# The Impact of the Freeze on U.S. Funding on the Activities of Non-Governmental Organizations Working in the Field of Migration and Integration in Poland

Analysis of Survey Results
Conducted between April 22 and May 6, 2025
Prepared by the Mapuj Pomoc Network (coordinated by the To Proste Foundation) in cooperation with the Ukraine Foundation, Q Foundation, Polish Migration Forum, Nomada Association, and the Towards Dialogue Foundation.

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# Context

In January 2025, the U.S. administration announced a decision to temporarily freeze nearly all foreign aid programs funded by the State Department and USAID, as part of a broader “America First” strategy.

Within the first 80 days, over 5,300 programs were suspended, representing 86% of USAID’s portfolio. This support had played a key role in Poland as well—in 2024, civil society organizations received approximately PLN 200 million in total, primarily for humanitarian and integration efforts for refugees from Ukraine.

In response to the sudden suspension of funding, the *To Proste* Foundation conducted two rounds of survey research to assess the scale of the impact this donor decision had on Polish NGOs. The study aimed to estimate the risk of disruption in operations, the consequences for vulnerable groups, and the need for systemic support from Polish public institutions.

The collected data has been compiled for submission to the Minister for Civil Society and the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, as a contribution to the national decision-making process.

**This analysis reflects data self-reported by organizations and has not been subject to independent verification.**

The full analysis of the survey data is available at the following link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AuEH8v97qfs5tfnt1awxyD_VyZWMTbSF2mAoipoiKkA/edit?tab=t.0

# The Refugee and Migrant Support System in Poland – The Perspective of Non-Governmental Organizations

It is estimated that around **5,000 Polish non-governmental organizations** have been involved in aid efforts for refugees—primarily from Ukraine—**supporting nearly one million people under temporary protection in Poland**. NGOs have played a key role in delivering humanitarian, integration, and psychosocial assistance, **providing support valued at a total of PLN 1.6 billion**. A significant portion of the funding for these activities came from U.S. sources, enabling flexible responses and the development of international partnerships. The suspension of this funding threatens the continuity of operations, reduces the scale of assistance, and may undermine trust in cross-sectoral cooperation. This report analyzes the impact of this decision from the perspective of humanitarian organizations operating in Poland.

# Survey on the Impact of the Freeze on U.S. Funding on the Activities of Non-Governmental Organizations Working in the Field of Migration and Integration in Poland – Methodology

- The study was conducted in the form of an online survey titled *"The Impact of the Freeze on U.S. Funding on the Activities of Non-Governmental Organizations Working in the Field of Migration and Integration in Poland."* The research tool was developed by the **Mapuj Pomoc Network (coordinated by the To Proste Foundation) in collaboration with the Ukraine Foundation, Q Foundation, Polish Migration Forum, Nomada Association, and the Towards Dialogue Foundation.**

- The survey included both closed-ended questions (single- and multiple-choice) and open-ended questions allowing respondents to provide more detailed comments or clarifications.

- The survey was distributed electronically through the communication channels of the Mapuj Pomoc network and friendly networks coordinated by other organizations. As of May 6, 2025, a total of 24 organizations had responded.

- The analysis concerns information provided by organisations, not verified as to its accuracy.

# The thematic scope of the survey included:

1. **Sources of funding** – questions focused on the origin of funds that had been frozen, withdrawn, or subject to terminated agreements. Respondents could indicate U.S. institutions (e.g., USAID) and partner organizations.
2. **Geographic scope of the projects** – respondents identified the voivodeships in which the projects affected by funding restrictions had been implemented.
3. **Financial losses** – this section included detailed questions about:
    - the amount of withdrawn funds with no guarantee of reinstatement,
    - suspended and reinstated funding amounts,
    - the value of potential funding the organization can no longer apply for in 2025,
    - the estimated share of lost or inaccessible funds in the organization's budget for activities in the first half and the entirety of 2025.
4. **Categories of lost and at-risk activities** – respondents identified the thematic areas in which funding was lost (e.g., education, integration, psychological support), and which activities are currently most at risk due to lack of funding.
5. **Staffing impacts** – questions addressed staff reductions resulting from the funding shortfall, including the number of people already laid off or expected to be laid off in 2025.
6. **Impact on beneficiaries** – respondents estimated:
    - the number of individuals who will not receive support due to the funding cuts,
    - the extent to which suspended programs targeted particularly vulnerable groups (e.g., children, people with disabilities, migrants in crisis),
    - the percentage of activities for these groups that had to be suspended.

# Exchange rate of the U.S. dollar

Amounts originally expressed in U.S. dollars were converted into Polish zloty using the exchange rate from May 5, 2025:
**1 USD = 3.7789 PLN (NBP rate as of May 6, 2025).**

In the past six months, the average exchange rate of the U.S. dollar was approximately **4.04 PLN.** During the budget planning stage, grant amounts were therefore converted into Polish currency using this higher rate, resulting in **greater values than those presented in this analysis**.
Since the current USD/PLN rate is significantly lower, organizations had expected funding in Polish zloty to be higher than the amounts shown here.

# Withdrawn Funds (PLN) – Number of Organizations by Amount Range

**Total Declared Loss: 17,913,023.20 PLN**

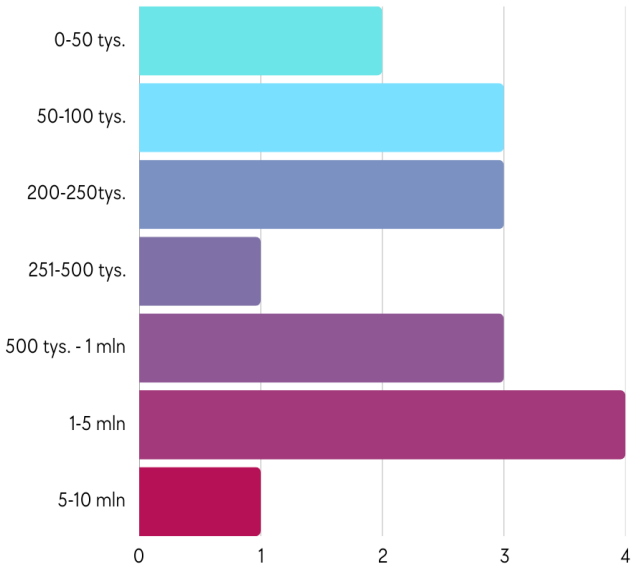
**Average amount of withdrawn funds:** 1,053,707.25 PLN
**Median (the middle value):** 400,000 PLN

This means that:

- Half of the organizations lost less than 400,000 PLN, but
- The average is significantly skewed by large losses – up to 7,539,666 PLN
- As many as 7 organizations reported losses below 250,000 PLN – which may nonetheless represent a significant portion of their tota operational budget.

The largest number of organizations (4) reported losses in the **1–5 million PLN range**, indicating that for part of the sector, the scale c withdrawn funds is not only substantial, but even critical to their operations.

These figures show that the loss of funding does not affect the sector uniformly, but rather impacts organizations in a dispersed manner, depending on their scale of activity, funding model, and level of source diversification.



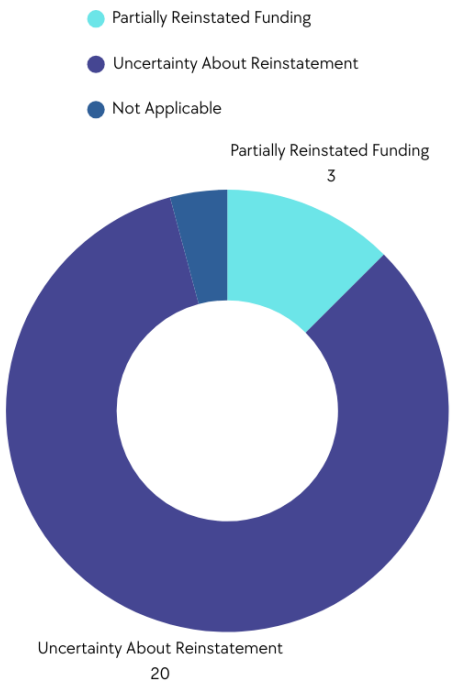
# Distribution of Declared Suspended and Reinstated Funds (in PLN)

- Average Value of Reinstated Funds: 483,799.17 PLN
- Median: 170,050 PLN

The majority of organizations did not receive reinstated funds or do not have any guarantee of recovering them.
**Only three out of 24 organizations (12.5%)** indicated specific amounts reinstated with a guarantee in 2025 – recalculated values:

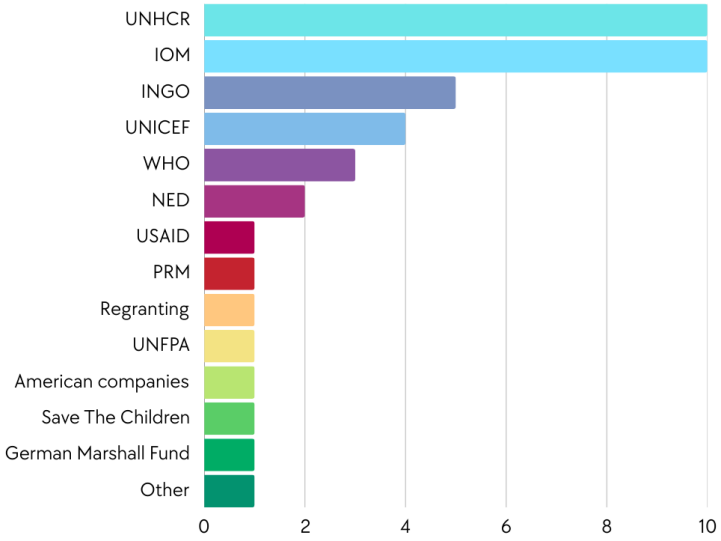
- 40,000 USD → 151,156 PLN – 6.5% of the planned funding amount of 610,501 USD
- 45,000 USD → 170,050 PLN – 20.4% of the planned funding amount of 220,000 USD
- 1,130,191.50 PLN – 15% of the planned funding amount of 2,000,000 USD

Other responses referred to a lack of guarantees, lack of reinstated funds, or lack of information (e.g. no access to financial data).
The data indicate that the reinstatement of suspended funds with a guarantee is very limited and concerns only a small portion of respondents.



# Sources of Frozen Funds – Donor Funding Sources from Organizations

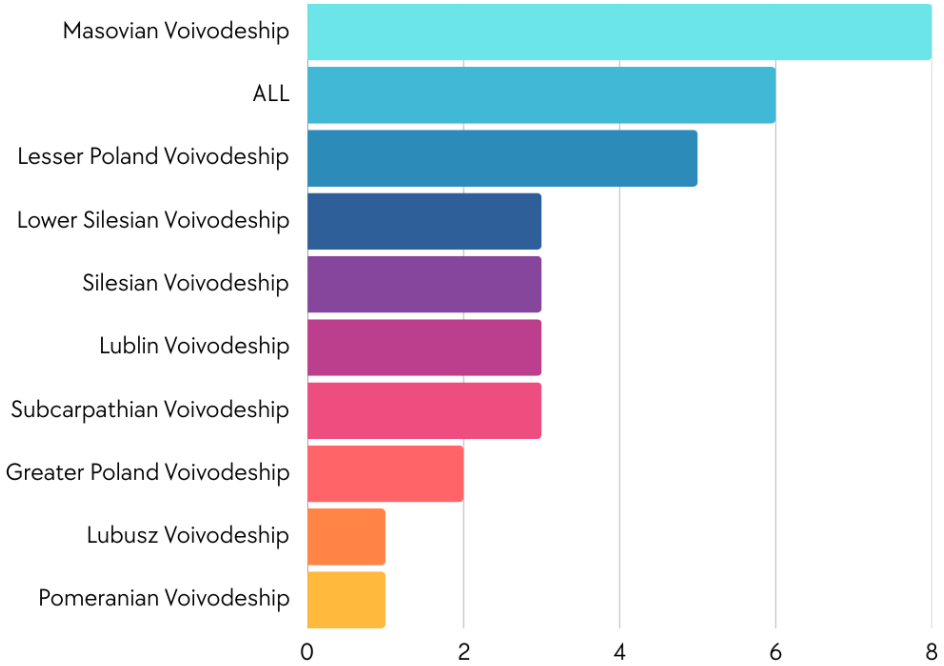
- The most frequently frozen funds originated from key UN agencies—UNHCR and IOM—each reported by over 41% of organizations. This indicates that organizations were heavily reliant on humanitarian funding from the UN system; when these resources became unavailable, the shock was felt across the sector.
- Smaller, yet still significant gaps involved grants from large international NGOs, as well as UNICEF and WHO, which further deepened the crisis in areas related to child protection and public health.
- Securing funding from UN agencies and international NGOs reflects both the ability of Polish non-governmental organizations to access diverse sources, their recognition, compliance with standards, and high professionalism. However, it also highlights the systemic risk posed by global shifts in aid priorities, as seen in this case.
- The high concentration of funding among a small number of major donors makes organizations particularly vulnerable to sudden decisions by those institutions.*




**This trend is confirmed by nationwide data—according to a 2025 Klon/Jawor survey, as many as 64% of NGOs working with refugees report receiving funding primarily from one or two sources, significantly increasing their exposure to systemic shocks.*

# Voivodeships Where Projects Were Affected

These data show that the effects of the funding suspension were nationwide. Many projects were implemented simultaneously across all voivodeships, with particular concentration in regions with high levels of aid activity—namely the Mazowieckie and Małopolskie voivodeships.



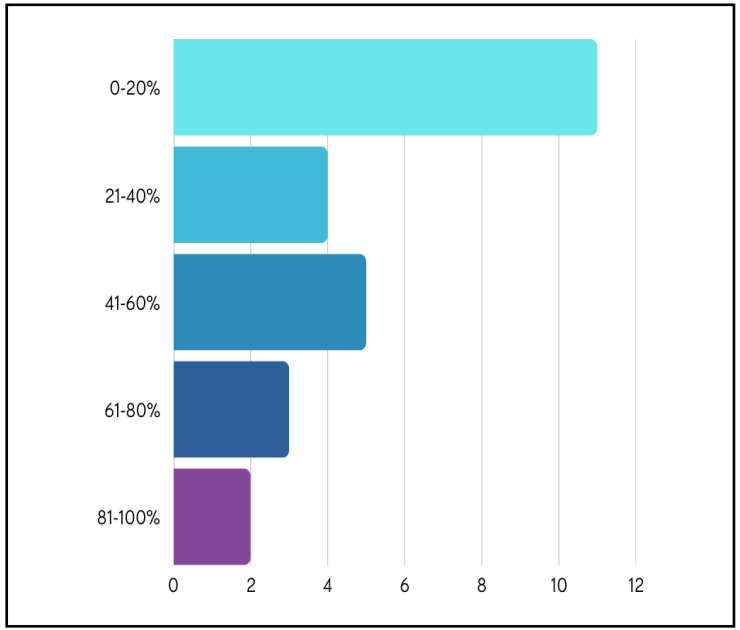
# Share of Frozen or Withdrawn Funds in the Organizations' Planned Budget – First Half of 2025

The largest number of responses regarding frozen funds (**11 out of 24 organizations**) fell within the 0–20% budget impact range. This group may appear relatively resilient at first glance, but in some cases, the funds were allocated to highly specific projects (e.g., psychological support), which had to be halted despite representing a relatively small portion of the total budget.

As many as 10 organizations (25% of respondents) reported a significantly higher share of lost funds:

- 4 organizations indicated the 21–40% range,
- 5 organizations indicated the 41–60% range,
- 3 organizations indicated the 61–80% range,
- 2 organizations reported as much as 81–100%, indicating near-total reliance on the funds that were frozen or withdrawn for their operations in the first half of 2025.

Even the loss of just 10–15% of the budget can paralyze a specialized program if the organization lacks flexible reserve funding. This gap is particularly evident in services related to public health, social integration, and psychosocial support.



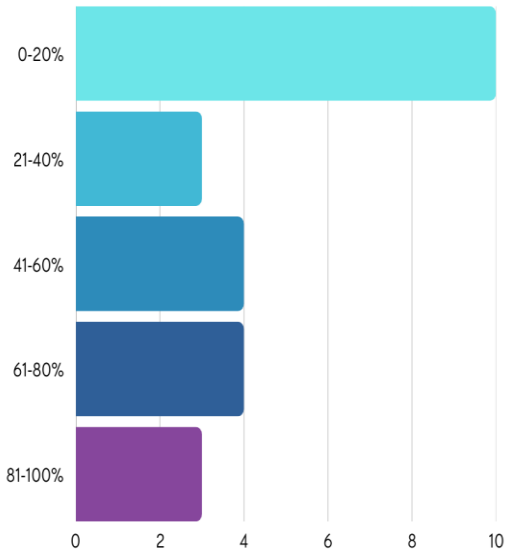
# Share of Unattainable Funds in the Organizations' Budget – Entire Year 2025

In response to the question about the estimated percentage of funds frozen or withdrawn from organizations' budgets for refugee and migrant support activities in the first half of 2025, **the most frequently selected category was the 0–20% range, indicated by 11 out of 24 respondents.** In practice, this does not necessarily reflect financial resilience— in some cases, these funds were allocated for specific programs that had to be suspended. Several survey responses indicated that although only 0–20% of the budget was affected, these amounts were dedicated to concrete activities (e.g., psychological support), which had to be halted—potentially permanently.

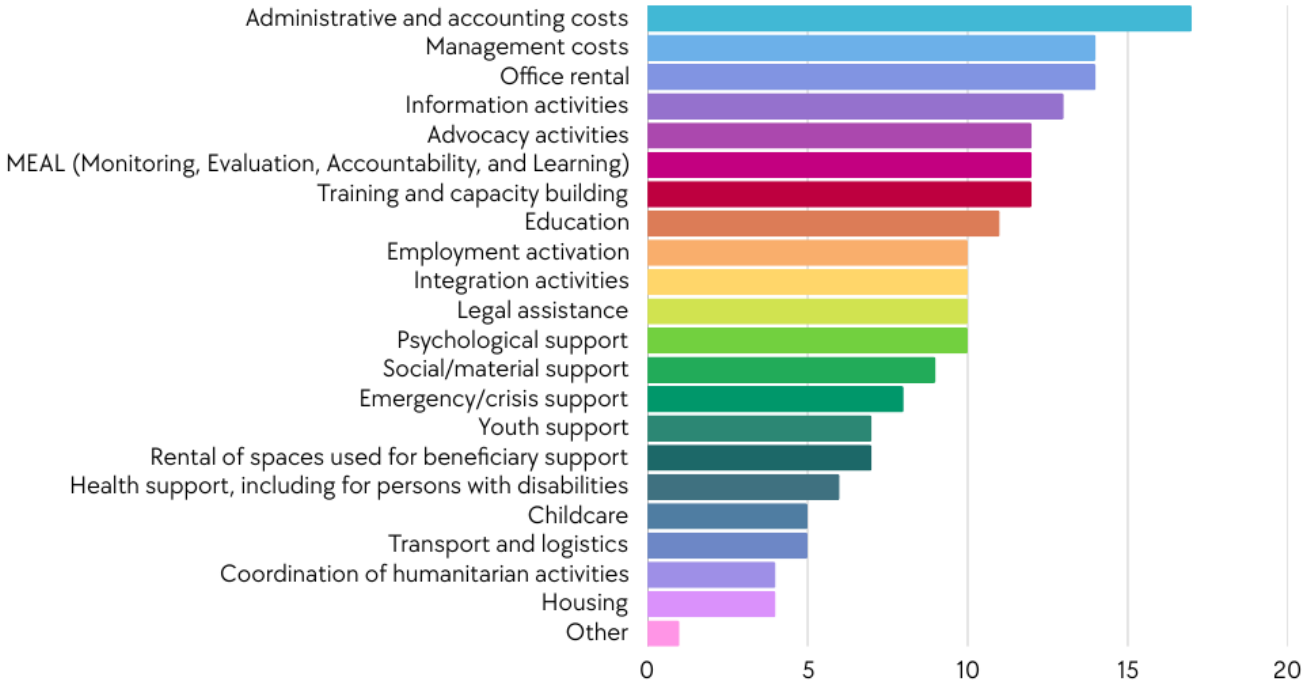
As many as 10 organizations (25% of respondents) reported a significantly higher share of lost funds than 0–20%:

- 4 organizations selected the 21–40% range,
- 5 organizations selected the 41–60% range,
- 3 organizations reported 61–80%,
- 2 organizations reported as much as 81–100%, meaning their operations in the first half of 2025 were almost entirely dependent on funds that have since been frozen or withdrawn.

The results indicate that although some organizations have managed to reduce financial risk, **a significant group still operates under conditions of great uncertainty. The high share of unavailable funds in planned budgets may lead to the reduction or complete suspension of activities, which in turn will affect the availability of services for refugees and migrants in Poland.**



# Categories of Activities for Which Organizations Lost Funding – Fully or Partially



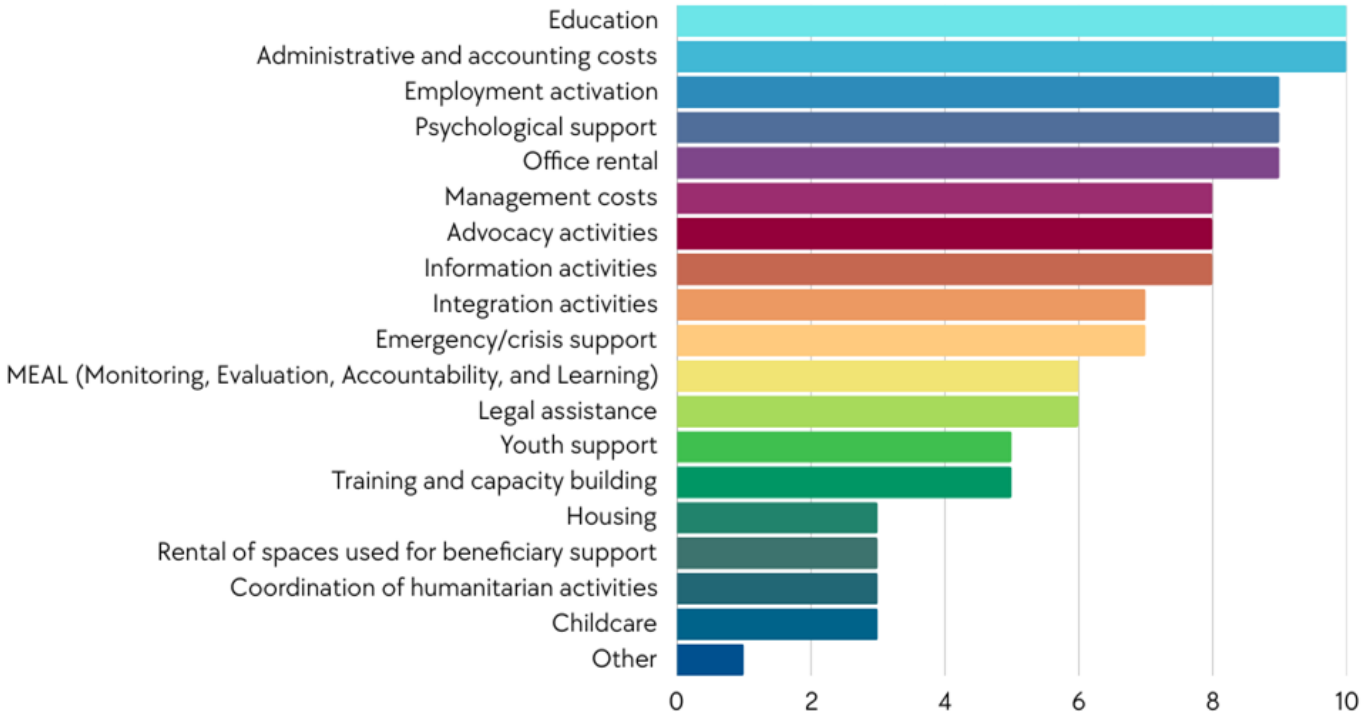
# Categories of Activities for Which Organizations Lost Funding – Fully or Partially

The most frequently reported categories were:

- **Administrative and accounting costs** – 17 responses – 70.83%
- **Management costs** – 14 responses – 58.33%
- **Office rental** – 14 responses – 58.33%
- **Information activities** – 13 responses – 54.17%
- **Advocacy activities** – 12 responses – 50.00%
- **MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning)** – 12 responses – 50.00%
- **Training and capacity building** – 12 responses – 50.00%
- **Education** – 11 responses – 45.83%
- **Employment activation** – 10 responses – 41.67%
- **Integration activities** – 10 responses – 41.67%
- **Legal assistance** – 10 responses – 41.67%
- **Psychological support** – 10 responses – 41.67%

The high number of responses in key categories—such as administrative and accounting costs, management costs, office rental, and information activities—suggests that organizations are most affected **not only in areas of direct support, but especially in covering fixed costs and operational infrastructure**. This may translate into difficulties in retaining staff, maintaining office space, and ensuring effective communication with beneficiaries, all of which directly impact the organizations' capacity to deliver **other essential services such as educational, legal, or psychological support. At the same time, a large number of organizations reported losing funds for activities directly aimed at refugees and migrants.**

# Activities Most at Risk in the Absence of New Funding Sources



# Activities Most at Risk in the Absence of New Funding Sources

In an **open-ended question**, organizations were asked to identify **which activities they consider most at risk or impossible to carry out without securing new funding**. The responses confirm that the effects of the freeze on U.S. funding impact both direct beneficiary services and critical elements of institutional infrastructure.

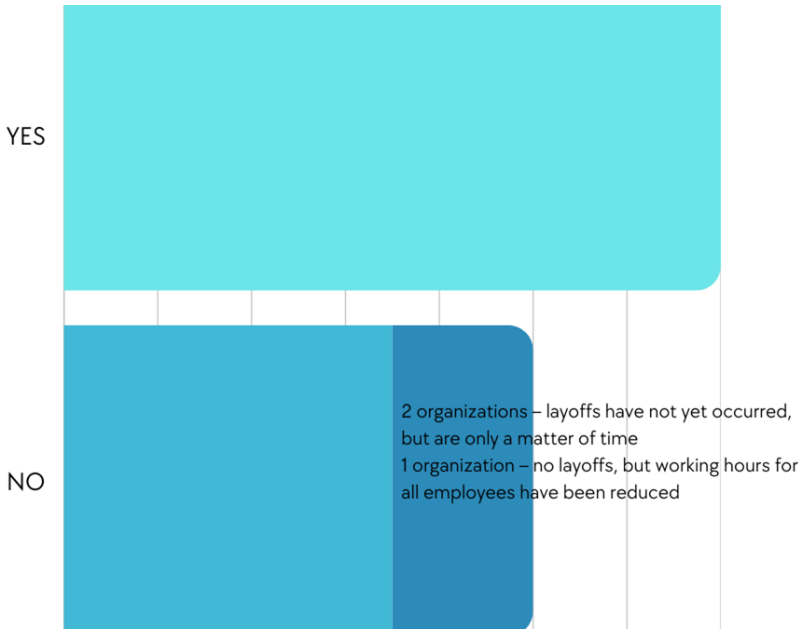
**The most frequently cited areas at risk** are:

- Education – 10 organizations – 41.67%
- Administrative and accounting costs – 10 organizations – 41.67%
- Psychological support – 10 organizations – 41.67%
- Office rental – 9 organizations – 37.5%
- Employment activation – 9 organizations – 37.5%
- Management costs – 8 organizations – 33.33%
- Information activities (hotlines, websites, info points) – 8 organizations – 33.33%
- Advocacy activities – 8 organizations – 33.33%
- Emergency / crisis support – 7 organizations – 29.16%
- Integration activities – 7 organizations – 29.16%

**Nature of the risk:**

- Some organizations have scaled back activities but have not yet suspended them—stating that continuation will not be possible without additional support.
- The risks are both systemic (e.g. lack of funds for coordination of humanitarian activities, MEAL, and management) and operational (e.g. lack of funding for specific services and staff).

# Staff Reductions Resulting from Loss of Funding



# Staff Reductions Resulting from Loss of Funding

- **14 organizations (58.33%)** confirmed that staff reductions have already taken place.
  **10 organizations (41.67%)** reported that no layoffs had occurred yet, but two of them noted that dismissals are only a matter of time, and in a third organization, all employees had their working hours reduced to less than full-time.

**Conclusions:**
More than half of respondents point to real and already tangible financial consequences that translate into reduced human resources. Staff reductions in the NGO sector **not only lead to job losses but also diminish the operational capacity of organizations and increase workload for remaining staff**. In many cases, one employee now covers responsibilities previously distributed across two or three roles, leading to **burnout** and increased staff turnover. This issue of overburdening and burnout was already a major challenge before the freeze on U.S. funding. As reported in the Klon-Jawor study "*When Life in Crisis Becomes the Everyday*", the sector is entering a phase of staffing destabilization, which may have long-term consequences.

Reduced human resources directly impact NGOs' ability to carry out their statutory activities—including service delivery, aid provision, effective crisis response, and engagement in social and institutional dialogue. As a result, **not only does the reach of Polish NGOs shrink, but so does staff readiness to remain engaged in such a strained system over the long term**.

# Estimated Percentage of Permanent Staff Laid Off (or at Risk of Layoff)

Quantifiable responses indicate that:

- In 6 organizations, between 40% and 100% of staff are at risk.
- In 4 additional cases, organizations reported layoffs in the 11–30% range.
- 7 organizations reported no layoffs; however, one noted that it managed to retain its team only by significantly reducing working hours. In another case, there were no staff cuts, but the management and coordinators are working without pay.
- Some respondents also indicated they were unsure of the full extent of layoffs or that their organization had not commenced operations due to the suspension of funds.

## Conclusions:

The data confirm that many organizations are operating **at the edge of functionality**—staff reductions are affecting not just individual positions but entire teams. In one case, it was reported that without new sources of funding, **the entire salaried staff, excluding management, would cease to operate**.

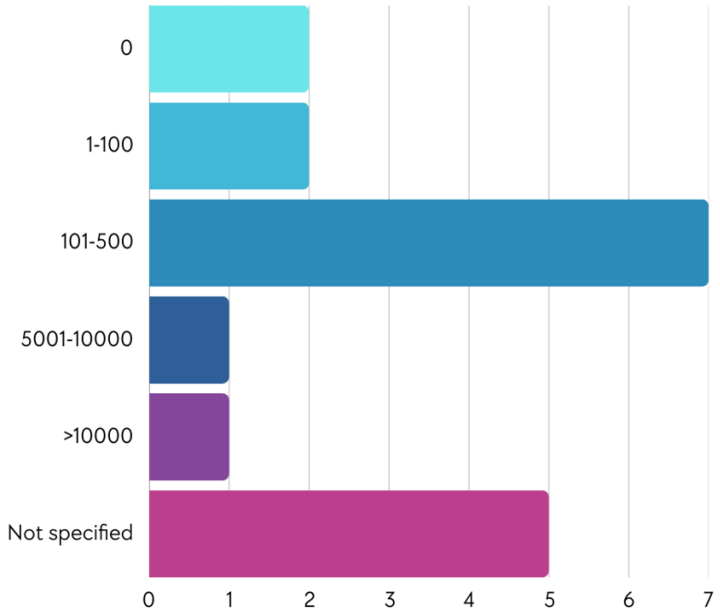
# Estimated Number of Beneficiaries Who Will Not Receive Support

Among the responses received:

- The highest reported number of affected beneficiaries was 100,000 (from one of the largest organizations).
- Several other organizations reported being unable to support beneficiaries in the range of thousands (e.g., 5,000, 8,000, 2,000).
- In total, based on quantifiable data, the sum exceeded 125,000 individuals, not including descriptive responses where no specific numbers were provided.

**Conclusions:**

The collected data indicate that the negative impact on the refugee and migrant population in Poland is substantial. **Many beneficiaries are losing access to essential forms of support—legal, social, psychological, and educational**—and organizations are signaling an inability to continue operations in critical areas.



# An example response

(from one organization presenting a detailed description of the impact of the funding freeze on specific areas of its work)

*1) Number of people who will not receive legal and assistance support: 210 people will not benefit from individual legal consultations, 353 people will not receive assistance support (e.g., in offices, clinics, at the police).*

*2) Number of people at risk of violence who will not receive help: 21 women and girls at risk of gender-based violence will remain without support, 25 people affected by bias-motivated violence will not receive help through anti-discrimination interventions, over 100 people will not participate in workshops on preventing and responding to bias-motivated violence.*

*3) Number of people who will lose access to psychological support: approximately 420 psychological consultations will not take place – access to support will be suspended as of June 2025.*

*4) Number of people from Latin American countries who will not receive support in the area of protection from labor exploitation: at least 500 people will not receive assistance support, will not participate in trainings on labor rights and adaptation in Poland, and will not be protected from fraud and exploitation.*

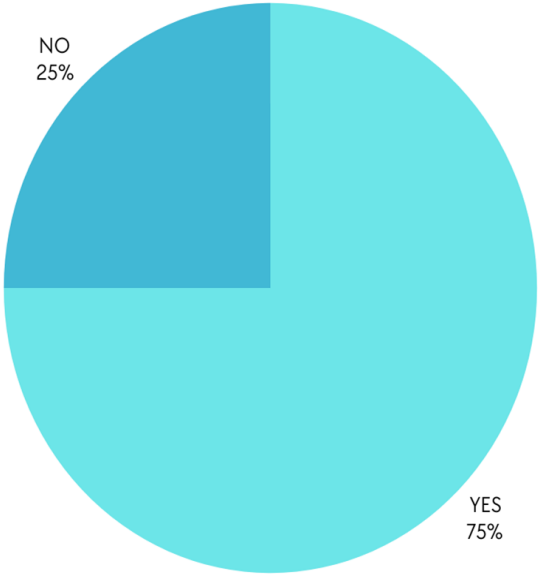
*5) Number of people in homelessness crisis and people in need of emergency housing without support: 34 people will not receive support in the form of temporary accommodation or accompaniment in the process of becoming independent.*

*6) Other activities that will be suspended or significantly reduced: No mobile outreach counseling visits to Collective Accommodation Centers – the number of people affected by this limitation was not precisely estimated in the report but is expected to be several hundred people annually. Suspension of translation services (regular and certified) – a significant portion of beneficiaries using counseling services (including the above-mentioned groups) will no longer have access to this form of [illegible]t.*

# Proportion of Suspended Programs Directed Toward Vulnerable Groups

Out of 25 organizations:

- 18 organizations (75%) responded YES – confirming that the suspended activities were primarily directed at groups particularly vulnerable to exclusion.
- 6 organizations (25%) responded NO – their suspended activities were not focused on such groups.

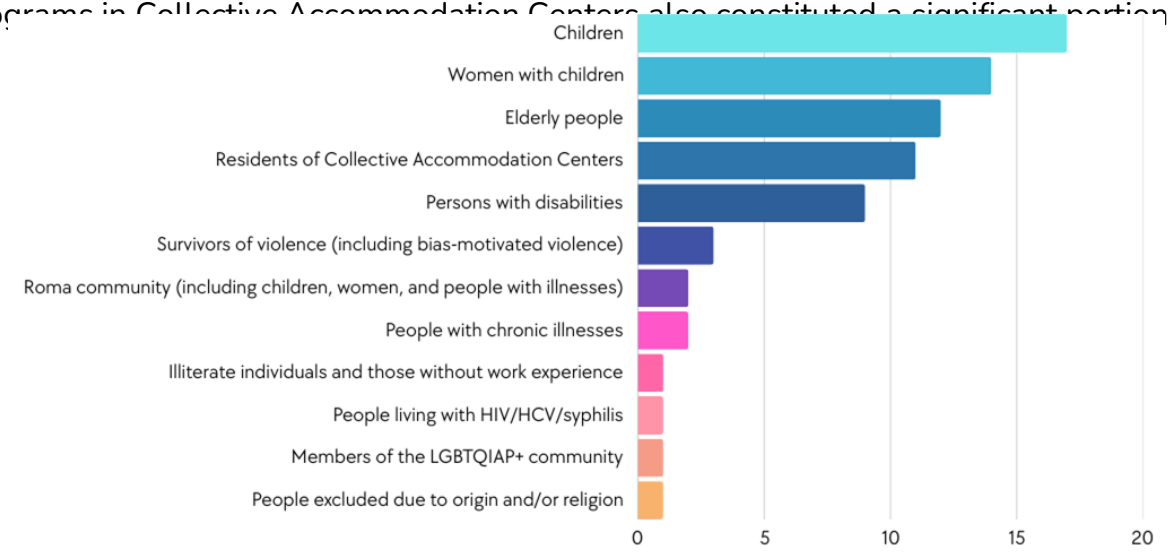



**Conclusions:**
The data clearly indicate that **the vast majority of lost or suspended programs concerned support for vulnerable groups**, such as people with refugee backgrounds, individuals experiencing homelessness, women at risk of violence, people with disabilities, and children.
This means that the consequences of the funding freeze are not distributed evenly—they hit hardest those at heightened risk of marginalization and most dependent on systemic support provided by non-governmental organizations.

# Most Frequently Identified Vulnerable Groups Affected by Suspended Programs

**Conclusions:**

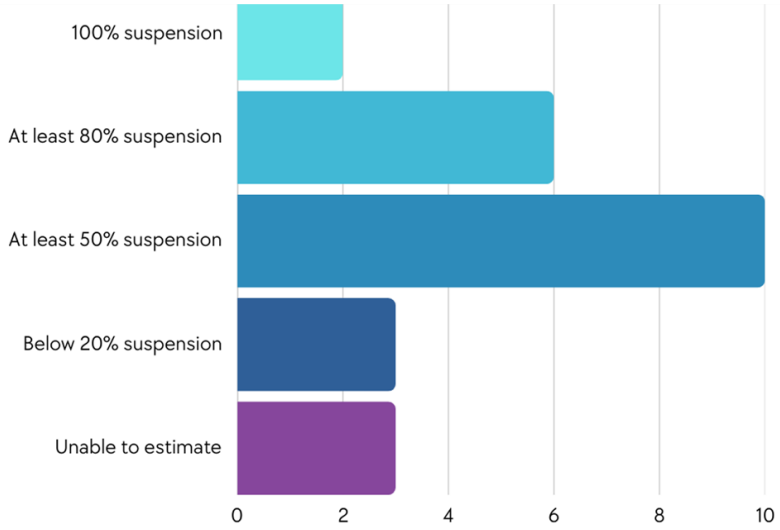
- Over three-quarters of organizations confirmed that their suspended programs targeted children and women with children, making these groups the most affected.
- Elderly individuals and people with disabilities were included in programs in 50% and 37.5% of cases, respectively.
- Support programs in Collective Accommodation Centers also constituted a significant portion of activities (45.83%).



# Extent of Suspension of Activities Targeting Vulnerable Groups

Numerical Results (based on analyzed quantitative responses):

- Average level of suspended activities: 58%
- Median: 65%
- Most common response ranges: 50–59% and 80–89%
- Organizations reporting 100% suspension: 2
- Organizations reporting at least 80% suspension: 6
- Organizations reporting at least 50% suspension: 10 (out of 17 analyzed quantitative responses)
- Organizations reporting below 20% suspension: 3
- Organizations unable to estimate the scale (descriptive responses): 3




**Conclusions:**
The data show that more than half of the organizations experienced a significant reduction in activities directed toward vulnerable groups—often exceeding half of their originally planned initiatives. In some cases, this means the complete suspension of specific programs, such as remedial classes for children.

The most commonly reported range was 50–100%, indicating a serious and direct impact of the financial situation on the operational capacity of organizations. Some organizations were unable to estimate the extent of the restrictions, likely due to the dynamic nature of the situation and uncertainty about the future of specific projects.

# SUMMARY

- ★ The analysis of survey results collected from organizations supporting refugees and migrants in Poland shows that the freeze on U.S. funding has had a significant impact on the entire sector—**both operationally and programmatically**.
- ★ The most severely affected were activities targeting vulnerable groups, including children, women with children, elderly people, and persons with disabilities. In over half of the organizations, at least 50% of such activities were suspended, with some forced to halt them entirely.
- ★ Key forms of substantive support, such as education, psychological assistance, employment activation, integration, and emergency interventions, have also been threatened or already reduced. Moreover, the effects of the funding freeze have been felt **across the country**—projects were implemented concurrently in multiple voivodeships, and the frozen funds impacted not only direct services but also the institutional backbone of organizations: staff costs, management, office rentals, and information activities.
- ★ The variation in financial losses across organizations **does not directly reflect their stability**—in many cases, the lost funds were earmarked for **specialized and critical activities** that had to be suspended despite representing a **relatively small percentage of the total budget**.
- ★ The financial crisis has also led to **staff reductions, overburdening of teams, and a decline in staff readiness for long-term commitment**. In the longer term, this may result in a **lasting weakening of the role of civil society organizations** as public partners and first responders in crisis situations.

# Recommendations

for possible support for organizations in light of the funding suspension:

1. **Strengthening communication with organizations affected by the funding crisis.**

Coordinated actions between the sector and the government are needed to present the real consequences of the staffing and financial crisis for the social support system. This includes information campaigns, meetings with institutional partners, and analytical reports aimed at developing solutions.

2. **Creation of a bridging or emergency fund, with particular emphasis on the financial needs of organizations supporting vulnerable groups.**

Such a mechanism could mitigate the effects of the sudden suspension of funding and allow for the continuation of key activities until new resources are secured. The temporary funding mechanism should cover the possibility of financing salaries, operational costs, and continued implementation of activities.

The call for proposals should follow a simplified procedure and be accessible also to smaller organizations, provided, for example, that they have been operating for at least six months prior to applying, and that they need support to continue activities already in progress.

3. **Prioritizing support for organizations assisting particularly vulnerable groups.**

Organizations should be ensured continuity of operations, especially for activities critical from the perspective of protecting vulnerable groups. These groups are the most exposed to the consequences of discontinued support and, at the same time, the least self-sufficient in seeking alternative forms of assistance. Maintaining the continuity of protective, integration, and psychosocial services for these beneficiaries is crucial from the perspective of human rights, social stability, and preventing long-term exclusion.

# Recommendations

for possible support for organizations in light of the funding suspension:

**4. Mapping service provision gaps.**

It is recommended to conduct an in-depth analysis of which areas and social groups have been most affected by the restrictions—in order to direct emergency and support measures to the organizations most impacted by the funding crisis. Data collection may be carried out through surveys and regional consultations, in cooperation with sectoral organizations and NGO networks, to identify interrupted activities, staffing limitations, and local needs. It is also important to support the operation of existing and well-known helplines and information portals, so that, amid the changing scale of assistance, refugees can continue to access reliable and verified information.

**5. Investing in organizational resilience.**

In the long term, efforts should be made to support the development of crisis planning capacity, diversification of funding sources, and professionalization of NGO management structures. It is suggested to introduce dedicated training and mentoring programs for NGOs in the areas of crisis management, financial planning, human resource management, building hybrid funding models, and designing contracts with potential partners that take crisis situations into account.