

S U M M A R Y

PoMOCna KAWA #50



HELPING ELDERLY PEOPLE FROM UKRAINE

21 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATED IN THE MEETING: Right to Protection Foundation, Mudita Association, Polish Migration Forum Foundation, Foundation for Social and Economic Initiatives Municipal Labor Office in Kielce, Municipal Information Point for Migrants and Refugees WroMigrant WCRS of the Wrocław Commune and others...

On October 31, two speakers came to the Helpful Coffee - Magdalena Rosochacka-Gmitrzak from the Society of Creative Initiatives "ę" and Karolina Czerwińska from the Polish Migration Forum. They talked about their experiences in building relationships with Ukrainian refugees aged 50+, which they gained through the joint grant program "New Relations - Actions for Inclusion and Intergenerational Integration of People from Ukraine with Refugee Experience". You can read the most important conclusions on this topic below.

Right to Protection's appeal

At the beginning of the meeting, a representative of Right to Protection responded about advocacy activities aimed at drawing attention to the situation of elderly Ukrainian refugees. You can read the full text of the organization's letter to the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights [here](#).

Older people are 4% of Ukrainian refugees in Poland

The latest data shows that elderly people constitute 4% of Ukrainian refugees in Poland. At first glance, it seems not much, but on a scale of 1.6 million it gives us approximately 90,000 people. Older people are a particularly sensitive group and at risk of exclusion. Therefore, it should be assumed that she will need help. Therefore, it is necessary to implement appropriate social programs dedicated to older people.

“New Relationships” - what are they?

The speakers talked about the relationships mentioned in the name of the program. The project aims to establish relations between the Ukrainian refugee community and local residents. They took the following forms: Ukrainian-Polish, Ukrainian-Ukrainian and between organizers and participants.

- **Ukrainians - Poles**

At the very beginning, the situation for refugees was full of obstacles, such as language barriers and uncertainty about the requirements from Poles. People who joined the project group felt tension, but at the same time great relief. Nevertheless, the difficulties related to the division into national groups proved difficult to overcome. The activities did not always bring results in the form of personal or lasting relations between the Polish and Ukrainian sides and were often limited to the duration of the project.

- **Ukrainians - Ukrainians**

For people from Ukraine, this relationship was important. Its three main aspects can be distinguished. Through close contacts within Ukrainian groups, the process of transforming the concepts of "Polishness" or "localness" to better suit the needs of refugees took place, which was initiated by Ukrainians and addressed mainly to their compatriots. People who had already lived in Poland or had more experience helped the newcomers cope. Practical support, such as information about job searches, doctors and renting apartments, played a key role. The strengthening relations within the Ukrainian group, which were aimed at supporting refugees in the process of adapting to the new reality and coping with trauma, were a positive phenomenon, although they could lead to a certain weakening of interethnic relations. This is a period in which refugees built their internal strength and prepared as a group for integration.

- **Organizers - Participants**

Characteristic issues here include the development of the nature of support, challenges and the sense of security.

Attitude models

In the next part of the meeting, the speakers also distinguished the three most clear models of integration attitudes among older people in Ukraine. And so we can point to:

remaining in an almost exclusively Ukrainian group, not learning Polish, but feeling safe and comfortable with being among "our own";

- finding one's way in the new reality and functioning efficiently in Polish society, while staying in the "Ukrainian" circle; coping with the help of the social resources of the Ukrainian group, which is the main point of reference;
- acquiring cultural competences necessary to feel at home in a new place and adapting to the norms in force in Poland.

The "nudge" method

During the meeting, we also learned about activities aimed at promoting integration, called "nudges". This method allowed us to distinguish the effects of work as part of the New Relations project. They were the first step in considering the positive impact of social projects on the integration processes of refugees in Poland. The dynamics of these activities and the fact that they generate changes and contribute to small but promising transformations were discussed.

Report: "New Relations - Actions for Inclusion and Intergenerational Integration of People from Ukraine with Refugee Experience"

In the above summary you will find only the most important conclusions regarding assistance to Ukrainian refugees aged 50+. However, the creators of the program have prepared a full report on the activities undertaken as part of the New Relationships program. If you would like to learn even more, [click here](#) to download the report.



If you need contact details for a specific organization, please write to us at: julia.bochenek@culturelab.pl.