	UNHCR
2.	Caritas
3.	International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)
4.	Save the Children
5.	Medical University of Lodz
6.	University of Lodz

7.	Warsaw School of Economics
8.	The Microfinance Centre
9.	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
10.	Tent
11.	Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego
12.	Red Cross
13.	Dom Otwarty
14.	International Organization for Migration (IOM)

AGENDA

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

11:10-11:35 **PART 1:** Presentation on the acculturation and adaptation in organisations employing foreign workers in Poland (including a preliminary analysis of the organisation's case study research).

(Anna Ścibior-Butrym M.A. in Sociology; fourth-year doctoral student at the University of Szczecin School of Management Career counsellor at the Centre of Assistance to Migrants and Refugees in Szczecin, Caritas +Q&A)

11:35-12:00 **PART 2:** Lewiatan Confederation pilot project on professional activation of Ukrainian citizens. Challenges and conclusions.

(Dr. hab Łukasz Arendt Prof. UŁ., Institute of Spatial Economics; Department of Economic Policy; Faculty of Economics Q&A)

12:00-12:25 **PART 3:** Interdisciplinary approach to professional counselling - examples from the city of Łódź.

(Dominik Durma, Project Implementation Specialist, Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer at the Medical University of Łódź+ Q&A).

12:25-13:00 AOB

INTRODUCTION

This meeting of the Economic Inclusion Working Group will focus on several key presentations. First, there will be a discussion on the adaptation and acculturation of Ukrainians (among other foreign workers) employed in organizations in Poland. This will be followed by a presentation on a pilot project aimed at the professional activation of Ukrainian citizens. Lastly, examples from the city of Lodz will be shared, highlighting an interdisciplinary approach to professional counseling.

OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

I. Presentation of own research conducted in the Szczecin organisation on adaptation and acculturation of, inter alia, Ukrainians employed in organisations in Poland

1. Definition and Types of Diversity

- Basic Diversity: Includes age, gender, nationality.
- Secondary Diversity: Includes religion, education, place of residence.

2. Core areas of management diversity in organisations

- Gender
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Disability
- Origin/Nationality

3. Cultural Diversity in organisations

The need arises in diversified employment structures and the interactivity of integration processes involving both migrants and the host community.

Approaches to managing diversity:

- a) Hostile: can lead to discrimination
- b) Neutral: Acceptance without taking action
- c) Naively positive: expecting benefits from hiring culturally diverse managers.
- d) Realistic: recognizing the need to consciously manage diversity in a goal-oriented manner.

4. Integration as an acculturation strategy

- a) Separation: Maintaining distinct cultural identities.
- b) Marginalization: Neither maintaining the original culture nor joining the host culture.
- c) Assimilation: Migrants adopt the host culture while retaining their national identity.
- d) Integration: Combining elements of both cultures.

Integration of people in a migratory situation occurs across various areas, with economic integration being particularly crucial, as this impacts other aspects of social life and the overall adaptation process.

Differences in national cultures can influence organizational dynamics.

The objective is to effectively integrate foreigners → In the process of assimilation, migrants may embrace the host culture while preserving their national identity. Achieving seamless integration across multiple domains is crucial, with the job market serving as a pivotal element in economic adaptation.

Organizational practices significantly influence the successful integration of individuals.

Observed behaviors of Ukrainians and Belarusians in organizations, such as their attitudes towards hierarchy and work culture, significantly influence their integration process. This highlights the need for tailored integration strategies that consider cultural differences and promote inclusivity in the workplace.

5. Research conducted on adaptation and acculturation

Aim: Identify and improve the adaptation and acculturation processes of Eastern European employees, particularly in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship.

Methodology: Case studies focusing on companies with diverse employment structures.

Main Research Question: How can the adaptation and acculturation processes of Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Georgians in the workplace be improved?

Case Study Subject: A company with foreign capital and a diversified employment structure with respect to nationality/culture in Szczecin (Western Pomeranian Voivodeship) and open to recommendations on improving these processes.

The company has employed 1227 employees in total, being 777 Polish, 452 Ukrainians, 15 Belarusians, 7 Georgians and 10 from other nationalities.

The preliminary analysis of the research data, based on in-depth interviews and document reviews, reveals insights into improving the integration and adaptation processes for foreign workers within the organization, particularly focusing on the use of Polish as a language for communication and its role in selection criteria.

Key findings highlight the challenges and dynamics of managing cultural diversity, the impact of cultural differences on recruitment and adaptation procedures, and the importance of effective communication of organizational procedures across diverse linguistic backgrounds.

The analysis also explores how foreign employees navigate the organizational culture and the effectiveness of acculturation strategies chosen by migrants. Overall, the study emphasizes the need for tailored approaches to effectively manage cultural diversity and enhance the integration of multicultural employees within the organizational framework, particularly emphasizing the use of Polish in these processes.

Results

Progress in Polish language skills is identified as a significant component of professional development within the leadership program, showcasing an integrative approach to integration, evident in the increasing percentage of Ukrainian employees. The leadership program also includes training in intercultural knowledge.

There is no top-down national differentiation in staff lines within the organization.

Regarding cultural differences among Ukrainian employees:

- There is an "offensive-defensive" communication attitude, characterized by over-expression.
- There is a strong focus on earning money through overtime work.
- Financial incentives are the primary motivator.
- There is a tendency for employees to hide issues from their superiors due to collectivist values, impacting safety and self-evaluation.
- There is a significant respect for hierarchical authority, sometimes resulting in behaviors not being properly communicated to superiors.
- There is a notable power distance observed among employees.

These findings highlight organizational practices and cultural dynamics influencing the integration and adaptation of foreign workers within the company.

Elements of Diversity Management in Cultural Diversity:

- A calendar of religious festivals for the dominant minority religion.
 - An integration budget allocated per person, allowing foremen and managers to organize joint outings.
 - Partial refunds for learning Polish, though only a small percentage of foreigners utilize this benefit.
 - Team-building events held a few times a year, with higher attendance for entertainment-focused activities compared to sporting ones.
 - Opportunities for employees to improve and acquire new professional qualifications, which have garnered high interest.
- At this stage, the study does not offer conclusions or recommendations. This is due to the limitations of the research and the stage of the overall survey.

II. **Lewiatan Confederation pilot project on professional activation of Ukrainian citizens. Challenges and conclusions.**

General principles of the pilot project

Objective: Develop an effective model for vocational activation that leverages targeted actions to activate the potential of a large, well-educated, and motivated group, encouraging them to work and stay in Poland.

The goals include securing employment for 40 project participants and ensuring they maintain their jobs for at least one month.

Target Group:

100 people from 3 voivodeships:

Mazowieckie (Warsaw, Pruszków) - 40 participants

Małopolskie (Kraków, Chrzanów) - 40 participants

Śląskie (Katowice, Siemianowice Śląskie) - 20 participants

Implementation:

- Activation activities will run for 4 months, from August 1 to November 30, 2022.
- A catalogue of obligatory activities includes:
- Development of an assessment of each participant's professional potential
- Preparation of an Individual Activation Plan for each participant
- Assistance with the preparation of application documents
- Support with the completion of official documents
- Job placement services

Assumptions and Continued Implementation:

The service delivery model includes:

- Assigning an individual employment adviser to each participant
- Providing ongoing contact with the adviser, including unlimited face-to-face sessions
- Offering individualized activities tailored to each participant's abilities and needs, based on prior diagnosis.
- Holistic support addressing health, social, and psychological needs, including cultural-motivational support provided by a Ukrainian consultant.
- Direct engagement with employers, such as job search assistance, candidate recommendations and presentations, and support during recruitment interviews
- Assisting employers with formalities related to hiring foreigners.
- Providing intensive Polish language courses, childcare, and relocation support
- Offering vocational courses and assistance with the recognition of qualifications, especially for regulated professions

Further Assumptions:

- 100 participants are randomly selected from the register of the Labour Office of the City of Warsaw.
- Competence testing is not required.
- Identification of sectors where Ukrainian citizens wish to work.
- Measures are implemented based on the provisions of the Act, with a highly flexible approach.
- Offering Polish language courses to all willing participants

Challenges→ The challenges faced in the pilot project include a sense of temporariness among participants, low interest in the scheme, and abandonment of participation. A significant language barrier is a key problem, exacerbated by a high level of formal education

but a lack of work experience and proof of education. There is reluctance to work below qualification levels and a lack of knowledge about the Polish labor market. Additionally, caring for dependent persons presents another obstacle.

Conclusions→ The findings highlight a disparity between the declarative willingness to enter the labor market and the actual motivation among participants. Key issues include the recognition of qualifications, knowledge of and willingness to learn the Polish language, limited flexibility and availability, and an unstable housing situation. Additionally, employers often have a stereotypical approach to employing Ukrainians. Standardized recruitment procedures can reduce the employability of Ukrainian nationals, and some employers lack experience in hiring foreigners. Onboarding is identified as a crucial part of a person's introduction to work.

III. Interdisciplinary approach to professional counselling - examples from the city of Łódź.

The labour market in Lodz: In 2024, the labor market in Łódź presents a diverse landscape. The current unemployment rate stands at 5.7%, placing Łódź 97th out of 380 counties in Poland in terms of unemployment. While this rate exceeds the national average, it does not pose a significant threat to the region's economic stability.

Key growth sectors in Lodz:

1. *IT industry:* Despite recent declines in job offers, the future outlook is optimistic due to increasing demand for IT specialists driven by digitalization and technological advancements. Employers are investing in modern technological solutions, leading to the creation of new jobs in this sector.
2. *Services and Trade:* There is significant development in services, particularly e-commerce, and increased investment in retail. This growth is expected to result in the creation of new jobs, especially in customer services and logistics.
3. *Industrial Sector:* Łódź, historically known for its industrial base, is undergoing transformation with investments in modern production technologies and logistics. This transformation is driving demand for skilled workers in the industrial sectors.

Target group: Ukrainian women who come to Poland seeking enhanced living conditions and professional stability. This demographic displays notable age diversity, encompassing young women embarking on their careers, middle-aged women with extensive professional backgrounds, and older women often seeking less physically demanding employment opportunities.

Support:

1. *Individual consultations:* Each session typically lasts around 30 minutes, focusing on the client's specific professional situation, skills, experience, and expectations regarding the Polish labor market.
2. *Group workshops:* These sessions are designed to improve qualifications and enhance professional skills among participants.

3. *Development of an individualized career path:* Following the initial consultation, ongoing communication is maintained primarily through email to support the client's career development journey.

IV. Other interventions

Organizations are encouraged to register on the 5W platform. A presentation will summarize progress and received inputs. Plans include translating "2024 RRP Poland – projects and activities tracking" into Polish, with training offered for data entry. Basic information is ready for analysis, and participation is open to all, encouraging those who haven't filled out information to do so.

There has been a reminder regarding the completion of an inter-agency survey on the funding needs of local Polish NGOs. The survey aims to identify financial needs and gaps, as well as to understand challenges in raising funds. The deadline for completion has been extended until the end of the month, and all participants are encouraged to submit their responses promptly.

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, 25th July, 11:00-13:00h.

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY

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

