MEETING MINUTES

ECONOMIC INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

DATE	31.07.2025	TIME	11.00-13.00	PLACE	Online meeting

CHAIRS	
1.	UNHCR (Eliza Przeździecka, Assistant Livelihood and Economic Inclusion Officer, przezdzi@unhcr.org)
2.	CARITAS POLAND (Marek Lepianka PM, mlepaianka@caritas.org.pl)
PRESENTERS	
1.	Joanna Księska-Koszałka, (Ph.D.), Coordinator and Career Counselor, Caritas
2.	Patricia Lopez-Hermoso, Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Assistant, UNHCR
3.	Maja Włodarczyk, Inter-Agency Coordination Assistant, UNHCR

PARTICIPANTS	
1.	UNHCR
2.	Caritas
3.	Pastoral Family Care Foundation
4.	Fundacja Ukraina
5.	IOM
6.	Skills Alliance
7.	Fundacja ADRA

8.	Upwardly Global
9.	CARE

AGENDA

11:00 - 11:10 - Introduction

11:10 - 11:40 - Part 1: "Concept, specifics and experiences in supporting the economic integration of migrants and refugees at the Caritas Archdiocese of Lublin Migrant and Refugee Assistance Center in 2022-2025", Joanna Księska-Koszałka (Ph.D.).

11:40 - 11:50 - Questions and answers

11:50 - 12:20 - Part 2: "Economic Inclusion Working Group - survey results and next steps", Patricia Lopez-Hermoso

12:20 - 12:30 - Questions and answers

12:30 - 13:00 - Part 3: "Funding opportunities for NGOs", Maja Włodarczyk

INTRODUCTION

In this Economic Inclusion Working Group meeting of July, first, Joanna Księska-Koszałka (Ph.D.) presented on the economic integration of migrants and refugees, followed by questions. Then, Patricia Lopez-Hermoso shared survey results and next steps, with a Q&A. Finally, Maja Włodarczyk presented on funding opportunities for NGOs.

Part I: Concept, specifics and experiences in supporting the economic integration of migrants and refugees at the Caritas Archdiocese of Lublin Migrant and Refugee Assistance Center in 2022-2025

The presentation "Koncepcja, specyfika i doświadczenia z zakresu wsparcia włączenia ekonomicznego migrantów i uchodźców" by Joanna Księska-Koszałka from the Centrum Pomocy Migrantom i Uchodźcom Caritas Archidiecezji Lubelskiej focused on the years 2022–2025. It highlighted the profile of beneficiaries, the situation of the local labor market, and difficulties faced by migrants and refugees in finding employment. Many require additional training, diploma recognition, or adaptation to Polish conditions. Demand exists for simple jobs and in male-dominated professions, while highly qualified specialists often lack opportunities, often leading to frustration and psychological problems.

In 2022 conditions were favorable due to strong support for Ukrainians, but in 2024–2025 negative social attitudes increased and job requirements such as language skills and diploma recognition became stricter.

Actions carried out in the center included career counseling, CV preparation, job search training, job placement, referrals to employers, language and vocational courses, as well as psychological interventions and continuous monitoring. Training programs covered both professional fields such as accounting, payroll, business Polish, cooking, tailoring, childcare, and transport, and non-professional areas such as computer literacy, motivational workshops, and psychological modules.

Results show that 30–50% of participants find employment within one to two months, 20–30% postpone their job search, and another 20–30% face serious barriers due to market conditions or personal circumstances. Challenges include language barriers, psychosocial issues, family responsibilities, reluctance to accept work below qualifications, and professions difficult to transfer into the Polish system.

The presentation concluded with the need for more retraining opportunities, stronger involvement of employment offices, a centralized information portal on diploma recognition, better training for career advisors, and programs engaging employers through mentoring, internships, and volunteering.

Part II: Economic Inclusion Working Group - survey results and next steps

The Working Group will continue holding monthly online meetings, with in-person meetings scheduled once per quarter. The first in-person meeting will take place on Thursday, 23 October 2025, from 9:30 to 11:30 at UNHCR Office in Warsaw. This session will focus on occupational safety and legal employment (with a PIP expert) or regulations regarding the residence and employment of foreigners. Future in-person meetings will include expert sessions on related topics, and starting in 2026, in-person meetings will occur every three months. The meetings will be held in the morning, avoid repetitive information, and feature more training, moderated discussions, interactive expert sessions, and greater participant engagement.

Suggested topics for discussion include refugee employment and adaptation, funding and cooperation with institutions, education (language, exam recognition, internships), status of Ukrainian refugees and the CUKR card, social integration and support for vulnerable groups, regulations on residence and work of foreigners, cooperation with employers and HR, communication with beneficiaries, and psychological support related to employment.

For the remainder of 2025, the meeting schedule is as follows: August – summer break; 25 September – online meeting; 23 October – in-person meeting; November and December – dates to be confirmed. All meetings will continue to take place on the last Thursday of the month, from 9:30 to 11:30.

We also encourage participants to share ideas for presentations or topics. If you would like to present your organization, share your experiences, or discuss a challenge that we can address together, please send your suggestions to: polwaeiwg@unhcr.org

Part III: Funding opportunities for NGOs

The session focused on European Union funding within the 2021–2027 framework, including the Cohesion Policy budget of €76 billion. Key instruments highlighted were the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund+, the Cohesion Fund, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, and the Just Transition Fund.

Several specific programmes were introduced, such as those for social development, digital transformation, Eastern Poland, food aid, cross-border cooperation (Interreg), technical assistance, regional programmes, migration and border management, fisheries, infrastructure, climate and environment, and modern economy initiatives.

The Inter-Agency expert also presented the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF/FAMI), which prioritizes asylum, legal migration and integration, and returns. Participants were guided on how to search for available funding through official government portals and application schedules. The importance of European Funds Information Points (PIFE), which provide free advisory services nationwide, was underlined as a key resource for NGOs. Opportunities for capacity building through training, conferences, and newsletters were also discussed. In addition, participants were encouraged to use NGO-focused platforms such as ngo.pl, granty.pl, and dedicated social media groups to stay updated on open calls and new funding opportunities.

NEXT MEETING
Thursday 25 September, 09:30-11:30