

# Caring for a diverse community

Activities of the Polish Migration Forum Foundation  
in 2023.

Warsaw, April 2024



FOUNDATION

**Polish  
Migration  
Forum**

# Caring for a diverse community

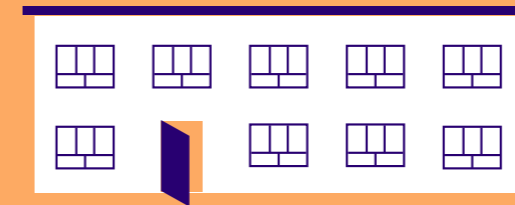
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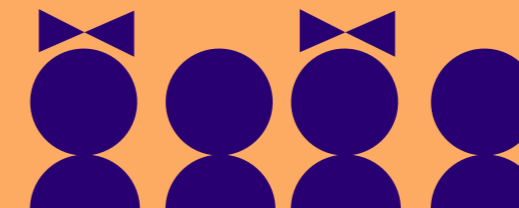
## Our work in 2023 in figures



The children (396 people) who are being cared for by our intercultural assistants would fill more than 16 classrooms! That could be an entire primary school!



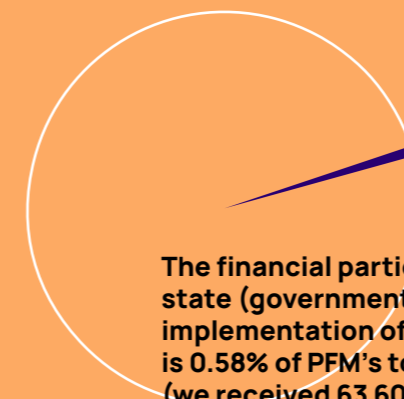
The clients of our caseworkers (4,032 people) would need a hundred coaches to come for our support!



The babies who were born after our birthing classes would fill six pre-school groups! (91 women participated in the birthing classes)



If all the clients of our support centre (5980 people) wanted to come to our office by metro, they would need four trains filled to the brim!



The financial participation of the state (government funds) in the implementation of our projects is 0.58% of PFM's total budget in 2023! (we received 63 600 PLN)



The Polish Migration Forum was mentioned in various media (786) more than twice a day. Every single day!

## Introduction

We have come a long way over the past year at the Foundation and have once again done a tremendous amount of work. For us it has been yet another year marked by the war in Ukraine, as it has been for many of our clients and colleagues. During this time, we have also supported people affected by other conflicts and disturbances in the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia and other parts of the world - from 55 countries. More than 20,000 people have benefited from our team's expertise and assistance. For many people, we have become a pillar of strength, a last resort, or simply a good, safe space.

It has been an intense period. Working at full capacity for two years takes its toll. We were the first Polish NGO to carry out a study on wellbeing and a diagnosis of burnout in our team. We have learned from it, and our plan for 2024 is to try to get back to working in balance as much as possible.

We have learnt important lessons from the last year: the need to continuously professionalise our services, manage our own diversity, reflect internally on how to help in a wise way, while still being attentive to the changing needs of the people we help and the challenges that arise. The development and learning that has been our experience both on an individual and collective level has been challenging, but has made us more mature and wiser as a team.

The new political context in Poland gives us space to share our expertise and experience. We intend to share our knowledge in the hope that it will allow us to build systemic solutions to many of the pressing problems that migrants in Poland currently face.



photo by Tomek Kaczor  
Agnieszka Kosowicz at the team integration meeting in September 2023.

To sum up the past year, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to all our partners, donors, colleagues, institutions, city councils and people of good will who have accompanied PFM during this intense period. Thank you for your support, and for working and looking for solutions together.

And a big thank you to the PFM team. For every day of your commitment, passion, compassion, attentiveness, care and kindness – thank you.

**Agnieszka Kosowicz**



photo by Tomek Kaczor  
Team integration meeting in September 2023.

## Who we are

The Polish Migration Forum Foundation has been supporting migrants and refugees in Poland since 2007. We strive to integrate migrants into Polish society, to respect their rights and to fight discrimination.

Every person is important.

We are committed to building a country that is welcoming and open to diversity. We want our knowledge and experience to help create a safe living space for those who make up our communities and societies, no matter where they're from.

We make sure that our work is reliable and that our services are of high quality: attentive to the needs of our clients, provided by professional staff, and with respect for the dignity and autonomy of the people with whom we work.

**We help everyone, regardless of their country of origin, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, faith, belief, worldview, disability, sexual orientation or age. Our support is free of charge.**

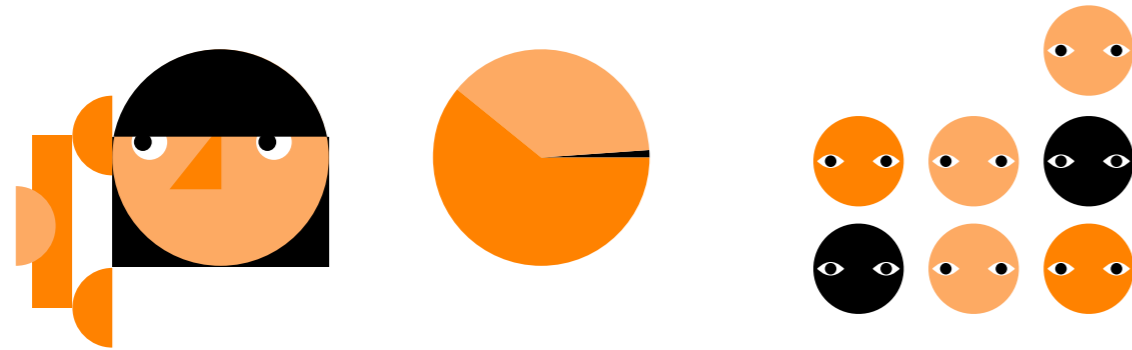


## Our services

photo by Tomek Kaczor  
Workshop on animation for children and young people from Ukraine, led by Daria Kopiec and Dominika Ludwig. The workshop was held as part of a project aimed at strengthening mental resilience and psychoeducation. An animated film 'It's worth reaching out for help' was produced, which can be viewed on our YouTube channel.

## Information support

- **3427 advisory and information sessions**
- **818 consultations on legal advice**
- **1824 legal consultations**



**more than 13 people a day receive information or advice through our helpline**

**61% women, 38% men and 1% non-binary people benefited from information support**

**our lawyers consult more than seven people a day**

We provide information support at our office at 137 Górczewska Street, online and over the phone.

The helpline experts provide information on a wide range of issues related to life in Poland in Ukrainian, Russian, English and Polish. The service operates five days a week, six hours a day.

In 2023, the most frequently asked questions were related to the legalisation of stay, UKR status (especially about leaving and returning to Poland), employment, sworn translations, official certification of various documents and qualifications, social benefits, availability of Polish language courses, enrolment of children in schools and kindergartens, visas for citizens and nationals of different countries.

By appointment, we also offer legal assistance and individual consultations (in person or online) regarding legalisation of stay, tax settlement, business activity and career counselling.

Our services are available in Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, English, Belarusian and French (with the possibility of translation into other languages).

### Key challenges:

- an inefficient system and procedures related to legalisation of stay (e.g. long legalisation procedures, incomprehensible communication with institutions, e.g. official letters)
- unequal treatment of migrants (discrimination based on country of origin)
- lack of clear information in foreign languages, both during legalisation procedures and in public spaces (schools, offices, health services and other)

### Systemic recommendations:

- a wise and sustainable migration and integration policy
- improvement of legalisation procedures
- improved access to information for non-Polish speakers, especially in public services and in communication with authorities
- training of administrative staff
- equal rights for migrants regardless of their country of origin, for example

**Open, sincere and tolerant staff who provide comprehensive and useful information. They patiently explain everything to you, until you understand. I am very grateful and glad that I turned to you.**

A client from Ukraine

## Psychological support

30

more than 30 people  
a day benefit from our  
psychological support



29% of them  
are children



65% of them  
are women

- 7737 psychological consultations
- of which 553 were in detention centres for foreigners
- 390 people were supported through the helpline
- our clients come from 55 different countries

**Our aim is to provide high-quality psychological support, as accessible as possible, and in a language in which the person needing support is comfortable speaking.**

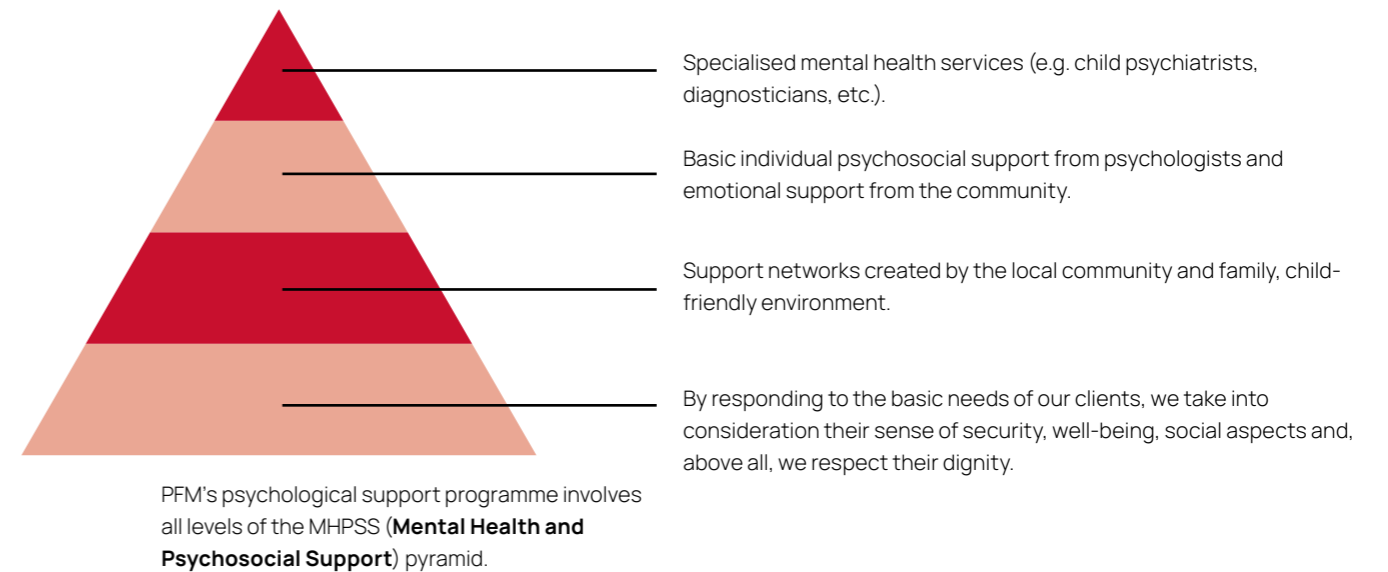
We strive to ensure that the whole system of support for refugees and migrants in Poland takes into account the psychosocial conditions associated with migration, such as stress, trauma and adaptation challenges. It is important to us that all our services put the dignity of their recipients first. We are happy to share our knowledge - we train other psychologists, teachers, educators. We participate in many conferences and seminars.

Our psychological team works closely with the educational team. In 2023, we ran a series of workshops in Warsaw and suburban schools aimed at building the mental resilience of children and young people, and strengthening the bonds between migrant children, so that they are supportive of each other. The „ReSET - Relationships, Strength, Emotions, Care” workshops reached more than 2,500 children, and we ran the workshop almost 200 times. We support refugees and migrants in strengthening their family ties and bonds with the local community, including, for example, the school community.

All of the people from our team who work directly with clients are able to provide psychological first aid, and redirect to a professional if necessary.

Our psychological team works with people who have experienced trauma, with difficulties in functioning as a parent, with those who are grieving, have anxiety or adjustment disorders, those in suicidal crisis, those with addictions and in perinatal crisis. We work in different psychotherapy styles: integrative, systemic, Ericksonian or SFT (solution-focused therapy). We also run support groups. We try to make access to psychiatrists easier - in the most urgent cases we redirect people to private medical facilities.

A specific form of specialised psychological support is our work in detention centres in Poland. In our opinion, people who are detained there are deprived of unbiased, high-quality psychological support provided in a language they understand. Our psychologists work with detained people in emergency situations, often preventing mental and suicidal crises. Refugees in detention centres regularly call for access to psychological support and they raise this issue during protests and hunger strikes, which are, unfortunately, becoming more frequent.

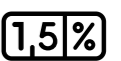


### Key challenges:

- low availability of psychologists, especially child psychologists, but also psychotraumatologists, psychiatrists and diagnosticians in public health services
- need for social normalisation of the use of psychological help
- very limited access to clients in detention centres for foreigners

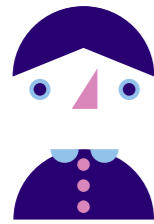
### Systemic recommendations:

- improving access to psychological help for people in detention centres
- psycho-educational activities for children, especially in multicultural classes
- improving the availability of psychiatrists, especially child psychiatrists
- improving the availability of child psychologists
- improving the system for preventing and responding to violence (especially in the family, against children and Gender Based Violence)
- improving the support system for people experiencing mental crises





## Educational support



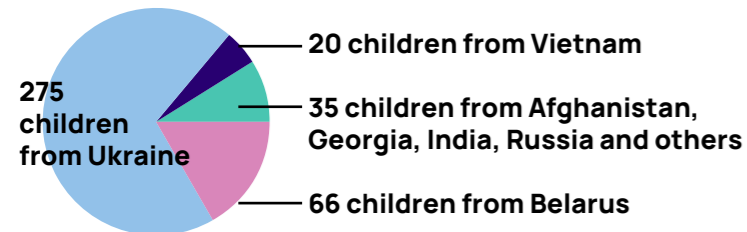
396 children have been under the care of our intercultural assistants in the school year 2023/24



11 intercultural assistants work in 21 schools

10 languages

assistants work in Ukrainian, Russian, English, French, Persian (Dari), Turkish, Tajik, Uzbek, Vietnamese and Polish



684 people have enrolled in the „School of Diversity” - an online platform for people working with migrant children: [szkola-roznorodnosci.org](https://szkola-roznorodnosci.org)

**Schools in Poland are becoming increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse. This is a process that will continue to grow dynamically, which is why we are committed to promoting openness, mutual kindness and cooperation among children from an early age. We are working towards making the Polish school a welcoming place for everyone, regardless of their background.**

An effective and, in our opinion, the best form of support for migrant children and their integration processes is the support of intercultural assistants. The assistants help children who do not speak Polish. They translate, support the school adaptation process and the building of relationships with other children. The assistants also mediate the child-parent-school communication.

Intercultural and anti-discrimination education is becoming increasingly important. We implement it through intercultural competence workshops for children and young people, workshops and webinars for teachers, psychologists and educators. Our intercultural assistants regularly participate in supervisions led by an intercultural psychologist. In 2023, we also expanded activities which strengthen children's psychological resilience and normalise the use of psychological support among migrant children.

We have launched an e-learning platform called „School of Diversity” - an online course for those working with migrant children. It covers different topics, such as the Polish education system, support for children with special needs, support for pupils who speak foreign languages, preventing violence against children, psychological first aid, and more.

We have also published several important publications - practical tools, brochures and handbooks to support educational work with children and young people - „Model of intercultural education WISE” in three languages and „Glossary-Dictionary.”

- 231 people working with migrant children participated in our in-depth trainings and workshops
- almost 1,000 people took part in our expert webinars
- 749 children took part in intercultural competence workshops
- approx. 2,500 children took part in workshops to strengthen mental resilience

### Key challenges:

- inclusion in education of almost 150,000 children and young people from Ukraine who remain outside the Polish system
- low motivation to study among migrant children (often resulting from an unstable family situation)
- improved access of foreign pupils to psychological and educational counselling services
- low awareness of the role and importance of intercultural assistants at school
- the need to improve the competences of intercultural assistants and those working as teacher aides
- cases of domestic violence (including neglect)

### Systemic recommendations:

- promoting intercultural assistants as a permanent element of the education system in Poland
- improving procedures for preventing and responding to violence against children
- inclusion in the school curriculum of intercultural and global education as well as integration elements and anti-discrimination education
- raising the competences of teachers, educators and school psychologists in working with multicultural classes



projekt współfinansuje  
miasto stołeczne  
Warszawa



Fundacja  
ING  
Dzieciom



## Support for women

- 16 birthing classes attended by 163 participants
- 343 physiotherapy consultations
- 645 consultations with a midwife
- 28 midwives from all over Poland have been trained on-site, 124 students had an on-line training
- 797 people from all over Poland participated in a webinar with the Professional Self-government of Nurses and Midwives

Every childbirth is part of a primary experience which all women are afraid of. No matter if a migrant or a Polish woman is giving birth. Although culture imposes different patterns of behaviour on us and there are different expectations surrounding this event, we all feel the same. However, we midwives must always be aware of what a life-changing experience it is not to give birth on your own land.

Małgorzata Skalska, midwife

**We support migrant and refugee women, especially those who are pregnant, those with young children, those who have experienced trauma and those who want to improve their parenting and caring skills.**

We run birthing classes for migrant and refugee women, support groups for women, mothers of babies and young children, workshops to improve parenting/caring skills, provide consultations with midwives, individual consultations for young children with a physiotherapist and training of medical staff on perinatal care in a culturally diverse environment. We have also conducted child first aid trainings, yoga classes for pregnant women and those with young children.

We provided financial and material aid to pregnant women and women with young children.

We published a practical guide for young migrant mothers „I am a mum in Poland” in three language versions.

To celebrate Mother's Day, we made a beautiful [film about lullabies](#). Women from different parts of the world such as Ukraine, Tajikistan, Venezuela, Jordan, Chechnya, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Mongolia shared stories about motherhood customs in their countries of origin.

We supported women from such countries as: Tajikistan, Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Chechnya, Congo, Afghanistan, Armenia, Latvia, Canada, Poland, Australia, Iran, Russia, Albania, Pakistan, Brazil, Algeria, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Spain, Somalia, Rwanda, Nepal, Egypt, India, Kenya, Portugal, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Lithuania, Nigeria, France, Zimbabwe, Bolivia, Jordan, Cameroon, Iraq, United Kingdom, Vietnam, USA, Philippines, Germany, Mexico, Colombia, Turkey, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Israel, Mali, Georgia, Sri Lanka.

We work in Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, Dari, French and English.



We have sent over **115 packages of the publication „I am a mum in Poland”** to maternity hospitals, health centres, social welfare centres and organisations supporting migrant women in Poland. The publication can also be downloaded from our website [forummigration.org](http://forummigration.org)

## Systemic recommendations

- training for midwifery students and health professionals on support for migrant women during the perinatal period and on how to deal with a traumatised child
- facilitating access to the profession for migrant midwives
- involving interpreters in maternity and paediatric hospitals
- the promotion of preventive health care among women and children (e.g. education on vaccination)
- networking with organisations and institutions supporting women
- improving access to information on reproductive rights in Poland,
- sensitising health professionals to the increased risk of perinatal depression among women with migration experience.

## Support for the most vulnerable people (caseworking)



**A team of caseworkers helps to deal with a variety of issues connected to education, health care and official matters. Most people who come us for support are from vulnerable groups\*.**

The largest group of people benefiting from our support are people from Ukraine (72%). Two years after the outbreak of the full-scale war, we are seeing an increase in social inequality. On one hand, a certain group of refugees has become independent and does not need our help, but on the other, we are still contacted by people in a dramatically difficult situation, and it's becoming increasingly difficult to help them. They are unemployed, without food or essentials, with untreated chronic illnesses and sometimes homeless. We are often approached

by confused elderly people. They have nothing and need everything. Unfortunately, our Foundation can help them to a very limited degree. We can offer one-off financial support and refer them to other public organisations or institutions - it is often not enough.

Here are two examples of the circumstances of the people we support:

A retired person was granted international protection, with a right to social assistance. According to the law, after being granted protection one must move out of the centre for asylum seekers - but the waiting time for an individual integration programme (IP) in Warsaw was around nine months in 2023. As a result, the elderly lady was left destitute and homeless.

Warsaw's night shelters refused her accommodation because she lost her UKR PESEL status when she was granted international protection. The woman became invisible to the support system. She spent a few cold nights at a train station. The system has created a loophole where less resourceful people end up. In theory, this person should be supported quickly through an integration programme.

\* In the context of humanitarian aid, vulnerable groups are often singled out as those in particular need of support. According to the European Parliament Directive, vulnerable groups are: minors, unaccompanied minors, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, pregnant women, single parents of minor children, victims of human trafficking, people suffering from serious diseases, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, victims of rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence.

The Social Welfare Centre should put her on a programme to exit homelessness and find her a place in a shelter for the homeless. Nothing like that has happened. The lady visited us every day to warm up and get a cup of hot tea until we were able to help her exercise her right to systemic assistance. Another retired person, this time from Russia, came to us in a similarly difficult situation. She came to Poland on a work visa, but her potential employer did not hire her. The person was left destitute and

without a place to live, and was not entitled to social assistance until she was granted international protection. The situation was complicated because of a gap (about 2 months) between the cancellation of the work visa and the start of the subsidiary protection procedure. It is only while in the procedure that the person can benefit from the support of the Office for Foreigners.

### Key challenges:

- insufficient housing and very high cost of living
- long-term stay in permanent housing perpetuates the feelings of helplessness
- lack of systemic solutions for the most vulnerable people, e.g. single senior citizens
- labour market fraud and insufficient control of the National Labour Inspectorate
- systemic and procedural gaps, especially those affecting the most vulnerable people (e.g. homeless)

### System recommendations:

- accessible housing (social and supportive housing)
- fight against dishonest employers
- local integration programmes, especially for elderly people
- equal rights for migrants, regardless of their country of origin
- improved accessibility of public services for non-Polish speakers
- strengthening Social Welfares Centres as bodies which can support the most vulnerable people

## Networking – exchanging information, knowledge, experience

- We have been on study visits to Oslo, Vienna, Prague, Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague, Berlin and Chania
- We have co-facilitated 5 international seminars
- We have organised and participated in dozens of meetings with local institutions and organisations

**Effective assistance to refugees and migrants is not about acting individually, but about creating an ecosystem of support. 2023 was full of meetings and partnerships, joint reflection and the search for solutions.**

PFM was in regular contact with local governments, state institutions, schools, UN agencies (especially UNHCR), international organisations - including those with which we didn't have any financial agreements, as well as dozens of Polish NGOs, informal initiatives and people of goodwill.

An ecosystem of well-functioning, efficient and effective sectors that both we and our customers can count on is essential. We are an active part of this network. Therefore, we have shared our knowledge and experience whenever we could. At the same time, we have gratefully accepted the knowledge, support and experience of others. PFM was active in Forum Razem (co-founding the Advisory Group and leading a group focused on the Polish-Belarusian border). We participated in Heads of Agency Meetings: regular meetings of the heads of large humanitarian organisations, coordinated by UNHCR. We were active in the Migration Consortium, co-founding the Migration Academy and the Forum for Cooperation and Integration. Currently, the Consortium brings together over 40 organisations from all over Poland!

### Exchange of information

As part of the project 'Comprehensive support for people with special needs in the Polish migration management system (KOMPLEKS)', implemented in cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, the Association for Legal Intervention and the Office for Foreigners, we organised networking meetings for organisations and institutions working on behalf of people with special needs, co-facilitated international seminars and participated in study visits.

**Networking meetings were dedicated to the needs of migrants with disabilities, those living with HIV/AIDS, foster care alumni, residents of long-term accommodation for refugees from Ukraine, residents of open centres for foreigners, and patients of medical facilities.**

Other important networking meetings were workshops for representatives of the communes of Marki, Izabelin and Podkowa Leśna, with whom, together with the Foundation for Freedom, we implemented the project 'Welcome Neighbour! Integration of migrants in the local communities'. The workshop was attended by local government employees, employees of cultural centres, schools, accommodation for foreigners, social welfare centres, intercultural assistants and representatives of the Office for Foreigners. We had the opportunity to share good practice between the communes and further develop our cooperation.

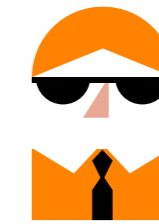
We co-facilitated **five international seminars** which aimed to seek solutions to current problems, find new partners and provide recommendations to the government. We dedicated the seminars to the following topics:



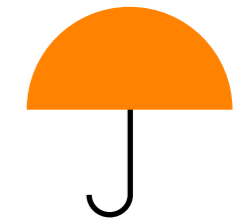
**Protection of children in foster care and unaccompanied minors from Ukraine** including issues such as challenges and strategies to regulate the situation of this group, prevent possible abuse and ensure the highest standards of care.



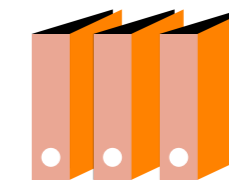
**Housing situation of refugees from Ukraine** The current housing situation of refugees from Ukraine and an assessment of the housing-related legal solutions included in the Special Act. We also looked at proposals for mid- and long-term housing solutions, both in Poland and other countries in the region.



**Welcoming, social integration and employment support programs of Ukrainian refugees with disabilities:** Diagnosis of the situation and possible solutions



**Challenges for systemic support of migrants with special needs.** Summary of experiences and future recommendations.



**The situation of Ukrainians under temporary protection in the labour market: the impact of working conditions and quality of work on integration**

We also invited employees of the City of Warsaw, Warsaw Social Welfare Centres, the Warsaw Family Assistance Centre and the Warsaw Crisis Intervention Centre to study visits organised as part of the KOMPLEKS project. Together we learnt more about foreign institutions supporting migrants, but also about each other, overcoming stereotypes and building a foundation for further cooperation locally.

## Support centre – Górczewska 137



5980 people visited us

10 490 times



192 group events took place



293 children benefited from a day care centre run by our partners from the Foundation for Freedom



**I would like to express my respect and gratitude to your organisation for the efficient and necessary assistance to the war refugees in Warsaw. My wife and I escaped after a year and a half of living under occupation. The journey to Poland was exhausting and lasted more than three days. We arrived in Warsaw totally unprepared and very stressed. But when we got to your office, the staff kindly told us to wait in the line on a comfortable couch offering water, tea and coffee. It was very nice. The caseworker provided us with all the information we needed about our stay in Poland, outlining and explaining a plan for the next steps.**

A couple from Ukraine

Since March 2023, our support centre has been located in Warsaw's Wola district at 137 Górczewska Street. It operates from Monday to Friday between 9:00 and 18:00.

There, you can receive information support, caseworker support (without prior registration) and get help with official, health, educational and other issues, in English, Ukrainian, Russian, Belarusian, Dari, Pashto and Chechen.

Children between the ages of 3 and 7 can use the day-care centre (for a maximum of 4 hours), under the professional care of the Foundation for Freedom staff. The babysitters speak Ukrainian and Russian.

With prior registration, you can receive psychological and legal aid, as well as career counselling. In addition, we run support groups for women, children of all ages, senior citizens, social skills workshops for children, yoga for pregnant women and mothers with young children, Latin dance classes and other networking activities.

**I receive professional answers to the questions I ask. There is a very pleasant and respectful atmosphere at the office.**

beneficiary from Ukraine

**I like the children's common room the most, it's a wonderful place for children to spend their time in an interesting way. My child enjoys it a lot.**

beneficiary from Ukraine

**Your services are of a high standard. Your employees are the best in the country. Efficient, intelligent and responsible.**

beneficiary from Ukraine

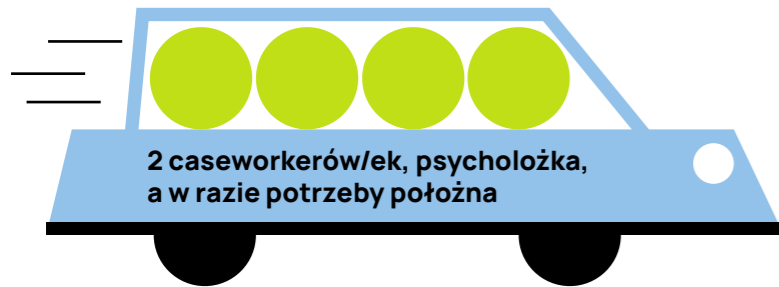
### Key challenges:

- the increasingly difficult situation of people who apply for assistance,
- insufficient systemic support, e.g. social assistance, lack of housing
- instability of our premises - we are constantly looking for financially accessible spaces for our activities.

### Systemic recommendations:

- increasing the availability of social assistance for people with various forms of international protection
- local government (or other, systemic) support in running a permanent support point

## Our mobile team



- 81 visits to 13 supported places
- 586 caseworker consultations
- 199 psychological consultations
- 15 midwifery consultations

Many thanks to your organisation for help. The staff who came to visit us are very professional, polite and attentive to people with special needs.

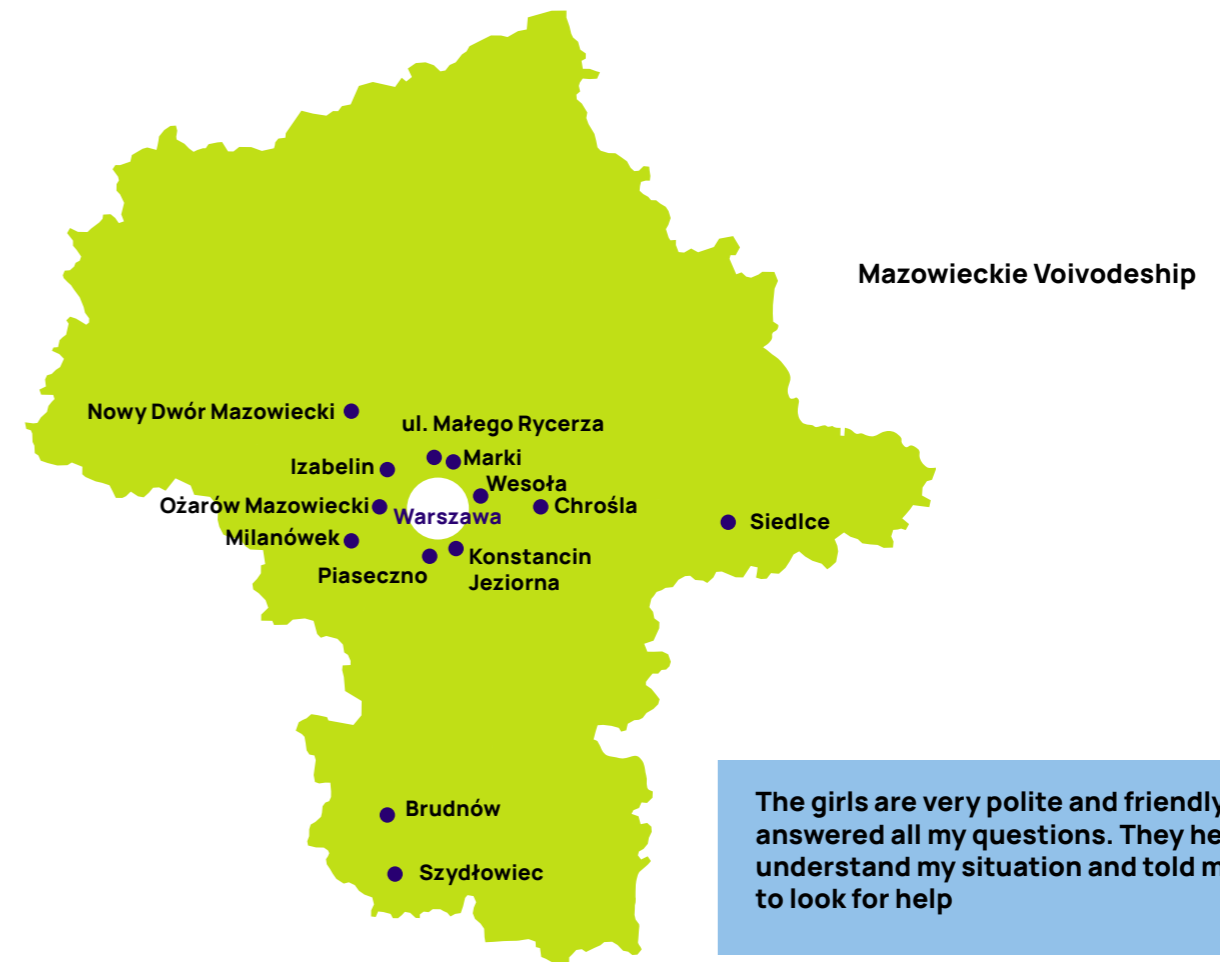
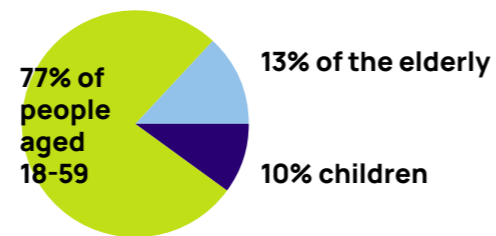
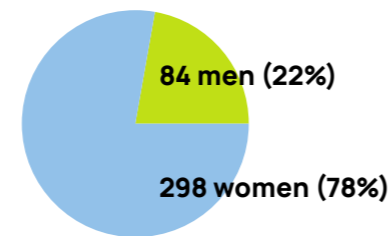
We are happy that the organisation's staff came to our hostel.

The consultant helped me a lot with applying for 500+, obtaining a residence card and other difficulties that refugees face in Poland.

The mobile team does extremely important and necessary work, reaching places outside of Warsaw, within the Mazovian Voivodeship, where no other help often reaches. We visit accommodation centres where for the past two years there have been people in need of support: the elderly, those caring for people with disabilities, chronically ill and dependent. Working in this team is difficult and requires a quick and effective response to current needs. We will continue to provide this form of support in 2024.

I had an excellent consultation with useful information. The caseworker has excellent communication skills and gave me great advice. I got answers to all my questions.

382 people benefited from our assistance, 98% of them from Ukraine



The girls are very polite and friendly. They answered all my questions. They helped me understand my situation and told me where to look for help

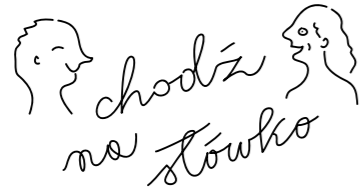
### Key challenges:

- high dynamics and unpredictability of the needs of people we visit
- we are not always able to respond to all of their needs
- we need to extend psychological support

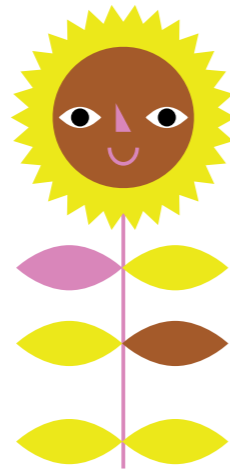
### Systemic recommendations:

- improving coordination and cooperation with other support providers
- improving the availability of support (of any kind) in smaller towns, at a systemic level - likely in the whole country

## Volunteering



100 Polish-migrant couples have conversations as part of the 'Chodź na słowko' project



115 volunteers of twenty different nationalities

**Thank you for my Taisija. I could not have gotten a more wonderful person. Her determination and insight in learning Polish impressed me. In addition to her work and daily tasks, she found the strength and time to pursue her goals. I know she will master the Polish language. I keep my fingers crossed for her and carry her in my heart all the time!**

**I've recently finished my lessons with Daniel. It was an interesting experience, we learned a lot from each other, but Daniel got a job offer in Spain and he is moving there. The meetings were supposed to last 3 months but we continued for 8... Well, now all I feel is emptiness. The project is great, so my question is, is it still running? I would like to help someone else. I'm hoping the project is still running... Please tell me that it does!**

In 2023, 115 volunteers of twenty different nationalities were involved in the Foundation's activities. The „Chodź na słowko” project, which engaged volunteers in supporting migrants in learning Polish, involved 100 Polish-migrant couples working together.

As part of employee volunteering, 24 people from the Orange Foundation supported people from nine different countries in learning Polish, and a team of volunteers from EcoVadis made beautiful gifts for migrants to celebrate Santa Claus Day.

Nearly 40 migrant volunteers supported other migrants with networking activities, organising workshops, meetings, walks and simply by sharing their time and skills. A group of regular volunteers has also supported the Plates and Mates team - our chefs who cook delicious food with migrant children. Volunteers also supported us with translations, Excel tables, assembling furniture, looking after the children and supporting them in their studies.

Thank you!

Photo: Hanna Linkowska  
Culinary workshops of  
Plates&Mates



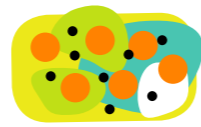
### Key challenges:

- The declared commitment of volunteers is greater than the current capacity to manage it effectively.
- The „Chodź na słowko” project has great potential for growth. It brings excellent results and could be resized and diversified if only the team had the capacity to do so.

### Systemic recommendations:

- There is great potential for activities initiated and carried out by migrants themselves as they are empowering, integrative, educational, give a sense of agency, experience and strengthen local relationships. It is worth focusing on this.
- Local activities with the voluntary engagement of neighbours have excellent integration effects. It would be advisable to support such initiatives systemically.
- The „Chodź na słowko” project is adaptable to any environment and we encourage it. We particularly recommend a senior-migrant conversation model developed as part of the „Nowe relacje” project ([nowerelacje.org](http://nowerelacje.org)), implemented together with Towarzystwo Inicjatyw Twórczych „ę”.

## Local networking activities



Together we made over  
500 Mexican tacos,  
200 arepa pancakes and  
500 spring rolls

**We love the meetings at the club. We immerse ourselves in the native Ukrainian atmosphere and for a few hours we feel as if we have returned home. We understand each other and have a common goal - to help people on the frontline. Our meetings and trips simply warm the soul. We don't need huge funds, we need hearty conversations, friendly meetings, aromatic coffee and our assistants who listen, help, and give advice. Suddenly, everything becomes easier.**

Tatiana, Dnipro, Ukraine

The most colourful and fun part of our work was spending time together, getting to know each other, doing enjoyable things together, creating something, cooking and enjoying meals. Some ideas for joint activities came from the migrants themselves, and we supported their implementation. Our International Senior Club, for example, was formed on the initiative of Olga, Ira, Tetiana, Olena, Raisa and Svitlana, who were meeting for three months to do activities supporting senior citizens.

In addition to our headquarters at 137 Górczewska Street, we were hosted by BAZA by Inclusive.Buzz, MAL Grójecka 109, the Kraina Foundation, Stacja Praga and Wolska Mozaika, among others. We also met by the Vistula River, in Skaryszewski Park and at Pole Mokotowskie.

Integration requires the involvement of both parties: the host and the hosted, and joint activities, especially those pleasant ones, bring people closer together. In 2023, these activities included:

- cooking together
- dancing
- International Senior Club
- WenDo workshops
- I miss home - a series of nostalgic meetings
- professional photo session
- carpentry classes
- speedfriending
- henna tattooing
- making beauty products together
- fortune-telling
- candle making
- embroidering
- shared breakfast
- sewing a huge refugee flag
- themed walks around Warsaw
- breakfast festival
- clothes exchange
- picnics
- joint celebrations of various holidays



Photo: Hanna Linkowska  
Henna painting workshop

### Key challenges:

- Lack of a permanent meeting place, a real community centre. We are looking for a long-term rental space - we will gladly accept any help!

### Systemic recommendations:

- Systemic inclusion and consideration of migrants in projects ran by public cultural institutions and NGOs, including language accessibility
- Supporting initiatives to include migrants in cultural and social life by NGOs, local activity places, volunteers, cultural centres, etc.
- Financial support of local leaders with migration experience (e.g. with microgrants) so that they can implement their own ideas.



## Career counselling

- **156 business counselling consultations**
- **228 career counselling consultations in Ukrainian, Russian, English, French and Polish.**

### **We support migrants in the process of becoming independent in Poland – also professionally.**

Many people cannot work in their profession after leaving their country of origin. There are difficulties in diploma nostrification, as well as legal, procedural and other formal differences. Finding one's place in the Polish labour market can be a challenge even for people who were respected professionals in their countries of origin and were specialists in their field. In 2023, we provided individual career counselling as well as group meetings on how and where to look for a job. We carried out these activities in Polish, English, Ukrainian, Russian and French.

Thanks to the cooperation with Association Mova - language without barriers, we also conducted a series of career counselling workshops in Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Persian and Tajik.

We also ran a long-term project to support the launch and running business in Poland, dedicated to women from the Middle East. The Intercultural Academy of Women's Initiatives is a series of meetings and workshops on personal development, as well as minigrants to support their new businesses.

Women from countries outside the European Union could also benefit from our other project against digital exclusion (DIGITS), run jointly with local NGOs and companies from Belgium, Germany, Austria, Greece and Romania. We are working to develop educational resources, including those for digital skills trainers.



Ms Irina, master of embroidery.  
Photo session was a part of the International Academy of Women's Initiatives.  
Photo: Tomek Kaczor

### **Key challenges:**

- lack of Polish language skills and low availability of Polish language courses for migrants
- structural mismatch - qualifications of migrants don't match the market needs
- migrants need to work below their qualifications
- lack of stability and life difficulties that results in inactivity
- many dishonest employers

### **Systemic recommendations:**

- Polish language courses organised on a systemic level, not only by NGOs
- greater labour market control to eliminate or at least reduce the scale of exploitation and discrimination of migrants
- support for employers to hire migrants more eagerly
- employment support programmes based on qualifications, requalification courses
- making diploma nostrification easier, pathways to the labour market for professionals are particularly needed in Poland, e.g. for medics.

## MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning)

**The warmth of the souls of your employees reveals itself before they even start talking to us. Therefore, people feel that their problem will be solved in the best possible way. It is a pleasure to tell our friends both in Warsaw and in Ukraine about your organisation.**

Beneficiary from Ukraine

Our MEAL team (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning) monitors the implementation of our projects. They take care of the quality of service provided to our beneficiaries, examine the needs of those who turn to us for help and provide feedback to those who speak with our experts.

Currently, in all of our locations - the centre at 137 Górczewska Street, the offices at 5/14 Szpitalna Street and in the mobile teams - our beneficiaries have the opportunity to approach us for help with a questionnaire which also allows them to provide feedback in eight languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, English, French, Polish, Spanish and Farsi).

We have also developed customised questionnaires for the special needs of children in different age groups (considering their reading skills, language and communication channels). Seniors and digitally excluded people can address us through a specially designed paper questionnaire.

We have developed a system for responding to complaints and inappropriate behaviour that ensures anonymity for those we help. We are continually developing and improving our procedures to ensure that the Polish Migration Forum Foundation is as accountable as possible for the actions of its employees.

We regularly organise meetings (focus groups and in-depth interviews) exploring the needs of beneficiaries where they can share their comments, complaints, experiences and needs.

### Challenges:

In the last two years, especially 2023, we have taken a huge leap in analysing quantitative and qualitative data. They allow us to understand trends but, above all, the changing needs of our beneficiaries. While last year we focused on developing skills and systems for monitoring, evaluation and accountability to our clients, we see 2024 as a time for learning from this data. We are committed to ensuring that our planning is always based on data that demonstrates the specific needs of the people we work for.

### Recommendation:

#### Sharing knowledge and experience.

In recent years, Polish NGOs have gained valuable experience in operating in emergency situations in accordance with the highest standards of professionalism and accountability. Humanitarian standards, principles for identifying vulnerable groups and methodologies for accountability towards beneficiaries should be passed on to state and local government institutions and entities. Therefore, the Polish Migration Forum Foundation is organising a series of workshops for social welfare centres and state services in 2024.



Multicultural workshops for children at ZSO SP 2 in Brwinów.  
Photo: Anna Maciejko

## Communication

- **Facebook reach - over 850,000 people**
- **a quarter of a million people visited our website**
- **we were featured in the media 786 times**
- **21 Ukrainian media outlets wrote about us**

The past year was an intensive period for our communications team. We implemented a lot of internal and external activities, developed many promotional, press and advocacy materials, as well as educational and informative publications. Information about the events organised by the PFM Foundation found its way into both mainstream media outlets in Poland and abroad, as well as professional websites and magazines aimed mainly at teaching staff, midwives or psychologists.

In 2023, the team was involved in the communication and promotion of such ventures, projects, publications and events as:

### **Multicultural calendar**

We started the year 2023 with our beautifully illustrated calendar, which features stories from migrants about holidays in different cultures and countries.

### **2022 annual report**

One year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we have published a report on the activities of our Foundation.

### **Promoting the Support Centre**

Our support centre was moved to 137 Górczewska Street. This change required numerous communication and promotional activities.

### **World Refugee Day**

Together with migrants and volunteers, we sewed a large orange flag - a symbol of solidarity with people on the move. The event took place on the Parade Square in Warsaw.

### **Lullabies and stories of motherhood**

A beautiful film made for Mother's Day in which women from different parts of the world talk about motherhood, childhood and customs from their countries of origin.

### **Animation film „It's worth reaching out for help”.**

Created during an art workshop for children and young people from Ukraine, led by Daria Kopiec.

**Other films:** about inclusive sports picnics, and a short video about the activities of PFM

### **„Szkoła różnorodności” („Diversity School”)**

Poland's first online course for people working with migrant children.

**Publications:** „I am a mum in Poland. A guide for migrant women who are expecting a child in Poland”, „WISE model of intercultural education”, „Diary-Dictionary”, „On the road to integration. A collection of good practices from the communes of Marki, Izabelin and Podkowa Leśna”, „Networking and building partnerships in times of crisis. Complex. Summary of experiences” and smaller psycho-educational and informational brochures and leaflets.

### **Training for midwives**

An extensive series of training sessions promoted in the industry media by, among others, the Professional Self-government of Nurses and Midwives, which was met with great interest. Stationary courses and webinars for those working with migrant children: intercultural assistants, teachers and psychologists.

### **Pre-election publication series**

We developed an educational, informative series with the main slogan „Let's choose wisely” and a viral post showing the topic of migration and integration on the agendas of the various political parties in the campaign ahead of the 2023 parliamentary elections.

### **Christmas campaign**

Promoting a Christmas ebook, our poster „Recipe for good communication at the table” and a guide on talking to families about difficult topics related to migration.

### **Cooking workshop for children Plates&Mates**

Inclusive cooking workshops for children, led by migrants

### **And other special events, which amounted to more than 250.**

### **Rebranding**

In 2023 we also worked on a big and important change for us - a new website and visual identity, including a new logotype. Michał Dąbrowski is the graphic designer behind all of this (thank you!). Our Foundation is dedicated to nurturing and strengthening diversity and we wanted to convey this diversity in our identity. Hence the decision not to be represented by one colour, but to make our identification colourful. So that we are not represented by one shape, but different shapes. So that the dynamics of the forms and the various combinations represent our character visually as well. This is how we see ourselves and how we want to be seen!

Transparency, clarity of messages and making information easy to search are also very important to us, and so our new website (coming soon!) and our entire identity focus on these features. With this visual change, we are re-inventing ourselves as a professional, modern and friendly organisation for which accessibility, diversity and transparency set the direction and style of communication.

A fond farewell to our previous logo: the three letters PFM with dots served as a visual representation for creating new ties. From the „P” with arms folded across the chest, to the „F” extending its hands to the other person, to the „M” symbolising a meeting. A big thank you to the author of the orange logo that has been with us for 17 years! Małgorzata Wójcicka - you are absolutely invaluable! The basic idea remains with us: creating new connections.



### **Recommendations:**

- In common spaces and public institutions, we recommend greater attention to accessibility (especially in terms of language), transparency and openness to diversity. In practice, this would mean, for example, using easy language and translations into foreign languages as the standard, not the exception.
- We also advocate for giving a voice to migrants, so that they have the chance to speak on their own behalf as often as possible.

## Polish-Belarusian border

- **Total amount collected by Store Without Borders: 729,035 PLN**
- **Number of psychological consultations in detention centres for foreigners: 553**

**The Polish Migration Forum Foundation has been advocating for human rights to be respected at the Polish-Belarus border since August 2021. We work with humanitarian activists and other NGOs within the informal coalition called the Border Group (Polish: Grupa Granica).**

We strongly oppose the pushbacks practised by the Polish military - the deportation of people to Belarus without the possibility of applying for international protection in the EU. We oppose the militarisation of border regions, repression of humanitarian activists and people living in these areas. We do not accept the destruction of nature, the dehumanisation of people on the move, the social and political condoning of violence and indifference.

**In the face of the humanitarian crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border, we are involved in the following areas as part of the Border Group's activities:**



### SKLEP BEZ GRANIC

#### Store Without Borders

We initiated the creation and run the Store Without Borders ([www.sklepbezgranic.pl](http://www.sklepbezgranic.pl)), where you can support the activities of the Border Group through shopping, including paying for a medical aid kit, a food parcel or covering other humanitarian costs.

#### Fundraising

- we partnered with international NGOs to get funding for humanitarian work in the border region  
- we supported local organisations on the front line, sharing competences in partnership building, fundraising and managing an organisation.

#### Psychological support for people in detention centres for foreigners

Although detention should be a preventive measure of last resort, almost all people who cross the 'green border' in Poland, who are stopped by the border guards and not sent back to Belarus, end up in detention centres for foreigners. These are often people who have experienced violence or even torture, at times even children, who should not be placed in detention centres at all, as the conditions of detention put a stain on mental health.

In 2023 we were not able to visit our clients in detention, but we provided crisis intervention and support over the phone. Our psychologists worked with 85 people, two of whom were minors. Those who came to us for help often experienced serious crises, self-harm, including suicide attempts. We describe our experiences in a report on psychological help in detention centres, which is scheduled for publication in 2024.

#### Advocacy

We need a systemic change and to finally comply with international and European law, which clearly states that pushbacks are an illegal practice. We took every opportunity to speak out about this - in the media, at conferences, seminars, at meetings with decision-makers.

We took an active part in the working group on the Polish-Belarusian border and detention within the 'Razem' Forum. We worked on strengthening coordination between local, national and international actors concerned with the response to the border crisis.

## The humanitarian crisis at the border continues!

**Statistics for 2023 describing the humanitarian crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border\*:**

**7583 people requested help from the Border Group**  
**3366 people were reached with humanitarian assistance**  
**among them 324 women, 164 children – as many as 110 unaccompanied minors**  
**88 – number of reported missing persons**  
**1098 - this is how many times the Border Group humanitarian activists went on interventions in 2023**  
**653 people on the move reported violence experienced in Poland**  
**1775 people on the move reported experiencing pushbacks (many people were taken back to Belarus multiple times)**  
**55 people on the move died (documented deaths from August 2021 to December 2023)**

### Key challenges:

- lack of will among politicians to end the pushbacks
- growing racism and xenophobia, strongly fuelled before the parliamentary elections
- declining public interest in the issue of the Polish-Belarusian border
- decreasing involvement of current and potential donors, including private donors
- fatigue and burnout of the humanitarian workers because of the lack of any stable systemic solutions

### Systemic recommendations:

- an immediate end to the practice of pushbacks
- use of detention in accordance with Polish law (as a last resort, not a standard practice)
- ending the detention of children – alternative safeguards should be applied to families with children,
- ending the detention of people who experienced violence
- implementing legal and safe solutions for refugees to find protection in Poland, such as joint participation in relocation or the 'community sponsorship' model
- changing the regulations on determining the age of people claiming to be minors (current methods leave a very large margin of error, resulting in children being classified as adults)

\* Data collected and shared by the We Are Monitoring Association  
[wearemonitoring.org.pl](http://wearemonitoring.org.pl)

## Advocacy and sharing of experience

- **The Polish Migration Forum Foundation appeared in the media 786 times, Agnieszka Kosowicz 309 times**
- **We appeared 309 times in the following media: Onet, Radio TOK FM, Gazeta Wyborcza, Interia, AlJazeera, Magazyn Kontakt, Oko.press, Radio Nowy Świat, Polsat, TVN24, Rzeczpospolita, Washington Post and in over 20 Ukrainian media outlets**
- **Some of the international conferences we have participated in: „The Role of Civil Society in the Promotion and Protection of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination” (OSCE) in Vienna, Humanitarianism in Changing Climate in Bangladesh, Refugee Hub in Brussels, Presidents Summit in Copenhagen, 86th UNHCR Standing Committee in Geneva, European Brief Therapy Association (EBTA) International Conference, Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) in Lisbon.**

### **We advocate for the improvement of the situation of migrants and refugees in Poland at every available opportunity and level.**

We try to talk about the needs of this group, give recommendations and suggest solutions. Our main demands in 2024 are listed on page XX at the beginning of this report. However, for effective cooperation, what we need from the authorities is first and foremost:

- Striving for systemic solutions to social problems with which the NGO sector cannot continue to be left alone. We see a smaller scale of NGO activities and a huge gap that is not being filled by the state.

- Long-term thinking, rather than just addressing current issues.
- Seeking solutions for all refugees and migrants, regardless of their country of origin
- Synergy in action. Poland should develop a system where different sectors have a comprehensive understanding of migrant problems. Looking for solutions within organisations and different parts of the system is not enough because everyone focuses solely on their own initiatives.
- Dialogue. The situation calls for an honest conversation about these challenges, using different perspectives.

### **In 2023 we engaged in dialogue and cooperation with:**

#### **Government and central administration**

In a politically difficult pre-election year, we discussed the needs of migrants at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration and the Office for Foreigners. The President of the PFM Foundation was a member of a working group set up by minister Agnieszka Ścigaj, preparing the government's strategy for social inclusion. Karolina Czerwińska, member of the PFM Board, represented social organisations in the Monitoring Committee of the European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. The aim of working with the government was to create good systemic solutions, taking into account the needs of migrants in the planning of activities and the distribution of funds at the central level.

#### **Local governments**

We built a partnership with the Education Office in Warsaw. We've enjoyed building relationships with the Warsaw communes of Izabelin, Marki and Podkowa Leśna. The cooperation resulted in specific activities supporting migrants in these areas. We co-founded the Migration Academy - an educational platform on migration for local government officials. More than 200 people from all over Poland have completed the online migration course. Our theme with local governments is integration and building local communities.

#### **Other NGOs**

Other NGOs are our important partners and collaborators. Our work within the initiative „We have an idea for Poland”, which we co-founded with the Batory Foundation and OFOP, was an important process for us. We wrote down our demands to politicians from different organisations which deal with various socially important issues. PFM presented the topic of migration to this group. An important platform of cooperation for us was the Migration Consortium, with which we jointly promoted our postulates, but also built an excellent network of the Forum for Cooperation and Integration, which brings together more than 40 organisations from all over Poland. PFM has also participated in the „Razem” Forum, co-running the Partnerships Group, the Detention Group

and participating in the Advisory Group. We have also started a pilot project with the organisation Pathways International (formerly known as Refugee Hub) to promote the ‚community sponsorship’ model as a safe and legal model for hosting refugees in Poland.

#### **Large international institutions and organisations**

On many occasions, we were invited to diplomatic missions in Poland and hosted international guests at our Support Centre. The changing needs of migrants and the NGO sector in Poland were often the subject of discussion. In autumn, we organised a conference with the International Crisis Group on the situation at the Polish-Belarusian border in Brussels. We shared our knowledge with OSCE, IOM, UNHCR, Refugee Hub, European Network of Migrant Women, IHSA and our international partners: DRC, IRC, CARE, Save the Children and many others.

#### **Universities**

In February 2023, Agnieszka Kosowicz was a guest lecturer at Harvard University, where she spoke about humanitarian aid in Poland. We work regularly with the University of Warsaw, where our team supports systemic knowledge building on migration and migrant support. We co-facilitate a postgraduate programme for intercultural assistants, where many of our team members teach and host study visits.

#### **Experts**

Psychologists Anastasia Padlikowska, Natalia Marchenko and Marta Piegat-Kaczmarczyk spoke at the prestigious European Brief Therapy Association (EBTA) Conference in 2023. Marta also shared her experience at the 2nd Polyvagal Conference, an international research and training conference at the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, and the 3rd International Research and Training Conference on Psychological Help Methods.



How we did it  
our team, partners and friends

## The team

**There were 102 people in the Polish Migration Forum Foundation team in December 2023. More than half of our team consists of migrants. We speak a total of fifteen languages!**

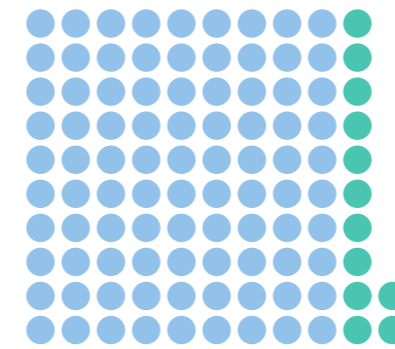
The year 2023 was a time of growth for our team, although not at such a crazy pace as the year before. We were faced with the challenge of creating an internal structure, creating and updating policies and procedures, internal communication and changes in management. It was a time of growth and constant change, working through crisis and uncertainty - but together we made it through.

**Your employees are the best in the country. Your services are of the highest standard. You are efficient, intelligent and responsible.**

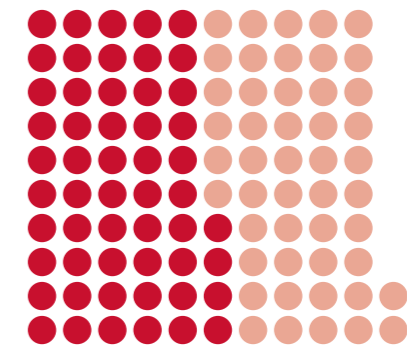
beneficiary from Ukraine

We received help from the RegenerAkcja Foundation, taking the whole team through a diagnosis of wellbeing in the organisation. The aim of the process was to identify the condition of the team and propose solutions to the identified challenges, as well as recommendations concerning those aspects of our work that are particularly valuable and supportive. We implemented some of the recommendations immediately, while others are being implemented gradually. As a result of this process, we are also reviewing our wellbeing policy.

The Foundation team consists of 102 people:



90 women and 12 men



54 persons (53%)  
with migration experience

**We have been learning!** Our employees took part in various courses, including:

- supporting teams at risk of professional burnout
- „Methodology of community work”
- „Working with individuals based on social case work techniques”
- Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)
- Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
- „Roma communities”, led by Foundation Towards Dialogue
- „Data Responsibility and Data Protection in Humanitarian Sector”
- „Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) training”
- „Conflict resolution among children”
- „Gender in Humanitarian Action”
- Diagnosing post-traumatic stress disorders
- Kids’ Skills method

## Partners and donors

The year 2023 was a time of stability, building long-term partnerships based on trust, shared goals and mission.

We have been able to build partnerships with public institutions and businesses, as well as international and local NGOs.

We know that together we are participating in a long-term process aimed at co-creating an inclusive and solidarity-based society. This will be possible by maintaining and strengthening relationships with the partners and donors who support us.

### Individual donors

We sincerely thank all our donors! Your generosity, which you have shown by making regular donations, by giving us 1.5% of your tax, by donating through our website, is invaluable. Thanks to you, we have gained a sense of security, stability and motivation to continue our work and a unique opportunity to respond to sudden, unexpected situations. Thank you for your trust!

### Business

We very much value our cooperation with the private sector. It gives us the opportunity to respond to the needs of our beneficiaries with efficiency and flexibility.

This year we are particularly grateful for the financial support of:

- **EcoVadis**
- **Robert Bosch Sp. z o.o.**
- **PGP HUB Sp. z o.o.**

We would also like to thank the following companies for sharing their resources with us:

- **Colliers** - for providing office space for our back office
- **IKEA** - for its support in furnishing the offices for psychological support
- **Uber** - for providing free ride codes for our beneficiaries
- **Hitteps** - for support with database and CRM configuration

### Corporate foundations

The **Biedronka Foundation** has placed its trust in us and invited us to partner in the housing programme it has been implementing since the outbreak of the full-scale war in Ukraine. Thanks to them, in 2023 we were able to provide temporary accommodation in hostels or staff housing to more than 1,250 people.

Among the beneficiaries, many were previously homeless and 28% of interventions involved children. The **BNP Paribas Foundation** contributed to our psychological support programme, including enabling us to refer adults and children in immediate need to psychiatrists. The Foundation has also supported our caseworker programme.

In 2023, we started and developed a partnership with the **Carrefour Foundation**. Together, we have created an integration programme for the local communities called Plates&Mates. The Foundation has also joined our psychological support programme, providing special care for children and young people.

The **Orange Foundation**, together with the employees of Orange Poland, joined our volunteer language programme „Chodź na słówko”.

The **Citi Handlowy Leopold Kronenberg Foundation** co-funded our psychological support programme.

*dziękujemy,  
że jesteście*

### International NGOs and UNHCR

In 2023, we continued to work with international NGOs, who not only co-funded our projects, but also provided us with technical expertise and strengthened our organisational facilities.

It was thanks to their support, but also to their high expectations, that we improved our systems: reporting, personal data protection, analysing demographic data of our beneficiaries. We were also given many opportunities to increase our competences. All this has been nurturing and motivating, for which we are very grateful. In 2023, we also made a strategic decision to form a project consortium with other Polish NGOs and become a direct partner of UNHCR. As of 2024, we are implementing the project in the Mazowieckie, Lubelskie and Dolnośląskie Voivodeships together with UNHCR, Homo Faber, the Nomada Association, the Foundation for Freedom, the Ukrainian House and the Migration Consortium.

### Local partnerships

We would also like to thank the partners who hosted our activities, implemented projects with us or simply worked with us:

Foundation for Freedom  
Association of the Creative Initiatives „e”  
Association Inclusive.Buzz and their wonderful BAZA  
Warsaw Family Assistance Centre  
POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews  
Association for Legal Intervention  
International Centre for Migration Policy Development  
Ukrainian House in Warsaw  
Żoliborz Community Centre  
MAL Grójecka 109  
Foundation Towards Dialogue  
Migration Consortium  
Kraina Foundation  
Praga Station  
Conflict Kitchen Foundation  
Słuszna Strawa  
Foundation for Social Diversity  
Association Mova - language without barriers  
Ashoka Poland  
Professional Self-government of Nurses and Midwives  
Birth by Humanity Foundation  
Empowering Children Foundation  
Intercultural Centre for Social Development MORS

Libraries Without Borders  
Education Office in Warsaw  
Office for Foreigners  
Dreamers and Craftsmen  
Wolska Mosaic  
Wandering Women  
Izabelin Commune  
Marki Commune  
Centre for Civic and Cultural Initiatives in Podkowa Leśna  
Izabelin Culture Centre  
CAF 3 in Marki  
Coalition for strengthening the role of intercultural and Roma assistants  
Code Your Path  
barStudio  
Strefa WolnoSłowa  
Kontakt magazine  
Stefan Batory Foundation  
schools where our intercultural assistants work  
places in the Masovian Voivodship that host our mobile team  
and organisations, activists and all those who contribute to the Border Group (Grupa Granica).

### Partnerships in international projects

We are particularly happy to work on projects through which we can exchange knowledge with local NGOs operating in other EU countries. We implement joint projects, but also learn good practices that have influenced social change in other countries.

Diesis Network – Belgium  
Austrian Association of Inclusive Society (AIS) – Austria  
Symplexis – Greece  
BK Consult –Germany  
Hub for Innovation Policy (HIP) – Romania  
Greek Forum of Migrants (EFM) – Greece  
Solidarity Now – Greece  
Mental Health Europe – Belgium  
Prolepsis Institute – Greece  
Liga za duševné zdravie – Slovakia

### International networks

In 2023, we joined the International Detention Coalition. Our organisation is also a member of the European Network for Migrant Women.





**The future –  
working contexts, challenges,  
plans and demands**

# The contexts of our work and future challenges

**The escalation of the war in Ukraine in February 2022 has shown how quickly the reality we live in can change. We are observing the dynamics of our work and know that we need to be ready and prepared to meet many new challenges.**

**There are currently two migration routes through Poland: one is the migration of people from Ukraine, the other is the route of irregular migration, mainly through the Polish-Belarusian border. The government's policy on both borders is extremely different.**

## Political conditions

The migration phenomenon and the emotions associated with it are often used for political purposes. We experienced this with the 2023 parliamentary elections in Poland, which were accompanied by a referendum that instrumentalised migration-related questions. We expect further tensions and challenges to arise from the politicisation of that area of our work, especially in the pre-election periods.

We expect our work to be influenced by:

- the **tense political situation in Poland during pre-election periods**. In 2024, we have local government elections, elections to the European Parliament, as well as a campaign preceding the presidential election in 2025.

Migration often becomes a pre-election topic and a tool to heat up public sentiment and create divisions. Heating the public debate on the topic of migration often leads to intensified xenophobia and discrimination.

- The **situation in Ukraine**, as well as political decisions regarding the situation of Ukrainians made in Poland, the EU and also globally. We expect further tensions in Polish-Ukrainian political relations, which will inevitably occur due to, at times, conflicting interests of both countries (after the grain conflict, we expect a dispute about the return of people from Ukraine, among other things).

- **Migration policy in the EU** – the European Migration Pact and discussions on Europe's collective approach towards migration tend to move towards restricting migration and protecting borders, rather than integration and creating inclusive communities. We are seeing a radicalisation of Europe, difficulties in reaching a compromise on solidarity, and at the same time, ageing populations and the demand of European markets for migrants. We are therefore concerned whether, in the context of the Polish-Belarusian border region, the EU will be respecting human rights.

- **Other geopolitical developments**, such as the recent events in countries where forced migrants are from: Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Turkey, and, to an even greater extent, the situation in Belarus and Russia. The destabilisation of the internal situation in the two countries in particular may increase migration to Poland. The presence of refugees from two sides of an ongoing conflict, even in small numbers, may be difficult.

## Economic context

Russia's invasion of Ukraine affects the economic situation in Poland, the region and the world in an obvious way. The aspects relevant to our work are:

- The **rising cost of living in Poland**, including the cost of labour, which has a direct impact on the cost of running operations, recruiting and retaining employees. The cost of living also affects the situation of the Foundation's clients. We expect that they will need help to meet their basic needs, especially as a growing percentage of the Foundation's clients are elderly, dependent people.
- The **impact of the war in Ukraine on global markets** is widely discussed. Dependence on grain imports is leading to problems in the countries of the Horn of Africa, for example, which could generate new migration flows. At the same time, the issue of grain transport is causing protests in Poland and the EU.
- The war in Ukraine is affecting **labour markets**, for example in Poland, which is shaping the group we work with. In some industries, workers from Ukraine are being replaced by people from South America - we are seeing numerous cases of labour exploitation and human trafficking. In the absence of adequate state responses, this problem will continue growing.
- On the other hand, the **presence of migrants revitalises the Polish market** and accounts for more than one per cent of GDP\*. More than 80 per cent of migrants live off their own earnings in Poland and pay taxes.
- **Sudden decisions on the departure of large groups of migrants** from Poland may put some sectors of the economy in a difficult situation and raise tensions or discontent among employers. At the same time, the return of refugees to Ukraine is and will continue to be a priority for the Ukrainian government.

\* Analysis of the impact of refugees from Ukraine on the economy of Poland – March 2024, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/106993>

## The social context

In recent years, Poland has seen a rapid cultural diversity of local communities. The country has become an immigrant, diverse country, and this phenomenon will continue to grow regardless of political narratives.

- We therefore expect **tensions and social challenges**: migrants are still learning how to live in Poland and Poles are learning about diversity. There will be conflicts. In the longer perspective, we will observe challenges of other migrant countries: e.g. the feeling of exclusion of the second generation, especially in the context of the currently observed exclusion of Ukrainian teenagers from education. In the coming years, a wise policy can help Poland avoid many of the mistakes of other countries, provided we adopt a wise policy.

- We see a **growing interest in the topic of migration** from state bodies, local authorities and institutions that deal with migrants, as well as a willingness to build integration strategies and policies in practice. There is a high demand for our expertise. Many people in Poland are looking for the knowledge and resources we have, and we will be sharing them.

- We expect that the main problem of the coming months will be a **crisis in social services of various kinds**. The Centre of Migration Research experts are warning about a crisis in health care, and we are already seeing a crisis in the education system. There are many upcoming problems in the social welfare system, which is severely underfunded, experiencing a lack of staff and resources to deal with problems in a multicultural society.

- The **situation of young people**, both local and migrant, is also difficult. We are seeing many young people in crisis. We expect that there is still a high demand for psychological help, not only for young people, as systemic help is still not sufficient.

- The **growing population of elderly people and people with disabilities** - both among refugees, migrants and in the local population - will also be a challenge. There is a growing number of people in Poland who require support in daily life. This is a social problem, not adequately addressed by the state. These people face a lack of housing, livelihood, medical care or rehabilitation.

- The **government's decisions on integration**, the creation of spaces to build culturally diverse communities, and the willingness of Poles and newcomers to change and build communities will be important.

## Legal context

The following legal changes are expected in 2024:

- the legal status of people from Ukraine who arrived after the escalation of the war. The current benefits will change, which will create a demand for information support and legal advice. We are already seeing a potential for fraud, a lot of misinformation and preying on the lack of knowledge of people who can't find clear information.

- State policy towards people on the move, who cross the Polish-Belarusian border, is being discussed and will probably change. The situation at the border is becoming more complex as time goes by.

- The legalisation of migrants' residence and work is and will continue to be a challenge. State systems are not efficient and the deadlines related to the processing of legalisation applications are repeatedly exceeded. The expiration of legal solutions provided for people from Ukraine will result in a strain on standard procedures which are not adapted to deal with an increased number of people. This may lead to thousands of people in Poland who will not have a regulated legal status.

- With the prolonged stay of people from Ukraine in Poland, there will be a need to introduce people to the labour market at their qualification level. Recognition of diplomas and professional skills will be a challenge.

## Consequences of the war

Last year, this year and in the coming years, Poland will be confronted with the consequences of the war in Ukraine. After the end of the conflict, we expect, among other things:

- a **long-term need for psychological support**.

Taking part in the war will leave many people devastated and broken.

- **conflicts and violence in families**, the need to support children who will not have the support from relatives. We expect conflicts between families currently separated between Ukraine, Poland and other countries.

- **violence, crime and easier access to weapons** than in peacetime (civilian disarmament will be both a process and a problem).

- the **increased number of people with disabilities** and those requiring long-term state assistance (this number will likely increase after the war, given the extent to which Ukraine has been mined and the associated risks for returnees). De-mining Ukraine will take decades.

- an increased number of **people addicted to psychoactive drugs and alcohol**

- an increased number of **homeless people**

- a large number of people requiring complex support due to an **unusual or particularly complicated life situation**

- an increased number of people whose identity will be difficult to establish and who will have difficulty in obtaining the documents necessary to legalise their stay; as a result, there will be an increased number of **people without a legal right of residence in Poland**, who will not be entitled to benefits

## Environment

**Poland as a country is currently not making any strategic decisions (or discussing) on the issue of climate change. Meanwhile, climate change is the cause of twice as many migrants as wars and conflicts. The scale of migration, including migration caused by climate change, will grow.**

- **Poland will be a destination for migrants** from many different countries in the world which are affected by climate change.

- **Deportation procedures will become even more dysfunctional**, and it will not be possible to deport people to a growing number of countries. Climate change will destabilise whole regions and become a cause of increased migration.

- **Climate change will also affect Ukraine** and will have an impact on migration processes in the country, as well as on the scale of return or further emigration from Ukraine, the level of wealth and the rate of reconstruction. We cannot yet estimate the impact of these changes.

## What we are striving for

After two years of working in a crisis mode, the time has come for a complete update of legal systems and systemic solutions, as well as solving problems we have been facing in Poland for years.

### Key areas in which we will be seeking changes in 2024:

#### Integration

We need:

- changes in the education system (e.g. making intercultural assistance more common, extending education to children who are currently out of the school system, training staff and introducing classes in schools to build intercultural competences)
- dissemination of free Polish language courses
- effective social assistance institutions (we need effective integration programmes, increasing the resources of crisis intervention systems, expanding the base of flats for care-dependent people, effective support for unaccompanied children and the elderly)
- protection of migrants in the labour market (the widespread exploitation and abuse of these people today is an injustice and a disservice to us all)
- consciously building a diverse community of people from different backgrounds who can rely on each other

#### Migration policy for Poland

Poland needs a migration strategy, prepared together by different sectors: government, local governments, civil society and businesses.

We are fed up with being governed by fear. We want a conversation about migration based on facts and knowledge to responsibly manage and benefit from the growing diversity of our communities. We will share our knowledge with those in power and with the public.

#### Mental health

We need accessible and professional psychological help, especially for children, in multiple languages and effective prevention, including large-scale psychoeducation.

#### Polish-Belarusian border

We demand a change in the current policy. We expect the government to come up with solutions that will restore respect for human rights at the Polish-Belarusian border.

We will also seek changes regarding detention. We call for an end to the detention of children, a wider use of alternatives to detention, as well as ensuring effective access to psychological support for people in detention.

## Projects implemented in 2023

	Project title	Project scope		Duration	Budget - implemented in 2023.	Funding	Tags
1	Protection of refugees through community centres in Poland	A multi-dimensional project with our centre at 137 Górczewska Street in Warsaw at its heart. We have provided caseworking services, legal assistance, career counselling, psychological support, a helpline and counselling on legalisation of residence, community building activities (welcoming refugees), business consultations and a mobile support point in collective accommodation facilities in the Masovian Voivodeship.		01.01.2023 - 31.12.2023	4 525 346,88 PLN	Danish Refugee Council UNHCR	Caseworking Psychological support Integration Career counselling Legal aid Social assistance Access to information
2	Perinatal support for pregnant women. A local response to the refugee crisis in Warsaw and the metropolitan area	Support for migrant mothers, including running intercultural birthing schools, midwifery consultations, health education, support groups for mothers of young children. Preventing violence against women and girls. A specific group we addressed in this project were midwives - we train them and share our experiences, especially from working in culturally diverse environments and with women who have experienced trauma or violence. One of the project areas was running a volunteer programme.		01.01.2023 - 31.12.2023 (continued until 31.03.2024)	1 154 941,53 PLN	CARE	Perinatal support Psychological support Strengthening system expertise Volunteering
3	Education and protection of children, young people and adults experiencing the effects of war in Ukraine	Intercultural assistants in Warsaw schools. Creating educational training materials preparing for intercultural assistants.		01.01.2023 - 31.08.2023	1 289 240,68 PLN	International Rescue Committee	Formal education Informal education Strengthening system expertise
4	Psycho-social inclusion and integration of children experiencing the effects of war in Ukraine	Strengthening the resilience of children and young people from Ukraine and supporting their integration through social animation. As part of the project, we implemented intercultural Plates & Mates workshops and cooking events, and empowered girls and young women through WenDo courses. The project also included psychological support for children and young people.		01.01.2023 - 31.12.2023 (continued until 31.01.2024)	662 606,47 PLN	Fundacja Carrefour	Psychological support Integration Volunteering
5	Hello School! Educational inclusion of children affected by the war in Ukraine	The aim of the project was to build teachers' competences in working with refugee and migrant students. As part of the project, we organised a series of on-site training and webinars, and published teaching materials for teachers. The project also included psycho-educational activities for refugee children during holiday classes in the Ukrainian Materynka school.		01/06/2023 - 31/08/2023	495 775,50 PLN	PLAN International oraz Disasters Emergency Committee	Strengthening system expertise Informal education
6	Psychological support for people who experienced forced migration	Psychological support and strengthening resilience of refugees		01.01.2023 - 30.09.2023	450 000,27	Choose Love	Psychological support
7	Improving access to education for children and youth impacted by the consequences of the war in Ukraine	Intercultural assistants in Warsaw schools. Building the competencies of intercultural assistants employed by various entities (NGOs, schools, local authorities) and organising networking meetings. Promotion and dissemination of the e-learning course created on szkola-roznorodnosci.org		01.09.2023 - 31.12.2023 (continued until 30.07.2024)	309 629,22 PLN	International Rescue Committee	Formal education Informal education Strengthening system expertise
8	Słowopomoc. Improving access to psychological help for persons impacted by the consequences of the war in Ukraine	Psychological support for children, young people and adults. Running the slowopomoc.pl helpline with a promotional campaign among partner organisations.		01.01.2023 - 15.04.2023	309 360,28 PLN	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Mercy Corps	Psychological support

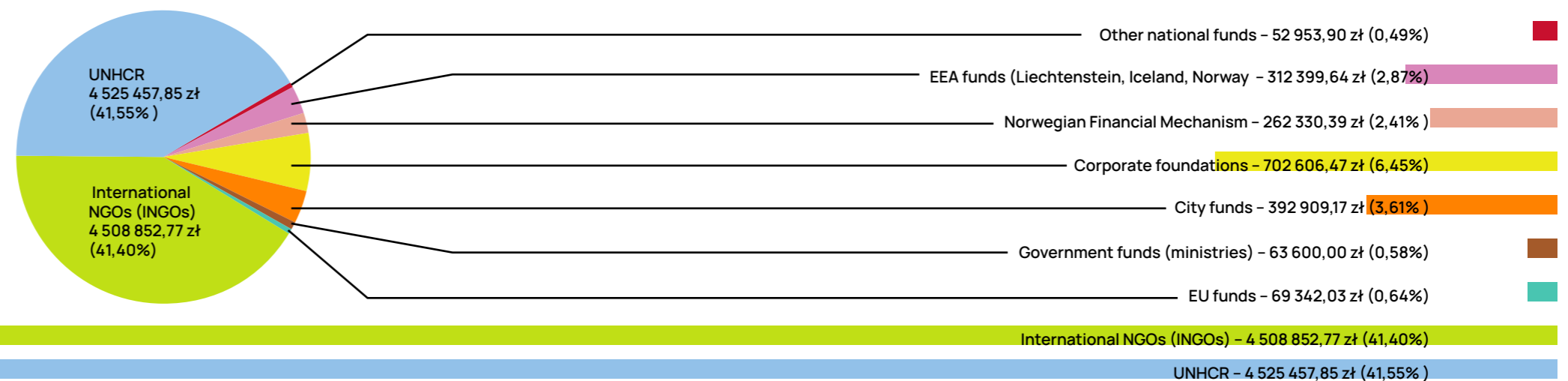


	Project title	Project scope		Duration	Budget - implemented in 2023.	Funding	Tags
16	Nowe Relacje - Inclusion and intergenerational integration of Ukrainian refugees	A regranting programme aimed at local organisations combining activities for migrants and seniors. Ten organisations participated in the programme. PFM supported the project with education and training. We ran a dedicated helpline for the programme, physiotherapy sessions and built the partners' skills in psychological support. The project was implemented in partnership with Association of the Creative Initiatives „ę” (project leader).		01.01.2023 - 31.07.2023	74 483,13 PLN	HelpAge	Integration
17	Together we can do more - first edition of the career counselling programme for foreigners for 2022 and 2023	Career counselling and support for migrants in setting up a business. The project was led by the Foundation for Social and Economic Initiatives.		01.07.2022 - 31.12.2023	63 600,00 PLN	Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy	Career counselling
18	Supporting refugees from Ukraine in an educational setting	Running the volunteer Polish language learning programme "Chodź na słówko". Psychological support for children and young people, including referrals to psychiatrists.		01.01.2023 - 30.04.2023	55 586,93 PLN	Stichtung Vluchteling	Volunteering Informal education Psychological support
19	Psychological support for people in detention centres for foreigners	Psychological support and crisis intervention for people in detention, who have often experienced violence at the Polish-Belarusian border. As part of the project, we are collecting the data in a report.		01.08.2023 - 31.12.2023  (continued until 30.06.2024)	54 800,00 PLN	Save the Children	Psychological support
20	Stronger together	Intervention project, implemented by organisations associated within the Migration Consortium. PFM provided psychological support as part of the project, including referrals to psychiatrists.		01.01.2023 - 31.12.2023	54 048,56 PLN	Open Society Fund	Psychological support
21	DIGITS. Building soft digital skills of migrant women	The aim of the project is to develop a common understanding of the needs for modern digital inclusion of migrant women in Europe. As part of the project we will make and pilot an online platform to build digital skills among migrant women. The project partners are: Symplexis (Greece) HIP - Hub for Innovation Policy (Romania) Diesis Coop (Belgium) Austrian Association of Inclusive Society (Austria) BK Consult (Germany) Elliniko Forum Metanaston (Greece)		01.01.2023 - 31.12.2023  (continued until 30.09.2024)	47 329,40 PLN	Project funded by the Erasmus+ programme	Career counselling Strengthening system expertise
22	"Cały świat w naszej klasie / ReSET." Strengthening intercultural competences and psychological well-being of children and young people at Warsaw schools - 2023/2024 edition	Running classes at schools in Warsaw 1) on intercultural education and anti-discrimination; 2) strengthening the psychological resilience of migrant children and young people. As part of the project, we also train school psychologists on how to work with migrant children.		01.09.2023 - 31.12.2023  (continued until 30.06.2024)	47 020,00 PLN	The Education Office in Warsaw	Informal education Psychological support Integration
23	"Cały świat w naszej klasie" - strengthening intercultural competences - 2022/2023 edition	Running classes at schools in Warsaw on intercultural education, causes of migration and anti-discrimination workshops.		01.01.2023 - 30.06.2023	27 172,89 PLN	The Education Office in Warsaw	Informal education Integration
24	Intercultural Academy of Women's Initiatives	Supporting entrepreneurship and career counselling for refugee women who may face discrimination. We invited women from Central Asia and the Middle East to join the programme.		01/08/2023 - 31/12/2023  (continued until 31/03/2024)	24 160,00 PLN	Ashoka	Career counselling

	Project title	Project scope		Duration	Budget - implemented in 2023.	Funding	Tags
25	MENTALITY - Implementing Mental Health Quality Practices	Project implemented in partnership with leading European mental health organisations.		01.01.2023-31.12.2023 (continued until 28.02.2025)	22 012,63 PLN	European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA)	Psychological support Strengthening system expertise
26	Intercultural Crisis School	Supporting migrant students by employing intercultural assistants, intercultural and anti-discrimination education for students and teachers in schools in the suburbs of Warsaw (intercultural competence workshops), raising awareness of the needs of migrant and refugee students (webinars for teachers).		01.01.2023 - 31.03.2023	21 492,90 PLN	The Assistance Fund for NGOs and Civic Initiatives 2022-23 programme was created by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation and implemented by the Education for Democracy Foundation.	Formal education
27	Step into the future. Career counselling for migrants and refugees	Career counselling workshops for refugees and migrants speaking rare languages (Sorani, Arabic, Tajik, Turkish and Persian). Project implemented in cooperation with the Association Mova - language without barriers.		01.09.2023 - 31.12.2023 (continued until 30.09.2024)	7 301,00 PLN	Ashoka	Career counselling

## Project budgets - breakdown by source of funding\*.

\*the figures do not include expenses raised through donations,  
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## Polish Migration Forum Foundation

info@forummigracyjne.org  
tel. +48 692 913 993  
hotline: +48 22 11 000 85

Szpitalna Street, 5/14  
Warsaw 00-031

Support Centre  
Górczewska Street 137, 3rd floor  
Warsaw 01-459  
tel. + 48 660 784 295

[www.forummigracyjne.org](http://www.forummigracyjne.org)

FOUNDATION  
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Karolina Czerwińska, Agnieszka Kosowicz, Karolina Kotowska, Weronika Regosz

Texts:  
Agnieszka Kosowicz, Karolina Czerwińska, Karolina Kotowska, Katarzyna Sawko, Justyna Różańska, Weronika Brączek, Katarzyna Sulima, Pamela Adamik, Katka Prokopowicz, Ewelina Łapińska, Aleksandra Ośko, Artem Graban, Magda Piaskowska, Katarzyna Łagowska, Anna Maciejko, Karolina Murawska, Olga Dobrowolska

Quantitative data and feedback:  
Katarzyna Sulima, Karolina Madej, Artem Graban

List of activities implemented in 2023:  
Karolina Czerwińska

Translation: Ela Krawczykowska / Stowarzyszenie Mova - język bez barier  
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Graphic identity design: Michał Dąbrowski  
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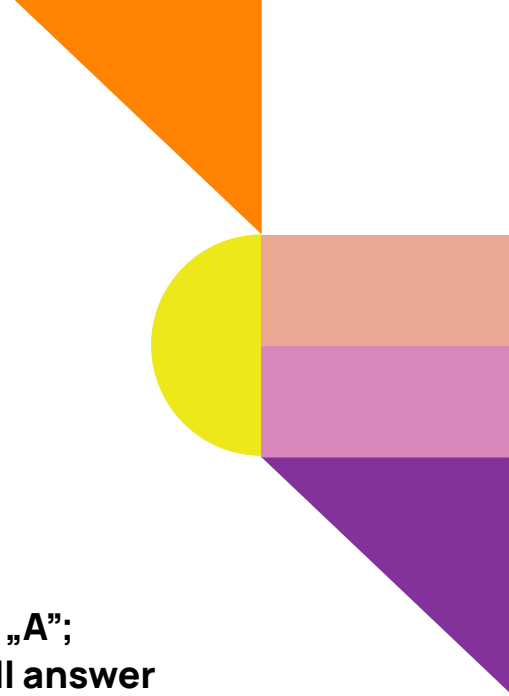
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