

LUBLIN

Anna Dąbrowska

SOCIAL

COMMITTEE

90 days of assistance

TO AID

Report

UKRAINE

*In the evening, before the first refugee reached Lublin, the city already had a crisis organisation. Social Aid Committee for Ukraine.*

*Those who escaped by car through road E372 could read on the light boards, which usually warn about traffic obstructions, where to call for help. The trucks were going to the border with provisions, blankets, clothes and information leaflets.*

*[...]*

*On the third day of the war, Lublin had a contact number for companies that could offer a job, an-other for people who had accepted refugees and needed some support, and a separate number for refugees with pets that needed food. In addition, five addresses where animal transport cages could be donated. It came to one's mind that some of the refugees might continue their journey and go to other countries or cities.*

*On the fifth day there was a psychological clinic for refugees and another one for volunteers with burnout syndrome. And a guide on how to talk to a refugee:*

*[...]*

*Under Polish law, the state bears full responsibility in the event of a refugee crisis. But among the fourteen people who sewed Lublin's crisis management together on February 24, there was no gov-ernment official.*

*The miraculous welcoming managed by Poland of three million refugees turns out to be mostly a private act.*

Maciej Zaremba\*

*From my perspective, it is important for people who help to know that refugee must have the right to choose and have the right to refuse. It is a matter of dignity.*

Aleksandra Zapolska, Fund Zustricz.

\* Maciej Zaremba, När det ska skrivas historia kommer forskarna att upptäcka Polens dubbelliv, „Dagens Nyheter”, 21.05.2022, source: [https://www.dn.se/kultur/maciej-zaremba-nar-det-ska-skrivas-historia-kommer-forskarna-att-upptacka-polens-dubbelliv/?fbclid=IwARoDkq-qHBuJtSyczLRI-5BIUiA3grgiCD8CeU6mrKj8rUlarPAfn6apl\\_9A%255D](https://www.dn.se/kultur/maciej-zaremba-nar-det-ska-skrivas-historia-kommer-forskarna-att-upptacka-polens-dubbelliv/?fbclid=IwARoDkq-qHBuJtSyczLRI-5BIUiA3grgiCD8CeU6mrKj8rUlarPAfn6apl_9A%255D) (access: 10.06.2022)

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# THE FIRST THREE MONTHS IN LUBLIN IN NUMBERS

Lublin, the largest city in the Lublin region, located 100 kms from the border with Ukraine, it was and remains one of the key reception destinations for war refugees. According to surveys measuring tourist traffic, 1,224,013 Ukrainian citizens used to stay in Lublin in February-April 2022, including 138,066 spending at least one night<sup>1</sup> in the city. During the first three months (February-May), the city accommodated 102,661 people in public accommodation facilities and gave 143,631 meals there. At the same time, 39,531 packages of durable food were issued in the city.

At its peak, 68,396 refugees from Ukraine<sup>2</sup> temporarily lived in the city for more than a few nights, which constituted 17% of the total population of Lublin.

After three months, on May 24, 14 public accommodation points were operating in Lublin, hosting 1,490 people. The rest of the refugees either found shelter in private homes or, on a smaller scale, rented apartments on the open market. During this time, nearly 60 restaurants provided 12,692 meals.

The PESEL identification number assignment system in Lublin, launched on March 16, registered 8,476 people. Detailed statistics on the number of registered people and their family members who were granted the status of foreigners on the basis of the special act as of May 24, 2022 indicated that the vast majority of people were women between 35 and 39 y.o. (739 people), and 6-year-old boys<sup>3</sup> dominated among men.

At the same time, 776 applications were registered for the care of 2,875 Ukrainian citizens for the amount of PLN 3,000,019 ("40+" benefits) and "300+" benefits for 6,865 Ukrainian citizens, for the amount of PLN 2,059,500 [as of May 24].

On March 11, the Lublin City Hall and LOT Metropolia Lublin together with the Municipal Employment Office in Lublin and the HRappka company launched a tool that aims to help people from Ukraine to find a satisfactory job corresponding to their education and competences – [www.praca-lublin-ukraina.pl](http://www.praca-lublin-ukraina.pl)<sup>4</sup> (as well as variant of this address). As the initiators wrote:

"Through [the portal], citizens of Ukraine will be able to apply for a job in Lublin, specifying their competences, language skills or experience.

<sup>1</sup> All data derive from statistics of Lublin City Hall, which were not published fully before.

<sup>2</sup> Data from: Marcin Wojdat, Paweł Cywiński: Hospitality of the city: huge increase, challenges and chances – Report about Refugees from Ukraine in the biggest cities of Poland, 2022 (April), source: [https://metropolie.pl/fileadmin/user\\_upload/UMP\\_raport\\_Ukraina\\_20220429\\_final.pdf](https://metropolie.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/UMP_raport_Ukraina_20220429_final.pdf) (access: 8.06.2022)

<sup>3</sup> Lublin county: 6064 women, 2412 men, total: 8476, Age of women: 739 people (years women were born in: 1983-87), 613 (78-77), 549 (88-92), 406 (73-77) Age of men: 125 (year men were born in: 2016), 118 (2008), 116 (2011), 115 (2012), 100 (2017) Data from: <https://dane.gov.pl/dataset/2715,zarejestrowane-wnioski-o-nadanie-statusu-ukr/resource/38789/table> (access: 5.06.2022)

<sup>4</sup> Data from: <https://praca-lublin-ukraina.pl/?fbclid=IwAR3RORis5DFNFz8vb4wxEL5CPmMZGg2084qYrJFdoqVpyAgEPaRJENGUhxk> (access: 5.06.2022)

Recruiters will match information obtained from potential employees with job offers submitted by employers and support contact between them.

The City of Lublin also collects information on employment opportunities for Ukrainian citizens in companies operating in the city of Lublin or in the Lublin Region.

Employers may submit job offers via the form [...] <sup>5</sup> .

In this way, 300 job offers for Ukrainian citizens were collected, and 1,398 registered jobs for Ukrainian citizens. 1,123 employees from Ukraine, seeking work, registered through the portal, and 1,196 people were employed.

It is also worth noting the employment program implemented by the city hall in cooperation with the Polish Centre for International Aid – “Cash for Work”. Thanks to it, 64 teachers from Ukraine found employment in 41 Lublin schools, becoming a teaching aid for 1,279 pupils in primary schools and 155 pupils in secondary schools. All persons underwent an accelerated Polish language course organised by the Homo Faber association.

An additional activity, although of great importance, was the humanitarian aid provided to Ukraine. Within three months, 78 trucks were handed over to Ukraine with humanitarian aid, including food, clothing, covers, medicine, hygiene products and hospital equipment. The donors of the provided aid were mainly twin cities of Lublin and the Protection Civile.

Lublin, as understood by the whole city, but especially by its residents, NGOs, a huge number of entities and institutions working in aid of refugees, is doing an exemplarily job. We have developed a model of cooperation that is unique in the country. NGOs step in where, for formal and legal reasons, the City cannot act. However, we must remember that the war is still going on, and it is our duty to provide long-term assistance. That's why we have already started integration and anti-stereotyping activities - this is one of the most important tasks facing us in the context of the refugee crisis. We need to stay ahead of the phenomena that all countries hosting refugees have faced. That is why systematic solutions are so important for us, because we have no doubt that we will feel the effects of the war in Ukraine for a very long time to come.

Krzysztof Żuk,  
Mayor of the City of Lublin.

<sup>5</sup> Quotation from: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=376805767781033&set=pb.100063548382421-2207520000> (access: 5.06.2022)

# COMMITTEE

The Lublin Social Committee to Aid Ukraine was established on February 24 in the morning. Initiated by people with various backgrounds, it has become a cross-sectoral platform coordinating aid activities in the city<sup>6</sup>.

The Committee was composed of non-governmental organisations that have been active for years for migrants and refugees: Homo Faber Association, Institute for the Rule of Law Foundation, Foundation of Spiritual Culture "Pogranicza", Foundation for the Development of Central and Eastern Europe, scouting organisations: Polish Scouting Association and Ukrainian Plast, which is extremely important for the success of the entire initiative, selected employees from the departments of the Lublin City Hall: Social Participation Office, Culture Department, Strategy and Entrepreneurship Department, Office – Centre for International Cooperation, Office for Integrated Territorial Investments. The Mayor of the City encouraged the employees of the Office to become directly involved in the work of the Committee.

The strength of the Committee were concrete people whose experience, skills and good knowledge of the city allowed in these key first days to build an efficient system, complementary to other initiatives. Mapping the needs of refugees and confronting them with the activities of other entities (social organisations, local government units and institutions), entering unattended areas and taking over responsibility gave the opportunity to maximise efficiency with limited resources and work on many variables.

Within 24 hours of its inception, the Committee managed 17 areas. These were, among others: 24/7 hotline, information, accommodation, transport and logistics, translations, medical assistance, psychological support, volunteering and others. In the first hours of the Committee's work, recruitment for volunteers was launched. Over 4,000 people completed the form within several dozen hours. The first several hundred offers were also collected from private individuals ready to host people from Ukraine in their private homes.

<sup>6</sup> In the first decade of March, Refugees International's report on Crisis in Ukraine: *humanitarian demands and human rights imperatives* highlighted that "The city of Lublin stands out as a place where the municipal authorities responded with commitment in a coherent, coordinated way when it comes to assistance for war refugees from Ukraine.", source: <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/s/Ukraine-Report-March-2022-FINAL.pdf> (access: 10.06.2022)

With the launch of public accommodation points (at their peak there were 13), teams of volunteer translators appeared in them. At its peak, it was 460 people. Their work, according to established rules, was coordinated by designated caregivers.

The temporary office of the Committee (from February 24 till May 15) was the Centre of Culture in Lublin – a local government cultural institution located in the city centre, in a building fully adapted for people with disabilities. CK's support was not limited only to providing space, but also equipment. A person who takes care of the needs and communication was delegated to cooperate with the Committee. Several employees permanently cooperate with the Committee, incl. in the nutritional program (see below).

The speed of reaction and efficient management of change made it possible to deliver help on time, in accordance with the first, basic needs of people reaching the city. In the following days, the departments changed their functions, some were shut down, and in their place others appeared to respond to new challenges. Currently (end of May) the Committee consists of 21 departments.

The Lublin Social Committee to Aid Ukraine was established on February 24, several hours after the start of the war in Ukraine.

Numerous representatives of non-governmental organisations, city officials, and a large group of students came to the first meeting at the hospitable Centre of Culture in the afternoon of that day. It was the moment when the first working groups were established and the mode of work was established, daily meetings and the first information about Lublin's activities spread throughout the world.

Subsequent working groups were created every day in response to the ever wider needs of newcomers, and more organisations and people joined the Committee and often took on entire areas related to help.

The Committee has become a living organism, operating 24 hours a day, providing assistance in accommodation, meals, legal and medical assistance, psychological support, childcare, translation support, and an efficient logistics team; Polish language for refugees and Ukrainian language for volunteers are taught here, particularly difficult cases are solved and a long-term concept of integration and support for refugees and the local community is created.

To manage a large number of volunteers, a separate department was created, a training system, which takes care of their efficiency, workplace hygiene and mental well-being.

And above all, the Committee has become a place where you can obtain reliable and up-to-date information on practically every area of refugee interests, a place where safety and thoughtful methods of providing aid, standards of humanitarian aid and respect for human dignity are taken care of.

Undoubtedly, the Committee's achievement is the trust and partnership relations that have been built with the local self-government of Lublin, which allows it to quickly and effectively respond to the changing needs of newcomers to Lublin who look for a safe shelter with us.

Nastia Kinzerska,  
Office of International Cooperation Centre of the City of Lublin,  
"Pogranicza" Spiritual Culture Foundation, Plast

# A SHORT HISTORY OF CROSS-SECTORAL COOPERATION

It is worth mentioning, however, that there would be no Committee understood as a coordination platform if there was no such number of activities undertaken in Lublin by non-governmental organisations, whose aim was to jointly reflect on the city's obligations resulting from the growing number of new residents of Lublin: migrants and refugees.

From the point of view of the Homo Faber Association, the talks on migration began with the research commissioned by the Lublin City Hall (Department of Culture) "Lublin is friendly"<sup>7</sup> (2008), as well as the Monitoring of the functioning of foreigners in Lublin in the public sphere<sup>8</sup> (2010).

It was the report and recommendations that became the basis for changes in the field of local government administration, and in the field of relations – initiated a series of talks between the organisation and local authorities regarding the quality standards of service for migrants and migrant women living in the city.

There are two key moments in building relationships with other partners. In 2013, the Integration Support Group<sup>9</sup> was established, an informal, cross-sectoral platform, the aim of which was to "carry out a detailed analysis of the currently functioning solutions in the area of intercultural integration and develop recommendations and tools based on good practices, among others, from Neuchâtel"<sup>10</sup>. It seems that its creation was possible mainly due to the involvement of specific civil servants as well as representatives of civil society organisations in the issue of migration and refugeeism.

The group was also a response to the postulate included in the Lublin Development Strategy for 2013-2020. It assumed "the implementation of a permanent multicultural management program"<sup>11</sup>.

The second<sup>12</sup> important stage in building inter-sectoral cooperation was the transformation of the Integration Support Group into the Civic Dialogue Commission for the Integration of Migrants and Migrant Women<sup>13</sup> in 2021. The initiators of the establishment of the CDC wrote, inter alia: "Immigrants living in Lublin are new residents. Thus today, the challenge is to integrate the community of residents,

<sup>7</sup> Summary of analysis: <https://arch.hf.org.pl/index.php?id=1308> (access: 10.06.2022)

<sup>8</sup> More: <https://arch.hf.org.pl/index.php?id=1663> (access: 10.06.2022)

<sup>9</sup> Assumptions and goals of the Integration Support Group: <https://lublin.eu/mieszkancy/partycypacja/lublin-dla-wszystkich/grupa-wsparcia-integracji/> (access: 10.06.2022)

<sup>10</sup> same source

<sup>11</sup> more: [https://lublin.eu/mieszkancy/partycypacja/lublin-dla-wszystkich/https://bip.lublin.eu/gfx/bip/userfiles/\\_public/import/rada-miasta-lublin-vii-kaden/sesje-rm-lublin/uchwaly-rm-lublin/vi-kadencja-rady-miasta-lubli/sesja-nr-xxviii-z-dnia-28-02-uchwala-nr-693xxviii2013-rady-76195\\_urm\\_693\\_xxviii\\_2013.pdf](https://lublin.eu/mieszkancy/partycypacja/lublin-dla-wszystkich/https://bip.lublin.eu/gfx/bip/userfiles/_public/import/rada-miasta-lublin-vii-kaden/sesje-rm-lublin/uchwaly-rm-lublin/vi-kadencja-rady-miasta-lubli/sesja-nr-xxviii-z-dnia-28-02-uchwala-nr-693xxviii2013-rady-76195_urm_693_xxviii_2013.pdf) (access: 10.06.2022)

<sup>12</sup> Due to the volume of the text, I do not cite here all the projects and cross-sector activities that were undertaken in Lublin. I have selected those that, due to their long-term effects, overtly affected the relations between local government and NGOs.

<sup>13</sup> However, it is worth mentioning that the project for establishing the Commission for Civil Dialogue was adjourned for nine months, waiting for president's signature. The reasons for this delay are unknown. More about Commission for Civil Dialogue: <https://lublin.eu/mieszkancy/partycypacja/organizacje-pozarzadowe/komisja-dial/kdo-integracja/opis/> (access: 5.06.2022)

supporting intercultural dialogue, supporting multicultural neighbourhoods, informing residents about social changes, and maintaining social cohesion.<sup>14</sup> According to the annual report<sup>15</sup>, as part of the tasks set for themselves, the member organisations and departments of the city hall planned to prepare a document describing the “integration model for Lublin”.

It is noteworthy that it was CDC who initiated a wide meeting with the city and voivodeship authorities on the subject of Lublin’s preparation to welcome refugees from Ukraine. The meeting took place on February 18, 2022. It was attended by: representatives of the Embassy of Ukraine in Poland, the Lublin voivode, the mayor of the city of Lublin, as well as the Director of the Department of Resident Security and Crisis Management, the director general of the Main Board of the Polish Red Cross, as well as representatives of Ukrainian minority organisations in Poland and organisations working for migration and refugees in the city of Lublin<sup>16</sup>.

At the meeting, both the voivode and the city president presented the state of Lublin’s preparation for the welcoming of refugees, as well as the crisis management mechanisms in the event of an increased migration movement. Undoubtedly, it was this “open card game” that allowed civil society organisations to pre-scrutinise the white fields – areas that were not then operationalised. These were issues not related to “first humanitarian aid” (accommodation, food, clothing) but related to the long-term stay of refugees as a result of prolonged conflict and inability to return. Thus integration, as defined in the Stockholm Program (2010)<sup>17</sup> a dynamic two-track process of interaction that requires not only action by national, regional and local authorities but also greater involvement of the host community and immigrants.

At that time, the issue of legalising the stay and its derivatives: work, education, health, remained completely open.

<sup>14</sup> <https://lublin.eu/mieszkancy/partycypacja/organizacje-pozarządowe/komisja-dial/kdo-integracja/opis/> (access: 10.06.2022)

<sup>15</sup> Report from CCD activity, migration in 202, <https://lublin.eu/mieszkancy/partycypacja/organizacje-pozarządowe/komisja-dial/kdo-integracja/sprawozdanie-z-dzialania-kdo-migracja-w-2021-roku,10,4932,1.html> (access: 5.06.2022)

<sup>16</sup> from: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10160636118688646&set=pb.100063548382421-2207520000> (access: 4.06.2022)

<sup>17</sup> Stockholm programme – An open and safe Europe for the benefit and protection of citizens [Dz.U.] [Journal of Laws]. Nr 115 from 4.5.2010; source: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/LSU/?uri=celex:52010XG0504\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/LSU/?uri=celex:52010XG0504(01)) (access: 10.06.2022)

# COMMITTEE – FREEDOM AND SUBSIDIARITY

The Committee is based on the cooperation of local government with non-governmental organisations.

Pursuant to the Act on the Commune Self-Government of 1990<sup>18</sup>, the self-government's own tasks do not include migration and refugee issues, nor do they include activities supporting the integration of migrants and refugees – but these are the tasks of the county, which also are on Lublin.

The aforementioned tasks focus on “satisfying the collective needs of the community” (Article 7 (1)), but “laws may impose on the commune the obligation to perform tasks commissioned from the scope of government administration” (Chapter 2, Article 8.1). Among the tasks is, of course, “cooperation and activities for the benefit of non-governmental organisations and entities mentioned in art. 3 sec. 3 of the Act of April 24, 2003 on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work” (Art. 7 (1) (19)). This, in turn, indicates that cooperation with public administration bodies “is based on the principles of: subsidiarity, sovereignty of the parties, partnership, efficiency, fair competition and transparency” (Article 5 (2) (3))<sup>19</sup>.

The key principle, when trying to describe the Committee – an informal platform for inter-sectoral cooperation, is the principle of subsidiarity. Not wanting to get bogged down in attempts at definition, and without the ambition to create my own, I will use the one proposed by Ewa Popławska “The principle of subsidiarity can be reduced to two basic postulates relating to the relationship: individual-community-state:

- as much freedom as possible; as much socialisation as necessary,
- as much society as possible; as much of the state as is necessary”<sup>20</sup>.

This means that “tasks should be performed primarily at the lowest organisational level, and higher-level units should support lower-level units in the implementation of their tasks and take over only those that cannot be performed at lower levels.”<sup>21</sup>

The second key issue, next to the principle of subsidiarity, is freedom – this is where non-governmental organisations operate. This is why the Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work does not include specific tasks or social topics that they can deal with.

Undoubtedly, these two: the principle of subsidiarity and freedom in the scope of the organisation's activities are the legs on which the Lublin Social Committee for Aid to Ukraine stands firmly.

<sup>18</sup> Act of March 8, 1990 on municipal self-government, Dz. U. [Journal of Laws] 1990 Nr 16 item. 95, source: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU19900160095/U/D19900095Lj.pdf> (access: 10.06.2022)

<sup>19</sup> Act of April 24, 2003 on public benefit activity and volunteer activity, Dz. U. [Journal of Laws] 2003 Nr 96 item. 873, source: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20030960873/U/D20030873Lj.pdf> (access: 10.06.2022)

<sup>20</sup> Subsidiarity in local government law and practice. Office of Analysis and Documentation of the Senate Chancellery, Warsaw 2012, p. 6, source: [https://www.senat.gov.pl/gfx/senat/pl/senatopracowania/27/plik/ot-609\\_internet\\_2.pdf](https://www.senat.gov.pl/gfx/senat/pl/senatopracowania/27/plik/ot-609_internet_2.pdf) (access: 10.06.2022)

<sup>21</sup> same source, p. 13.

# PRIORITIES – CORE HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS

With the establishment of cooperation with the Danish Refugee Council, which is bound by a trilateral agreement, the City of Lublin, the Homo Faber Association and DRC, the team began implementing the humanitarian standards of the CHS Alliance group:

- Humanitarian aid is adequate and relevant to the needs
- Humanitarian aid is effective and delivered on time
- Humanitarian aid strengthens the local potential and does not cause negative effects
- Humanitarian aid is based on communication, participation and information (people affected by the crisis know their rights and powers, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them)
- Complaints are being accepted and handled appropriately
- Humanitarian aid is coordinated and complementary
- Humanitarian actors are constantly learning and improving
- Staff are supported to do their job efficiently and staff are treated fairly and equally
- Resources are managed and used responsibly and for their intended purpose<sup>22</sup>.

The Committee team was trained on the standards in a 15-hour training session led by a DRC expert.

<sup>22</sup> Source: [https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/CHS\\_Plain\\_Language\\_Polish\\_2022.pdf](https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/CHS_Plain_Language_Polish_2022.pdf) (access: 10.06.2022)

# MECHANICS – HOW IT WORKS

When creating the Committee, we recognised that work in the area of crisis intervention requires a system based on a clear structure. This choice was dictated by the need for efficient, quick decision-making and taking responsibility for them, as well as the sense of security of all people involved in it. However, the mechanisms of openness and participation have been taken care of – both at the level of employees and volunteers as well as beneficiaries, the implementation of the complaints system – the LOOP platform<sup>23</sup>.

Of course, the most numerous group are volunteers. From among 4,000 applications, several hundred people were selected through surveys on the website of the Homo Faber Association (for territorial reasons, language skills and availability). At its peak, 270 people were in action every day. At the end of May, there are 176 voluntary contracts. In addition, volunteer members of non-governmental organisations participating in the work of the Committee as well as several dozen employees of the Lublin City Office and Lublin cultural institutions delegated by the Mayor of the City to activities within the Committee are involved.

Volunteers work in designated places and hours. Each group has its own coordinator. They are the ones who directly look after the volunteers, set the schedules, obligatory supervisions, and are the first point of contact in the event of challenges and problems..

Moreover, each department also has its own coordinators. Some of them are people from non-governmental organisations, some are officials from the Lublin City Hall delegated to work in the Committee.

The work of the Committee is managed at several levels.

Coordinators meet at briefings. In the first weeks of the crisis, meetings were held every day and, as a rule, lasted no more than one hour. It is currently a weekly mode. A note is compulsorily prepared from each meeting and made available to all persons in the Committee. Meetings of representatives of all partners: social and local government are held once a week. Strategic meetings once a month, focused on future solutions. The whole team is coordinated by a team of the Homo Faber Association.

After a short break caused by work during the crisis, CDC meetings were also resumed.

The current work of the team takes place in a building lent to the Committee free of charge by the City Hall. For everyday communication, the Committee uses the Slack internet platform – thanks to the possibility of programming discussion groups on specific topics, chaos and blocking other communication channels (telephone, e-mail) have been avoided.

All this means that decisions are made through deliberation, and the structure and division of tasks are open.

*The uniqueness of the Committee lies in the unprecedented and natural cooperation of representatives of non-governmental organisations, volunteers and employees of the City Hall. When we work side by side or talk about the challenges ahead, we feel mutual support. We understand the potential and limitations of each partner.* Krzysztof Stanowski – Centre for International Cooperation Lublin City Hall

<sup>23</sup> More: <https://www.talktoloop.org/>

# COMMITTEE - AREAS OF ACTIVITY

## 1. Providing reliable information

It was recognised that access to proven, reliable information on border crossing, safe travel, as well as offers of assistance after reaching Lublin – accommodation, meals and navigation around the city, is one of the key needs of refugees fleeing from Ukraine. That is why it was decided to launch a 24/7 hotline as well as internet activities and leaflet and poster campaigns in Lublin.

### Hotline 24/7

It was established in the first hours of the Committee's operation. It was launched on February 25, supported by a team of volunteers supported by employees of the organisation and the Lublin City Hall. It works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It supports all incoming calls in the following languages: Ukrainian, Russian, Belarusian, English and Polish.

An internal system for collecting data on services offered by the administration, organisations and private entities in the city was set up. In situations where the case requires additional checking, the hotline employees contact the clients after collecting the data.

In the first weeks, an additional night duty (red line) was carried out by people coordinating the work of the entire Committee to support the hotline in the most difficult cases (e.g. suspected human trafficking).

The number and the switchboard were provided by the Lublin Tourist Organisation.

**16 021**  
calls received

Suddenly, we found ourselves in a situation of war that no one until the end believed was real and was happening here and now. The amount of emotions and unknowns was huge. We were the first helpline people fleeing the war found out about. We received dramatic phone calls asking for help. As a hotline team, we did our best not to leave anyone without support. We stayed in touch with the people who called and tried to complete each case. The reaction to a given problem was immediate, thanks to the cooperation of many people, the effectiveness was amazing.

Magda Gnyp-Ścigocka,  
Social Participation Office of the City Hall of Lublin,  
co-coordinator of the hotline

### Information point

It was active in the Committee at the Centre for Culture right at the entrance of the building.

Its task was to support people who sought help directly. And just like the helpline, it solved all matters, either immediately on the spot or successfully sending those who are in need to other places.

Currently, the point is located in the building to which the Committee has moved. Its tasks have not changed.

The key role of the point is to gather information and delegate effectively.

It is worth adding that information services are also provided by the point at the "Grodzka Gate - NN Theatre» Centre. By the end of May, 336 cases of 639 people were handled there.

### Translations

The department has been operating since the beginning of the Committee's establishment. Handles the coming up translations of utility texts (publications) and specialist translations of refugee documents (patient cards, certificates, etc.)

**1200**  
cases

## 2. Crisis support

These are departments dealing with direct support for refugees after arriving in the city: legal assistance, psychological assistance, medical support as well as assistance to people in particularly difficult situations, then finding a job and professional activation.

### Legal assistance

The legal aid point is operated by a team of lawyers from the Rule of Law Institute Foundation – an organisation that has been specialising in refugee and migration law for many years and offers free advice.

Legal assistance is provided both by personal contact, as well as by e-mail and by phone, in Ukrainian, Russian, English and Polish.

The Homo Faber team of lawyers provides anti-discrimination advice at the organisation's office.

It is worth mentioning that RLIF and HF lawyers also provide advice in guarded and open centres for foreigners.

over  
**1500**  
legal cases

There is already quite a lot of information on the legal situation of refugees from Ukraine on the Internet, but there is also a lot of junk content – it is false, incomplete or out of date. The regulations in this area are changing very dynamically. Since its entry into force, the Special Act has been amended five times and another draft is already in the parliament. Due to that, and taking into account the fact that the provisions are a bit 'leaky' (which leaves a lot of room for interpretation of the provisions by offices), it is necessary that reliable and up-to-date legal information is available.

Julian Hofman,  
Rule of Law Institute Foundation, legal aid coordinator

The challenge that we did not expect at all is the reluctance to use psychological services by people from Ukraine, so we are constantly learning new methods of reaching and trying to overcome resistance. The need for support is growing month by month.

Anna Szadkowska,  
Social Participation Office of the Lublin City Hall,  
coordinator of psychological assistance

## Psychological support

This task is carried out both for women refugees and men refugees, including children, as well as for volunteers and employees of the Committee. The partner of the action is the Crisis Intervention Centre in Lublin, which supplemented its services with a telephone service of crisis interveners in Ukrainian (from Monday to Friday from 15.00 to 19.00 and on Saturday from 10.00 to 14.00). Support can be received both by phone and stationary; psychologists, supported by translators, also regularly visit collective accommodation points.

Counselling for refugees takes place at the Centre and other safe spaces.

The volunteers and employees of the Committee are provided with psychological help and can use it at any time. They are also obliged to participate in supervision. This seems to be particularly important, bearing in mind that the vast majority of volunteers are people from Ukraine, who are particularly burdened by the current situation, often having a family in Ukraine, fighting fathers and mothers, hosting family members and friends at their households.

In the first days of the Committee's activity, a short psychological guide was created<sup>24</sup>. Everyone involved also received a brochure from Doctors Without Borders / Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF): *Take Care of Yourself. A guide to stress and how to deal with it*.

There was also prepared and published a short guide for people who host people from Ukraine at their homes – *10 principles in the self-refugee / refugee relationship*<sup>25</sup>.

It is worth noting that a team of psychologists regularly trains itself by improving its members' competences. There were 4 trainings on psychological first aid, crisis intervention, work with war trauma, there are also trainings on working with children and youth under the helpline.

Work is underway to launch a helpline for children and youth from Ukraine.



<sup>24</sup> If u help people from Ukraine – read the psychological guide, source: <https://arch.hf.org.pl/index.php?id=2563> (access: 10.06.2022)

<sup>25</sup> *10 principles in the self-refugee / refugee relationship*, it was published on Facebook of HF source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=384465607015049&set=pb.100063548382421-2207520000> (access: 10.06.2022)

The biggest challenge is to combine childcare with entering the labor market. Breaking the fear of the language barrier and daring the interview. Women from Ukraine are either very highly qualified or mega-complex, because they have been responsible for raising children for a long time.

Wiktorja Herun,  
head of the Internationalisation Department at the Department  
of Strategy and Entrepreneurship of the Lublin City Hall,  
coordinator of professional activation

I haven't thought about the mission of our project before. We simply helped the specific medics to integrate with the system. After the war had broken out, we realised that the Ukrainian doctors in Poland offered great potential for helping the refugees. Hundreds of people have used convenient and unlimited healthcare services in Lublin thanks to our collaboration with the Ukrainian medics.

Vira Orel, CEO of Medimost,  
the coordinator of the Foundation for the Development  
of Central and Eastern Europe

### Crisis intervention – hostel

In March, an intervention hostel was launched – a safe space for women and children in a special situation. It was decided that people who experienced violence, including war violence, should not be placed in public accommodation places or private houses of people ready to host refugees from Ukraine.

The hostel offers accommodation with a full range of services (food, legal, psychological, medical and material support). The criteria for assistance and the rules of the hostel have been developed. Its location, for security reasons, is classified information.

### Business and work

Seeing the determination of some refugees to find a job quickly after their arrival and the dangers of the contact with dishonest employers and human trafficking, it was decided to launch support for safe job search in the city and its vicinity. This task was taken up entirely by the Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship of the Municipal Office in Lublin. For this purpose, a website was launched, on the one hand collecting data on job offers, and on the other – collecting data on people willing to take up employment. The task of the office staff was to verify offers from employers and meet them with people seeking them.

We are currently developing a professional support program.



### Medical support

The Foundation for the Development of Central and Eastern Europe, which supports the Ukrainian medics in different parts of Poland, has been responsible for helping the sick since the establishment of the Committee. There are more and more doctors, nurses and paramedics speaking Ukrainian and Russian (almost 100 people) who can easily respond to the needs of the refugees.

My life, similarly to the lives of most of the people from the Committee, was turned upside down on the 24th of February. I've never thought that giving lectures on 'Intercultural Communication' or 'Migration Processes in Modern World' provides with knowledge that I could put into practice and most students would find useful. Maintaining a group of 108 students who, up till now, work in different places was most challenging. This group comprises primarily students from Ukraine and Belarus who were, and still are, in need of help. I was a bit of a psychologist for them as well. At the beginning, these boys were unstoppable in helping. They couldn't stand the fact that they didn't fight. These students lost their incomes, they could no longer pay for their dormitories or afford food. It was them who also needed help. It was them who also took in and helped their families. I looked for jobs for them. These people weren't emotionally prepared for refugee stories. This war is also their war. This war directly affects their families. These students initially worked as translators and interpreters. In reality, they did everything - they changed sheets, distributed meals, checked bus or train timetables, etc.

Maria Mazur, PhD,  
an academic lecturer and the coordinator  
of the Municipal Sports and Recreation Sports Hall.

Working with volunteers during crisis is like pure acrobatics. You have to be really flexible and creative, able to adapt to the dynamically changing situation. Good collaboration with all of the teams. Lots of observing and listening to the volunteers, responding immediately to their current problems at work, taking care of their everyday, sometimes mundane, needs, talking with the coordinators of the specific points every day. It all is incredibly important.

Agnieszka Tracz,  
the volunteer coordinator

I came to the Committee and Piotr told me that they would need volunteers - a train was to arrive from Ukraine with 300 passengers at 10 p.m. I met with the volunteers at the Municipal Sports and Recreation Sports Hall.

At 9.45 p.m. There were around 60 students. It was when a group 'Volunteers' in Telegram was created, I gave my phone to one of the students who created the group and added the students. When 100 people joined the group, I realised that I was managing the whole world!

Maria Mazur, PhD,  
an academic lecturer and the coordinator  
of the Municipal Sports and Recreation Sports Hall.

As part of the actions of the assistance, we offer help with doctor's appointments, official matters and sometimes everyday matters. When we walk with a person needing help (e.g. with making a doctor's appointment), we explain to them how the system works, how to get a referral or a prescription. We also help by interpreting at the doctor's or during patient registration. Being with an assistant makes them feel safer and calmer because they no longer worry that they won't understand something important.

Viktoria Berezniak,  
a student and the coordinator of the assistants

### 3. Voluntary work and assistance

The Committee has been based on voluntary workers from the very beginning. Some of them, because of their task, that is, coordination, are currently on civil law contracts and employment contracts with the Homo Faber Association.

#### Voluntary work - coordination

As soon as on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February, there was a volunteer application form<sup>26</sup> available on the Homo Faber Association's website. Over 4 000 people filled it out in a very short period of time. Simultaneously, many people willing to help attended the first open meeting of the Committee in the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> of February. They were mainly people from Ukraine, but also from Poland and Belarus.

Over 278 volunteers worked for the Committee at its peak. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, it was 176 people. They work in teams and each team has its own coordinator. The volunteers work at public accommodation points (at 10 points at its peak, now at 6 points) and at the Main Bus Station (PKS) and the Railway Station (PKP) as interpreters.

Guidelines for the volunteers, safety rules and a supervision system have been established.

# 176 volunteers

#### Interpreter Assistants at accommodation points

The teams of interpreter assistants that work at public accommodation points support the actions of the Municipal Centre for Family Assistance. Their task is to provide interpretation assistance and to help with organising the functioning of the night shelters. It seems that the volunteers play a very important role in making the refugees feel safe by speaking fluent Ukrainian or Russian and by being their navigators and guides thanks to being familiar with the reality of life in Poland and in Lublin, and by being the ones who the refugees can trust and turn to.

#### Intercultural assistance

This action was launched at the beginning of April as a response to the new needs. The assistants are guides in this new reality - the help with running errands, such as making doctor's appointments for children or filling out forms. Each team consists of a few people who speak fluent Ukrainian, Russian and Polish.

# 60 interventions

<sup>26</sup> source: <https://arch.hf.org.pl/index.php?id=2552> (access: 10.06.2022)

## Transport and logistics

It is one of the first departments which have been established in the Committee. It is responsible for organising and transporting people and items. A base of drivers who were ready to help was created (an online application form: personal details, vehicle details and a type of a vehicle, details concerning availability). After the verification in a special PIN-code system, the drivers transported people from the border to the city.

Introducing free public transport in Lublin and full fee waivers for parking spaces for the refugees occurred to be incredibly helpful.

The role of the Municipal Police of the City of Lublin in helping with organising individual transport of people and transport of items in Lublin must be emphasised as well.

**416** drivers have expressed their willingness via transport applications

**60** buses with humanitarian aid have been sent all around Poland

We have organised transport for around **1000** people (not including people who were going by buses)

Regular weekly transports to Ukraine  
**2 or 3 buses every week**  
(37 buses in total)

## 4. Taking care of children

Most of the people fleeing from Ukraine are women with children, and therefore, special spaces have been prepared for them. It has been done in two ways:

- specially designated spaces for children have been introduced in temporary accommodations, childcare system and special event system have been introduced – the latter features animators' performances, theatre companies and circus performances;
- municipal cultural facilities, non-governmental organisations and business entities have created spaces for the youngest refugees which offer care, free-time activities, educational support and teaching Polish.

### Day-care rooms for children

1. Animation activities for children in temporary accommodations functioned thanks to the engagement of the animators who were involved in municipal cultural facilities, non-governmental organisations and business entities, and thanks to natural people (among others, the 'Bronowice' Centre for Culture, the Hans Christian Andersen Theatre, the Centre for Culture, the House of Words, the Sempre a Frente Foundation, Foundation 'Sztukmistrze', Foundation 'Strefa Dorastania', the 'Inside Out' Foundation and Infinitum Studio). Over 45 volunteers from different countries – Poland, Israel, the USA, England, Ukraine and Belarus – took part in integration via culture. They organised art, movement, manual, music, circus, cartoon, skateboard, ceramic and multimedia workshops, as well as games and plays. Moreover, common meetings and picnics were also arranged.

The activities were coordinated by the House of Words (a local government institution) and the Culture Department of the Lublin City Hall.

Animation activities for children were introduced in temporary accommodations and were organised 4 to 7 times a week for at least 2 hours a day. These activities were arranged at 9 points at the same time at the peak of their functioning.

2. Since the first days of the war, day-care rooms/meeting venues for children and mothers from Ukraine functioned in, among others, Galeria Labirynt, the Centre for Culture in Lublin (the Headquarters), the Workshops of Culture in Lublin, the 'Węglin' Cultural Centre and the establishment of the Society of Friends of Children (Lubelski Regional Department). Thanks to the Comenius Foundation for Child Development, some of these entities joined the 'SPYNKA PROGRAMME – Support for Children and Mothers from Ukraine' which, thanks to UNICEF's grant, supports the organisation of the activities of these places and provides them with personnel. What is more, the 'SPYNKA PROGRAMME' is organised at two points of collective accommodation, which enabled arranging care for children for a couple of hours each day in places where this kind of help is most needed.

**288** workshops

## Personal development scholarship

This programme offers scholarships for both children and adults to support them in following their passions and interests, and enable self-development for them as far as the labour market is considered. 'We aim at supporting those who have found refuge in Poland from the war, so that they can (re)build their lives in a new country', said the organisers in the invitation for submitting applications. The first recruitment was launched on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, 2022. The next one was launched on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May. In order to apply for this kind of support, an online application form must be filled out.

'There are currently around 30 scholars in the music section – they comprise young pianists, guitarists, vocalists, violinists, bandurists and a clarinetist. As part of the Scholarship Programme, a musical band consisting of guitarists and vocalists has been formed as a result of the collaboration with the T. Szeligowski 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree Musical School in Lublin, the Music Centre operating as a part of the 'Muzyka' Association and the 'Bronowice' Cultural Centre. Among the scholarship recipients, there are award winners of regional and international competitions from Ukraine, who, because of the war, have found their new home in our city.'<sup>27</sup> wrote the Homo Faber Association after the launch of the first edition of this programme.

**109** scholarships were given during the first recruitment

## Polish (and Ukrainian) courses

The number of questions about fast and free Polish learning addressed to people working on helplines and to people at information desks resulted in establishing 7 language learning groups. Those groups included two intensive courses – for 42 teachers employed in schools in Lublin with the support of UN-HCR and PCPM – POLISH CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AID.

There are currently 13 groups. The classes are organised in a few locations in the city. They are entirely free. Entries are announced on social media.

It is also worth mentioning that there is no government scheme supporting foreigners in learning Polish in Poland (in practice it means differences in programmes and scopes) and most of the free language courses are organised by non-governmental organisations which are often financially supported by the European Union. At the same time, people applying for Polish citizenship are expected to pass an exam in the Polish language. The disproportion between the offered assistance and the requirements to know the language has been frequently reported to the central authorities by the non-governmental sector.

Two Ukrainian courses and one English course for the people engaged in the Committee's activity have been launched. The courses are held twice a week.

<sup>27</sup> source: [https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=416216280506648&\\_amp;set=a.370605341734409](https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=416216280506648&_amp;set=a.370605341734409) (access: 10.06.2022)

When we finally memorise and know how to pronounce the names of the children who we have the opportunity to meet and spend time with, when we find our common ground through pictures, sounds of instruments or body movements, we realise that Liera, Salomia, Taisa and Arsen are already far away from here, and there are just other Liera, Salomia, Taisa and Arsen standing in front of us... Our work is a never-ending story about beginnings. About new encounters, about getting to know each other, and often about repeating the same words or gestures. Sometimes we remember somebody for a long time and get used to that person. And when this person disappears, there is a feeling of emptiness that another child fills out pretty quickly. This is a dynamic work full of the unknown, and at the same time, a work that gives you fulfilment and a purpose. Culture has become our language and a way to live tomorrow.

Alina Januszczyk

- the House of Words, the coordinator of animation activities

As part of the scholarship programme, we find and organise various artistic and sports activities for the people from Ukraine – according to their needs. We buy or hire the most needed equipment, such as instruments, sportswear, art tools.

Organising such activities may seem to be a kind gesture, and an opportunity for a brief rest and taking your mind off the worst events. And for some people this actually the case – a few hours in a week in pleasant workshops, getting to know new places and people. For another group, this feels like going back to normal in their new lives thanks to continuing their trainings and classes. Maintaining their rhythm of the week and performing necessary duties. The continuation of their classes allows the talented children to further develop in specific fields. It also puts their parents' minds at ease because they know that their children are taken care of and aren't wasting their chance.

Ewelina Kruszyńska,

the coordinator of the scholarship programme

**13** language learning  
groups per week  
we are teaching **200**

**40** class periods  
per week **people in total**

**7** Polish teachers  
are employed

### Library

The idea of this activity is to make fiction available both to children and adults - providing municipal libraries with the Ukrainian and Belarusian literature and creating a multilingual library. The book collections are being expanded by include books in other languages.

**4000** books  
**2550** books have been donated  
to public establishments

Polish courses are organised in a way that allows the participants to overcome language barriers on the elementary level as quickly as possible, and to acquire the abilities to communicate in everyday situations. As part of Polish classes and using this language in practice, we provide the participants with possibilities to take part in cultural events, performances, film shows and concerts. Our language courses don't boil down only to language learning, they make the participants feel safe and self-reliant. What's more, it allows them to live more comfortably and freely in Lublin.

Marta Sienkiewicz,  
the office director of the Homo Faber Association,  
the coordinator of Polish classes

I'm an architect. However, at the beginning of the war I reskilled myself and now I'm looking for books, I'm collecting them and promoting them. I didn't realise that it would get so serious. Reading books is like catching fresh air for the refugees.

Yaryna Posuniak,  
the coordinator of the emerging library

## V. Life in Lublin / Humanitarian aid

### Accommodation

As a result of many residents being willing to take in refugees from Ukraine, an online form for the submission of offers was introduced in the first days of the war. 'If you want to host somebody, please fill out this form'<sup>28</sup>. The form included questions such as 'Since when is the accommodation available?', 'For how long?', 'For how many people? '.

Additionally, a mailbox was created to which offers were sent. In order to ensure the safety of the refugee women and the people who offered accommodation, the Accommodation Point was established. Its main idea was to check the offers available in the base, inform the hosts about the conditions and inform both the hosts and the refugees about the rules of hospitality.

The Accommodation Point was located in the Centre for Culture and was open everyday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At its peak, there were 7 reception points and a waiting room. Around 30 volunteers worked for the Accommodation Point. The number of volunteers has now been reduced (due to the lack of housing available in the base).

The most crucial task of the Accommodation Point was to provide SAFE accommodation.

There are two-person teams working at each desk:

- a Polish speaking person who allocates accommodation and has very good interpersonal skills and experience in working with other people (academic teachers, doctors, animators, office workers)
- an interpreter speaking Ukrainian/Russian who provides language assistance

All people allocating accommodation have the access to one housing base.

A team is divided into three subteams:

- a subteam responsible for allocating accommodation at accommodation points on four-hour shifts
- a subteam responsible for verifying offers/reservations (online work)
- a subteam completing the housing base (online work)

The Accommodation Point adapted a holistic approach to this work. It also answered all questions, helped with the transport to the new accommodation and provided all that was necessary for, e.g. furnishing a flat (collaboration with, among others, Caritas, the Polish Red Cross).

What is more, in the first two months of the Accommodation Point's activity, the collaborators of the Committee coordinated the relocation of the refugees to the countries of Western Europe.

When we accommodated the refugee women, we checked the hosts and the housing conditions they offered to make sure that the accommodation was adequate for the number of family members and that pets would also be taken in since they were often inseparable from the families. We also asked whether there were schools nearby, we contacted the hosts after a few days to know their opinion. We made sure that there were no men accommodated - if a mother and her children had any concerns, we kept on looking for another accommodation for them. We contacted then the accommodated to know their needs and satisfy them moving on to the second team of the family assistance.

Anna Jastrzębska,  
the Culture Department of the Lublin City Council,  
the coordinator of the Accommodation Point

# 1668 people

that is **531** families have been provided accommodation by families in Lublin and outside of Lublin

<sup>28</sup> source: <https://arch.hf.org.pl/index.php?id=2553> (access: 10.06.2022)

## Food assistance

Food distribution programme was launched in April, 2022. The direct reason was the food assortment available at public food distribution points – flour, oil, pasta, rice, etc. The conclusion: no vegetables, fruit or dairy products.

The first step was to identify the needs – the family accommodation point called all of the accommodated. A base of 250 families was created. They are given 20-kilogram boxes full of fresh vegetables, fruit and dairy products.

The quality of this service was also monitored – the families were asked to fill out questionnaires.

On the basis of the results, adjustments of the assortment were made.

It is also worth mentioning that the services of local suppliers are used.

**1000** boxes  
**250** families

## Humanitarian aid for Ukraine

The main aim of the Committee was, and still is, supporting the refugees in Lublin but also providing humanitarian aid for Ukraine by Poland, sister cities and international humanitarian organisations. In total, 78 lorries with humanitarian aid which entailed food, clothes, medication, hygiene products and hospital equipment were sent to, among others, Lutsk, Vinnytsia, Rivne, Lviv, Kharkiv, Khmelnytskyi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Yavoriv, Ostroh, Cherkasy, Ternopil, Chernihiv, Bucha, Kremenchuk, Kiev.

During the first food distribution, 10 boxes were delivered to 10 different places. All products were bought at the food market and delivered on the very same day.

There are many people fleeing from the war in Ukraine who were provided with accommodation by Polish families or who found it on their own. Not all of them have already found a job or another source of income. As a result, they can't afford to buy healthy food products, such as vegetables and fruit. They obviously can get dried products, such as rice, pasta or oil, but it isn't enough to prepare a nutritious dinner. It's especially important for children to be provided with vitamins.

Dima Latashov,  
a logistician in a private company, the coordinator of food assistance

## VI. Technical departments:

### Media

Since the 24<sup>th</sup> of February, the Committee has been visited by several press agencies and dozens of TV and radio crews from all around the world. The activity and effectiveness of the Committee piqued interest of the biggest publishers and individual freelancers who decided to explore this war on their own. The Committee publicised subjects that reverberated in the media environment.

Some of the most important publications include:

- The Guardian, Lorenzo Tondom Weronika Strzyżyńska, *We understand what war means': Poles rush to aid Ukraine's refugees*, 5.03.2022: [https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/05/poland-rush-to-aid-ukraine-refugees-russia-war?fbclid=IwAR0-PIDkNliY-W1u\\_M3Ac4Ji7o6ow29iVQPRqEAE\\_yidzaw2Fj6J5mg3M8](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/05/poland-rush-to-aid-ukraine-refugees-russia-war?fbclid=IwAR0-PIDkNliY-W1u_M3Ac4Ji7o6ow29iVQPRqEAE_yidzaw2Fj6J5mg3M8)
- Berliner Zeitung, Kaja Puto, *Polnisch-ukrainische Grenze: Die Polen sind solidarisch, aber wie lange noch?*, 12.03.2022: <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/wochenende/reportage-von-der-polnisch-ukrainischen-grenze-jetzt-solidaritaet-und-was-dann-li.216131?pid=true>
- The New York Times, Ada Petriczko, *Aid organisations say they are seeing signs of trafficking of people fleeing Ukraine*, 18.03.2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/03/18/world/ukraine-russia-war#ukraine-refugee-poland-assault>
- Gazeta Wyborcza Lublin, Małgorzata Domagała, *W Ukrainie wojna. Musimy pomóc. Działamy! Portrety wolontariuszy*, 28.04.2022: <https://lublin.wyborcza.pl/lublin/7,48724,28357770,w-ukrainie-wojna-musimy-pomoc-dzialamy.html>
- TVN24, Czarno na białym, Dariusz Kubik, *Polityka migracyjna polskiego rządu*, 2.05.2022: <https://tvn24.pl/go/programy,7/czarno-na-bialym-odcinki,11367/odcinek-1923,S00E1923,761976?fbclid=IwAR1YbRcptPAXTeeMK3EAqkNwP-TMBUjoaTCiyMyOP3afHXDJGJsEYEzRgSc>
- Dagens Nyheter, Maciej Zaremba, *När det ska skrivas historia kommer forskarna att upptäcka Polens dubbelliv*, 23.05.2022: [https://www.dn.se/kultur/maciej-zaremba-nar-det-ska-skrivas-historia-kommer-forskarna-att-upptacka-polens-dubbelliv/?fbclid=IwAR1qTkYfo5vTgUMT\\_TxUg5-IEscy-gFbwresWE\\_gIaZ6RgX7S8jp3zZh8aU](https://www.dn.se/kultur/maciej-zaremba-nar-det-ska-skrivas-historia-kommer-forskarna-att-upptacka-polens-dubbelliv/?fbclid=IwAR1qTkYfo5vTgUMT_TxUg5-IEscy-gFbwresWE_gIaZ6RgX7S8jp3zZh8aU)
- The Times, Paulina Olszanka, *Nerves fray in Poland as 3.7m refugees arrive from Ukraine*, 30.05.2022: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/95dfe820-e02b-11ec-8bdd-c253e043f5f0?shareToken=44770cea3c1a5429c1f08e066b31448a&fbclid=IwAR1zCR-KqqqDda5UWuNMkR6s2sf1AZnRD-qYOY5J7EYz81TRHTUAj32kvTOM>

The Committee has become the source of accurate information about the actual situation of the Ukrainian refugees in Eastern Poland. Furthermore, the complexity of the Committee's activity has become an impulse for more publications. One of the most vital moments in its activity was an invitation for Anna Dąbrowska, the president of the Homo Faber Association, to a public hearing in the European Parliament.

### Social media

The Committee does not have separate social media accounts and communicates via its constituent organisations and municipal profiles. In order to maintain effective communication, information is prepared in Ukrainian and also in English if needed.

To make the information more accessible, the Homo Faber Association has created an account in Telegram, a communication platform popular in Ukraine.

The Committee's website<sup>29</sup> functions only as a business card of the Association and redirects its visitors to its constituent entities.

### International collaboration

The Committee as a platform is not a party in contracts. The collaboration with Polish and international organisations is established by the constituent entities of the Committee.

The key strategic partner for both the Homo Faber Association, the leading organisation, and the Lublin City Council is the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), a private humanitarian organisation established in 1956<sup>30</sup>. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, 2022, a trilateral contract between the Danish Refugee Council, the Lublin City Council and the Homo Faber Association<sup>31</sup> was signed.

Other important partners that help create a system which provides assistance to the refugees from Ukraine are, among others, Oxfam. The international collaboration is also possible thanks to foreign donors. The Homo Faber Association is also supported by companies, such as Google, Allegro and the Von der Heyden Group, an investment firm.

### Trainings

A training system for the volunteers and coordinators is being developed in order to improve their skills. A personal development system is also being introduced.

### Management and finance

The main burden of coordinating, establishing partnerships, paying accounts and fulfilling contracts falls on the Homo Faber Association.

<sup>29</sup> Website of Lublin Committee: <http://www.hf.org.pl/komitet/pomocne-informacje/>

<sup>30</sup> More about DRC: <https://drc.ngo/about-us/who-we-are/organisation/>

<sup>31</sup> Lublin strengthens international cooperation in refugee crisis, source: <https://www.portalsamorządowy.pl/komunikacja-spooleczna/lublin-zaciesnia-miedzynarodowa-wspolprace-w-kryzysie-uchodzyczym,360404.html> (access: 10.06.2022)

# CHALLENGES

After 100 hundred days of the war and taking in the refugees in Poland, the Homo Faber Association has prepared a list of challenges together with partner organisations, that is, the Polish Migration Forum Foundation (PFM), the “Our Choice” Foundation / the Ukrainian House in Warsaw, the NOMADA Association for Multicultural Society Integration and the ‘With Bread and Salt’ Group. The list consists of almost 100 points and is divided into the following groups: accommodation, social assistance, the labour market, the system of education, depleting grassroots initiatives, violence, children and minorities, the healthcare system, migration policy<sup>32</sup>. ‘As far as the state management on various levels is considered, there is still a lack of systemic solutions and plans for the next months and years. We need to know how to properly respond to what happens in our country<sup>33</sup>, wrote the authors in the introduction.

From the perspective of Lublin, the most crucial issues are:

- the lack of flats and possible homelessness
- the risk of labour exploitation – violation of the labour rights, human trafficking
- the lack of system that would integrate the Ukrainian children into the Polish schools
- the lack of systemic solutions to the comprehensive care of the women – the victims of war rape
- the invisibility of the unaccompanied minors
- the lack of systemic support to the chronically ill
- the lack of integration programmes in accordance with the migration policy of the state
- the lack of coordinating assistance by the state.

Our psychological support specialists also point out the following issues:

- great difficulties with the accessibility to the psychiatric support
- the lack of a qualified Ukrainian-speaking psychology staff
- depleting (energy, motivation) resources of the people engaged in helping (burn-out, being tired from helping)
- the lack of workers – people who are knowledgeable about humanitarian and development aid, have organisational skills and are ready to reconcile their private work life with new challenges.

<sup>32</sup> 100 days since invasion of Ukraine – challenges for Poland, source: <https://hf.org.pl/100-dni-od-inwazji-wyzwania-dla-polski/> (access: 10.06.2022)

<sup>33</sup> same source.

# CONCLUSION

After the first three months, people engaged in helping the refugees from Ukraine can finally take some rest. The traffic at border crossings has decreased. Many people decide to go back to Ukraine. According to the data published by the UN, Poland has taken in 3 690 096 refugees and 1 512 192 of those refugees have returned to Ukraine. From all countries that had taken in the refugees until the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, 2 102 247 people in total have returned to Ukraine<sup>34</sup>.

The 'Special Act'<sup>35</sup> allowed to legalise the stay of the Ukrainians fleeing from the war for 18 months. After 9 months, the permission for the temporary stay for 3 years can be obtained (without any additional conditions). In spite of that, some people are sitting on the fence on whether to stay in Poland or not.

On the other hand, we constantly hear about the social weariness which affects the ordinary people who, just after the beginning of the war, decided to help which was often beyond their own capacities, skills and emotional resources, as well as the professionals, including workers, from non-governmental organisations. Not only does the society seem to feel a sense of loneliness and abandonment by the state, but also the burden of responsibility for the undertaken actions.

It also must be mentioned that in Poland, there has been no big organisations in the sector of organisation dealing with migration and exile so far. We are currently observing the expansion of some of them. This expansion is connected with the scale of the undertaken actions and the volunteers engaged in helping, as well as with the external funds which have enabled employing new workers and new ways of assisting. The non-governmental organisations, which were on the defensive, have become vital elements of the assistance system in many places, and their opinions have become valued and desired in debates thanks to their expertise. It happened after a few years during which the funds had been frozen by the central authorities because of, among other things, the take-over of the European funds of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund in 2016. However, the financial perspective in the new reality is only short-term – most of the international organisations encourage to submit applications for 6 month at most. The applications are in fact very simplified and easy to submit. There are rarely partners who offer a long-term financial perspective. It all makes us think about the temporariness of the solutions and the instability of the created systems. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of solutions depends on their long-term perspective.

The Lublin Social Committee to Aid Ukraine is also undergoing some changes. Its founders, having considered two time perspectives, planned fast, immediate and adequate help of good quality, as well as establishing a centre which will provide services to refugees and migrants and will support the Polish host community during the process of social changes long-term.

The establishment and the activity of the Centre would not be possible without the collaboration of the community organisations with the Lublin City Council. With the Homo Faber Association as its manager, it will be a place for action of many entities and informal groups.

<sup>34</sup> Data from: How many Ukrainians have fled their homes and where have they gone?, BBC, 6.05.2022, source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60555472> (access: 10.06.2022)

<sup>35</sup> Law of March 12, 2022 on assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with the armed conflict on the territory of the country, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] 2022 item. 583, source: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20220000583/T/D20220583L.pdf> (access: 7.06.2022)

After a few days of the Committee's work, visits from large international organisations, world media and others who are professionally involved in observing places like ours began. And what was remarkable to me was that they all emphasised the calmness that prevails in our place. They said that in other places it is edgy, there is tension, often chaos. With us one can feel balance and composure.

It's a big success that in this way we worked by dividing into smaller teams, delegating tasks so that everyone knew what to do and didn't have to do everything. This may sound a bit presumptuous, but looking back on these past three months, I think what we did together was amazing. It actually took place without any major clashes, conflicts or arguments. Everyone was maximally focused on good, sensitive cooperation, had kindness for each other, buried their egos in their pockets. What mattered was helping people in a meaningful way.

Piotr Skrzypczak,  
Homo Faber Association, coordinator of coordinators



**Homo Faber**

