



**Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting**  
Meeting Minutes – 21 July 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; Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy; All Hands and Hearts; Centrum Pomocy Prawnej im. Haliny Nieć; Fundacja Dostępny Świat; Fundacja Understanding; Fundacja Wolno Nam; Fundacja Zustricz; IOM; One World One Heart; Salam Lab; UNHCR; UNICEF; VOICE Amplified; ZHP;
<b>Agenda:</b>	<p>Introduction from the co-chairs and update on the points decided on the last Coordination meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Updates from Ukrainian-led organizations</li><li>2) Poland Shelter/housing/accommodation Sector, overview, and initiatives</li><li>3) Local NGOs' role in humanitarian coordination; NGO Forum "Razem" updates</li><li>4) Updates from the Women and Children Working Group (Voice Amplified)</li><li>5) AOB</li></ol>
<b>AGENDA POINT</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
<b>Introduction and update on points from last meeting</b>	<p>Participants were welcomed to the 22nd Małopolska Coordination Group (MCG) meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participants were reminded of the change in meeting frequency over the summer vacation period. No meeting will take place in August. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 7 September. After this meetings will continue on either a bi-weekly or monthly basis.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in the agenda of the present meeting were announced. The update from the Voivodship Office was postponed to a later date and an update on the Women and Children Working Group by Voice Amplified was added.</li> <li>• UNHCR shared that the official UNHCR Position on Voluntary Returns to Ukraine that had recently been published. The Position will be shared with the participants after the meeting. According to a recent survey, 76 percent of refugees in Poland expressed willingness to return to Ukraine. However, only a small number of them are planning to return in the near future. In March 2022, UNHCR published a Position on Returns to Ukraine, calling on States not to forcibly return nationals and former habitual residents of Ukraine, including those who have had their asylum claims rejected. In view of the ongoing conflict, UNHCR reiterates that this Position remains valid. Returns to Ukraine must be voluntary, safe and dignified. Recognizing that refugees are best placed to evaluate risks and make decisions on issues that directly concern them, including return, UNHCR is prepared to facilitate returns for persons who may need assistance in returning due to vulnerability on a case-by-case basis. UNHCR advocates for the full inclusion of refugees in national systems, including the education system. In case the protection directive comes to an end, it is crucial that asylum seekers still have the opportunity to access these systems. Moreover, UNHCR recommends that states exhibit flexibility in allowing short-term returns (below 3 months) without deactivating essential identifiers like the PESEL (Polish identification number) for Ukrainian nationals.</li> <li>• A Call for Expressions of Interest for organizations wishing to partner with UNHCR also remains open until 26<sup>th</sup> July. Additionally, a joint Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment is being carried out by UNHCR and IOM.</li> </ul>
<b>Agenda point 1</b>	No updates were provided under the given agenda point.
<b>Agenda point 2</b>	<p>The co-chairs of the Shelter, Housing, and Accommodation Sector shared a presentation on the Sector and its initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Shelter, Housing, and Accommodation Sector is one of five sectors operating at the national level. It is co-chaired by IOM and Habitat for Humanity. The other sectors encompass education, protection, health, and economic inclusion. The Shelter, Housing, and Accommodation Sector in Poland is composed of multiple organizations operating across the country, with the highest concentration of activities in the Mazowsze region. The Sector's efforts encompass not only accommodation-related services but also various support activities. All organizations involved in housing are invited to connect and collaborate. In the Małopolskie region, the two main Sector partners are Mudita and Salam Lab.</li> </ul>

- The Sector's partner organizations engage in a range of activities, including information dissemination, transportation assistance, collective and individual support, financial aid for residence, funding for centers, capacity building, and advocacy for social housing. Distribution of Non-Food Items (NFIs) is also facilitated.
- Participation is welcome even if organizations implement only one type of activity within the scope of the Sector. Active involvement allows for monitoring and addressing gaps in the needs of refugees. As of July 2023, the majority of organizations in the Sector focus on directly providing accommodation in Poland.
- The strategy of the Sector involves two key areas of action: medium and long-term accommodation for refugees, and support for the most vulnerable individuals who may struggle to find employment and live independently. Various support mechanisms, such as cash for rent and other modalities, are designed to assist vulnerable group. Trainings for facility managers and upgrading and renovating living spaces are also carried out. The sector is also assessing the housing standards of collective accommodation centers through surveys. Training sessions for managers of these centers have been implemented in the Mazowieckie and Podkarpackie regions in collaboration with IOM and DRC.
- For further inquiries or collaboration, participants are invited to contact [Marvelasco@iom.int](mailto:Marvelasco@iom.int), [Efrank@iom.int](mailto:Efrank@iom.int), or [Aszczutowska@habitat.pl](mailto:Aszczutowska@habitat.pl). Meetings are held every second Wednesday at 14:00, both online and in Warsaw, with the next meeting scheduled for 2nd August at 14:00.

Following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions:

- Salam Lab raised concerns regarding the changing needs of refugees, particularly in their struggle to find housing. Language barriers and difficulties with rental agencies make the process challenging for those who can afford rent but face challenges with communication, language, and rental regulations. Habitat for Humanity offered to discuss the issue further bilaterally.
- Voice inquired about support for reporting among partners, expressing concerns about smaller partners facing barriers in this area. The reply confirmed that dedicated information managers are available to provide the necessary support.

### Agenda point 3

The Representative of the NGO Forum "Razem" shared a presentation about the Forum and recent activities:

- The NGO Forum "Razem" serves as a platform that connects NGOs, facilitates the flow of funds, and fosters mutual aid. Currently, there are 200 organizations involved, including 100 local NGOs. The vision of the Forum is to offer coordinated

assistance to individuals with migration experience in Poland and advocate for those affected by the refugee crisis. The forum is a joint effort between Polish Humanitarian Action and Ashoka. Current funding is provided by CARE.

- The Forum operates based on three pillars: connecting NGOs, coordinating efforts, and building resources and communities. Participation in the forum is free, and registration and verification can be done online. Meetings are mostly held online, with biweekly sessions. During the summer, meetings may be temporarily suspended. Information about the forum can be found on [forum.razem.org.pl](http://forum.razem.org.pl).
- The Forum's main activities are directed towards NGOs and include various training sessions. Announcements and a list of events are available on the website, along with a newsletter.
- Since January, working groups within the Forum have been established, focusing on partnership and collaboration with NGOs working at Belarusian border and detention centers.
- The Forum organized the "Community of Practice: Stronger Together in Warsaw" event on 28th June 2023. The event saw the participation of 80 representatives from 41 organizations. The gathering was jointly organized by the NGO Forum and UNHCR. Participants expressed the need for in-person meetings to strengthen collaboration and address three key areas: advocacy, resource mobilization, and support for refugee-led organizations and those embedded in communities.
- The Forum aims to provide at least one key training session every quarter.
- Participants interested in Forum's activity are requested to contact Aska Warchal-Beneschi, [Joanna.warchal-beneschi@pah.org.pl](mailto:Joanna.warchal-beneschi@pah.org.pl)

#### Agenda point 4

Voice Amplified shared a presentation with recent updates on the activities of the Women and Children's Working Group (WCWG).

- The WCWG is a series of bi-weekly meetings for partners, involving presentations on relevant issues, as well as an opportunity for networking. The meetings take place every other Tuesday, 2 pm, in the office of Voice Amplified, ul. Stradomska 15/10, Kraków. Partners who would like to join the WCWG are encouraged to contact Anna Chromik ([ania@voiceamplified.org](mailto:ania@voiceamplified.org)).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voice Amplified distributes a newsletter with information on the latest updates and changes in the humanitarian sector. Partners who would like to join the newsletter or receive information on the services promoted by Voice Amplified should contact the Voice office (<a href="mailto:polandoffice@voiceamplified.org">polandoffice@voiceamplified.org</a>).</li> </ul>
<b>AOB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF shared that they are waiting for a meeting with the Polish Ministry of Education concerning school registration. An invitation to the meeting will be circulated.</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>				
<b>2</b>				