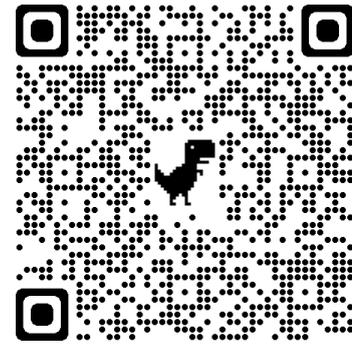




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POLISH SCHOOL OF HELP

Reception and integration of refugees
from Ukraine in Poland in 2022

REPORT SUMMARY

Initially, there was a lot of enthusiasm (...) However, it is difficult to expect from an ordinary resident some long-term relief effort (public administration)

It's been exactly one year since the outbreak of full-scale aggression against Ukraine, as a result of which nearly two million Ukrainian women and men sought refuge from the war in Poland, 70 percent of whom settled in the 12 largest Polish cities. The report shows **the tremendous mobilization of a large part of Polish society** involved in helping those fleeing war. It shows what we can feel proud of and highlights help that goes unnoticed - help for refugees from the Ukrainian community - and the challenges and severe need of cooperation between state, civil society and international actors.

The Polish School of Helping report offers a **diagnosis of the needs and good practices** of assistance and integration activities to those involved in these activities - local and central authorities, social and international organizations, representatives of business and migrant communities - based on the voices and experiences they have gained by operating continuously since February 24. **Based on our analysis from 12 Polish cities we could identify what can be improved and emphasize the good practices.**

TWO PHASES: RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION

It must be clear who is responsible for what. Who is called what (civil society)

The unprecedented scale of mobilization of Polish civil society and the governmental response to the humanitarian crisis, brought a number of social, logistical and cross-sectoral challenges. **In the first phase of the relief effort - reception** - it was crucial to provide humanitarian assistance and security to those fleeing Ukraine, and most actions were taken on an ad hoc basis. **We are now in the second phase of the response to the crisis - integration.** In need of long-term solutions and forms of support that include refugee people in decision-making processes. The following research in Polish cities indicated that many actors felt left on their own for months and that only intersectoral cooperation can bring any measurable results to improve the refugees' situation.

REFUGEES IN POLISH CITIES

This help came from the heart, but also from the understanding it could also happen to us (civil society)

What emerges clearly from the report is the huge role (and responsibility) that **the Ukrainian minority itself, as well as migrants and refugees themselves**, played in the cities surveyed, often acting as the first support (translation, mediation), best recognizing and identifying the needs of those fleeing Ukraine, and entering into uneasy activities and new forms of cooperation.

INTERSECTORAL COOPERATION

This state of permanent crisis requires the cooperation of all of us (civil society)

Coherent and transparent cooperation between different sectors has been and remains a priority, which was emphasized by virtually all of those interviewed for this report. However, in most of the surveyed cities (except perhaps Lublin), regardless of their size, cooperation and communication **between local governments and the social sector** rarely went smoothly. After months of grassroots efforts, **civil society lost the strength** and resources necessary to maintain the aid infrastructure, but was not replaced to an adequate extent. Very much appreciated was the cooperation with local and international business. **The government's activities**, represented mainly by governors, were present primarily in large cities, yet largely still **need to be improved**, especially in terms of access to services, sanitation and people with special needs.

The war in Ukraine will not end soon, and it is essential to have a long-term strategy for assistance and integration, and to guarantee stable support for those who implement it. The following report is an analysis of activities and solutions to date.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The government **should withdraw** from the obligation, introduced as of March 2023 for refugees **to contribute to the cost of living in places of collective accommodation**.
- It is necessary to **prepare and introduce consistent local integration policies** at the level of local governments at various levels. **Long-term measures** are a priority. It is necessary to plan and carry out the **improvement of refugees' access to services: education, labor market, housing etc.**
- It is necessary **to improve intersectoral cooperation** in relief and integration activities, to make communication channels more consistent, and to **share knowledge** and good practices. **This cooperation must be based on trust**. Civil society must be **significantly relieved** by local and central authorities in these activities.
- The government's plans and work to carry out **internal relocations** should be intensified, and should be based on cooperation with local governments.
- **Support in the form of psychological assistance**, also with the prevention of professional burnout should also be offered to all those working directly with refugees, including in public institutions.



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