



Anna Dąbrowska

Report 2025



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INTRODUCTION

When I enter work – a beautiful, hundred-year-old building at 39 Krakowskie Przedmieście Street in Lublin – there is usually someone already in the kitchen. He or she drinks coffee, eats breakfast brought from home. Sometimes I think that new members of the household are greeting me. We greet each other in different languages and go about our everyday lives. During the day, the building fills up, and then suddenly empties, lets more people into its high interior and lets out with a sigh of a heavy door. And so it flows through the day, only to shine through every window in the evening, fill itself with the noise of conversations and stomping on the stairs. Up and down. Inhale and exhale. The tide. Drain.

31,000 visits. The enormity of human fate. Their trust, our care.

When I come to work, I greet the team. From action and activism, common movement and volunteering, they have entered the mode of everyday work, often tedious, the effects of which persistently untangle from the maze of cultural misunderstandings. We are no longer patching holes, but we are becoming a systemic response. As if the Baobab was always here. People say: “after all, there is a Baobab” – changing this name at any time.

Somewhere above all of us, there is a great question about the near future, about enthusiasm and readiness. Mobility – an immanent feature of social organizations, whose comfortable sitting is always a pause before the necessary exit from the comfort zone. About being ready for the imaginable and unimaginable tomorrow, which will be touched by a lit Baobab at full sail.

Anna Dąbrowska
President of the Homo Faber Association



WHAT IS BAOBAB?

The Baobab Community Center is a multi-purpose space in the center of Lublin, which supports the process of reception, adaptation and integration of new residents of Lublin, especially people with migration and refugee experience. Opened in February 2023, it is a place for building relationships, weaving social threads, and in a crisis situation – a ready-made intervention place, with a professional team and good facilities. The Baobab has a set of changing activities that follows the changes taking place and it supports the process of building a harmonious socially cohesive understanding society.

The name directly refers to the history of Lublin.

For over 150 years, a tree grew on the main square of the city – Litewski Square. The common black poplar, due to its powerful stature, was called “Baobab” by the people of Lublin. And it quickly became a popular meeting place – in the era before mobile phones, it was enough to make an appointment “under the baobab”.

During the renovation of the square, the diseased and deteriorating poplar was replaced with a new planting. It is still difficult to call a small tree a baobab. When creating the center, we decided to adapt this name, which is legible and symbolic for both old and new residents.

On a daily basis, 33 people work in the substantive Baobab team. Foreign people make up 57%. It makes a lot of sense. We work with diverse people for diverse people. But identity alone is not enough to skillfully transform individual experience into systemic solutions. In the last year, 10 people from the team started their second studies, postgraduate studies, nostrifying diplomas. In addition, several people have started another year of education in master's and doctoral studies. From sociology, through pedagogy, mediation, crisis interventions to management and economics. Craftsmen and craftswomen.

1. RESPONDING TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Prevention and response to human rights violations is a key statutory activity of Homo Faber.

In 2025, we addressed our activities to both individuals and collectives. We focused on people from groups exposed to exclusion and violence, people on the road with different residence status in Poland, people from minority groups, we offered crisis assistance to those who experienced violence of various types.

We worked both stationary in Lublin and on the move, visiting places of collective accommodation for refugees from Ukraine, arranging meetings in the region, visiting friendly organizations supporting migrants in their surroundings.

We have intensified cooperation with the school community, supporting teaching staff in effectively diagnosing and responding to peer violence – bullying. Together, we strengthened school violence prevention systems. We visited schools, but also invited classes to the Baobab so that by using the space intended for craft workshops, students had a chance to get to know each other better and integrate through joint work.

We also worked on launching a new support line – for people returning from the Ukrainian front, joining families and friends living in Poland, in Lublin. The support of veterans became possible thanks to cooperation with Ukrainian partners.

In our search for solutions, we were guided by three key principles: to look for a solution to succeed and, if necessary, to prototype new ones, to involve public institutions from the very beginning and thus try to change practice, and to take care of and monitor the client's subjectivity at every stage.

FRONT DESK

The front desk is a specialized team of advisors whose work takes place on several levels:

- providing reliable, verified, law- and procedural-based information,
- consulting individual matters,
- institutional and legal consultancy,
- assistance in filling in official documents and forms.

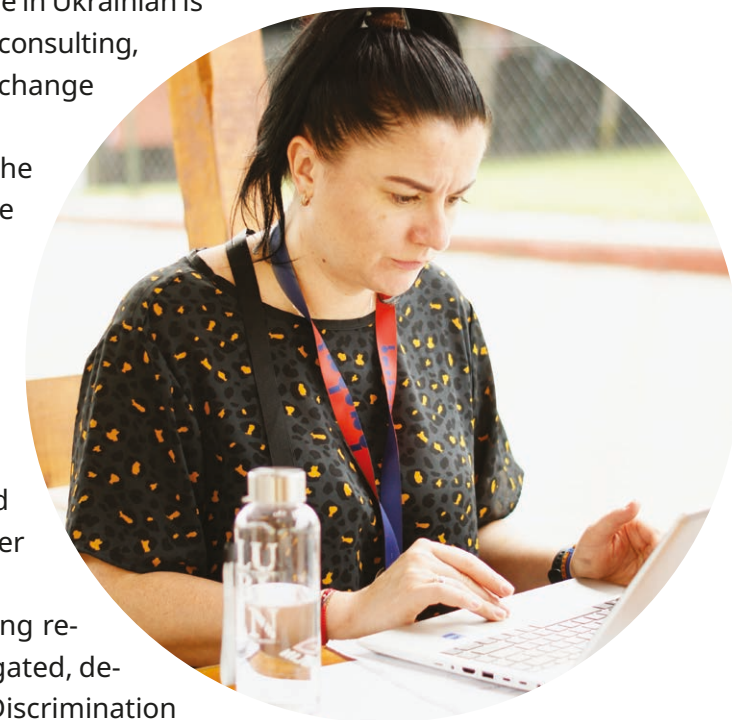
The work is carried out in four languages: Polish, Ukrainian, Russian and English, and if necessary, also in other languages through translators.

In addition to Homo Faber employees, there is also an employee of the Residents' Service Office of the Lublin City Hall and employees of the Municipal Labor Office in a rotational system. The city hotline in Ukrainian is also received here. All this increases the quality of consulting, and also supports the process of knowledge exchange and service improvement.

Matters are handled either on the spot, at the front desk or delegated to other specialists in the Baobab, or referred to other institutions or organizations. In order for the referral to be effective and lead to a solution, mapping of services in the city and a communication system based on cooperation and reciprocity are necessary. In the case of difficult, multi-threaded, ad hoc cases, communication is created with selected institutions and organizations that work together on a solution.

An important part of this work is also receiving reports of human rights violations, which are delegated, depending on the case, to the teams of the Anti-Discrimination HUB, Crisis Interventions and GBV, Anti-Bullying.

Taking into account the scope of knowledge, daily work – the practice of implementing legal acts regulating the daily affairs of migrants – the front desk team supports the advocacy activities of the association, in particular by preparing comments on the consulted acts.



WEDNESDAYS WITH THE LABOUR MARKET

In the last year, we have paid more attention to labour law. Wednesdays with the labour market were possible, among other things, thanks to the duty of advisers from the Municipal Labor Office. The meetings and consultations included: registration in the MLO system, review of offers, subsidies for professional development, development of competences.

We have also increased the staff of Homo Faber employees on the front desk, including employment lawyers. Thematic trainings were held, which are discussed in more detail by Sofija Fedziukovich in Chapter 3 "Integration" (workshops). The guide "Labour Law, Handbook", published by us this year, in four languages (Polish, Ukrainian, Russian and English) takes up the basic topics of labour law in a simple way: types of contracts, working time, holidays, salaries, insurance, benefits, protection of employees. We consider knowledge of the law to be an important, although not the only element protecting against exploitation of workers.

This year, our clients were people from Ukraine, Polish, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, Algeria, Belarus, Nepal, Tajikistan, Georgia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Turkey.



3963
clients

6292
consultations

Olha Steblianka:

In one sentence, "we take care of life". We are a safe and trusted place, a place where we do not judge or criticize, a place where we focus on solutions. If we don't know how to do it, we will learn and do it. And if the solution goes far beyond our agency – we find paths and contacts – we draw a map to solve. This is how we assumed that a person cannot leave us with an unresolved matter.

Recently, someone asked me that we probably have fewer customers now, because we have already served so many people in the last three years. Meanwhile, we have another record. From the inside, I can see how difficult and exhausting this work is.

MOBILE OUTREACH

Mobile activities are the provision of specialist services, available in the Baobab on a daily basis, to people from outside Lublin, especially from small towns living both in the system of collective accommodation and outside of it. In carrying out this task, we rely on a diverse network of partnerships and cooperation with social organizations operating in the region, municipal, county and voivodeship institutions.

Our action is to level the playing field at least a little bit in terms of access to information, knowledge and support.

In practice, it is an all-day trip of some teams: front desk, assistance, psychological, intervention and kids space.

During the trip, we take care of:

- administrative and application assistance (Emp@tia, mObywatel, ePUAP, ZUS),
- we provide information about the legalization of stay,
- we support in the operation of the mObywatel / Diia.pl application and the "trusted profile",
- we provide educational advice on the labour market and health care,
- we consult and inform about possible psychological support (for teenagers and adults),
- we conduct classes for children during the meeting.

This year we were in Hrubieszów, Lubartów, Puławy, Okuninka, Chełm, Biała Podlaska, Bystrzejowice Trze, Opole Lubelskie, Motycz, Janów Lubelski, Świdnik, Siennica Nadolna, Krężnica.



29
departures

Taras Kuzma:

When I look at the numbers from 2024 and 2025, I see that despite the elimination of collective accommodation facilities, the demand for our help remains at a similar level. We have changed a bit – we know more than before. We follow trends and predict what people will need. We learn a given thing and include it in the repertoire of our work. The number of cases processed and their heterogeneity make us quickly become specialists. An example? Last year, we got to know the Ukrainian pension fund from the inside. So when we informed the collective accommodation that we could help with this, there were long queues.

I also see how much the dynamics of contact have changed recently – it is no longer the owners who manage the accommodation facilities who call us, but the residents themselves to ask when we can come. People who are informal community leaders began to report cases to us. It says a lot about trust and relationships.

275
people served

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

The psychological team works with three different age groups: children, teenagers and adults, in the mode of intervention consultations (not therapy). Counselling takes place both stationary in Baobab and during visits as part of mobile activities and in remote mode. We also happen to go to deliberate interventions at the invitation of organizations and institutions. It is worth mentioning that, if necessary, the psychological team also works in the interventions we undertake.

Mental well-being is one of the pillars that allows a person to function in a new environment, enter into possible adaptation and integration processes, and join social, cultural and civic life.

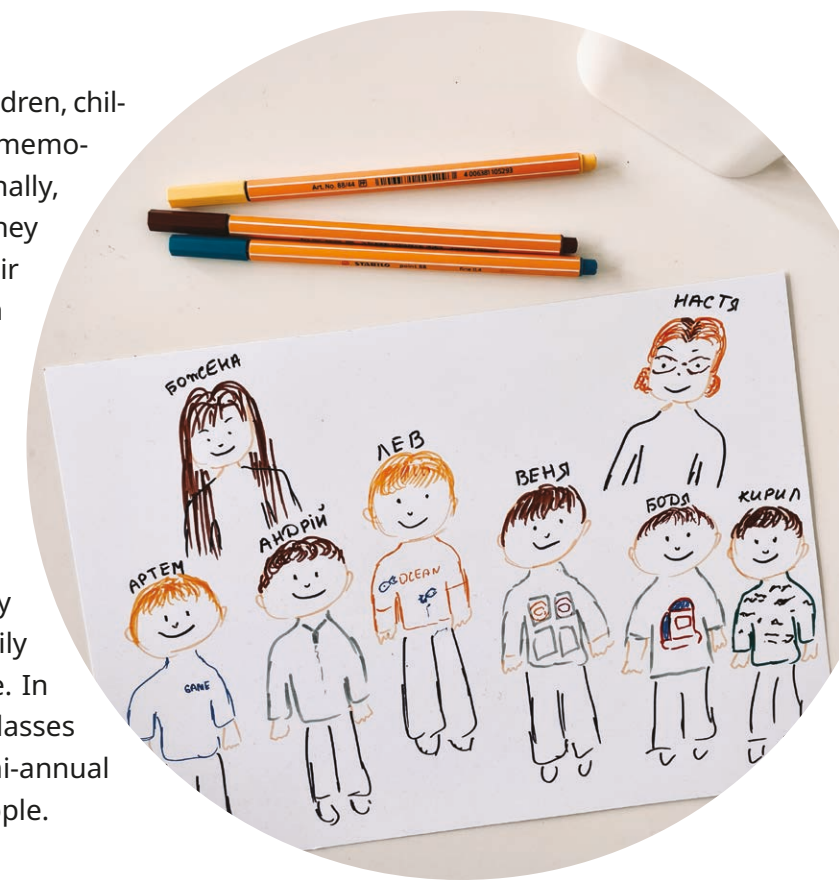
Psychological support is an expression of care for the community while looking to the future – it gives people a chance to function safely at home, at school and at work.

Meanwhile, access to qualified psychological help in an understandable, and preferably the closest language, is very difficult in Poland. For these reasons, in 2025 we continued to provide psychological support for migrants.

Looking at the changing trends, in 2025 we definitely had more children of primary school age, more

difficult cases, rebellious and aggressive children, children in a retraumatic state with recurring memories of war and unprocessed grief. Additionally, many parents are burnt out and although they know they are expected to take part in their child's recovery process, lack the strength and resources to do so. We also see more children who have already been diagnosed and entered the Polish system, and this is certainly a positive change.

In 2025, we observed an increase in young people, teenagers, with self-aggressive behavior, self-harm, which were caused by various types of fears no longer necessarily correlated with war and a change of place. In 2025, we had a chance to launch group classes for teenagers, which, through regular, semi-annual meetings, took care of the needs of 20 people.



1129
children's
consultations

805
consultations
for adults

138
group
workshops

Bożena Kajdan and Anastasiia Savchenko:

It was the most difficult year since the outbreak of the full-scale war in Ukraine. People have already provided for their basic living needs and suddenly it turns out that somewhere they have lost the moment when they should take care of their own and their children's mental health. The effect of this innocent omission at that time is the necessity to enter into a systemic and permanent practice today.

Iryna Yarets:

People didn't come for help for a long time, now they come sometimes taking the whole family with them. I open the door, and there is a mother and two children. And each of them needs help. Different. But there is always a moment when we look together at how they function, where they are in life together, when they have time for each other, how they build relationships. We focus on what is today and what is in the future. I give people tools and teach methods. Here we practice, learn how to use them properly, so that the person can help themselves later. There is also a chance that he or she will teach someone else, a family member, a friend...

MULTICULTURAL ASSISTANCE

Assistance focuses on supporting people in reaching the necessary and adequate services in the city of Lublin and assisting them while doing so. We help people by assisting in the broadly understood medical and administrative area: we make appointments, help get to the place, and if necessary, we translate. We do not impose solutions, and our support is temporary.

This specific navigation, combining both concrete assistance and practical knowledge about the city and its topography as well as the specificity of the administrative and legal system, is to support the process of independence. With our support, people learn to function in a new reality for themselves, acquiring competences characteristic of residents.

In the last year, the assistance team supported the process of implementing social patronage in Homo Faber.

Wiktoria Berezniak:

We are in the process of registration. The person receives a file of documents to fill in. He turns to me and says: "fill in, it will be faster". No, that's not how the assist works. Assistance will help you understand what and how to complete so that next time you can do it yourself, without our help.

Our task is to build and strengthen agency, model the situation, create safe patient-doctor, applicant-clerk relationships so that it is a maximally productive conversation, based on understanding, respect and clarity in communication, even if it is partly based on our translation. We, as assistants, are supposed to be invisible in this, only to disappear in a moment, giving full agency to the person involved in the case.

382
Telephone
Assistance

587
City Assistance

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION HUB

The Anti-Discrimination HUB is an intercultural first contact team for people who suspect that they have been treated unequally (discrimination), verbal violence (hate speech) due to their identity trait in one of the areas of life: work, education, healthcare, services and goods, etc.

The aim of the HUB is to listen, investigate the matter and work out possible solutions. As in any other sphere of consulting, we care about the dignity, subjectivity, participation, agency and decision-making power as well as the safety of clients. And when looking for solutions, we try to provide a coordinated response based on cooperation between different aid sectors.

We work in Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, English, Arabic and in Shona.

In 2025, we dealt with 9 cases.

CRISIS INTERVENTIONS, GBV

The interventions we undertake address a wide range of issues related to violence and suspicion of violence against adults and children. The intervention team works both in Baobab building and in the city, going to people in need. We support people regardless of their characteristics and residence status in Poland.

We pay special attention to those cases that concern gender-based violence. We build support paths for survivors in such a way as to ensure their safety and that of their loved ones, we care about dignity, subjectivity, participation, agency and decision-making. And when looking for solutions, we try to provide a coordinated response based on cooperation between different aid sectors.

Milena Kloczkowska:

Unfortunately, intervention action, including GBV, will always be needed. People call us because they don't know where, because the case is multi-threaded, because someone sent them away, because it's very late or very early, because they know that they can count on us... And we know that we can count on our partners: the public institutions and services with which we cooperate.

24
interventions

5
GBV
cases

ANTIBULLYING – TOWARDS SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Anti-bullying is a series of activities supporting Lublin schools in creating solutions to counteract peer violence, especially its escalation that makes it permanent.

During educational programs, we focus on understanding the definitions and forms of peer violence as well as its impact on students and the school community as a whole. We analyse the factors that contribute to the occurrence of violence and explore how schools can function as environments that protect against it. Participants learn to recognise signals indicating that pure violence is taking place and to develop strategies and preventative programs aimed at addressing this phenomenon.

We also teach how to work with individuals who experienced violence as well as those who use it and we demonstrate how to support witnesses and responding in a wise and safe manner.



Wiktoria Dudek:

This year it was very intense, I did not expect so many people, training and workshop hours. But that's good!

This year, as part of supporting anti-violence activities, we went to small schools in small towns in the region. We believe that small schools are an exceptional asset in the system, an important phenomenon. It is worth taking care of them. The staff working in them really want to learn. This year we also had a lot of visits by school groups to Baobab. This is not really about teaching young people something specific, but to give space for conversations. I remember this group: 25 teenage boys. The teacher leaves the room for a moment, only then do they have the courage to ask if sexual violence against a man is possible. They have already seen everything on the Internet, all the brutality of the world. And I would like them to remember that there is a place like Baobab, where you can talk without shame and taboo.

606
teachers
participating
in the training

102
students

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION – TRAINING COURSES

A separate pool of training courses are our meetings with public institutions and uniformed services. This year we cooperated with the Municipal Police Headquarters in Lublin, the Voivodeship Police Headquarters, and the District Court in Lublin. The trainings focused on intercultural issues, counteracting violence and effective communication. The instructors were people from our team – coaches with different cultural backgrounds.



Wiktoria Dudek:

The workshops with policemen and policewomen were fantastic. We worked with both operational officers and press officers. We talk a lot, look for a common perspective on solutions, discuss ideal models and, contrary to appearances, we are usually very close to similar solutions.

65
people
participating

VETERANS – MALE AND FEMALE

On December 8, 2025 in Khmelnytskyi (Ukraine), we signed a cooperation agreement between the local government institution Veteran PRO | КЗ Хмельницької обласної ради «Ветеранський простір Ветеран ПРО» and the Homo Faber Association. The agreement is about building support for veterans returning from the war to both Ukrainian communities in Ukraine and Ukrainian communities in Poland.

The story of this cooperation began this summer. On one of the warm days, we had the honor to host representatives of Veteran PRO in Baobab. It was when we decided that we would like to learn more about this topic — ahead of expectations. We were aware that the families of refugees in Poland would be joined by those members who are actively serving in the Ukrainian army.

For half a year, thanks to contacts with Veteran PRO, as well as other Ukrainian institutions, our team has undergone a number of expert trainings in the field of building relationships, diagnosing needs, modeling activities and supporting veterans. At the same time, the first people after combat experience began to come to us. In 2025, it was 6 people.



2. WELCOME TO LUBLIN

The “Welcome to Lublin” program, understood as a classic “tour of the house”, has been implemented since 2009. Its main goal is to receive and adapt newly arrived people with migration and refugee experience to the city, as well as to support people who have moved to Lublin from other parts of the region or Polish in finding their way in a new reality for themselves. We assume that every person who does not know the city needs a welcome, the necessary information, an introduction to the context, a kind of guided tour of their new place in order to get to know it, understand it and function in it on an equal footing with the old residents.

The activities of “Welcome to Lublin” in further steps also include Polish language courses, meetings on Polish culture and learning more about social contexts.

An important package of activities are those addressed to people studying at Lublin universities. Every year, more people from different parts of the world decide to stay in the city for several years. Their significant number makes autumn full of information meetings, walks and organized visits for this group of new residents.

We also implemented the previously prepared social patronage as a model of supporting refugees in their first independent steps in the city, using the involvement of a network of residents-volunteers.

FIRST STEPS, WALKS AROUND LUBLIN

Lublin, first steps. Every third Saturday of the month at 12:00 p.m. in Baobab we organize a meeting for new residents of Lublin – those who came from very far away, but also those who came from the neighboring commune. During the two-hour meeting, using four languages (Polish, English, Ukrainian and Russian), we talk about the city: topography and location, important historical dates, authorities and administration, culture and entertainment... – everything you need to know.

The meeting is also an opportunity to get to know Baobab and take the next step: go for a walk, sign up for a workshop, join one of the clubs...

In 2025, we organized 12 presentations, which were attended by 197 people.

Kristina Jonauskaite:

We want to welcome the newly arrived residents, because we believe that if we start well, there are more chances that things will continue well.

Last year, we showed the city from very different sides. It is known that we cross the thresholds of cultural institutions, that we go around bicycle paths, that we tell about the history of the city... but going out into the forest, hearing the sound of Lublin or finally entering the space of farewell, death and memory together, while walking through the cemetery on Lipowa Street, seeing this layer of culture to which we do not always have access, was something fascinatingly new.



WALKS

This is our specialty. This year we walked along different routes, different Lublin. In total, there were 13 different guided tours!

Among the routes were the classic and key ones, such as a walk for beginners discovering the axis of the city, a walk through cultural institutions, during which we learned about the topography of these places and the people who work in them; a Jewish guided tour – in the footsteps of our neighbors, a huge community that has been creating this city for centuries; All Souls' Day walk, to which we invited on November 2, wanting not only to show you around the cemetery in Lipowa, but also to bring closer the profiles of important Lublin residents.

The offer also included completely unusual, new, experimental walks, including a sound guided tour about the sound of the city, a herbal walk – about plants in the city and their functions, after the flea market, which was a great lesson in the history of utility design, or a non-walk walk, when we were lying on deckchairs on Litewski Square listening to stories about the entire (!) history of the city.

Ah, and of course we rode, both by bicycle and by bus, so that Lublin would open up to us further.



297
city
explorers

CHILLAX WITH POLISH CULTURE

The “Chillax with Polish Culture” series was a casual meeting conducted in English, the aim of which was to bring closer the richness of Polish history, cinema, photography and music.

We explored Polish literature, delved into the phenomenon of disco polo, looked at memes and their social and moral connotations, as well as characters, slogans, signs and symbols, which often refer to Polish history in a humorous and nostalgic way.

Chillax with Polish Culture were light conversations about matters of no small importance. They gave space to unravel cultural codes and a chance for a better understanding of the Polish reality here and now.

As part of the cycle, 5 regular meetings were held and one special one – “at the table” on November 11.

The people leading the series were: Bartosz Wójcik, PhD in humanities, translator specializing in Caribbean culture, academic lecturer at the Department of Applied Linguistics at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University and Jola Sienkiewicz-Prochowicz, philosopher, ethicist, activist, teacher of Polish language and philosophy in one of the Lublin high schools.



COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

Community sponsorship is a model of integration created for refugees who, after obtaining residence status, start their lives in a new country, a new city, a new neighbourhood. In their case, forced migration, necessary to preserve their health or life, not only detaches them from their previous communities and relationships, it is often marked by the suffering of escape and journey, and does not always end in the country where they “planned” to be. A long period of waiting for the case to be considered, usually spent in a refugee center, is usually a period of waiting until full legalisation and, consequently, independence. Leaving the center is the moment of another beginning. And this is where we come in with social patronage.

At the heart of community sponsorship are local volunteer residents who support refugees in their daily lives, helping them build relationships and adapt to their new environment. For each person/family, a group of volunteers-patrons is created, who for a very specific period of time, often through small helps, guide the person through the first weeks in a new place, community, culture.

Community sponsorship uses the potential of good inherent in society. It organizes and facilitates the provision of support. Thanks to the small but coherent involvement of individuals, institutions, organizations, and business, it is possible to achieve a greater effect by involving fewer resources. In a word, do it more efficiently, faster and more effectively!

The year 2025 was the time of implementation of the Homo Faber model. During this time, we have supported 7 people.

We also built a system – together with 5 organizations from other Polish cities, we established a coalition of community sponsorship to strengthen each other.

Wiktoria Paździerz:

An adult living in a refugee center and waiting for a decision is in complete limbo – he or she does not know what the decision will be or when. He/she has low motivation to learn the language and get to know the country, because he doesn't even know if he will stay here. So when, sometimes after six months, and sometimes after two years, he/she finally gets a positive decision and leaves the center, his/her possibilities of actually starting life are poor – he/she knows little about this Poland, especially the everyday one, how it is served. Deprived of social networks, he/she is completely lost. And this is the first challenge.

The second is the systemic gap – the moment when the competences of one entity have ended and the other has not started. So our job is to initiate the network – the patrons – and fill the holes. Together.

And it's not that you need to have some competences to be a part of it. Sometimes it is enough to look at the other person as a fellow human being

POLISH LANGUAGE COURSES

Without language, there is no integration – we have been repeating in Homo Faber for years. That is why every year we enable migrants to participate in courses to improve their ability to speak, write and read in Polish.

Classes are held in Slavic and English-speaking groups at different levels: A1, A2, B1, B2. They usually last 9 months. Shorter ones, usually summer holidays, are addressed especially to students starting their education in a Polish school and those who want to raise their level.

A separate group are people supported under social patronage (more about this activity above) who take more individualized courses.

There are also two conversation clubs for advanced students in Baobab, the aim of which is to encourage them to communicate freely in Polish and develop their vocabulary. During Monday's meetings in Witalnia, the Women's Club grouped migrant and refugee women, mainly from Ukraine and Belarus. We read texts by Polish writers and poets, discussed current events, watched films...

In the autumn, a conversation club for men was launched. Meetings in the heavy workshop focused on tools and equipment as well as craft techniques.

1539
lessons

Anna Mikiciuk:

This year we have launched both basic and B1 and B2 courses, giving people a chance to improve their language, and therefore greater agency in life in Poland. We also started industry courses. And we stick to practice, we follow what people need. Hence the idea of preparing for passing the state certified exam. We can do it.

And when I think of challenges, I think of autumn 2025, the culmination of 10 groups learning at the same time! And every recruitment – there are a lot of people, much more than we can accept.

23
groups

Paweł Nowak:

The idea for the men's club was inspired by the women's club, but also by my observation that there was less communication in the heavy workshop room during the open hours than I expected. In coeducational groups, men impose a dominant structure on themselves. The club was an attempt to create such a space where without masks we can talk not only about successes, but also about difficulties. And this is happening. In practice, we talk not only about technical matters, among us there is an ornithologist, two DIYers, a few gentlemen who can cook... The topics therefore follow the line of these interests. And finally we also ended up in the kitchen, where some instructed and others tried.

303
people

STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITIES

In the academic year 2024/25, nearly 9,000 foreigners studied in Lublin, which is about 13% of the total number of students. The internationalization of the university placed the city at the forefront in the country. It is all the more worth talking about it both in the context of opportunities and challenges. That is why in 2025 we have returned to our activities supporting the academic community. We work with both universities and students themselves. We treat the Baobab space as a tool for connecting people with the city, building bonds with residents and our own social activity.

Katarzyna Sz waj:

Foreign students, once they get to Lublin, are not sufficiently taken care of. They are omitted because of the language, because of cultural differences, because they will leave... It is not an easy group to invite. So rarely is anyone interested in them that when someone finally writes to them, invites them, they are silent, because they are not used to being talked to.

Everything we try to do focuses on the word "worth it": it's worth going out, it's worth getting to know others, it's worth seeing the city, it's worth learning the basics of the language... Maybe it's also worth staying.

571
people

7
meetings
for students



VISITS TO COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITIES

If you want people to come to you, you must first go to people.

The idea that it is enough to throw an invitation somewhere in the depths of social media to make someone feel genuinely invited, welcome, is an illusion. Especially if he or she has never been invited, and often unwelcome.

In 2025, we have set ourselves the goal of building a network, contacts, links between Baobab and Lublin communities, minority communities, migrant communities, often invisible.

We visited communities and informal groups, establishing relationships with leaders, guides, facilitators, and animators of social life. This was done so that Baobab could bring their voices together, respond to their needs, support their development and visibility, strengthen their capacity, and empower them to take action. It was a space created together — not merely for them.

Tadiwanashe Mudoti:

We weave a web. So that people have a chance to tell what is difficult for them, and we – who can help them, who can pick up the alarm signal and show them that they are important to someone. Over time, we become a space that generates migrant initiatives for migrants, active people, with ideas and willingness to act. Weaving this web begins with a 30-minute presentation about Baobab, somewhere at a meeting where we say “you are welcome here”.

3. INTEGRATION

We think about integration by definition exactly as it is explained by the documents of the European Union, that:

- it is a continuous two-way process involving both legally resident third-country nationals and the society hosting them,
- includes, but goes beyond anti-discrimination policies,
- presupposes respect for the fundamental values of the European Union and fundamental human rights,
- requires basic skills to participate in society,
- it depends on frequent interaction and intercultural dialogue between members of society in common forums and activities aimed at improving mutual understanding,
- extends to different policy areas, including employment and education.”*

When we work to support the process of integration, we think about social cohesion, i.e. the ability of society to maintain unity and harmony through strong ties between individuals and groups, based on a common system of values, trust, solidarity, acceptance of diversity and a sense of belonging, as well as cooperation in the pursuit of the common good.**

A cohesive society is one that, connected by the bonds of mutual relations, functions harmoniously in times of peace and security, but also has high resilience in times of tension and crisis. Through strong relationships, trust, cooperation, cohesion, it is able to adapt, survive and rebuild after a crisis.

By translating this into concrete actions, we create spaces where people can engage in activities that make it easier to get to know one another, build relationships, and gain a deeper understanding of the city and its cultural context — fostering cultural learning and participation.



* Source: The Hague Programme: STRENGTHENING FREEDOM, SECURITY AND JUSTICE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (2005/C; source: 53/01 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2005:053:0001:0014:PL:PDF>)

** Definition by: Centre for Social Cohesion Studies | Social Cohesion Hub, University of Warsaw, source: <https://ipsir.uw.edu.pl/osrodek-studiow-nad-spojnoscia-spoleczna-social-cohesion-hub/>

WORKSHOPS

The Baobab houses two craft workshops: a light one – sewing, embroidery, flowers, ceramics, macrame and others, and a heavy one – carpentry, two technical workshops: an IT studio with 12 computer stations, an electrical workshop (3D printing, laser burning, electronics repairs, construction of electrical systems) and two music studios equipped with various instruments.

The work takes place both as part of the thematic workshops offered and open hours, during which each person can use the equipment and tools collected here under the supervision of qualified people.

The idea behind the studios is to gather residents of Lublin with different identities around working together – repairs in the spirit of recycling and reuse, and creating good quality things.

A separate activity of the studio was to support people in acquiring the skills necessary to look for employment. In the heavy workshop, workshop blocks were held, among others: carpentry from scratch: hand tools, electric tools, carpentry connection techniques, hand tools; laser plotter operation; basics of electrical engineering and soldering; Renovation step by step: cavities and fixings.

A similar thing happened in the computer lab, where classes were held from the ABC of computer use, through the use of computer tools, sales and warehouse program, graphic design, 3D printing, google work space to AI at work.

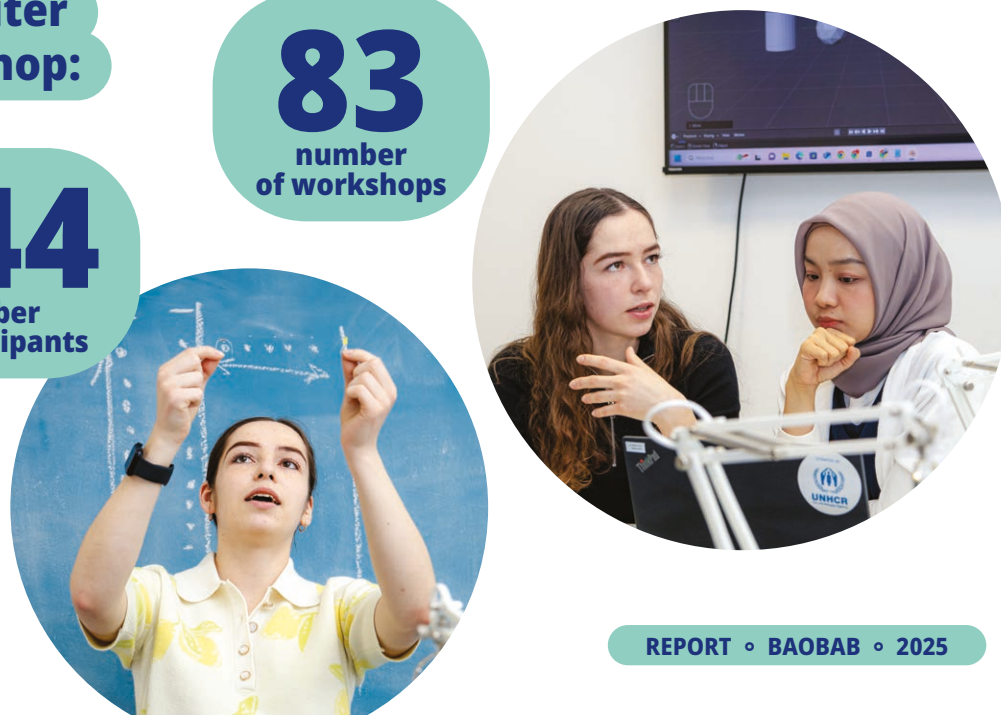
In the light workshop, we also worked in cycles, engaging people in 9-hour classes, usually advanced: tailoring, knitting, macrame.

A novelty in the light workshop was the inclusion of completely new groups of recipients – among other things, workshops for the Deaf have been completed.

Computer workshop:

444
number of participants

83
number of workshops



Ewelina Kruszyńska, coordinator of the light workshop:

It is great to see how people from the participants-recipients become creators and begin to co-create the program of the workshop. All the more I dream of six-month cycles, deep in terms of craftsmanship, during which people work on something for a long time, perfecting their craft. It's a bit like this during open hours, when people come with their own projects and create them for long weeks. However, the activities of the studio are not only craftsmanship. Part of the work is completely invisible – it's the whole process of inventing, engaging artists-teachers, recruiting. Here, I try very hard to make the group that meets each other as diverse as possible, so that people who have not yet been to our place have a chance to participate, in short – to build and open the workshop space.



Light workshop:

115
number of workshops

513
number of participants



Heavy and electrotechnical workshop:

58
number of workshops

317
number of participants

Paweł Nowak, coordinator of the heavy workshop:

This year, an important part of the workshop's activities were workshops, which focused on learning skills related to work. We introduced the topics of occupational health and safety, proper use and maintenance of tools... It was no longer just about making things and hobby sneakers. Thus, we reached a completely new group of recipients.

Sofiya Fedziukovich, coordinator of the computer workshop:

I am most happy when people start and finish the training cycle, they are on everything, because I know that it is well sewn and well conducted, and the participants bring their friends to the next one! We try to follow the needs of people, but also the challenges of everyday life. The second part of my job was helping at the front desk during Wednesday shifts with the labor market. It's a cruelly hard job. A lot of people, complicated problems, a lot of emotions.

AT THE TABLE



"At the table" is a formula of intercultural meetings, the axis of which is one large table. Over the last three years, "at the table" has become a space for meetings between new and old residents of Lublin, a formula for building reciprocity and relations. Each meeting "at the table" has its own theme, place and dynamics, it is accompanied by games, sometimes dances, food, conversations. Hundreds of people who were united by Lublin took part in them.

This year we set it up 5 times, not only in Baobab. In June, the table first went to the yard and initiated the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the former bank building (Baobab building now). In the middle of hot July, we set the table again in the area of the "Our Grab" Family Allotment Gardens, to end the meeting with barefoot dancing to the sounds of lively folk melodies. In October, jars and onions, i.e. classics of student "cuisine", appeared on the table, and the table itself appeared in the waiting room of the Metropolitan Bus Station – the modern gateway to the city.



Traditionally, we set the table on November 11, on Polish Independence Day. The slogan "homeland-motherland-polish" directed us to talk about the Polish language and literature, with the help of Adam Mickiewicz, Stanisław Wyśpiański, Zuzanna Ginczanka and Wisława Szymborska.

And in December, when, looking for non-religious formulas for celebrating the passing year and the solstice, we were delighted with the Slavic tradition of "Szczodre Gody" – Generous/Bountiful Winter Solstice Festival", during which our ancestors broke bread, gave apples and looked with hope at the coming. They wished for each other in abundance. Generosity was a table of thanks and wishes.



5
tables

300
participants

LIBRARY & MEETINGS

The library is a collection of 3470 books in 34 languages, to be used on site or borrowed. It is the only such extensive collection of international literature in the city, offering books for all ages. It brings together people reading from different parts of the world, lovers of literature read in the original, as well as those for whom our book collection is an aid in learning and practicing the language.

The library also organizes literary meetings. In 2025, 6 meetings with authors were held. Our guests were: Wojciech Górecki, the author of the book "The Eternal State", Maciej Jakubowiak with "Hanka", the duo of Urszula Chowaniec and Natalia Skoczylas with stories about "Grubancypacja", the author of "Feminism is Veganism" – Karolina Skowron-Baka, Monika Pastuszko with the book "Mother Polka pees in the bushes" and Artur Pomerny with the book "Blacks".

A novelty was the thematic workshop "Around books and paper", which included, among other things, bookbinding workshops. A total of 5 workshops were held. The library set up book swapping events twice. And also the series "Chillax with Polish Culture", which is discussed in more detail in chapter 2 "Welcome to Lublin".



Anastasiya Bazhenava:

The first visit to the Baobab library is always full of emotions. People are usually very surprised when they see books in their own language on the shelf, especially if it is not a very popular and widely used language in Poland. When the first shock passes, they are happy to share stories about themselves. This first contact never ends with a simple loan. Then it doesn't – the acquaintances initiated at library shelves, during meetings with authors or during workshops go far beyond Baobab. What pleasantly surprised us in the last year was the number of volunteer applications. In 2025, we had 8 volunteers from Polish, Ukraine and Belarus in the library.

880
readers

1901
rentals

KIDS SPACE



A children's day-care center has several functions: it is a place where parents can leave their children under professional care so that they can take care of important matters during this time; a place for thematic workshops for organized preschool groups and the integration of children of different origins.

This year, the kids space, along with the proposed thematic workshops, was a place of visits by groups of preschoolers and students – a total of 40. The thematic repertoire included mainly those that we deal with as an organization. And when asked “is it worth talking to children about migration”, we always answer “it’s very worth it!”. We have a world where migration is part of our everyday life, and people with migration experience are our neighbours and classmates.



Irina Filas:

A lot of new things were happening in the kids space, including art classes, where we talked about the work of Zofia Stryjeńska or Frida Khalo, or more thematic classes for schools, when we followed their challenges and worked around empathy. But I’m most proud of the classes on migration. The school found us on its own, decided that Baobab is exactly the place where it is worth starting this topic with students. I already know that these classes will have their future.

78
workshops

1965
participants

4. EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Documents, an apartment, a kindergarten and a school for children, a job, a bus ticket, words in Polish, an electronic diary and a parent-teacher meeting, some letter from the office, plans for a free weekend, an RCB alert about difficult weather conditions... Stress and uncertainty. A map on your phone and a handy dictionary.

The next steps are not easy either. Adaptation continues. Because not only the language is new, but all this cultural software, the software of everyday life. No one will learn it for you. With a translator-guide, someone who will hint, explain, and teach the process becomes easier.

But there comes a time, for each person individually, when you bow your head and look for a social place for yourself. Going deeper, in a different role than before. No longer a foreigner but a resident, no longer a customer but a user, a viewer, or even further – a co-creator and creator, an animator with his own voice.

We understand empowerment as supporting the potential of people to be active residents, aware of their rights, participating, speaking up, proposing solutions. We prototype a lot here, looking for such tools that could serve not only us.

MULTICULTURAL SCHOOL OF LEADERS

The Multicultural School of Leaders is a one-year course for people with migration/refugee experience in the basics of social activities, ending with the implementation of specific activities for the benefit of urban communities.

MSL strengthens community leaders, their knowledge, skills and sense of agency, teaches how to set social goals, diagnose, creatively come up with solutions, work together and build teams, check effectiveness, communicate, but also take care of themselves in the role of activists.

In 2025, we continued the fourth edition of the Intercultural School of Leaders (it started in the fall of 2024). 16 people from 6 countries: Belarus, Ukraine, Rwanda, Morocco, Indonesia and Ethiopia worked on their first social projects in Poland around the topics they diagnosed:

- integration of migrants of working age in Lublin,
- integration of Ukrainian families with teenagers in Lublin,
- socialization of boys aged 16-20 in Lublin,
- cultural differences and similarities,
- misunderstandings in communication between women and men,
- waste segregation,
- booking of deadlines for submitting applications for legalization of stay.

In October, the fifth cycle began, the final of which will be in June 2026.



Kristina Jonauskaite:

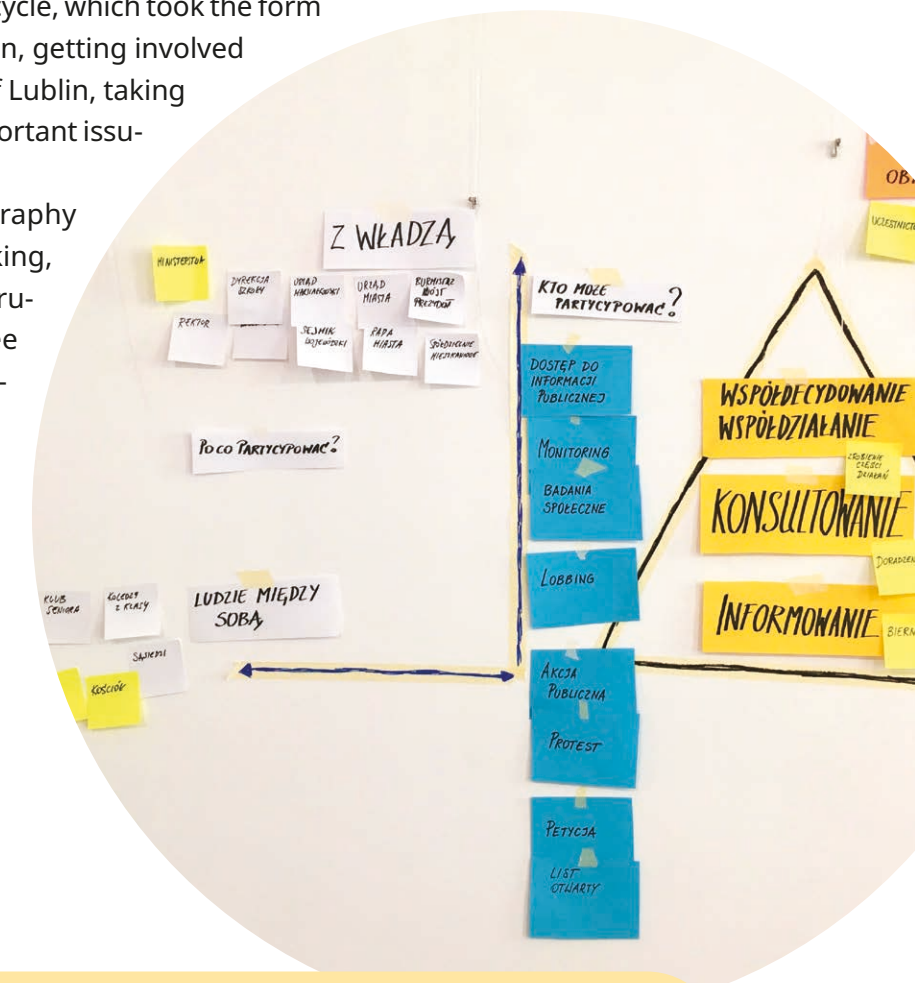
The fourth edition was the most culturally diverse of all so far – we had the participation of Polish, English and Ukrainian speakers at the same time. The diversity also concerned age – there was room for youth activities, and this made us think about an edition only for young people.

If I were to summarize the projects of MSL graduates, I can see that those directly touching on the issue of intercultural integration send a message to the world: “look at us Poles – in fact, we migrants are cool, come to us, there is nothing to be afraid of”, which shows some huge and at the same time unmet need for contacts and relationships.

PARTICIPATION IN THE CITY

ParticipypacJA was a completely new cycle, which took the form of 5 meetings devoted to participation, getting involved in the city, being an active resident of Lublin, taking part in city discussions, reporting important issues for yourself and your community.

We learned the structure, topography of institutions, steps in decision-making, tools and methods of participation, rules governing them... We tried to see and define to what extent foreign residents of the city have an influence on them, where and how they can perform their “civic” duties (by the way, we stopped at this word) and, finally, whether it is possible to work out a decision together.



Anna Dąbrowska:

Migrants who are not citizens of the European Union do not have the right to vote in Poland. However, this does not mean that they are completely devoid of influence in their place. Tools and mechanisms facilitating speaking up (consulting), participation or, finally, co-decision and co-governance, have been invented and implemented for a long time, especially in local governments. All it takes is some active reflection and facelift for them to function efficiently as tools to support the participation of those residents who have migrant/refugee experience. There are only benefits to it. The feeling that this is my city, which I can take care of, is a deep experience of community.

FLYING UNIVERSITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Flying University of Human Rights is an educational initiative of the Homo Faber Association and the European Solidarity Center from Gdańsk with the support of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights. The 6-month course on the basics of ideas, law and practice of human rights and freedoms refers to extensive knowledge in the field of law, education, new technologies, ecology, migration and international systems of human rights protection.

It is attended by people from public and local government institutions, cultural institutions and social organizations. Through expert lectures, workshops and visits, they not only learn about the legal context of human rights, but also discuss contemporary challenges in the implementation of these rights and look for solutions together.

In March 2025, the 3rd edition ended, in which 25 people participated. Our lecturers in this edition were, among others: Magdalena Krzyżanowska – Mierzewska, in the years 1993-2018 a lawyer at the Chancellery of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg; Agata Sikora, PhD, cultural scientist, literary critic and essayist; Agnieszka Bieńczyk-Missala, PhD, DSc, researcher and didactic employee at the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies of the University of Warsaw, Deputy Director of the Institute of International Relations of the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies of the University of Warsaw; Witold Klaus, criminologist and migration researcher; habilitated doctor of law, professor at the Institute of Legal Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, co-chairman of the Migration Consortium; Tomasz Besta, PhD, DSc, professor at the University of Gdańsk, author of the books "Fight, protest, change the world!" and co-author of "Between groups. A guide to relationships with people who are different from us"; Agnieszka Demczuk, PhD, DSc, Professor of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University from the Department of Political Systems and Human Rights of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University; member of the Commission for the Investigation of Russian and Belarusian Influence on Internal Security and Interests of the Republic of Poland in the Years 2004-2024.

The compass and good spirit of these meetings was the invaluable Danuta Przywara, co-founder and long-time president of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights.

In September, the 4th course for 30 people began.

Piotr Skrzypczak:

Here are 100 people who have completed the course. And there are others who are ready to enter it, to devote their free weekends to learn about human rights, people who are deeply educated, occupying high positions in administration, education, business, organizations. It is gratifying that the subject of human rights is alive and arouses heated discussions. What is difficult – during each edition we witness another crisis in the area of human rights, and thus we look at the resilience of the protection system.

SCHOLARSHIPS

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME – SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Since 2022, we have been running a scholarship program for young people. The program enables people who found themselves in Lublin in connection with the war in Ukraine to continue their creative and professional development (in the field of music, sports, dance, theater, visual arts). We focus on a specific person and his/her developmental needs. We don't donate money – we buy the necessary equipment, pay for trainers, instructors and teachers or training rooms.

We are deeply convinced that together with our partners, thanks to the tools of culture, art and sports, we give young people from Ukraine who came here as a result of the war a space to work with emotions and build peace. And finally, to agency, self-esteem and growth.

Support took place as part of individual music classes (piano, violin, bandura), sports (judo, acrobatics, swimming), and group – in music groups: a guitar band led by Mirosław Sokołowski, a children's choir "Weselyky" led by Halyna Nawrocka. There are two age groups in both the choir and the guitar band, the older and the younger. The third band is a quartet of bandurists, which already has its name "Barwy". In 2025, the artistic supervision of the bandura ensemble was taken over by Zoriana Bilowus.

The program also supported the education of three students at the music school.



60
in 2025,
60 children
participated
in the Program

VICTORIES AND SUCCESSES 2025

Illia Kryvyi won a gold medal in judo at the National Judo Tournament and swimmer Viktoria Pronchakova won 4 gold medals at the All-Ukrainian Cadet Swimming Championships.

Our scholarship holders and ensembles, including the “Veselyky” choir, accompanied the official events organized by the Lublin City Hall. The most important and largest concert this year was the joint big performance of all scholarship holders as part of the “Night of Culture” festival on June 7 on the large outdoor stage at the H. Łopaciński Library.

60
scholarship
holders

PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

In July 2025, we also completed a development program for adults with migration and refugee experience. The aim of the project was to provide substantive and financial support to refugees who intended to use their education, skills and expert knowledge on the Polish labor market, either by supplementing the necessary qualifications or by setting up their own businesses.

Five times during the project, we announced an open call – a total of nearly 50 ideas were submitted. Grants along with an individual approach to development were received by 35 people: 26 women and 7 men. As part of the micro-grant, we purchased sewing machines, tailoring tools, hairdressing tools, pottery tools, language and vocational courses, textbooks among many other things. The program was set in craft workshops in Baobab (more on which in the chapter “Integration”).

35
scholarship
holders

SOCIAL RESILIENCE

In connection with the Civil Protection and Civil Defense Act adopted in December 2024* and the publication of the “Safety Guide”**, the topic of social resilience has become one of the most important, most discussed, and at the same time the most demanding of joint reflection, discussion and understanding in the past year. We stopped thinking “whether” and began to think about “how” to build our own and private resilience, and in the context of the organization – how to strengthen knowledge, skills and resources to be able to be an element that wisely and effectively supports local forces in the event of a crisis.

Reading the regulations allowed us not only to see ourselves as an organization, in the system. Memories of 2022, when “subsidiarity” took the real shape of cross-sectoral coordination, came back to us.

FORUM

On 20-21 November, together with the Stefan Batory Foundation, we organized in Lublin “Before. During. After. Forum on Social Resilience”. In the invitation, we wrote that “social resilience is developed like a good habit”, hence the main part of the Forum was a crisis management simulation – over a two-hour exercise! It was experienced and discussed with a powerful lesson about the strengths and weaknesses of various actors of social life: local government, small and large organizations, local media, residents... but also experience, which we lack to build an agreement and with it a system that “uses” the power of each player.

Three plenary discussions were tailored to the practice:

Agnieszka Lichnerowicz (TOK FM radio) asked experts from Ukraine, Norway and Latvia about her experiences and lessons: Evheniya Tkachuk and Oksana Kuiantseva, both from БФ Схід SOS / CF «East SOS» / East SOS Foundation; Marte Winsvold – PhD in Political Science, researcher specializing in crisis preparedness, social engagement in crisis situations and cooperation between government



* Act of 5 December 2024, source: <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20240001907/T/D20241907L.pdf>

** Safety guide, source: <https://www.gov.pl/web/poradnikbezpieczenstwa>

institutions and civil society, and Inese Vaivare – Director of the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS).

We asked Senior Brig. Dariusz Marczyński – Director of the Department of Civil Protection and Crisis Management at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Senior Brig. Michał Kamieniecki – Warmian-Masurian Commander of the Voivodeship State Fire Service and Prof. Agnieszka Demczuk – about the practical dimension of the Act of 5 December 2024 on Civil Protection and Civil Protection, and about the place it gives to social organizations – lawyer and political scientist, working at the Institute of Political Science and Public Administration of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin.

And based on our experience and claiming that none, especially a major crisis, can be borne only by the administration, let alone by the social sector, we asked about local intersectoral management systems: Dorota Komornicka – the founder of the first local fund in Poland “Masyw Śnieżnika”, involved in helping flood victims in the Kłodzko Region; Bartosz Dąbrowski – member of the Presidium of the Main Board of the Association of Volunteer Fire Brigades of the Republic of Poland, mayor of Niedzwica Duża; Dariusz Krzysztofik – Deputy Director of the Security and Crisis Management Department of the Lublin City Hall and Dariusz Działo – Director of the Security and Crisis Management Department of the Lublin Voivodeship Office in Lublin.

We took many lessons from the Forum: about the importance of communication and connectivity, about the need to plan far in advance, about the necessity of coordination, about checking readiness, about resources, competences, about what holds us back and what pushes us to act. We also wrote down a list of things to do.

The Forum was held under the Honorary Patronage of the Mayor of the City of Lublin, Krzysztof Żuk. It was attended by 85 people from local governments, social organizations and informal groups from all over Poland.



ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

In order to be better prepared, in 2025 we have taken a systemic approach to our resilience as an organization. The developed models are twofold: on the one hand, we have planned our possible activities for the population – what we are able to carry as an organization, what services to provide and inside – what we need as a team to be ready for this commitment, to be able to carry it out effectively, and safely, and to take care of the team. A related thread is the one concerning joining the urban and regional system – work on this is still ongoing.

SPACE

From the very opening of the building, Baobab was conceived as a space for other organizations and informal groups that, acting for the benefit of others, do not have their place. We are happy to host those initiatives that respect our standards and principles.

In 2025, our space was used by 58 organizations and groups.

To meet the needs, the Baobab is also open in the evenings (usually until 8:00 p.m., sometimes until 9:00 p.m.) and on weekends, becoming a casual place to spend time. This opportunity has been used over 16,000 times in the last year!

SOCIAL RENOVATION -2



In 2025, we also undertook the renovation of a large room with windows on the patio located by the -2 basements (the basements in the Baobab are visible on one side due to the terrain). Initially, the renovation was planned as part of the grant, but the donor withdrew from the funding (US funds). Eventually, thanks to the efforts of our team, organization and people who were friends with us, we managed to renovate and equip the hall (thanks to public collection).

What did we actually do? We cleaned the walls, vacuumed, took out the garbage, carved out the most uneven places in the floor to then putty them, the walls too, we laid new cables to the sockets, primed the walls and ceiling, we laid a primer for the carpeting, we painted the walls, ceilings and doors, we laid a new carpet (we couldn't afford the panels), the workshop participants in the light workshop sewed poufs, and we washed the windows, We installed mirrors and decorations.



60 people threw PLN 5,100 into our piggy bank.

The renovation was coordinated by Olha Taran, the director of our office, and technically supported by Mr. Sergey.



5. ADVOCACY

Advocacy is work at the intersection of the sector. As practitioners, we formulate problems of great repetition, and sometimes with them solutions of great impact, although small on the scale of the law. For us, advocacy is sometimes building a footbridge between the cracks of the written law and the implemented reality.

In practice, we read and comment on legal acts, propose solutions, inform about gaps and omissions. We make sure that the standards of public consultations are adhered to in the legislative process as the necessary minimum. We strive to include migrant and refugee people themselves, their organizations and communities in the participatory processes.

ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

In 2025, we worked on:

- communication and coordination of the Baobab with public administration institutions and services; Baobab as a place of first contact by mapping services but also networking creates two-vector connections that allow for quick solving of cases, learning new ones and effective reporting.
- promoting the participation and representation of people with migration and refugee experience;
- the topic of civil protection civil defense at the municipal and provincial level, studying the law and local plans, discussing the possible scope of tasks and connecting with them to the system.

On 26 June, at the meeting of the Lublin City Council, during the discussion on the report on the state of the commune, Piotr Skrzypczak, a member of the board of the Homo Faber Association, took the floor. Piotr, referring to the history of himself and his family, drew the history for the return of multicultural Lublin.

"We have always been aware that even the largest organization is not able to replace system solutions. That is why we have seen and see our role

as a kind of glue, assembly foam, which, in moments of challenges, can fill the gaps between the needs of people and the authorities or institutions. When the worst came, we were ready. Not as an organization, but as a community. On February 24, 2022, we put on hold minor matters, skirmishes. Within a few hours, the Lublin Committee for Aid to Ukraine was established. [...]

What about today? The biggest compliment for me is that I see people coming to my Lublin, not only from the whole region, the country, but also from the world. And they don't run away anymore. They know that it is

a good place to live, study, love.

I guess it's hard to find a better proof of quality! [...]

I am from Lublin, and I want respect for others, openness and sensitivity to continue to be the showcase of my city."



STUDY VISITS

In 2025, we hosted 58 study visits to Baobab, including:

- from the City Hall (Office of Social Participation, Office – Center for International Cooperation, Office of Youth Policy) together with delegations from Ukraine (Lutsk, Pavlograd, Kosov, Lviv), Canada (Windsor), France, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Japan, the Philippines, Spain, Taiwan;
 - experts of the European Capital of Culture;
 - student groups from Lublin universities;
- as well as:
- representatives of the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC), the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, the National Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations, Flemish organizations SO-CIUS, Polish social organizations, social networks and enterprises.



ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES AT CENTRAL LEVEL

In 2025, much of our advocacy work took place at the national level, systematically – since February, we have participated in meetings of the Working Group on Cooperation with Government Organizations, created as part of the interdepartmental Migration Team at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration. And also ad hoc, writing and signing letters from civil society organizations against various types of violations:

- In March, together with 29 social organizations in Poland, we signed an appeal to the President of Poland to refuse to sign the law introducing the possibility of temporary and territorial restriction of the right to apply for international protection on the territory of Polish.
- In April, we responded to a letter to Ministers Tomasz Siemoniak and Adam Bodnar, alerting about the growing wave of violence and contempt for people with migrant and refugee experience in Poland.
- In September, we signed an appeal to the President of Poland regarding a special law regulating the legal status of Ukrainian citizens.
- At the turn of 2025 and 2026, we signed a letter to the Minister of the Interior and Administration, Marcin Kierwiński, opposing the manner of conducting public consultations on the project “on the extinguishment of solutions resulting from the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens in Connection with the Armed Conflict on the Territory of this State and on the Amendment of Certain Other Acts”.

We were also present and spoke at many meetings, discussions, forums, among others:

- in May at the Participation Practitioners’ Forum, where we talked about Baobab in the panel on integration;
- at the beginning of July, the story of the Baobab was part of a presentation at the conference “Is Memory Enough in the 21st Century” organized by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in Oświęcim;
- and in mid-July, we hosted an expert workshop at the Law Clinic of the University of Bristol (UK) on the presence of refugees from Ukraine in the UK, the Czech Republic and Poland;
- in September, we were visited by migration researchers – the XIV Conference of the Committee for Migration Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences “Migrations in Global and Local Contexts” unofficially began with a visit to the Baobab and a multi-threaded discussion on the mechanism of integration management;



- On 6 October at the District Court in Lublin, at a conference summarizing the competition for peer mediators in schools, we talked about good management of quarrels, which, when revealed and well worked out, have a positive power to change our relationships, communication, rules;
- in November in Warsaw, we met with the Ombudsman of Ukraine, Dmytro Lubinets, in order to very quickly outline the challenges related to the change of the special law regulating the situation of Ukrainian citizens in Poland;
- we were also at the Congress of Catholics at the Marek Edelman Dialogue Center in talks about irregular migration;
- and in December, at the conference “Ukrainian Communities in Poland: Relations and Discourses” organized by the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, in cooperation with the Committee for Migration Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences of the University of Science and Mathematics of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Center for Migration Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, we postulated: “nothing about migrants without migrants”.

We also traveled to Ukraine twice:

- In May, at the invitation of the Stefan Batory Foundation, we visited Kiev. The visit concerned civil protection, evacuation, coordination of crisis management; We met with local non-governmental organizations, representatives of the local government and services. We also participated in the conference “Full Evacuation Cycle: Invisible People of Frontline Areas”, which was organized by SOS Shid.
- In December, we visited Khmelnytskyi, where we signed a cooperation agreement with the local government institution Veteran PRO | K3 Хмельницької обласної ради «Ветеранський простір Ветеран ПРО». The agreement is about building support for veterans returning from the war to both Ukrainian communities in Ukraine and Ukrainian communities in Poland. On December 10, while in Kyiv, we also took part in the conference of the Commissioner for Human Rights of Ukraine “Ukrainian lessons for the world. New challenges to human rights”.



COALITIONS

Systematic work with our colleagues from other organizations in Poland took place through the Migration Consortium – a nationwide network of social organizations working for migration and refugees.

In the autumn, we also formalized a new partnership – the Coalition of community sponsorship. In this way, we are strengthening the network of social organizations that have been implementing CS in Poland for two years – a model of social engagement of ordinary people who have the will/space/time to support new members of the community – people with migrant and/or refugee experience. The coalition consists of: the Polish Migration Forum, the Nomad Association, the Catholic Intelligentsia Club, the Society for Creative Initiatives “e”, the Ładne Historie Foundation, the Multi.Art Association.

AWARDS

Anna Dąbrowska in June and Piotr Skrzypczak in September were awarded the Solidarity and Human Rights Badge of the European Solidarity Centre.



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- non-governmental organizations with which we have been working for years, we develop together and support each other,
- special thanks go to the Migration Consortium, the Polish Migration Forum, the Ukrainian House in Przemyśl, the Institute for the Rule of Law Foundation, the "No to ci pomogę" Association.
- as well as all those people who, by cooperating with us, create a more open, safe and friendly Lublin.

We thank everyone who believes in us and those who visit us and wish us well. This is our common big cause.







The Homo Faber Association is a human rights organization, founded in 2004 in Lublin.

Homo Faber from Latin means a craftman. 21 years ago, the name for our organization was given by Jacek Kuroń. This famous oppositionist pointed out that it is *homo faber* who is the one who, acts from the bottom and changes reality

We support people whose human rights and freedoms are not respected. We try to ensure that advocacy for systemic changes happens in parallel with help. We give a voice to those who do not have it.

We work for social inclusion, protection of human rights and counteracting exclusion.

Since January 2023, we have been coordinating the Baobab Community Center – a multi-purpose space supporting new residents of Lublin.

You can be a part of this story. Set up a standing order in any amount on your account, e.g. PLN 10, 30 or 50. In the title, write “donation for statutory purposes”. Visit us and see how your support becomes a real action.