



# Good practices

4

Stakeholder engagement for policy change



# How to effectively engage stakeholders for policy change

**Contributing INNOVATE partner: IRC International Rescue Committee**

## **Objectives, basic principles & potential impact**

In this Good Practice, we share tips on how to engage stakeholders and create relationships that can help you communicate your points and influence policymaking.

It is common for academics and practitioners to share their research or policy briefs widely by email and/or on social media. They may ask relevant policymakers for a meeting to present their findings and recommendations and be surprised or upset when they do not get a response or get a negative one. The truth is, policymakers often do not have time to meet with all interest groups and will therefore filter their communication and give priority to the issues they feel are most relevant and important to them or they have been involved in already, and to meeting with people they know and respect.

Engaging stakeholders for policy change is a process that involves several strategic steps. Here are ten tips to consider when planning your stakeholder engagement:

1. **Identify Stakeholders early on:** Determine who the key stakeholders are, including individuals, groups, or organizations that will be affected by the policy change or have influence over it, whether they agree or disagree with your views (power mapping).
2. **Understand Interests and Concerns:** Conduct research to understand the interests, concerns, and motivations of each stakeholder through internet research, interviews, focus groups, etc.
3. **Build Relationships:** Establish and maintain open lines of communication with stakeholders. Building trust is essential for effective engagement.
4. **Communicate Clearly:** Develop clear and concise messaging that outlines the need for policy change, the benefits it will bring, and how it aligns with stakeholders' interests.
5. **Involve Stakeholders in the Process:** Encourage stakeholder participation in discussions and decision-making processes.
6. **Provide Evidence and Data:** Use data and evidence to support the case for policy change. This can help persuade stakeholders by demonstrating the potential impact and benefits.
7. **Address Concerns:** Be prepared to listen to and address any concerns or objections stakeholders may have. This shows respect for their viewpoints and can lead to more constructive dialogue.
8. **Leverage Influencers:** Identify and engage influential stakeholders who can advocate for the policy change within their networks.
9. **Create a Coalition:** Form alliances with like-minded stakeholders to strengthen the push for policy change. A united front can be more persuasive.
10. **Follow Up and Maintain Engagement:** After initial engagement, continue to communicate with stakeholders, providing updates and seeking their input throughout the policy change process.

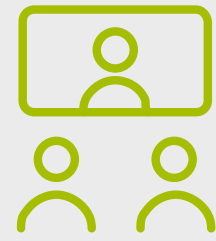


## Example 1

### **Do the human right thing – Raising our Voice for Refugee Rights**

A good example of successful stakeholder engagement was the project 'Do the human right thing - Raising our Voice for Refugee Rights', which advocated for the integration of asylum seekers and refugees in Greek society. The project was implemented in 2021-2022 by IRC Hellas, the Greek Council for Refugees, Diotima Centre for Gender Rights and Equality, and Popaganda, a popular Greek e-magazine.

Through this project, the partner organisations conducted research to report on the situation regarding refugees and asylum seekers' access to housing, health services, and employment and any violations of these three fundamental rights for human life with dignity. Policy proposals were shared through this coalition (step 9 in list above) with relevant decision-makers in Greece and in EU institutions, who had been previously thoroughly researched and identified.



## Engagement steps

Each of the three NGOs led one of three themes: access to housing, access to employment, and access to health services. A quantitative survey was designed to cover the three issues in various languages, shared widely with refugees and asylum seekers that the organisations supported, which resulted in 183 respondents. This ensured data and evidence was used to support the case for policy change and involve interested parties in the process, therefore helping persuade policymakers by demonstrating the potential impact and benefits (steps 5 & 6 in list above).

A relevant report was then drafted for each of the three issues, clearly communicating the need for policy change and the benefits it would bring (step 4 in list above):

1. Homeless and Hopeless: An assessment of the housing situation of asylum applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in Greece.
2. Seeking a new life - seeking employment: An assessment of the employment situation of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in Greece
3. Right to health – Right to life: An assessment of access to health care services of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection in Greece

Throughout the research and drafting stage, a variety of stakeholders was consulted and a series of interviews were held, including with key decisions makers. This ensured understanding of the positions and concerns of each stakeholder and addressing them in the reports and recommendations (steps 1, 2, 3 and 7 in list above). Key decision makers were also offered the chance to review the draft reports ahead of publication.

After the publication of each report, relevant meetings were requested to present the findings and recommendations.



### **Success factors**

The critical factors for success were multiple. First of all, the thorough research stage ensured all stakeholders were consulted:

- refugees and asylum seekers affected by these policies, so up-to-date information on the situation was collected, as well as their views on how challenges should be addressed;
- NGOs and international organisations implementing integration projects, to find out about the obstacles faced by a large number of people –rather than individuals– and their views on how challenges should be addressed;
- decision makers/government officials on their challenges and proposed ways forward;
- as well as a variety of other stakeholders such as journalists, academics and donors.

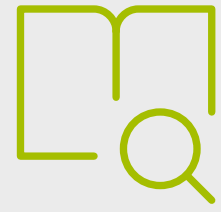
Through this early engagement and involvement, and the opportunity to review draft reports before they were published, relationships of trust were built, which have been long-standing and have helped on projects and initiatives later on (step 10 of list above).



### **Impact and lessons learned**

Policy makers were quite interested in our input and all relevant Ministries agreed to meet with us and hear our findings and recommendations. We were specifically asked to share the survey results regarding refugees' access to housing, employment, and health, and the data was used to design integration projects.

Notably, the more specific and practical recommendations were taken up, as opposed to those that required political endorsement or large budgets. One specific example comes from the 'Seeking a new life – seeking employment' report, and the recommendation to introduce the wording "Right to Access the Labour Market" in asylum seeker cards, where applicable. The suggestion for this recommendation came from employers consulted in the research stage of the report, as they felt they could not be sure whether an asylum seeker had the right to work or not. This was introduced and has likely benefitted hundreds or even thousands of asylum seekers and employers.



### **Learn more**

[Here](#) are all the sources of the project from RESCUE EU website, including the relevant reports, while here is an [article](#) from Popaganda reviewing the project's milestones (available in Greek only).

Additional relevant resources include:

[How can I engage with policymakers?](#)

[GACD's top tips for engaging with policymakers](#)

[Engaging with policymakers | Things to consider](#)





## Example 2

### **Child Rights in Serbia (CRIS) project – stakeholder engagement and capacity-building**

The Child Rights in Serbia (CRIS) project aimed to improve outcomes for children involved with the Serbian justice system through the systematic application of child-friendly approaches and evidence-based support in legal proceedings. The project focused on strengthening Child-Friendly Justice (CFJ) in Serbia by mobilising and engaging key public institutions and civil society organisations (CSOs) to improve the legal outcomes for children involved with the justice system.

Through systematic stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and children-participation activities, the project sought to ensure the Serbia justice system was more child-centered, aligned with national laws, and in line with international best practices for protecting children's rights. The project's focus was also on mobilizing key actors to collaborate, build capacity, and inform policy changes related to CFJ.

Funded by the European Union's Rights Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC), the project targeted a broad range of stakeholders and policymakers, including judges, prosecutors, police officers, social workers, lawyers, and government officials from institutions such as the Supreme Court of Cassation, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Judicial Academy, and the Ministry of Interior.

Key activities included creating child-friendly materials, conducting trainings for judges, prosecutors, social workers, and other child-facing professionals, and organising consultations with children to understand their perspectives on the justice system. The project also emphasised strengthening evidence-based interventions by producing research and analytical documents to inform policy reforms.

The project's potential impact lies in institutionalising CFJ practices in the Serbian justice system. It is expected that the project's outputs, such as the training curricula and manuals, will continue to be used by public institutions, ensuring sustainability. Additionally, the project's success in involving children in decision-making processes marked a significant step forward in the application of CFJ principles.

In summary, the CRIS project aimed to create a sustainable model for improving the legal protection of children by facilitating collaboration between institutions and CSOs, enhancing the capacity of the justice system, and ensuring children's voices were heard in shaping legal processes that affect them.



### **Engagement steps**

The CRIS project was implemented in a multi-phased approach, focusing on mobilisation, capacity-building, and child participation, ensuring stakeholders' active engagement at every step:

## **1** Initial mobilisation and establishment of stakeholder networks

- The project began with stakeholder mapping, identifying key actors in the Serbian justice system, including CSOs, judicial institutions, and child-rights advocates. These stakeholders formed a Project Advisory Board (PAB), which met regularly to guide the project's activities, ensuring it remained relevant to the needs of the justice system and children.
- A kick-off conference brought together all stakeholders to discuss the objectives, roles, and responsibilities, fostering initial cooperation between public institutions and CSOs.

## **2** Capacity-building for justice professionals

- To address the need for better CFJ practices, the project organised several Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions. These sessions, designed with the Judicial Academy (JA), equipped judges, prosecutors, and social workers with the tools needed to handle cases involving children more effectively and sensitively.
- The training manual and curriculum on CFJ were developed and validated by the project's key stakeholders, followed by workshops and hands-on sessions where trainers learned how to apply child-friendly approaches in their work.
- An innovative addition to the project was the creation of a training module titled "Child Victims and the Media", where professionals in the justice system were trained on how to interact with journalists to ensure ethical reporting on cases involving children.

### **3** Child participation and advocacy

- A key component of the project was involving children themselves in CFJ discussions. Through partnerships with the Children's Information and Cultural Center (DX Club), the project organised workshops and sessions where children could share their experiences with the justice system and provide input on the development of child-friendly materials.
- The project also conducted awareness-raising campaigns aimed at informing children and their caregivers about their legal rights, using materials such as booklets, videos, and online platforms to disseminate this information widely.

### **4** Monitoring, evaluation and adaptation

- Throughout the project, the CRIS team monitored progress closely and adapted the project activities based on real-time feedback from stakeholders, especially in response to the challenges posed by COVID-19, which limited physical interaction.
- Hybrid models, combining online and in-person events, were implemented to ensure continuous engagement.



## Success factors

- **Inclusive and Participatory Approach:** One of the strongest points of the CRIS project was its inclusive approach, which ensured that all relevant stakeholders were actively involved from the beginning. The establishment of the PAB enabled continuous consultation and decision-making throughout the project, creating a sense of ownership among stakeholders.
- **Adaptability:** The project's ability to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic was critical. The team shifted to online and hybrid models to continue capacity-building activities and consultations with children. This flexibility ensured that all planned activities were completed despite the challenges.
- **Strategic Capacity Building:** The collaboration with the Judicial Academy was instrumental in ensuring that the trainings were of high quality and met the needs of professionals in the justice system. The development of the training manual and curriculum ensured the sustainability of the project's outcomes.



### General Dos:

- **Do** engage stakeholders early and continuously: Building strong relationships with stakeholders at the outset and maintaining those connections through regular consultations (e.g., PAB meetings) is crucial for success.
- **Do** adapt to challenges: Flexibility, especially in response to external factors like COVID-19, is key to ensuring that project goals are met.



### General Don'ts:

- **Don't** underestimate the need for child involvement: While the project involved children through the DX Club and schools, it was noted that younger children, especially those under 16, were less engaged. Future projects should consider structural mechanisms for involving younger children more effectively.
- **Don't** overlook multi-sectoral cooperation: Projects like CRIS require sustained cooperation between different sectors. Keeping these channels of communication open, even after the project ends, is crucial for long-term success.



## Impact and lessons learned

The CRIS project had a positive reception from policymakers and stakeholders. The training modules developed under the project, including the “Child Victims and the Media” curriculum, were incorporated into the Judicial Academy’s training programs. Policy stakeholders, such as the Supreme Court of Cassation and the Public Prosecutor’s Office, acknowledged the value of these trainings in enhancing CFJ practices.

Moreover, the research and analytical work produced under the project, such as the Formative Analysis and the study on Child-Friendly Justice from the Perspective of Children and Youth, are expected to inform future legislation on juvenile justice, particularly the drafting of a new Law on Juvenile Perpetrators.

The project’s efforts were also reflected in Serbia’s EU accession monitoring, with CRIS outputs contributing to the European Commission 2021 report on Serbia, particularly on Chapters 23 and 24 on judiciary and fundamental rights.



## Learn more

[Child Rights in Serbia \(CRIS\) project](#)

[Child Rights in Serbia – Improving Outcomes for Children in the Serbian Justice System \(CRIS\)](#)



## Stakeholder engagement cycle aimed at policy change

**Contributing INNOVATE partner: ECRE European Council on Refugees and Exiles**

### **Objectives, basic principles & potential impact**

This example demonstrates the stakeholder engagement cycle used by European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) to ensure the right stakeholders, with the power to affect change in the area of policy we are targeting, are engaged with ECRE and our research and recommendations. For all areas of work, ECRE conducts initial research, a power mapping of which stakeholders are the most important, followed by outreach to policy makers, dissemination of policy tools, research and recommendations, with targeted follow-up and assessment of impact. Everything from the design, length and type of publication or output is designed with stakeholder engagement in mind. The initial power mapping defines what we see as the space to influence, who has more/less power, the different actors and stakeholders according to their potential as allies and how important ECRE is for these stakeholders/policymakers etc.

Impact monitoring helps us to see who engages and how and helps to refine our methods and engagement strategy for next time.





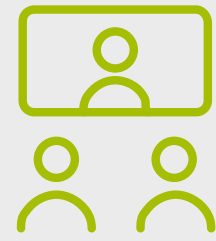
## **AIDA, the Asylum Information Database**

The Asylum Information Database (AIDA) is a database managed by ECRE, containing information on asylum procedures, reception conditions, detention and content of international protection across 24 countries. This includes 19 European Union Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Spain, France, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia) and 5 non-EU countries (Switzerland, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine and the United Kingdom).

The overall goal of the database is to contribute to the improvement of asylum policies and practices in Europe and the situation of asylum seekers by providing all relevant actors with appropriate tools and information to support their advocacy and litigation efforts, both at the national and European level.

Alongside individual country reports, there are comparative reports, more in-depth fact-finding visits, legal briefings and statistical updates on the implementation of the Dublin Regulation.

Although an information tool, stakeholder engagement is considered throughout the whole of the AIDA production to dissemination cycle to ensure that the AIDA research is in line with advocacy/outreach needs.



## Engagement steps

**AIDA template:** the AIDA country reports are written based on a template. The draft template is reviewed each year including by the advocacy team to see whether the most important questions would be captured and to identify any gaps and challenges. Good practices or explanations of specific problems are requested from national authors in advance anticipating the interests of policy makers. There is also an internal meeting to take into account feedback received in meetings with policymakers.

**Review of country reports by authors:** at the editing stage each national report is reviewed by an expert and a similar process is undertaken, including to make sure there are no major gaps in knowledge about important issues of the day.

**AIDA launch:** The AIDA annual launch is an important moment in the process of engaging stakeholders in the latest round of country reports and other analysis from AIDA.

**Follow up meetings:** After the launch ECRE and its members meet up with stakeholders including from other sectors (e.g. on the labour market, from the public sector) who give feedback to feed into advocacy or help develop stakeholder allies.

**Identifying additional stakeholders:** ECRE tries to participate in topical events, round tables etc as much as possible in different fora to present the results and to identify additional persons interested in the AIDA research. New contacts are often approached with shorter policy briefs, clear messages and requests. AIDA is also extensively quoted in case law and other research.

**Building and maintaining relationships:** ECRE uses different methods to build and maintain relationships, including through maintaining a database of contacts and through its power-mapping, which is also carried out for AIDA at least once per year.

**Monitoring impact:** ECRE monitors how many people use the AIDA database itself, which parts of the database are visited, it also monitors who quotes information from AIDA in research, case law and advocacy. This feeds into strategies on stakeholder engagement.



### **Success factors**

The critical factor for success on stakeholder engagement is to keep stakeholders in mind throughout the whole process from design to delivery and dissemination.

### **Impact**

- The 23 AIDA country reports were widely cited in reports and publications, including by the EUAA, EP, Council of Europe, UNHCR, academic researchers and think tanks.
- In 2023, the AIDA website registered a total of 875,347 views
- AIDA outputs increased their outreach, being cited in +2,150 national court cases (only counting the cases in countries that publish decisions – the figure is likely to be at least four times this), +160 policy/academic reports, and 82 external media articles throughout the year.
- AIDA reports are used to provide information to the EU Asylum Agency (EUAA), with

19 of 23 reports cited by the EUAA in its 2023 Asylum Report. The reports were also used to inform stakeholders about the situation of Afghans and Ukrainians in Europe for use in advocacy.



### **Learn more**

[AIDA Asylum Information Database](#)

[Shadow Report Toolkit](#): The Shadow Report Toolkit is structured to explain what a shadow report is, how to produce one, and how to use it as part of an advocacy strategy. This toolkit serves as a guide, offering essential steps, practical tips, and recommendations for preparing reports with a specific focus on integration and inclusion policies and strategies.

[Training Kit for Empowering Refugee-Led Community Organisations](#)



## Including migrants and storytelling in research dissemination and policy dialogue

**Contributing INNOVATE partner: Chemnitz University of Technology, Prof. Birgit Glorius**

### **Objectives, basic principles & potential impact**

How to address migrant related issues in political and public debates in which migrant's perspectives are represented adequately and respectfully for individual fates? This good practice shows the fundamental challenge of integrating the individual stories of migrants into the research and dissemination process. An example is used to exemplify how this sensitive topic can be dealt with, and how to link scientific findings with the individual perspectives of migrants for translating scientific research in political messages.

The integration of individual, sometimes traumatic experiences into the research process poses both ethical and practical challenge.

From an ethical perspective, who has the right to speak about migration-related concerns? This question addresses issues of identity, the self-attribution of individuals or society's self-image. Consequently, this question is negotiated in a broad field of stakeholders and (opposing) interests: Researchers aiming for objective scientific insights, migrants as the target or even peer-group of research with individual stories, experiences and opinions, migrant self-organisations as advocates of migrants and migration related issues or decision makers with their respective political agendas. In terms of research practice, the challenge is that mostly a long time is passing between data collection and dissemination. During this research period the circumstances of people involved in the research process may have changed, so that they are no longer approachable for the discussion of results or there are anonymisation issues preventing their involvement.

Finally, to incorporate complex outcomes from research projects into political and public debates, it is necessary to translate them into simple messages. The challenge here is to ensure the objectivity of scientific statements and to link them with illustrative examples and individual perspectives of migrants. It is important to ensure that individuals with a history of migration are neither forced into a victim role nor exoticised.



## Example

### **How life stories can change perspectives**

How can I manage to adequately present the challenges and success factors of refugee integration in a rural community without merely reproducing platitudes? After all, much is already known about specifics of rural regions that also hamper or fuel immigrant integration.

For example, that mobility in rural areas is a huge problem, that demographic ageing might affect the possibility of refugees to find peer groups, that there is often little intercultural competence, but that there is a lot of potential in local civil society. How can I really touch stakeholders and give them insight into research findings in a sustainable way?

In our research projects on local integration, we collected many biographical stories from refugees. Coming from a qualitative research tradition, it is very important for us to always interpret individual aspects of the integration experience, such as achieving an educational goal or finding an apartment, against the background of the overall biographical formation. This holistic approach is valuable for the validation of research results, but it is difficult to “translate” it into pieces of communication, which need to be short and to the point.

Nevertheless, we have developed formats in which more than just an answer to a specific question is given, but rather a section of the overall biographical formation of a refugee. We use original quotes from interviews with refugees. In one case, we were able to persuade a young refugee to retell her own story in a short film. By linking the research findings to a concrete biography, the findings are communicated with more depth and enable an emotional confrontation with the content. In this way, at least we hope, we can anchor the quintessence of our research in the minds of policy makers' minds.



### **Engagement steps**

First, we carried out the research. This included biographical interviews with refugees. They lasted between one and two hours. We talked about their flight trajectory and how it was to arrive in Germany, about their integration experiences and major achievements, and about their further goals in life. In total, we collected around 50 interviews at our six research locations. The interviews were transcribed and coded using software.

We then carried out a qualitative content analysis and created evaluation texts on important integration topics: Housing, education, work, health, social contacts and encounters with the host society. In this way, we were able to make valid statements about the various integration paths and link them to socio-demographic variables such as age, gender and education.



Our interviewees had given us their informed consent to use their statements in an anonymized form for our research. To initiate the interviews, we collected the refugees' contact details. We were still in loose contact with some of them after the interviews. This also gave us a feel for who we could approach for the next step in our research communication.

It had to be someone who could tell their story authentically and confidently. Someone who would not run the risk of re-traumatisation. Someone who we were absolutely sure understood and supported the aims of our research. Someone whose story would take a positive turn.

The next step was to produce a 5-minute short film in which the refugee is the main character and tells their story.

We selected a suitable person and established contact. However, contact with our first main actor broke off shortly before filming. This showed us that our project was not trivial. After all, the protagonist gets a lot of publicity, far more than you would achieve in a research report. This also involves risks that the protagonist must be aware of.

In the end, however, we found a protagonist who had a positive development story to tell and was willing to take part in the filming. She appears in the film as an authentic, strong personality, not as a "refugee". Of course, her flight biography is part of her story. If she had not been forced to flee, her life would have been different, easier, as she herself reflects. But her story shows how she rises from the biographical fate of being a refugee. And what and who helped her to make a new start and pursue her own path.

This short film has a strong emotional component alongside many generalisable experiences of arrival, integration and the development of life goals. Because the protagonist allows the viewer to empathise with her, what is said is much more memorable than any research report can do.



## Success factors

During our project and when preparing results for communication, we learned a lot about the dos and don'ts. These are as follows:

- **Make sure to keep contact:** Often persons involved in the research are not approachable anymore due to long time between data collection and dissemination: Therefore, have migrant self-organisations (representing the communities which were researched) participating in dissemination events. However, possible issues of representativeness should be considered.
- **Specific but generalisable:** If refugees are involved, motivate to tell a reflexive story of their life, not only sticking to their own individual details, but rather pointing to the specifics of their biography compared to others. Enable them to be the specialists of their own life story and give advice to policymakers grounded in their own experience, but at the same time showing which aspects are generalisable.
- **Let original voices speak:** Include in dissemination products qualitative material, such as quotes of refugees. This often very direct, raw information can change minds if used as an anchor or example for general findings.
- **Offer embedding for stories:** Explain to policymakers what in such examples makes them generalisable. The words of someone directly involved can make abstract findings much more accessible.
- **Strategic alignment:** Align with politicians' strategic use of storytelling. A storytelling approach by researchers can make it easier for policymakers to integrate the evidence in their policies.



## Impact and lessons learned

Of course, we cannot directly measure the impact of this video or other communications that are based on the technique on storytelling. However, as we continue with our dissemination and communication activities, we get a lot of direct feedback which shows that storytelling leaves deep impressions that can effectively point to critical junctures in refugees' trajectories and how the receiving society can prepare a framework that enables refugees to develop and pursue ambitious goals.



## Learn more

- Our video with the [story of Elisar](#)
- Other personal life stories collected by our research partners: [WholeComm – Short stories](#)



## Design thinking to engage with policymakers and migrants

**Contributing INNOVATE partner: University of Luxembourg**

### **Objectives, basic principles & potential impact**

Design thinking is a versatile methodology for developing innovative solutions to complex problems. Originating in design and engineering, this approach is now widely adopted across disciplines, including migration studies, to co-create practical solutions.

The design thinking process seeks to deeply understand a problem, challenge existing assumptions, redefine issues, and generate novel solutions. This is particularly useful for addressing complex, uncertain, or ill-defined challenges. In the context of migration, design thinking encourages participants to rethink integration challenges and create responsive solutions that align with the needs and experiences of migrants. By focusing on empathy, this process uncovers insights into the cultural and environmental factors impacting migrants.

## Stages of Design Thinking

Design thinking typically includes five key phases: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test (see figure). Each stage builds on the last, fostering a comprehensive approach to problem-solving.

### Stanford d.school Design Thinking Process



This approach aims to generate practical, implementable solutions to complex issues. Ideally, a follow-up session with policymakers after each workshop supports the integration of solutions, such as by publishing a strategic document or declaration. Regular workshops also encourage continuous learning and empathy-building, allowing for the prioritization and development of feasible solutions.

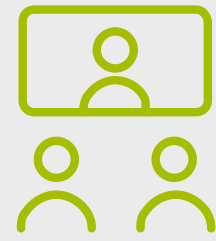


## Example

### **Design thinking workshop engaging policymakers, practitioners, and young migrants on integration**

Within the Horizon 2020 project MIMY, which focuses on empowering young migrants through active involvement (e.g., as peer researchers and through participatory methods like digital storytelling and design thinking), workshops were organised in seven European countries (Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Sweden, UK, Poland, and Romania). Led by the University of Luxembourg, these workshops followed a standard template and set of guidelines to ensure consistency.

The workshop aimed to bring together stakeholders, including policymakers (e.g., representatives from the Luxembourg Ministry of Family Affairs and the National Reception Office), practitioners (e.g., social workers, youth workers, and NGO representatives), and young migrants from non-EU countries (aged 18-29), to co-create innovative solutions addressing integration challenges.



## Engagement steps

The University of Luxembourg, with guidance from the University of Sheffield, developed a set of workshop guidelines detailing the five phases of design thinking. These guidelines also emphasized ethical considerations to ensure a safe, non-judgmental environment for open, trusting dialogue among diverse participants.

In Luxembourg, the workshop included the following steps:

1. **Introduction and Icebreaker** (People Bingo): Fostering a relaxed atmosphere for participants to get to know one another.
2. **Project Presentation** (Phase 1: Empathise): Briefing participants on project findings to establish shared knowledge.
3. **Defining Key Issues** (Phase 2: Define): Small groups selected and explored relevant integration challenges.
4. **Group Discussions on Solutions** (Phase 3: Ideate and Phase 4: Prototype): Teams designed potential solutions to their selected issues.
5. **Group Presentations and Solution Testing** (Phase 5: Test): Each group presented outcomes for feedback, followed by final remarks and takeaways.

Each group in Luxembourg developed two to four initiatives, which were later discussed collectively, incorporating participants' personal and professional perspectives.



### **Success factors**

Ethical considerations were key to fostering a safe, equitable environment where participants felt comfortable sharing their thoughts. The facilitators' role in creating this space was essential, particularly in a multilingual setting like Luxembourg, where translators helped support cross-language discussions.



### **Impact and lessons learned**

The workshop received positive feedback, with policymakers especially valuing the direct interaction with young migrants. Numerous ideas emerged, many of which were further examined for feasibility. Given the diversity of participants, effective facilitation was crucial to bridge communication gaps and create a comfortable space for expression.

Policymakers expressed interest in future workshops, although financial constraints have limited ongoing efforts post-project. Additional funding would enable regular workshops, enhancing collaborative engagement between stakeholders and migrants.





### **Learn more**

More about the [objectives of the MIMY project](#).

For more insights on design thinking in migration and integration contexts, explore the following references:

Janik-Hornik et al. (2019): [What Design Thinking Can Do for Migrants and Refugees](#)

Liedtka, J. (2017): Design Thinking for the Greater Good: Innovation in the Social Sector.

Pachocka et al. (2020): Design Thinking as a Framework for Addressing Migration Challenges, in Right to the City, Performing Arts and Migration.

[Stanford d.school](#)

[IDEO Design Kit](#)

[Service Design Tools](#)

[IDEO](#)



## Deliberative polling

**Contributing INNOVATE partner: MPC Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute**

### **Objectives, basic principles & potential impact**

Deliberative Polling or other forms of deliberative process such as citizens' assemblies are decision-making procedures through which it is assumed that citizens working together through dialogue and engagement with evidence and with each other can reach a rational agreement based on the best argument. Deliberative polling can overcome divisions and inform policymaking by building dialogue between citizens who are affected by contentious and divisive issues.

The OECD's Recommendations on Open Government (2017) identify effective citizen participation in deliberative processes to require that:

- All stakeholders have equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted and actively engage them in all phases of the policy-cycle
- Innovative ways are promoted to effectively engage with stakeholders to source ideas and co-create solutions.

While there is no single method for deliberation, there are some basic principles. A key and essential element is that a deliberative poll requires inclusion of a representative sample of citizens whether this be at community, national or international levels. It is important to avoid self-selection that would mean participants would seek to be involved because of their prior interest in or high concern about the issue at stake. Self-selection would significantly reduce the value of the exercise.

For a process of Deliberative Polling, before the process begins, all participants would be asked to complete a survey that asks them about their attitudes to the issues that will be the focus for the deliberative process. Briefing materials are circulated to all participants. Crucially, a range of viewpoints and perspectives must be included. An expert group could be appointed to ensure that material is balanced and reflects the range of perspectives.

The participants then meet and work together in moderated, smaller sub-groups that can formulate questions that are then posed to a panel of experts and policymakers. On the basis of their work and engagement with each other and experts, participants can then develop guidelines or recommendations. It is vital that the sub-groups provide a polite and respectful venue for participants to express their views and to listen to others. After the plenary session, a Deliberative Polling method would repeat the survey of participants to gauge opinions. In other types of deliberative process – such as citizens' assemblies – participants could be asked to vote on recommendations that result from the discussions.

Deliberative polling and other forms of deliberative process such as citizens' assemblies have the potential to represent the considered view of citizens that have engaged with each other, with experts and with the evidence. This is more than a snapshot of public opinion because the deeper, dialogic roots of deliberative processes can lay the foundations for more sustainable policies. The 'goods' that can arise from such a process have been identified as inclusiveness, popular control, considered judgment, transparency, efficiency, and transferability (Smith, 2019).



## Example

### Conference on the future of Europe

An example of a deliberative process is the Conference on the Future of Europe convened between April 2021 and May 2022. The European Union used deliberation mechanisms involving around 900 European citizens to deliberate on 9 topics with the aim of shaping the future of Europe, including on migration.



### Engagement steps

This included creation of a multilingual digital platform for the exchange of ideas, the creation of citizens' panels at European level and in the member states, and conferences that brought together representatives of EU institutions, national parliaments, civil society organizations and members of the citizens' panels. The idea was that EU citizens could share their opinions and expectations, and the EU's institutions would examine the proposals and try to adapt and potentially adopt them in accordance with the EU's legal framework.

The deliberative process was informed by the principles for open government and citizen participation that have been developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).



### **Success factors**

The European Citizens' Panels brought together representative groups (gender, age, geographic origin (nationality as well as urban/rural), socio-economic background and level of education) in European and National Citizens' Panels. A criticism was the lack of attention to ethnic minority groups. There were four European panels and National citizens panels were convened in Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Lithuania and the Netherlands. In total more than 900 individuals were involved. The 449 participants in the final Conference Plenary included citizens representing European and National Citizens' Panels, representatives of EU institutions, elected representatives at national, regional and local levels, plus representatives of civil society and social partners.

Each sub-group developed 'guidelines' that were presented to a plenary meeting after which the sub-groups formulated recommendations. Each recommendation was voted on by all the participants through an online form at the end of the session. Before the vote, all participants received material explaining the draft recommendations. Recommendations with an approval greater than 70% were adopted by the panel while the others were discarded.



## Impact and lessons learned

The final Plenary Conference debated the recommendations including a proposal to reform the European asylum system, establishing common rules of procedure and responsibility. The impacts on specific EU policies are difficult to assess although there does still seem to be deadlock among member states on key aspects of a reform agenda on asylum.

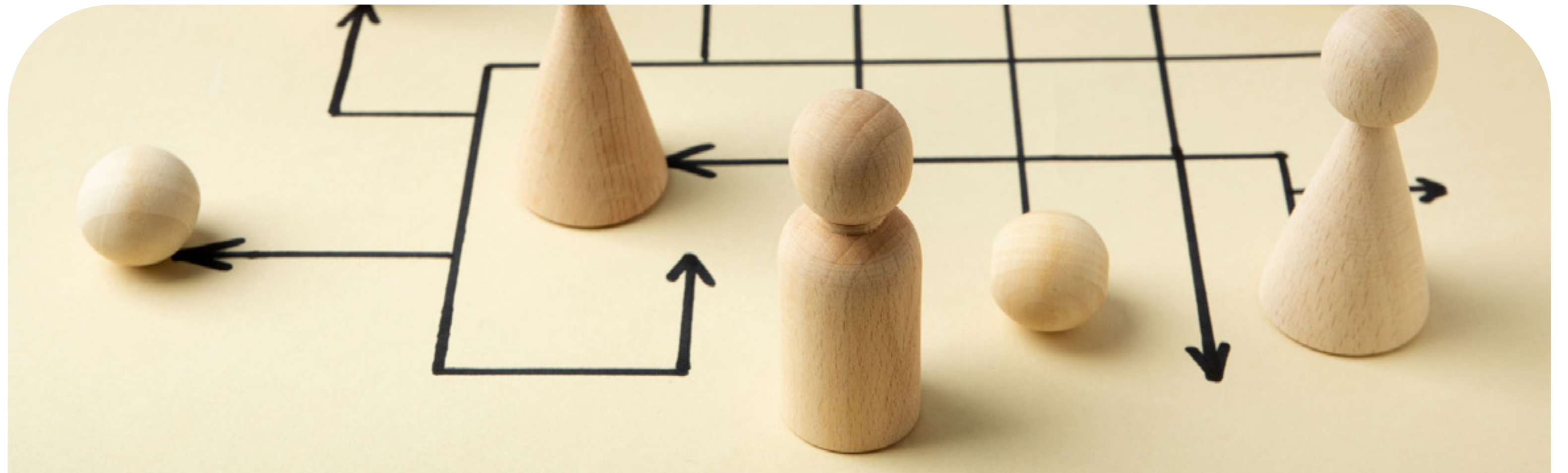
On the positive side, the Conference did stimulate high levels of engagement. There was criticism that the focus was too broad, ranging across all the main areas of EU activity. The impact is also likely to be limited if recommendations seem to be ignored. To be an innovative deliberative process requires that the views of citizens that participated in the deliberative process are listened to and that their recommendations are translated into public policies or improved practices.



## Learn more

Smith, G. (2019). *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

OECD. (2020). *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.



## Participatory multi-stakeholder engagement in the local response to mass-scale displacement

**Contributing INNOVATE partner: CMR UW Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw**

### **Objectives, basic principles & potential impact**

Even if Polish cities were involved in local-level migration governance before 2022, their contribution included the provision of public services and integration support to relatively small groups of recognised refugees. With the drastic change of context after 24 February 2022, following the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, it was often the big cities and other municipalities that took the lead in crisis management of the mass arrivals of refugee seekers. Within these emergency settings, the urban situation has evolved dramatically in terms of the number of new stakeholders who appeared in the cities to support forced migrants, including IGOs and INGOs.

In those circumstances, researchers from the Centre of Migration Research of the University of Warsaw (CMR UW) decided to launch the Laboratory of Urban and Regional Migration Policies (the Lab) as a place for engagement between academia, local governments, NGOs, migrant communities and other stakeholders, providing support to migrants as well as being active in other ways in local responses to migration challenges.

We aimed to produce a co-creation space where everybody is welcomed and where – by addressing the topic in a research-oriented but applied manner, reaching out to non-scholars also – we invited a wide range of stakeholders to participate in the dialogue on how cities should react to migration in the crisis situation and afterwards. Despite its fairly moderate scope, which started from regular webinars and rather long discussions that allowed us to contextualise the specific issues of migrant support and integration in the local context, the impact we have achieved exceeded our expectations.

The Lab has started to expand its activities, publishing policy briefs, conducting new projects, and developing cooperation with different municipalities and NGOs in Poland. This was not only due to the topic under discussion being explored in depth, but also the Lab's inclusiveness, simplicity of the form, and the time we have devoted to each local case and its specific context.





## Example

### **Laboratory of Urban and Regional Migration Policies and “Cities and migration” webinar series**

The outbreak of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine led to a massive influx of displaced people to Poland, which became the main host country for the refugee population. This necessitated a rapid response from various actors in migration governance and relief efforts for those fleeing Ukraine. Forced migrants from Ukraine have been granted temporary protection under EU regulations. However, the Polish government went a step further by adopting the *Act of 12 March 2022 on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine in Connection with the Armed Conflict on the Territory of that Country*.

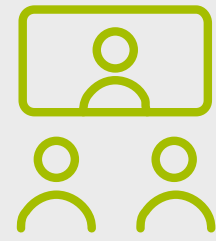
Due to the enormous dynamics of the situation and its scale, a key role was played by the grassroots mobilisation of civil society together with various social organisations, including migrants’ organisations<sup>1</sup>. Last but not least, the activities of the Polish local governments were of particular importance – be it border towns like Przemyśl, those located further from the border with Ukraine, such as Rzeszów or Lublin, or other cities, including metropolises like Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław, Poznań and Gdańsk<sup>2</sup>.

Over time, forced migrants were received in various municipalities across Poland. In May 2022, their number was estimated at 3.37 million within the country, and in some

cities the percentage of Ukrainian citizens in the total population reached as high as 30-40% (see, e.g., data for Rzeszów, based on the report from the Union of Polish Metropolises<sup>3</sup>). By the end of 2022, the number of temporary protection beneficiaries with Ukrainian citizenship amounted to approximately 1.5 million persons, and by the end of 2023 was close to 950,000 persons<sup>4</sup>. The migration status of Poland as a new immigration country in Europe was consolidated.

For many Polish cities, mainly medium-sized and small, to receive such a large number of migrants in such a short time was unprecedented, and they had to provide them with specific reception conditions and humanitarian assistance. In a slightly different situation were large cities with more migration experience, a better developed public service infrastructure and the support of local NGOs who had previously worked with the foreign population.

In such crisis conditions, no specific emergency plans were implemented in Poland, so it was essential to be able to exchange mutual experiences and hold discussions between representatives of the public sector (mainly cities) and NGOs, who played a key role in the planning and implementation of local responses, together with the involvement of academia, who often combined research activities with volunteering for the refugees. It was also crucial to learn from international experiences, e.g., of other cities, NGOs, and IGOs that had faced similar challenges, such as during the so-called 2015 migration crisis.



## Engagement steps

In reaction to the growing need for new dialogue forums and an evidence-based and systemic approach to the crisis, a group of researchers from the Centre of Migration Research launched a series of webinars on 'Migration and Cities: Managing the Crisis'. Between March and June 2022, the first six webinars were held, covering such topics as relocation and housing, education, the labour market and access to the healthcare system and social services in the context of forced migration.

Most seminars were conducted in English and lasted two hours. The format of the webinars included the participation of several key expert panellists from Poland and abroad (up to 6 people), both representatives of cities, NGOs and researchers, who shared their past experiences and presented adopted solutions in response to the migration-related emergencies from 2022 and earlier. The second part of the meetings included a moderated Q&A session. At the same time, all participants were encouraged to share their opinions, comments, good practices and sources of knowledge in the webinars' chat.

Invitations to participate in the webinars were widely circulated, especially in Poland, among cities and social organisations, with the support of various national and foreign universities and research networks, the Union of Polish Metropolises<sup>5</sup>, and international organisations.

Attendance reached up to 100 people on average per webinar. The webinars were recorded and made available to all interested parties on the YouTube channel of the

CMR UW<sup>6</sup>. As late as March 2022, the CMR UW team involved in the webinar series published a special CMR Spotlight newsletter issue on 'Migration and Cities in Humanitarian Crisis'.

Seeing a growing interest in research on policy initiatives and research outputs published after the seminars, a group of researchers involved in organising CMR Webinars initiated the establishment of the Laboratory of Urban and Regional Migration Policies at CMR UW. Created in September 2022 from the initiative of Karolina Łukasiewicz and Marta Pachocka and supported by a group of founding members-researchers, it formalised its ad-hoc activities and previous collaborations with local stakeholders.

The Lab unites several CMR UW researchers who share scientific interests in the urban dimension of migration, particularly migration policies. Its creation was also justified by the need to reflect scientifically on the concept of the local turn in migration governance in Central and Eastern European cities (see our forthcoming publication, Łukasiewicz et al. 2025), including Polish municipalities, benefiting from the expertise and research results of the CMR team.

Even prior to 2022, CMR researchers were involved in projects and collaborations with various local stakeholders concerning, among other things, integration governance. Examples of this are two projects focusing on Warsaw: "Foreigners-Varsovians. Diagnosis and recommendations for integration actions" (2021-2022) and "Equal access of foreigners to public services: Warsaw" (2021-2023).



## Success factors

Since its inception, the focus of the Lab's activities has been on horizontal cooperation between CMR members, who, on a day-to-day basis, belong to the three main CMR research units but whose interests remain in the intersection of cities and migration and activities targeting migrants at the local and regional government levels in Poland. The Lab's scope of activities primarily includes:

- involvement and overall support of all projects carried out at the CMR that concern cities and migration;
- coordination of activities on the part of the CMR within the framework of already signed agreements and cooperation/strategic partnerships with local government actors (including the Union of Polish Metropolises and the Warsaw City Hall) and other organisations (e.g. NGOs, including the Migration Consortium);
- preparing new agreements or establishing other forms of cooperation with the above-mentioned actors;
- cooperation with other research centres/units in Poland and abroad;
- preparation of grant proposals and commissioned research;
- the organisation of seminars/webinars in the group's thematic area;
- preparation of scientific publications, research reports and other publications that popularise knowledge about migration and cities.

The following key success factors for the Lab can be identified:

- an interdisciplinary and diverse team of researchers representing different areas of research (political science, sociology, economics, law, migration studies, European studies, urban studies);
- a very strong demand for theoretical and applied knowledge in the area from both researchers and practitioners;
- lack of functioning information exchange platforms with a similar profil;
- openness to discussion in a friendly environment;
- the platform being perceived as neutral/secure and the results documented in open access (YouTube recordings, reports, publications, newsletters).

All this together determines the Lab's development potential and sets a good example to follow.



### **Impact and lessons learned**

The Lab's activities initiated in 2022, largely in the context of increased interest from local-level policymakers and other migration governance stakeholders, continue until today. CMR Webinars on cities and migration are organised regularly and receive massive interest from policymakers, NGOs, IGOs and other local practitioners and experts. Their topics range from the response to the 2022 forced migration in Poland to the role of Ukrainian cities in response to post-2022 internal displacement, or more

systemic issues such as creating local and regional integration policies or good practices and the desired direction of change for nationally implemented integration programmes in Poland.

The premise of organising CMR Webinars remains the same – both the invited panellists and participants include representatives from the public, social and academic sectors, which fosters the exchange of opinions and creates an inclusive platform for discussion among local-level migration governance practitioners with the support of migration researchers. The topics of the webinars are often inspired by consultations and meetings with representatives of cities and NGOs.

Other more targeted forms of cooperation with practitioners have been established. Since 2022, the Lab has regularly collaborated with the Union of Polish Metropolises (an association of 12 major cities in the country), co-organising a series of CMR Webinars. Lab researchers have also been involved in the development of the report on the “Model of local policy for the integration of migrants in urban life. Assumptions and recommendations” (Warsaw, 2023) in a tripartite cooperation with the social partner NOMADA Association for the Integration of Multicultural Society and the Municipality of Wrocław. It also co-implemented the project “Polish School of Assistance” in cooperation with the NGO Migration Consortium and other research institutes, resulting in the report “Polish School of Assistance. Reception and Integration of Refugees from Ukraine in Poland in 2022” (Warsaw, 2023) (in Polish and English).



### **Learn more**

The website of the Laboratory of Urban and Regional Migration Policies:

<https://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/projects/the-laboratory-of-urban-and-regional-migration-policies/>

A short video about the Lab (YouTube, in Polish):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYNSnkSzyzk>



### **CMR webinars (selected, in Polish or English):**

[Migrations and cities in humanitarian crisis, 08/03/2022](#)

[Migration and cities: managing the crisis, 18/03/2022](#)

[Forced migration, relocation and housing, 29/04/2022](#)

[Forced migration and education, 06/05/2022](#)

[Forced migrants on the local labour markets, 19/05/2022](#)

[Forced migrants accessing the healthcare system and social services, 02/06/2022](#)

[Migration and cities: How to create local policies to include migrants in urban life, part 1, 17/03/2023](#)

[Migration and cities: How to create local policies to include migrants in urban life, part 2, 21/04/2023](#)



Migration and cities. Migrant inclusion measures - a medium and small cities perspective, 02.06.2023,

Ukrainian Cities at the Forefront of the Response to the post-2022 Internal Displacement, 12/01/2024

Migration and cities. Local migrant inclusion policies, 01/03/2024

Individual Integration Programmes (IPI) in Poland - good practices and desirable direction of change, 21/06/2024

International integration practices - lessons learned, 02/09/2024



### **Selected publications (in Polish or English):**

- “Polish School of Assistance. Reception and Integration of Refugees from Ukraine in Poland in 2022”, eds. Sarian Jarosz, Witold Klaus, Migration Consortium, Centre of Migration Research at the University of Warsaw/ CMR Foundation, Centre for Migration Studies at Adam Mickiewicz University, Warsaw 2023, <https://konsorcjum.org.pl/storage/2023/05/The-Polish-School-of-Assistance-Report.pdf>
- Cichocka Ewa, Homel Kseniya, Krzyworzeka-Jelinowska Aneta, Łukasiewicz Karolina, Nowosielski Michał, Pachocka Marta, Podgórska Karolina, Poptawska Joanna Zuzanna, Wach Dominik, Winiarska Aleksandra, A Guide to Creating Policies Including Persons with Migration Experiences in the Life of Cities, “CMR Spotlight” 2022, No. 12 (46), Special Issue, <https://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Spotlight-DECEMBER-2022.pdf>

- Homel Kseniya, Krzyworzeka-Jelinowska Aneta, Łukasiewicz Karolina, Nowosielski Michał, Pachocka Marta, Podgórska Karolina, Poptawska Joanna Zuzanna, Wach Dominik, Winiarska Aleksandra, "Model of local policy for the integration of migrants in urban life. Assumptions and recommendations", Warsaw 2023, <https://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/publikacje/model-lokalnej-polityki-wlaczania-migrantow-i-migrantek-w-zycie-miast-zalozenia-i-rekomendacje/>
- Łukasiewicz Karolina, Nowosielski Michał, Pachocka Marta, Podgórska Karolina, Reception of forced migrants from Ukraine - local and regional experiences, "CMR Spotlight" 2024, No. 2 (59), <https://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Spotlight-FEBRUARY-2024.pdf>
- Łukasiewicz Karolina, Nowosielski Michał, Pachocka Marta, Wach Dominik, Fiałkowska Kamila, Cichocka Ewa, Klaus Witold, Migration and cities in humanitarian crisis, "CMR Spotlight" 2022, No. 3 (38), Special Issue 2, <https://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Spotlight-Wydanie-Specjalne-2-2022-PL.pdf>

## Endnote

1 J. Fomina, M. Pachocka, Polish society's initial responses to the arrival of forced migrants from Ukraine in early 2022, "Canadian Foreign Policy Journal" 2024, 30(1), pp. 52-64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2024.2310245>.

2 See e.g. *Polish School of Assistance. Reception and Integration of Refugees from Ukraine in Poland in 2022*, eds. S. Jarosz, W. Klaus, Migration Consortium, Centre of Migration Research at the University of Warsaw/CMR Foundation, Centre for Migration Studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Warsaw 2023, <https://konsorcjum.org.pl/storage/2023/05/The-Polish-School-of-Assistance-Report.pdf>.

3 Union of Polish Metropolises, *Urban hospitality: Estimation of the number of Ukrainian nationals in the UMP cities – March, April, May 2022*, UPM, Warsaw 2022, [https://metropolie.pl/fileadmin/news/2022/07/Urban\\_hospitality\\_update.pdf](https://metropolie.pl/fileadmin/news/2022/07/Urban_hospitality_update.pdf).

4 UNHCR, *Ukraine refugee situation*, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

5 It is a foundation uniting the 12 biggest Polish cities, <https://metropolie.pl/>.

6 CMR UW at YT, <https://www.youtube.com/@centreofmigrationresearch7081>.

