Pilot project. Summary

Professional activation of long-term unemployed refugees from Ukraine residing in collective accommodation centres

July 10, 2025

Jobs First

Specialization

Bringing people back who are out of the labor market or who have significant barriers to returning to the labor market into sustainable employment

Our customers

- Long-term unemployed.
- Individuals dismissed for reasons attributable by the employer.
- People losing their jobs as a result of economic, technological, Energy transformation.
- People 50+.
- People with health problems.
- Single parents.
- Refugees.

Jobs First

Experience

- **Over 5,000 individuals brought to lasting employement**
- Participant profile: age **45 with 23. years of work experience** with the last employer.
- **85%** of participants who completed the program found new employment.
- Placeing to employment at an average of **3.5 months** (over the course of the program).

Project Assumptions

Justification

- On March 1, 2023, a new regulation was implemented in Poland, targeting to refugees from Ukraine who have stayed in collective accommodation facilities (CABs) for more than 120 days. It concerns the refugees' share in the cost of living in OZZs.
- The provision is intended to encourage refugees who have the capacity to work, to become self-reliant and independent of outside assistance.
- As of May/June 2023, there were 54.000 refugees in collective accommodation centers in Poland.

Project Assumptions

Main objective

- Increased self-reliance and economic independence for refugees staying in collective housing facilities.
- Enhanced cooperation between the private sector, refugee communities, public employment services and others in removing barriers to decent employment.
- Greater involvement of employers in hiring, capacity building and sustaining refugee workers.
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of the employment service's model for the long-term unemployed to refugees from Ukraine, which can be replicated at the national level.

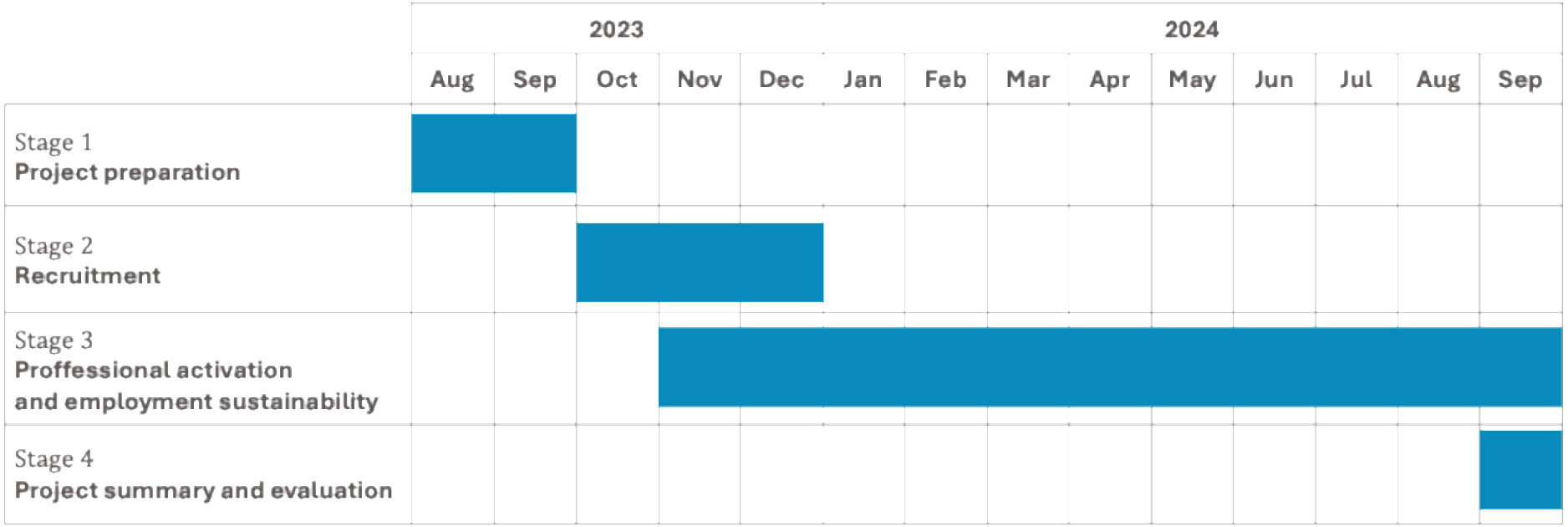
Project Assumptions

Implementation conditions

- The Project's areas are 3 voivodships: pomorskie, śląskie and małopolskie.
- There were 70 places in the Project, 96 participated (70 recruited at the first stage, 26 in the supplementary recruitment) refugees meeting the following formal criteria:
  - Ukrainian citizenship held
  - Arrival in Poland after February 24, 2022.
  - Remaining unemployed for at least 6 months prior to joining the Project
  - Staying in the OZZ for at least 3 months (counting from the date of joining the Project)
  - Residing in a UNHCR-selected CAB.
- Duration of employement activities: 6 months to lead to employment and 3 months to maintain employment.
- Starting employment based on an employment contract, contract of mandate (with a contract concluded for a period of at least 6 months) or business activity.

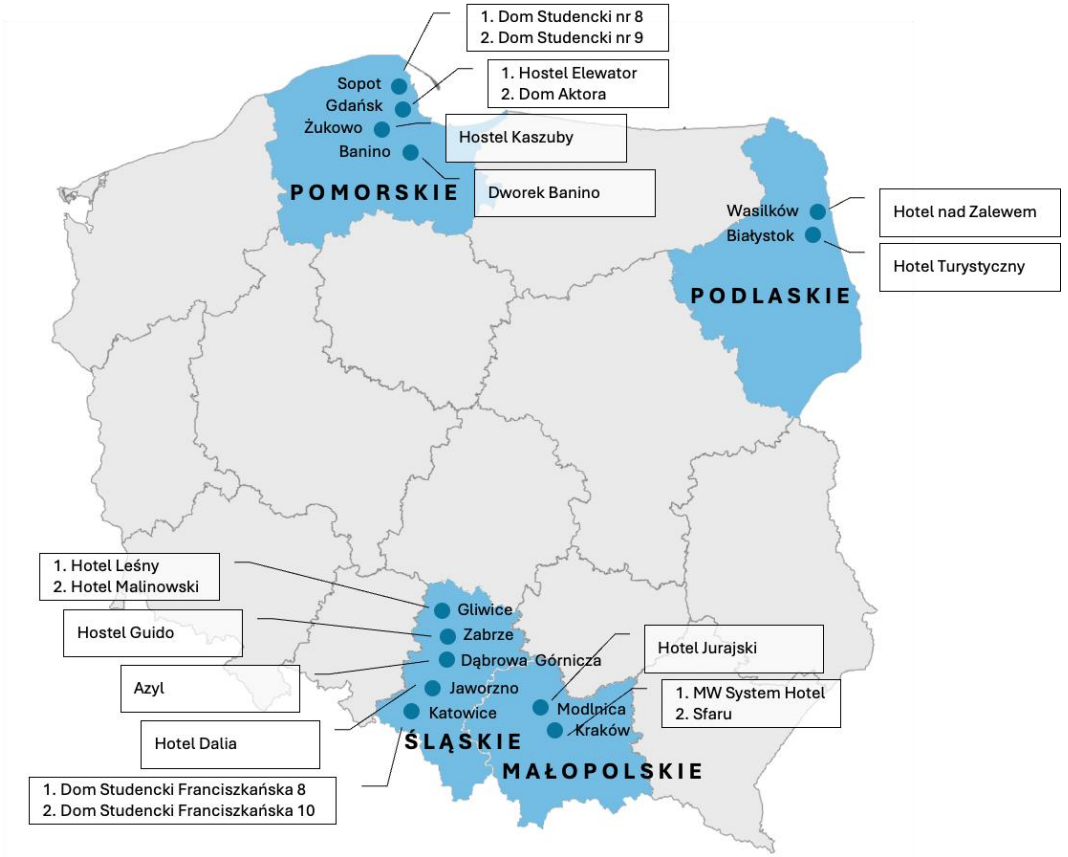
Implementation

Project Schedule



Implementation

The breakdown of the SFO

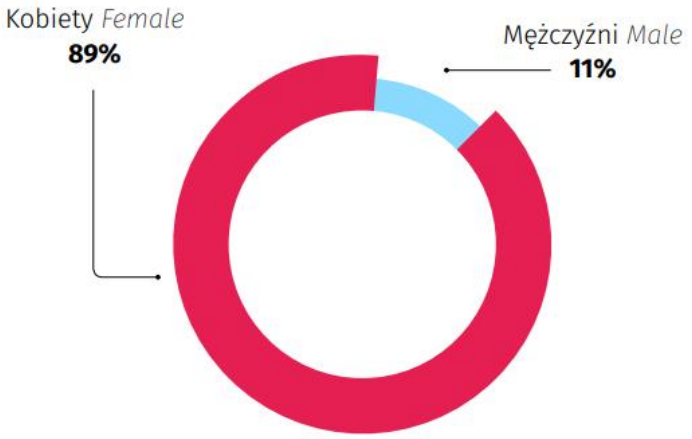


- 4 voivodships, 13 cities and 18 OZZ, among them 12 private and 6 managed by municipal companies.
- The largest number of the Project's MNOs comes from the Silesian and Pomerania.
- The total number of refugees residing in the Project's SPAs is about 1.500 people.

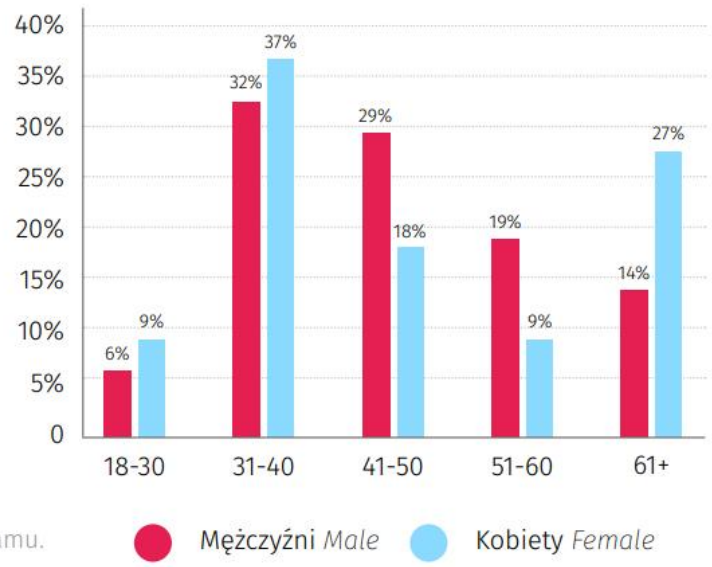
Implementation

Participant profile

Rysunek 3. Struktura uczestników według płci
Figure 3. Structure of participants by gender



Rysunek 4. Struktura uczestników według wieku
Figure 4. Structure of participants by age

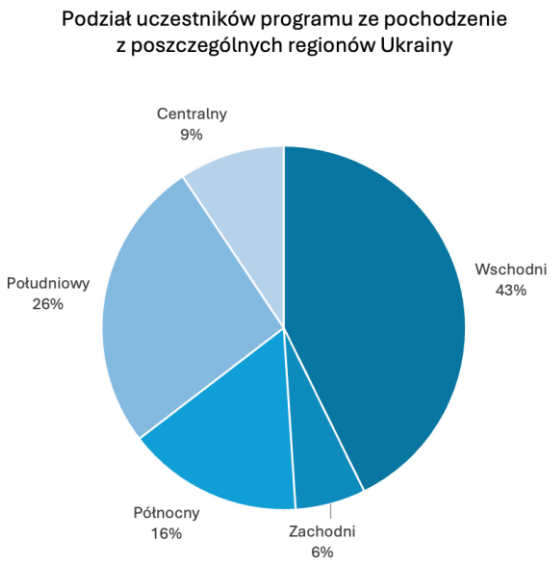


Źródło: opracowanie firmy Jobs First na podstawie danych programu.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

- The majority of participants, almost 90%, were women.
- The largest age group was those of working age 31-50 (60%).
- The average age in women and men were similar and was 46 years old in women and 45 years in men.
- At the time of entry into the program, the average length of a participant's stay in Poland was 18 months, of which the time spent in the SCA was an average of 12 months.

Implementation

Participant Profile | Origins



Rysunek 5. Liczba uczestników programu ze wskazaniem regionu pochodzenia (wg obwodu w Ukrainie)
Figure 5. Number of programme participants by region of Origin (Ukrainian Oblast)

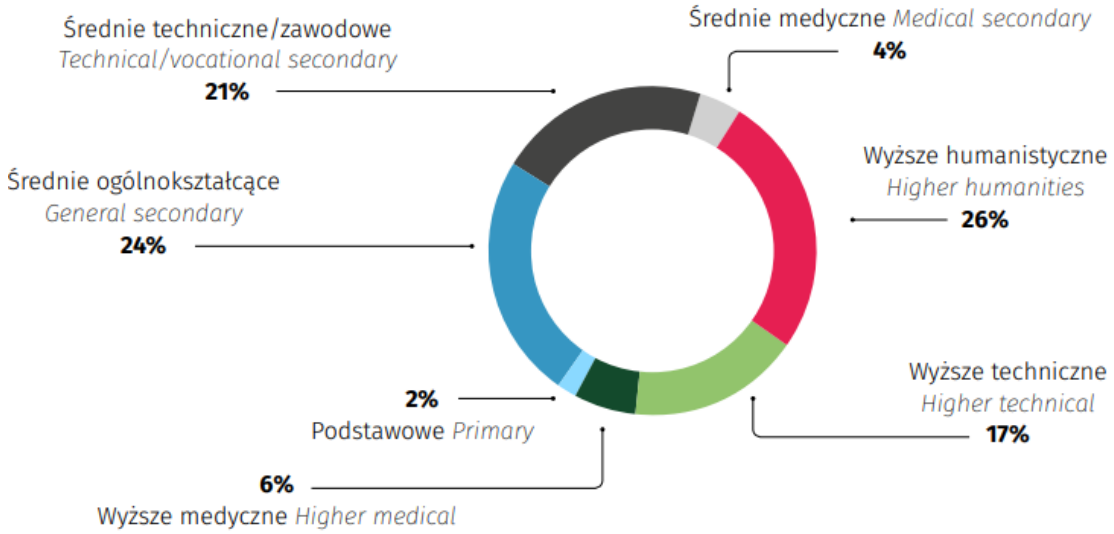
Źródło: opracowanie firmy Jobs First na podstawie danych programu.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

- All 5 regions of Ukraine.
- The largest number of participants came from the Eastern Ukraine region (43%) and South (26%).
- The Northern Region (16%) had a large representation from Kyiv region (13 participants).

Implementation

Participant profile | Education

Rysunek 6. Struktura uczestników ze względu na wykształcenie
Figure 6. Structure of participants by education level



Źródło: opracowanie firmy Jobs First na podstawie danych programu.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

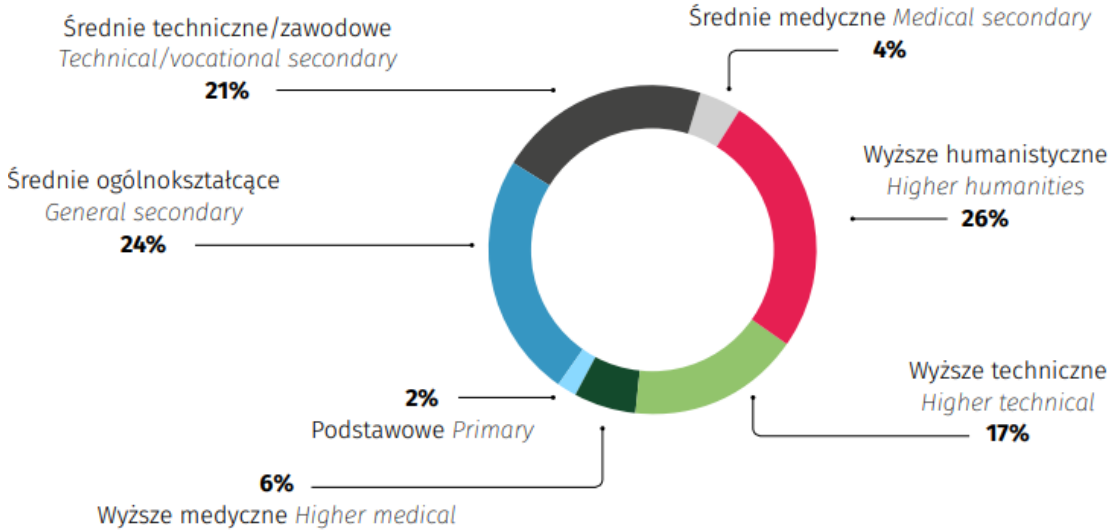
- A similar split among participants with high school and college education, 51% and 48%, respectively.
- Participants represented a total of 64 occupations. Recurring occupations:

  - Accounting specialists and accounting
  - Philologists and translators
  - Specialist doctors
  - Nurses with a specialist degree
  - Financial analysts
  - Management specialists and organization
  - Legal specialists
  - Shopkeepers
  - Tailors
  - Construction electricians
  - Cooks
  - Bank tellers
  - Medium staff health
  - Teachers of schools Primary schools
  - Pharmacists
  - Mechanical engineers

Implementation

Participant profile | Education

Rysunek 6. Struktura uczestników ze względu na wykształcenie
Figure 6. Structure of participants by education level



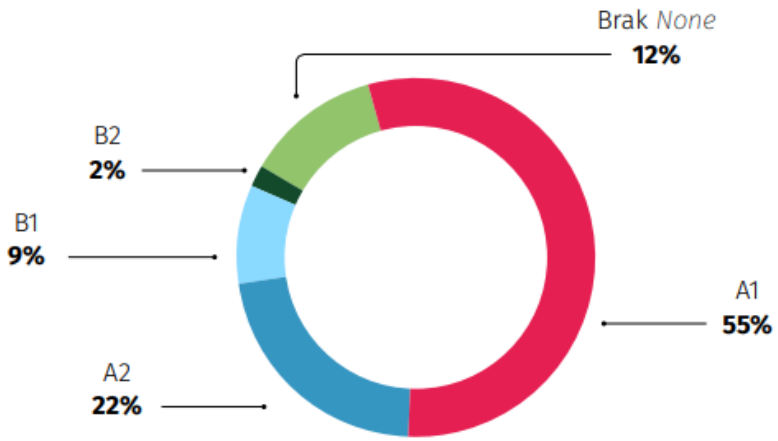
Źródło: opracowanie firmy Jobs First na podstawie danych programu.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

- Only half of the participants had with them documents confirming the education they had acquired and qualifications.
- 83% declared that they were working, economically active people before the outbreak of war.
- Almost all, 93%, also declared, that before the outbreak of war they had no experience with working in Poland.

Implementation

Participant profile | Knowledge of Polish language.

Rysunek 7. Stopień znajomości języka polskiego wśród uczestników programu
Figure 7. Participants' level of Polish proficiency



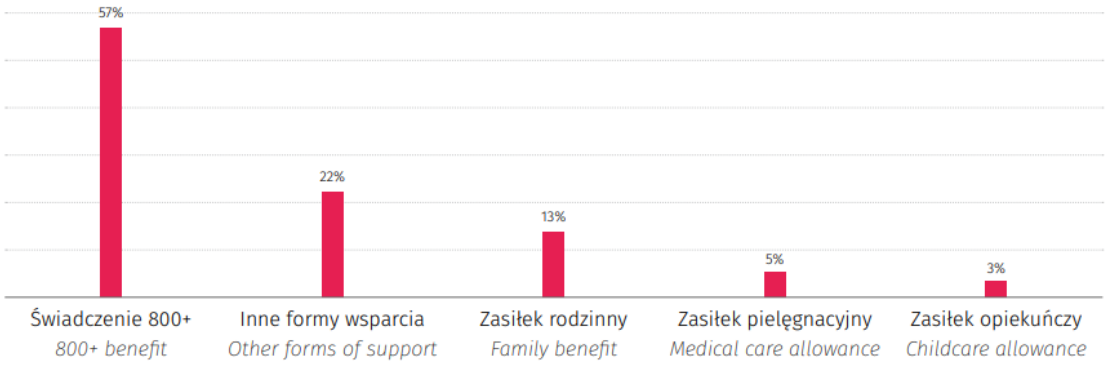
Źródło: opracowanie firmy Jobs First na podstawie danych programu.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

- According to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) criteria, participants generally presented very poor knowledge of Polish.
  - 12% did not speak at all.
  - 77% spoke Polish to a degree that allowed only basic communication (A1/A2).
  - Only 11% knew enough Polish to communicate with a potential employer (B1/B2).

Implementation

Participant profile | Social benefits

Rysunek 8. Deklaracje uczestników programu o otrzymywanych świadczeniach socjalnych
Figure 8. Declarations of social benefits received by participants



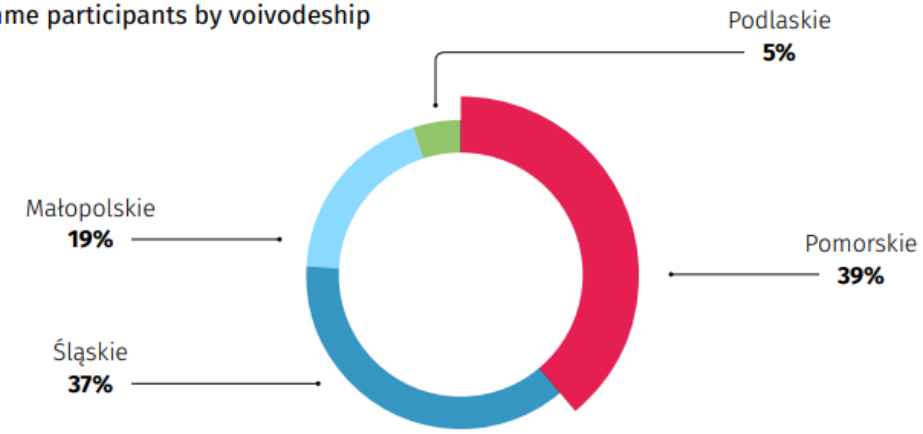
Źródło: opracowanie firmy Jobs First na podstawie danych programu.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

- 60% of participants were caring for minor children, an average of two. In most cases, they were the only ones and their guardians.
- 57% benefited from the 500/800+ benefit, 24% from family, nursing or guardianship benefits, which made up an average approximate amount of benefits received of PLN 1535 per participant per month.
- 22% declared that they receive other material assistance, such as from family residing in Poland or Ukraine, a Ukrainian pension.
- 8% of participants had a disability certificate, including severe disability (2 people), moderate (5 people) and light (1 person).

Implementation

Participant profile | Place of residence

Rysunek 9. Uczestnicy programu w podziale na województwa
Figure 9. Programme participants by voivodeship



Źródło: opracowanie firmy Jobs First na podstawie danych programu.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

- The largest group were participants from Silesia (37%) and Pomerania (39%).
- 5 Jobs First employment advisors were involved in the project. It was agreed that each of them would work with a maximum of 15 participants.
- The Pomeranian and Silesian provinces, which started the Project the earliest, each had 30 participants per voivodship. In Małopolska province, where activities began only in January 2024, 10 people were recruited from the limit of 70 contracted places in the Project).

Jobs First

Model of operation

- **Target**
  - A real opportunity to find employment within a measurable period of time during the programme.
  - Sustainable employment. The important thing is the result, not the process.
- **Individualization of support**
  - Each participant pursues their own path to employment.
    100 people = 100 strategies to lead to employment.
  - Holistic approach - working across the full spectrum of opportunities/ alternative career paths to maximize job opportunities.
  - Personal Employment Advisor.

Jobs First

Model of operation

- **Employment advisor**
  - Comprehensive support of professionals combining the competencies of career counselor, career coach, recruiter.
  - Goal-oriented, responsible for the results of their work, committed, empathetic, motivated, who care about the success of their mentees.
  - Case management.
- **Work system**
  - Unlimited number of meetings. Flexible schedule of meetings with frequency tailored to the needs and capabilities of the participant. Contact between meetings.

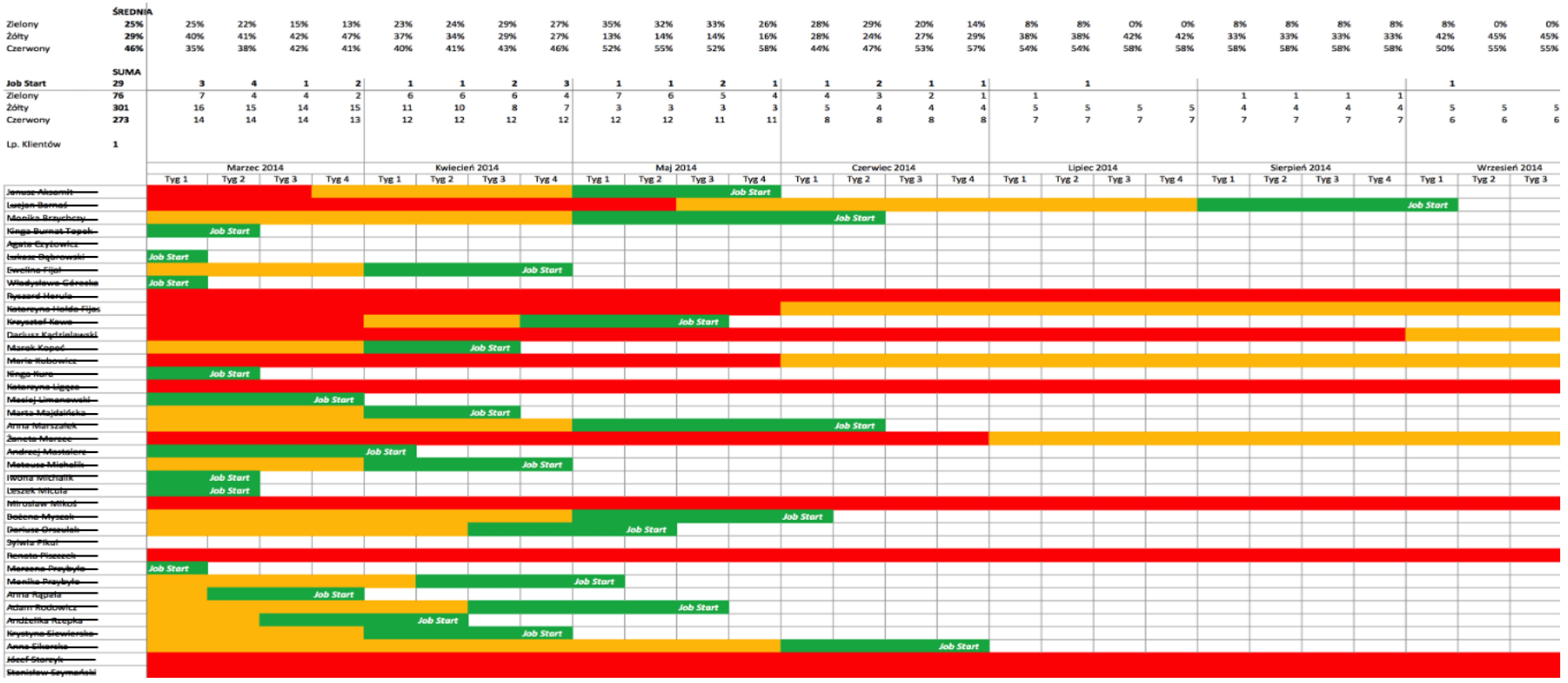
Jobs First

Model of operation

- **Result**
  - Satisfactory work in line with the participant's profile, needs and abilities, offering the prospect of stability and development.
- **Working with employers**
  - Selection of companies in terms of obtaining sustainable employment, consistent with the expectations of the participant and the purpose of the Project.
  - Penetration of the hidden labor market. 60% of employment comes from the hidden labor market.

Jobs First

Action Model. Case Management



	ŚREDNIA																											
Zielony	25%	25%	22%	15%	13%	23%	24%	29%	27%	35%	32%	33%	26%	28%	29%	20%	14%	8%	8%	0%	0%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	0%	0%
Żółty	29%	40%	41%	42%	47%	37%	34%	29%	27%	13%	14%	14%	16%	28%	24%	27%	29%	38%	38%	42%	42%	33%	33%	33%	33%	42%	45%	45%
Czerwony	46%	35%	38%	42%	41%	40%	41%	43%	46%	52%	55%	52%	58%	44%	47%	53%	57%	54%	54%	58%	58%	58%	58%	58%	58%	50%	55%	55%
	SUMA																											
Job Start	29	3	4	1	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1		1							1		
Zielony	76	7	4	4	2	6	6	6	4	7	6	5	4	4	3	2	1	1				1	1	1	1			
Żółty	301	16	15	14	15	11	10	8	7	3	3	3	3	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
Czerwony	273	14	14	14	13	12	12	12	12	12	12	11	11	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	6
Lp. Klientów	1																											

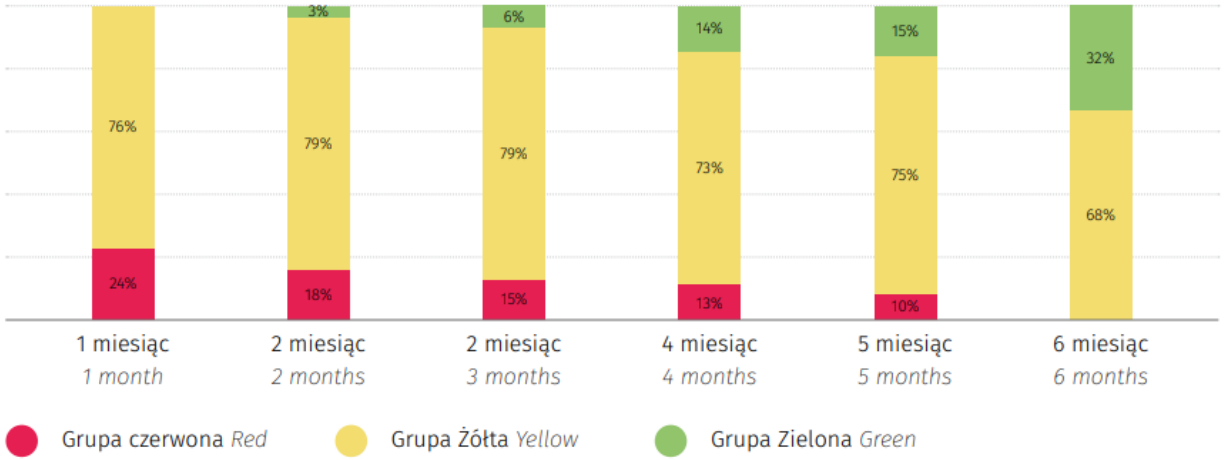
	Marzec 2014				Kwiecień 2014				Maj 2014				Czerwiec 2014				Lipiec 2014				Sierpień 2014				Wrzesień 2014		
	Tyg 1	Tyg 2	Tyg 3	Tyg 4	Tyg 1	Tyg 2	Tyg 3	Tyg 4	Tyg 1	Tyg 2	Tyg 3	Tyg 4	Tyg 1	Tyg 2	Tyg 3	Tyg 4	Tyg 1	Tyg 2	Tyg 3	Tyg 4	Tyg 1	Tyg 2	Tyg 3	Tyg 4	Tyg 1	Tyg 2	Tyg 3
~~Janusz Akermit~~												Job Start															
~~Lucjan Bornat~~																								Job Start			
~~Monika Brzychczy~~																											
~~Kinga Burnat-Topek~~	Job Start																										
~~Agata Czyżowicz~~																											
~~Łukasz Dąbrowski~~	Job Start																										
~~Ewelina Fijał~~								Job Start																			
~~Władysława Góreczna~~	Job Start																										
~~Ryszard Hercuba~~																											
~~Katarzyna Hołda-Fijas~~																											
~~Krzysztof Kawa~~												Job Start															
~~Dariusz Kądzielawski~~																											
~~Marek Kopeć~~							Job Start																				
~~Maria Kubowicz~~																											
~~Kinga Kuna~~	Job Start																										
~~Katarzyna Liggas~~																											
~~Maciej Limanowski~~		Job Start																									
~~Marta Majdzińska~~							Job Start																				
~~Anna Marszałek~~												Job Start															
~~Żaneta Marzec~~																											
~~Andrzej Mastalerz~~					Job Start																						
~~Mateusz Michalik~~								Job Start																			
~~Iwona Michalik~~	Job Start																										
~~Leszek Micuda~~	Job Start																										
~~Mirosław Mikos~~																											
~~Bożena Myszak~~													Job Start														
~~Dariusz Orasulak~~											Job Start																
~~Sylwia Pikuł~~																											
~~Renata Pisecek~~																											
~~Marzena Przybyło~~	Job Start																										
~~Monika Przybyło~~									Job Start																		
~~Anna Rąpała~~		Job Start																									
~~Adam Rodowicz~~												Job Start															
~~Andżelika Rzepka~~			Job Start																								
~~Krystyna Siewierska~~								Job Start																			
~~Anna Silarska~~																Job Start											
~~Józef Storczyk~~																											
~~Stanisław Szymański~~																											

Implementation

Activity of participants

Rysunek 10. Dynamika procesu dochodzenia do zatrudnienia wg segmentacji uczestników stosowanej w Jobs First

Figure 10. Dynamics of employment progress by Jobs First participant segmentation



Źródło: opracowanie firmy Jobs First na podstawie danych programu.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

[14] Wskaźniki procentowe obliczono dla grupy 70 osób – zakładana liczba uczestników programu.

[14] The percentages were calculated for a group of 70 people - the assumed number of program participants.

- Employment counselors held a total of 955 individual meetings (an average of 14 meetings per 1 participant).
- 65% of them were carried out in face-to-face meetings, 35% in remote meetings.
- Participants were presented by counselors with 769 job offers in line with the direction of search established in the IPD (an average of 11 job offers per participant).
- Participants applied for 620 positions of these offers (an average of 9 applications per participant).
- Participants took part in an average of 106 recruitment processes (an average of 1.5 recruitment processes per 1 participant).
- Correct dynamics of the change process in the development of skills necessary to navigate the labor market and attitude (segmentation of participants).

Implementation

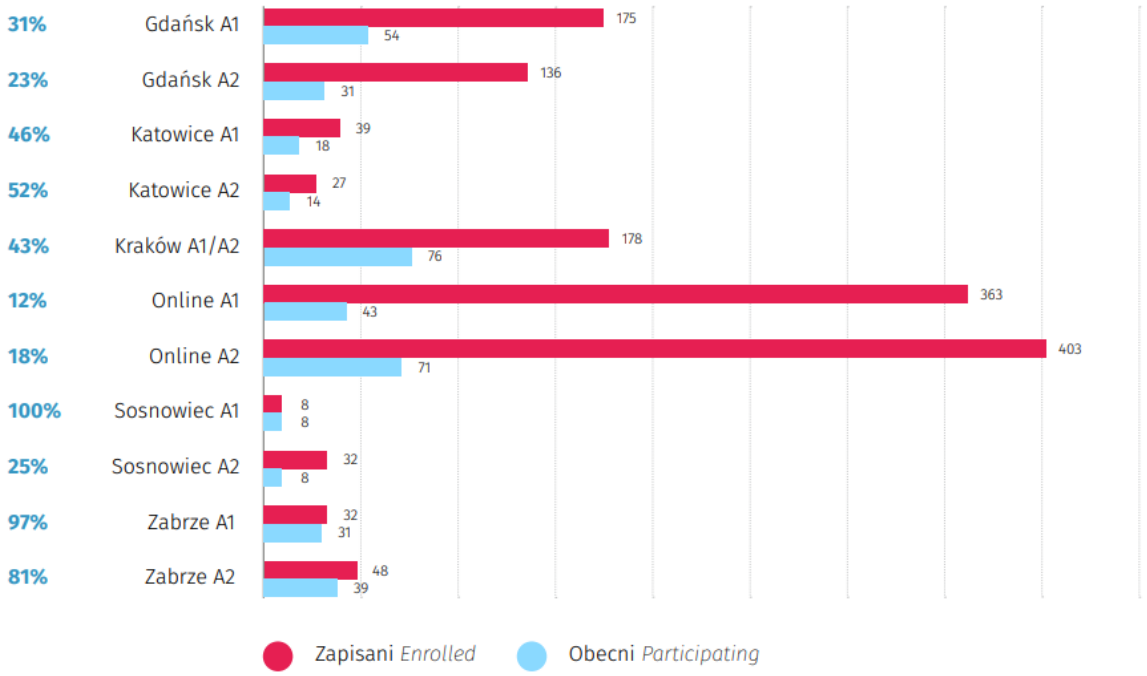
Forms of support

- In addition to activities strictly related to employment, participants were offered various forms of support both in completing competencies as well as overcoming organizational and formal barriers.
  - Assist in the care of the child/children.
  - Funding for medical examinations.
  - Funding of a sanepid booklet.
  - Funding for emergency medical care.
  - Assistance in finding housing in a relocation situation.
  - Funding for the translation of professional qualification documents by a certified translator and legal assistance in the implementation of the process of obtaining approval from the Minister of Health and the professional self-government to practice as a doctor, dentist, nurse.
  - Assistance from a psychologist who speaks Ukrainian.
  - Learning Polish - the most elementary need in taking up employment.

Implementation

Participation in Polish language courses

Rysunek 12. Frekwencja w kursie języka polskiego w podziale na lokalizacje i poziom nauczania
Figure 12. Attendance in Polish language courses by location and proficiency level



Źródło: opracowanie firmy Jobs First na podstawie danych programu.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

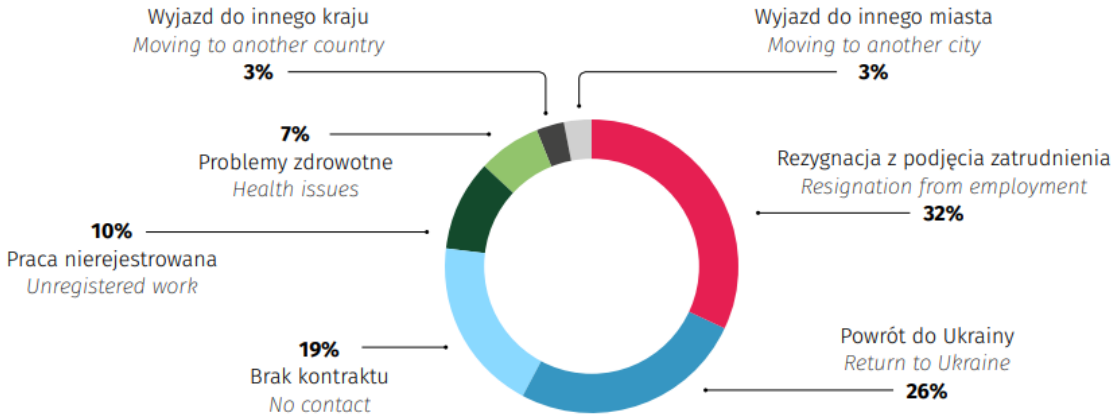
Attendance in the course of learning Polish. By location and level of instruction

- All forms of classes were available - stationary in the school's locations, stationary in OZZ (Zabrze) and online.
- High attendance (over 80%) was recorded only at the course, which was held in OZZ, at the participants' place of residence.
- During the 6 months of the program, 1,441 person-tutorials were organized, of which 393 were implemented.
- The overall turnout was only 27%.
- At the recruitment stage, 98% of candidates declared their willingness to study Polish language in an intensive mode.

Implementation

Program cancellations

Rysunek 13. Przyczyny rezygnacji z udziału w programie
Figure 13. Reasons for withdrawing from the programme

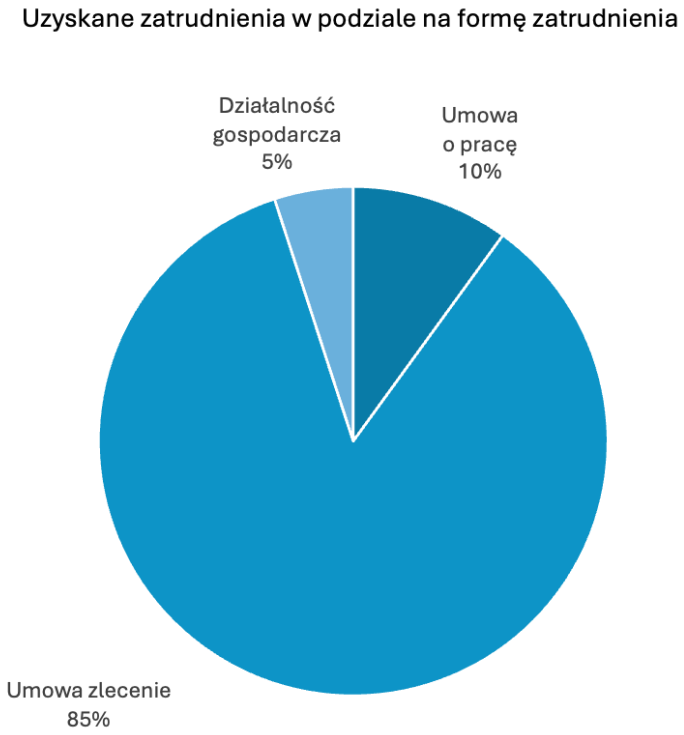


Źródło: opracowanie firmy Jobs First na podstawie danych programu.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

- 31 participants resigned from further participation in the Project.
- The main reasons for resignation include giving up from further job search (32%), return to Ukraine (26%) and lack of contact (19%). 10% also took a job in the black market and remained with this solution.
- The average duration of the programme for participants who withdrew was 2.4 months. During this time, a total of 117 meetings were held.
- Follow-up recruitment was carried out on an ongoing basis to replace those who dropped out, with a total of 26 people being recruited. Those entering the program in their place had an average program time of less by 2.4 months.
- Withdrawal from the programme significantly reduced the effectiveness of activities, while increasing the workload of advisors.

Implementation

Employment undertaken



- During the course of the Project, 20 people became employed, which represents an employment rate of 28.5% of the 70 places covered by payment for the provision of services.
- The average time to employment was 3.9 months.
- Most, 85%, took up employment under a contract of mandate. Only 2 people took up employment under an employment contract, 1 person took up a business.
- With the exception of 4 people, employment was undertaken in occupations other than those learned or performed in Ukraine.
- New employment was most often associated involving physical work that did not require hard professional skills.

Implementation

Employment undertaken

Tabela 2. Zawody, w których podjęli zatrudnienie uczestnicy programu
Table 2. Professions of participants who found employment

Zawód	Liczba osób zatrudnionych	Profession	Number of employed individuals
Fizjoterapeuci	2	Physiotherapists	2
Konserwatorzy urządzeń	2	Maintenance technicians	2
Kucharze	2	Cooks	2
Kwiaciarki	2	Florists	2
Opiekunowie osób starszych	2	Elderly care assistants	2
Pomoce kuchenne	2	Kitchen assistants	2
Pracownicy usług czystościowych	2	Cleaning service workers	2
Krawcowe	1	Tailors	1
Fryzjerzy	1	Hairdressers	1
Kasjerzy-Sprzedawcy	1	Cashiers and shop assistants	1
Pakowacze posiłków	1	Meal packagers	1
Pomoce w przygotowywaniu surowców cukierniczych	1	Assistants in confectionery raw material prep.	1
Pracownicy restauracji	1	Restaurant workers	1
RAZEM	20	**TOTAL**	20

Źródło: opracowanie firmy Jobs First na podstawie danych programu.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

[15] Wskaźniki obliczono dla grupy 70 osób – zakładana liczba uczestników programu.

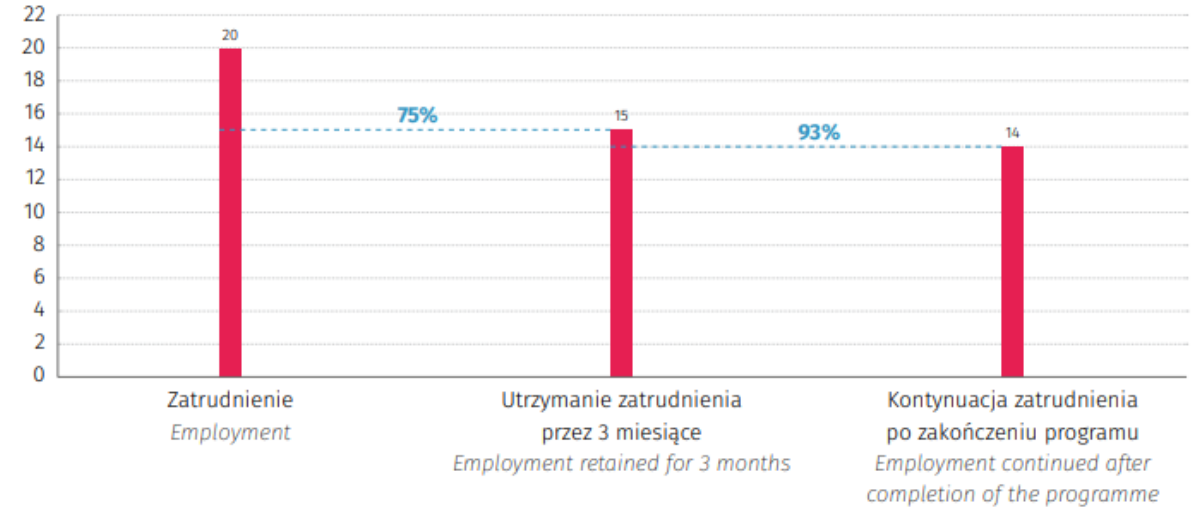
[15] The percentages were calculated for a group of 70 people - the assumed number of program participants.

- For every 19 people who took up employment, there were 18 employers, which indicates a high level of individualisation of the advisor's activities on the labour market.
- 74% of the hires are in micro companies with fewer than 10 employees and small companies with fewer than 50, which also indicates a high level of individualization.
- In large companies with more than 250 employees, only 2 people took up employment (Jeronimo Martins, McDonalds).
- The average salary was 5100 PLN. Gross, on average 19% higher than the minimum in 2024.

Implementation

Sustainability of employment

Rysunek 11. Trwałość podjętego zatrudnienia
Figure 11. Sustainability of employment



Uwaga: Weryfikacji kontynuacji zatrudnienia dokonano po upływie 3 miesięcy od zatrudnienia.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

Note: Employment continuation was verified three months after starting the job.
Source: Jobs First's compilation based on programme data.

- Although the jobs were among simple positions and industries often subject to high turnover, they were permanent and offered wages higher than the minimum. Thus, they met the initial conditions for enabling participants to integrate into society and advance.
- Of the 20 people who took up employment during the programme, 75% remained in their jobs for at least 3 months.
- As of the end of August, 93% continue to work of them with an average employment duration of 5.7 months.
- Reasons for discontinuation of employment in 5 people:
  - 2 people - continued employment without a legal contract.
  - 1 person after 5.6 months of work decided to return to Ukraine.
  - 2 people have decided to devote themselves to child care.

Implementation

Sustainability of employment

Important factors affecting the sustainability of employment

- Appropriate selection of job offers tailored to the participant's needs and expectations.
  The starting point for searching for specific job offers is always the participant and their preferences, not the employer and the job offers available on the market. As a result, the job taken up by the participant was the one they wanted and were able to do.
- Direct involvement of the counselor with the employer at every stage of the program.
  The counselor becomes a partner with the employer in solving the employer's problems.
  The counselor is also a "guarantor" of employment.
- Continuous, unlimited contact between the advisor and the participant in solving their current personal and organisational problems, which may constitute an obstacle or a reason for termination of employment. Continuous maintenance of a high level of motivation of the participant.
- Genuine concern, personal commitment and determination of the advisor in pursuing the goal are appreciated by participants.

Implementation

Barriers and challenges

- Low level of motivation to become independent and work legally in Poland:
  - Basic living conditions are guaranteed, which means that there is no material compulsion to take up employment, including access to a wide range of social benefits. (68% received 500/800+).
  - The necessity to contribute to the costs of accommodation and meals at the OZZ in the event of taking up legal employment (up to PLN 1.860 gross per person). Therefore, we estimate that approximately 60% of the Project participants worked illegally.
  - There is still a widespread sense of temporariness, although at the time of participants had, on average, been in Poland for 1.5 years.
- Lack of knowledge of Polish and unwillingness to learn, despite the fact that the implementer fulfilled the conditions for this throughout the entire duration of the programme, offering various options taking into account the participants' time availability and level of proficiency.
- Cultural differences manifesting themselves in different approaches to communication or agreements and commitments made.

Implementation
Recommendations

Optimal conditions for program implementation

- Extending the duration of the program for refugees from Ukraine to 12 months.
- Activation model based on individual support from a dedicated Employment Advisor.
- Comprehensive assistance, "leading by the hand."
- Motivating, creating a vision for the future.
- Employment advisor commitment to job sustain.
- Onbording - the implementation of a newly hired employee in the workplace during the first weeks of work.
- The program also provides real help for those who have not taken up employment.
  Thanks to the skills they acquired, they were able to apply on their own. Some of them took up jobs soon after the program ended.