

# CSOs AT THE FOREFRONT OF REFUGEES SUPPORT

## Common challenges and solutions

13-15 November 2023

## Agenda

Click to choose  
the day

**DAY 2**

**DAY 1**

**DAY 3**

Initiative implemented by:



**FRSI**



**DAY 1**

**Monday,**  
November 13<sup>th</sup>

Meeting venue:  
Centrum Kreatywności  
Targowa, Targowa 56



**9.30-10.00 Registration and morning snacks/drinks**

**10.00-10.30 Opening session**

Location: **A (main hall)**

Welcoming remarks by:

- **Øystein Bø**, Ambassador of Norway to Poland
- **Hannes Heimisson**, Ambassador of Iceland to Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine
- **Kevin J. Allen**, Refugee Coordinator for the Ukraine Situation in Poland, Representative of the **UN High Commissioner for Refugees**

**10.30-11.30 Plenary networking session**

Location: **A (main hall)**

**11.30-12.00 Coffee & tea break**

**12.00-13.30 Bridging the gaps, avoiding the overlap. The challenges of coordination in the face of crisis (plenary session)**

Location: **A (main hall)**

Moderator: **Raluca Teodor**, Civil Society Development Foundation/  
**Fundatia pentru Dezvoltarea Societatii Civile (RO)**<sup>1</sup>

Guests:

- **Mihai Lupu**, Director of Cabinet to the Secretary of State, Head of the Department for Emergency Situations, Romania (RO)
- **Dorothea Kokozidou**, **UNHCR Greece Office** (GR)
- **Agnieszka Kosowicz**, **Polish Migration Forum** and **Migration Consortium/Polskie Forum Migracyjne i Konsorcjum Migracyjne** (PL)
- **Piotr Sasin**, Country Director, **CARE International in Poland** (PL)
- **Joanna Warchał-Beneschi**, **NGO Forum „Razem” (Together)** and **Polish Humanitarian Action/Polska Akcja Humanitarna** (PL)

*Coordination is key to effective response in the face of the crisis, but also a process that presents many challenges. Pooling resources, avoiding overlaps, ensuring seamless communication between different actors - during the session we will give an overview on coordination mechanisms usually at play in a humanitarian crisis, looking at models and practices based on the experience of our speakers, who represent different countries and sectors. While we explore the challenges, we will try to identify possible lessons learned and recommendations.*

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations used to identify countries represented by the guests: BY – Belarus, CR – Croatia, GR – Greece, LT – Lithuania, PL – Poland, RO – Romania, SI –Slovenia.

**13.30-14.30 Lunch break**

**14.30-16.00 4 parallel sessions:**

### **I) Challenges and traps of unprecedented organizational growth – and how to deal with them**

Location: **B**

Moderator: Jędrzej Dudkiewicz, freelance journalist (PL)

Guests:

- Katerina Goula, [SolidarityNow](#) (GR)
- Jan Marković, [Subcarpathian Association for Active Families/ Podkarpackie Stowarzyszenie Aktywnych Rodzin](#) (PL)
- Bogdan Eugen Preda, [The Romanian National Council for Refugees/ Fundatia Consiliul National Roman pentru Refugiati](#) (RO)

*In many European countries the growing numbers of refugees and migrants has significantly changed the reality of the civic sector over the last decade (or even couple of years): new organizations formed, others changed the focus of their previous activities in the face of urgent societal needs related to the presence of the newcomers. New challenges concern not only the actions to be taken by the CSOs, but also their own institutional transformation. How to deal with expanding teams and quick time 'professionalisation' in face of unprecedented expansion of activities and funding? How to plan a sustainable path for organization development in the long run and with perspective of donors' withdrawal as new crises happen in other parts of the world? And how to survive all that as an organization and a team?*

### **II) What works? How people with migration and refugee experience can transform homogeneous communities**

Location: **A (main hall)**

\* **Note:** This session will have simultaneous interpretation between Polish and English as one of the panellists will talk in Polish. Headphones and receivers allowing access to interpretation will be provided before the session.

Moderator: Lena Rogowska-Lewandowska, [Culture of Dialogue Foundation/ Fundacja Kultury Dialogu](#) (PL)

Guests:

- Ewa Kozdraj, [For the Earth Association/ Stowarzyszenie dla Ziemi](#) (PL)
- Anastassia Pyroh, [Jesuit Refugee Service Romania®](#) (RO)
- Tahmina Rajabova, [Rescue Foundation/ Fundacja Ocalenie](#) (PL)

*In this session, we will explore integration and inclusion, guided by two key sociological insights: (1) Integration is a two way process. It involves both migrants and the host society at all levels. (2) Integration takes place locally.*

*Throughout our conversation, basing on our guests' personal experience, we will examine: How are integration processes unfolding? How is the host society evolving? How do*

*we define success, and what do we need to do to achieve it? What impact does refugee empowerment have on society? And what are the barriers to integration and inclusion? What does not work, and can cause secondary stigmatization or stereotyping?*

### **III) Disinformation, hate speech, smear campaigns and SLAPPs – experiences and coping solutions**

Location: **C**

Moderator: **Agnieszka Lichnerowicz**, **Radio TOK FM**

Guests:

- **Anastasia Chalkia**, PhD, **Human Rights Advisor at Greek National Commission for Human Rights**, rep. **Racist Violence Recording Network** (GR)
- **Konrad Siemaszko**, **Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights/Helsińska Fundacja Praw Człowieka** (PL)
- **Mantautas Šulskus**, **Sienos Grupe** (Border Group) (LT)
- **A representative of the Border Group/Grupa Granica** (PL) [TBC]

*Civil society organizations operating in reality of lack of relevant support from the state for people with migrant/refugee background often have to face not only challenges connected with burnout, not enough capacity or administrative overload, but also risks of being under constant attack by hostile governments, media and polarized societies. The attacks can have many faces: from legal threats like SLAPPs (strategic lawsuit against public participation) to disinformation, hate speech and smear campaigns damaging their reputation and discrediting them as a reliable and trustworthy voices of civil society. The aim of the session is to prepare an overview of current most worrying challenges, impacts (on organizations, their staff and communities) and solutions for threats to CSOs described above. Together with invited experts-practitioners from Greece, Lithuania and Poland we are going to look for what we have in common and what differs us in this field.*

### **IV) Cross-sectoral partnerships towards integration and inclusion**

Location: **D**

Moderator: **Magdalena Krasowska-Igras**, **Information Society Development Foundation/Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego** (PL)

Guests:

- **Anna Dąbrowska**, **Homo Faber Association/Stowarzyszenie Homo Faber** (PL)
- **Małgorzata Kołtun**, **Zagłębie Folkloru Foundation/Fundacja Zagłębie Folkloru** (PL)
- **Joanna Maksa**, **City Library in Chrzanów/Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna w Chrzanowie** (PL)
- **Claudia Serbanuta**, **Communities of the Future Association/Asociația Comunitățile Viitorului** (RO)
- **Krzysztof Stanowski**, **Director of International Cooperation Centre at Lublin City Office/Dyrektor Centrum Współpracy Międzynarodowej w Urzędzie Miasta Lublin** (PL)

*During this session we will focus on lessons learnt and experience-based recommendations concerning the integration processes as challenges for cross-sectoral cooperation. We will talk about drivers and processes of change introduced through local activism (individuals, organisations and institutions), schemes of joint efforts of local stakeholders, main outputs of local cooperation and its influence on the reception of newcomers and their place in the community. We will also tackle the need for analysis of recognition and initial attitude towards migrants and refugees in homogeneous and ethnically diverse communities.*

**16.00-16.15 Coffee & tea break**

**16.15-17.30 3 parallel sessions of sharing experiences**

### **I) Experiences from the borders (frontiers, camps, beaches, forests)**

Location: **B**

Moderator: **Marinella Matejčić**, **Solidarna** (CR)

Guests:

- **Vida Fućak**, **Association for Human Rights and Civic Participation PaRiter/ Udruga za ljudska prava i građansku participaciju PaRiter** (CR)
- **Nicholas Rangos**, **SolidarityNow** (GR)
- **Larisa Pop**, **The Order of Malta Relief in Romania/Asociația Serviciul de Ajutor Maltez în România** (RO)

*Sharing the experiences of working on the ground with people on the move: from the borders on the sea, to the borders on the land, in organized camps and impromptu relief locations through the countries. Diverse speakers will share their know-how, lessons learned and pressing issues when it comes to providing the help within restricted conditions. The aim of the panel is to map good practices in terms of both direct help and navigation through oppressive governmental systems that are hindering the efforts of the helpers.*

### **II) Experiences of work with groups of refugees with specific needs**

Location: **A (main hall)**

\* **Note:** This session will have simultaneous interpretation between Polish and English as one of the panellists will talk in Polish. Headphones and receivers allowing access to interpretation will be provided before the session.

Moderator: **Natalia Kertyczak**, **Education for Democracy Foundation/ Fundacja Edukacja dla Demokracji** (PL)

Guests:

- **Raimonda Lebelionytė Alseikienė**, **Artscape** (LT)
- **Izabela Jaśkowiak**, **„Harangos” Roma Education Association/ Romskie Stowarzyszenie Oświatowe „Harangos”** (PL)
- **Maša Jeričević Šušteršič**, **Legebitra** (SI)
- **Olga Wojdyńska**, **Mudita Association/Stowarzyszenie Mudita** (PL)

*As the crises in our countries have shown, there are groups of refugees for whom it's more difficult to use regular services/systems of support and who face additional challenges, because of their specific needs or vulnerabilities. In the context of our countries, such groups were for example Roma refugees from Ukraine, people with disabilities, LGBT+ persons, unaccompanied minors, etc. During the session we will hear the experience of those who have worked directly with different vulnerable groups/groups with specific needs, learn about what challenges they faced in their response, and try to explore what can be done to provide more adequate and effective support to those who need it most. Participants attending the session will be invited to share their experience and reflections alongside the speakers.*

### III) Experiences of work with communities welcoming refugees in the face of general disinformation

Location: **D**

Moderator: **Ewa Stokłuska**, Education for Democracy Foundation/  
**Fundacja Edukacja dla Demokracji** (PL)

Guests:

- **Maryna Leskiw**, Association of Ukrainians in Poland/  
**Związek Ukraińców w Polsce** (PL)
- **Ongjen Radivojević**, Slovenska Filantropija (SI)
- **Karol Wilczyński**, **Minority Rights Group International** (PL)

*Working in support for refugees is always a challenging matter. But ever more so when it takes place in communities and societies whose image of this group is influenced by fake news and disinformation. How can such context influence the work of civic organization and how do they try to mitigate it or react to it? During the session we will share experiences from onsite work and observations from places where disinformation played a significant role in systems of refugees support.*

**17.30-17.45** **Closing remarks**

**20.00** **Dinner**

Venue: **Centrum Zarządzania Światem**, Stefana Okrzei 26

- \* **Note:** This is an informal dinner and no particular dress-code is expected. Food, and non-alcoholic beverages will be provided by the organizers. Alcoholic drinks can be bought at the bar.



**9.30-10.00** Registration and morning snacks/drinks

**10.00-10.30** 4 parallel sessions:

**I) When facing dead ends at national level, can EU advocacy be the effective solution?**

Location: **B**

Moderator: **Eugenija Kovaliova**, **Ukreate Hub** and **Open Lithuania Foundation/Atviros Lietuvos fondas** (LT)

Guests:

- **Viktor Ostrovnoj**, Lithuanian Red Cross Society/**Lietuvos Raudonasis Kryžius** (LT)
- **Lina Vosyliūtė**, **Heartwarmingly** (LT, based in Brussels)
- **Magdalena Zuberek-Wąsińska**, **Rescue Foundation/Fundacja Ocalenie** (PL)

*In this session we will explore whether EU-level advocacy can break through the dead ends and challenges faced on the national stage and offer strategies to navigate the complex migration landscape. We are hoping to have an engaging discussion with case studies from several NGOs who have taken their cases to EU level, discuss whether such approach provides the necessary solutions, and what new challenges such advocacy can bring.*

*Key themes to be explored: the array of legal, financial, and democratic accountability tools available at the EU level, policy advocacy within the European context, and the role of strategic litigation as an advocacy tool.*

**II) Extreme conditions of volunteering.  
What is the responsibility of an organization?**

Location: **C**

Moderator: **Mateusz Luft**, Advisor to MEP Janina Ochojska-Okońska

Guests:

- **Wojtek Radwański**, **Club of Catholic Intelligentsia in Warsaw/Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej** w Warszawie, photographer for Agence France-Presse (PL)
- **Katarzyna Sołowiej**, Egala Association/**Stowarzyszenie Egala** (PL)

*What is the responsibility of organization and volunteer acting in a hostile legal and physical environment? How to mitigate risks coming from interactions with law enforcement? How to prepare and support physically volunteers working in demanding conditions without support of state institutions? How to share responsibilities between frontline workers and background supporters? During the workshop we will share experiences from dif-*



ferent countries and various conditions, including input from Wojtek Radwański who is the creator of Crisis Intervention Point (PIK) created by Club of Catholic Intelligentsia in Warsaw where direct aid is provided to refugees on Polish-Belarusian border, and from Katarzyna Sołowiej - responsible for preparation and coordination of volunteers at the Egala Association.

### III) Research, data and its analysis: how to collect data when there are no such initiatives on the government level and how to make use of them

Location: **D**

Moderator: Kaja Puto, Political Critique/*Krytyka Polityka* (PL)

Guests:

- Kiryl Kofanov, *Human Constanta* (BY, based in PL)
- Mateusz Krępa, *Researches on the Border/Badaczki i Badacze na Granicy* (PL)
- Marta Pachocka, PhD, *Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw/Ośrodek Badań and Migracjami, Uniwersytet Warszawski*
- Rasa Pranskevičiūtė-Amoson, PhD, *Diversity Development Group* (LT)
- Kornelia Trubiłowicz and Maria Wołkowicz, *Association for Legal Intervention/Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej* (PL)

*Effective measures supporting people with migrant/refugee background and advocating for their rights can't be undertaken without reliable resources such as facts and figures and regularly carried out research. How this can be reached when the government willfully doesn't enable researchers to conduct such activities (e.g at the Polish-Belarusian border). The session will focus on problems that researchers have to face and potential solutions to overcome these "unfriendly" conditions. What are the most current so-called "research gaps" on the topic of migration and what would be needed to fill these gaps in? Invited experts from Belarussian, Lithuanian and Polish CSOs/entities were kindly asked to share their most urgent and current challenges and solutions they already found out.*

### IV) Effective influence on donors' decisions regarding grants/mechanisms for financing activities with refugees - working group (part 1)

Location: **E**

\* **Note:** This is a working group that will work in two blocks: from 10.00 to 11.30 and from 12.00 to 13.30. We suggest taking part in both blocks to achieve the best results of this session.

Facilitator: Martyna Rubinowska, *Ashoka*

*The next financial perspectives of the EEA and Norwegian Funds, as well as European Union funds, lie ahead of us. We meet among organizations working with refugees from many European countries. This is a unique opportunity to jointly consider recommendations that may influence the shape of financial mechanisms that such organizations could use. The idea is to draw attention to both the ideas and main areas of funding, as well as the smallest details that can make the use of these funds effective. Let's try to think together about how such funds should be organized. And let's write about it to the donors' representatives.*



## 12.00-13.30 5 parallel sessions:

### I) Effective influence on donors' decisions regarding grants/mechanisms for financing activities with refugees (part 2) – CONTINUATION of the working group (see above for description)

Location: **E**

### II) How to collectively create and implement an anti-burnout policy/strategy inside your organization?

Location: **A (main hall)**

Moderator: Zuzanna Piechowicz, **Radio TOK FM** (PL)

Guests:

- **Małgorzata Kubik (she/her)** – Human Resources and Administration Director in **Rescue Foundation**/Fundacja Ocalenie (PL)
- **Natalia Sarata (she/her)**, anti-burnout trainer and expert, Founder of RegenerAction Foundation/**Fundacja RegenerAkcja** (PL)

*How to effectively implement and inground anti-burnout prevention measures in organizations at the forefront of support for people with migrant/refugee background? Especially if we want to do this in the most collective, egalitarian, available and accessible way? And - an even more challenging factor - the world is not taking a break or slowing down - it is exactly the opposite – so the amount of work is increasing dramatically. Invited experts will share their stories, case studies and lessons learnt from activities/policies/strategies implemented so far inside the organizations they work for or with.*

### III) The burn out leader

Location: **D**

Facilitator: **Martyna Markiewicz, Ashoka** (PL)

*This workshop session will tackle the issue of burn out in the leadership role, especially in the NGO/activist context. It will be a space of sharing and reflecting on burnout factors on the personal level. The participants will learn various definitions of burnout and models that can support the road to wellbeing.*

\* **Note:** There is a limit of 20 people attending this workshop. Please declare your interest in participating beforehand by filling in the questionnaire sent by the organizers.

### IV) The path to collective selfcare

Location: **B**

Facilitator: **Katarzyna Zabratańska, Other Foundation/Inna Fundacja**, DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) expert and trainer (PL)

*During the workshop you will be invited to look back at your activist roots, both at the individual and organizational levels. We will discuss what anchors us in activism and forms the basis of our social engagement. We will also examine the organizational and systemic factors that can lead to burnout, recognizing how they manifest in our thoughts, emotions, and bodies, and how we can collectively care for ourselves.*

\* **Note:** There is a limit of **15 people** attending this workshop. Please declare your interest in participating beforehand by filling in the questionnaire sent by the organizers.

## **V) Empathy for the bad guy - understanding as an anti-burn tool**

Location: **C**

Facilitator: **Weronika Józwiak**, equality and regeneration trainer

*Working with refugees can involve a great deal of social exposure and the constant need to represent one's views to a not always conciliatory audience. In a polarized society, the media and the internet provide a huge platform for xenophobic voices to resound. This can result in exposure fatigue, a sense of isolation and an out of proportion assessment of the scale of hostility. In this workshop, using drama and Non-Violent Communication methods, we will create a space to look at these voices and see what could lie behind hateful comments and contemptuous opinions.*

\* **Note:** There is a limit of **15 people** attending this workshop. Please declare your interest in participating beforehand by filling in the questionnaire sent by the organizers.

**13.30-14.30** **Lunch**

**14.30-16.00** **Plenary closing session**

**19.30** **"Empire" – performative spectacle inspired by Mackbeth and experiences of persons migrating through the Polish-Belarussian border**

Venue: **Teatr Powszechny**, Zamojskiego 20

\* **Note:** We provide tickets for the spectacle based on declarations in the registration form. If you did not sign up for it, please check at registration if there are any tickets left. The spectacle has English subtitles and lasts ca. 1 hour.

**DAY 3**

**Wednesday,**  
November 15<sup>th</sup>

**Meeting place:**  
**Hotel Hetman (hall),**  
Kłopotowskiego 36



## On-site visits to Warsaw-based organizations

\* **Note:** All three groups going for on-site visits meet at the same place, but at slightly different times and go from there to one of the organizations using public transportation. Each group will be led by a member of the organizers' team who will provide tickets for tram/metro or buses to get to the place.

Please declare your interest in visiting a particular organization (one to be chosen out of three) by filling in the questionnaire sent by the organizers.

**9.05-10.00** Travel to designated organizations

**10.00-11.30** Visits in the organizations

### 1. Ukrainian School in Warsaw/Warszawska Szkoła Ukraińska

**Meeting time: 9.05 at Hotel Hetman (Kłopotowskiego 36)**

**Address:** ul. Grójecka 128 A

**Person leading the group to the place:** Katarzyna Zakroczyńska, +48 533 851 113

*The Warsaw Ukrainian School (SzkoUA) was established in April 2022 out of the urgent need to provide children who found shelter in Warsaw after fleeing the war in Ukraine with the opportunity to finish the school year. It was planned as a three-month project, but as the war continues the School is still needed and continues to operate. It gives its students the opportunity to study full-time in safe conditions: in their native language, in the Ukrainian educational system they are familiar with, and among colleagues who have had similar experiences. At the end of the year the students receive official Ukrainian certificates. From September 2023 SzkoUA entered the Polish educational system.*

*SzkoUA was established on the initiative of the **Club of Catholic Intelligentsia in Warsaw** and the **Ukrainian House Foundation/Fundacja Ukraiński Dom**, in partnership with **Save the Children International**, with the support of the **Polish School Foundation/Polska Fundacja Szkolna** and the **Przymierze Rodzin Association/Stowarzyszenie Przymierze Rodzin**, as well as in cooperation with the **Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine**.*

### 2. Rescue Foundation/Fundacja Ocalenie

**Meeting time: 9.20 at Hotel Hetman (Kłopotowskiego 36)**

**Address:** Help Centre for Foreigners, Krucza 6/14a

**Person leading the group to the place:** Ewa Stokłuska, +48 720 801 013

Host: **Anna Chmielewska**, Director of Integration Programmes at the Rescue Foundation and Member of the Foundation Board

Ocalenie Foundation was founded in the year 2000 and since then has been continuously supporting migrants and refugees in integrating into Polish society and their personal development. It runs Help Centers for Foreigners in Warsaw and Łomża, offers free Polish lessons, carries out adaptation and integration support programs, and look for housing for its clients (under the **Refugees Welcome** initiative). It also runs a youth center for children of refugees in Łomża.

The Foundation works also for raising public awareness: holds workshops about refugees, anti-discrimination, and integration, works with schools, colleges, public institutions, companies, and international organizations.

Ocalenie has also been working on site at the Polish-Belarussian border since the beginning of the humanitarian crisis. They have opened a temporary office on the spot and keep monitoring the situation, provide humanitarian and legal aid to refugees, inform the public about the situation and advocate for an end to this crisis in the name of a safe border being a border where no one dies.

### 3. Polish Migration Forum/Fundacja Polskie Forum Migracyjne

**Meeting time: 9.30 at Hotel Hetman (Kłopotowskiego 36)**

**Address:** Support Center for Foreigners, Górczewska 137, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

**Person leading the group to the place:** Maryna Czaplińska, +48 533 791 105

Polish Migration Forum Foundation (PFM) was established in 2007 to promote the rights of migrants in Poland. It specialises in informational activities by providing: direct support to foreigners (psychological, about the job market, regarding legalisation of stay), trainings (for teachers, psychologists, government officials), and activities in between formal and informal education. PFM supports also migrant women in a special way by organising childbirth schools and support groups for migrant mothers.

During the last two years, most notably after the full-scale Russian invasion in Ukraine and in response to needs regarding organizing system of support for growing number of refugees in Poland, the Foundation team has expanded nearly tenfold, becoming a multicultural team of experts, consultants and caseworkers. Apart from running a Support Center for Foreigners in the Wola district, the Foundation has also engaged a.o. in support for almost two hundred persons evacuated by the Polish government from Afghanistan in 2021, and for persons located in guarded centers for foreigners.

The Foundation is also a part of the **Migration Consortium** and does advocacy work in cooperation with governmental institutions and local government authorities.

\* **Note:** Return journeys after the visits are to be organized individually. Please consult logistical instructions in the email from organizers to learn about best options to get the airport, train station or other places within the city. Depending on your travel arrangements, you can leave your luggage in the morning at the hotel or take it with you to the chosen organization.