

# STEPPING UP

Ukrainian Refugees, Chngemaking  
& How to Make Europe a Better Place for All



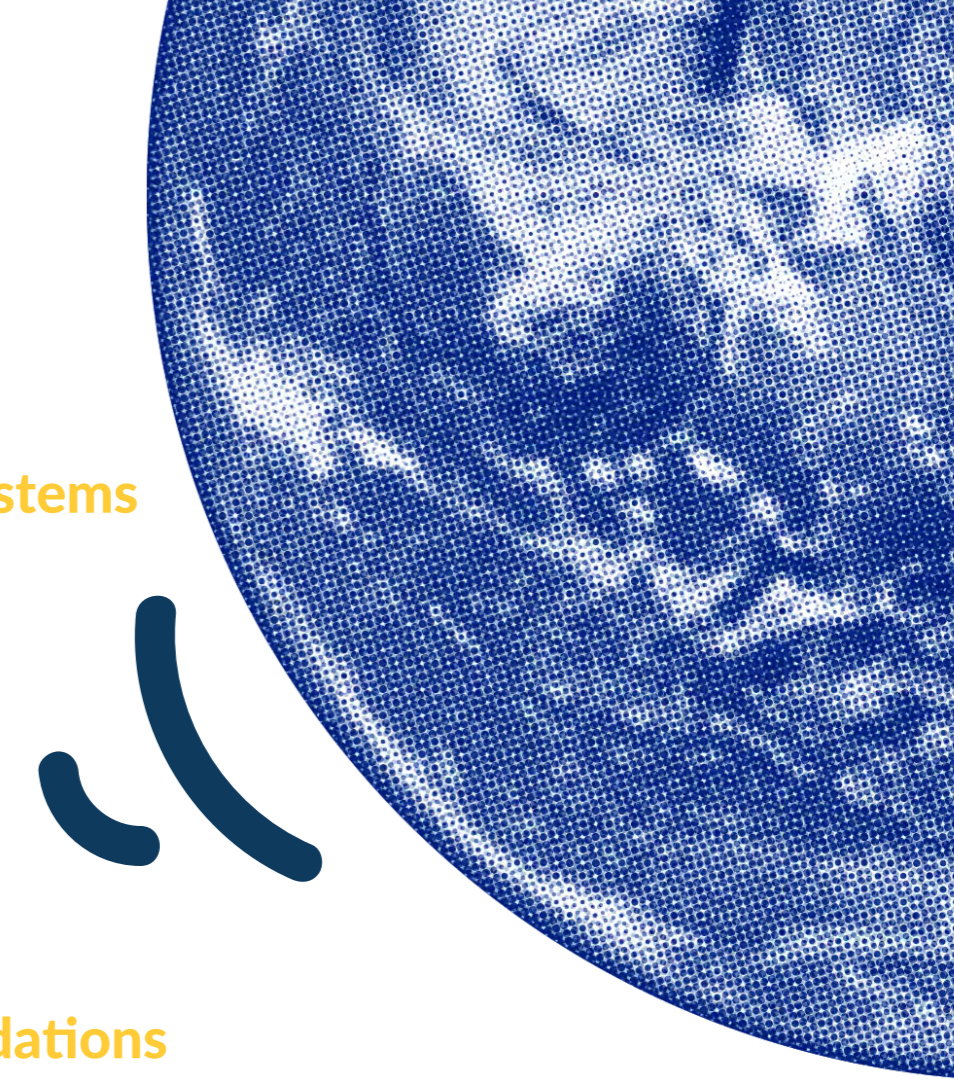
HELLO  
EUROPE



# Table of Contents

4	<b>Foreword</b>
6	<b>Acknowledgements</b>
8	<b>Executive Summary</b>
12	<b>Introduction</b>
14	<b>Methodology</b>
18	<b>Changemakers on the map</b>
30	<b>Key findings</b>
30	Seeing yourself as a changemaker
33	Barriers and challenges on the way
36	Emerging opportunities
36	Shifting mindsets and values

47	<b>Local Ecosystems</b>
48	Czechia
56	Germany
64	Hungary
70	Poland
78	Romania
88	Slovakia
94	<b>Recommendations</b>
94	Diversifying leadership
95	Increasing resources
97	More connection spaces
98	New stories
99	Activating changemakers
101	<b>Conclusions</b>
102	<b>Further Reading &amp; References</b>
106	<b>Appendix</b>



# Foreword

If we have learned one thing over the past eight years of Hello World's experience in the field of migration, it is that when people are on the move, changemaking happens. Of course, this does not annul the countless stories of heartbreak, pain and trauma that often drive people to make the impossible decision of uprooting their family and moving across a border to seek refuge or economic opportunity. The fact remains, regardless of the causes, throughout the journey of people on the move, value is created and changemaking happens. Migrants and refugees become changemakers, and their movement and actions also activate members of the communities that welcome them. If allowed, encouraged, and channeled in the right way, this can bring great good to all of society.

This report is proof of concept. It centers on the movement of refugees from Ukraine that has occurred at an intense rate over the last year, and on the changemakers that rose to the occasion to support and receive them. Importantly, this report goes very local while also providing a significant sample across six countries to show how widespread this fact is. We see leaders who quickly pivoted their organizations to serve people on the move, or others who started new initiatives to provide a solution. We also see migrants and people on the move themselves activating their own changemakers and creating powerful impact for their own communities – even in the face of incredible hardships.

The implications of this study, though, go beyond this particular situation. Indeed, recognizing and activating changemaking from and with people on the move is, we believe, a central lever to transform the broken system that governs migration and people on the move. From our experience in the field, we have developed what we call a “Framework Change” model that points to four shifts in the way we see migration. These shifts need to happen to break the divisiveness of the sector and unlock the potential of people on the move as a factor for positive change everywhere.

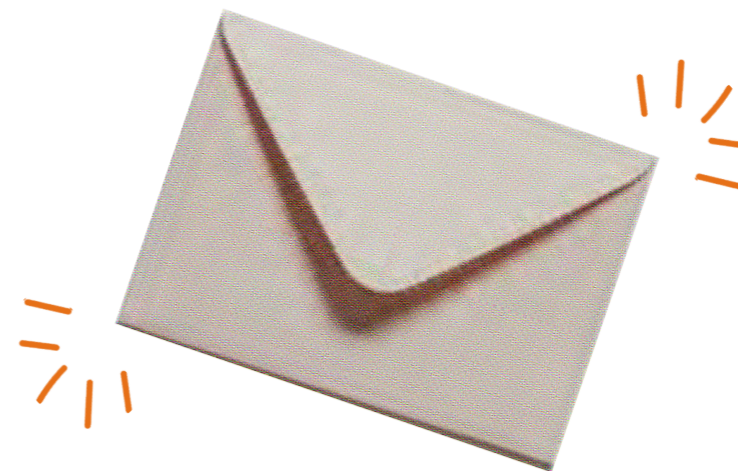
**The four shifts can be summarized as follows.**

- 1 Instead of portraying them as subjects of pity or compassion, **people on the move and the communities that welcome them must be seen as powerful contributors for the good of all.**
- 2 Resisting the false dichotomy of movers and stayers, **movement must be recognized as a shared experience and an opportunity for positive change.**
- 3 Rather than framing movement as a problem, **the knowledge, insights and resources created by people on the move and their communities need to be recognized as valuable for societal good.**
- 4 It is vital to recognize that **people on the move cultivate fluid identities and communities which are vehicles for change, often spanning multiple geographies.**

For more on our Framework Change, read our recent report [Migration: People on the Move](#).

In this paper, we see seeds of this Framework Change in each of these leaders. They are shifting the way we see and speak about people on the move, recognizing their value (or proving it as migrants and refugees themselves), and building new and powerful communities that can be vehicles for changemaking. However, they also need support, encouragement and opportunities to continue to grow in impact and reach.

**We hope everyone who reads this will be inspired and challenged. Inspired by the changemaking, the leadership, the innovation that has been sparked by a large movement of people. Challenged to find ways to join the movement and support innovators like those portrayed here. Indeed, we need more changemakers, and especially from the communities affected by the issues. This requires changemakers to be celebrated, to have access to resources, and to actively participate in key decision-making at all levels. We all need to pitch in and imagine our role in this transformation. Our world needs us to help build an environment where solutions outrun problems.**



**MARÍA MÉROLA & KENNY CLEWETT**

CO-DIRECTORS OF  
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# Acknowledgements

We want to celebrate and thank all the participating changemakers who shared their valuable insights and experiences with us (their list in the Appendix).

The team behind this report

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## About Ashoka

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

Ashoka is the largest global network of leading social entrepreneurs—individuals with new ideas to systemically address the world's biggest challenges and the entrepreneurial skill to transform those ideas into national, regional, and global social impact. For more than 40 years, Ashoka has supported nearly 4,000 social entrepreneurs in more than 90 countries with solutions addressing society's most pressing issues. Ashoka's vision is a world in which Everyone is a Changemaker—a society that responds quickly and effectively to challenges, and where each individual has the freedom, confidence and societal support to address any social problem.



## About Hello World

<https://helloworld.ashoka.org>

Since 2015, Ashoka's Hello World initiative has been activating changemaking in the field of migration around the world, starting in Europe and Latin America and spreading globally. We work with changemakers, social innovators, policy makers, opinion leaders and other key partners to change the way we think and act on global migration. With over eight years of experience in analyzing trends and collaborating with key experts and decision-makers in the field, we are building a system of solutions and changemakers for migration, influencing policy and shaping narratives.



## About Hello Europe

[www.hello-europe.eu](http://www.hello-europe.eu)

Hello Europe is part of Hello World and drives Ashoka's migration work in Europe. Our strategy stands on three fundamental pillars. We go wide by identifying, activating and connecting changemakers working in the field of migration. We go deep by scaling the best solutions and showing how the framework can be changed in high potential ecosystems. And we tell the story to knead these changes into policy structures and the public imagination.



## About HEY – Hello Europe Youth

<https://www.hello-europe.eu/young-changemakers>

"HEY" is the youth program of the Migration Initiative by Ashoka. Since 2022, HEY has been supporting young migrants who contribute to solving social issues. With a supportive network, they can play an active role in society and unleash their potential. In doing so, they create new narratives and tell stories that lead to a profound change in the perception of migrating individuals. Young people are capable and willing to co-create social change.

# Executive Summary

This paper is the result of a mapping exercise across 6 countries in Europe (Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia), to identify changemakers who are welcoming and supporting refugees from Ukraine. The aim is, first, to inform and inspire the sector by showing the work going on, and especially highlight the role of changemakers with a migrant background, as well as to highlight some of the challenges they face. Second, we hope to provide actionable ideas to support and activate changemakers in this field. The effort is part of Ashoka's Hello Europe Refugee Fund, launched in early 2022 to support social entrepreneurs and changemakers across Europe doing systemic work around the large movement of refugees from Ukraine.

Using a 'snowball' data collection model through in person interviews, it analyzes 365 changemakers work from around Europe, looking at their work, barriers, opportunities, and desired societal changes. The data that emerged pointed to interesting trends:

## Who are the changemakers?

One third of all changemakers analyzed are migrants themselves. This shows a powerful resilience and changemaking, as they overcome significant obstacles to start their organizations and achieve funding to support fellow migrants. Regarding gender, 70% are women, reinforcing the observation that 'help has a female face', and often, despite balanced gender distribution, they play roles traditionally associated to women. Regarding age, youth are very active, especially those from "Millennial and Gen Z" generations, despite significant challenges to access resources. Finally, the majority work in NGOs or other non profits, with 74% holding key leadership roles. Half of them are involved in relief work in Ukraine itself.

## Self-identified as changemakers

All respondents identify themselves as changemakers, which is a key factor for ongoing change. The degree of self-identification varies according to factors such as gender identity, location. Lived experiences, especially overcoming personal and work-related barriers, significantly shape one's self-perception as a changemaker.

## What are the barriers and challenges they face?

Respondents spoke mostly of lack of funding, difficult relationship with government authorities, mental health challenges, workforce deficit, lack of

awareness, prejudices and negative narratives. In addition, the report points to long-term financial stability for changemakers' organizations as a major need, as well as an increased awareness in society about their work, and an urgency to address harmful narratives about refugees. Opportunities emerge also around building strong community, the continued sense of urgency many feel, the untapped potential of people on the move as changemakers themselves, and general goodwill towards refugees require the contribution of the whole spectrum of actors.

## What are changemakers hoping to change in the long term?

Interviewees point to a deep need for a shift in mindsets and values to start with empathy, recognize the value and contribution of refugees, overcome biases, and address fears of personal neglect ("if the other gets something, I might lose it"). There should be a more intentional focus on community-based changemakers. They also talked about raising awareness about mental health and celebrating the efforts already made as a way to move forward. They also highlighted the need for better information on migrants, responsible media narratives, political will, promotion of diversity, direct interactions between migrants and locals, and more resources and assistance for the sector and refugees. Finally, there is a latent desire for more spaces to participate.

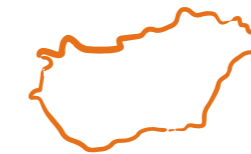
There are specific challenges experienced by the six countries included in the research and detailed by local authors:

## Czechia



accepted the largest number per capita of refugees compared to other countries. Challenges include housing, employment, and long-term integration of refugees. The country also notes tensions among vulnerable groups and the importance of shifting refugee narratives.

## Hungary



Despite its multiethnic history, currently there is an imaginary connection between ethnic homogeneity and economic success. The country's approach to migration is mostly short-term, with a lack of long-term strategies for integration. This calls for a paradigm shift in migration narratives, strategies, and hiring practices.

## Romania



Characterized as a country of emigration, Romania was unprepared for the influx of Ukrainian refugees following the outbreak of war. NGOs and civil society played a significant role, but there is a need for effective state migration policy, and addressing the impact of the crisis on various societal levels.

## Germany



has a rich migration history and large migrant communities. Overall, it seems the country recognizes young migrants as powerful contributors to society and calls for a shift from a deficit-oriented view to a resource-oriented perspective. The importance of education and addressing socio-economic disparities among migrant children is emphasized.

## Poland



Due to migration patterns and dynamic societal changes in Poland, it has recently become an immigration hub, particularly for those fleeing the war in Ukraine. The challenges and opportunities include the growing role of civil society organizations and the need for improved migration and refugee legal system.

## Slovakia



responded to the challenge of an unprecedented influx of refugees through the contribution of local municipalities, NGOs, and international organizations to the humanitarian effort. Issues of political leadership and public opinion regarding refugees are especially visible.

The report concludes with **five key recommendations** to strengthen the changemaking ecosystem in Europe for refugees and migrants.



There is a need for **more leadership from underrepresented communities** such as those with a migrant background, women, and youth. These leaders bring invaluable insights and resourcefulness, but often face additional barriers including funding challenges and isolation. Therefore, stakeholders must intentionally identify and support these leaders, potentially through dedicated funding mechanisms and diversity checks in organizational leadership structures.



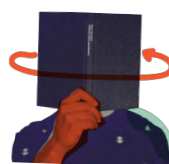
**New resources are required urgently** to support changemakers aiding refugees, particularly long-term financial support to sustain organizations and their leaders. A shift in focus from emergency relief to long-term investment is crucial, and funding must be accessible, flexible, and focused on key long-term topics such as migration narratives and community support.



There must be **more connection spaces** to foster significant personal and professional connections between changemakers and the communities they work in. This involves networking and co-creation opportunities, as well as deeper connections to overcome feelings of isolation.



The **narratives surrounding migration need to change**, focusing on contributions and hope rather than pity or compassion. This involves building empathy, countering propaganda, and celebrating success. Migrants need to be seen as the changemakers they are.



Pointing forward, organizations need **to intentionally activate more changemakers** and provide support to them and their organizations. This involves developing specific strategies to cultivate changemaking within organizations and communities, and dedicating resources and effort towards this.

As we look to the future and the new challenges that loom on the horizon, this report suggests a need to prioritize activating changemakers broadly across society. Increasing changemaking skills and confidence, especially from a young age, is the only way to build a world where Everyone is a Changemaker, and where solutions outrun the problems that emerge.

Targeted at changemakers, social entrepreneurs, policy and business decision-makers, journalists, researchers, and the general public, this report aims to spread the understanding and importance of changemaking across Europe. While the refugee movement was caused by tragic events, it has also spurred positive change in communities and fostered a spirit of entrepreneurship that could benefit Europe in the long run.



# Introduction

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia on February 24, 2022, immediately led to a huge wave of movement by refugees. Within less than a month, a quarter of the country's population had left their homes, and several millions found themselves in the neighboring countries (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Moldova) or moved further, with largest numbers applying for asylum or other forms of temporary protection in Poland, Germany, and Czechia.

In response to these tragic events that uprooted so many, changemaking blossomed at an astonishing rate across Europe. Very quickly, our Ashoka network jumped into action, especially in bordering countries. Many of our Fellows went to work, shifting their focus to welcome and support newly arrived refugees. Some Fellows worked on setting up efficient reception and direction infrastructure at the border, while others' work focused on documenting, training and implementing measures against discrimination and trafficking on the border. Other Fellows built specific solutions for and provided vital immediate assistance to forgotten communities, like those with disabilities, orphaned children, or mothers giving birth ([see concrete examples here](#)).

Additionally, we saw members of the Hello Europe community rise to the occasion, many with a migrant background and, in Central Europe, belonging to the Ukrainian diaspora. Their role proved essential, as they had the capacity to activate changemakers from those arriving at a quick and powerful speed.

In the midst of joining changemaking efforts around immediate relief, we also encouraged our network to think in the medium and long term ([see letter on how to help here](#)). We know from our experience in the field that, after the first months of relief, resources and energy drain quickly. If we don't plan for long-term endurance, innovation turns into exhaustion, excitement into discouragement. Therefore, we launched the Hello Europe Refugee Fund to address these long-term issues through our network ([see link here](#)). A top priority was to encourage the sector to create better conditions for changemakers to receive funding, support and recognition. This paper is one of the outputs of this goal and, we hope, a resource to spark long-term improvements.

## The mapping report in your hands aims to achieve two goals:

1

On the one hand, it is meant to inform and inspire. It is a descriptive report that provides the reader with information on what is being done and where support is needed. The mapping paints a picture of the changemaking that emerged: it displays important information regarding changemakers' origin, the type of work they are doing, the resources they provide and what they need to keep active. The report shows the **importance of changemakers with migrant background**: when they are involved, changemaking increases and, often, effective impact does too, given their ability to build bridges between communities. We also see the **fields changemakers are working in**, which hint at what has been most important so far: for example, there is a strong focus on preventing radicalization in our Fellows' work. Additionally, we see the **barriers and risks**, such as lack of funding, resistance from authorities and mental health. These are the three top factors changemakers are dealing with, which cause concern and should be acted on.

2

On the other hand, the report gives the reader ideas to act upon. It includes recommendations and ideas on how we can move forward and provide better infrastructure to support changemakers in the field of people on the move. Pulling from Ashoka's decades of experience supporting changemakers and social entrepreneurs all around the world, we point to some of the keys to exponentially increase these changemakers' impact. They can be summarized in three big ideas. First, **more support infrastructure needs to be created for changemakers to thrive**: funding that is flexible and simple to achieve, visibility of their projects, training for organizational capacitation, and mental healthcare are some of the main needs. Second, **changemakers need to make activating other changemakers a central priority of their work**. To achieve a world where

solutions outrun problems, we need more changemakers, and this is also the best way to increase and spread impact. Third, **changemakers with migrant backgrounds need to be intentionally recognized and supported**. As proximate leaders, they are often more effective and play key roles that would require more resources and time from non-migrant leaders. We see this in some of the research from the response to the Ukrainian refugee movement: in locations where the Ukrainian diaspora was already involved in social entrepreneurship, newly arrived refugees were activated as volunteers and changemakers more quickly, creating a domino effect for the good of all. This is a gamechanger for work with migration.

This report is intended for multiple types of readers: for changemakers, social entrepreneurs and those that support them – to better understand the field and where to go; for decision makers in policy, business and philanthropy – to see opportunities to unlock resources to make a large impact; for journalists and researchers – to see a fuller picture of where innovation is happening and areas to research deeper; and for society at large – to understand how important changemaking is and be encouraged to engage. All these perspectives are essential if we are to continue to spread changemaking for the good of all across Europe.

The events that set off this important movement of people in Europe are tragic, and many of those on the move have heart-wrenching stories that will need time to heal. At the same time, this movement has brought opportunity and solutions to communities that desperately needed them, and an impulse to changemaking and entrepreneurship that, if supported well, could bring benefits to Europe as a whole for decades to come. The moment is important, and we for one are committed to support these changemakers in order to strive towards a World where Everyone is a Changemaker.

 **WILL YOU JOIN US?**

# Methodology

## From data to actions

As part of the work of the Hello Europe Refugee Fund, which was established by Ashoka in February 2022 in response to the invasion of Ukraine, it became clear that what the ecosystem needs is direct insight. It needs to understand the real situation on the ground, experienced by changemakers who have been welcoming Ukrainian refugees, as well as their vision for the future of that ecosystem. To gain that acumen, the Hello Europe team designed a process that would enable us to learn straight from changemakers themselves and use the advantage of being one of the largest networks of social innovators in the world: this allows for meta-level data aggregation and extracting valuable conclusions.

### 1 SELECTING THE COUNTRIES

We have selected **six countries** where we invited changemakers involved in helping Ukrainian refugees to share their thoughts with us. These countries include four out of five countries which directly border with Ukraine (Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia) and three countries that have highest numbers of refugees residing in (Czechia, Germany, and, again, Poland). In these six countries, besides having experienced local teams, Ashoka has already engaged a vibrant community consisting of Fellows and other social entrepreneurs, young changemakers, and allies and partners in the public and private sector.

### 2 CHOOSING THE METHOD

In the past, Ashoka has conducted numerous **mappings**, showcasing different groups of changemakers: from social entrepreneurs active in a particular country (e.g., **Romania**) to innovators in a particular field (e.g., **climate**). Such maps have raised the visibility of changemakers' solutions and created multiple new opportunities in terms of collaboration, funding, and scaling up. In all of these cases, Ashoka has used a so-called 'snowball' method to create a visualization of the changemakers' network where individuals and



their organizations are shown as connected to each other based on the nominations given during their interviews.

While an initial cohort of 15-20 'starting points' were chosen by Ashoka staff in a way to be as representative and diverse as the community in question, the database is then filled based on the estimation of the members of that community: they are asked to share the names of key actors whom they know or have worked together in the same field. The nominees are then contacted, interviewed, and added to the growing map. Interviewing changemakers to place them on a map is also an occasion to ask them deeper questions to collect statistical data about their work, as well as to measure their attitudes and opinions.

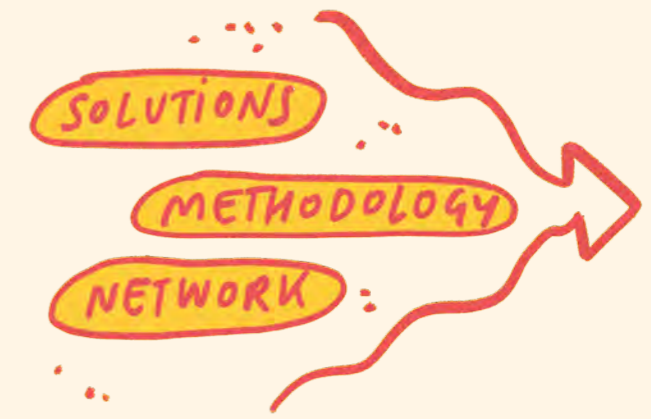
The distinctive feature of snowball analysis thus is its radical bottom-up approach: it is based on the knowledge of the community members and the researched sample itself is co-created with the community, which in a way is a form of peer reviewing and validating of the result.

### 3 ADAPTING THE METHOD

When we invited local teams to join us on this journey, they were given a degree of autonomy to align this research with the strategic priorities of their local work and communities. Two countries, Poland and Germany – given the size of the sector of welcoming Ukrainian refugees there – decided to narrow the sample, focusing primarily on young changemakers and those organizations that engage youth. As can be seen in the results, they have ventured outside that bracket, but the natural age groups' balance is nevertheless intentionally distorted.

Poland made this mapping part of their larger snowball research into young changemakers in Poland, where respondents landed on our map only if they work with Ukrainian refugees, which explains multiple disconnections in the resulting graph for Poland.

And while analyzing such 'multi-optional' data presented a challenge, in the end it is thanks to these methodological variations that the overall dataset is so rich in wisdom coming from the diversity of the contexts.



Germany, on the other hand, had a distinct focus on the changemaking of the young persons with migration background. The map for Germany, however, shows lower connectedness for a different reason: German culture can be characterized by a very specific data protection sensitivity and approach, with people being very reluctant to give anyone else's details.

### 4 IMPLEMENTING THE METHOD AND DESIGNING THE TOOLS



For the mapping of changemakers responding to the arrival of refugees from Ukraine, Hello Europe team developed general guidelines for the local teams of interviewers and a set of tools: the online questionnaire to be filled by the interviewers during their conversations with the respondents and the GDPR form to collect their explicit consent for the use of their data. Those forms were available in English and Ukrainian since some of the changemakers and interviewers are Ukrainian migrants themselves. Additionally, local teams could make their localized versions of the forms.



The main form consisted of several sections:

- building the profile of the person with questions like age, gender, migration background, etc.;
- building the profile of their initiative or organization with questions about its history, areas and types of activity, funding, etc.;
- asking their opinion about the existing barriers and opportunities for their work;
- gathering their take on the mindset shifts or shifts in values that need to occur for society to welcome people on the move as a positive force

in their communities, as well as obstacles they see for such shifts;

- finally, the nominations: names and contacts of other changemakers in the field.

We used closed questions as much as possible to make the interview process shorter and smoother. However, on several occasions we asked their opinion by means of giving a mark between 1 and 5: e.g., 1 for feeling completely not welcome as a migrant in their new country and 5 for feeling fully welcome. For the two mindset shift and obstacles questions, we collected direct quotes without predefined answers.

5

## COLLECTING THE DATA

Interviews were conducted between January 16 – May 30, 2023, by a team of over a dozen interviewers. The answers were collected using the online form filled by the interviewers during phone calls or online video conferences with the respondents. An average interview lasted about an hour. Respondents were then sent a link to the GDPR-consent form. Only the names of those whose explicit consent we have received are placed on the map.

The snowball process was considered finished for every country when it reached the initial target level set by the local team and when the map could be considered 'saturated,' as no new respondents could be reached or agreed to participate. In the end, we have gathered between 50 and 76 respondents per country. And while for each country, the level of how representative that sample is for the overall ecosystem is different, these numbers are reasonably comparable and allow us to draw conclusions based on the similarity of responses within each of the data subsets.

6

## ANALYZING THE DATA AND SYNTHESIZING THE FINDINGS

In order to analyze the 365 gathered responses, responses in other languages had to be translated into English and then merged into one dataset. For basic statistical observations and simple correlations, we used the MS Excel functions. For more sophisticated cases requiring too many human-hours, such as 'Other' options for closed-list questions and, especially, for the two open questions about mindset shifts, we were assisted by a commercial version of ChatGPT. No personal or sensitive information was ever given to the tool, as all dataset entries were submitted for linguistic analysis in an anonymized form, with only entry IDs and the quotes included in the queries. ChatGPT was asked to cluster the entries based on their semantic proximity.

This has allowed us, among other things, to identify additional barriers to changemakers' work and has helped us significantly in summarizing the changemakers' vision of the shifts that would lead our societies to a future when people on the move are seen as a positive force.

7

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The next stage, after the report presentation for local and international communities in the fall of 2023, is in your hands!

A bird's-eye view of the situation has allowed us to gain insight into the contexts and changemaking of 365 wonderful persons. With this knowledge that we bring to the table, we invite all the readers of this report to act upon it. In the Recommendations chapter of this report, we summarize some of the key points that can be taken upon by different constituencies. It is our shared responsibility to go beyond yet another data collection towards informed decisions and ecosystem transformation.

**With this report, Ashoka commits to use its unique position to convey the Stepping Up message of this research to the whole spectrum of stakeholders, as well as to further engage the changemakers working in the field of migration, bringing the ecosystem closer together for the good of all.**

Interestingly, artificial intelligence of ChatGPT is similar to a human mind in a way that, if asked several times, it can produce different outcomes, just as with asking several human researchers. So, the outcomes of AI analysis were additionally filtered by a human who merged them checking for the consistency of entries' allocation.

Adding to this the fact that the clusters produced by ChatGPT were at times overlapping/redundant or the allocation of a specific entry to a cluster was erroneously based on a minor detail in the quote, nevertheless validating and amending the

results by human researchers was much less time-consuming than doing it all manually from scratch. We humbly offer this experience to other researchers in the field, knowing that AI use in social sciences will only grow with time.

Further work with the outcomes of the mapping and interviews on the local and pan-European level was conducted by a large global team including the interviewers from all participating countries and additional experienced researchers and editors, previously involved in the work of Hello World.

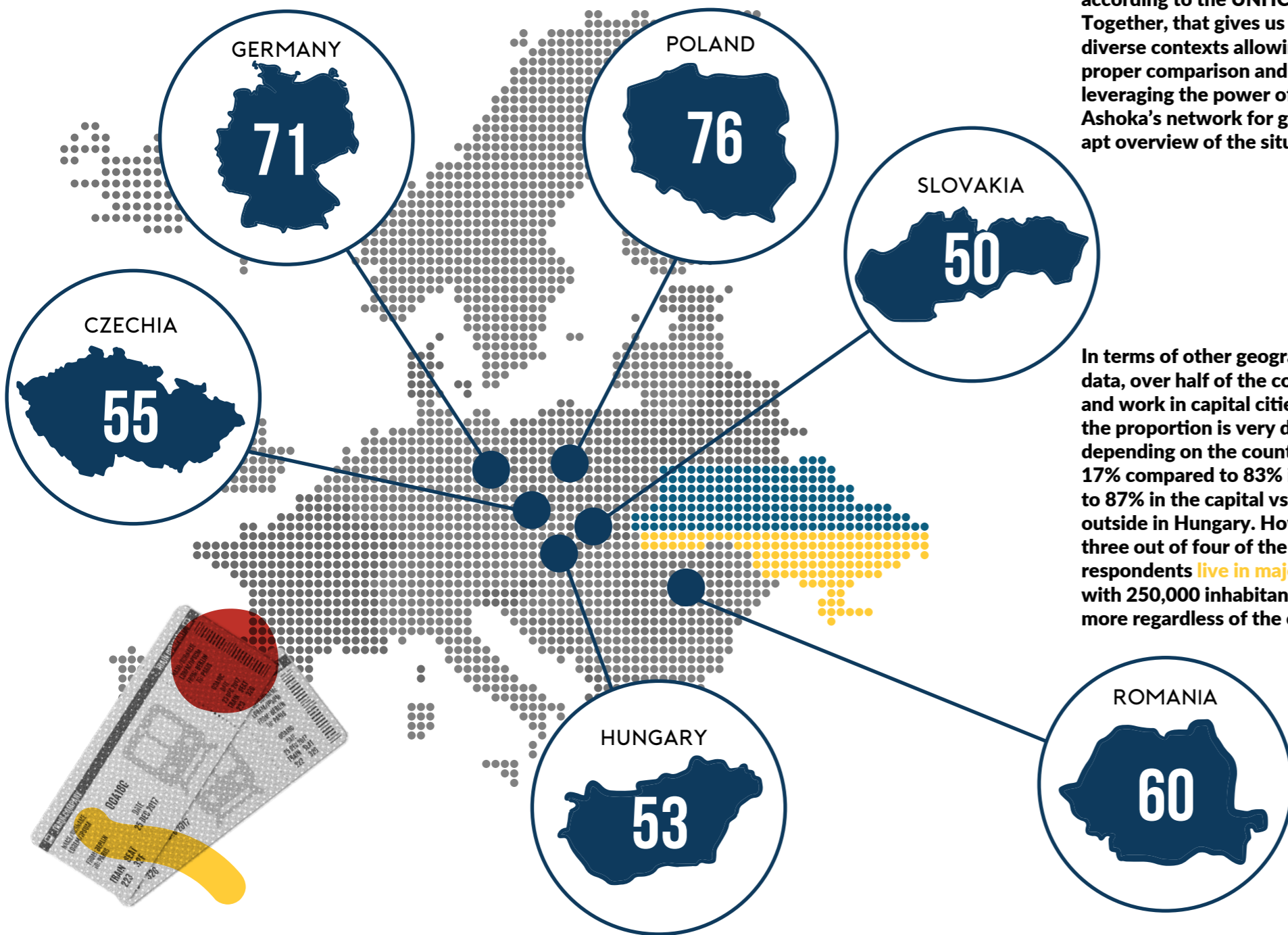


# Changemakers on the map

## Who they are and what they do

**365** changemakers took part in this research. We know that there are many more people who are engaged in helping Ukrainian refugees in their countries, but we would like to have a closer look at this particular group of those on our map.

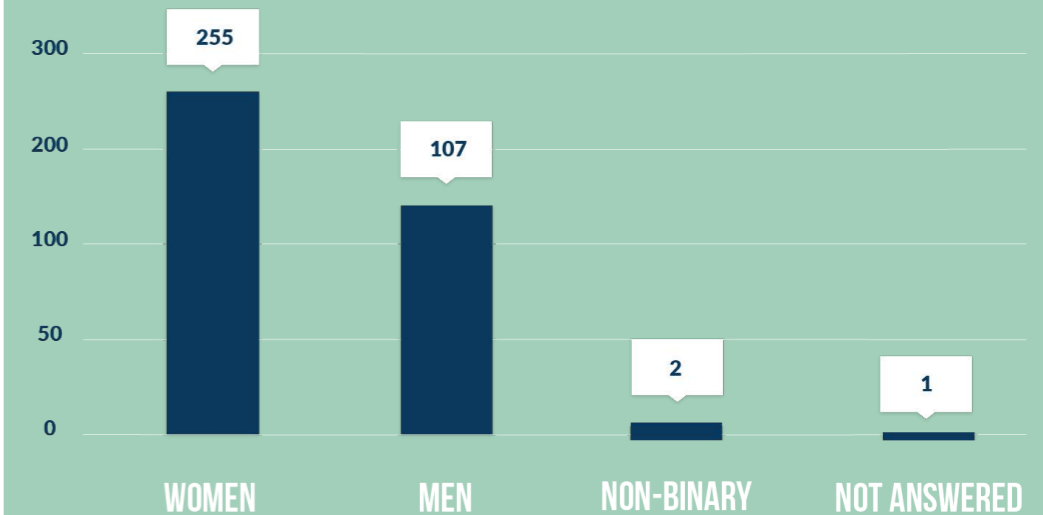
In this research, we collected and analyzed respondent's personal details like location (capital city vs. rural areas), gender, and age group. Information about their work was also critical for this mapping, such as whether they work in the public or private sector, what their organization's target audience is, the type of support they provide, and more. To see a full breakdown of the research findings, continue reading these pages.



Why did we choose these **six countries**? Four out of them border with Ukraine directly (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Romania) and have seen the highest numbers of Ukrainian refugees cross their border. At the same time, three out of those six countries (Czechia, Germany, Poland) have the highest number of refugees staying and registering, according to the UNHCR data. Together, that gives us a map of diverse contexts allowing for proper comparison and analysis, leveraging the power of Ashoka's network for gaining an apt overview of the situation.

In terms of other geographical data, over half of the cohort live and work in capital cities, but the proportion is very diverse depending on the country: from 17% compared to 83% in Poland to 87% in the capital vs. 13% outside in Hungary. However, three out of four of the respondents live in major cities with 250,000 inhabitants or more regardless of the country.

## GENDER: TRADITION ASSIGNING THE ROLES



70% of our 365-strong cohort of changemakers are women: from 59% in Germany to 76% in Poland and Czechia, which is confirmed by the general observation that 'help has a female face' and that most persons involved in welcoming Ukrainian refugees are women. The reasons for that can be a topic for separate interdisciplinary research: it is worth reflecting on whether women in our societies are socially conditioned to practice more empathy or whether their higher capacity for social work is a result of power dynamics in patriarchal frameworks. Yet, whatever the reasons, we

consider it important to acknowledge **the leading role of women** in the response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees and celebrate women as changemakers. Historically, most of the acclaimed social entrepreneurs and innovators in the world are men: even among Ashoka Fellows the proportion is closer to 58% compared to 42% in favor of men.

Among other interesting findings, we should mention three respondents who identified as non-binary or preferred not to answer the gender question, all of them from Germany and from the younger age brackets.

In terms of **other demographic characteristics** (age structure, population of residence city, migrant status, etc.), there are **no significant differences** between the female and male changemakers in the cohort, with the exception of the rather obvious fact that there are almost no men among those changemakers who themselves are Ukrainian refugees: most Ukrainian men have not been allowed to leave their country during the war.

As for the **types of help**, they are also shared by the genders in a rather balanced way. Yet, women are more visible in providing those kinds of care that are traditionally associated with their gender: psychological help and education for children and youth (difference of 8-9%). Organizations led by men are more involved in coordination work for the sector and funding (difference of 6-9%). And men take leading roles in their

organizations more often than women (difference of 7%). Women-led organizations provide more space for the migrants to play active part (difference of 5%).

Male changemakers are more critical of the role of the authorities (55% vs 45%) and they report fewer problems with mental health, workforce deficit and lack of public awareness of their work (ca. 32% vs ca. 42%). They focus less on the need for shifts in education (36% vs 48%), inclusion and integration work (17% vs 25%) and addressing economic disparities in aid allocation and fear of neglect experienced by the local population (2% vs 11%). At the same time, they seem to be aware of the social conditioning of their role: they speak more often about the need for direct personal contacts with migrants and about the lack of empathy in the society (difference of 2-4%). They are indeed 20% less connected than female changemakers: 2.28 nominations of other changemakers to take part in the research vs 2.84.

## YOUNG PEOPLE: CONFIDENCE OF NEW REALITY MUST HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE



Not surprisingly, **the most represented** and most active in helping Ukrainian refugees are the younger (164) and older (148) **adults**, aka 'Millennials' and 'Gen X,' respectively. They are more experienced in practicing their agency and have more resources and connections that make it easier for them to respond to new challenges.

The more commendable is the **active participation of the younger generation**, aka 'Gen Z' (43), for many of whom working with Ukrainian refugees was their first bold step as changemakers. This group's rising to the occasion is crucial from the point of view of building a world where every person changes the world for the good of all, having learned from a young age what empathy means in practice. And while they are less rooted in existing systems, they show great power of change and hold important keys to the stepping up of the whole ecosystem.

Even though they occupy lower positions (44% are not leaders in their organizations vs 24% among adults), are less connected (they nominated on average 1.12 other changemakers to participate in the research compared to 2.89 nominations by the adults), have less funding coming from such donors as EU (14% vs 24%) and businesses (12% vs 36%) or report having no funding at all (14% vs 2%), they **do not lack confidence**. The level of self-perception as changemakers is absolutely the same for the youth and the adults (85%).

They don't believe systems are unfavorable to them: it was as easy to start their initiatives for

them as for the older group (58-59%). They are even less critical of the systems in terms of welcoming the refugees: they perceive the systems to be 47% ready, while the adults give a lower level of 33%. And they are surprisingly more forgiving of powerholders' shortcomings: only 22% of them mention this barrier, as opposed to 49% among the adults.

They are very optimistic: the main opportunity they see in the current situation is the untapped future potential of the refugees and of the movement around them (58% vs 37% for the adults). They are not so much dreaming, but rather **already living in a different world**: while they consider stereotypes and prejudices as one of the most prominent obstacles (31%), they almost don't mention the need to promote the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion (8% vs 25% for the adults), as they are their everyday reality. Not relying on traditional media as much as the adults, their perception of the negative role of the media is also lower (8% vs 28%). They count less on existing frameworks: 32% of them operate individually or without a legal entity, while the same can be said only about 14% of adults.

They are very **focused on problem-solving**: 47% of them work just with refugees (vs 29% adults). And while they are less present in traditional 'grownups' sectors such as healthcare (17% vs 43%), human rights (43% vs 59%) or ageing (0% vs 13%), they devote all their power to the areas where they have more opportunities: they are 21% more engaged in the education field than

the adults (83% vs 62%). With those types of help that require more resources (humanitarian aid, housing, logistics, psychological help, access to labor market, policies/lobbying and especially medical help), they show 8-26% less involvement than their senior counterparts. The same is true for coordination of the sector or providing financial support to other organizations: they are 10-12% less involved in such roles. Yet, where they can depend more on themselves, they are **ready to take the lead**: with building support networks, intercultural exchange, translations the difference is ca. 2% in their favor, going onto 5% with the narratives work (21% vs 16%).

And finally, **they create a different climate** in their initiatives: not only are they involving youth itself 18% more (66% vs 48%), which is logical given the leadership roles of young changemakers, but they are 12% stronger in terms of the refugees running the place (as opposed to being passive objects of care and pity): 61% vs 49%.

We are already amazed by the great things these young changemakers have achieved and we can't wait to see what is around the corner for them and how their different take on things opens more possibilities for change. Yet, in order to 'shift gears' as an ecosystem, we need to not only provide young changemakers with more resources, but also help them build their social capital: judging by their low connectedness to other actors, **they are not as part of the conversation** as much as they deserve and as needed for deep transformations.



## MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES: CREATING NEW QUALITY DESPITE THE LACK OF RESOURCES

**One-third** of the mapped changemakers (124) **are migrants themselves**. Among them, one-fourth (28) only came to their new country in 2022 fleeing from Ukraine, others have arrived from a variety of places and in different moments in the past. Yet, whatever their migration path and history, they stepped up for their fellow migrants, showing wonderful examples of solidarity.

Given their longer experience with the host country, the non-refugee migrants **feel slightly more welcome** than the newly arrived refugees (72% vs 70%). Possibly due to them also being on the receiving end of the offered help, refugees **see the systems as being more ready** to welcome them (54%) than other migrants (41%) or non-migrants (29%).

At the same time, in terms of practicing their changemaking, it is **least easy for them to start** their own initiative or organization (45%) compared to other migrants (55%) or non-migrants (62%). And yet, one-third of migrants' organizations were launched in response to the current war; however, that rate is much lower for the non-migrants (15%).

Not surprisingly, 29% of refugees and migrants work independently or without a structure/legal entity, while this is true only for 9% of non-migrants. 75% of refugees' initiatives lack funding, which is 21% more than the corresponding figure for non-migrants. Obviously, that precludes changemakers with

migration backgrounds from providing financial support to their beneficiaries: they mostly offer direct help.

Refugees are least critical of the **role of the authorities** in the ecosystem: 21% compared to 46% for non-migrants and 50% for non-refugees. It is the locals that lead in the conviction that the powerholders' attitudes and practices should change: 42% vs 8% for refugees.

Migrants' initiatives are much **more focused**: around half of them work with refugees only, while this can only be said for about one out of four non-migrants' organizations. They are also concentrating on hands-on help: while the share of refugees and other migrants that implement projects is the same as for the non-migrants, their organizations are much less involved in all other roles (funding, research, regulation, etc.), with difference going up to 18%.

While all of these groups are involved in many common **types of help** (the top shared one being education for children and youth), their different backgrounds are clearly reflected in their priorities: when the non-migrants concentrate on providing humanitarian aid and shelters, the non-refugee migrants are offering education for adults, building support networks and providing opportunities for intercultural exchange, and the refugees are primarily involved in psychological help and education.

As for the individual roles, refugees are **more likely to be in supporting positions**: only 46% of

them call themselves leaders of their initiatives, while for the more rooted groups this figure goes up to 73-77%. However, the migrants' organizations are much more strongly **run by the marginalized groups** than those of the locals: 76% vs 42% for refugees and 57% vs 47% for youth. Yet, only 8% of refugees and 14% of other migrants stress the importance of direct contacts between the newcomers and the locals: as the exposure is lacking on the local population's side, it is the non-migrant changemakers who see this as an immediately needed shift at 33%. At the same time, non-migrants are much more connected: on average, they nominated 3.23 other changemakers to take part in this research, while the level for migrants was two times lower.

Among **other things to address** that changemakers on the move see stronger than the host community are the misinformation and propaganda (78% for refugees vs 50% for non-migrants), historical issues (44% vs 10%) and language barriers (22% vs 7%). Additionally, it is the non-refugee migrants who have most exposure to and problem with discrimination and racism (25% vs 11% for refugees and 9% for non-migrants).

Just as with young people, activation of people on the move as changemakers is in the interest of everyone in the ecosystem. Not only is the conversation deeper and more informed when it goes from 'about' mode to 'with and by,' but so are the work outcomes improved.

**4 out of 5 of their organizations were founded before the war.** Changemakers from Germany, Romania and Slovakia said it was rather difficult to found their initiatives (45-46%), while their counterparts from Czechia, Poland and especially Hungary were much more positive (65-87%), with average perception of 59%. For those organizations that were founded recently, in response to the war, the level is that of 62%, though figures for Poland and Slovakia are 6-8% lower than the general ones, and for all other countries the mark is up to 11% higher.



7 out of 10 organizations **focus on a wider target audience** than just refugees from Ukraine. Their general focus lies in education and youth, human rights and DEI, and healthcare and wellbeing. Among other options, there were planet and climate, economic development, tech and humanity, ageing, culture and arts, and even religious organizations.

Quite predictably, 3 out of 5 organizations started in response to the war focus on refugees alone. And 1 out of 5 organizations founded before the war shifted to working with refugees alone.

While most of the mapped changemakers are engaged in **hands-on project implementation** and direct aid (85% on average), 44% coordinate the work in the sector, 21% provide funding, 18% are involved in research and 13% are doing regulation work. Interestingly, half of changemakers in Hungary and Poland are involved in coordination efforts, and more than half of respondents from Romania are conducting research.

Among the **types of help** offered are education for adults and children (50%), building support networks (50%), providing humanitarian aid (49%) and psychological help (48%). These are followed by intercultural exchange and providing shelters/housing (44-45%). Logistics /travel arrangements, access to labor market / entrepreneurship opportunities, legal help, translations, and medical help scored between 30- 34%. Unsurprisingly, but rather alarmingly, the most important areas from the long-term perspective, such as narratives work, policies / lobbying and preventing violence/radicalization, found themselves at the very end of the table: 16-26%. Changemakers are so overwhelmed with the diversity of needs and demands to respond to on an everyday basis that they cannot focus properly on solutions of that level of complexity and attention.

Moreover, to fund all their work they have to be very **entrepreneurial in terms of fundraising**. On average, each changemaker mentioned receiving financial support from 2.79 sources, with the lowest level shown by Germany (2.04) and highest by Romania (3.52). This may be seen as proof that the amounts of funding available in wealthier countries are seen as sufficient, while in some of the less privileged contexts they require changemakers to practice wit and creativity in looking for additional support.

**Private donations and crowdfunding** are used by 51% of changemakers, foundations grants by 45%, NGO grants (including INGOs) by 36%. 33% of changemakers get their support from companies/corporations and 18% from individual investors. In terms of public money, 27% get support from municipal/regional governments, 26% from central governments of their countries and 22% from the EU. Interestingly, private donations and crowdfunding are the main source of income not only for all six countries together, but also for Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, while for Germany and Hungary it is grants from foundations, and central government funding for Czechia. Among additional minor sources, changemakers mention foreign governments and embassies (including EEA grants) and religious donors. Some changemakers use their own funds (4%) or have no funding at all (4%; including every seventh changemaker in Germany). Those **re-granting organizations** that offer funding for others mostly get their money from a mix of foundations, businesses, and governments, however their leading source is private donations/crowdfunding (55%), which is an interesting sign of community-based mechanisms of self-funding and governing.

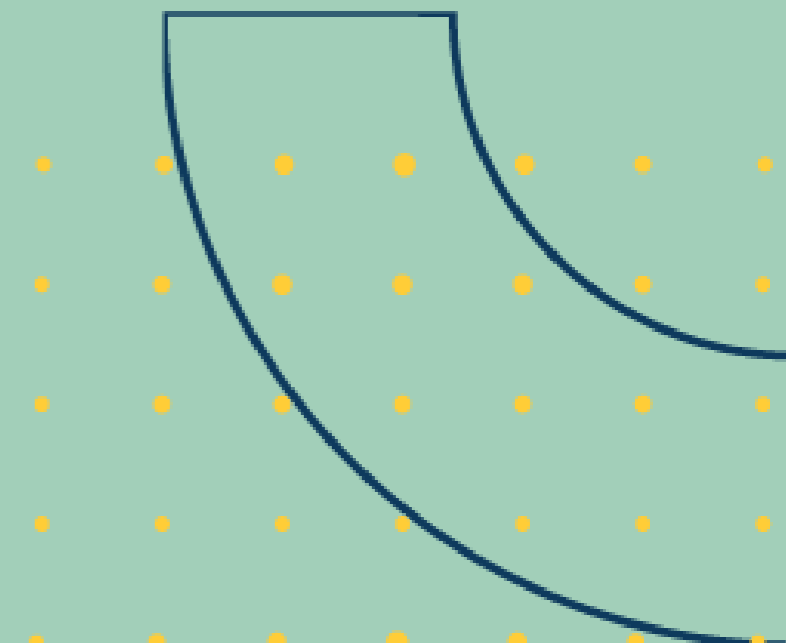
Half of the changemakers organizations are also **involved in relief work in Ukraine** itself (e.g., sending generators), though the level is significantly lower for countries not bordering with Ukraine (Czechia - 36%, Germany - 31%).

## CHANGEMAKERS' WORK: EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE

70% of the Stepping Up changemakers cohort work in **NGOs/non-profits** (254), followed by informal groups with no structure or individuals (59) and public sector (32).

74% of these changemakers represent the **key leadership** of their organizations, and 26% are employees or supporters.

On average, they perceive their organizations as 50%-strongly run **by refugees** and, at the same time, 50%-strongly run **by young people**.



## CONNECTIONS: IT TAKES 2.61 TO TANGO

The mapped changemakers also do not act alone. While 22% of them mention **lack of cooperation and coordination** as a barrier for the development of the ecosystem, they nevertheless are aware of or work together with others. As part of the snowball method, they were asked to nominate other potential respondents for the research. These webs of connections for each country are presented in the local chapters below. However, it is interesting to mention that on average every changemaker **nominated 2.61 other persons**, with 953 nominations made altogether. Ca. 300 of those nominees and their organizations did not end up on the map, as they either could not be reached or decided not to take part. For those who were interviewed, the average number of people

nominating them was 1.35. **Most connected** of the six communities **is the one in Slovakia** (3.94 nominated by respondents, 2.46 nominations per respondent). The lowest figures shown by Germany (1.14/0.70) and Poland (1.55/0.69) are the result of special methodological choices made for the research in those countries, as well as of cultural specifics and GDPR regulations.

And while these nominations cannot serve as a direct indicator, we believe that shifting the gears of the ecosystem would, among other things, require **fostering cooperation between changemakers**. In the bright world of the future, we can and should expect much higher interactions, nominations, and connections.



**KLÁRA ŠIMÁČKOVÁ  
LAURENČÍKOVÁ**

GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS AND NATIONAL  
COORDINATOR FOR UKRAINIAN  
REFUGEES  
CZECHIA

Klára is an Ashoka Fellow and the Human Rights Commissioner, leading efforts to assist people with temporary protection. Her office includes an advisory group that collaborates with ministries and state bodies for integrating Ukrainian refugees. The office not only enforces regulations but also facilitates communication among international organizations, NGOs, and regional representatives, often through roundtable discussions. Klára is recognized for her vital role in aiding Ukrainian refugees. Previously, she founded the Czech Expert Society for Inclusive Education and held significant roles, including chairing the Committee for Children's Rights and participating in government councils related to human rights, gender equality, and domestic violence prevention.



**MOHAMMED JOUNI**

JUGENDLICHE OHNE GRENZEN  
GERMANY

Mohammed founded the organization "Youth Without Borders" and, among other roles, he is a board member of the BumF (Federal Association of Unaccompanied Minor Refugees e.V.), advocates for the rights of (young) refugees. Jugendliche ohne Grenzen is a youth-led initiative, independently organized by young individuals with a refugee or migrant background, aiming to support refugees. Their main focus is on political education, self-organization, and empowerment of refugees by refugees. The initiative strongly advocates for the right of participation for all, the full implementation of UN children's rights, equal rights for refugees and locals, legalization of individuals without proper documentation (so-called "illegals"), equal opportunities in education and the job market, and the right of return for deported individuals who were once part of their community. They create a community of young people where they can learn from each other, exchange ideas, and collaborate in creating solutions that serve their needs and interests.

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**Migration is a fact, but inclusion is an act.**





## CSILLA SZLOBOGYÁN KURTYAK

BONE FIDE FOUNDATION  
HUNGARY

Csilla began her work at the start of the war as an interpreter and translator who speaks both Ukrainian and Hungarian. She also worked as a clerk for legal matters. She gathered information efficiently about Ukrainian refugees and became closely connected with various stakeholders. This led her to play a central role in coordinating organizations that catered to the needs of migrants living in Hungary.

The Bona Fide Foundation's members are all migrants or refugees. Because of this, they have a direct understanding of the challenges faced by those fleeing

Ukraine. This shared experience enables Ukrainians to easily build trust with the foundation's members, resulting in numerous people seeking their assistance daily. Csilla ensures that the foundation operates flexibly and promptly according to the needs of those requiring assistance. This includes tasks like administration, legal representation, and even establishing language teaching groups.



**I would like to improve the coordination between organizations, the coordination of resources with needs and opportunities, as I am convinced that it is possible to help those in need more globally and effectively by working together.**



## MARTYNA NAGÓRSKA

BABA Z WRZESZCZA  
POLAND

Martyna spontaneously organized help to war refugees (family of her sons' colleague). Because her network of friends on Facebook responded instantly, for many weeks she was busy coordinating help for others as well. The RC Foundation made it possible for her to develop her activities by giving her storage and workshop space (e.g., art workshops also involving Belarusian women). Many individuals like her continue to help by: sewing of camouflage nets, organizing regular collections of needed items for Ukrainian residents and support for medical assistance.



**Without the RC Foundation, my activities on this scale would simply not have been possible. The logistical and substantive support allowed me to launch activities and prove myself as a local leader, which amazed me.**





**ELENA CALISTRU**  
FUNKY CITIZENS  
ROMANIA

Funky Citizens uses technology, social networks, and non-formal education methods to facilitate access to previously hard-to-find public information in a country with deep distrust in politicians and decision-makers, with corruption and endemic clientelism deeply rooted in local culture and practices. Elena and her organization were directly involved in supporting refugees, even though, like almost all other organizations, they did not have a background in working with migrants. They handled evacuations of people from the war zone, from the border between Moldova and Ukraine, conducted humanitarian transportations, and also worked on projects for women from Ukraine under the title "Navigating Romania," which included language courses and train-the-trainer training sessions for them to pass on to others.

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Looking back, civil society is better equipped than the state to respond in multiple possible ways to such crises. The state responded more through traditional bodies, relatively centralized and even militarized structures. But in civil society, decentralization made the covered needs much more diverse, which speaks a lot about the level of sophistication of civil society.



**MICHAELA POBUDOVÁ**  
MAREENA  
SLOVAKIA

Mareena has been one of the most important non-governmental Slovak organizations active in humanitarian and integration activities for Ukrainian refugees from the very beginning of the Russian invasion. Michaela and her team have been helping those fleeing war zones, making sure they will find safe space and dignified acceptance in Slovakia. They coordinated the border zone and provided first contact services for the people crossing the country. Their main activities include helping foreigners in Slovakia with their integration process and opening public discussion about migration and related topics. Working closely with the state, NGOs and other actors, it brings knowledge and experience in working with and integrating migrants and asylum seekers.

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**Something has to happen, on the basis of which I will associate positive emotions with them. We need to create positive social contact between majority population and migrants - this direct contact has the highest impact. We need to start working with people with social capital (influencers, politicians, personalities) to build positive narratives in society.**

# Key Findings

## SEEING YOURSELF AS A CHANGEMAKER

Over forty years of work with leading social entrepreneurs has shaped Ashoka's perspective about approaches to leadership, organization, and collaboration that positively advance systems change and ignite the changemaking capacity in everyone. Learning with and from thousands of changemakers of all ages, Ashoka found four qualities or "abilities" that changemakers share: cognitive empathy, fluid teamwork, shared leadership, and creative problem-solving<sup>1</sup>.

**A changemaker takes creative action to solve a social problem, has both the will and the skills to make positive change and puts empathy in action for the good of all. That is how we defined key characteristics of a changemaker in this mapping.**

At Ashoka, we have found that self-perception as a changemaker is critical for ongoing changemaking, along with having access to tools and opportunities to bring positive change to the communities they're involved in. People who self-identify as changemakers are more likely to continue their work and inspire others to discover their power.

For this report, we mapped 365 people who responded to the needs of the Ukrainian refugees: people whom we see as changemakers. One of the questions we asked them was whether they perceive themselves as such. The answer is yes: they identify with this definition very strongly. This is true for participants in all six countries, of all ages, genders, and backgrounds. These individuals stepped up because they felt that, as changemakers, they want and can change the reality around them.

**On a scale from 1 to 5, our respondents strongly identified themselves as changemakers, with an average response of 4.38.**

Although all 365 respondents self-identified as changemakers, the degree to which they perceive themselves as such differed. Some changemakers' self-evaluations were rated higher than others. There are several findings behind these differences, let's drill down to a few factors such as gender identity, location, and their organization's work with migrants.

### Discovering changemaking power through lived experiences

Every changemaker is shaped at some level by the particular barriers they overcome, both personal and in their projects. Whether their story is that of the hardships of migration and they struggle with the feeling of being unwelcome or if they have confronted other systems without being on the move themselves, these struggles influence their self-perception.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Ashoka (2022), *Your guide to 4 changemaker abilities*, URL: <https://medium.com/change-maker/your-guide-to-4-changemaker-abilities-d83d0aaaae85>

We have found that the harder the obstacles a person has had to face, the stronger they identify as changemakers. We also find that a changemaking mentality – constantly thinking of new, creative ways to solve problems – makes one both more critical and optimistic regarding systems and mindsets. A changemaker notices more issues and obstacles, but their belief that change is possible grows stronger.

### Youth and migrants' involvement strengthens the agency of change for all

Our data shows that the stronger the involvement of youth and migrants in an organization, the stronger that organization displays the spirit of changemaking. Respondents who worked at organizations in which youth and individuals with migrant backgrounds are involved self-identified as changemakers more strongly than respondents whose organizations had less involvement of youth and migrants.

**10% HIGHER**  
level of self-perception as a changemaker for those non-migrant respondents whose organizations strongly involve migrants

This spirals further: the stronger one is as a changemaker, the more space one gives in their organization to migrants and people on the move themselves (and also to younger people over all): they stop being merely 'beneficiaries', and instead shift to equal partners in co-creating sustainable solutions to social problems.

### Recognizing intersectional identities and geographic locations

Self-perception as a changemaker echoes power structures at play in society. We saw that male respondents tend to give themselves higher marks than female and non-binary ones. Respondents from capital cities identify as changemakers stronger than those from smaller towns. And so do members of the 'welcoming societies' compared to migrants.

This exemplifies the importance of the work on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Imagine the potential for positive impact if we diminish barriers to practice changemaking for people of all identities. What if we uplifted opportunities to create change for those who find themselves lower in social hierarchies, especially those with multiple marginalized identities.

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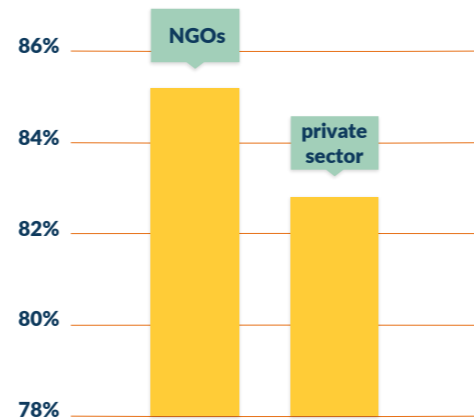
**Integration should create a fluid identity for migrants, allowing them to embrace multiple cultural aspects. However, in some cases, it is forcing them to choose one identity instead.**



### Considering organization types and focus areas

#### NGOs and Business Sector Responses

Representatives of non-profit and public sectors have more self-awareness as changemakers than those coming from the business world. And this is confirmed by how the events of 2022 unfolded: in many places, it was the civil society that immediately stepped up, while companies and those in the business sector were still seeking guidance on how to react.



#### Changemaking Within Nonprofit Organizations

Changemakers' identity is visible in all areas of help: from direct humanitarian aid to translations. Yet, it was those who work with narratives, diversity, and social cohesion who scored the highest. Concretely for the respondents that characterize their work as preventing radicalization we recorded one of the strongest self-perception scores of 91% (compared to 85% on average).



**JAMIL ALYOU**  
TRAIN OF HOPE DORTMUND  
GERMANY

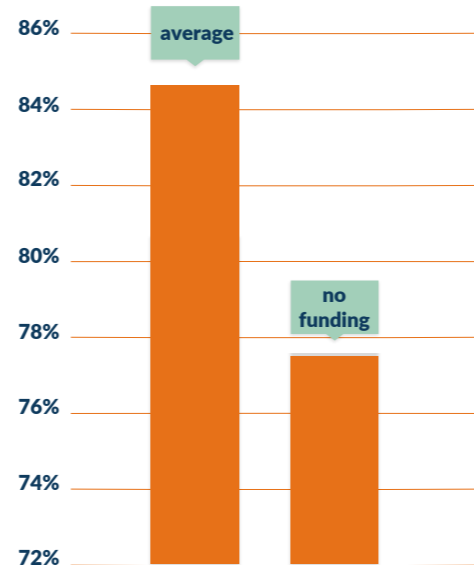
The refugee aid association Train of Hope promotes an open, tolerant, and diverse society through workshops, seminars, and activities, fostering understanding between cultures and combating prejudices. They offer a wide range of programs focused on the personal development of children, adolescents and young people. Moreover, they have a program for LGBTIQA members to find a safe space for them where they can exchange and find common solutions to different problems that they face.

#### Organizations' History and Makeup

We surveyed changemakers who worked at organizations with a wide range of attributes. The organizations' focus areas and founding stories and experiences differed: however, the respondents' self-perception as changemakers remained quite high across organizations.

There are subtle differences that show that those who were activated by the war have less space for reflection and display more anxiety over exhaustion of resources.

One of the subgroups of respondents with the lowest level of self-identification as changemakers were those who also reported having no funding for their work. We see that scarcity of resources is strongly correlated with lower confidence to lead change.



### BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES ON THE WAY

One thing we know from experience across the world is that when large groups of people move and enter into new communities with an important level of vulnerability, this situation often exposes or brings visibility to system failures that were already present, but now become urgent. For example, if the availability of affordable housing is already a problem in a given city, the arrival of hundreds of thousands of migrants needing temporary shelter will shed a light on this situation in a new way, and it will likely gain an urgency that had been pushed down the road previously.

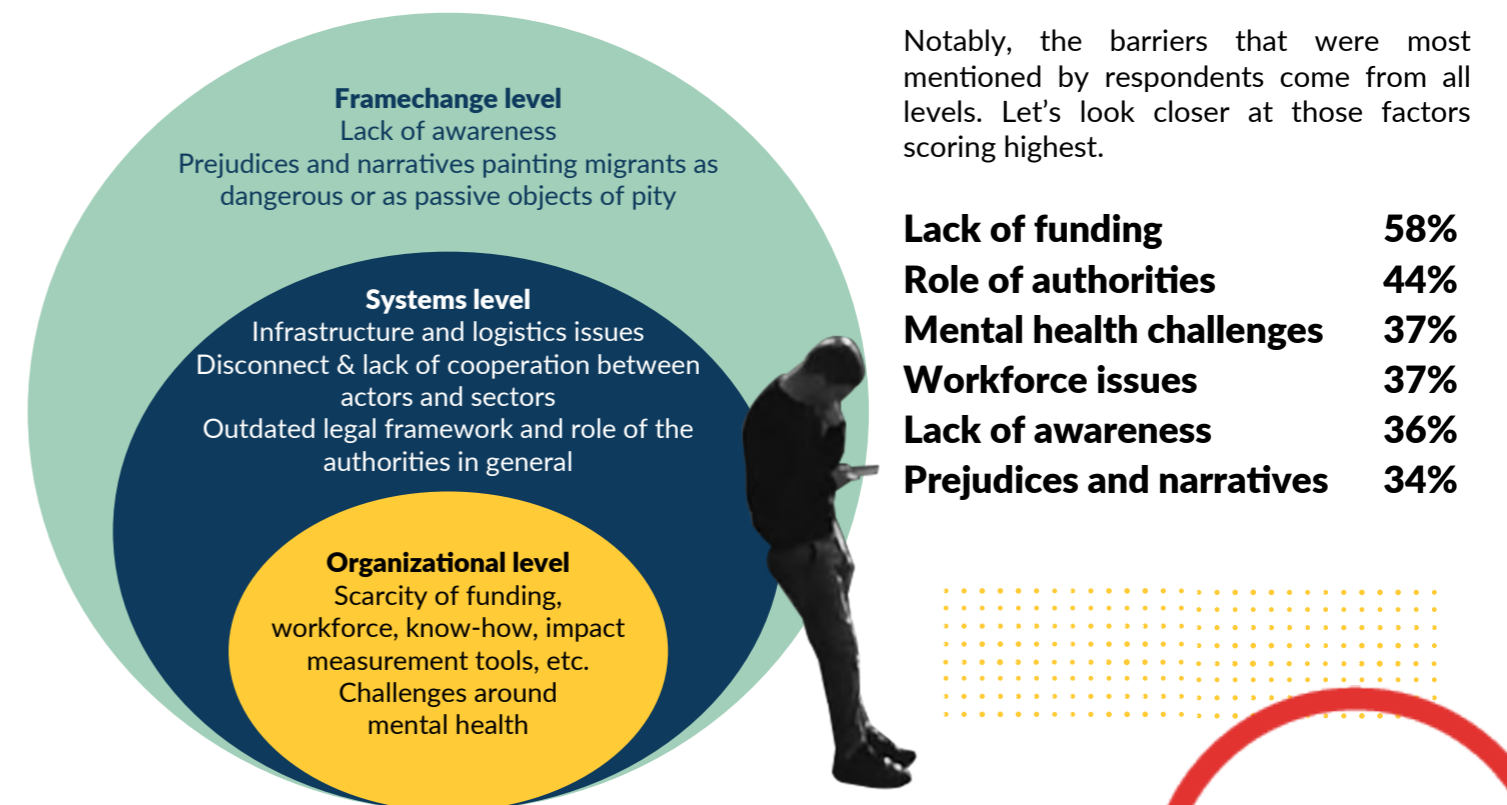


**Migrants and refugees do not take anything from Romanians but are opportunity for systemic changes.**

**Irina Alexandra Mateescu**, Asociatia Moaselor Independente, Romania

When asked our respondents whether the systems in their respective countries were **ready to welcome and integrate refugees**, only **35% of them responded positively** which shows a low level of confidence.

In terms of specific obstacles changemakers have been experiencing, our respondents identified quite a few factors hindering their work with refugees. We can structure them into several layers of impact:



Notably, the barriers that were most mentioned by respondents come from all levels. Let's look closer at those factors scoring highest.

### Lack of funding

When speaking of the **funding challenges**, the most common comment was that the funding available is not long-term: changemakers may have enough for their current work, but their organizations' future is not clear. As searching for additional funding becomes a work area itself, it draws away resources from the meaningful work in other directions. Additionally, financial insecurity becomes a strong component of the mental health and burnout problem.

Interestingly, when we combined the data on funding as a challenge with the sources of available funding reported by the respondents, it turns out that no matter the number of types of donors or the combination of those types (e.g., municipal grants and crowdfunding, or corporate grants and grants from foundations, etc.) they have, it does not solve the problem — the lack of funding is their first barrier. This means that in order to answer to this need, all donors have to step up and contribute towards long-term financial stability of the changemakers' organizations.

### Role of authorities

The challenging **role of the governmental authorities** can be manifold: respondents speak of tricky legal frameworks that don't allow them to have a clear legal status and they also voice their concerns with overregulation and bureaucracy. In general, they mention inadequate state support that started when the civil society rushed to respond to the wave of war refugees arriving in their countries — movement that continues to this day. Instead of seeing the public sector as the main and most natural ally, almost half of changemakers sadly have to spend their energy and time on developing and sustaining those high-maintenance relations. Unblocking

that connection and harnessing the full potential of cooperation between sectors is a key prerequisite for changing the gears of changemakers' work.

### Mental health challenges

Our data confirms clearly: **wellbeing of those who care for the good of others is at risk**. Over one-third of respondents mentioned issues around the mental health, wellbeing, emotional support, and burnout prevention. And the abovementioned factors contribute to this one: changemakers feel alienated instead of being supported, they feel helpless when resources are scarce. Additionally, dealing with other people's grief and pain on everyday basis leaves its mark. Unsurprisingly, even among those changemakers whose organizations offer psychological help to Ukrainian refugees, half of that group reports internal issues related to psychological wellbeing. As the next chapter will show, an important action in this area is to promote mental health awareness in the society. Yet, alleviating the everyday burdens away is the foundation without which the awareness alone would not suffice.

### Workforce issues and lack of awareness

Despite the overall sense of urgency for the changemakers' work and the ongoing flow of refugees from Ukraine, respondents observe both lack and inevitable decrease in the number of available hands for that work. **Workforce issues** are reported by every third changemaker, both in terms of attracting new personnel as retaining the existent, given the high levels of responsibility, pressure, and burnout. Some changemakers additionally speak of

impossibility to properly onboard and train new volunteers/employees, as they need to immediately join the operations.

Additional funding would contribute to stabilizing the situation by transferring more workforce from volunteering into paid staff and offering them more long-term security, but this needs to be paired by the **awareness-raising** work in welcoming communities. Lack of understanding changemakers' work helping the refugees and the reasons for their aid is building a divide between the communities, the organizations and the refugees themselves. If over one-third of respondents speak of the shortage of information in the society on their activities, then where will new volunteers come from, especially given the overall fatigue from the refugee situation and natural drop of interest? Society desperately needs role models and positive publicity around the changemakers' work, on a national level and, most importantly, on the level of local communities.

### Prejudices and narratives

Finally, the most prominent barriers experienced by the changemakers include **harmful narratives**, promoted or upheld by some politicians and media. Such narratives can be of two types. First and foremost, we are talking about explicitly negative narratives against refugees, e.g., "they are taking away our resources". Extinguishing a fire that people with massive platforms would like to add fuel to is a task none of these changemakers asked for. In addition to directly helping the refugees, they must deal with the consequences of irresponsible framing, misinformation, fearmongering, exploitation of stereotypes, prejudices, and biases, along with anti-refugee propaganda.

”

**Society needs to understand that they are not threatened by migrants and understand that migration is an opportunity to grow and thrive.**

**Nine Fumi**, BIPoC Ukraine & friends in Germany

The other type of narratives that also form barriers are those where migrants and refugees are presented as passive objects of pity. While it allows for some level of response in the short term, it is not based on real empathy and in the long term, such objectification leads to dehumanizing attitudes.

”

**People need to see the commitment and dedication of the newcomers. Seeing the effort and the road they have travelled, they will see them as a human being, a trustworthy partner, a neighbor.**

**Jan Baehr**, Związek Polskich Kawalerów Maltańskich, Poland

We will look closer to this barrier in the next chapter, as it affects not just the current work of the changemakers but also the future of the ecosystem and society as a whole: it stands in the way of the mindset shifts around the positive role of migration and people on the move.

## EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

There are many forces pulling the changemakers both down and up. Exposing fragilities of the systems, showing need for policy changes and mindset shift, people on the move bring opportunities for changemaking for the good of all. Besides the obstacles, the respondents observe factors that help their work and, in a way, motivate them. We asked them to share such opportunities, as recognizing and strengthening those elements is crucial for the continuation and upscaling of the changemakers' work.

Two-thirds believe they have a **strong community** to work with, whether it is other changemakers or the refugees themselves. Almost half of the respondents see that the **sense of urgency** for action in this area continues to be strong. Every two respondents

out of five highlight the **untapped future potential** of people on the move for the local societies. Slightly less than one third praise the general **good will** for refugees in the majority of the society, even if silent. Accessible funding, market interest towards refugees, and positive changes on the policy level all scored just below one quarter. Last but not least, 16% of the respondents spoke about **positive narratives** about migration and refugees.

There are different actors to commend for their contribution to these opportunities: they involve the refugees themselves, other changemakers, funders, narrative creators, policymakers, businesses, and the society as a whole. Which just proves that the whole ecosystem has a role to play, and not just in the refugee welcoming efforts but in the transformations to come.

## SHIFTING MINDSETS AND VALUES

### Envisaging the change

An urgent movement of such large groups of people required immediate response from the welcoming communities: needs of all sorts had to be addressed. Changemakers throughout the continent stepped up and have continued to be involved for the last year and a half. They have provided shelters and psychological help, built support networks and offered translations. They have navigated numerous barriers and deepened their insight into the working of multiple systems.

Leveraging their unique experience and vantage point, we asked them to look into the future. **If migrants are to be seen as a positive force for society, what are the shifts that need to occur in our mindsets and values?** What mental models must be addressed and what obstacles have to be removed? Their responses are proof of not just the visionary nature of a changemaker's mind but of their deep understanding of the interdependencies at play



### A BIT OF EMPATHY TO IMAGINE ONESELF IN THAT SITUATION

The primary change that in a way precedes all other shifts is the need to direct attitudes towards more empathy. Fostering the atmosphere of and providing opportunities for practicing acceptance and solidarity, respect and tolerance, understanding and openness in a society is a prerequisite for any positive change in perception of new actors in that society.

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**Extending empathy, caring and being curious about people arriving instead of being scared.**

Anne Kjaer Bathel, Redi School for Digital Integration, Germany

”

**We need to focus and approach each person as a human being, a person with a story who can get out of the current situation.**

Kristýna Titěrová, META, Czechia

### RECOGNIZING THE VALUE AND CHANGEMAKING IN REFUGEES

Individuals and societies that are more empathetic and open are then able to notice and acknowledge the value and contribution of the migrants and refugees. They are not coming to passively receive care or demand special attention, but they bring their unique expertise and skills. Their presence and active participation can have a positive impact on society. That was emphasized by 28% of respondents.

”

**Representatives of different social classes, professions and talents have come to us – we need to see the value of their presence in Poland.**

Julia Bochenek, CultureLab, Poland

”

**The majority need to realize what refugees bring us. In the economic realm, their involvement in the workforce can benefit all. It is important to promote this through good practical examples, including those from other countries.**

Veronika Ibllová, Krajanka, Czechia

**OVERCOMING BIASES, STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES**

Promoting positive values must go hand in hand with addressing the harmful ones. Strong biases, stereotypes, and prejudices are hurting not only marginalized groups but are also destructive for the welcoming communities. And in the shape of xenophobia and racism, they become a direct invitation for hate crimes.

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I think that they are not interested in migrants because they have biases, and they see the news that does not actually represent us. It would be great if they could learn more about our stories and know that we are not the bad guys.

Mahnaz Jafari, Germany

**ADDRESSING FEAR AND NEGATIVE PORTRAYAL OF PEOPLE ON THE MOVE**

A common misconception on the side of non-migrants is that the support for people on the move takes away resources from the host communities. Changemakers deeply involved in welcoming the refugees see that sense of anxiety around them, but they assert that this zero-sum approach is not based on facts. Addressing the **feeling of loss or neglect** in the welcoming community is important in order to promote a win-win mentality where the movement leads to mutual exchange, enrichment, complementing, and thriving.

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In the media, opinions such as 'Ukrainians are taking what is ours' should not be supported. Instead, a positive campaign should take place. It is important to raise awareness about who the people coming to our country are, including the fact that among them are doctors and highly educated individuals. This is a failure of political culture.

Martina Paboučková, Mateřské centrum a dětská skupina/ Školní klub Klubíčko, Czechia

”

Romanians started to worry we invest too much in refugees and we need to go back to history and learn why we need to do it and the fact the war is ongoing.

Dorin Dumitrașcu, Asociația Pro Veritas, Romania

”

We need to talk about the fact that refugees do not take away the work and finances of the country, but on the contrary - replenish the treasury of Poland by being employed and paying taxes. They want to participate in the cultural and social life of Poland.

Natalia Tiuniahina, Initiative Group "Integranty", Poland

**EXPOSING SYSTEMIC FAILURES AND CHALLENGING OUR IDENTITY**

Naturally, such tectonic shifts as wars and mass migration are a challenge for the **perception of traditional institutions and frameworks**. Visionaries and leaders of change call nations to reexamine their identity, their past and their role in the modern world: parting with the nationalistic concepts of state and having awareness of the contribution of migrants throughout the history of every nation are imperative.

”

We should learn the history and see how migrants rebuilt Germany in the past.

Nine Fumi, BIPoC Ukraine & friends in Germany



**We face a paradigm in education where we defend ourselves against everyone. However, modernization also implies foreign labor force. This kind of diversity needs to be built up from an early age to change our vision of Romanians' place in the world.**

**Laura Oana Ștefan**, Expert Forum, *Romania*

#### REFUGEES AND COMMUNITIES THAT RECEIVE THEM

There is a vivid anticipation of the shift from focusing on individuals alone to caring for communities, their identities, their fluid nature. In the vision of Europe where everyone is a changemaker, whether a 'local' or a migrant, it is the communities that are the most natural hubs of changemaking.



**STEPHANIE LANDA**  
SISTERS NETWORK  
GERMANY

Sisters Network provides support for young women aged 16 to 26 during their transition from school to work. The network is particularly targeting young refugee girls and women, enabling them to establish connections and build their own support system. They organize occurring group meetings that cover diverse topics based on the participants' interests. Discussions often involve inviting other women as role models, to share insights from their personal and professional life journey.



**We must prioritize the creation of spaces that foster personal connections between diverse individuals. These environments will facilitate open and honest dialogue, and offer opportunities to learn how to navigate and resolve conflicts constructively.**

Regardless of their origin, changemakers highlight the need for these efforts to be seen as a shared endeavor. Refugees or not, there is work to be done by all. As some pre-existing walls cannot be taken down from one side only, so the new constructions cannot be built unilaterally. It is easy to expect the 'other' (the migrants for some, the 'hosts' for others) to take all the responsibility. Yet, communities require commitment on the part of all its members.



**Transformation should start from the bottom up, from small communities, from religious leaders (as church plays an important role in the society), from local elected representatives.**

**Attila Tibor Daray**, Asociația Dorcas  
Aid România, *Romania*



**Own experiences enforce positive narratives and reflections on the family level and community level inclusion.**

**Zsuzsa Gyenes**, United Way Hungary, *Hungary*



**It is not possible to identify just one actor who can change the discourse. There are many - teachers, police officers, business representatives, journalists from the local press who can tell positive stories. Even migrants themselves are still objects of debate rather than empowered individuals defending their rights.**

**Petr Čáp**, IOM, *Czechia*



**It is necessary for citizens to interact with migrants, to meet, talk to them and to exchange experiences. Then migrants will get to know the culture of the country faster and learn the language, and the natives will stop excluding migrants from society.**

*Ivanna Serediuk, Przystulnie, Poland*



**We need to activate feelings of solidarity, respect for individual values, and curiosity for multiculturalism.**

*Anna-Cristina Burtea, IFundatia Inimă de Copil, Romania*



#### **UPHOLDING THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH**

Changemakers who deal with the painful experiences of the refugees and face burnout risks on an above-average level are calling for special attention to the area of psychological wellbeing of all. Only through the high awareness and established frameworks for mental healthcare in society can harmonious coexistence be ensured. Non-processed traumas of the past, whether of individuals or large groups, recent or going generations back, local or moved, should not be allowed to jeopardize the hard work put into the weaving of emerging social fabric of new, post-migration societies. Mutual, community care and support are the future worth building.



**Refugees need support in their integration into Czech society and hope for the future, as the uncertainty brings about various psychological problems, and there have even been reports of suicidal tendencies.**

*I.D., Ukrajinská Iniciativa Jižní Moravy z.s., Czechia*



**We need more awareness on mental health, people who have experienced trauma behave unpredictably, so we need to practice empathy and not project on their actions and reactions.**

*Ana Cojocaru, Romanian National Council for Refugees, Romania*



**One of the problems is that Russia had a massive influence, and Ukrainians moving from eastern to western parts of Ukraine lived under the assumption that the rest of the Ukrainians would harm them. It is important to be open, discuss the matter, and listen to them. One solution does not work for everyone; each person is a package of emotions, situations, and customs.**

*Petra Benešová, Rodinné centrum v Litomyšli, Czechia*

**APPRECIATE AND CELEBRATE ALL EFFORTS**

As a final shift of the level of mindsets emphasized by changemakers in this research is the need to **move towards a focus on appreciation**. Critical thinking, albeit crucial, has to be complemented with gratitude for what has already been achieved, recognizing good will and commending the hard work.



**A general thanksgiving has to happen to build on good emotions. So that people's perspectives are not changed on the basis of seeing individual negative attitudes.**

**Bartłomiej Głuszak**, Federacja FOSA, Poland



**Simply appreciating how we initially responded very well, how we helped as much as we could. It was truly exemplary and good, including the fact that the government expressed its stance clearly. It was worth going back and expressing gratitude.**

**Věra Roubalová**, InBáze, z. s., Czechia

**SHIFTING MINDSETS REQUIRES EFFORT FROM ALL**

Our respondents also talked about several distinct focal areas. Notably, they mentioned them both in terms of positive efforts as well as countering negative phenomena and overcoming obstacles. These are the issues that must be tackled if the shifts mentioned above are to take root:

**1**

**More information available on migrants and refugees to the local societies**, with education systems being the primary agents of raising awareness. Particularly, they emphasized critical thinking as a crucial skill.

**2**

**Media to take responsibility for the narratives** they use in shaping perceptions. Communication must be more transparent. Additionally, according to 28% of mapped changemakers, there must be strong resistance to and prevention of misinformation. Deconstruction of fake news, anti-refugee propaganda, sometimes directly originating from Russia, is crucial.

**3**

**Attitudes to change among powerholders**. There must be political will and interest in genuine support for the migration sector - mobilizing available resources, focusing on inclusive and sustainable long-term strategies, and restraining from using fear around migration for immediate political gains. Their discourse has a direct impact. Respondents also called on politicians and government officials to allow representation, so that decisions about people with migration experience are made with them. Lastly, 28% of mapped changemakers spoke about bureaucracy, lack of transparency, even corruption, along with inefficient or absent policies, overregulation, and legislative barriers.

**4**

**To scale programs which promote the values of diversity, inclusion, and equity**. To advance empathy and openness, we urge to consciously engage with those migrants who find themselves on the margins based on multiple grounds. This should be complemented by **addressing fears and prejudices as barriers**. 21% of changemakers speak explicitly about the fear of change and fear of the unknown. Anti-discrimination legislation measures addressing racism and other forms of xenophobia should be in place.

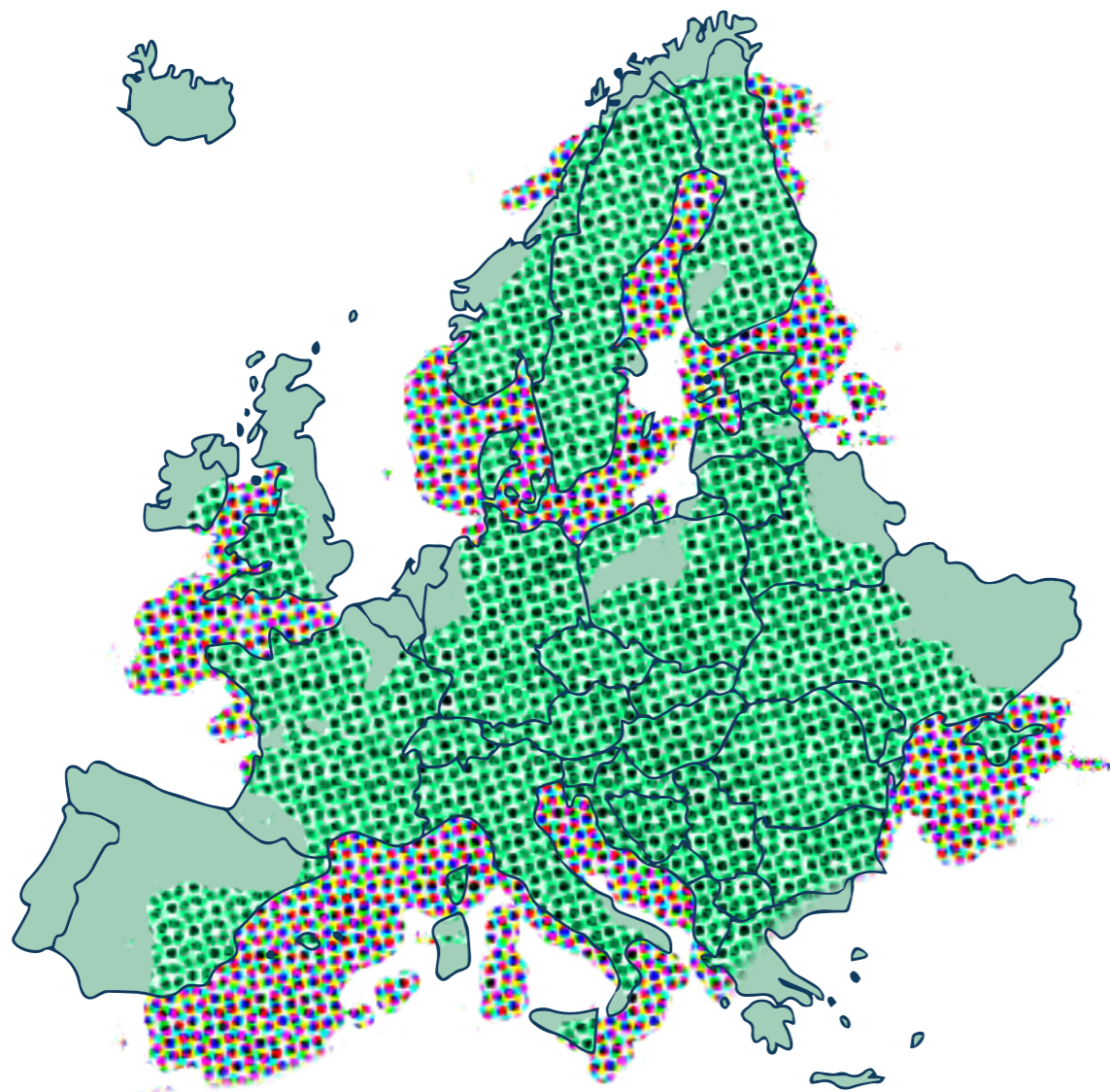
**5**

**To encourage direct contact and interactions between migrants and communities that receive them**. The human dimension of such immediate experiences and exposure to personal stories is key for weaving new type of connections. Creating and maintaining spaces and occasions for such 'mingling', be it for common solving of social problems, cultural exchange and artistic activities, sports and culinary, or any other form of leisure, is highlighted by numerous changemakers as one of the most essential tasks.

**6**

**More resources and assistance to the sector and refugees themselves**. Funders must be conscious, empathetic, and fair in providing support to address economic concerns and disparities between different groups of migrants (e.g., refugees from Ukraine and Middle East) or between migrants and 'locals.'

Additional challenges to overcome seen by changemakers include historical issues between countries, language barriers, cultural differences, as well as general lack of trust and fear of cooperation, need for a longer-term vision and need for more time for positive effects to manifest.



## Local Ecosystems

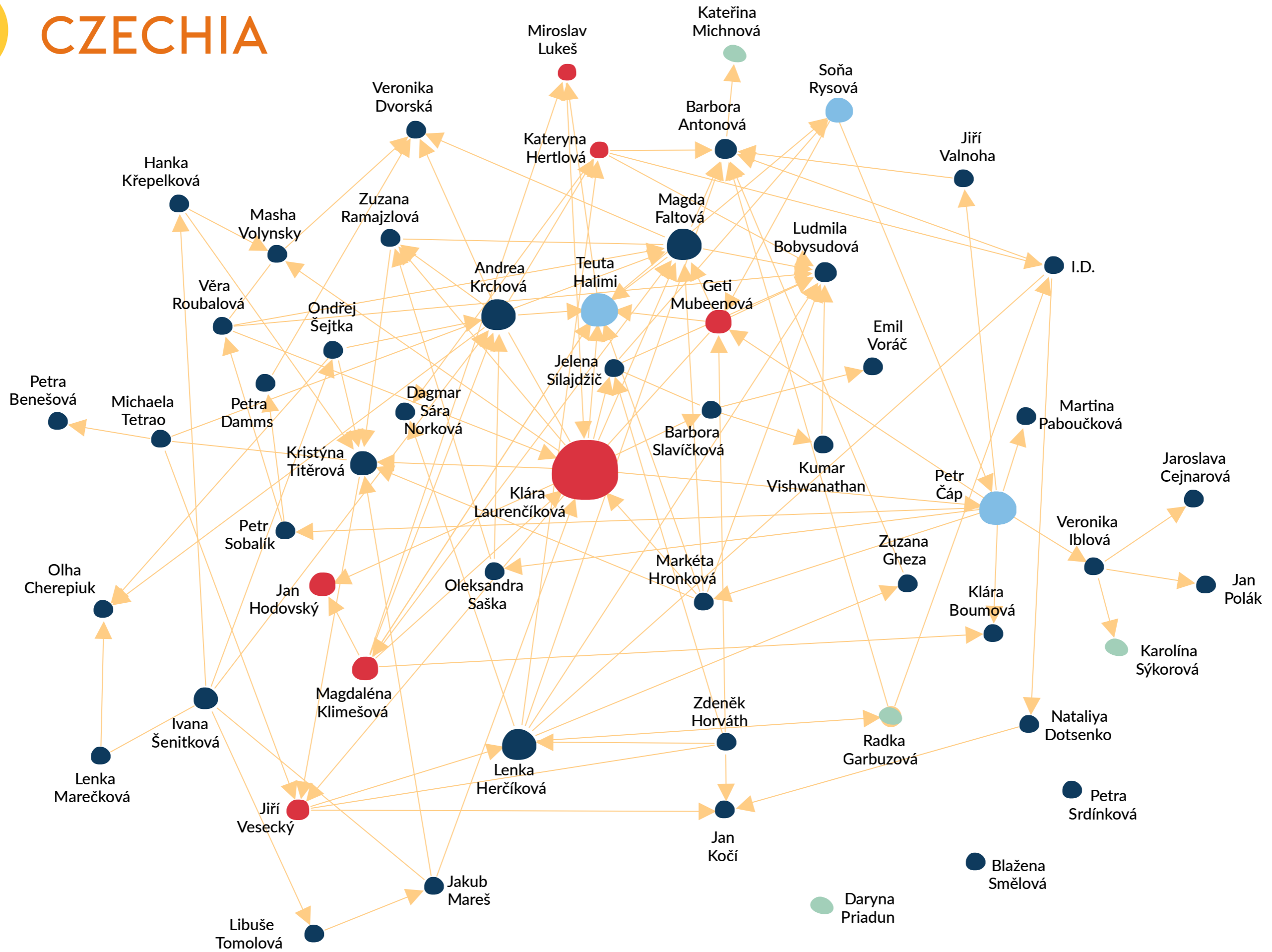
This part of the report is the result of incredible effort of local authors from respective countries who gained first-hand insights from the on-the-ground reality during interviews. They also took a step back to allow a reader to see the bigger picture.

They delve deeper into their country's previous experience with migration, highlight important traits and characteristics of each ecosystem to provide a needed context for their findings, and then reflect on what they have learned with the changemakers on the map. Concrete stories and solutions emerging from proximate leaders are highlighted on the following pages, and we celebrate their work with people on the move.

Each author has a unique voice, and we want to recognize that these six country-specific chapters differ in language and style which brings richness to the content and underlines the diversity of perspectives.



# CZECHIA



Color indicators: ● - INGOs | ● - NGOs | ● - Public | ● - Individuals / Informal Groups | ● - Businesses

# CZECHIA

## Long history of cooperation with Ukraine

Both countries have been maintaining economic, political and business partnerships long before the Russian invasion started. With almost 187,000 Ukrainian citizens representing 30% of all foreigners in Czechia in 2021<sup>2</sup>, Ukrainian citizens were already the largest foreign community in the country. This large community has been part of Czech society, which encouraged Czech citizens to enthusiastically support arriving Ukrainian refugees.

These facts led to Czechia becoming one of the EU leaders in supporting Ukraine in their fight for independence in the current war with Russia. The Czech Republic has been providing significant military, financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine and its citizens, both residing in Ukraine and Czechia.

Czechia with only 10.5 million inhabitants in total has accepted approximately half a million refugees from Ukraine. That means holding the largest number of refugees per capita, compared

## Housing support for Ukrainian refugees

In July 2023, a new long-debated law Lex Ukraine 5 entered into force, bringing changes to the system of humanitarian social benefits. The humanitarian and housing state support will end after a specific period of time. This largely affects vulnerable groups such as mothers with children who will have to find new homes and work. Many of the mapped changemakers expressed serious concerns for the impact the law would bring for Ukrainians, interrupting successful integration efforts and splitting the refugees to vulnerable and self-sufficient groups. Those most at risk would be put in danger of falling to poverty, and even losing their homes. Some actors participating in government roundtables on this topic mentioned there were continuing discussions to update the newly brought law.

## Tensions among various vulnerable groups in Czechia

Similar to other countries in the region, the Czech citizens are dealing with their own social and economic concerns. However, the overall reception of the Ukrainian refugees has been very positive among Czech society, also given the government's strong stance on Ukrainian support. The only exception was treatment of Ukrainian Roma refugees, which confirmed persistent discrimination towards the Roma population in general. Roma refugees thus had to face double discrimination upon arrival to Czechia.

with other countries that welcomed Ukrainian refugees. For example, Poland accepted 1.6 million refugees and Germany over 1 million refugees.<sup>3</sup>

For the past 1.5 years, the Czech government, the NGO sector as well as ordinary citizens continue to support Ukrainians, many of whom intend to return to their home country after the war; however, many will stay in the new country. As less people have been coming to Czechia recently, the supporting efforts in all participating sectors – government, businesses and NGO – have been shifting from immediate help to the newcomers to integration activities for the refugees remaining in Czechia.

There are several persisting issues that Czechia is currently dealing with: housing and employment of the Ukrainian refugees and the long-term integration of the refugee children in the Czech school system.

Growing tensions between local Roma and Ukrainian refugee communities were also mentioned by the respondents, mainly concerning work and housing conditions of both groups. Recent stories in media report an atmosphere of increasing conflict due to long-term frustration of Roma community's unaddressed needs. Additionally, physical attacks between the two communities recently led to several Roma demonstrations against Ukrainians.

Numerous members of Roma communities tend to feel that the government decisions and mainly the financial assistance provided to Ukrainians is higher than to their own Roma people. They feel left behind, which often leads them falling for the disinformation narratives spread mainly via social media. These events call for intense discussions with both communities as well as interventions and addressing the communities' needs from the government's side.

## Migration activated diverse groups of players and brought new perspectives

Most of the respondents reside in largest cities (Prague, Brno), however, there are large numbers of actors around the country in smaller regional locations (more than 500). Around 20% of the respondents were of migrant backgrounds: the rest mostly had some experience working with foreigners before the war (primarily in the NGO sector). For those working for the state administration and businesses, working with foreigners was rather new and brought new perspectives, which will probably influence their future work: that is, to be more inclusive and thoughtful of foreigners and their needs.

## Different measure of success and exposing deeper systemic failures

Despite the overall positive results stemming from the strong engagement of the country and its citizens in helping Ukrainians in this unprecedented situation and agreeing that Czechia has been successful in acceptance and integration of the refugees from Ukraine, there were differences in perception of the situation among representatives from various sectors. For instance, while the government representatives see the system of social and housing support Czechia created as very generous compared to

other countries, NGO representatives have varying opinions on this question.

Representatives of all sectors, however, see the addressing of Czech citizens' needs as urgent, reacting to their own economic and social issues. The integration process should be simplified and sped up to enable the Ukrainians who will stay in Czechia fully join the Czech social system as soon as possible.

## Role of diaspora, cross-sectoral collaborations and INGOs

There are also numerous established and well-functioning Ukrainian organizations who help their own citizens in Czechia and intensely cooperate with other organizations and the state.

Dealing with large numbers of refugees spread around the whole country was new to all sectors. This experience led to enhanced cooperation between various actors, and their cooperation gradually became directed and coordinated. Actors confirmed that in some instances there are issues with getting the important information to target groups, either from state to regional actors or to Ukrainian citizens. Some local NGO actors see a lack of coordination on regional levels – missing bodies that would coordinate the activities and organize roundtables.

Czechia welcomed the presence of international organizations such as IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF Refugee Response, who strengthened their outreach in the country since the start of the invasion. They brought their global experience with refugees from many other countries and played an important coordination role between the state and the NGO sector. They see the cooperation with the government as very good and the government being very committed compared to other countries.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Czech Statistical Office (2022), Foreigners in the Czech Republic, URL: <https://www.czso.cz/documents/10180/165384708/29002722.pdf/Ob03ebd4-aab2-4292-a215-12e81096bc2d?version=1.1>

<sup>3</sup> Source: Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic (n.d.), V České republice je aktuálně 325 tisíc uprchlíků z Ukrajiny, URL: <https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/v-ceske-republice-je-aktualne-325-tisic-uprchliku-z-ukrajiny.aspx>

### Changemakers on the map



### OLEKSANDRA SAŠKA

MRIYA UA

Oleksandra established MRIYA UA organization in 2022 as an immediate reaction of Ukrainians in Czechia who wanted to help their compatriots in need. Before MRIYA, she worked in business running her private company in Prague and thus did not have sufficient information about the non-profit environment and its financing and had to learn by experience. The organization has run 2 centers (the humanitarian center closed down in mid-2023) providing comprehensive services for refugees varying from humanitarian aid to healthcare, psychological, educational assistance and access to labor market as well as integrational activities. The future plan of the organization is to widen its focus from refugees to all migrants coming to Czechia.

### Shifting refugee narratives is critical

In order for the society to perceive the presence of refugees positively, most interviewees agreed that necessary changes include enforced positive political framing of refugee narratives. Furthermore, the government needs to address the needs of all socially disadvantaged groups similarly, so the Czech citizens do not feel they are receiving less than the refugees.

Another aspect that helps break down barriers and bring positive perception of refugees is highlighting positive examples of the refugees. Besides data with economic indicators showing the quantifiable benefits of having a new workforce in the country (benefits have long prevailed over the costs of hosting refugees), the human context through individual stories needs to be stressed as well. Government, media and public institutions should play an important role in this work.

### Ashoka Fellows active in helping the Ukrainian refugees



### JIŘÍ SKUHROVEC

DATLAB

As a data analyst, Jiří focuses primarily on data analysis of public contracts. In relation to the Russian invasion in Ukraine, Jiří partnered with Ashoka Support Network member Martin Ducháček to create a project using data analytics for improved

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The public awareness of the ongoing war in Ukraine is still strong which contributes to a sense of solidarity within the Czech society. However, the government should communicate in the same way with all marginalized groups, not just refugees. It is crucial to focus on the development of civic education across society, including well-being in schools, media literacy, and more.

**Klára Šimáčková Laurenčíková**, Government Commissioner for Human Rights  
National coordinator for Ukrainian refugees, *Ashoka Fellow*

sanction list enforcement in Czechia. Since it has been difficult to prove the final ownership of companies and their beneficiaries, Jiří developed software through his Datlab project, to map the ownership ties across more than 100 countries. Using European public registers, he reveals hidden links to sanctioned individuals who are tied to Russian companies and entrepreneurs in Czechia, as well as in Europe.

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All these high-risk firms most likely should not have been awarded public tenders since the introduction of EU sanctions. Datlab found that the volume of EU public contracts won by Russian-linked firms did not decline in 2022.

Jiri's solution is already used by the Czech government and he initiated cooperation with EU official institutions to bring more accurate sanctions targeting.



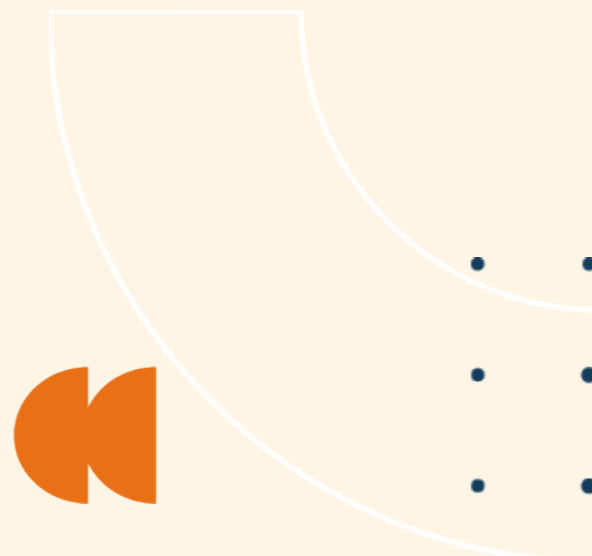
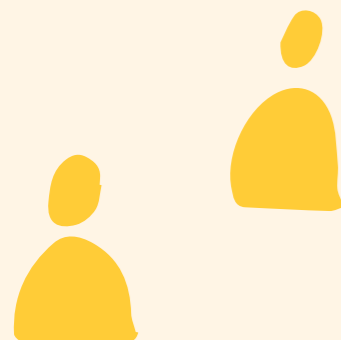
Zdeněk dedicates his time to the transformation of the Czech educational system. In its five-year pilot project in Kutna hora region, Eduzměna has involved various partners from the region to bring proven educational procedures and activities and look for ways to improve the education system. Kids, teachers, school directors, parents and school founders are all included in the creation process to make the necessary changes work for all actors.

**ZDENĚK SLEJŠKA**  
EDUZMĚNA FOUNDATION

After February 2022, Eduzměna also started to serve as donor coordinator in the field of education and integration of Ukrainian refugee children. Coordinating the group of fifteen foundations and donors, it aims to bring targeted and effective aid in the integration process of Ukrainian school children in Czechia. They connect involved foundations or non-profit organizations in specific areas and look for ways to solve problems systematically. Donors are encouraged to cooperate with each other and join forces in specific problem areas.



**The situation of the education of Ukrainian children revealed several gaps in the Czech educational system that now can be openly addressed, such as support for all disadvantaged children.**



Kumar is a human rights activist, pedagogue and social worker, working mainly with the Roma minority in the Moravian region. An immigrant from India himself, he is focusing on improving the co-existence of Roma and the Czech majority. His organization Vzájemné soužití ('Coexist') works to improve the social and living conditions of those in need, providing humanitarian, educational, human rights support, as well as providing legal advice, housing and employment assistance. Vzájemné soužití has played an important role in supporting Roma refugees from Ukraine (although they work with all refugees) who face multiple discrimination. Their contribution mainly focuses on providing social services, community policing (combating usury), education, civic participation and intercultural exchange. Kumar has also been an Ashoka Fellow since 2007.

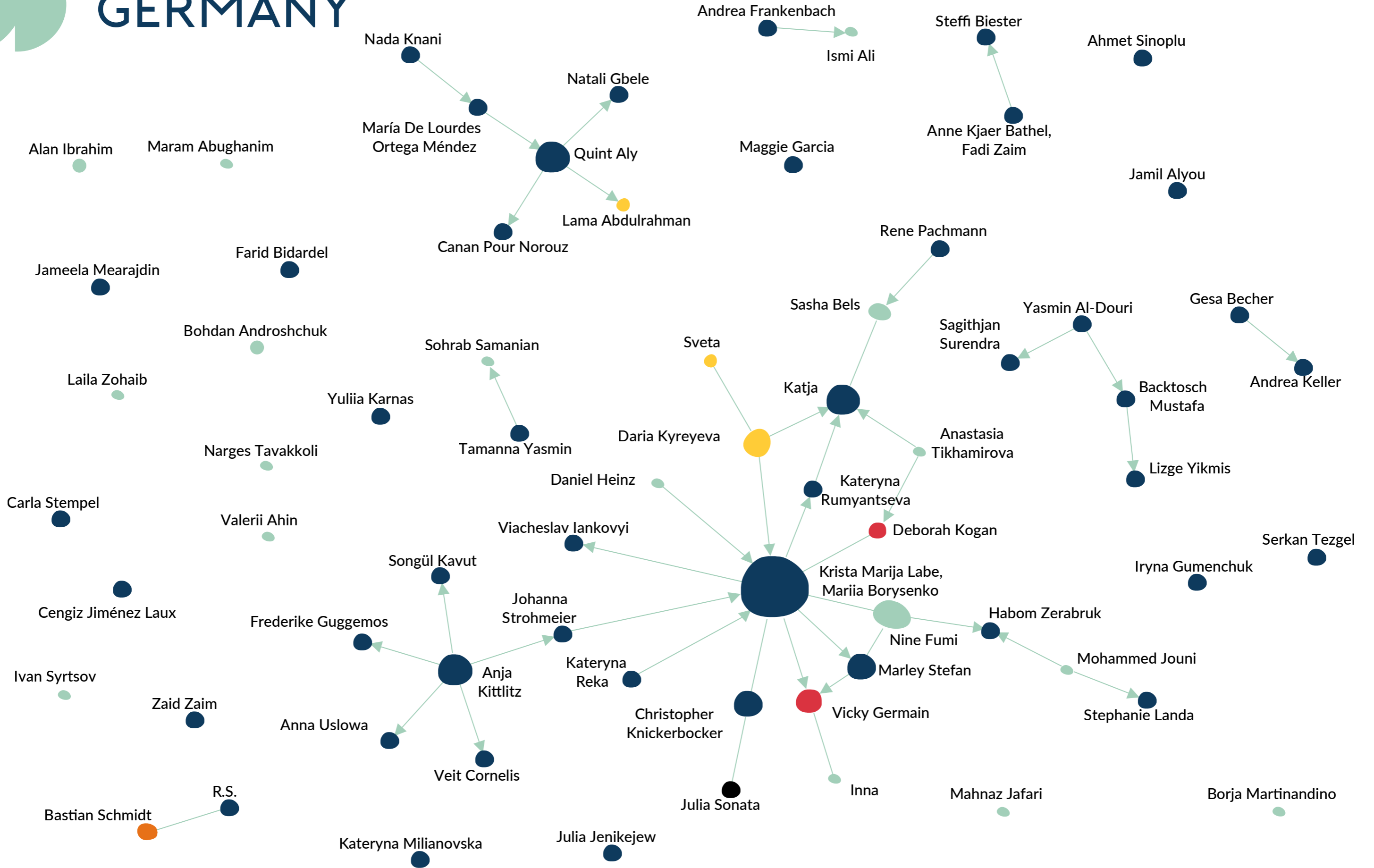
**KUMAR VISHWANATHAN**  
VZÁJEMNÉ SOUŽITÍ



**Czech society is generally not diverse. From an economic point of view, diversity will be important in the future, and from a pragmatic perspective, society will accept migrants and refugees (the population is aging).**



# GERMANY



Color indicators: ● - NGOs | ● - Public | ● - Individuals / Informal Groups | ● - Businesses | ● - Religious Organizations

# GERMANY

Germany has a long history of migration, but some parts of society still seem to be in denial of that fact. In only recent years, a couple with a migration story developed the crucial element of the vaccine against COVID-19: Uğur Şahin and Özlem Türeci. Uğur was born in Turkey and moved to Germany when he was four years old to join his father who was working in an automobile factory in Cologne. Özlem was born in Germany and pursued a medical career, just like her father did in Germany. Their life stories challenge the dominant disempowering narrative of migration in Germany, but still have characteristics that many others share. As entrepreneurs with innovative minds, they not only used their own skills but also paved the way for others to make a valuable contribution to society.

Germany is the strongest economic power in the European Union today.<sup>4</sup> This strength is linked to migration in both the past and in the present. After the end of World War II, Western Germany signed various agreements with countries such as Italy, Greece, Spain and Turkey to hire workers for its factories and mines. Within ten years, the number of workers from other countries grew tenfold (from 280,000 in 1960 to 2.6 million in 1973).<sup>5</sup> After a few years, the workers brought their families along, the children started going to school in Germany and eventually had their own children. By 2020, 35% of families living in Germany had such a migration history.<sup>6</sup>

As a result of negotiations to end World War II, the allied forces divided Germany, and history went a different route in East and West. But not so much regarding migration. Contrary to popular belief today, Eastern Germany also experienced migration. There were huge migration flows towards Eastern Germany, approximately 480,000 Soviet soldiers were stationed in Eastern Germany and approximately 95,000 persons from countries such as Vietnam, Mozambique and Angola were living and working in Eastern Germany in 1989.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the current immigration from war-torn countries like Afghanistan, Syria or Ukraine are not new experiences of migration to people living in the Eastern part of Germany.

Many of the organizations Ashoka has interviewed stressed how important the years 2015 and 2016 were for both their own work and for the public perception of immigration.<sup>8</sup> After the outbreak of war in Syria in 2011, Syrians became the biggest group of refugees in Germany. In 2022, after several years of war, there were approximately 900,000 Syrians in Germany (the total population of Germany being 84 million persons).<sup>9</sup> Most came in the years 2015 and 2016, including more than 60,000 Syrians under the age of 18 arriving without their parents.<sup>10</sup> They were first met with an unparalleled outpouring of public support and the establishment of support structures. In the following years, right-wing populism gained



support, the wider public discourse turned and resulted in stricter asylum laws, as well as in a rise of racist crimes.<sup>11</sup>

Since the Russian invasion in Ukraine, 1,074,864 Ukrainians sought protection in Germany (as of July 2023). 346,000 of them are children and youths under the age of 18.<sup>12</sup> In the general German population, only roughly 15% of persons

are under 18 years of age, but in the migrant population, the percentage of young people is twice as high. Both the relevance of young people within the migration flow and their importance in bringing change to a society led Ashoka Germany to focus on youth in this report (71 organizations were interviewed, 60% of them were run by people under the age of 25).

## Young people on the move are powerful contributors to the good of all

A mindset is a set of beliefs, held by individuals or groups. If a mindset changes, it can change in individuals, in groups and eventually in whole societies. Starting at the individual level, perceiving oneself as a changemaker is a powerful change of one's own mindset which then influences bigger groups. But how does that happen?

Children and young people who have been on the move with their parents or on their own have often lived through intense emotions such as fear and hope. For some, developing their potential

only starts once their surroundings are safe again and their days are filled with school, friends and everything else that comes with growing up. Others have had extraordinary experiences while planning to leave, on the move or while arriving. These experiences are sometimes traumatizing, but in some cases can also help children and young people on the move discover resilience, coping strategies or creative solutions. These individual experiences are interlinked with the self-perception of people on the move and the way this group is being seen by others.<sup>13</sup>

## Shifting from what is not there to what actually is

While the need for more openness, acceptance and empathy was mentioned the most often in interviews (by 51 interviewees), the need for a shift from a deficit-oriented view to a resource-oriented view was the second most important (mentioned in 38 interviews). As one interviewee said: "Society needs to stop focusing on weaknesses like 'they do not speak German' and focus on people's strengths." The crucial question to answer here is: How do we discover strengths and develop them, especially at a young age?

<sup>4</sup> Source: Eurostat (2023), National Accounts and GDP, URL: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=National\\_accounts\\_and\\_GDP#Developments\\_for\\_GDP\\_in\\_the\\_EU:\\_the\\_rebound\\_observed\\_in\\_2021\\_continued\\_in\\_2022](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=National_accounts_and_GDP#Developments_for_GDP_in_the_EU:_the_rebound_observed_in_2021_continued_in_2022)

<sup>5</sup> Source: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (2020), Erstes Anwerbeabkommen vor 65 Jahren, URL: <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/hintergrund-aktuell/324552/erstes-anwerbeabkommen-vor-65-jahren/>

<sup>6</sup> Source: Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (2020), Gelebte Vielfalt: Familien mit Migrationshintergrund in Deutschland, URL: <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/116880/83c02ec19d5ea15014d7868048f697f2/gelebte-vielfalt--familien-mit-migrationshintergrund-in-deutschland-data.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Source: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (2020), Ausländer in Ostdeutschland, URL: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/deutsche-einheit/lange-wege-der-deutschen-einheit/314193/auslaender-in-ostdeutschland/>

<sup>8</sup> Of all the organizations interviewed, 75% were founded before the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Mediendienst Integration (n.d.), Unbegleitete minderjährige Flüchtlinge, URL: <https://mediendienst-integration.de/migration/flucht-asyl/syrische-fluechtlinge.html>

<sup>10</sup> Source: Mediendienst Integration (n.d.), Unbegleitete minderjährige Flüchtlinge, URL: <https://mediendienst-integration.de/migration/flucht-asyl/minderjaehrige.html>

<sup>11</sup> Source: Bundesministerium des Inneren und fuer Heimat (2022), Verfassungsschutzbericht 2022, p.27, URL: [https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutzberichte/2023-06-20-verfassungsschutzbericht-2022.pdf;jsessionid=7D4572EAFD0BF0C5B20967492E9F0FDA.intranet662?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=4](https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutzberichte/2023-06-20-verfassungsschutzbericht-2022.pdf;jsessionid=7D4572EAFD0BF0C5B20967492E9F0FDA.intranet662?__blob=publicationFile&v=4)

<sup>12</sup> Source: Mediendienst (2023), Flüchtlinge aus der Ukraine, URL: <https://mediendienst-integration.de/migration/flucht-asyl/ukrainische-fluechtlinge.html>

<sup>13</sup> Additional resources on migration and resilience:

Caramella, M., Monacelli, N. & Cocimano, L.C.E. Promotion of Resilience in Migrants: A Systematic Review of Study and Psychosocial Intervention. *J Immigrant Minority Health* 24, 1328–1344 (2022).

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-021-01247-y>

UNICEF (2017), Resilient migration, Tools for the emotional rescue of migrant children and adolescents,

URL: <https://www.unicef.org/mexico/media/4876/file/Resilient%20Migration%202020.pdf>

### What migrant children need most

Not all migrant children grow up in poverty, but the risk of poverty is twice as high in the migrant population.<sup>14</sup> The migrant children that grow up in poverty have a considerable disadvantage in developing their potential, as their access to education and opportunities is limited. For this reason, many organizations in Germany focused on services in the field of education. For example, continuing schooling in Ukrainian for

children made up 43% of the activities organizations mentioned in the interviews. But education is much more than just the transfer of knowledge. Among other benefits, going to school provides a reliable structure of the day, opportunities to make friends and ideally develop a wide range of skills like curiosity, imagination and communication.



**KATERYNA MILIANOVSKA**  
SCHLAU-SCHULE

SchlaU-Schule supports the education of refugee children and young people who face challenges integrating into existing public educational programs. Their educational activities are enhance the future prospects of their students by creating customized programs. SchlaU-Schule provides a nurturing learning environment that allows young refugees to establish a sense of belonging and shape their future independently, while also receiving educational and psychosocial support.

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The moment I am allowed to work without relying on social benefits is when I can **demonstrate my value, intelligence, and capabilities.**

### Movement is a shared experience

Migrant youth face at least two mindsets: because they are young, they are often seen as 'not ready yet', 'immature' or 'not good enough'. In addition, other stereotypes related to their family history of migration add to the mindsets they face.

If we look at movement as a shared experience, we can connect over common experiences. Movement is shared between Ukrainians and Syrians, but also people who came to Germany decades ago – or have even just moved house in the same city or for a short period of time. Movement is also shared over a lifetime and even between generations. In Germany, the so-called 'migration background' (Migrationshintergrund) remains a statistical tool, even for people who did not migrate themselves but have at least one parent who was born outside Germany. In that regard, people with German passports born in

Germany and having spent their whole lives in Germany, but with a father or mother who migrated to Germany at the age of 4 are still classified as 'with migrant background' today.<sup>15</sup> This label of 'migrant background' serves to define what is 'real German' and what is not, as many recent populist moves have shown, particularly in the context of crime.<sup>16</sup>

Given this label with a clearly negative undertone, normalizing migration was the strongest shift that civil society organizations see as necessary. This was expressed through a need for changing attitudes (51 mentions), a need to promote diversity (15 mentions) and a need to address biases (12 mentions). The driving force to do so is empathy, as Mariia Borysenko from Vitsche notes: **“Empathy leads to seeing a non-German person as a human being.”**

**Vitsche, an association of young Ukrainians in Germany, was established by young activists and community leaders in response to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. They actively organize protests, cultural, and educational events to amplify Ukrainian voices in Germany. Addressing disinformation and media reporting during times of war is also a significant focus. Furthermore, Vitsche helps refugees find homes, navigate bureaucracy, secure employment, and provide translation services, logistics arrangements, accommodations, shelters, and psychosocial support.**

### Find out what could be better and make the first step

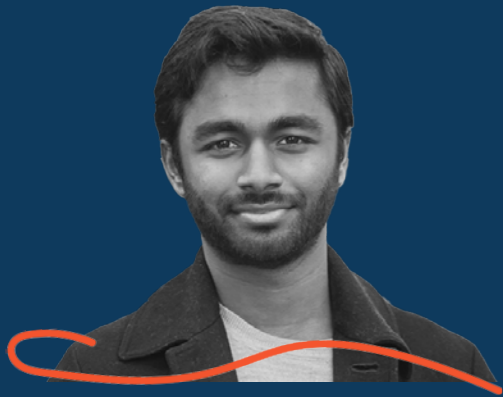
When families migrate, kids are often the first in the family to go to a German school, to navigate German bureaucracy with sufficient language skills or to support other family members when going to the doctor. Be it education, public

services or the health system – all of these fields need social innovation. Young migrants overcome these barriers and while doing so, discover what needs to be changed so that the whole system improves.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Der Paritaetische (2023), Zwischen Pandemie und Inflation: Paritätischer Armutsbericht, URL: [https://www.der-paritaetische.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Schwerpunkte/Armutsbericht/doc/Armutsbericht\\_2022\\_aktualisierte\\_Auflage.pdf](https://www.der-paritaetische.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Schwerpunkte/Armutsbericht/doc/Armutsbericht_2022_aktualisierte_Auflage.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2018), Tuerkischstaemmige Personen in Deutschland, URL: [https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Forschung/WorkingPapers/wp81-tuerkeistaemmige-in-deutschland.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=12](https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Forschung/WorkingPapers/wp81-tuerkeistaemmige-in-deutschland.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=12)

<sup>16</sup> Source: Betschka, Julius (2023), Vornamen-Abfrage der Berliner CDU, URL: <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/vornamensabfrage-der-berliner-cdu-es-wird-plotzlich-sehr-einsam-um-kai-wegner-9158382.html>



**SAGITHJAN SURENDRA**  
AELIUS FÖRDERWERK

Aelius is establishing the first nationwide support program for young people between 14 and 21 years of age in Germany, promoting equal access to education for children from diverse schools and backgrounds irrespective of their social status. The support of mentors helps young people to identify their strengths and successfully complete school.

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**The community's reluctance to welcome refugees often stems from its reluctance to confront existing problems within the system. Instead of addressing these issues and working to fix the system, some people choose to reject refugees. However, real progress lies in acknowledging and rectifying the underlying problems to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.**

### If children are our future, so is migration

German society is changing. The statistics have already normalized migration: 40% of children under the age of 5 have a migration history - but only 8% of persons above 85 years of age do.<sup>17</sup> Laughing, joking, shouting in school yards is already happening in many languages in Germany. Children and young people are growing up with fluid identities and are paving the way for a society that recognizes positive contributions by migrants.

Participating in all decisions relating to one's own life is both a human right guaranteed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and a prerequisite for changemaking.<sup>18</sup> To move the needle and promote societal change, one needs to have a seat at the table. Migrants need to have a seat at the table, young people need to have a seat at the table – young migrants even more so.



**YASMIN AL-DOURI**  
DIVERSE YOUNG LEADERS

Youth participation is often limited, time-consuming, and financially burdensome. This can deter potential candidates from migrant backgrounds that lack resources from attending projects aimed at participation or applying for opportunities. It seems potential future leadership roles and youth engagement is dominated by a homogenous group, excluding those with a migration history. To foster diverse youth engagement, Diverse Young Leaders was founded and now raises awareness about systematic barriers and racism hindering young minorities from excelling in their careers and assuming potential leadership roles.

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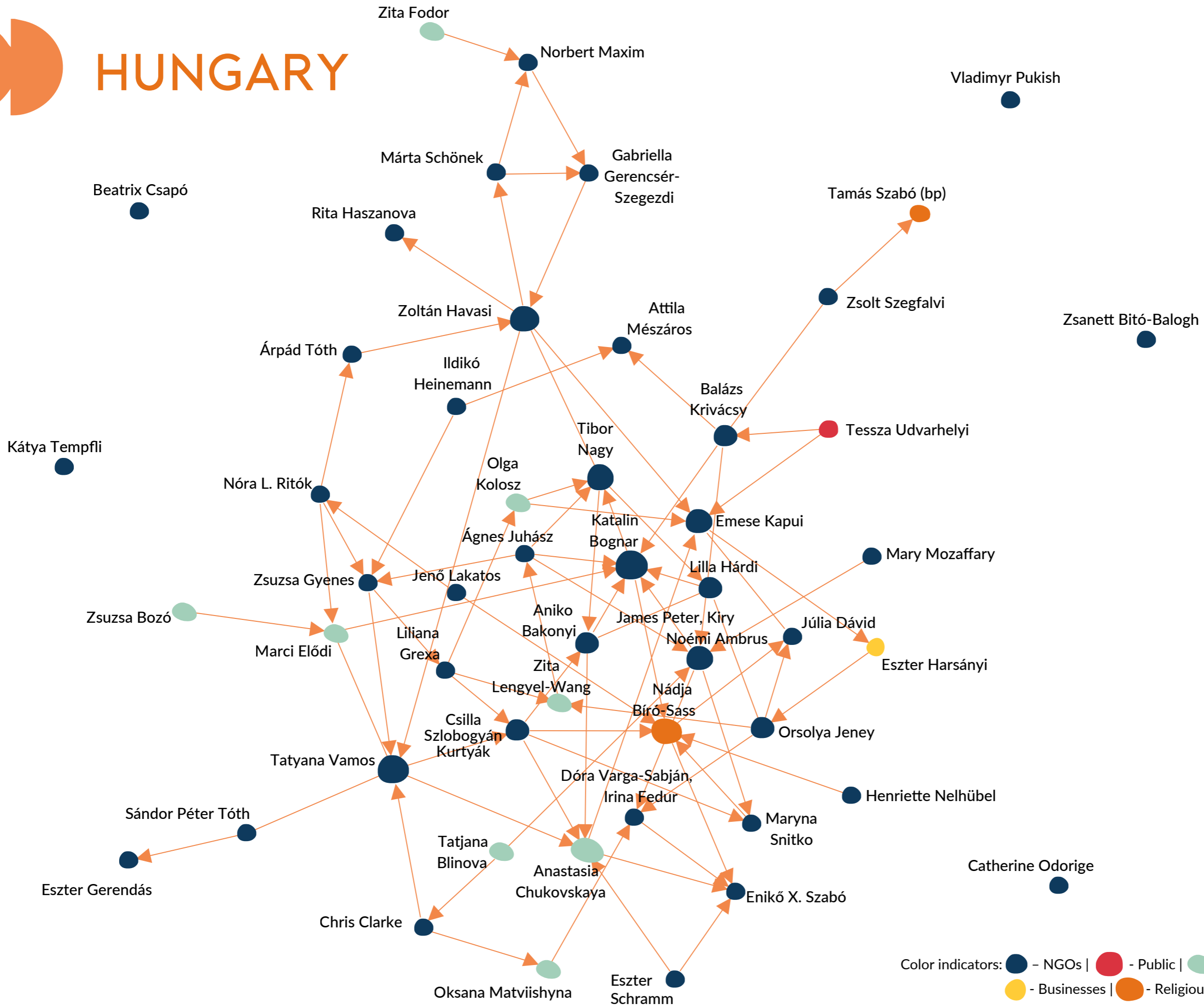
**Changing the narrative about migration in the media is crucial.**

<sup>17</sup> Source: Bundeszentrale fuer politische Bildung (2022), Bevoelkerung mit Migrationshintergrund, URL: <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/150599/bevoelkerung-mit-migrationshintergrund-nach-alter/>

<sup>18</sup> Source: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Art. 12 and 31, URL: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>



# HUNGARY



Color indicators: ● - NGOs | ● - Public | ● - Individuals / Informal Groups  
● - Businesses | ● - Religious Organizations

# HUNGARY

Hungary is both young and old. On one hand, looking at the borders of today, Hungary is a young country. It was formed by major losses of territory just after World War I. But on the other hand, Hungary is also a very old country, with memories of a huge realm called the

Austro-Hungarian empire that existed for centuries in various constellations. Multiethnicity was a defining factor for its existence, looking at the different ethnicities living on the territory and all the languages being spoken from what is now Northern Italy to Ukraine.

## The foundation of economic success

However, in very recent history, the picture the current government is painting is the opposite: an ethnically homogenous state. The conservative right, the ruling party since 2010, is openly calling the ethnic homogeneity of the Hungarian people a key to economic success.<sup>19</sup> This stands in stark contradiction to migration studies and economic studies in theory and practice, examples like the economic development of the United States and Europe for which migration was a driving force for both innovation and economic growth.<sup>20</sup>

## You are entering the European Union

Since Hungary joined the European Union in 2004, its border with Ukraine became a border between European Union territory and non-European Union territory. 2.1 million refugees came across that border since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Roughly 34,000

persons applied for protection within the government scheme.<sup>21</sup> Among the six countries portrayed in this report, Hungary has received the smallest number of refugees both in absolute numbers as well as per capita.

## Quick to the rescue

Hungary stands out when examining the ease or difficulty of starting an initiative: respondents in Hungary answered that it was very easy (4.75 on a scale from 1-5, compared to 2.5 in Slovakia). However, funding from the government was lowest in Hungary compared to the other countries surveyed (funding from

NGOs, foundations and the EU were all mentioned more often). Several interviewees mentioned that short-term funding was indeed available, but for Ukrainian refugees only: NGOs needed to turn away from the work they were already doing for refugees. Also, after a few months and with no end to the war in sight, both volunteers' motivation and funding subsided.

## A short-term view focused on survival

A very short-term perspective on migration was voiced during interviews. For example, neither Hungarians nor Ukrainians were sure how long the war would last, whether Ukrainians should start building a new home or whether this was only temporary. With no concept of immigration into the Hungarian job market or the school system for the children, Ukrainian children had to attend Hungarian school, also attending online education from Ukraine as well as joining several homework centers or so-called pop-up schools. This led to exhaustion of the children.

Such a development points to two possible underlying reasons, which are both supported by the data gathered in our report: a very short-term hands-on approach to migration

(providing shelter and clothes, rather than a long-term perspective with legal aid or education for adults) and a substantial lack of coordination among different initiatives and organizations (mentioned as the second barrier for successful work after lack of funding).

Migrants are knowledgeable about the shortcomings of every system, and they often develop the best solutions for it. In Hungary, only a third of organizations Ashoka interviewed had people with lived migration experience in their leadership circle (the lowest number among the countries surveyed). That knowledge appears to be a valuable asset to reshape existing processes in the field of migration.

## Belonging – and not

In the interviews Ashoka conducted, it was confirmed that exclusion of Roma played a particularly complicated part. Especially that Roma-speaking Hungarian people living in Ukraine were treated as not 'real' Ukrainians by other Ukrainian refugees, while they also experienced a wide cultural difference from Roma people living in Hungary. For those who have Hungarian citizenship as well (dual citizenship), it is difficult to legally treat them as refugees even though they had to leave their homes in Ukraine due to the war. So, they are also excluded from some benefits that targeted refugees.

## The most obvious need is the most difficult to attain

The paradigm shift of seeing migration as a natural phenomenon is both the shift with the biggest potential in Hungary and the most difficult to attain. As historically speaking, Hungary underwent huge changes in territory, and people with many different languages and traditions lived together in changing circumstances, there is huge potential. However, the current political parties very strongly work against any promotion of diversity. In our report,

empathy was mentioned several times as the fundamental shift that needed to occur (voiced as "openness" and "love"). Sadly, but understandably given the circumstances, narrative change is the area in which the fewest organizations were active (only 9% of organizations mentioned narrative change as a field of work, compared to 27% in Germany and 24% in Poland).

<sup>19</sup> Source: EURACTIV Media Network B.V. (2017), Orbán calls "ethnic homogeneity" a key to success, URL: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/orban-calls-ethnic-homogeneity-a-key-to-success/>

<sup>20</sup> Additional resources:

Harnoss, Johann et.al (2021), The Power of Human Migration in the 21st Century,

URL: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2021/how-global-migration-drives-innovation>

OECD (2014), Is migration good for the economy?,

URL: <https://www.oecd.org/migration/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf>

Helsinki and Menedék (2021), For the third cycle of UPR of Hungary on the rights of migrants,

URL: [https://helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/HHC\\_Menedek\\_UPR2021\\_Hungary\\_Migrants\\_web.pdf](https://helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/HHC_Menedek_UPR2021_Hungary_Migrants_web.pdf)

Engler, Philipp et.al. (2020), Migration to Advanced Economies Can Raise Growth,

URL:

<https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2020/06/19/blog-weo-chapter4-migration-to-advanced-economies-can-raise-growth>

Higgins, Andrew et.al. (2022), Hungary's Orbán, a Scourge of Liberals, Faces a New Foe: Economics,

URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/20/world/europe/viktor-orban-hungary-economy.html>

<sup>21</sup> Source: IOM Hungary (2023), Ukraine Crisis 2022-2023, One Year of Response, URL:

[https://hungary.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1591/files/documents/2023-03/One%20year%20in%20war\\_report\\_FIN\\_0.pdf](https://hungary.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1591/files/documents/2023-03/One%20year%20in%20war_report_FIN_0.pdf)

**Emerging insights and recommendations:**

1

A paradigm shift in the narrative of migration: Migration is not a threat to a nation, but its only chance of survival. Migration revitalizes a society, brings innovation and much-needed economic growth. Such a paradigm shift can only be achieved by normalizing migration, reminding Hungarians of their own history and highlighting those who start to make themselves a home in Hungary and contribute to resolving the societal challenges.

2

A paradigm shift in migration strategy: Accepting migration as a needed resource, allows for long-term budgeting for civil society to support those arriving with both their most immediate needs and support them in the steps they need to make to realize their changemaking potential.

3

A paradigm shift in hiring practices: Hiring people with lived migration experience in decision-making roles in the field of migration brings expertise and first-hand knowledge to where it is most needed.

**Changemakers on the map**

**ZITA LENGYEL-WANG**  
REFUGEE HELP DIGITAL NETWORK

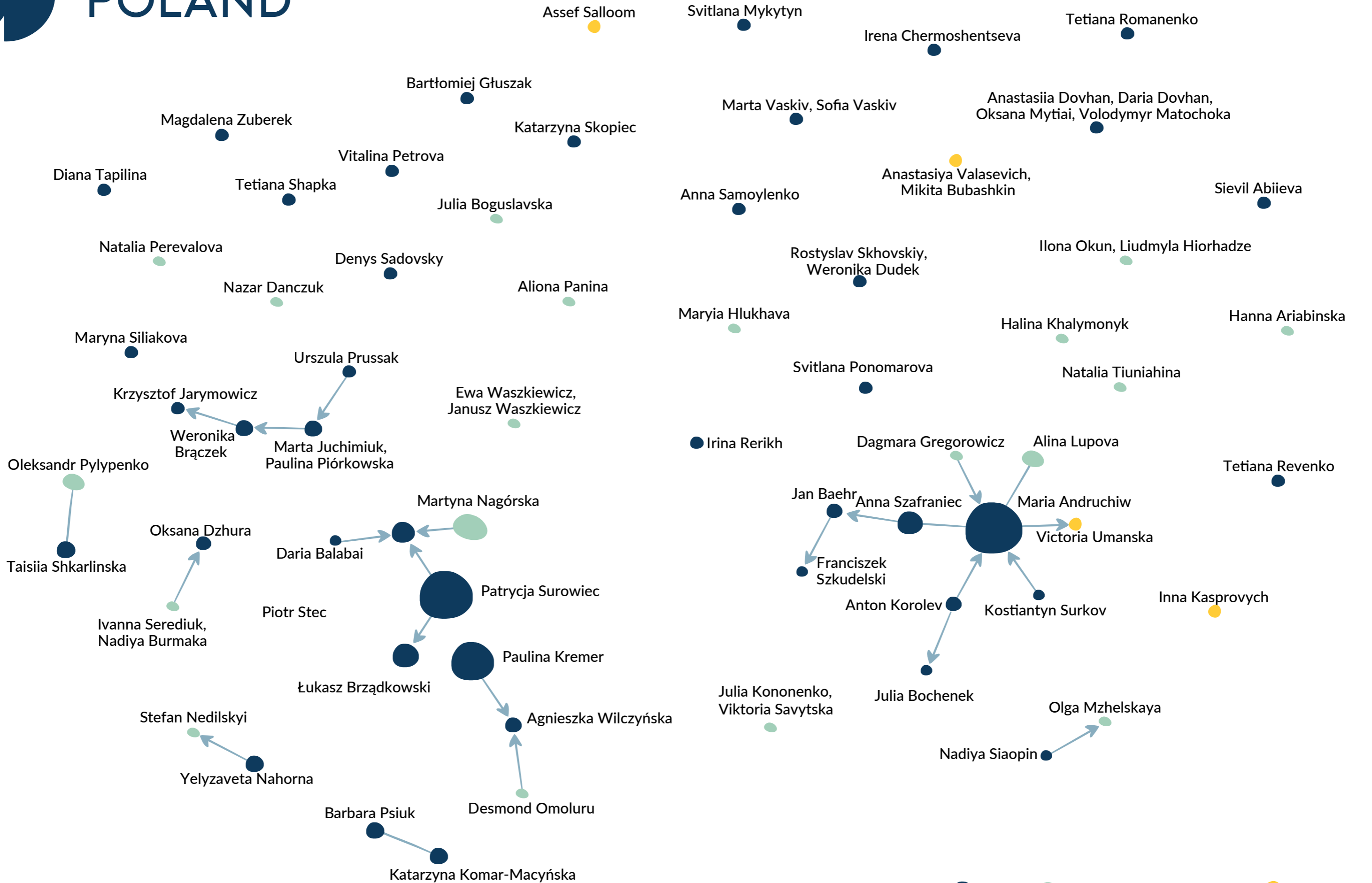
Zita is a founding member of Segítségnyújtás Ukrajna, Kárpátalja/ Refugee Help Digital Network that started out as a Facebook support group with the aim to connect refugees in need of help, with local civilians looking for a forum to offer their help. Thanks to the team of volunteers' strong digital know-how, the initiative has grown into one of the most effective and well-known online support channels in Hungary, with more than 130 000 members that still operates to address the ever-changing needs of refugees.

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**Cooperation and information sharing between the largest Facebook groups of countries receiving Ukrainian refugees such as Poland and Romania have the potential to contribute to a more accurate need assessment and resource allocation.**



# POLAND



Color indicators: ● - NGOs | ● - Individuals / Informal Groups | ● - Businesses

# POLAND

## Poland and migration patterns

The society of Poland is dynamically changing, due to a set of interrelated factors. One of them is the migration patterns. For many decades in the 20th century, Poland was a place of emigration. Poles were seeking better opportunities far from poverty (before World War II), from communist dictatorship (until the 90s) and to search for new economic opportunities in times of transformation and later after entering the EU. However, in the last decade an opposite trend is visible. Poland is increasingly an immigration country. The movement of people fleeing the full-scale war in Ukraine is just the most recent (not last) chapter in this story.

Poland, as a neighboring country to Ukraine where many Ukrainian citizens worked before 2014, became a good direction of migration, when Russia invaded the Ukrainian territories. After the war started the Ukrainian migrants had not been given any special status, other than a temporary permit for work. They were treated as economic migrants. However, that migration phenomena created a basis for a strong diaspora, which played and still plays a crucial role in serving the ones fleeing the full-scale war after the escalation in February 2022.

## Large cross-border movements and overwhelming Polish response

Between February 24, 2022, and July 2, 2023, almost 12.5 million Ukrainian citizens crossed the Ukrainian-Polish border. More than 10.5 million people left Poland. It is estimated that more than 1.2 million Ukrainian citizens are currently residing in Poland. More than 1.5 million PESEL numbers have been issued to Ukrainian citizens, of which less than one million are active today.<sup>22</sup>

The vast majority of Poles were actively assisting the people on the refuge. Even the historical disputes over the difficult time of World War II were not a barrier to welcoming the 'neighbors', 'guests' - hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the threat of full-scale war. Polish response to the arrival of refugees was overwhelmingly based on civil society organizations run by Polish individuals and those with migration experience. These were formally existing nonprofit organizations as well as informal initiatives by individuals and companies.

Such broad involvement of third sector organizations required efficient coordination of activities, which was possible thanks to the NGO Forum Razem (initiated by Ashoka and Polish Humanitarian Action) among others. Other coordination initiatives and quick establishment of local hubs in the biggest Polish cities were proof of the value of long-term multi-stakeholder collaboration curated in networks such as Ashoka's community. This facilitated the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and material support when INGOs arrived in Poland.

Poland became the main receiving country for the Ukrainians, but it faces other migration-related challenges. The migration and refugee legal system in Poland and its implementation had been for years widely criticized by a group of experts coming from social organizations. In 2022 the quick fixes successfully addressed short-term immediate needs of large numbers of people but were far

from fair and sustainable. Experts highlight unacceptable systemic inequalities in the treatment of people of different origins. While Ukrainian citizens soon received the rights to protection and social assistance, asylum seekers from other parts of the world trying to claim the same right on the Belarusian border were pushed back and rejected any official assistance.

Lack of long-term clarity about the legality of residence and rights for persons with special Ukrainian status are among the most frequently cited systemic reasons for prolonged feelings of stress, temporariness, and lack of agency. According to our research, lack of safety and stabilization, including uncertainty about the length of stay, are the reasons for little engagement in affairs of the new community.

## Challenges and opportunities emerging in Poland

In our mapping in Poland, we interviewed 76 people with migration experience and those Poles who actively were engaged in assisting people on the move in need, mostly in the age bracket 26-35. Additionally, we interviewed 90 young people (18-25) who are active as changemakers in various sectors of society. We found out that humanitarian assistance to people fleeing Ukraine was rarely led by young adults (25 and below).

Younger people largely found their place in temporary support roles. Some of the volunteers became employees of the humanitarian non-profits. Others, after the period of intensive assistance, returned to their main areas of activity. In the first phase of response to need of people on the move, young people undertook tasks around:

- support in finding own way in Poland, assisting in taking your first steps,
- language assistance,
- conducting additional classes,
- assistance in dealing with systems/applications

What is observable is that the tasks are strenuous one-on-one work, but young people stressed out the sense of empowerment they feel while assisting people in need. The direct service is stressful, brings lots of responsibility and risk of burn out, transferring trauma or PTSD, if the assistants are not supported carefully.

Young people in Poland are increasingly engaged in social entrepreneurship, but they face several challenges, including:

- Lack of support from the education system
- Discrimination due to age
- Physical and mental stresses
- Lack of experience
- Lack of funding

Age discrimination is a phenomenon that many people encounter in their activities. Such discrimination occurs within an organization (where younger people work with older people); between 'younger' organizations (founded by young people, where a young team dominates) and 'older' organizations, also in cooperation with local authorities.

The research had included only a small group of young social activists with recent refugee experience, still they confirm the same barriers additionally to the one faced due to the migrant identity.

According to the research, only a small percentage of surveyed young adults are interested in long-term social engagement with people on the move. There is a strong observable trend that young changemakers engage in areas that are their personal pain points. It shows the huge potential and need for self-advocacy.

<sup>22</sup> Source: Dobołowicz, Michał (n.d.), Ilu uchodźców z Ukrainy mieszka w Polsce? Znamy najnowsze dane, URL: [https://www.rm24.pl/raporty/raport-wojna-z-rosja/news-ilu-uchodzcow-z-ukrainy-mieszka-w-polsce-znamy-najnowsze-dan,nld,6890477#crp\\_state=1](https://www.rm24.pl/raporty/raport-wojna-z-rosja/news-ilu-uchodzcow-z-ukrainy-mieszka-w-polsce-znamy-najnowsze-dan,nld,6890477#crp_state=1)

The engagement of young people with migration experience has at this stage a temporary or unstructured character. They engage in areas that are of the most importance for them, as well as the Polish young changemakers. The most common areas are: building support networks, education for adults and/or minors and engaging in intercultural exchange. In the case of young people who fled other countries than Ukraine, different types of social engagement prevail. In the group of Belarusians, they often initiate cultural events (concerts, performances, exhibitions, club events). Still, their cultural activities are often strongly connected to message of peace, support to Ukraine and democracy in Belarus.

According to the anthropological research conducted under the Hello Entrepreneurship program<sup>23</sup>, young adults with migrant experience do not prioritize social entrepreneurship due to two main issues: they must focus on earning income and they are engaged in obtaining the best possible higher education in Poland. Especially the need to earn a living early is seen as a barrier to social engagement, perceived as additional, voluntary engagement.

### The changing society

The vast majority of Poles involved in work with migration assess the Polish system as unprepared for the reception and integration of persons on the move. The more informed and involved activists are, the more critical they tend to be. This harsh assessment of the situation is especially expressed by the humanitarian activists working in the extremely difficult situation at the Polish - Belarusian border. As experts claim, for the situation to permanently improve, a realistic national migration policy needs to be developed and implemented. Such a document may be created on the base of previous experience and expert knowledge mainly from the non-profit sector<sup>24</sup>. The need for long-term migration and integration policy is well-recognized by local authorities, which carry the burden of creating high-quality public services for new and old inhabitants. Local governments are open to multi-stakeholder collaboration, recognizing the value of services provided by social entrepreneurs.

The interviewed changemakers who have recent experience of migration from Ukraine are, more than Poles, satisfied with the state of Polish systems. They recognize the gaps and difficulties however they also see opportunities and express

gratitude to Polish society for creating the space for their agency and changemaking.

There is a huge untapped potential for resolving social tensions in the media. In times of strong polarization of public debate in Poland, the media has power to improve public understanding of the issue of people on the move, as well as to shape narrative in a different way. The media can play a powerful role in shaping public opinion, and it is important that they use this power to promote accurate and compassionate reporting on this issue. In the research, we had heard many statements expressing frustration caused by the media, which instead of using a narrative that brings people closer together (showing their personal stories, courage and struggle) fuels the conflicts. The economic and social importance of the presence of people on the move (their entrepreneurship, work, taxes paid, investments) are rarely reported. Social entrepreneurs are actively shaping positive narratives, but the collaboration and interest from the media is essential for success. There is a space for solution journalism, which contradicts the biased focus on the cost of aid and the additional burden on schools and the health system.

The challenges connected to the growing number of people on the move looking for their place in Poland are at the same time an opportunity for society as a whole. The richness of diversity in terms of culture and ethnicity can be an opportunity to create more just, equitable and inclusive systems. Society has more chances to recognize the value of diversity. The presence of people on the move, with other identities and from minorities and other aspects of diversity is an opportunity to unleash the changemaking potential of people from different backgrounds. An example of this can be seen in the high level of women's activity noted in the study, who create spaces of cooperation and mutual support. They engage despite simultaneously struggling with the many challenges of the war that has overturned their personal lives.

Interestingly, the social sector in Poland is dominated by women. Due to travel restrictions for men, the great majority of newcomers from Ukraine are also women, so they reinforce the pattern of female domination in social work. Engagement in solving social challenges is associated with helping, care and charity, assigned to women as 'care-givers'. It results in strong underrepresentation of men as social entrepreneurs and higher disengagement in solving social problems. The differences are reflected in declared values and political choices, where young women declare more openness, empathy and inclusion<sup>25</sup>. Thus, in Polish civil society, there is a need to include more men and boys into changemaking.

### Changemakers on the map



**YELIZAVETA NAHORNA**  
THE FOUNDATION UKRAINE



The Foundation Ukraine, made up largely of young people, is one of the most active organizations in Poland. They offer a wide range of assistance - from integration support services, job assistance, language learning to cultural events. Over the year since February 24, 2022, the Foundation has grown enormously, increasing its staff threefold. Despite her young age, Yelizaveta holds a very responsible position at the heart of the organization. Her tasks include recruiting new staff and ensuring that all colleagues act in accordance with the Foundation's mission and values.

**Given that the NGO sector in general is partly based on the involvement of volunteers, you can almost always find a range of support and participation that suits you. I started my journey at the Foundation with volunteering, so I know how important it is for NGOs to create a space to work with active people, to give them agency.**

<sup>23</sup> Source: Ashoka (2023), Jak młode i przedsiębiorcze osoby odnajdują się w Polsce?,

URL: <https://www.ashoka.org/pl-pl/story/jak-mlode-i-przedsiębiorcze-osoby-odnajdują-sie-w-polsce>

<sup>24</sup> Source: Migration Consortium et.al. (2023), Polish School of Assistance, Reception and integration of refugees from the Ukraine in Poland in 2022,

URL: <https://konsorcjum.org.pl/en/report-the-polish-school-of-assistance/>

<sup>25</sup> Source: Młodziwyborcy (2023), Debutanci '23,

URL: <https://mlodziwyborcy.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Raport-Debutanci23-7-Jul.pdf>



**PAULINA KREMER**  
SPÓŁDZIELNIA HECA

Paulina provides inclusive workplaces while running the HECA Co-operative for several years now. HECA is not limited to bicycle courier services, producing natural lemonade or upcycled furniture. With the arrival of a large group of war refugees from Ukraine in Tczew, they have provided accommodation, integration support and the creation of a new nursery that has enabled young mothers to take up employment. The smooth operation is made possible by close cooperation with local businesses.

### Ashoka Fellows active in helping the Ukrainian refugees



**MYROSLAVA KERYK**  
THE UKRAINIAN HOUSE



Myroslava supports people with migration experience to quickly establish themselves in a new place, so that they can work for the common good. She also involves host communities in the process, which fosters relationships and prevents conflicts. In addition to providing comprehensive support to people with the experience of migration in the most important aspects of life, such as housing, work and education, Myra also creates a home away from home - the Ukrainian House. It is a unique space co-created by local communities - both Polish and Ukrainian. Her work is rooted in personal experience.



**WITOLD KLAUS**  
THE MIGRATION CONSORTIUM



Witold being aware of the level of ambiguity and complexity of the Polish legal system concerning the status of refugees and migrants residing in Poland - created the Association of Legal Intervention. It provides free legal support to people in the process of legalizing their stay. Now Witold is co-leading the Migration Consortium, which manages to combine the expertise of organizations working on behalf of migrants in various areas. They share a common vision of an inclusive state.



**KRZYSZTOF STANOWSKI**  
LUBLIN CITY COUNCIL



Krzysztof is one of the people behind the smooth cooperation between regional NGOs, the city council and INGOs in Lublin. Some of the solutions they proposed have been successfully implemented across the country (e.g., employing cultural assistants in schools). This is possible thanks to many years of work, mutual understanding and trust. Another important result of this collaboration is the creation of Baobab, space for exchanging experiences and learning about cultures in the building where the bank used to be (Homo Faber is the lead organization).

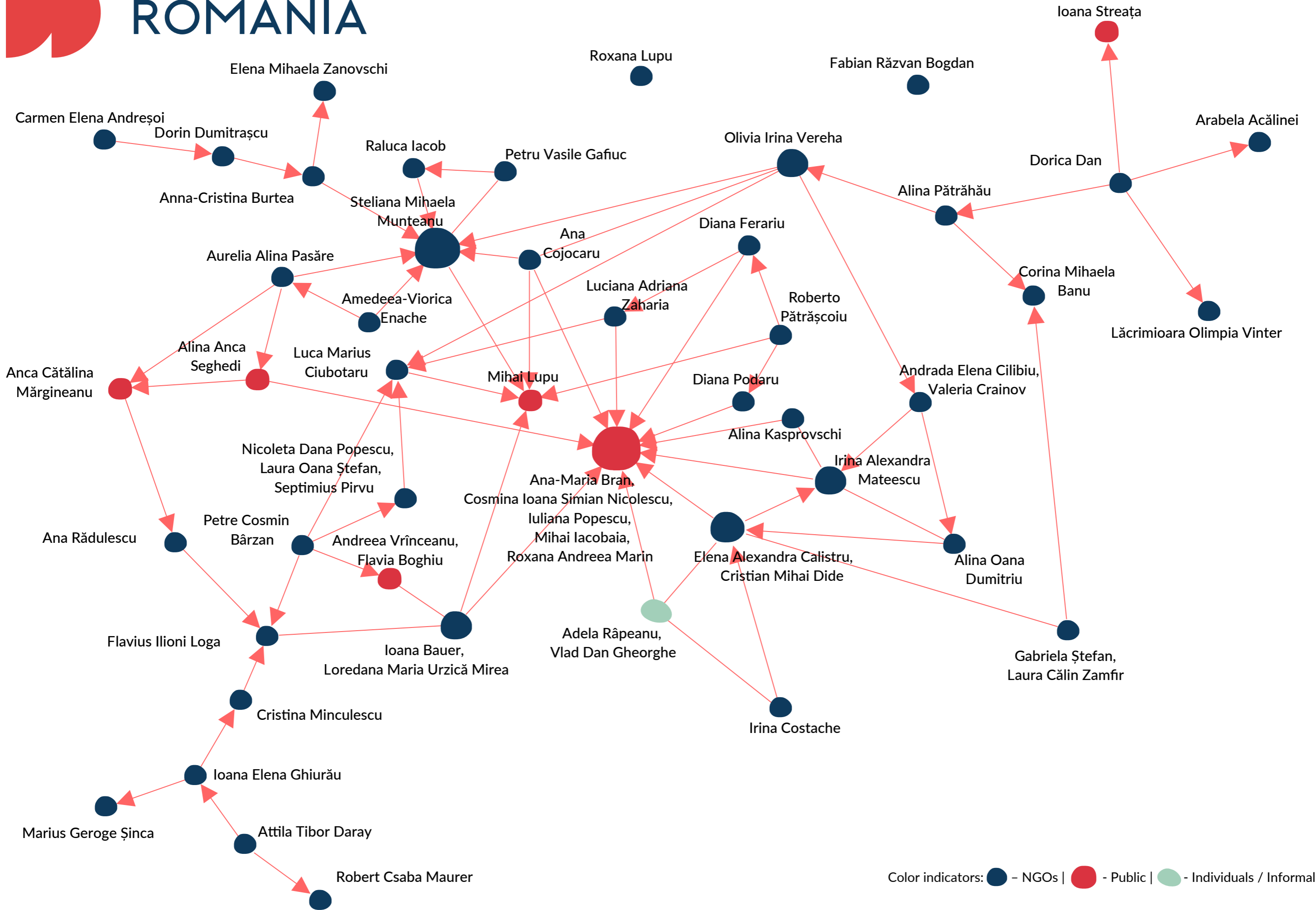
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**Baobab is a meeting spot and a bonding place between new and old citizens. Initiatives from organizations and informal groups, including migrant and minority organizations, are invited to create a social, cultural, integrative and inclusive offer. Thinking of integration as a two-way process, we direct some of our activities towards the host society, i.e., the residents of Lublin.**

Anna Dąbrowska, president of Homo Faber<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Source: Wasik, Dominik (2023), Dawna siedziba banku zamieniła się w przyjazną przestrzeń dla nowych mieszkańców Lublina. Zajrzeliśmy do „baobabu”, URL: <https://spottedlublin.pl/dawna-siedziba-banku-zamienila-sie-w-przyjazna-przestrzen-dla-nowych-mieszkanow-lublina-zajrzelismy-do-baobabu/>

# ROMANIA





# ROMANIA

## Romania is eminently a country of emigration

Ranking among the top twenty nations in the world in terms of highest emigration: over 4 million Romanians live abroad<sup>27</sup>. The number of Romanian emigrants was six times higher than the number of foreign immigrants in the country at the end of 2020. Therefore, we can't speak of a deeply interactive exercise at the societal level concerning newcomers, as the number is small compared to Romania's population (19 million people).

Romania's policies concerning the integration of refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection into Romanian society have profound deficiencies – as indicated by the assessment of the National Integration Evaluation Mechanism (NIEM). This project, funded by the European Union, measured governmental efforts to create comprehensive frameworks for integrating beneficiaries of international protection in 14 EU member states from 2016 to 2019.<sup>28</sup>

The NIEM report identified several structural issues within Romania's policy system concerning the integration of foreigners, including the lack of legislative harmonization between asylum and migration laws and the organic laws governing specific areas (education, health), as well as secondary legislation (government decisions, ministerial orders, internal instructions, and regulations). As a result, beneficiaries of international protection often face refusal of access to goods and public

services to which they are entitled. Furthermore, the NIEM report outlined a lack of involvement from the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, which, together with their subordinate institutions, are directly responsible for two key dimensions: access to education and access to the labor market. It also highlights a closed system of integration policy management, with passive involvement of beneficiaries, reduced transparency, and a lack of data to support public policies in the field.

Having this foundation, the war in Ukraine caught Romania completely unprepared to manage a shocking influx of refugees. All aspects of human, logistical, and legal resources were challenged in the early days of the conflict. Between 10,000 and 20,000 refugees were crossing the border in a single day, attempting to seek safety.

No fewer than 5.8 million Ukrainian refugees have come to the EU since the outbreak of the war and as of July of the current year, 2.9 million Ukrainian refugees have transited through Romania, with 95,000 registered on the country's territory at this moment<sup>29</sup>. Poland, Germany, and Czechia are the three most important host countries for people fleeing Ukraine, with Poland alone accommodating approximately 35% of those under temporary protection in the EU.

<sup>27</sup> The International Organization for Migration (2021), World Migration Report 2022, URL: <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2022-interactive/>

<sup>28</sup> Source: Foundation Institute of Public Affairs (2022), National Integration Evaluation Mechanisms (NIEM) in 14 EU Member States, URL: <http://www.forintegration.eu/pl/pub>

<sup>29</sup> UNHCR (n.d.), Ukraine Refugee Situation, URL: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

## Non-profit organizations and civil society stepping up

The actors involved in this emergency response in Romania have been the state, civil society, non-governmental international organizations, UN agencies, and the private sector. It was perhaps the most extensive process of collaboration and interrelation in the country's history, with an incredible mobilization of forces. A similar synergistic energy occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic when these actors came together for the first time to provide assistance with donations, medical equipment, and expert human resources. Therefore, the Ukrainian crisis emerged on a foundation of fatigue and already expended resources.

There were over 300 NGOs involved in this response, most of them lacking experience in humanitarian emergencies or refugee situations, acting out of empathy and urgency, present at the borders to offer assistance to the refugees from the very first days. They were the ones who spurred the government into action, bringing forth proposals and solutions, mobilizing human resources and humanitarian aid, and remaining a solid partner for the state throughout the entire period since the outbreak of the war.

## Key insights from our mapping

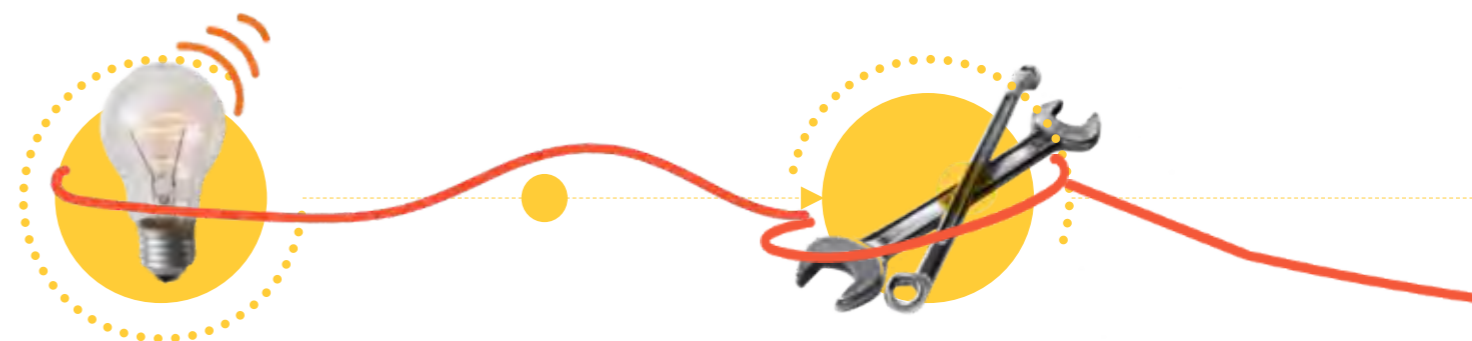
We have spoken with 61 changemakers involved in the front line of support and intervention to help Ukrainians affected by the war. Based on our study, several relevant aspects have emerged demonstrating significant impact on multiple levels. None of the actors involved were familiar with a large-scale humanitarian response related to migration.

The Romanian system was and is not prepared to receive and integrate refugees in any aspect: logistics, legislation, resources, and expertise in the field (specific to refugees and then major humanitarian crises and emergency support), as well as coordination of state structures. There is a lack of specialized personnel in state institutions trained in humanitarian crises and refugee affairs. Also, a lack of a comprehensive strategy from the Romanian state on multiple levels: the organization of Romanian language courses (largely provided by NGOs), a deficient system for accessing education for Ukrainian children, a lack of measures to encourage Ukrainian citizens to enter the job market, and an

unprepared social protection system to accommodate such a high number of foreign individuals with atypical and complicated situations, posing multiple implications (legal status, legislation, vulnerabilities).

Additionally, there is an alarming expectation of management on the second phase: we want them to integrate and get jobs and have a functional life here, but we forget the trauma these people are enduring.

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**I believe that only after a few years will we understand what these people fleeing from war have been through and what happened to them there. They are deeply traumatized, and our expectations as a system are completely misguided: we ask them to integrate, we blame them for not making efforts to integrate, but we forget that refugees have a distinct status: they only want a safe space to live until they can return home again. They didn't come here to start a new life; they came here to save themselves, they had no other choice. Most of them don't have the mindset to stay; instead, they plan to be here temporarily and then return home. We must consider that we're demanding impossible things from them given the traumatic situation they're in.**

**Carmen Gheorghe**, Ashoka Fellow and founder of E-Romnja, *the only Roma feminist organization in Romania*

### As the situation evolves, we face decreased funding and lack of long-term vision

Furthermore, there is not a clear view on which institution is accountable for what type of intervention or service and what can be institutionalized from what was created, especially by the social sector.

The private sector intervened forcefully with financial and logistical support, but this happened mainly during the initial emergency phase, covering immediate needs. However, the funds allocated from the private sector to a certain part of civil society - generally based on previous collaborations rather than expertise - were done in a non-strategic manner, making other NGOs in the market more vulnerable.

NGOs have been substituting for the state - the interviewed changemakers talk about how the services provided by NGOs are not duplicated

by the state. A significant part of the actions supporting refugees are based on internal funds, UN agencies and other international organizations.

The state has been supporting through accommodation, food, transport, and financial help. The official data from January 2023<sup>30</sup> show that over 106 million euros from public funds were invested in accommodating and feeding refugees during the war in Ukraine, with an additional 12 million euros for transportation and an estimated 26 million dollars in cash assistance from UN agencies and NGOs.

The main barriers identified are lack of education, exposure to diversity, bureaucracy, lack of strategy, vision, and political will. Language barrier is a fundamental aspect, as well.

### Enthusiasm fading away and fatigue settling in

In Romania, a culture of distrust persists from the communist regime, resulting in a lack of education, acceptance and tolerance towards people from outside the country. The enthusiasm from early stages of the conflict has diminished, so now there is a transition from "Ukrainians are our brothers and sisters" to "visitors are welcome, but they also have to leave" (Romanian expression). Also, domestic socio-economic developments like inflation and the energy prices crisis have added to the innate vulnerabilities of the society in a pre-electoral year. Hence influencing the narratives about refugees from Ukraine is gaining importance. The need for inclusive education is evident, and education requires time. If during the COVID-19 pandemic there was a wave of new organizations forming to tackle health issues for society, we don't see the same effect now, largely due to the temporary mindset of the situation.

### More distortions within the social sector

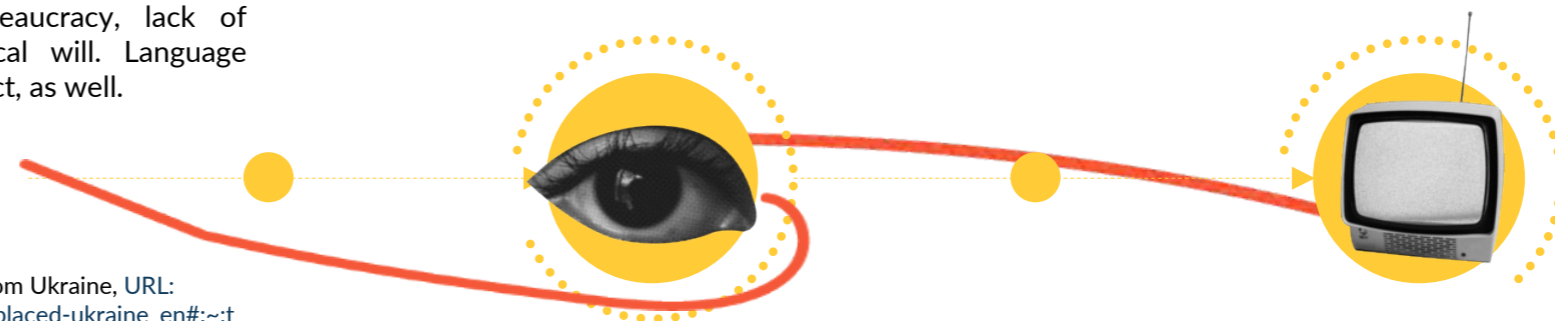
As we have seen in our mapping, the shift towards education and social inclusion post-pandemic, coupled with a decrease in civil engagement or environmental civil society movements and organizations, shows that once more, after 3 years of resource reallocation to putting out fires, important and critical societal dimensions that were addressed mainly by the NGO sector are under even more pressure.

The mental health and emotional dimensions were underfunded and understated as impact in both the relationship management among actors as well as in funder-grantee-refugee management. The incredible energy of civil society and the positive effects it generates are encouraging but the effects of involvement almost beyond the capacity of an entire sector must be taken into account.

### As we have seen in our mapping, the shift towards education and social inclusion

We see a huge potential in leaders from the NGO sector, and the government can unlock it by consulting them more frequently to design programs tailored to people's needs, with medium and long-term impact. Infrastructure models are needed, as well as capacity building consolidation, open information, transparent communication and an intersectoral attitude, collaboration, and the creation of coherent public policies adapted to the reality on the ground.

There is a strong need to get out of the 'beneficiaries' mindset in looking at refugees: political policies or programs of interventions should be based on consultation with the refugees themselves so that they can become co-creators.



<sup>30</sup> Source: European Commission (2023), Romania: Report on the national response to those displaced from Ukraine, URL: [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/romania-report-national-response-those-displaced-ukraine\\_en#:~:text=The%20report%20also%20identifies%20the,are%20legally%20employed%20in%20Romania](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/romania-report-national-response-those-displaced-ukraine_en#:~:text=The%20report%20also%20identifies%20the,are%20legally%20employed%20in%20Romania)

### Changemakers on the map



#### MIHAELA MUNTEANU

THE FEDERATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

FONSS was a key actor in the response efforts, and in the early days of the conflict, they activated the Social Emergency Center, a model of response in situations of social emergencies. *"We felt it as a matter of honor to come and take action in this crisis because we were one step ahead of the authorities. We also understood that we need to support and align ourselves with them because they have resources that we don't. Since we were addressing the specific problems of traditional vulnerable groups and had no experience with refugees, there were more accumulated needs than we knew how to intervene in. We did not have a clear intervention path, we had to invent it."*

Mihaela Munteanu also highlights what this experience brought in terms of accelerated learning and growth of organizations, a process fostered by this moment.



**Currently, we are capitalizing on an experience we did not have before. Large funds were managed; FONSS now has a budget several times larger than before, and this will help us access larger projects and strategic funds. Moreover, we are now working on refugee integration projects with smaller organizations, and they have all grown rapidly during this time.**

They piloted several innovative intervention models: they opened a social store for the benefit of refugees, which is a unique assistance model. It is not just a donation distribution; when a person enters the store, they receive a sum of a virtual currency called "ROUA" (a combination of Romania and Ukraine), and they are allocated a specific amount of money to spend. The goal, according to Mihaela, is to have a different approach in distributing social aid, one that does not compromise their dignity, where people do not feel poor, have spending limits, and can also save money. Additionally, a social worker conducts constant evaluations and reevaluations of social cases for each person who enters the store. This way, they have an overall and individual perspective on the beneficiaries they serve.



#### IOANA BAUER

ELIBERARE ASSOCIATION

eLiberare deals with preventing human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Romania. To support refugees from Ukraine, most of whom were women and children, they developed a new protection model. It was designed and piloted nationally to address trafficking risks and prevent sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, forced begging, and other forms of human trafficking.



**The new Kompass model was created together with Ukrainian colleagues who joined the eLiberare team in April 2022. Going through the experience of leaving everything behind and fleeing the country in search of safety, they helped build the Kompass model based on their lived experiences. The purpose of the model is to increase awareness of safety measures, develop individual safety plans for those at risk, and provide assistance to them.**





## CARMEN GHEORGHE

E-ROMNJA

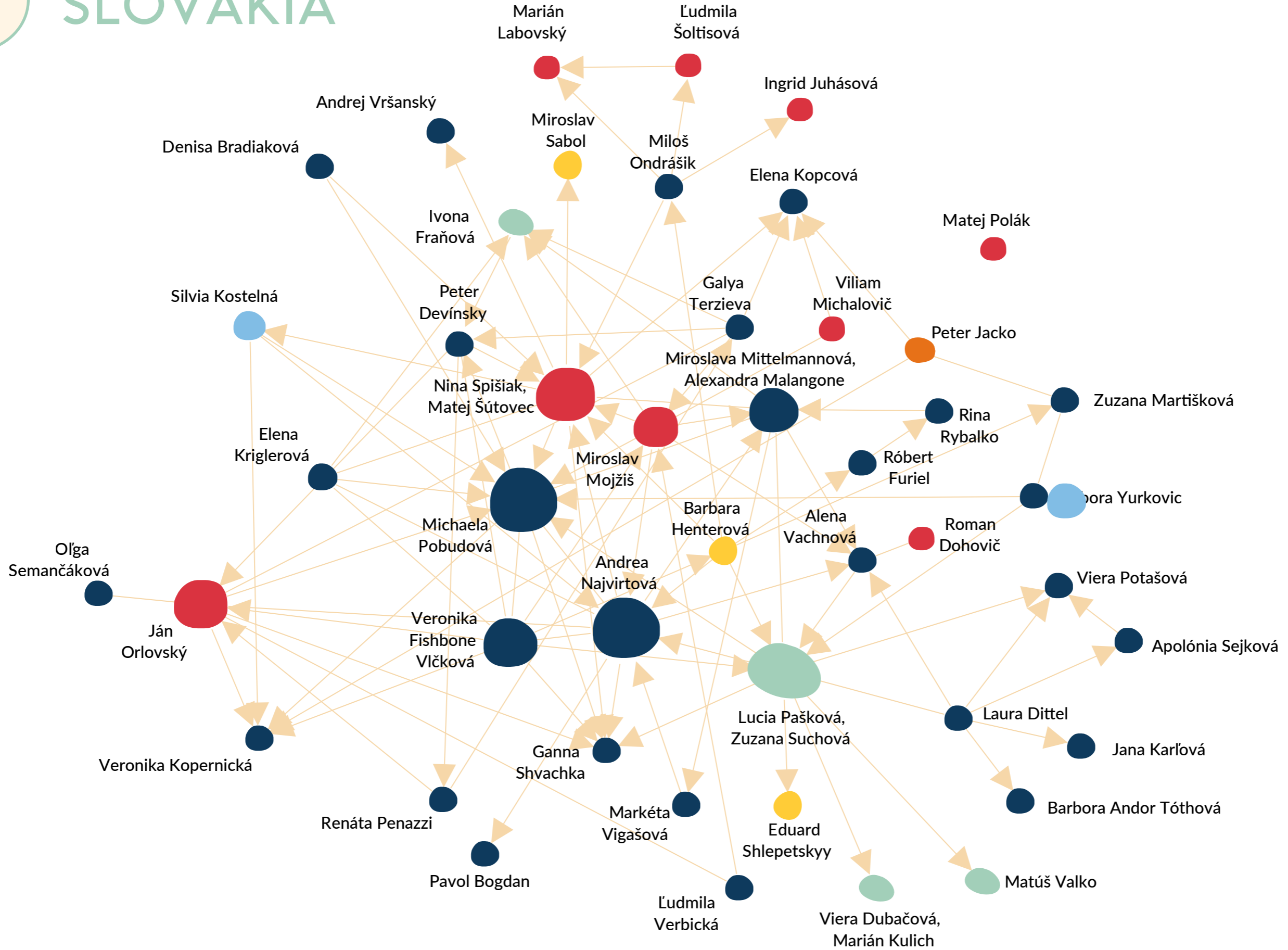
E-Romnja is the only Roma feminist organization in Romania. They work in an intersectional manner to support women in developing a deeper understanding and solutions for issues ranging from identity (gender, sexuality) and women's rights (abortion, gender equality) to housing and local infrastructure. Carmen and her organization were involved in supporting Ukrainian refugees in their specialized area and say that they identified discriminatory attitudes towards Romani refugees: the war only deepened the existing prejudices and stereotypes. Carmen says that Roma women coming to Romania struggled with accessing the system, especially regarding basic services, and it was clear that the Romanian state was unable to consistently respond to people through sexual and reproductive health services or protection against violence and domestic violence.

”

We wanted to reach Roma women, whom many organizations don't reach, especially since there was a media context with racist news targeting Romani refugees, particularly women. We worked mainly in shelters and hosting centers and found women who had left a war context but were already living a daily life of micro-harassment and racial discrimination. Roma individuals were much more scrutinized and investigated by various actors in the state authority sector, questioning whether they were genuinely refugees or not. They did not receive the same care as other refugees, and this was based on pre-existing racism.



# SLOVAKIA



Color indicators: ● - INGOs | ● - NGOs | ● - Public | ● - Individuals / Informal Groups | ● - Businesses

# SLOVAKIA

In Slovakia, the term 'odídenec' (someone with a temporary protection status who is forced to leave their country due to a war conflict) is used instead of 'utečenec' (refugee). Anticipating that the Ukrainian citizens with this status will at some point return to their home country.

## Initial situation in the aftermath of the Russian invasion

In this historically unprecedented situation and related lack of experience in this area, the Slovak systems experienced numerous difficulties in dealing with large numbers of Ukrainians seeking refuge in their neighboring country. In the early stage of the war, there were reports that the state encountered several problems with immediate intervention, from building detention facilities for refugees to creating coordinated assistance in the border areas where refugees were arriving in large numbers. Instead, regional municipalities took over responsibility for providing the immediate humanitarian help and creating special teams delegated to humanitarian activities.

Also, NGOs played an important role in this situation, taking over a significant part of the organization of humanitarian help, which the state was not reportedly prepared for. The affected areas (close to the borders with Ukraine) received financial support from the state with delays, having serious issues dealing with the situation themselves. However, the prior

COVID-19 pandemic served as a model in crisis situations and helped create mechanisms for problem solving and generate cooperative initiatives. Also, significant help came from a strong wave of public solidarity with displaced Ukrainians and helped the situation immensely, with volunteers among private citizens offering housing and offering humanitarian and personal help.

Number of respondents confirmed the importance of international organizations (UNHCR, UNICEF, etc.) which brought know-how and financing to areas without any previous experience with helping refugees. These INGOs continue to play an important coordination role between the state and the NGO sectors, cooperating with the state on long-term integration activities for refugees. Initially, they helped provide immediate help as the state was not prepared for immediate financing of the affected areas, while the preparation of the EU funds for these purposes required longer periods of time.

## Integration of the Ukrainian children in the Slovak school system

In September 2022, approx. 10,500 Ukrainian children joined the Slovak school system, from kindergarten to high school level. The main issue related to putting Ukrainian children in the Slovak school system was the fact that the school attendance has not been mandatory (as it is for instance in Czechia where the results of integration of Ukrainian children in schools have been fairly good). Many children do not attend Slovak schools and prefer Ukrainian online education, or did not join any education system at all, which puts their integration in danger.

Some reportedly remain at home unattended, with their parents having to leave for work. Those attending the Slovak schools encounter loneliness and psychological trauma from the events they had experienced. Many respondents confirmed the school system was not prepared for the integration of these children, encountering challenges such as missing Ukrainian-speaking employees in the schools, lack of tools for schools to work with these children, and insufficient Slovak language trainings.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Source: Centrum vzdelávacích analýz (2023), Čo priniesol školský rok? Deti z Ukrajiny mimo systému, žalobu z Bruselu aj kľúčové reformy, URL: <https://www.vzdelavacieanalyzy.sk/co-priniesol-skolsky-rok-deti-z-ukrajiny-mimo-systemu-zalobu-z-bruselu-aj-klucove-reformy/>

The respondents largely expressed gaps in the state migration policy, which puts a lot of weight on the shoulders of the NGOs, and even the international organizations. It seems that not even the situation in Ukraine and subsequent refugee influx would bring policy changes in this area.

## Temporary refugee status

The European Union decided to provide temporary protection to Ukrainian citizens until March 2024 (with a possible extension until 2025), with each EU member state setting up its own social support system. Slovakia set up much lower social benefits than for example Czechia, which mainly puts the Ukrainian women with children in a more vulnerable position.

Furthermore, the temporary refugee status does not allow for the Ukrainians to enter the Slovak social system which is making it more difficult to provide social benefits for them. So far, only

children and those with employment have been receiving full healthcare insurance. Until now, 115,000 people requested temporary refugee status, 85% of them were women and children. According to latest estimates, approximately half of the newcomers stayed in the country, about 60,000 people.

Some Ukrainians remain in the large capacity humanitarian detention facilities (former military premises). Staying in these facilities leads to large passivity among the inhabitants and slows down the possibilities of joining the labor market.

## Political situation and the future of Ukrainians in Slovakia

Respondents of the mapping largely saw the connection between the political leadership of the country and the fact that the support for refugees and their rights among the majority population in Slovakia has been recently decreasing. Even though mainly women with children applied for temporary protection, several polls showed the decrease in acceptance of Ukrainians in Slovakia.

Political representation on several fronts has been continuously undermining the need to support refugees and stressing the needs of the local population. Several political parties even combined it with supporting Russia. These efforts, together with a strong disinformation scene, are linked to the upcoming parliamentary elections planned for September 2023, bringing polarization to public opinions. This naturally complicates the work of the NGO sector. "In March 2022, almost 35% of respondents disagreed that refugees should have the right to apply for asylum in Slovakia without any annual limits. By December, this figure had increased by almost half."<sup>32</sup>

Despite polls' results, local data show that Ukrainian refugee workers significantly contributed to the growth of employment in 2022, predominantly occupying the low-skilled job positions that companies have not been able to fill for a long time and in regions where there is not a lack of work. The number of foreign workers in 2022 broke a historical record – more than 90,000 foreigners joined the Slovak labor market, contributing to the alleviation of the regional disbalance between labor supply and demand.<sup>33</sup>

Respondents of the mapping saw the media and political prejudice as one of the main issues they encountered in their work with Ukrainian refugees. They see the personal social interactions with refugees as crucial in their acceptance and in improving their opinions, removing fear of the unknown. Similarly, supportive political culture could play an important role in shaping attitudes towards refugees.

<sup>32</sup> Source: European Commission (2023): Slovakia: Slight decrease in public support for those displaced from Ukraine, URL: [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/slovakia-slight-decrease-public-support-those-displaced-ukraine\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/slovakia-slight-decrease-public-support-those-displaced-ukraine_en)

<sup>33</sup> Source: Hojdan, Dávid et.al (2023), Trhu práce prospievajú cudzinci, URL: <https://infogram.com/ifp-monitor-122023-1hxr4zxr5lj5q6y>



**Slovakia faces challenges in terms of vulnerability, greater inclusion, and the willingness to give opportunities to people who are in disadvantaged situations (refugees, homeless individuals). There is a lack of openness in this regard.**

**Alena Vachnová**, Nadácia DEDO, Slovakia

### Persisting systemic challenges

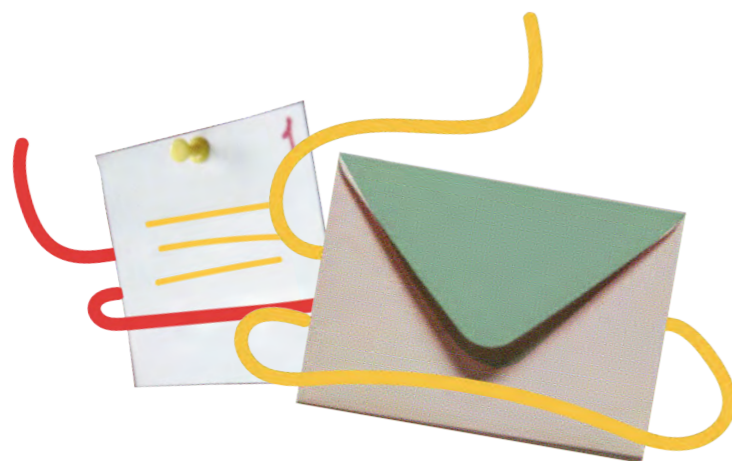
Among remaining challenges Slovakia is facing in relation to Ukrainian refugees' integration are mainly the unsolved healthcare, and school system solutions. Large numbers of children continue to remain without structured integration and outside the local education system. This might contribute to integrational issues of vulnerable groups in future years.

The labor market also continues to have limitations. So far, Ukrainians have not been permitted to set up businesses in Slovakia. Furthermore, the state has not managed to create a mechanism for nostrification of diplomas, causing large numbers of overqualified employees to take mainly manual jobs.

The state continues to fall short of coordination tools related to Ukrainian refugees, since there is no previous experience with the integration of vulnerable groups as well as bringing more effective public services in this field.

For the past several years, Slovakia has been facing its own social, economical and political challenges, which itself causes political turbulence and lack of trust in political leadership. In this context, it is crucial for the state to focus on building mechanisms that would support local citizens while also supporting refugees from Ukraine. This needs to be thoroughly considered in the refugee integration process.

The question of creating a well-functioning integration process for refugees also brings up a question of all migrants' integration, which has not been previously systemized in the country before (the last infrastructure for the care of foreigners is from 1993). It would be advisable for the country to create a structure (such as a government body - e.g., commissioner for foreigners) that would address migrant issues in general and help initiate cooperation of institutions.



### Changemakers on the map



**IVONA FRAŇOVÁ**  
COMIN, NITRA

The municipality of Nitra formed its own platform of cooperating with non-governmental organizations with a contact point called COMIN. This community centre, led by Ivona, was created with the intention to integrate incoming migrants into the Nitra region since it is one of the country's main industrial regions with a significant number of migrants. With the planned opening of new car-producing factories the city started preparing integration activities for coming migrants (not only Ukrainians) and working on including foreigners in the city policies in the past years.

The war in Ukraine, however, brought a significant shift in the centre's activities, suddenly having to refocus on providing complex services for refugees, from humanitarian aid, social/healthcare/mental health assistance, crisis intervention, criminal issues, to integration activities and legal support and employment.

COMIN's unique value lies in the cooperation between various local organizations, also working with national and even international actors. It is an example of a planned, well-functioning full integration effort on a municipal/regional level, created without state intervention. In the future, its plan is to create a long-term platform for the positive integration of foreigners, while working with local citizens at the same time, making sure their needs are addressed as well.



**The structure of the state/municipal responsibility has to change in the long run. There is a missing integration strategy plan for foreigners. The state needs to start working with the public and public opinion through the state-owned media.**

# Recommendations

As we look at this sample of active changemakers across six countries, a few clear patterns emerge that are instructive to point the way forward. The goal is to enrich and grow the changemaking ecosystem in Europe, both around refugee movements, as well as for other societal challenges that will continue to emerge. We have combined the insights from changemakers on the front lines and the experience of Ashoka's Hello Europe team with social entrepreneurship and changemaking into five areas of recommended action for every stakeholder group. Each recommendation includes a clear proposal, a brief description, and some suggested measures to implement. Whether you are from the government, policy making, the corporate sector, media, social entrepreneurship, education or a community organizer, the time to step up is now!

## 1

### DIVERSIFYING LEADERSHIP

**We need more leadership from underrepresented communities, especially people with migrant backgrounds, women and youth.**

Leaders from these underrepresented communities bring key insights, creativity and resourcefulness to the initiatives they contribute to, yet they face more barriers to exercise their changemaking and leadership.

Concretely, leaders with a migrant background, which research shows to be highly effective at achieving impact with their communities,<sup>34</sup> also face more funding challenges (75% speak of major funding difficulties), are less connected with the sector, and operate with more informal structures (29% of our sample). On the flipside, when they are active and leading, changemaking self-perception in their organization increases for everyone. We need to make it easier for them to participate, work, lead and hold responsibility roles in key initiatives.

When we look at women and youth, they also contribute unique leadership qualities that are needed, and yet are underrepresented in leadership (women are 7% and youth 20% less present in leadership structures). In our sample,

we find that when women are in leadership, they make more space for migrant leadership, and more attention is paid to key issues like economic disparities or mental health. Youth also bring important energy and contribute to important areas that often require less material resources (e.g., building support networks, intercultural exchange, translations, narratives work). Despite this key work, they often feel undervalued. When both groups are active in organizations, changemaking self-perception also increases, making organizations more likely to activate more changemakers.

All three underrepresented communities, and those with intersectional identities that navigate between these and other groups, are often the most active against misinformation and propaganda as well. Indeed, they are often the target of some of these hurtful messages and campaigns. By being active in organizations, they embody and shape new communities that are essential for integration, and often can become a motor for changemaking.

<sup>34</sup> Additional resources on the power of leaders from the communities they work in and more specifically on migrant background leaders: Jackson, Angela et al. (2020), Effective Change Requires Proximate Leaders, URL: [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/effective\\_change\\_requires\\_proximate\\_leaders](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/effective_change_requires_proximate_leaders)  
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### Recommendation:

**All stakeholders must find ways to intentionally identify and support more leaders from migrant backgrounds and who are women and youth.**

### Actions

Our research shows these underrepresented groups are active, but often operate under radar or with less connections to key networks and funding. Some ways to give them more support might involve:

- Highlighting examples and stories of changemakers from these groups, so that people can self-identify and consider applying for funding or joining a network where they might not have seen themselves before.
- Creating specific funding and support mechanisms for leaders from these communities. This does not necessarily mean building programs exclusively for them, but rather ensuring there are resources from the main programs set aside to ensure groups that face additional barriers can fully participate. (This could involve funding for travel, or support for paperwork or filling out forms, translation, etc.).
- Checking organizational leadership structures for this kind of diversity to ensure there are voices from this community in decision-making settings.
- Investing in more research and attention to identify and affirm particular leadership qualities and strategies changemakers from these communities bring to the table. They are clearly doing something different as their presence increases the sense of community and self-perception as changemakers in participants, it is important to bring more light to this.

## 2

### INCREASING RESOURCES

**More resources are needed urgently to uphold and support changemakers helping refugees, especially financial support focused on the long term and to sustain organizations and their leaders.**

When refugees started crossing the Ukrainian border, significant funding and resources from public and private sources were activated for relief. However, now that we have passed that phase and are looking towards the future, we need to unlock new resources for initiatives that address issues that are farther reaching, and sometimes require a more subtle (e.g., migration narratives, de-radicalization work, or building up changemakers in communities). Currently, a low

percentage of organizations work on these topics (between 16-26% of those surveyed), but when they do, they have higher levels of changemaking self-perception. Indeed, the need manifest here is not only about funders. All stakeholders need to adjust from a mindset of putting out fires, to one focused on cultivating the field for long-term impact.



Concrete to the changemakers interviewed, it is necessary to resource organization leaders and staff to enable them to persevere in the long run. This includes enabling spaces, time and resources to work on mental health, access creativity and long-term planning.

Finally, this study reveals a demand for more creative and flexible forms of funding and providing resources. Overall, changemakers require more unrestricted funding that can support their general goals, and more ease of

access in order to not have to invest staff and volunteer time and effort in applying for multiple grants. Often changemakers feel like they have to fight with funders and other entities that are needed to enable their work (especially in the public sector) to explain and justify what they are doing, and navigate very difficult bureaucracies and legal frameworks to achieve support and access, rather than seeing these entities as partners. With the private sector, there is a greater potential to activate their own changemaking, both corporately and for individual staff.

#### Recommendation:

**New resources and funding must be activated and made easily available for changemakers. There needs to be a shift in focus for funds to increasingly go to strategies for long-term success, including investment in human resources as well as in key actions such as building new narratives, activating changemakers from affected communities and strategies connected to de-radicalization.**

#### Actions

Some specific steps to take involve:

- Public funding to be made more accessible to changemakers at different stages. There should be more grants focused on organizational health and sustainability, including increasing human resources and providing mental health support.
- Funders might benefit from inviting grantees to share their vision and what they would like to accomplish in ways that can help shape future grants, especially as we shift from putting out fires to investing in the long-term.
- Community funding has worked well as start-up funding for many of these organizations. Companies and private funders could develop matching schemes connected to this, in addition to helping organizations in the long term with more flexible funding as they grow and community funding dries up.
- Funding grants and other resources could be used to also encourage organizations to activate changemakers and changemaking in their communities. Changemaking activation could be a requisite in measuring impact to report to funders.
- Funders and strategic partners should prioritize key long-term topics such as: migration narratives, de-radicalization and peace building, community support, activating and supporting local changemakers to provide solutions for their local communities, social cohesion, collaboration.
- Funding must also intentionally focus on underrepresented communities and groups that serve them.

### 3

## MORE CONNECTION SPACES

***There is a desire, demand and urgency for significant personal and professional connections between changemakers and also different communities within a given context (newcomers and welcomers, etc.).***

Our survey showed two different important needs regarding connections. On the one hand, the changemakers themselves stated their desire to connect more with other changemakers and stakeholders within their ecosystem. This is not only about networking for new opportunities, investment or learning, but also to overcome feelings of isolation and despair about the massive challenges they are tackling. Indeed, from Ashoka's experience, we know that one of the most important needs for Changemakers and early-stage social entrepreneurs is to connect with like-minded entrepreneurs in deep ways. This provides a sense of belonging, encouragement, ideas, energy, and, eventually, opportunities for scaling and co-creation.

On the other hand, interviewees spoke about a strong need for more connections within communities where migrants and refugees are living. More specifically, finding spaces, opportunities and incentives for different groups of people to spend time getting to know and appreciate one another. Many of these changemakers' organizations consider this one of the most important needs and strategies to implement in the upcoming years to break down de-humanizing polarization. Interestingly, our survey respondents that were men pointed to this need the most.

#### Recommendation:

**Resources need to be directed to enabling time and space for deep connections between changemakers and within their communities.**

#### Actions

This might involve some of the following ideas:

- Funders can unlock specific funds for travel to conferences, gatherings to meet other social entrepreneurs and changemakers, or exchanges between staff and volunteers. For funders that support multiple changemakers, enabling specific spaces and resources for them to connect with each other is vital.
- Initiatives should be created and supported that facilitate deep connections between organization leaders, and spaces and funds offered to incentivize co-creation.
- Changemakers and social entrepreneurs that are on the forefront should be invited more intentionally to existing networking events and communities to connect with funders or contribute to policy decisions, given their insights and desire to connect with the sector.

- We need more initiatives and projects that map changemakers in specific ecosystems or topics, bring them visibility, and enable them to link with each other and other stakeholders.
- Funds for collaborative projects need to increase and be more accessible.
- Municipalities and other local governments should dedicate time and resources to build spaces where citizens from different backgrounds interact (and build projects together).
- Initiatives that bring together locals and newcomers should be invested in (such as buddy systems, or language exchange) to enable developing significant relationships.

## 4

## NEW STORIES

***We need a new story: the way we talk about migration and refugees and the narratives we convey need to change to focus on contribution, celebration and hope, instead of pity or compassion.***

We must shift our narratives around migration, even within communities dedicated to helping. Often, we fall into the trap of seeing migrants and refugees solely as subjects of pity or compassion, rather than the changemakers they are and can be if given a chance. This report points to a number of key ways in which the sector can contribute to building better narratives.

- When asked how to change the narrative a number of steps emerged:
- Start with empathy to build the connection between communities.
- Address the fear of neglect from the receiving community, and find ways to explicitly show the real and practical “win-win” situations that migration brings.
- Switch from asking for pity to instead speak of and celebrate migrants’ contribution.
- Build flows of information and data to counter propaganda (but without falling into the narrative frame that propaganda and disinformation provide).
- Focus on the communities and how they interact and contribute, not only on individual stories.
- Build more awareness about mental health and how this becomes a barrier to people’s ability to contribute. Trauma and fatigue (including compassion fatigue) are real and must be addressed to move forward.

- Narratives must convey shared experiences and joint endeavors where everyone has a role (i.e., not just specialized organizations).
- More celebration needs to be present in our narratives: stories of success and contribution, exciting events, moments to stop and celebrate what has been achieved so far, etc.

Additionally, this study points to the power of enabling people with a migrant background (and from other underserved groups) to play key leadership roles as a resource for better narratives. They tend to lead the cry against misinformation and propaganda, especially since they often suffer the consequences directly, and seeing them as role models and leaders both tells a story of its own and inspires others from their communities to step up. Of course, this does not take away from the need for local allies and leadership, but without migrant background leadership, the live narrative often falls short.

Finally, the report points to a need for more support from different stakeholders around narratives specifically, and especially from local authorities who play a vital role in establishing the conversation framework.

**Recommendation:**

**More investment, energy and resources need to be put into shifting the narrative within the helping community to see people on the move as changemakers.**

**Actions**

This might involve some of these ideas:

- Media organizations can capture stories of migrant background changemakers and others and share these openly.
- Nonprofits and helping organizations need to shift their narrative focus from pity to showing migrants as changemakers. It wouldn’t hurt to look through their materials, websites and videos with communication experts (and migrants themselves), to identify words, pictures, graphics and stories that portray migrants as victims or subjects of compassion and change these.
- Laws and policies need to be enforced to enable a freer flow of true, adequate and understandable data and information, and crack down on misinformation and propaganda – at the very least taking away some of its ability to spread.
- Changemakers with a migrant background need to be given more leadership and access to decision-making spaces around narrative, given their unique contribution.

## 5

## ACTIVATING CHANGEMAKERS

***We need to activate more changemakers, and changemakers themselves and their organizations need support to do this more.***

At the heart of this report is the belief that by activating more changemakers, we will more quickly and swiftly be able to solve problems and provide solutions that bring good for all society. In the field of migration and refugee movements, this is even more evident, as we have shown above. Indeed, changemakers can quickly identify issues, organize communities around them, mobilize and create resources that were untapped before, and adapt and navigate through a quickly changing world to continue to do good for all. We need a lot of this if we are to successfully address the increasingly complex and ever-emerging problems that our society encounters as the world changes quickly.

Many of the organizations we interviewed find themselves activating changemakers, and this is important, but we see a need and an opportunity to do this more intentionally. We know from our work with social entrepreneurs that activating changemakers is part of what any leading social entrepreneur does: it’s the best way to scale and spread their work. But we also know that this is often anecdotal unless the social entrepreneur puts strategic thinking, funding and action into making changemakers as a key part of their mission. We recommend that all changemakers and stakeholders in the sector consider this as a key next step.

In a way, what we are suggesting is to shift gears from a linear approach to growing changemaking to an exponential one. So far we have seen changemaking blossom in part as a response to a crisis that society has felt (many people in vulnerable situations crossing borders seeking help and where to contribute), and in part as a

natural outcome of social entrepreneurs and leaders inviting others to join their movement. There has been a linear growth in this sense. If we shift gears to activate changemaking as a priority, we will see exponential growth of changemaking, getting us closer to a world where solutions outrun the problems that emerge.

#### Recommendation:

**All stakeholders in the sector (entrepreneurs, changemakers, funders, public institutions, etc.) should make activating changemakers a fundamental priority in their strategy and allocate resources accordingly.**

#### Actions

This might involve some of these ideas:

- Establishing and unlocking small start-up funding mechanisms for social enterprises that can be accessed easily so that early stage changemakers have access to seed funding for ideas.
- Putting funding and support into programs, organizations, curriculum and education institutions that cultivate changemaking from a young age (as youth are most likely to pick it up than people in their later adulthood).
- Inviting changemakers of all ages to decision-making spaces to contribute: this should be a must-have in any policy or general participative space, and we should especially pay attention to having changemakers from the community affected by the decision (e.g., if it is a migration topic, changemakers with a migrant background should be in the room with decision power).
- Bringing more visibility to changemakers in all their diversity as role models in different spaces, including mass and social media.
- Including activating changemakers as an impact metric to measure and report on in grants, reports and funding applications.
- Using tools to measure changemaking in given communities, organizations or settings (like Ashoka's Changemaker Index) over a period of time as programs are implemented as a key metric on success in bringing positive social change.

# Conclusions

## A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE IS A CHANGEMAKER

Across Europe we are seeing a powerful movement of changemakers respond to the major social problems that are emerging on a regular basis. Here we have analyzed a response to a significant movement of people across the continent. We've looked at their make-up, the needs and opportunities they face, and what can be done to support this movement. We see similar movements occurring around other social and environmental challenges. And this is encouraging.

At Ashoka we strive for an Everyone a Changemaker world. In this world, everyone has the capacity and opportunity to contribute and create positive change – everyone is powerful, everyone has a voice, everyone has access to needed resources, and everyone can thrive. Indeed, when everyone is a changemaker, there is no place for discrimination, oppression or hierarchy systems because no one group dominates or exploits others. When we think about refugee and migrant movements, this approach is absolutely central. All people on the move deserve to be seen as changemakers and given a chance to contribute, whether they are fleeing from a war in Syria or Ukraine, or putting their family on a boat in the Mediterranean to find a job that allows them to survive, or flying into a new city to try to launch a new business. In this study we meet a few of them, and what they are doing, and others who are striving to lower barriers for more newcomers to be able to contribute. And we would like to see more of this. The better we support, connect and bring visibility to the changemaking that is happening across the continent, the closer we will come to a society where all people thrive in dignity and have the opportunity to contribute, regardless of their place of birth.

We hope you are inspired and challenged by reading this report, and that you are already thinking of personal steps you can take to engage in changemaking for the good of all, and use your resources and position to activate this in others.



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### Ashoka's initiatives with People on the Move in Europe and Latin America:

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# Appendix

## CHANGEMAKERS ON THE MAP

***We thank our interviewees for taking the time, sharing their insights and experiences with us.***

### Czechia

Andrea Krchová, Konsorcium Nevládních Organizací  
Barbora Antonová, Vesna  
Barbora Slavíčková, Romodrom  
Blažena Smělová, Koordinátorka Města Tachov  
Dagmar Sára Norková, Diecézní Charita Brno  
Daryna Priadun, Unity Community Z.S.  
Emil Voráč, Khamoro  
Geti Mubeenová, Magistrát Hlavního Města Prahy  
Hanka Křepelková, Nadace Rsj  
I.D., Ukrajinská Iniciativa Jižní Moravy Z.S.  
Ivana Šenitková, Nadační Fond Eduzměna  
Jakub Mareš, Foundation of Česká Spořitelna  
Jan Hodovský, Asociace Krajů  
Jan Kočí, Diecézní Katolická Charita Hradec Králové  
Jan Polák, Dárek Pro Putina  
Jaroslava Cejnarová, Cesty Pomoci  
Jelena Silajdžič, Slovo 21  
Jiří Valnoha, Naděje Brno  
Jiří Vesecký, Centra Na Podporu Integrace Cizinců  
Karolína Sýkorová,  
Kateřina Michnová, Iniciativa Bořetice Vaří Dobro  
Kateryna Hertlová, Magistrát Města Brna  
Klára Boumová, Charita Česká Republika  
Klára Laurenčíková, Government Commissioner For Human Rights/ National Coordinator For Refugees From Ukraine  
Kristýna Titěrová, Meta  
Kumar Vishwanathan, Vzájemné Soužití  
Lenka Herčíková, Centrum Pro Cizince Jihomoravského Kraje  
Lenka Marečková, Nadace Ppf  
Libuše Tomolová, Nadace Abakus  
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Magda Faltová, SIMI (Sdružení Pro Integraci a Migraci)  
Magdaléna Klimešová, Ministerstvo Práce a Sociálních Věcí (MPSV)  
Markéta Hronková, La Strada  
Martina Paboučková, Mateřské Centrum a Dětská Skupina/ Školní Klub Klubíčko  
Masha Volynsky, Amiga  
Michaela Tetrao, Most Pro O.P.S.  
Miroslav Lukeš, Hasičský Záchranný Sbor České Republiky  
Nataliya Dotsenko, Regionální Ukrajinský Spolek Ve Východních Čechách  
Oleksandra Saška, Mriya  
Olha Cherepiuk, Svitlo  
Ondřej Šejtka, Česká Rada Děti a Mládeže  
Petr Čáp, IOM

Petr Sobalík, Diakonie Čce  
Petra Benešová, Rodinné Centrum V Litomyšli  
Petra Damms, Dignity Restoring Hope  
Petra Srdínková, Kalyna - Komunitní Uprchlícké Centrum  
Radka Garbuzová, Ukrajinská Komise Při Českobratrské Církvi Evangelické v Brně  
Soňa Rysová, UNHCR  
Teuta Halimi, UNICEF  
Věra Roubalová, Inbáze, Z. S.  
Veronika Dvorská, Iniciativa Hlavák  
Veronika Ibllová, Krajanka  
Zdeněk Horváth, Integrační Centrum Praha  
Zuzana Gheza, Ratolest  
Zuzana Ramajzlová, Člověk v Tísni

### Germany

Ahmet Sinoplu, Coach e.V.  
Alan Ibrahim, Mit Mach Music  
Anastasia Tikhmirova, young changemaker  
Andrea Frankenbach, Die-Traum-Schmiede  
Andrea Keller, Theater Am Strom Wilhelmsburg  
Anja Kittlitz, Schlau-Werkstatt  
Anna Uslova, Kinder Sprach Bruecke  
Anne Kjaer Bathel, Redi School for Digital Integration  
Backtosch Mustafa, Applicaid  
Bastian Schmidt, Evangelische Lutherische Kirche Sachsens  
Bohdan Androshchuk, Child Fun Deutschland and Ukrainian Venture Fund  
Borja Martinandino, young changemaker  
Canan Pour Norouz, CMS Foundation  
Carla Stempel, Kulturgrenzenlos e.V.  
Cengiz Jiménez Laux, Jugendbotschafter  
Christopher Knickerbocker, Berlin to Borders e.V.  
Daniel Heinz, Postmigrantisches Bildung  
Daria Kyreyeva, Tired Club  
Deborah Kogan, JSUD  
Fadi Zaim, Redi School for Digital Integration  
Farid Bidardel, START-Stiftung  
Frederike Guggemos, Zubaka  
Gesabecher, Yallah Hamburg  
Habom Zerabruk, Hamburg Delphine & Asmaras World  
Inna, Berlin Arrival Support  
Iryna Gumenchuk, ABLE e.V.  
Ismi Ali, young changemaker  
Ivan Syrtsov, Upgrade Ukraine  
Jameela Mearajdin, Mpower e.V.  
Jamil Alyou, The Train of Hope Dortmund  
Johanna Strohmeier, Ausbildung statt Abschiebung (AsA) e.V.

Julia Jenikejew, Ukrainischer Verein In Niedersachsen e.V.  
Julia Sonata, Inwole e.V.  
Kateryna Milianovska, Schlau Schule  
Kateryna Reka, Mayak Infohub - Project Together  
Kateryna Rumyantseva, Feine Ukraine e.V.  
Katja, Razam e.V.  
Krista Marija Labe, Vitsche  
Laila Zohaib, The Migrant Accelerator  
Lama Abdulrahman, DLA Piper  
Lizge Yikmis, Haydee  
Maggie Garcia, Gemeinsam4Ukraine  
Mahnaz Jafari, young changemaker  
Maram Abughanim, Germanized  
María De Lourdes Ortega Méndez, Bundesverband Ausländischer Studierender E.V. (BAS)  
Marley Stefan, Bridges Over Borders  
Mariia Borysenko, young changemaker  
Mohammed Jouni, Jugendliche ohne Grenzen  
Nada Knani, German-Tunisian Association Tunibless e.V.  
Narges Tavakkoli, young changemaker  
Natali Gbele, Know Your Rights Initiative e.V.  
Nine Fumi, BIPOC Ukraine & Friends in Germany  
Quint Aly, Refugee Law Clinics Deutschland  
Rene Pachmann, Blaue Brücke - Helping Hands e.V.  
R.S., FUB e.V.  
Sagithjan Surendra, Aelius Förderwerk e.V.  
Sasha Bels, Die Monstranten  
Serkan Tezgel, Januam  
Sohrab Samanian, Afghan Diaspora Initiative  
Songül Kavut, Chancenwerk e.V.  
Steffi Biester, Kickfair  
Stephanie Landa, Sisters Network  
Sveta, young changemaker  
Tamanna Yasmin, Tomorrow Together  
Valerii Ahin, Hack Club Berlin  
Veit Cornelis, Bildung Für Alle e.V.  
Viacheslav Iankovyi, UKR DIM  
Vicky Germain, CUSBU  
Yasmin Al-Douri, Diverse Young Leaders and Responsible Technology Hub  
Yuliia Karnas, One Ukraine  
Zaid Zaim, young changemaker

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Zita Lengyel-Wang, Help (Ukraine, Zakarpattia) Facebook Group  
Zoltán Havasi, Budapest Bike Maffia  
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 Natalia Tiuniahina, grupa inicjatywna "Intehranty"  
 Nazar Danczuk, Medimove  
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 Róbert Furiel, Saplinq  
 Roman Dohovič, Mesto Košice – Commissioner for  
 Humanitarian Aid to Refugees from Ukraine  
 Silvia Kostelná, Slovenský Červený Kríž  
 Veronika Fishbone Vlčková, Nadácia Milana Šimečku  
 Veronika Kopernická, Slovenská Katolícka Charita  
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 Kto Pomože Ukrajine







HELLO  
EUROPE



# STEPPING UP

Ukrainian Refugees, Changemaking  
& How to Make Europe a Better Place for All

SEPTEMBER 2023

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