

# KROK DO PRACY

## Centrum Wsparcia i Integracji

Project 'Step into Employment - Support and Integration Centre' is a joint initiative of the Foundation Innovation and Knowledge (FIIW), which has been operating for ten years, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), one of the oldest humanitarian organisations in the world. FIIW specialises in vocational and social activation, financial education and projects that promote education and lifelong learning for people from different social groups. The project was created as a response to the needs of refugees fleeing Ukraine who have found a temporary or permanent homes in the cities of Poznań and Katowice as a result of military actions in Ukraine. The project is funded by the UK Government - specifically by the Disaster Emergency Committee programme. Its main objective is to offer people from Ukraine who, as a result of the armed conflict, were forced to seek shelter in Poland services that would facilitate their integration into the local labour market and society.

For this purpose, in January 2023, FIIW and IRC launched two Support and Integration Centres in Katowice and Poznań. The centres were established to support refugees from Ukraine and others who face the challenge of finding permanent employment in Poland. They provide a wide range of services, including, among others: employment counselling, entrepreneurship support and grants for micro-enterprises, financial education workshops, Polish language courses, vocational training, soft skills training such as psycho-social support, job placement, legal assistance, interpretation support and childcare.

The project will support 3,000 people who can benefit from different activation pathways. The first, so-called 'fast path' offers employment counselling services, i.e. preparation/consultation of application documents or job offers, legal counselling or interpreter support. The second, so called 'full path' includes comprehensive support provided by a job counsellor and job matcher in order to diagnose the participant's needs and develop an Individual Action Plan, followed by selection of appropriate activation instruments, i.e. vocational training, Polish language course, soft skills training and finally, assistance in finding appropriate employment for the participant. As part of this full pathway, 50 participants with entrepreneurial mindset or those who have an idea for their own business, can benefit from business counselling and training on setting up and running their own business and then receive a one-off micro grant if their business plan proves successful.

Each Support and Integration Centre is staffed by a team of specialists such as Job Counsellors, a Job Matcher, a Legal Advisor, an Interpreter and a Reception and Child Zone Officer, and all operational activities are coordinated by the Centre Manager. With the help of these specialists, the project participants will be able to look for a job that not only provides for their basic needs, but also gives them the opportunity to become financially independent. Participants of the project 'Step into Employment', in addition to participating in traditional socio-professional activation services, can also take part in a series of integration events, regularly organised in each Centre, aimed at promoting cultural diversity and integrating the Ukrainian, Polish and other nationalities living in Silesia and Greater Poland Regions. In addition, each month, thematic meetings are held, conducted by external experts, exploring topics such as legal aspects of employment, taxes, conducting business activity in Poland, etc., which tend to provide Ukrainian citizens with practical knowledge facilitating their lives and work in Poland. Once a quarter, Job Fairs are organised in cooperation with local partner

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institutions, i.e. chambers of commerce, city halls or universities in order to reach the widest possible number of employers interested in employing Ukrainian people.

As the majority of Ukrainian refugees are women who have come to Poland with children or other dependants, each Support and Integration Centre has a Children's Zone - a special playroom where project participants can leave their children under the supervision of a caregiver while participating in counselling or training sessions.

*We have named our Centre 'Step into Employment' because it can mean a different step for everyone. Some people have worked here or in Ukraine before, others have not worked at all and now they need to find some employment and for them this process might be more challenging. Our main asset is that our programme is flexible and we are able to provide a holistic support that a particular person just needs. We wish people who come to us to be able to integrate more easily and efficiently into Polish society. And it is work that gives us financial independence and a better future - Katarzyna Jaszczuk, Vice-President of the Foundation Innovation and Knowledge.*

The Centres are open from Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. People interested in participating in the project can apply online by filling in a form available at [www.krokdopracy.org](http://www.krokdopracy.org). All services offered at the Support and Integration Centres in Katowice and Poznań are free of charge.

For more information on the project 'Step into Employment - Support and Integration Centre' visit:

www:

[www.krokdopracy.org](http://www.krokdopracy.org)

[www.fiiw.pl](http://www.fiiw.pl)

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