

“People on the Move”

stories from churches and faith
-based organisations
in Central and Eastern Europe



interdiac

Research Series 3

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Theme Coordinator: Dr Ulla Siirto
Research Coordinator: Oksana Prosvirina

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Preface

The rapid changes in Central and Eastern Europe are profoundly transforming the pattern of the lives of people and societies. They are often making them more challenging and demanding, and especially they affect the wellbeing of disadvantaged people. Over the years of constant social turbulence, the feeling of anxiety and powerlessness within people in the face of those changes has been increasing. At this point in our lives, with the impact of COVID-19 on top of everything else, we take it for granted that the research in diverse local contexts is needed in order to uncover the way in which the changes influence people's lives and to inform the new tasks they present to the work of diaconal organisations.

The need for more research was in fact already identified by interdiac partners several years ago because the deep changes and growing complexity of social life in the today's world need to be better understood to make the work of their organisations more effective. Eventually the routine professional methodologies of work have become inadequate and they often fail to grasp the diverse life worlds of people. Consequently, people, who are approached with an offer of help, often respond with aggression and lack of trust provoked by their precarious situation. Although the churches and organisations have been developing their responses to the contextual challenges there is an urgent need for more collaborative knowledge development, which should be grounded in experience and reflection on professional practice. Therefore interdiac – the International Academy for Diaconia and Christian and Social Action has launched a Research Programme with the aim of providing the space and support for new research initiatives.

The starting point for this initiative was a meeting of 13 practitioners, academics and students in diaconia and Christian social service from 10 countries in 2017, where they shared their understanding of the needs for research and the ways in which it could be supported in the future. They agreed to form the interdiac Research Platform to support networking, research and development.

In light of the discussions, five topics for future research were identified and the participants agreed to continue to work on these initiatives and to search for other partners. From the five topics, three themes were selected for immediate follow-up action:

People on Move – Diaconia with migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons.

Youth on the Margins - addressing especially the context and needs of young people facing a precarious and jobless future.

Ecclesiology and the Theological Understanding of Diaconia, addressing ecumenical and interfaith diversity and the need for a deeper dialogue about different traditions and contemporary applications.

Another important outcome of the discussion was a choice of the research methodology. The practitioners agreed on use of qualitative people-centred approach. It was meant to give voice to the 'voiceless' people to communicate their perspective and, at the same time, the research should closely examine the existing practice so that it would present a feedback closely related to the realities of the context and work of the organisations. Furthermore, it was agreed that the research should contribute to building the curricula for new learning programmes.

Since then, the practitioners of different denominations from 11 countries (Armenia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Estonia, Hungary, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine) have been working in collaboration in three Research Theme Groups in order to plan and gradually carry out the research process. Mutual commitment, intensive distance communication and steering of the process have resulted in obtaining rich picture from the contexts and practice of diaconal organisations. It allows us to give a better understanding of diaconia in Eastern and Central Europe and Central Asia

Moreover, interdiac hopes that this research will facilitate international discussion among practitioners to deepen the knowledge about diaconal practice and contribute to development of more creative and effective diaconal initiatives. interdiac also expresses hope that this research programme will contribute to the development of the interdiac Research Platform. The Platform aims to support the task of developing good practice and achieving recognition of diaconia in a context where faith-based actions are insufficiently acknowledged. We invite you to join our growing learning community and welcome your feedback and comments!

Janka Adameová
Director, interdiac

Foreword

Through this publication, we are inviting you to read about the experience of uprooted people in Central and Eastern Europe and of church work with them. Although 'mobility' may be positively seen as integral part of the life in the 21st century, the stories of 'moving people' on the pages of this report draw a different picture for you. Most of them were uprooted from their original places of their residence by specific social challenges, such as a lack of jobs or secure income or in some countries by civil and military conflicts. Those people, being stressed, scared and often devastated, were forced to leave in the search for a peaceful and sustainable life for themselves and often their families. Regretfully, such enforced 'moving' has become a common phenomenon in many countries of the region and thus also contributes to the ongoing social collisions and disturbances of lives in many societies.

In this report, you can read the stories of people from the region of former Yugoslavia, particularly from Serbia and from Armenia and Ukraine, as well as from the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. All these stories are put in the context of each country with an introductory country report and they sadly reveal that often the search for a better life brings more stress and challenges in the lives of uprooted people. After you have read the country reports and the stories of uprooted people, you will read about the concrete responses built by the churches and diaconal organisations in order to respond to the needs of these people.

Together, the national accounts and the analysis of church and diaconal engagement present the scope of the thematic participative research "People on the Move" conducted in joint process by the partners of interdiac and coordinated by Ulla Siirto (Finland). The research was initiated with the aim of obtaining more relevant data on and analysis of the work with uprooted people in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. However, above all, the voices of the uprooted people and the voices of the professional workers placed in the country context provide you with the opportunity to reflect on the question of how in all our societies we welcome the stranger nowadays and see our life together in diversity.

Over a period of 18 months the participatory nature of this research has taken the participants on a path of mutual learning and cooperation over the boundaries. Empathic listening and openness have built a space of mutual recognition and acceptance. Sharing ideas and experience through participative discussions have contributed to building new ideas for professional practice and development. We welcome you to join this process and we are always glad to receive your feedback!

Oksana Prosvirina
Research Coordinator, interdiac

Introduction

Theme Coordinator & Author of the Analytic Text

Dr. Ulla Siirto

Ulla Siirto is a deacon and has a Ph.D. in social sciences. She worked at the grassroots level with people on the move, later on she taught multiculturalism, migration and diaconia at the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Finland. Now she is working as an advisor on multiculturalism and migration at the National Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. She has studied and written about refugees and diaconia. She has also participated in the diaconal process “Seeking conviviality”, organised by the Lutheran World Federation. She is an ExCom member of CCME and a workgroup member in CEC’s thematic working group: “Democracy, education and diversity”.

In her personal biography Ulla comes from a family, which was sent into exile



Introduction

The “People on the Move” research project was established by interdiac which, with its partner organisations, saw the need to develop research into practice related to specific themes in the regional context. The planning of the process started in 2018. After receiving funding from Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, (ELCA), the research process started in spring 2019. At the same time, the ‘seeking conviviality’ process of the Lutheran World Federation had also turned to look at conviviality specifically from the point of view of “people on the move”. Concretely, years of intensive conflict forced people to move from the conflict areas to Europe have been the reality facing different churches and faith-based organisations (FBO’s). On top of this, conflict within the Central and Eastern European region also forced and continues to force people to be on the move.

The research process has been intensive, and it partly happened under the shadow of COVID-19. The process has involved many people, including an international team of researcher-practitioners, in the joint research work. The whole process is possible to see from the appendix 1.

Research setting

The main purpose of this research is to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon “people on the move” and especially of the practices of churches and FBO’s who are working with migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The main research aim is studied through three objectives. Firstly, to ask what the role of faith is, as an excluding or including factor in the relation to the majority and on defining the role of faith for uprooted people. Secondly, how does diaconia make a difference when acting among “people on the move” in terms of securing rights and participation, combating stigma and discrimination and enabling integration and community development. Thirdly, how do churches and FBOs are dealing with populism and nationalism.

There is not much research about “people on the move” from the Eastern European perspective and the and FBOs & churches in the region. For that reason, the research was necessary in order to focus attention on Eastern Europe. A call for participation in the research programme was sent to the partner organisations of Interdiac in Eastern Europe & Central Asia in April 2019. The Armenian Round Table, the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren in the Czech Republic, the Lutheran churches in Hungary and Poland, the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation EHO from Serbia and the Volunteer

Psychological Service of the Rehabilitation Center of St Peter and St Paul from Ukraine responded to the call. A practitioner-researcher from every country joined the research team.

Before starting with data collection, each practitioner-researcher wrote a country report, which gives a background for the data collection. This was mainly done in May-June 2019, but some reports came later, and all reports were supplemented with new material just before the finalisation of the research.

The data collection was carried out in two phases. First data were collected from service users, the so-called “people on the move”, in Autumn 2019. Those who participated in the research process from local churches or FBOs carried out individual or focus group interviews among “people on the move”. Practitioner-researchers were asked to interview “people on the move” to find out the different reasons for moving (Appendix 2). Unfortunately, the briefing for the research did not underline that people interviewed should be among those related to their own organisation’s or church’s activities. Some practitioner-researchers interviewed people who they found through other contacts. The reason for this could have been that the specific church or FBO did not work among some specific groups of ‘movers’ that the research was asking about.

The second data set was collected from professionals working with “people on the move” (Appendix 3). There were a lot of translations from one language to other: themes and questions were sent to the contact persons in English; they translated them to their language. Later, contact persons translated the interviews to English. Some data might have disappeared during this process, since many translations were summaries from the interviews.

The data was analysed by using thematic content analysis which organises the data according to main themes. The whole research process has followed qualitative participatory research orientation. This means that local practitioner-researchers had a central role in seeking people for interviews and interviewing them. Also, the draft of every analytic phase was returned to the participants and practitioner-researchers were able to react and add, what they saw missing or correct wherever they had been misunderstood.

part one

COUNTRY REPORTS

Introduction

Armenia
Czech Republic
Hungary
Poland
Serbia
Ukraine



Introduction

This section of the report presents the country reports from all the participating countries. As mentioned, they were written by a practitioner-researcher of the country in question. In most of the cases it was possible to use available information. The practitioner researchers described the current situation in their society covering:

- the general situation of their countries related migration,
- current statistics on immigration and emigration,
- legislation and immigration policy,
- general opinion towards migration,
- and
- the policies and practices of churches and ecumenical organisations.

The practitioner-researchers wrote about the changes in migration policy in their countries during recent years and whether immigration or emigration is increasing or decreasing. They discuss how changes in legislation and migration policy in each country and in the general opinion towards migration. The practitioner-researchers also describe the work of their church or FBO and in some cases other churches among “people on the move”. They discuss how churches or FBO’s deal with migration, what kind of policy and practices they have among immigrants and emigrants and how these practices have developed during recent years. Two special discussion points are the difference between churches and FBOs and other organisations dealing with these issues and the different opinions inside churches and FBOs about the work among “people on the move”. Lastly, questions were raised about nationalism, polarisation, and discrimination in each country the ways in which churches & FBO’s have reacted to it.

Armenia

Rubina Devrikyan

Rubina Devrikyan is a Professor of University of Yerevan, Armenia. She holds PhD in International Development Studies from Technical University Dortmund, Master’s Degree in Development Policy and Research from the Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany and BA in Humanities from the State. Dr. Rubina Devrikyan is a development professional with more than 18 years of professional experience in development projects covering various fields. She has worked in the field of migration both in Georgia after the war in Abkhazia and Armenia with the migrants from Syria, Iraq and Lebanon.



Historical Overview

Displacement and migration play an important role in the memory and life experience of Armenians. For centuries, Armenians have been forced to leave their places of residence because of political and religious persecution, difficult economic conditions, and natural disasters. Although massacres, flight, and deportations had been recurrent events in Armenian history, it was in particular during the last decades of Ottoman rule that Armenians became the victims of massive persecution. The most tragic blow to the Armenian communities occurred in 1915, when Talat Pasha and the ruling Committee for Union and Progress ordered the deportation of millions of Armenians. Massacres, atrocities, and starvation resulted in the genocide of an estimated 1.5 million people. Those who were able to escape the genocide resettled in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Russia, Republic of Armenia, Europe and the United States.

Current State

The first large influx of Syrian-Armenians was registered in 2012, caused by brutal conditions and beginning of the war in Aleppo.

Armenia is one of the largest hosts of Syrian refugees per capita.¹ However, given the lack of international aid and the country’s own lacklustre socioeconomic situation, the Armenian government faces considerable challenges to the resettlement of incoming Syrian refugees. The existing programmes and integration strategies are not enough to absorb the large population into the labour force and have proven unable to adequately “satisfy the needs of the socially disadvantaged”. Presently, an estimated 25,000 ethnic Armenians, descendants of survivors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide, have become displaced for the second time in a century.

According to a published study by the European Friends of Armenia, Armenia hosted six Syrian refugees per 1,000 nationals—a ratio much higher than many European countries or the USA, a fact that is especially noteworthy given the country’s economic circumstance.

It is also important to consider that Armenia’s GDP is estimated at 11.6 billion USD with a declining growth rate of 3.8 percent.² This is ten times lower than the European Union’s average GDP.³ Additionally, Armenia’s unemployment rate is currently 17 percent (up from 16 percent in 2014) and

1 European Union, 2016

2 World Bank, 2019

3 European Friends of Armenia, 2019

the average annual income is about 8,000 USD annually. The lack of access to jobs and affordable housing affects Syrians and Syrian-Armenians at a disproportional rate because, as refugees, they generally arrive in host countries with little to no resources or savings and subsequently spend most of their funds on rent.⁴ These economic realities currently pose significant difficulties to the state's ability to independently and adequately fund programmes that manage the continuing flow of refugees. Armenia's economic capacity is further tested by a general lack of positive international attention as well as a severe lack of humanitarian funding, as contrary to other neighbours such as Lebanon, Turkey or Jordan, Armenia has not received the financial and operational assistance needed to pursue its humanitarian efforts, and the country faces serious challenges in the process of integration of the arrived Syrian-Armenians.

The refugee crisis is one of the major and complex issues in the world.⁵ The Syrian refugee hardships reminded Armenians of their own tragic history and indicated the moral duty of the country in offering a safe place to those fleeing war and persecution. The majority of these are descendants of Armenians who escaped the Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks in 1915 and were given refuge in Syria.

It is important to note that the level of humanitarian relief is not sufficient for the newcomers, as they need to address a number of problems related to their socio-economic situation, access opportunities to continue their education, find accommodation and many other items necessary to adapt to a completely new environment.

Armenia is different from Syria in terms of being a post-Soviet country with the respective peculiarities, poor socio-economic conditions, and the current emigration rate which is 4-5% of the whole population annually, making it one of the highest in the world.

The poor economic situation of Armenia is an acute problem for the refugees, who even in the cases where they find a job relevant to their qualification and working experience, they will never benefit from the same quality of life which they had in Syria, as in Armenia, living costs are much higher and the average earnings are lower than in Syria.

The majority of Syrian-Armenians share common values and cultural heritage with their fellows from Armenia and have received an Armenian passport, considering Armenia as final destination, a new country where they will rebuild their lives or at least can wait in in better conditions for a possible return to Syria.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that presently Syrian Armenians need to be integrated in the Armenian society, as despite understanding the language, they speak a different dialect and face acute problems related to integration.

Traditionally, the Armenian community in Syria was relatively prosperous, and a major part of the Armenian population have worked as doctors and engineers, and many more owned their own businesses.

Armenians in Syria used to face the task of preserving their language, religion, culture and identity, which prompted sense of isolation from wider Syrian society.

Most of the displaced Syrian-Armenians still remain in dire living conditions. At the outset, there has been no system or data collection mechanism in place to document and regulate the migration flow, except for the formal border-crossing and visa procedures. Once in Armenia, and at their own discretion, the Syrian-Armenians start to refer to institutions, including the Ministry of Diaspora, Migration Service, Police Department of Passports and Visas with a series of problems they face upon arrival.

Subsequently, the government has issued an order to allow applications for Armenian citizenship, in accordance with the Geneva Refugee Convention, which prescribes that member states should contribute to the assimilation and naturalisation of refugees. Currently, Syrian-Armenians have various legal status in Armenia, including Armenian citizens (dual citizens), refugees, asylum seekers, and persons with temporary or permanent residence (one/five/ten years). According to the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora a total of 10,707 people received citizenship in the period of 2012-2014. Refugee and asylum seekers comprise a smaller number, around 700-800 Syrian-Armenians, for the period of

2012-2013. According to the Migration Service of Armenia, 236 people were granted asylum, of which 136 provided with shelter.

It should be noted, that after the issuing of citizenship, the state does not have any obligations related to Syrian-Armenians' integration or other concerns. Considering the regional developments and multiple challenges Armenia faces today, the need for a relevant infrastructure to address the social and economic issues of Syrian-Armenians becomes extremely urgent. The problems related to the integration of Syrian-Armenians can be divided into two groups.

Housing is one of the key issues facing Syrian-Armenians today. There have been certain measures enforced to provide housing compensation by the Ministry of Diaspora as well as local and international civil society organisations.

The majority of Syrian-Armenians however rent housing, which is a short-term solution to the situation, obviously without any long-term feasibility. Originally, the authorities undertook a project to build a new district, intended to be funded by the donations of Syrian-Armenians, other individuals and organisations (the project was to be curated and implemented by a council coordinating issues of Syrian-Armenians). Many Syrian-Armenians registered to be considered for the programme (which indicates an intention of settling in Armenia), at the same time however hoping that the district will be constructed by other means, due to the limited personal financial resources. Therefore, the program was not implemented. The solution to the housing issue of Syrian-Armenians remains crucial, as it will contribute to the possibility of their permanent residence in Armenia.

Education is one of the foundational links towards integration. The problems of Syrian-Armenian students in the Armenian general education system are mainly conditioned by high tuition fees, particularly in the courses taught in English, linguistic problems, with respect to certain subjects, as well as by the difference of educational systems in Armenia and Syria. In this context, educational integration necessitates attention regarding both language and pedagogical aspects. The new educational environment represents another problem manifested in the clash of cultures and leading to alienation and similar negative consequences. In this context, the role of teachers becomes highly important, who exercise few methods in dealing with such issues.

The issue of children's integration is highly sensitive necessitating attention, to prevent the marginalisation of those families intending to establish a permanent residence in Armenia. Social inclusion and citizens' active participation in the social and economic life are the basic indicators of social citizenship. Such indicators demonstrate the actual quality of the citizenship, apart from formal rights and responsibilities.

In Armenia, the Syrian-Armenians are represented by various social groups, such as businessmen, craftsmen, doctors, etc. It is worth noting that those successful in the field of small and medium enterprises in Syria were able to make a successful transition to the same field in Armenia. This means that such human and social capital can be additional stimulus for economic activity in the country. Although Armenia implemented selective loan projects to help boost the engagement of the Syrian-Armenian business community, at the same time however difficulties to such engagement remain. While the Syrian-Armenians are willing and ready to engage in economic activity - the tax, customs duties, tariffs, fines, administrative and business environment conditions hinder successful economic integration in general. Additionally, the problems are also conditioned by differences in market volumes in Armenia and Syria, as the latter had much better business opportunities and bigger markets than Armenia. Besides, the Armenian market is not as diversified as the Syrian one, where the Syrian-Armenians used to have diverse production and business opportunities and contributed not only to the Syrian domestic business, but also largely to the export.

Most of the time, the difficulties and complaints based on individual experiences revolve around the issue of high taxes and increased loan responsibilities. In general, labour conditions and salary policy in Armenia are problematic. For example, the Syrian-Armenian doctors considered opportunities with regional medical institutions. However, there too they encountered problems conditioned by mandatory payments (otherwise known as percentage of service fees paid by employees to hospitals), as well as the general problem of private institutions, or monopolization or monopolisation of the medical sphere, which can be recognised by the lack of vacancies and by policies infected by partisanship and corruption.

4 UNHCR, 2014

5 Open Society Foundation Armenia, 2017

The initial asylum institution building process has been concluded, sound national legislation⁶ has been adopted, an asylum authority, the State Migration Service (SMS) is fully operational and benefits from training for and coaching of staff. A small (though still sub-standard) reception facility (capacity for about 42 asylum-seekers) is in place. The quality of Refugee Status Determination (RSD) decision making has improved in particular related to systematic use of Country-of-Origin Information (COI) and written reasoning of decisions. Some progress has been made in engaging courts in asylum cases. The number of asylum-seekers of non-Armenian/non-Christian background having been granted refugee status has increased recently, but often requires intensive and time-consuming interventions, which are not always successful.⁷

Most of the persons displaced due to the conflict in Syria use other avenues for obtaining protection in Armenia (i.e., facilitated naturalisation of ethnic Armenians or provision of residence permits) and only less than 10 % of those arriving ask for refugee status.

Changes in migration policy

A welcoming attitude on behalf of the state is portrayed by its newly revised migration legislation. As a result of recent legislative amendments, the majority of the Syrian-Armenian refugees resettling in Armenia have chosen to obtain Armenian citizenship or residence permits; in fact, approximately 15,000 have been granted Armenian citizenship and only about 630 migrants have obtained official refugee status.⁸ Due to this and other similar legislative modifications, Armenia has managed to avoid placing incoming refugees in camps and actively works to integrate newcomers by providing them with basic needs like housing, healthcare, and education.⁹

The Government of Armenia adopted the 2017-2021 Strategy for Migration Policy of the Republic of Armenia, which is the fourth document formulating Armenia's migration policy. The strategy takes into account the outcomes of implementation of the 2012-2016 Action Plan, the related lessons learnt, as well as recommendations resulting from discussions with experts from civil society and international organizations. The 2017-2021 Action Plan for effective implementation of the Strategy was approved in 2017.

Both, the Strategy and its Action Plan, were developed by the Migration Service of Armenia and do not cover the key objectives for border management and trafficking, since those are already set out in separate strategic documents adopted by the Government. Overall, the Strategy puts forward

23 topics and 78 mechanisms for achieving the goals set under each policy direction, as well as a comprehensive monitoring and assessment of the Strategy.

The Action Plan aims at enhancing regular migration and further improving the migration management system. It consists of 173 concrete activities for implementation of the concrete actions put forward by the Strategy. It also specifies the responsible implementing institutions and timeframes. The Strategy is based on an internationally recognised approach, which was developed and received universal recognition on the basis of the requirements of the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development at the UN. The Comprehensive Migration Management model categorises the activities conducted for regulation of population movements into four basic areas of migration: „migration and development“, „facilitating the regulated movements of population“, „adjustment of population movements“ and „forced migration“.¹⁰ It is worth mentioning that some of the activities have also been included in the Roadmap and Action Plan of the new EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed on November 24, 2017.

The priority areas of the Strategy and the Action Plan refer to Migration and development, particularly directing the economic and human potential of Armenian emigrants towards the development of their country. The implementation of most of the activities foresee the support and expertise of international organisations. Among the 23 concrete mechanisms specified in the Action Plan for this area are the

following: (i) development of targeted programmes for ensuring the mobilisation of the skills, intellectual potential and experience of highly qualified Armenian citizens residing abroad; (ii) increase financial literacy of emigrants and members of their families living in Armenia; (iii) widening of circular migration schemes; (iv) involving emigrant organizations in local community development programmes.

The Action Plan also covers, among others, the following issues:

Improvement of legal framework and mechanisms for counteracting illegal migration. The Action Plan addresses the mechanisms related to authorities' work towards preventing foreign citizens from entering Armenia with forged documents and from transiting the country illegally. It has become increasingly common for citizens of third countries to enter Armenia with their original passports and then attempt leaving the country with forged documents stipulating citizenship of a Schengen state.

Amongst other measures, the Action Plan therefore envisages joint operations for the identification of illegal migrants and the storage of their fingerprints.

Cooperation within the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union. The Action Plan envisages the approximation of Armenia's legal and institutional framework for migration management to those of the EU and EAEU. Since signing the EU-Armenia Visa Facilitation Agreement in 2012, the visa liberalization process has topped the agenda in terms of EU - Armenia cooperation on migration.

Joining the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) brought new challenges and opportunities for the Republic of Armenia in the migration sphere. Russia remains the main destination country of (seasonal) labour migration from Armenia with the share of all the departures going to Russia increasing from 89.4% in 2013 to 94.6% in 2015. Since January 2015, Armenian labour migrants enjoy the right to reside and work across the EEU Member States under the sole condition of having an employment contract but without having to meet the requirements applied for protection of the national labour markets. This has resulted in an increased number of Armenian citizens working in the Russian Federation. This increase is also linked to the legalisation of many migrant workers previously employed in the shadow economy. As a result, the number of Armenian citizens working in Russia has almost doubled from 124,500 in 2014 to 232,247 in 2017.¹¹

Institutionalizing the collection of migration data. The new Action Plan aims at autonomously developing Armenia's Migration Profile, based on survey results and administrative statistical data. In the past, international organisations developed the Migration Profile of Armenia with the support of the Government. The resulting documents were uniform but did not foresee any regular collection or updating of the indicators and data. In the Action Plan Adopted in 2017, the respective Government Decree sets 144 indicators for the Extended Migration Profile, which is to be updated every three years starting from 2019. During these intervals, the complementary Basic Migration Profiles should provide the essential migration statistics.

Monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan. This is aimed at improving the institutional monitoring system, which also foresees an enhanced status of the Interagency Committee for Monitoring of the Migration Strategy and Action Plan (ICMAP), coordinated and chaired by the Head of Migration Service, under the auspices of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure.

Present situation concerning Government Policy for integration

It is important to note that starting from 2012 the mass influx of Syrian-Armenians demonstrated that Armenia was not ready for such a new reality in terms of valid predictions along with practical policy considerations. The decisions made by public authorities were mainly based on a situational approach, as opposed to a prospective strategy. Notwithstanding the existence of procedures overseeing legal status (such as dual citizenship, asylum, refugee) as described above there is still a lack of an adequate policy framework to address overall problems of Syrian-Armenians today.

6 Amended in January 2016

7 UNHCR, 2018

8 European Friends of Armenia, 2015

9 Ardhalidjan, 201

10 Action Plan 201702021, p.4

11 Number of citizens, who entered EEU member states for employment, available at http://smsmta.am/?menu_id=187, accessed on 15 July 2018

Although Syrian-Armenians exercise a legal status in Armenia, there is a need for a comprehensive and unified future vision and for related policies, considering the prospect of their permanent residence in Armenia. The Armenian government should adequately address relevant policies considering the issues of Syrian-Armenians settlement, social, legal, cultural and economic integration.

Practices of church/faith-based organisations (FBO)

The FBOs in Armenia do not have specific policies related to migration, have however, played an important role in provision of both humanitarian and development support to the Syrian-Armenians since 2012.

Some FBOs, including WCC Armenia Round Table Foundation, UMCOR, Caritas and Armenian Mission Association of America implemented humanitarian relief interventions to alleviate the situation, such as provision of food, clothing, necessary items, as most people had abandoned their goods and assets in Syria.

WCC Armenia Round Table Foundation (ART) has been supporting Syrian-Armenians since 2012 and 6000 refugees received financial support, food, stationary, clothing, hygiene items, children's clothes, etc.

In 2014, humanitarian assistance and psychological support was provided to 2500 displaced people from Kessab, Syria, who had arrived in Latakia, Syria.

From 2014-2018, ART provided social support, including: (i) Socio-psychological support; (ii) Home visits and needs assessment; (iii) Humanitarian support; (iv) Pastoral support, including organisation of pilgrimages, pastoral counselling and support to more than 2500 displaced Syrian-Armenians; (v) Public discussions and awareness raising regarding the problems of the displaced people among the local population, via developing films and theatrical performances; (vi) vocational training; (vii) IT related training on web-resign and programming; (viii) courses in foreign languages; (ix) job placement; (x) regular work with the families; (xi) courses in marketing and the labour code; (xii) participation in festivals, Christmas markets.

Since 2018 ART launched a new project to improve the capacities and integration opportunities of young, displaced people from Syria and Iraq. Many young people do not know how and where to continue their education, do not have enough financial resources for education, accommodation, and are unemployed, live in despair and face psychological problems caused both by war and hardships faced in Armenia.

The project addresses the needs of more than 300 young Syrian and Iraqi-Armenians, 50% of whom are women, while the indirect target group reaches nearly 1000 young people from various denominations. The project provides both capacity building tailored to the target group, based on their needs to enter the labour market, scholarships and financial aid to the most vulnerable students, and psychological and pastoral support, by the organisation of pilgrimages, ecumenical camps and psychological counselling. Since 2018, 328 young people, including 223 women and 105 men have directly benefited from the project.

In 2012, UMCOR *Armenia* jointly with ART helped about 600 Syrian-Armenian refugees affected by the civil unrest in Syria.

Caritas supported Syrian-Armenians and returnees from the EU and Syria, by conducting awareness raising campaigns for the population of high migration-risk communities, returnees from the EU, young entrepreneurs from communities having high migration risks.

Armenian Mission Association of America supported Syrian-Armenians by providing food and water, medical assistance, scholarship aid and salaries for schoolteachers.

Conclusion

A broad overview is provided by this chapter, starting from the historical aspects and coming to the current state of immigrants. It points out the challenges that have been faced for many years in Armenia and highlights a series of limitations, including the lack of state support due to the absence of resources and insufficient assistance from local and international organisations needed in order to address the long-term integration of the immigrants in Armenia. The problems related to access of immigrants to employment, education and accommodation still hinder their normal life in Armenia, while the civil society organisations lack an effective coordination mechanism to provide tailored support to the migrants, which would be needed to achieve long-term integration in Armenian society. Furthermore, despite the changes in the immigration policy of the Republic of Armenia, the immigrants in Armenia face an acute problem related to housing, which is becoming critical in the times of the pandemic and high unemployment.

The establishment of a coordination mechanism at the national level, with the involvement of both state and non-state actors and civil society organisations, where the churches can play an important role, is required to ensure effective and tailored support to the immigrants.

Czech Republic

Václav Rados

Václav lives in Třinec. He is married and has two children. He graduated in Social Pathology and Prevention at the Silesian University in Opava. He also received a master's degree from the TMC International Institute in Austria. "I have personal experience in helping at refugee camps in Germany and Iraq. I worked for Silesian Diaconia as a social worker in an integration project to relocate Iraqi refugees to the Czech Republic. In connection with this project, I was in charge of assistance to refugees within the Moravian-Silesian Region. This project was implemented by the Diaconia of the Czech Brethren Church and named DOOR - Diaconia Opens Opportunities to the Refugees.



Petr Sobalík

Petr was born and lives in Prague. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in social work from Charles University. Since then, he has been working as a social worker. "I have been dealing with migration issues for five years. First, I worked in the state-established organisation Správa uprchlických zařízení (Administration of Refugee Facilities) in the so-called Státní integrační program (State Integration Program). The aim was to help people who have newly acquired asylum status to use the financial resources that the state has dedicated for the integration of each individual. After working in this organisation, I moved to the non-profit sector in the Diakonie ČCE. Since then, I have been working on the Doma na Ústecku project, which deals with overcoming xenophobia by meeting natives and immigrants".



Current Situation

In the last five years, the issue of migration has become not only a professional matter, but also a very intensely perceived and reflected matter in society. One of the indicators of the overall attitude as well as the sentiment of society on this issue are opinion polls. Regardless of their limits, these surveys provide both the responsible state authorities and politicians with an important insight into how important or sensitive this issue is for society at the moment, also with regard to internal security. Also, these surveys show to some extent whether society or the media understands, supports or rejects policies and actions in the area of migration.

Czech society lacks a comprehensive view of migration and the rights of migrants, and the unrealistic attitude of considering only the interests of the Czech Republic prevails. In terms of migrants and immigrants, there is too much repression and belief that coercive means and economic utilitarianism can be or even need to be increasingly used against migrants, that is the idea that the economic value of the migrant should be its economic benefit to the host country.

The current immigration system is very complicated, confusing and unpredictable for people who want to work, study, live with their family or seek international protection. Migration is regulated

instead of being clearly defined and the legal conditions are signified rather by procedural obstructions and administrative barriers. There is a notable lack of capacity of the authorities, the insistence on requirements to produce difficult to obtain documents (e.g., proof of accommodation prior to the application) or strict conditions when and where the application for a residence permit may be lodged. In particular, formal criteria are used when assessing individual cases, and individual circumstances are not taken into account. Migrants' access to political rights is repeatedly denied, in particular concerning the right to vote of third-country nationals' resident and members of the family of EU citizens temporarily resident.

In the public debate on migrants, the following attitudes prevail, according to our assessment: The attitude towards migrants as second-order people prevails, instead of a clear awareness of the universality of human rights and equality before the law. Socio-cultural differences are exaggerated to the detriment of substantive discussion of what value base must be shared by all citizens (not only migrants) in a given country in order for society to function.

The public debate on migration and refugees is characterised by a lack of proven facts and confusion about who is a refugee, who is an economic migrant, etc. The specificities of the migration situation in the Czech Republic are not taken into account and the situation in other EU countries or countries of origin of migrants is not taken into account or is directly demonised. For example, the Czech Republic's approach to the refugee crisis in the public debate is set not based on the actual number of applicants for international protection in the Czech Republic, but by accentuating the number of applicants in countries such as Germany or Hungary.

Xenophobic populism, which most politicians are silent on, is increasing, and some even promote it with impunity as public figures, legitimising racist and xenophobic views as socially acceptable. ¹

Recent changes in migration policy in the country

Czech asylum policy does not have a long-term tradition, because before 1989, for political reasons, it was one of the refugees producing countries, rather than being a recipient refugees. Historically, Czechoslovakia belonged to the Eastern Bloc and it is still one of the more or less homogeneous states. The number of migrants in the Czech Republic has gradually increased since 2000 - in 2010 it was 425,000 people. Migrants make up 4% of the Czech population - 1.3% are EU citizens and 2.7% are third-country nationals. As of 2010, there were 124,000 Ukrainians (29% of all immigrants), 72,000 Slovaks (17%), 60,000 Vietnamese (15%) and 32,000 Russians (8%). ²

The administrative process of obtaining employee visas and permits (including extending them) is time-consuming and bureaucratic, which has, over time, been exacerbated. The system supports the tendency to move from employee visas to business visas (less restrictive) and to make more frequent use of intermediary services (both official and unofficial). This is most commonly observed among Ukrainians and Vietnamese.

Work permits are issued by labour offices (they have 30 or 60 days for complicated cases). The permit is issued for the duration of the employment contract and is tied to a specific job. Authorisation is terminated in case of the cancellation or termination of the employment contract, which leads to uncertainty on the part of migrants - this puts more power into the hands of brokers on the grey edge.

There is a lack of effective sanction mechanisms in the market and a weak possibility of enforcing sanctions (IOM CR). The efforts of the State to combat the violation and circumvention of the laws on the employment of foreigners have not led to the desired results. Newton analysed for copper from 08 to 09 years showed that the articles on migrants in printed media were in 47% neutral, negative in 44% and 7% positive. 55% of Czechs replied in March 2011 that it is right to employ foreigners in the Czech Republic, similarly in 2001 and 2009. Immigrant families with at least one child have limited access to social benefits and only after one year of legal residence. Despite dynamic migration (between 2000 and 2009, an increase from 2% to 4.5% of the population), this topic is ignored both in the media and politically. Immigrants are not voters, so politicians are not interested. There are not so many, and apart

¹ Migration manifesto. [online]. Copyright © [cit. 30.10.2020]. Downloaded from: <http://www.migracnimanifest.cz/en/index.html>

² Downloaded from: <http://IOM ČR, Focus on migrants, more at www.mits-eu.org, figures rounded to thousands>

from a few cases (the Russian Mafia) they are not „problematic“. Another case is the Roma, but they do not have the status of immigrants (they have been living in the Czech Republic for a long time).

Paradoxically, both Ukrainians (124,000) and Vietnamese (60,000) do not acquire Czech citizenship in large numbers (only about one in five Vietnamese have it, although they lived here for a long time). These numerically significant groups are not politically represented at national level, and very negligibly on the municipal level. The Czech government has been played a relatively hard hand for a long time, the Czech Republic is seen only a transitional country to the West for some of the immigrants, and only Ukrainians, Vietnamese and Slovaks are heading for the state.

As regards the latest changes concerning migration policy in the Czech Republic, the amendment to the Act on the Residence of Foreigners is the most recent. The law was published in the Collection of Laws 16.7. 2019 and the operation of most its provisions occur on the fifteenth day following its publication in the SBI RCE, i.e., on 31.7. 2019.

The amendment introduces a number of changes that affect almost all areas of the Act on the Residence of Aliens. The amendment transposes 2016/801 / EU of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, study, traineeship, volunteer service, pupil exchange programmes or educational projects and au-pair activities. This represents further adjustments that have continued in the trend of recent years, towards stricter conditions for the stay of foreigners in the Czech Republic.

The amendment introduces breakthrough compulsory integration elements – the completion of an adaptation-integration course with an allowance of 8 hours during the first year of residence - and a fundamental systemic change concerning the incorporation of regional integration centres into the Foreigners Residence Act.

Significant changes are also affecting the area of economic migration as a result of efforts to make it more flexible and transparent to government management. The changes consist in the introduction of quotas for economic migration and a new type of extraordinary workforce. Following the amendment, the Government also, through its resolution, significantly restructured current projects and economic migration regimes into three government programmes: for key workers and researchers, highly qualified employees and skilled employees. Along with these changes, the adjustment of employee cards is made stricter, in particular by the inability of a foreigner to change employment for at least 6 months (for programmes it may be specified differently).

The amendment also brings several stricter provisions regarding the cancellation of residence permits and administrative expulsions. In some cases of expulsion, the police will not be obliged to ask the Ministry for a binding opinion and the acceptable obstacles to departure are significantly reduced. There is also a further tightening of sanctions for unauthorised residence in the country, faster abolition of residence in criminal offences and a reduction in the possibilities for foreigners to proceed in administrative proceedings on the revocation of a residence permit.

The transposition of the Directive brings some simplifications for researchers and students. In the case of long-term residence for the purpose of study and scientific research, it regulates the conditions for mobility within the EU. The holders of these residence permits and their family members will be able to stay in the territory of another Member State without a visa for one year, if they participate in an Erasmus mobility programme (the definition is broader in the law - it concerns bilateral contracts of scientific institutions, etc.) An important change is the introduction of long-term residence for the purpose of seeking employment or starting a business. Students and researchers may, after completing their studies or research activities, stay in the country for up to 9 months in order to seek employment or start a business.³

3 Informace pro cizince – Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky. Úvodní strana – Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky [online]. Copyright © 2020 Ministerstvo vnitra České republiky, všechna práva vyhrazena [cit. 30.10.2020]. See: <https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/služby-pro-verejnost-informace-pro-cizince-informace-pro-cizince.aspx>

Practices in the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren (ECCB)

Introduction

Although the ECCB has no explicitly formulated “comprehensive concept” in relation to foreigners, it has long been involved in the creation of an atmosphere favourable to the reception of refugees and foreigners in general within individual projects. Obviously, the Synod’s adoption of a resolution against racism and xenophobia has no immediate impact on the situation of migrants living in our country. But this signifies that the leaders of this church are aware of the situation in society, and when they can, support the actions of their local churches and districts and individuals. It is true that not everywhere people and churches engage in such activities such as the “Help Mongols” project organised by the Diaconia Department of the West Bohemia church district. It is also true to say that not all partnerships with foreign churches really work (e.g., on the basis of annual visits of their members).

“Be a Neighbour”

Among the best-known nationwide projects of the ECCB is the project “Be a Neighbour”,⁴ which for the second year has been supporting the coexistence of foreigners with the Czech majority. Through the project, foreigners can make new friends at their place of residence. In this project, ECCB uses its dense network of churches throughout the Czech Republic. The project coordinator Alena Fendrychová can contact one of them and ask for help for specific individuals or families and mediate contact between foreigners and the host community. The project does not work so ideally that after receiving an information letter about this activity, the churches themselves seek out foreigners in their area, but when asked to do so, they try to help. Discussions about foreigners are also organised for interested churches. Project participants are provided with assistance in solving problems and misunderstandings even after establishing relationships. A big obstacle is often language. Currently, for example, in a few places in the country we build „neighbourhood“ with the families from Burma. But the language barrier is considerable. It is not about regular supervision, but about support when it is needed.

One of the goals of the “Be a Neighbour” project is also to educate people who often do not know anything about foreigners living in the Czech Republic and have a priori negative attitudes. The experience of the discussions shows that Czechs are often surprised, for example, by the fact that foreigners at home have a beautiful house and garden, that they did not ‘run away’ because they would have a better life in the Czech Republic but because they had to.

“No – Violence”⁵

In a similar way to “Be a Neighbour”, this project is carried out by the Diaconia of the ECCB and concerns the spreading of awareness about foreigners in the Czech Republic. It is aimed at helping victims of trafficking in human beings and forced prostitution or forced labour (exploitation).

Rut Dvořáková, project coordinator, at various centres of Diaconia and the ECCB congregations throughout the Czech Republic, helps workers to understand the issues and coordinates the creation of a methodological manual for preventive programs for children and young people of different ages.

The result of the project is a comprehensive preventive programme that has not so far existed in the Czech Republic. The co-operation of many institutions and bodies is essential for the project. The coordinator has been integrated into the Ministry of the Interior group, which includes representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Czech Police, the Public Prosecutor’s Office, the Ministry of Justice and non-profit organisations and Magdala Caritas CR.

4 Diakonie ČCE. Diakonie ČCE [online]. Copyright © 2020 [cit. 30.10.2020]. Downloaded from: https://www.diakonie.cz/index.php?option=com_content&task=category&ionid=42&id=189&Itemid=427

5 Based on an article by P. Hanych, “It Looked Good” (Brotherhood, in print)

“God-fathering”⁶

The last nationwide project deals with the help of specific foreigners. The God-fathering organisation is a civic society founded by three members of the ECCB, which contributes to the education of children and young foreigners living in the Czech Republic.

This company was originally set up to help an asylum-seeker Muslim family from Afghanistan, and even today it is a small-scale project that supports about ten people. One choir, for example, pays hours of singing tuition to a little girl from Georgia, elsewhere children receive housing or other support. A girl from Congo will become a nurse with the support of the God-fathering. To avoid misconception: education is free in the Czech Republic, but the God-fathering contributes, for example, to boarding accommodation or other living costs that these foreigners would not otherwise be able to pay. Joel Ruml,⁷ one of the founders of the project, says, “While God-fathering was a personal initiative, it is difficult to say whether it would have arisen if I had not built a long-term atmosphere in the Church (even in a foreign church), one of the virtues of faith.” Contributors include churches and individuals from the ECCB.

Attitudes and Practice of other Churches Towards Migrants

The Generation 21 Endowment Fund

In early 2016, thanks to the initiative of the Generation 21 Endowment Fund,⁸ when 34 Iraqi refugees were gradually moved to the Czech Republic. Some of them were accommodated in the small village of Smilovice in Silesia, where unfortunately the local population opposed this action. In response to this step, representatives of churches and Christian organisations from the Moravian-Silesian Region wrote a statement expressing their support for the arrival of Christian refugees. Including Silesian Diaconia, which was to coordinate their stay.⁹

The Czech Bishops' Conference (CBC) and the Ecumenical Council of Churches (ERC)

The Czech Bishops' Conference (CBC) and the Ecumenical Council of Churches (ERC) issued a statement in 2016¹⁰ on the issue of migration and the atmosphere in Czech society. The Czech Episcopal Conference is the official voice of the leadership of the Czech Roman Catholic Church and the Ecumenical Council of Churches brings together a large part of the other Czech churches; it is therefore an expression that should - at least in theory - express the attitude of most Christians in the Czech Republic. Of course, the situation is not so clear in practice: many Christians engage in more radical initiatives - either in one direction or in the other - and to consider the CBC and ERC statements as a clear voice for all would be misleading. The statement from 2016 nevertheless deserves attention not only because it goes to the heart of the current social issue, but also because joint statements of this kind do not come every day. The whole statement was an initiative of the Czech Bishops' Conference. The Ecumenical Council of Churches received its text for commenting and eventual rewriting. Even as the ERC itself associates very diverse churches, the resulting text is ultimately a compromise that reflects different attitudes and interests. For example, the Synodal Council of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren¹¹ has repeatedly issued a declaration on migration which differs from the common statement in some respects. The joint statement of CBK and ERC is characterised by a balance between emphasis on the need for solidarity with the people on the run and understanding for the concerns of a part of the Czech society. In any case, Sandra Silná says: „But first and foremost

6 Downloaded from: <http://kmotrovstvi.evangnet.cz/>

7 Joel Ruml – Evangnet. Evangnet [online]. Copyright © 2001 [cit. 18.11.2020]. Downloaded from: https://www.evangelnet.cz/cce/kazatel/42-joel_ruml

8 VÝROČNÍ ZPRÁVA 2015 a 2016 | Nadační fond Generace 21. Nadační fond Generace 21 [online]. Downloaded from: <http://www.gen21.cz/vyrocní-zprava-2015-a-2016/>

9 Prohlášení zástupců církví k přijezdu křesťanských uprchlíků - Apoštolská církev. Úvod - Apoštolská církev [online]. Copyright © APOŠTOLSKÁ CÍRKEV. CZ 2018 DESIGNED BY B [cit. 30.10.2020]. Downloaded from: <https://apostolskacirkev.cz/615-prohlaseni-zastupcu-cirkvi-k-prijezdu-krestanskych-uprchliku>

10 Stanovisko ČBK k migrační krizi - Církev.cz. Církev.cz [online]. Copyright © 2020 Česká biskupská konference [cit. 30.10.2020]. Downloaded from: <https://www.cirkev.cz/cs/aktuality/160420stanovisko-cbk-k-migracni-krizi>

11 Synodní rada vyzývá k pomoci uprchlíkům - Českobratrská církev evangelická. Českobratrská církev evangelická [online]. Downloaded from: <https://www.e-cirkev.cz/clanek/6337-Synodni-rada-vyzyva-k-pomoci-uprchlikum/index.htm>

we are all about solidarity.“ The statement calls on Czech politicians to be decisive, with Sandra Silná explaining that this is primarily about xenophobic moods and things such as gallows on demonstrations and threatening opponents of death.

Recent social discourse and the role of the church

Most people complain about the division of society, which they perceive as significantly worse than in the past. This impression is confirmed by experts. Similarly, believers experience the feeling of a divided church, the polarisation in the church and society is intensifying.

Currently, the great theme of the migration of 78 Chinese Christians to the Czech Republic is a major issue. Only eight Chinese Christians who applied for international protection in the Czech Republic received asylum at the end of February 2018.¹² The decision on applications submitted by refugees in early 2016 was postponed several times, and 70 applications were eventually rejected. In September 2016, the presidency of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic sent a call to the members of the Government asking for early compliance with asylum applications. At the beginning of March 2018, the ECCB Synodal Council issued the following statement:

“We are grateful for the granting of eight asylums. Christians are persecuted in the PRC for their faith, and if rejected applicants have to return there, they face punishment and persecution. We would like them to be able to stay in our country and profess their faith freely, if they cannot do so in their own country.”¹³

Lawyers representing rejected applicants intend to apply to the courts to review the decisions of the Ministry of the Interior. The fact that the applicants are actively interested in social inclusion, they learn Czech, some of them work, proves that they do not want to be dependent on state social support and they are not economic migrants.

Conclusion

The situation in the Czech Republic is specific in the relationship between the numbers of migrant workers and refugees. The Czech Republic has a high number of migrant workers and a very low number of refugees. Public discourse is largely distorted by the expressions of populist politicians. Terms such as „migrant“, „refugee“, „Islam“ or „Islamismus“, etc. are thus confused. At present, there are no significant changes in attitudes to migration in Christian communities and in society in general.

Church leaders generally take a rather neutral or negative attitude towards migrants and refugees. Only Christian refugees are favoured. An exception is made by representatives of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, who called for the reception of refugees and people in need regardless of religion or culture of origin. However, the Catholic Church (contrary to the statements of its representatives.) and the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren are the founders of non-profit organisations, which provide assistance to refugees and migrants as part of their services.

12 Osm čínských křesťanů dostalo azyl v Česku, 70 jich odmítli - Novinky.cz. Novinky.cz – nejčtenější zprávy na českém internetu [online]. Copyright © 2003 [cit. 22.11.2020]. Downloaded from: <https://www.novinky.cz/domaci/clanek/osm-cinskychkrestanu-dostalo-azyl-v-cesku-70-jich-odmitli-40061357>

13 Podpora čínským křesťanům - Českobratrská církev evangelická. Českobratrská církev evangelická [online]. Downloaded from: <https://www.e-cirkev.cz/clanek/6281-Podpora-cinskyhm-krestanum/index.htm>

Hungary

Attila Meszaros

Attila was born in Serbia, but he has been living in Budapest for the last 25 years, therefore he considers himself as a migrant. Although he left his homeland during the south Slavic war, he didn't arrive to Hungary as a refugee, but only to study. Attila is a social worker, who already started to deal with refugees (mainly from the Balkans) during his college years. Since then, he has helped the integration of refugees and the development of an inclusive social environment in many organizations and programs. He ran the social program of one of the largest non-governmental organizations assisting refugees for ten years, but he also worked in the municipal and business spheres. Attila runs currently the asylum programme of the Lutheran Diaconia, where their primary service is crisis care, and they have about 200 clients per year.



Bertalan Decmann

In 2015 after Bertalan graduated as a social worker, he started to work with homeless people at Budapest's largest homeless service provider. Next to his work he completed a master's degree in sociology to expand his theoretical knowledge. In summer of 2017 he started to work with refugees in a short-term integration programme run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary. Bertalan is a doctoral candidate at the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest, where he is writing his doctoral thesis on refugees' integration in Hungary. He participated in research about refugees not just in Hungary but also in Greece.



Refugees

Hungary has a significant role in migration. The country - as a member of the Schengen area - is the guardian of 15 percent of the Schengen area's external land borders.¹ It is important to know, that Hungary is not considered as a destination country for asylum seekers. Because of Hungary's geographical location, the country is, however, a transit country for most of the asylum seekers. Most people who asked for asylum in Hungary did not wait until the end of their asylum process, they left the country in the direction of west. But it is also common, that after they receive national protection, they leave the country.² Although the number of applications for asylum did increase until 2015, the number of beneficiaries of international protection did not increase significantly (see Table 1).

1 Ritecz György 2016 A migráció trendjei – és ami mögötte van. Regio, 24.2:109–139. Régió <http://regio.tk.mta.hu/index.php/regio/article/view/115> Date of access: July 17, 2019

2 Joób Sándor 2018 Index. Ha menekült, befogadjuk, csak menjen innen tovább https://index.hu/belfold/2018/01/17/menekultek_oltalmazotti_statusz_statiztika_kopt_keresztenyek_bevandorlas/ Date of access: Oct 27, 2020

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Application for asylum	2 157	18 900	42 777	177 135	29 432	3 397	671
Subsidiary protection + refugee status	415	356	476	502	425	1216	349

Table 1: Number of the application for asylum and the number of the person who got asylum (Source: BMBAH)³

The number of rejections of asylum applications in 2018 was 590. This number includes the applications which were submitted in previous years. From the 671 applications in 2018, 274 were submitted by Afghan and 239 by Syrian people. From the 28th of March 2017 only asylum seekers in the transit zones can submit application for asylum.⁴ Those who are staying in the country lawfully are an exception to this legislation. For the duration of the asylum procedure all asylum seekers have to stay at the transit zones (excluding unaccompanied children below the age of 14)⁵.

Immigration

On the 1st of January 2019 the population of Hungary was 9,765,000, which is 14,300 less than it was in 2018. Because of international migration, the population rose by 27,000 in 2018. On the 1st of January 2019, the number of foreign citizens legally and permanently staying in Hungary was 172,600, which made up 1.8% of the country's population. The vast majority (64%) of the foreigners living in Hungary arrived from other European countries, mostly from the neighbouring countries (Romania 12%, Ukraine 12%, Germany 9,3 %, Slovakia 5,4 %). 28% of the foreigners living in Hungary are from Asia, 3,9 % from Africa and 3,5 % from the American continent. Those persons who migrated from Asia are mostly Chinese and Vietnamese. Almost half of the foreign population (47%) live in Budapest. Among the foreigners there are more men (58%) than women (42%) and their age composition is younger than the native population'. 48% of the foreigners are aged between 20 and 39 years.⁶

Emigration

One of Hungary's most worrying social problems is emigration from the country. At the last decade Hungary became a country of emigration (Hárs 2019).⁷ According to the statistics of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office⁸ the emigration in the recent years has growth and then has come to a halt and then began to decline. In 2018, 23,808 Hungarians left the country for a shorter or longer period. The Hungarian immigrants in the period of 2012-2017 - according to Hárs' research, which is based on the European Union Labour Force Survey,-have an upper-secondary qualification. In the same period the migration rate of low qualified workers was modest compared to other countries. It is also important to note, that in the same year 33,625 immigrant Hungarian citizens arrived back to the country. From this number 23,401 people were born in Hungary. Since 2010, last year the numbers of immigrant Hungarians was the highest.

According to Hárs, Hungary among Poland, Estonia and Slovakia, belongs to the low-emigration countries. The migration rate from these countries was only 5-8 percent of the active-age population in 2017.

3 http://www.bmbah.hu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=492&Itemid=1259&lang=en# Date of access: Oct 26, 2020

4 Transit zone: In case of mass immigration, transit zones are the designated areas where foreigners can initiate asylum procedures correctly. As asylum seekers they can use the services in the zones until their procedure is completed. Asylum seekers can leave the transit zone at any time with no restriction except that they must only go in the direction of Serbia. (Source: <https://tinyurl.com/y5xhznqw> Date of access: July 10, 2019)

5 https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/report-download/aida_hu_2018update.pdf Date of access: July 17, 2019

6 KSH – Népmozgalom 2018 – Statisztikai tükör, 2019. május 20. <https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/nepmozg/nepmoz18.pdf> Date of access: July 17, 2019

7 Hárs Ágnes 2019 Increasing outward migration – opportunities, hopes and labour market impacts Hungarian Social Report 2019 https://www.tarki.hu/sites/default/files/2019-02/137_159_Hars_elvandorlas.pdf Date of access: July 18, 2019

8 https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_eves/i_wvvn004.html Date of access: Oct 27, 2020

Citizenship

According to the Hungarian Central of Statistical Office⁹ in the last 6 years the number of persons who have acquired Hungarian citizenship has decreased. In 2013, 9,178 persons got Hungarian citizenship, but last year only 3,508. From this number, 2,955 people came from other European countries.¹⁰

Opinion towards migration

According to the survey ‘Special Eurobarometer 469’,¹¹ 80% of Hungarians do not meet with migrants regularly or just have less frequent interactions with migrants. Only 7% of the population have daily interactions with migrants. 73% of Hungarians would not feel comfortable if they had to work with migrants or if migrants would be their neighbours or their doctor. 63% of Hungarians (the highest percentage in the EU) think that immigration from outside the EU is more problematic and only 9% think that it is more like an opportunity. 54% of the EU 28 average think that the integration is successful in the local area or country, and 40% think it is not. In Hungary 37% think that the integration is successful, and 53% think that it is not.

Xenophobia in Hungary

Many Europeans are concerned with security and the economic repercussions of the refugee crisis, but the Hungarian data reveals figures which exceed the average. In research made by PEW Research,¹² Hungarians had the worst opinions about refugees. 76% of the Hungarians think that “refugees will increase the likelihood of terrorism in our country”. Also, a high percentage, 82% think that “Refugees are a burden on our country because they take our jobs and social benefits”. And finally, 43% of the Hungarians say, “refugees in our country are more to blame for crime than other groups”.

In Hungary the xenophobic attitudes have been examined by TÁRKI Social Research Institute over the period since 1992. The Institute measures the xenophilia and xenophobia related to the acceptance of migrants. They ask three simple question each year:

“do you think that Hungary: 1. should accept all asylum seekers, 2. should not accept any asylum seekers, 3. should accept some asylum seekers, some not”.¹³ The xenophobia level started to increase from 2006, and it hit record levels in 2016 and 2017 (in 2016 56% of the population was xenophobic, in 2017 – 60%). In 2017 only 2% of the population was “xenophilic” (foreigner friendly), 60% was “xenophobic” (against the foreigners) and 38% were “thinkers” (They think there are those who need to be accepted and there are those who do not).

From this two research results it is clear that the population is far away from the idea of being open and welcoming.

Recent changes in migration policy in Hungary

In recent years, there were many changes affecting the migration policy of the country, but these changes were not in connection with the emigration or immigration but with the asylum system.

In 2015 an unprecedented number of asylum claims were registered in Hungary (as in many other EU countries). In 2015 Hungary’s southern border was the third most important entry point into the

9 <https://infogram.com/a-2018-ban-magyar-allampolgarsagot-kapottak-aranya-elozo-allampolgarsaguk-alapjan-1h7j4dpd71z94nr> Date of access: Oct 27, 2020

10 Countries of the previous nationality: Romania in 2123 cases, Slovakia in 223 cases, Ukraine in 193 cases, Egypt in 191 cases, Serbia in 105 cases etc.

11 Integration of immigrants in the European Union, Special Eurobarometer 469, April 2018 <https://ec.europa.eu/comfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/82537> Date of access: July 17, 2019

12 <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/07/11/europeans-fear-wave-of-refugees-will-mean-more-terrorism-fewer-jobs/> Date of access: Oct 26, 2020

13 Barlai Melani – Sik Endre 2017 A Hungarian Trademark (a „Hungarikum”): The Moral Panic Button. In Melani Barlai – Christina Griessler – Birte Fähnrich – Markus Rhomberg ed., The Migrant Crisis: European Perspectives and National Discourses. Lit Verlag, Berlin–Münster–Wien–Zürich–London. 147–169.

European Union. If we take a look at the numbers of the first-time asylum applicants for 2015, using monthly data, we see the following: March – 4,925, April – 6,690, May- 9,970, June – 16,580, July – 31,280, August – 47,095, September – 30,795, and then in October 615, November 325.¹⁴

The decrease in September, October was because the new 175 km long fence, which closed the Hungarian-Serbian border was finished on 15th September 2015. From 15th September 2015 there were other changes, for example, from this date an entry through the border is considered to be a criminal act. In 2015, there were 177,135 first time asylum applicants in Hungary, and the next year there were 29.430. This means, that only physical fence alone can’t stop those who are wishing to seek protection.

The government’s other action to stop the illegal migration, starting on the 5th July 2016 was the policy of pushbacks at the border. Pushback means, that those migrants and asylum seekers who enters into the territory of Hungary through the border fence are returned to Serbia.¹⁵ As a result of these measures, the number of applications decreased from the second half of 2016.

The number of the migrants and asylum seekers in the transit areas increased at the same time. The transit areas are partly on Hungarian, and party on Serbian territory, close to the transit zones (migrants and asylum seekers were waiting on the Serbian side to enter to the Hungarian transit zones). The number of the asylum-seekers allowed to access the transit zones to seek asylum became limited, due to the high number of the people in the transit zone. became

From 2017 March the police have pushed back the migrants and asylum seekers who are apprehended within 8 km of the external side of the border fence along the Serbian- Hungarian and Croatian-Hungarian border (Helsinki Committee 2017).

From 1 June 2016 the integration programmes and services for refugees and protected persons in Hungary has ended. Another measure taken was that the period of stay in reception centres following the asylum procedure has been reduced to 30 day from 60 days. Finding accommodation is difficult in many ways, especially in such a short period of time in a new cultural environment for those who were recognised as a beneficiary of international protection

On the 1st July 2018 the “Stop Soros” package of laws came into force in Hungary. The aim of the package was to provide Hungary protections against the people who organise and finance illegal migration.¹⁶ According to the law, helping illegal migration is a criminal offence. Anyone who helps illegal migration is usually punished by imprisonment or in more serious cases banishment from the country.

According to the Helsinki Committee report¹⁷ since the end of January 2018 the IAO allows only 1 person per working day per transit zone to enter the transit zone and apply asylum. (IAO is a government agency under the Ministry of Interior, is in charge of the asylum procedure through its Directorate of Refugee Affairs)

	Asylum applications	Push-backs	Blocked entries	Total denied access (% compared to asylum applications)
2016	29 432	8 466	10 591	19 057 (65 %)
2017	3 397	9 136	10 964	20 100 (592 %)
2018	671	4 151	1668	5 819 (867 %)

Table 2: Asylum applications, pushbacks and blocked entries (Source: Helsinki Committee - 2019)

14 Source: Eurostat - online data code: MIGR_ASYAPPCTZM

15 Helsinki Committee 2017 https://www.helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/Two-years-after_2017.pdf Date of access: July 10, 2019

16 <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/the-stop-soros-package-of-laws-is-now-in-force-in-hungary/> Date of access: Oct 29, 2020

17 Helsinki Committee 2019 <https://www.helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/One-year-after-2019.pdf> Date of access: July 17, 2019

Practices toward people on the move in Hungarian Lutheran Church

The Hungarian Lutheran Church started its work with refugees in 2015. It is important to know, that earlier the church helped refugees during the refugee wave from Transylvania and from the Balkans. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary has a history of helping persecuted people. Gabor Sztéhlo, a Lutheran pastor got the *Righteous Among the Nations prize*, because of his work during World War II. He saved persecuted people, especially Jewish children.

During the migrant crisis in 2015 the church began to deal with crisis management. The church started to provide clothes, food, medicine and information to the refugees traveling through the country, and then opened an integration service. The service is maintained in a smaller or larger volume in accordance with needs and support. It has become an important player in the Hungarian non-state refugee system.

In addition to Church laws, the work is governed by diaconal principles, relevant domestic and international laws and guidelines. Our services have been based on the needs. With the help of shortage programmes, which are not available from other service providers we have tried to help the integration of refugees who are living in Hungary. Our service has two significant parts. On the one hand we are trying to reduce distrust towards refugees by providing objective information and raising awareness towards them and on the other hand, we are trying to soften the crisis situations and help refugee integration with counselling and with aids.

After the Church's crisis management work in 2015, it launched an advisory office which is open three days a week. The two social workers work in this office speak foreign languages and have significant professional experience in the field of helping refugees. They also provide short-term housing, food and medical care for those who are in need. With the help of volunteers, our service provides community programmes a summer camp for children and language courses for everyone. The Church has established good cooperation with the NGOs who are working in the field of migration. We have also common clients with these NGOs, and we are mutually using each other's services to help our service users together. Currently we have a crisis housing service, where we can provide temporary accommodation, food, medicine and counselling to about 10 refugees per month.

In Hungary, more and more churches are involved in helping refugees:

- Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta
A member of the charity council which earlier had a job seeking service which was financed from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). Right now, they are dealing with Venezuelan refugees. The Venezuelan refugees arrived Hungary last year with the help of the Hungarian Government.
- Hungarian Interchurch Aid
They have been present in the area for a long time, but they are primarily active in the near East.
- Jesuit Refugee Service
They are providing training and education materials on the topic of refugees and they have a low volume housing programme.
- Hungarian Baptist Aid
Earlier they operated a temporary family shelter, maybe it will be operated again in the autumn.
- Community of Sant'Egidio
In 2015, during the refugee crisis, they provided food, clothes and aids for refugees. The community celebrate a mass every year on World Refugee Day.
- Kalumba
This organization is linked to the Reformed Church and provides a complex integration service for refugees. Their programs were supported by AMIF.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that there are other church representatives (Catholics and Lutherans), who stand up for the refugees by word or deed. The historical churches in Hungary are in a delicate position on the question of asylum. The government's main message in the last years was

that the refugees are a threat to our country. Maybe it is less well known that the historical churches are important partners of the government, and they get substantial financial and other support from the government. This dependent relationship makes it difficult for churches to stand up for such a delicate and well-politicised social phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, xenophobia is very strong in our country so the faithful are divided on the question, this fact also makes it difficult for churches to make a clear statement about refugees and migration.

The government established a charity council where the following big churches and FBOs are invited members: Caritas Hungarica, Hungarian Baptist Aid, Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, Reformed Church in Hungary. These churches and FBOs are in formal cooperation with the government, they do their work with the state's support, which means they can enter the "transit zones" where no other organisations can go. The other churches and FBOs who are not members of the charity council, maintain their programmes mostly from slim sources. It is important to know, that the Ministry of Interior withdrew all the calls for tenders funded by AMIF in the beginning of 2018. This means that by 30 June 2018, all those programmes had ceased, including the integration support activity which relied on this fund. The social confidence in refugees has declined significantly in recent years, the church members (believers) also map this social belief, which is very divided on the judgment of refugees. This also explains why there was no official refugee-friendly resolution on the part of the churches. However, all churches/FBOs or their representatives (Catholic bishops, as well as the Lutheran pastors) made statements or actions in favour of the persecuted. Here are some examples:

- a Catholic bishop receives refugees into church property
- an evangelical pastor feeds asylum seekers who do not get food from the state and who are in the transit zones
- two bishops (Catholic and Lutheran) took part in a UNHCR campaign film¹⁸

Therefore, it can be said, that almost of all the churches/FBOs are unwilling to take a unified position, but still, they are trying to help the troubled persons on individual level. Because of the lack of a unified position, it is impossible to choose the most refugee friendly church. There are several churches from which the government has withdrawn the church status, and now these churches can communicate more freely. One of these churches is the Hungarian Evangelical Fellowship whose leader often makes statements condemning the government's anti-refugee policy.

Compared to the European level, xenophobia has always been high in Hungary. In recent years, the government's communication has made the rate of foreigner-friendly people virtually immeasurable, thus only the people who are openly anti-alien and those who hesitate remain visible. The word "migrant" became a swearword. Children mock at each other with that word. The government built strong fear in the society against the migrants, which resulted psychiatric disorders in some cases. This shows that the fear and hatred which was amplified by propaganda, changes the population not the immigrants. It is hard to talk about discrimination because it is invisible and because of that the cases are not investigated, but in our daily work, we found that there is fear against refugees. The media reported several cases when residents called police officers because they saw "coloured people" in their area. The coloured people were Arab tourists.

The situation on the labour market is the opposite, economic rationality overrides the fears. Because of the lack of employees, refugees are also employed. The situation in the housing market is worse, for example, social workers often face rejection after the landlords hear the word "refugee". The government anti-migrant government campaign which cost tens of millions of euros also caused an interesting, positive social phenomena - the civilian initiatives have intensified, and the number of volunteer helpers has increased. This can be caused by humane and political protest. The churches have recognised the danger of the government's communication which is often inciting negative attitudes, however for the above-mentioned reasons, they have not acted against it formally and unequivocally. Several churches have launched sensitising training for students in schools however, their coverage is insignificant, compared to the systematic government brainwashing, which has been going on for years.

The Hungarian Evangelical Church is historically diverse, with many believers from Germany and Slovakia. Furthermore, there is strong professional cooperation with German and other Western

18 <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2017/12/5a37a6c94/bishops-offer-room-inn-refugees-hungary.html> (Date of access: July 10, 2019)

European Protestant churches. Foreign sister churches also played a major role in the resumption and support of the asylum work. After the 2015 crisis, our presiding bishop's stand on behalf of refugees was exemplary. Both by his statement and by his involvement in the UNHCR campaign film he drew attention to the importance of helping refugees.

Conclusion

Solidarity and integration are core values of the European Union, therefore the way in which member states treat refugees and immigrants has an important social impact. The nation's choice depends on the ruling government's attitude which, in this case, can be pro- or anti-immigrants, asylum-seekers, or refugees. From the point of view of asylum seekers, Hungary is not a target destination but a migration transit country. Integration is important for those who are staying in the country and the churches in Hungary are aware of this, therefore services provided by them are crucial and necessary. However, a unified position is an urgent need and with its help, fear and anxiety against immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees could reduce in the population.

Poland

Grzegorz Stefan Giemza

born 1969 in Katowice. Doctor of theological sciences, evangelical pastor, director of the Polish Ecumenical Council. Lecturer, psychological-pastoral counsellor, supervisor, president of the Association of Counselling and Pastoral Psychology in Poland and the Joannici Dzieło Pomocy association. Member of the Board of the Polish Society for Spiritual Care in Medicine, Member of the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling and The Brandenburg Balley of the knightly Order of St. John of Jerusalem. In the years 1998-2017 the director of the Centre for Mission and Evangelization, and in the years 2012-2017 the president of the Synod of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland. Married, has two adult sons and a daughter.



"That the issues related to migration and refugees were prompted by my work in the Polish Ecumenical Council. In international ecumenical circles this is an important topic that has been discussed for many years, but in Poland it was not popular. Therefore, within the Polish Ecumenical Council, we decided to encourage churches and FBO to take up this topic and to get involved in helping migrants".

The Context

According to the latest data¹ published by the Office for Foreigners, as of 1 July 2019 there were 399,669 foreigners in Poland who had valid documents confirming their right of residence on the territory of Poland. Of this number, the largest group had a temporary residence permit – 224,026 people (the largest group were Ukrainian citizens – 155,269). 74,230 persons had the permanent residence permit, the so-called residence card, (the largest group were also citizens of Ukraine – 37,632 persons). The third group were citizens of the European Union (who do not need a permit) who registered their residence – 73,102 people. The next two groups are long-term residents of the European Union (13,351 persons) and citizens of the European Union with permanent residence (8,484 persons). 1,321 persons had the refugee status (the largest group were Russians - 375 persons, followed by Syrians - 235 persons, Ukrainians - 98 persons, Belarusians - 88 persons and Iraqis - 79 persons). 1,870 people had subsidiary protection (the largest group were also Russians – 1,154 people, followed by Ukrainians - 380 people, Tajiks - 58 people, Iraqis - 52 people and Syrians - 50 people). 268 people had the so-called tolerated stay, most of whom were Vietnamese (189 people) and stateless persons (20 people). 1,962 people had been allowed to stay for humanitarian reasons (the most numerous group to the citizens of Russia - 708 people, Ukraine - 453 people, Georgia - 148 people and Vietnam - 71 people). One person, a citizen of Belarus, had received asylum in Poland.

The data shows that in mid-2019 the so-called undocumented migrants constituted only 1.36% of foreigners having a regular legal status (5,422 such persons stayed in Poland). However, this data does not include all foreigners. The Office for Foreigners does not have data on all foreigners legally residing in Poland.

The largest group of migrants in Poland are people coming in connection with work. One of the possibilities to show the size of labour migration in Poland is to count the so-called "Declarations of

¹ Dane liczbowe dotyczące postępowań prowadzonych wobec cudzoziemców w I połowie 2019 roku [in:] "Zestawienia roczne", <https://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-roczne/>, published on 28 December 2019.

intent to employ a foreigner". Such declarations were introduced by new regulations on 1 January 2018. Thanks to them, the procedure of obtaining a work permit has been made easier. Such declarations are submitted by the employer to the Labour Office. This procedure applies to citizens of Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. The period of employment must not exceed 6 months within a consecutive period of 12 months and must not include so-called seasonal work. According to the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, in 2017, more than 1.8 million such declarations were registered in local labour offices. 93.99% concerned citizens of Ukraine, who constitute the largest group of economic migrants in Poland. Submitting such a declaration does not mean that the person concerned has actually taken up employment or even come to Poland. Moreover, more than one statement can be submitted for one person. However, popular opinion talks about 1.5 million Ukrainians working in Poland. However, according to the data, in 2018 there were at least 800,000 Ukrainians working in Poland²

On the one hand, there is an increase in the influx of foreigners looking for work in Poland, and on the other hand, there is a decrease in the number of refugees trying to legalise their stay in Poland. In 2018, according to the data of the Office for Foreigners, 4,135 applications for international protection were submitted. Among the applicants for international protection in 2018, the largest number were citizens of Russia, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Armenia and Georgia. The refugee status was granted to 168 people, most of them had come from Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan and Ukraine. Subsidiary protection was granted to 191 persons from Ukraine, Russia, Tajikistan, Iraq and Libya. 16 persons from Georgia, Ukraine and Russia received tolerated stay. 2,128 people received negative decisions, and 1,942 cases were discontinued.³ In 2017, 5,078 applications were submitted. Refugee status was granted to 150 persons, subsidiary protection to 340 persons and tolerated stay to 19.⁴ In 2016, 12,319 applications for international protection were submitted. The refugee status was granted to 108 persons, subsidiary protection to 150 persons, tolerated stay to 49.⁵ This shows that there has been a continuous decline in the number of applications for international protection over the last three years.

According to information of the Office for Foreigners, as of 1 January 2016 there were 211,869 persons in Poland who held documents allowing them to stay in Poland as foreigners, including: permanent residence permits – 47,989, long-term EU residence permits – 9,469, temporary residence permits – 77,623, right of residence of an EU citizen – 63,460, right of permanent residence of an EU citizen – 7,098, right of residence of an EU citizen's family member – 596, right of permanent residence of EU citizen's family member – 84, asylum – 1, refugee status – 1,359, subsidiary protection – 2,058, humanitarian stay – 1,599, tolerated stay – 533. Based on these statistics, we know that 5,550 persons were covered by international protection. They constituted 2.62% of all foreigners holding a document issued by the Office for Foreigners. Comparing this with the situation in mid 2019, we also see a slight decrease in the number of legally residing persons with international protection.

Very often, for refugees, Poland is not the destination country. This is indicated by the statistics on the so-called discontinuance of proceedings conducted by the Office for Foreigners. In 2018 there were 1,962 such discontinuances. These are persons for whom the procedure had been launched in Poland, but could not be completed due to their departure, most probably to another European country. According to refugees' reports, they are informed that after obtaining a Schengen visa, they will be able to reside in any European country.

Despite the fact that the number of people who receive international protection in Poland is small, voices are raised concerning the threat posed by refugees. Adam Białous, author of the article „How many Muslim immigrants are there really in Poland?”, expressed the following opinion in the „Polonia Christiana“ Portal: „The issue of the influx of refugees into our country – so hotly debated not long ago – is currently not a front-page issue for the newspapers. Government representatives are also unlikely to speak on their own initiative on this issue. They are not forced to make such statements by the

2 M. Jaroszewicz, O. Małynowska, Najnowsza migracja z Ukrainy do Polski: (nie)stały fenomen?, Stefan Bathory Foundation, Stefan Bathory Foundation 2018, p. 3.

3 Dane liczbowe dotyczące postępowań prowadzonych wobec cudzoziemców w latach 2016-2018 [in:] „Zestawienia roczne”, <https://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-roczne/>, published on 20 December 2019.

4 Dane liczbowe dotyczące postępowań prowadzonych wobec cudzoziemców w latach 2016-2018 [na:] „Zestawienia roczne”, <https://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-roczne/>, published on 20 December 2019.

5 Dane liczbowe dotyczące postępowań prowadzonych wobec cudzoziemców w latach 2016-2018 [na:] „Zestawienia roczne”, <https://udsc.gov.pl/statystyki/raporty-okresowe/zestawienia-roczne/>, published on 20 December 2019.

current situation, in which successive EU countries are adopting the same attitude towards refugees and immigrants as Poland, i.e., that those affected must be helped in their home countries, and not allowed to settle permanently in Europe – which does not work for anyone”.⁶

Difficulties with the System

In Poland, the Office for Foreigners deals with matters of documented migrants and refugees. It deals with all matters related to entering, passing through, staying and leaving the territory of Poland. It deals with granting international protection, asylum, granting a permit for tolerated stay as well as for temporary protection.

The stay of foreigners on the territory of Poland is regulated by several legal acts. The basic one is the Act of 12 December 2013 on foreigners (Journal of Laws of 2013, item 1650). However, the residence in Poland of citizens of other EU Member States, the European Economic Area, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland is regulated by the Act of 14 July 2006 on the entry into, residence in and exit from the Republic of Poland of citizens of EU Member States and their family members (Journal of Laws of 2006, No. 144, item 1043, as amended). The Act of 13 June 2003 on granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland (Journal of Laws of 2003 No. 128 item 1176) is particularly important for refugees. It regulates the implementation of the Geneva Convention and legislation of the European Union in Poland. It lays down the prerequisites for granting the refugee status and subsidiary protection. The Act describes the principles and course of the procedure for granting international protection. It regulates the forms and procedure of social assistance which is granted to persons applying for international protection.

Despite the existence of certain solutions, regulations and procedures in the existing system, refugees still face difficulties. The most important one is related to language. In the current situation, the refugee reception system in Poland does not provide for sufficient Polish language training. Under the current system, a refugee is not offered the opportunity to learn Polish from the very moment he or she asks for asylum and is brought to a reception centre. NGOs are trying to fill this gap by organising language classes taught by volunteers. However, such classes are organised on a very irregular basis, which depends on the funds they raise. For the last two and a half years, the situation has worsened due to the transfer of state funds and their allocation to other activities.

After 6 months of stay in the centre, an asylum-seeker may move outside the centre. However, the problem of learning the Polish language remains. Such a situation may continue for several years. Waiting „in suspense“ is a difficult period for refugees. Above all, their future existence is uncertain, and they are not offered any systemic solutions related to language learning. This problem is caused by the procedure of obtaining refugee status or another form of international protection, which may take several years.

Polish language classes are offered only during the so-called integration programme, which lasts 12 months after obtaining refugee status or subsidiary protection. There are different solutions in this respect in different regions of the country. Most often a person with refugee status or subsidiary protection covers the cost of language learning from the funds they receive. Sometimes the language course is organized by the City Hall. Here, there is another difficulty related to the number of hours. Usually, the lessons take place twice a week for one hour, which is definitely not enough to master the language to a satisfactory degree. During the integration programme, refugees are provided with the amount of PLN 1,300 per person (in the case of children, the amount is smaller), which is not enough to meet their basic needs (e.g., food and flat rental). Therefore, they are forced to take additional work, which in turn distracts them from learning Polish and they lose commitment to learn the language. It is necessary to provide more hours of language training both during the integration programme and while awaiting the granting of refugee status or subsidiary protection. Poor knowledge of the language also makes it difficult for migrants to deal with their various daily tasks, these include basic issues such as dealing with official matters, visits to the doctor or conversations at the school the children attend. Migrants often also need the help of an „assistant“ there.

6 A. Białous, Ilu naprawdę jest w Polsce przybyszów z krajów muzułmańskich? [in:] „Polonia Christiana”, <https://www.pch24.pl/ilu-naprawde-jest-w-polsce-przybyszow-z-krajow-muzulmanskich-,60242,i.html#ixzz60r43ZOYw>, published on 10 December 2019.

Churches attitudes and practice towards migrants

Churches are aware of the problems migrants face in Poland. This may stem from the fact that they have their own history of migration. For example, in the case of the Evangelical-Reformed Church, a large part of the Church has Bohemian roots (The Bohemian Brethren fleeing persecution found a safe haven in Poland). Parishes of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church have in their history been influenced by migration from Western Europe to Poland. The Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church experienced forced displacements after World War II. All Churches also experienced emigration after World War II and in the 1980s.

The migration crisis was one of the topics discussed the meeting of the Dialogue Committee of the (Roman-Catholic) Polish Bishops' Conference and the Polish Ecumenical Council, which took place on 5 October 2015. Following discussions on dramatic developments in the migration crisis, a decision was made to prepare a joint message on this issue. On 30 June 2016, in the secretariat of the Polish Bishops' Conference, the „Message of Churches in Poland on Refugees“ was signed. Signatories of the document were member Churches of the Polish Ecumenical Council and the Polish Bishops' Conference. The message reads:

*„The Church has been tasked with educating hearts so that through concrete acts of mercy they would come to the aid of those who are suffering, those who are fleeing war, persecution and death. From the beginning of the Church's existence, this kind of attitude on the part of Christians towards other people has been their hallmark“.*⁷

Before these words, it was indicated that migration is inscribed in human history. The document further cites the examples of Abraham (Genesis 12:10) and Patriarch Jacob (Genesis 42:1-6; 46:1-7), who had fled the famine to Egypt. The argument that Jesus Christ was also a refugee was raised too (Matthew 2:13-15), as well as examples from the Bible and of times in the Polish history when Poland was known for its tolerance and reception of refugees (e.g., in the Jagiellonian era) or when Poles experienced hospitality in other countries (e.g., after the fall of the 19th century uprisings or in the 1980s). It is clear to the signatories of the document that the responsibility lies not only with the Churches, but also with others, including state authorities, so it is important to cooperate with them, as well as with social organizations:

*„Only comprehensive humanitarian action and consideration of the political and economic causes of the existing difficulties can bring about real improvements. May it also provide an incentive for the development of volunteering, including at the level of our parishes, to address emerging problems effectively and responsibly“.*⁸

The message ends with a kind of wish:

*„We trust that God will enlighten the eyes of our hearts so that we can respond to Christ's call with the love of the Gospel: «I was a stranger and you invited me in» (Matthew 25,35)“.*⁹

The signatories of the document strongly advocated for the involvement of the Churches in helping refugees. At the press conference following the signing, Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, President of the Polish Bishops' Conference, said: “The most important theme of the message is the question of what to do to help the refugees. Even if 60-80 percent of the population were against refugees, the Church cannot behave like the politicians and say: „People don't want that, so we won't do it“.¹⁰ This is a strong declaration, bearing in mind what the general climate around the issue of refugees was at the time due to the change in the new Polish government's refugee policy.

7 Z. Glaeser, G. Giemza (ed.), Przesłanie Kościołów w Polsce w sprawie uchodźców [in:] Swój i obcy w kontekście współczesnego kryzysu migracyjnego. Doświadczenia i zadania Kościołów i społeczeństwa, Warto, Warto 2017, p. 49.

8 Z. Glaeser, G. Giemza (ed.), Przesłanie Kościołów w Polsce w sprawie uchodźców [in:] Swój i obcy w kontekście współczesnego kryzysu migracyjnego. Doświadczenia i zadania Kościołów i społeczeństwa, Warto, Warto 2017, p. 49.

9 Z. Glaeser, G. Giemza (ed.), Przesłanie Kościołów w Polsce w sprawie uchodźców [in:] Swój i obcy w kontekście współczesnego kryzysu migracyjnego. Doświadczenia i zadania Kościołów i społeczeństwa, Warto, Warto 2017, p. 50.

10 Polskie Kościoły wzywają do pomocy uchodźcom [in:] „Polska Rada Ekumeniczna“, <https://ekumenia.pl/aktualnosc/polskiekościoły-wzywają-do-pomocy-uchodźcom/>, 30 June 2016, published on 18 December 2019

One of the questions asked at this press conference was why the message came so late. It was a legitimate one, because positions and appeals of various international ecclesiastical bodies (the World Council of Churches, the Conference of European Churches or the Lutheran World Federation) had appeared much earlier. As regards Member Churches of the Polish Ecumenical Council, noteworthy are the pastoral letters issued by Bishop Jerzy Samiec, head of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland. The first one entitled „Let us experience the power of prayer“ was published on 30 April 2015.¹¹, and the second one „Let us open our hearts to refugees“ on 9 September 2015¹². Both letters tackled the problem of the migration crisis. Bishop Samiec encourages in them to pray, to open our hearts and to get involved in practical help for the refugees¹³. Bishop Samiec also responded to the above question: „I don't think this message comes too late. It is the result of multilateral consultations conducted in order to develop a clear, but also balanced document“¹⁴

The Polish Ecumenical Council (PEC) proposed the project „Ecumenical Information Point on Migration - The Hospitable Church“. One of the objectives was that the „Message of Churches in Poland on Refugees“ should not remain only at the level of declarations but should find a practical dimension in ecumenical activities. The aim of the project was to support the Member Churches of the PEC in preparing people to get involved in helping migrants and refugees by motivating them and training them to provide (counselling) support to migrants and refugees. This project has been planned for 24 months and started on 1 November 2017. Its concept included 5 elements: annual countrywide consultations, regional consultations in agreement with PEC branches, training for multipliers, information meetings in churches and an information desk at the headquarters of PEC.

Three national consultations were planned: to launch, provide a mid-term summary and evaluate the project. The project started with a diaconal consultation of the Polish Ecumenical Council (PEC) in Łódź between 15 and 16 November 2017 co-organised by the PEC Diaconal Commission. The second element are the regional consultations organised in agreement with the branches of the PEC. This had been planned to be an opportunity for representatives of Member Churches associated in PEC branches to meet with local structures dealing with refugees and migrants, NGOs and other persons interested and involved in helping migrants and refugees. The third element is training. The idea was to prepare in each of the Member Churches the so-called multipliers of the engagement for refugees. A special training in interpersonal and communication skills and intercultural and interreligious competences based on the standards of the Society of Counselling and Pastoral Psychology in Poland (which correspond to the American and German standards of education in clinical pastoral care) has been prepared. The multipliers could be clergy, lay workers and volunteers. They could be people already involved in helping migrants and refugees or people who intend to be engaged. The fourth element is related to the need to talk to parishioners about flight and migration. This element concerns information meetings in the framework of conferences, conventions and other major events in PEC Member Churches, e.g., seminars, lectures, workshops or information desks.

An information desk has been set up in the headquarters of the Polish Ecumenical Council in order to:

- inform members of Churches about institutions and organisations that help refugees and migrants,
- give volunteers the opportunity to get involved in projects, and
- support the development of new projects for refugees and migrants.

Member Churches of the Polish Ecumenical Council experience migrants in different ways. Most of them mainly encounter economic migrants. The largest group of migrants have contact with the Orthodox Church. There is a visible increase in the number of participants in the Holy Liturgy, especially during holidays. A large group of migrants are also associated with the Baptist Church. Within the Church, services are held in Russian. The first Russian-speaking congregations have also been established. Services in Russian are also occasionally held in the Methodist Church in Poland.

11 J. Samiec, *List pasterski Biskupa Kościoła. Doświadczajmy mocy modlitwy* [in:] http://luteranie.pl/nawosci/list_pasterski_biskupa_kosciola,2755.html, 30 April 2015, published on 4 November 2019.

12 J. Samiec, *Otwórzmy serca dla uchodźców. List pasterski Biskupa Kościoła* [in:] http://luteranie.pl/nawosci/otworzmy_serca_dla_uchodzcow,3175.html, 9 September 2015, published on 4 November 2019.

13 G. Giemza, *Polska Rada Ekumeniczna wobec aktualnego kryzysu migracyjnego* [in:] Z. Glaeser, G. Giemza (ed.), Swój i obcy w kontekście współczesnego kryzysu migracyjnego. Doświadczenia i zadania Kościołów i społeczeństwa, Warto 2017, p. 34-36.

14 *Polskie Kościoły wzywają do pomocy uchodźcom* [in:] „Polska Rada Ekumeniczna“, <https://ekumenia.pl/aktualnosc/polskiekościoły-wzywają-do-pomocy-uchodźcom/>, 30 June 2016, published on 18 December 2019.

Several families from Syria found help in the Evangelical-Augsburg Church. Member Churches of the Polish Ecumenical Council try to respond to the needs of migrants they have noticed. It is, for example, a matter of learning the Polish language. They offered courses run by volunteers, but these ended quickly due to the absence of participants.

In 2015, the Roman Catholic Church in Poland took steps to prepare itself to receive relocated refugees in cooperation with the authorities. On 5 September 2015, President of the Polish Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki appealed: "It is necessary that each parish prepare a place for people who are being persecuted and who will come here, expecting a helping hand and a level of fraternity that they do not find elsewhere!"¹⁵ Another prominent figure of the Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Krzysztof Zadarko (President of the Polish Bishops' Council for Migration), in an interview with the Catholic Information Agency, explained how the reception process would proceed. He also expressed the opinion that Poland is able to receive about 30,000 refugees.¹⁶ In 2016, Caritas Polska came forward with two initiatives. The first one was the „New Home - Poland“ project. Under the project, refugees could count on co-financing of flat rental, kindergarten fees, purchase of medicines, textbooks, school kits and children's participation in integration camps. The second initiative were humanitarian corridors, the aim of which was to receive small, selected groups of victims of armed conflicts for specialist treatment.¹⁷ However, they have not been implemented yet, as this idea has been negatively received by the government, which believes that assistance - including medical assistance - should be provided to victims of conflicts on the ground, in their home countries.¹⁸

Helping refugees „on the ground in their home countries“ is one of the political priorities of the current government. The intention is to create conditions that would encourage refugees to stay in their country. At one of the briefings, the Minister of Humanitarian Aid, Beata Kempa, justifying the Polish government's opposition to the forced relocation of refugees, said: "It is justified by the policy of helping on the ground, but also helping those countries that are facing refugee problems, such as Lebanon, Greece, Jordan and Uganda"¹⁹. The Polish section of the Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church „Aid to the Church in Need“, which deals with helping persecuted Christians, is very much in line with this policy of the Polish government.²⁰

An example of an initiative supporting refugees is the activity of the Jesuit Social Centre in Action in Warsaw, which supports refugees through material aid, legal aid and teaching of the Polish language.²¹

Conclusion

Having analysed the approach to migration in Poland, a certain dissonance should be noted. On the one hand, Poles consider themselves to be open to others and very hospitable, on the other hand, the approach to strangers can be very reserved. When the migration crisis started, Poland got involved in solving it. The government of that time declared that they would accept refugees relocated from countries such as Greece. Churches also started to talk about such a need and prepare themselves to receive refugees. However, after the parliamentary elections on 25th October 2015 and the rise to power of the then opposition, the refugee policy has also changed. There was opposition to the relocation of refugees. In the meantime, more and more economic immigrants are coming to Poland, who are welcomed and expected. They are somehow filling the gap in the Polish labour market which

was created in connection with the emigration of Poles to other European Union countries. On the other hand, in 2017, about 2,540,000 Poles temporarily stayed outside of Poland.²²

The Churches in Poland tried to respond to the emerging migration crisis, among other things, they issued the „Message of the Churches in Poland on refugees“ and prepared for the arrival of more refugees to Poland. However, advocacy efforts for refugees had little impact on government decisions. The influx of economic migrants from Ukraine and Belarus is of greater importance for the life of the churches. There is a visible increase in the participation of migrants in the religious life of the Orthodox Church and the Baptist Church. Due to the expected maintenance of the level of economic migration to Poland from the countries of Eastern Europe, the Churches should create conditions for their integration into Polish society. This may be a special role for minority churches, which in the past were treated as „not ours“ (not Polish) by the Roman Catholic majority. This stereotype is broken by minority churches, although still often present.

Regardless of the current government policy, the churches should also prepare to open up to refugees so that they can also contribute to the integration of refugees. For all immigrants and refugees, the most important thing is to help them to learn the Polish language. The churches can also play an important role here.

15 mp, bd, *Kościół w Polsce niezmiennie pomaga uchodźcom* [in:] "ekai.pl", <https://ekai.pl/kosciol-w-polsce-niezmiennie-apelujeo-pomoc-i-szacunek-dla-uchodzcow/>, 19 October 2017, published on 12 December 2019.

16 mp, bd, *Kościół w Polsce niezmiennie pomaga uchodźcom* [in:] "ekai.pl", <https://ekai.pl/kosciol-w-polsce-niezmiennie-apelujeo-pomoc-i-szacunek-dla-uchodzcow/>, 19 October 2017, published on 12 December 2019.

17 mp, mz, *Kościół za organizacją korytarzy humanitarnych* [in:] "eKAI", <https://ekai.pl/kosciol-niezmiennie-opowiada-sie-zaorganizacja-korytarzy-humanitarnych/>, published on 1 October 2019.

18 A. Białous, *Ilu naprawdę jest w Polsce przybyszów z krajów muzułmańskich?* [in:] "Polonia Christiana", <https://www.pch24.pl/ilu-naprawde-jest-w-polsce-przybyszow-z-krajow-muzulmanskich-60242,i.html#ixzz60r43ZOYw>, published on 10 December 2019.

19 BK, AK, Kempa: Polski rząd pomaga uchodźcom na miejscu i w krajach, do których przybywają [in:] "TVP INFO", <https://www.tvp.info/39651065/kempa-polski-rzad-pomaga-uchodzcom-na-miejscu-i-w-krajach-do-ktorych-przybywaja>, published on 30 September 2019.

20 BK, AK, Kempa: Polski rząd pomaga uchodźcom na miejscu i w krajach, do których przybywają [na:] "TVP INFO", <https://www.tvp.info/39651065/kempa-polski-rzad-pomaga-uchodzcom-na-miejscu-i-w-krajach-do-ktorych-przybywaja>, published on 30 September 2019.

21 Uchodźcy [in:] "wakcji.org", <https://www.wakcji.org/uchodzcy/>, published on 10 January 2020.

22 *Ilu Polaków przebywa na emigracji? GUS: Ich liczba wzrosła [NAJNOWSZE DANE]* [in:] "forsal.pl", <https://forsal.pl/artykuly/1355113,ilu-polakow-przebywa-na-emigracji-gus-ich-liczba-wzrosła-najnowsze-dane.html>, 19 November 2018, published on 9 January 2020.

Ana Bu

Ana Bu (Bú Anna), born in 1946 in Pančevo (Serbia) in an internment camp for ethnic Germans in the aftermath of WWII. She is of Hungarian and German descent, grew up in the town of Zrenjanin, studied civil engineering but graduated from the German Department at the university in Novi Sad, where she has lived since 1967. In 1993 she joined the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization (EHO) and worked there for the next 20 years to provide humanitarian and development aid to victims of war, refugees displaced persons and other marginalised groups, regardless of their religious affiliation or ethnicity. She is a licensed trainer and has 25 years of experience as researcher, consultant, evaluator and trainer.

She is one of the 1000 peace women nominated by Swiss peace for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005 and winner of the Annual award of the Government of Vojvodina in the area of gender equality.



1. General situation in Serbia related to migration

Serbia has defined accession to the European Union as its strategic political orientation. This also includes the adoption of European Union values and standards in the field of migration and mobility. During the last two decades, the Republic of Serbia (RS) has adopted relevant laws and strategies and established mechanisms, therefore it may be concluded that the normative and institutional framework for migration monitoring and management is complete, that is, developed in line with the valid European and global standards. “However, it seems that Serbia still lacks a clear policy on an integrated approach to migration, i.e. that it lacks a comprehensive well-ordered system comprising a migration policy and planned organized management of migration flows. An integrated approach entails not only the control of the entry and stay of aliens within the state borders, but also adequate **statistical and empirical monitoring of external and internal flows** as well as the implementation of activities encouraging regular and discouraging irregular migration. Consequently, Serbia lacks a nationwide operational system for registering, processing, disseminating and communicating data in all stages of the migration cycle, from the moment a person enters the country, his/her movement through it, until s/he leaves it”.¹

Therefore, it is **difficult to find uniform statistical data on migration** – they differ from organisation to organisation.

The Republic of Serbia in the past three decades has faced stormy and turbulent migration flows². The arrival of refugees from the former Yugoslavia and internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo along with the departure of a large number of citizens who emigrated to the countries of Western Europe and North America were the trends of the nineties. In past few years, Serbia has also faced asylum seekers from countries in Asia and Africa, illegal migrants and returnees under the Readmission Agreement. All these years the trend of the depopulation of rural areas has continued.

¹ <https://serbia.iom.int/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Study%20on%20external%20and%20internal%20migration%20of%20Serbia%27s%20citizens%20with%20particular%20focus%20on%20Youth.pdf>

² http://www.kirs.gov.rs/wb-page.php?kat_id=216

2. Legal and institutional framework of the RS in the field of migration management³

The RS was therefore faced with all kinds of migration: external (mostly emigration) and internal (from villages to towns); forced (refugees and internally displaced persons) and voluntary; legal and illegal, labour migration and since 2015 with migration from Asia and Africa. As a result of these different migration flows & migration types, a variety of ministries were placed in charge of the different categories of migrants which were defined by numerous strategies. Sector strategies, directly related to the groups of migrants and migration management system, are:

- The Strategy for Combating Illegal Migration in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2009-2014. („Official Gazette of RS“, No. 25/2009);
- The Strategy of Reintegration of the Returnees Based on the Readmission Agreement („RS Official Gazette“, No. 15/2009);
- Strategy for Integrated Border Management in the Republic of Serbia („RS Official Gazette“, No. 11/2006);
- Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking in the Republic of Serbia („RS Official Gazette“, No. 111/2006);
- Sustainable return and subsidence Strategy („RS Official Gazette“, No. 32/2010).

A lack of coordination⁴ among ministries and institutions has been noticed in the migration management system, and since it was necessary to intensify the harmonization of national migration policies with EU regulations and policies, it was decided to develop an umbrella strategy to integrate policies and improve the existing framework for migration management. The Migration Management Strategy („RS Official Gazette“, No. 59/09), adopted on 23rd of July 2009., foresaw the establishment and implementation of mechanisms for comprehensive and continuous monitoring of migration flows into the Republic of Serbia, the completion of the strategic, legal and institutional framework for joint migration management and creation of conditions for integration and social inclusion of migrants.

3. Current statistics of migration

3.1. External migration (out-migration)

According to a recent OECD report⁵, people are emigrating from Serbia at a galloping rate. Out of 50 countries covered by the report, Serbia occupies 31st place in terms of countries with the highest emigration rate.

Serbia is a traditional emigration area⁶ and is still considered a predominantly emigration area, when its own nationals are the issue in question, although immigration and transit flows have also been registered in its territory, just as in the entire Western Balkans. The educational and economic features of external migrants have changed over time, in parallel with the labour market demands in developed economies.

Austria is the country of destination of most Serbian emigrants today, followed by Germany. According to the 2011 Census, 313,411 people were registered as working/living abroad, while, according to the 2013 Migration Profile data, 233,452 nationals of Serbia were registered in the European Union (EU) member-states.

However, the data collated by the OECD⁷, which is based on the data compiled by the countries that take in economic migrants, shows that there are 598,200 Serbian citizens (ages 15 and over) living

³ http://www.kirs.gov.rs/media/uploads/Migracije/Publikacije/Eng/Review_of_Legal_and_Institutional_Framework_of_the_Republic_of_Serbia_in_the_Field_of_Migration_Management.pdf

⁴ http://www.kirs.gov.rs/wb-page.php?kat_id=216

⁵ <https://www.serbianmonitor.com/en/serbia-31st-the-world-migration/>

⁶ <https://serbia.iom.int/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Study%20on%20external%20and%20internal%20migration%20of%20Serbia%27s%20citizens%20with%20particular%20focus%20on%20Youth.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.serbianmonitor.com/en/serbia-31st-the-world-migration/>

abroad. According to the OECD, the average number of Serbian citizens that left the country each year to live in OECD countries during the period from 2005 to 2014 was 31,000. In 2014, a total of 57,000 people emigrated from Serbia, while, in 2015, this number reached a record-breaking 60,000.

The negative migration balance accounted for 15.3% of Serbia's overall depopulation in the last inter-census period (2002–2011). Younger citizens, in the 30–39 categories, account for most of the emigrants; most of them are men. When viewed by region and level of education, the highly educated population of Belgrade and Vojvodina regions (Northern Serbia) account for most of the emigrants, while, on the other hand, the population with incomplete or primary education is out-migrating from the south of the country. Unemployment and poor economic living conditions are the main motivations prompting them to think of leaving Serbia. "Although we are living in a talent hunt era, in which developed countries are designing state policies for attracting highly educated professionals from semi-developed and undeveloped countries, most of Serbia's potential migrants have secondary education, therefore they clearly expect exclusively economic benefits from emigration."⁸

3.2. Internal migration⁹ (in-migration)

Internal migration in Serbia is characterized by several adverse tendencies: spatial concentration of the population in large urban agglomerations and the predominance of local relocation within the same area or municipality. This, along with the long-term low fertility rates, exacerbates the aging of the population and depopulation, which is particularly pronounced in the southern and eastern regions of the country. The analysis of the total migrant population by place of in-migration shows that nearly **80% of the in-migrants are from Serbia and around 20% from other countries**. Most internal migration has been registered in the Belgrade and Vojvodina regions. Just as in the case of external migration, the greater chance of finding a job and expectations of better living standards, as well as of a better quality of life, are the main motivations, the so-called pull factors. As opposed to external migration, where men account for most of the potential migrants, many more women than men are thinking of moving that would not entail leaving the country. As far as educational levels are concerned, the results are similar as those regarding potential external migrants: most potential migrants have completed secondary school. Individuals with a college education have either settled down in their places of residence and are satisfied with their living standards or had not even returned to their places of origin after graduation. Only a very small number of respondents said they would move to the countryside. Nearly all of them are at the end of their working life and plan on moving back when they retire to the villages where they were born and grew up. The percentage of respondents planning on leaving the cities to live in the countryside because they want to live a healthier and calmer life is negligible. In the mobility domain, the number of internal migrants is greatly exceeded by the growing number of daily commuters, many more of them are workers than are pupils/students. This particular type of migration strategy of individuals, families and households is generally on the rise in Serbia, just as in the rest of the world.

3.3. Refugees from former Yugoslav Republics¹⁰

Upon the cessation of armed conflict in Ex-Yugoslavia and the initiation of the process of normalisation in the region, the UNHCR registered 537,937 refugees and 79,791 war-affected persons. According to the estimates of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration Republic of Serbia (KIRS), around 69,500 people returned to Croatia and about 79,000 returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina and other former Yugoslav republics from the Republic of Serbia. To third countries, around 46,000 people returned. It is estimated that about 40,000 people died in the meantime and the rest **integrated locally**. The current number of **refugees** in the Republic of Serbia is **27,802 persons** (19,038 from the Republic of Croatia and 8,764 from Bosnia and Herzegovina).

8 Ibid

9 <https://serbia.iom.int/sites/default/files/publications/documents/Study%20on%20external%20and%20internal%20migration%20of%20Serbia%27s%20citizens%20with%20particular%20focus%20on%20Youth.pdf>

10 http://www.kirs.gov.rs/wb-page.php?kat_id=190

3.4. Internally displaced persons (IDPs)¹¹

In March 2000, in collaboration with UNHCR, KIRS organised the registration of internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija, when 187,129 people were registered. In the period between 2000 and 2005, there were more than 20,000 newcomers from Kosovo, so at the end of 2005, the number of internally displaced persons in Serbia without Kosovo and Metohija was 209,021. Currently, this number is **201,047 persons**.

3.5. Returnees under the Readmission Agreements

"Returnees on the basis of readmission agreement are persons who have been returned to the territory of the RS for not having had fulfilled the conditions for the entry to and residence in the territory of the country with which the RS signed the Readmission Agreement."¹²

Prevention of illegal migration and the acceptance and integration of returnees under the Readmission Agreement were one of the conditions of putting the Republic of Serbia on the white Schengen list.¹³ In order to fulfil this obligation, Serbia adopted the Strategy for Reintegration of Returnees according to the Readmission Agreement, in 2009. There is no exact data on the total number of Returnees under this Agreement, as they are registered only at the Readmission office located at the Nikola Tesla/ Belgrade airport (although according to the Strategy they should also be registered by the local Migration Councils).

"In 2011, 5150 returnees on the basis of the Readmission Agreement were returned to Serbia from the countries of Western Europe. In 2012, the totals of 1514 returnees were returned through the Readmission Office located at Nikola Tesla airport."¹⁴ Here are the latest statistics on returnees given by KIRS and IOM in the publication "Migration Profile of the Republic of Serbia for 2017"¹⁵:

According to the records of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, there were 3,458 readmission requests received in 2017, out of which 2,725 requests were approved, and in this period 3,933 Serbian citizens returned. The highest number of returnees registered with the Readmission Office at the Nikola Tesla Airport came from Germany (93%), followed by Sweden (1.75%). In 2017, the share of **Roma**¹⁶ in the total number of returnees under Readmission Agreements registered by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration **was 76%**.¹⁷

3.6. Refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers arrived since 2015

In March 2019¹⁸ Serbia hosted around 4,200 refugees and migrants who arrived during the European Refugee Situation. Additionally, there are over 26,500 refugees from former Yugoslav Republics (who arrived between 1991-1995) and 199,500 IDPs from the ex- Yugoslavia region (mainly Kosovo) and some 2,100 persons at risk of statelessness. The total number of the **migrant population of concern is 232,391**. Persons in need of international protection amongst newly arriving third country nationals (over 17,200 during the last twelve months) are supported in requesting and being granted asylum and local integration. Most displaced from the region have found solutions, while the actual cases and the threat of statelessness have been reduced.¹⁹

According to the UNHCR and partners surveyed in August 2019, **3,673** newly arriving asylumseekers and migrants were recorded, and this was the highest number of new arrivals in a single month since February 2016. 37% of these were nationals of Pakistan, 34% Afghanistan, 9% Iraq, 6% Bangladesh

11 http://www.kirs.gov.rs/wb-page.php?kat_id=199

12 http://www.kirs.gov.rs/media/uploads/Migracije/Publikacije/Eng/Migration_Management_in_the_Republic_of_Serbia.pdf

13 http://www.kirs.gov.rs/wb-page.php?kat_id=219

14 http://www.kirs.gov.rs/media/uploads/Migracije/Publikacije/Eng/Migration_Management_in_the_Republic_of_Serbia.pdf

15 http://www.kirs.gov.rs/media/uploads/Migracije/Publikacije/Eng/Migration_Management_in_the_Republic_of_Serbia.pdf

16 Romani people, or Roma, are the third largest ethnic group in Serbia, numbering 147,604 (2.1%) according to the 2011 census. Roma are internally displaced from Kosovo after 1999. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romani_people_in_Serbia

17 http://www.kirs.gov.rs/media/uploads/Migracije/Publikacije/Eng/Migration_Management_in_the_Republic_of_Serbia.pdf

18 <https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/unhcr-serbia-factsheet-march-2019>

19 Ibid

and 3% Somalia. 80% were adult men, 4% adult women and 16% children, including 314 UASC.²⁰ 80% entered Serbia from North Macedonia, 11% from Bulgaria, and 8% from Albania. Most of them were accommodated in 16 Asylum or Reception/Transit Centres, but almost 580 were observed sleeping rough, around 350 in Belgrade City and 230 near the borders with Croatia, Hungary or Bosnia and Herzegovina²¹.

4. Citizen's attitudes towards refugees and migrants

The migrant crisis is one of the secondary problems²² in the municipalities of Serbia, which does not directly affect citizens, who are primarily concerned about unemployment and low living standards. Also, citizens do not identify themselves with the current profile of refugees, although they had previous experience from the former Yugoslavia with the refugee crisis during the '90s and internally displaced persons from Kosovo in '99 and '04. The perception of **being different** from migrants is prevalent primarily because of culture, religion and customs. The attitude towards migration, not only by the Serbian media, but of the academic and intellectual circles as well, is now ambivalent, or filled with moral panic. Public discourse is often negatively intoned ("brain drain", inflow of "unwanted" immigrants from the Third World, asylum crises in some local communities, etc.).

In addition to the widespread ambivalence on the part of citizens towards migrants, in August 2017²³ a negative tendency in their attitudes was identified, particularly in the municipalities more intensely affected by the crisis. The cause of the negative attitudes was the lack of **information, false information or fake news, nurtured by hate speech, nationalism and extremist narratives**. The perception of the situation was worse and the **social distance** higher in the municipalities with an intensive influx of migrants, as there was a fear (in rare cases justified) among citizens for their security. In addition to the prevailing negative and neutral assessments of the impact of the migrant crisis on their municipality, citizens see a positive side when it comes to retail sales, media coverage of the municipality and its image. In addition, there is an awareness of the need to help migrants, together with a willingness to personally provide assistance by donating food and equipment. On the other hand, the level of readiness for closer interaction is lower. Integration of migrants into society, immediate neighbourhood or at least the municipality, migrant children's attendance at a school or kindergarten together with local children, are far from being accepted by citizens. Acceptance only reaches the level of creating conditions for the survival of migrants and refugees – food, accommodation, health services – the expectation being that migrants will be assisted to continue their journey to more distant and prosperous countries.

Sociability, cordiality and hospitality are perceived as the still dominant features of the social character of Serbian citizens. In that sense, it is **widely believed** that, compared to other neighbouring nations and states (Croatia, Hungary), we are more sensitive to the suffering of others and more willing to help those who have suffered, and this is often associated with historical memories and/or quite recent (collective) experiences or memories of refugees and suffering.

Tolerance is another feature that people in Serbia are believed to have, but its real manifestations, viewed through the findings of this research²⁴, are rather incoherent and also quite different in various regions. Vojvodina, in this sense, may be a special case: although perceived as a multicultural environment in which the value of tolerance is traditionally nurtured, the process of acceptance of different cultural patterns and the integration of others is considered to be difficult, even impossible.

The dominant belief is that the refugees and migrants in Serbia are only 'passing through' – that Serbia is not and cannot be their ultimate destination. In this sense, there is an opinion that any attempt to 'force' people to stay in Serbia would only create problems, and that their eventual staying in Serbia, which may be caused by any kind of unfavourable circumstances, would nevertheless be only

20 UASC-Unaccompanied and Separated Children

21 <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/71304.pdf>

22 http://www.rs.undp.org/content/serbia/en/home/library/crisis_prevention_and_recovery/attitudes-to-refugee-and-migrantcrisis-in-serbia.html

23 http://www.rs.undp.org/content/serbia/en/home/library/crisis_prevention_and_recovery/attitudes-to-refugee-and-migrantcrisis-in-serbia.html

24 Ibid

temporary, and that their real destination would still be Germany (or some other developed European country). Refugees and migrants, therefore, are seen as people whose stay here is certainly temporary.

The events of 2015 have certainly led to the formation of strong stereotypes about two groups of refugees: 'Syrians' are perceived as cultured and emancipated, while 'Afghans' are seen as uncivilized, prone to theft, unhygienic habits and violence. The former group is usually associated with the idea of 'real refugees' – people who have been forced to leave their country due to war and violence, which is strongly opposed to the idea of migrants, who are perceived as those who are only searching for a better life. Although such a 'polarized' perception of refugees and migrants is still quite present, there is a clear tendency of increasingly more **negative stereotyping** of refugees and migrants, and an even wider **generalization** of negative events and behaviours associated with a certain number of refugees and migrants. This tendency is related to the belief that most of those now staying in Serbia actually belong to the category of migrants. And it is a widespread belief that migrants do not deserve compassion or the humanitarian aid which refugees receive. In addition to the stereotyped negative characteristics already mentioned, migrants are being assigned to another one: they have money, they sell humanitarian aid and they have very expensive mobile phones.

5. The work of churches/faith-based organizations (FBO) in Serbia

In order to understand the response of the churches and FBOs to migration, it is necessary to give a brief overview on the current position of religion in Serbia.

The total population of Serbia is estimated at 7.1 million and according to the 2011 census, approximately 85 percent of the population is Orthodox Christian, 5 percent Roman Catholic, 3 percent Sunni Muslim, and 1 percent Protestant. The remaining 6 percent includes Jews, Buddhists, members of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, members of other religious groups, agnostics, atheists and individuals without a declared religious affiliation. Orthodox Christians are members of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), ethnic Hungarians and Croats are predominantly Catholics, residing in Vojvodina Province, Muslims include Bosnian's (Slavic Muslims) in the southwest Sandzak region, ethnic Albanians in the south, and Roma located throughout the country.

The Serbian constitution forbids the establishment of a state religion, guarantees equality for religious groups, and calls for separation of religion and state. It states that churches and religious communities shall be free to organise their internal structure, perform religious rites in public, and establish and manage religious schools and social and charity institutions in accordance with the law. The law provides for religious education in public schools, but only for the seven traditional groups. Students in primary and secondary schools must attend either a religious or a civic education class.

The Serbian law²⁵ grants special treatment to seven religious groups the government defines as "traditional." These are the SOC, Roman Catholic Church, Slovak Evangelical Church, Reformed Christian Church, Evangelical Christian Church, Islamic community, and Jewish community. Beside them, there are 22 registered "non-traditional" religious groups in the country. The constitution prohibits religious discrimination or incitement of religious hatred, calls upon the government to promote religious diversity and tolerance.

Some religious groups and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) criticised the government for granting special privileges to the seven religious groups it defined as "traditional" and protested against difficulties in the registration process, without which religious groups lacked property rights, tax exemptions, pensions for the priests and legal status. The latest International Religious Freedom report (2018)²⁶ stated that minority religious groups feel that the law governing traditional and non-traditional religious groups is biased and that the laws governing churches and religious communities were in conflict with constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion and equal status among religious groups.

"Serbian media have reported public discrimination against Protestant groups at the time of the October celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation and articles critical of non-traditional religious groups have continued to appear in the press and on web portals, which also

25 Act on Churches and Religious Communities (2006) at <https://www.legislationline.org/documents>

26 <https://rs.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/235/Serbia-2018-International-Religious-Freedom-Report.pdf>

describe some religious groups as “sects.”²⁷ Anti-Semitic literature was available in some book stores, and the Jewish community reported incidents of anti-Semitic comments in online media”, the above report said.

5.1. The work of churches/ FBOs in Serbia related to migration

Migration contributed to the growth and visibility of both the majority church – the Serbian Orthodox Church and the minority Churches in Serbia (the Protestant Churches, the Roman Catholic Church etc.) and to the development of their humanitarian organisations. Thanks to their humanitarian & emergency assistance to migrants, since the nineties they have become more active and visible during the last three decades.

Their relief work was sometimes carried out directly through the support of the congregations to their migrant – neighbours or to nearby refugee camps and asylum centres. However, more often it was carried out through their own humanitarian organisations, established mainly in the nineties, or through joint initiatives, like the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization.

FBOs are doing this relief work by using their own resources (volunteers, staff, premises, equipment, food and other relief goods donated by local population) and the financial and other support of their partners (ECHO, UNHCR, CWS, IOCC, LWF and other ACT member churches and FBOs).

Organised activities of Churches & FBOs in Serbia were also a part of the response to the migrant crisis in 2015, which also hit Serbia as one of the countries on the so called “Balkan Route.” They offered, mainly with the support of international donors, different solidarity/humanitarian services to migrants - food and hygiene assistance, housing, education, legal and psychosocial counselling, language courses. By doing this, they responded to the most urgent humanitarian needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in most of the reception centres in Serbia.

Their response focuses on the overall well-being of refugee and migrant population by providing emergency assistance and services, which are not covered by KIRS, UNHCR, ECHO and other international relief organizations. All the activities of FBOs in Serbia are carried out with approval of and in cooperation with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia and they are in line with the government policy and legislation related to migration.

FBOs in Serbia are applying the Sphere- humanitarian standards in their work and the staff of the major FBOs in Serbia attended the Sphere trainings.

As church-based organisations, the FBOs follow the policy of the Churches in Serbia - they rarely raise their voices when the human rights of refugees or migrants are violated. Usually they don't interfere in the work of governmental organisations and don't initiate any advocacy work on changes in migration policy or legislation, or against the violation of human rights or cases of discrimination.

The next section gives a brief overview of the work of the most active and visible FBOs in Serbia.

5.1.1. Philanthropy (Čovekoljublje)²⁸ is the charitable fund of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its basic activity is humanitarian assistance and emergency response. In summer 2015, due to the influx of people from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Philanthropy, in cooperation with its international partners (ECHO, UNHCR), initiated a large-scale assistance operation and provided food, water, hygienic items, clothing, and cash assistance, as they were needed, to refugees and asylum seekers. Working closely with national and local authorities, mainly in Central and South Serbia, as well as with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, through its local offices in Serbia, Philanthropy provides continual assistance to migrants residing in public asylum and reception centres in Serbia, as well as in shelters for victims of human trafficking and shelters for accommodation of unaccompanied minors. In some of the reception centres, they offer Serbian language courses, aimed at improving the integration and communication skills of migrants.

Philanthropy and EHO are member organizations of ACT Alliance and Eurodiaconia.

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ <https://www.covekoljublje.org/>

5.1.2. The Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization (EHO)²⁹ from Novi Sad is an interchurch organisation, founded in 1993 on the initiative of the World Council of Churches, with the aim of assisting the refugees from the Ex-Yugoslav Republics and the impoverished local population. Since then, EHO evolved from a humanitarian to a development organization, advocating for rights, social inclusion of vulnerable groups and offering innovative services to them.

The founders of EHO are representatives of the following five minority churches: Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia; Reformed Christian Church in Serbia; Evangelical Methodist Church in Serbia; Greek Catholic Church in Vojvodina and the Evangelical Christian Church (Augsburg Confession) of Serbia-Vojvodina.

As previously mentioned, the Republic of Serbia was faced with all kinds of migrations: external (mostly emigration) and internal (from villages to towns); forced (refugees and internally displaced persons) and voluntary; legal and illegal, labour migrations and since 2015 with migrations from Asia and Africa.

- EHO has supported most of these groups of migrants, except the huge number of young people **emigrating from Serbia** (external or out- migration, see 3.1). Two interviews in the present research report, those with Dragica and Katarina, describe and explain this type of migration. Neither of them got support from EHO or any other religious organisation for leaving Serbia or settling down in another country (Germany and Brazil in their case).
- The second group of migrants (see 3.2), the so-called **internal migrants** are still out of the attention of EHO and other organizations, or churches, although the growing population in large cities like Novi Sad and Belgrade reveal that internal migration is an ongoing process - Serbs from Kosovo and Bosnia are moving to Serbia for reasons of safety or economic betterment.
- The third type of migrants (see 3.3) - **the refugees from Ex-Yugoslav Republics** were the focus of EHO activities in the nineties. Many emergency - and later development projects – soup kitchens, distribution of food and hygiene parcels, clothes and footwear, baby food, psychosocial counselling, medical assistance, mobile medical teams, support for return of refugees to Croatia and Bosnia etc. Two interviews in this research report are with refugees supported by EHO: with Sara from Croatia, a member of the EHO mobile medical team and Vladislava, a refugee from Sarajevo, later a volunteer in EHO projects assisting migrants.
- The **fourth group is of internally displaced persons – IDPs**. (see 3.4) EHO supported them from the very beginning – actually from the first day of NATO bombardment in March 1999. As most of the IDPs in Novi Sad are Roma, they have been constantly supported since 1999 within all projects of the EHO Roma Resource Centre and other projects, by providing legal, educational, economic, housing and integration support. The interview with Silvia in this research report, Roma activists are describing the support of EHO to the IDPs and other Roma. Silvia was forced to leave Serbia- so she belongs also to the group of external migrants.
- It is difficult sometimes to make a difference between IDPs from Kosovo and the Returnees under the readmission agreement (see 3.5), as both groups consist mainly of Roma. The interview with Violeta in this research report shows the typical situation of returnees under the readmission agreement, as she is also an IDP from Kosovo and the beneficiary of an EHO project supported by Diakonia Württemberg. The project is aimed at reintegrating families repatriated to Serbia from the state of Baden-Württemberg. Support for the reintegration of vulnerable families consists of the following measures and services: establishing minimum sanitary standards and improving housing conditions, integrating children into the education system and ensuring ongoing schooling, providing information, counselling and support in the issue of personal documents and in contacts with state institutions and services, economic empowerment through self-employment, small scale emergency assistance, counselling and support in pursuing options for legal migration and improving health care.

Most of the returnees and Roma are supported by the HEKS/SDC project named: “Improving living conditions for Roma and other marginalized groups, prevention of irregular migration and promotion of the reintegration of returnees to Serbia”. The project has three components: housing, education and migration and was implemented in more than 10 municipalities in Serbia.

²⁹ <http://www.ehons.org/en/projekti/humanitarni-rad/humanitarna-pomoc-za-izbeglice-i-migrante-u-srbiji>

– Several projects are supporting the **refugees and migrants in Serbia**. (see 3.6) Since 2015 EHO has provided humanitarian aid and shelter for refugees in transit through Serbia, as well as to those staying in refugee reception centres, some of them for periods of 18 months or more. Project activities, supported by UNHCR, ECHO and ACT member churches, were conducted in all reception centres in Vojvodina (Adaševci, Principovac, Šid, Kikinda, Sombor, and Subotica). The principal goal of the projects was to reduce the vulnerability of refugees by providing them with humanitarian assistance in the form of personal and shared hygiene products, washing bed sheets and blankets, and renovating, equipping and maintaining the premises in which they were staying. Some of ongoing EHO projects assisting migrants are:

- Integration of migrants in the form of training for school personnel and networking of local and migrant populations in six places in Serbia.
- In the transit centre in Subotica (near the Hungarian border), EHO set up the Children's Safe Corner, aimed to provide psychosocial support, as well as to try to prevent secondary trauma among this sensitive group of children through a variety of creative and educational activities.

The focus group discussion within this research project was held in the in the EHO Day Centre for children and women within the Reception Centre for migrants in Sombor. EHO has been present in the Centre since 2018. They have built and completely furnished the Day Centre for children and women with the help of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). This is a day centre for education and leisure-time activities for migrant women and children, with a kindergarten, living room and kitchen etc. ELCA provided the funds for running the Day Centre for three years. Two educators for the kindergarten and a teacher (and hostess of the Centre) who give additional classes to the pupils and help the women and pupils to learn the local language. They also help them to understand better their environment and current circumstances.

5.1.3. Caritas Serbia³⁰ has been present in Serbia in the socio-humanitarian field for more than 20 years.

Caritas Serbia began its operations through providing humanitarian aid in situations of crisis: during the time of the embargo and conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia, it helped refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and internally displaced persons from Kosovo, as well as the local population in need.

Today, Caritas Serbia is recognized as a provider of emergency assistance, as an advocate for mental health reform and the deinstitutionalisation process, as a promoter of social entrepreneurship and as an important player in activities aimed at raising awareness and reducing the risk of natural disasters. In September 2015, Caritas launched an urgent project to help refugees from the Middle East who has been passing through Serbia on their way to EU countries. This project is still ongoing and is reflected in the distribution of warm meals, hygiene items, laundry services, and in providing psycho-social assistance.

Major, ongoing relief activities of Caritas are:

- Food assistance for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees hosted in government reception centres in Serbia. Activities are implemented within the Consortium led by OXFAM Italia, consisting of Caritas Serbia and CARE Germany. Through this project Caritas Serbia provides safe and nutritionally healthy food, three times a day, to persons accommodated in the reception centres Obrenovac, Vranje, Bujanovac, Pirot and Bosilegrad.
- The work of the psycho-social support teams in Bujanovac, Vranje, Bogovađa and Krnjaca, animation and education activities in Principovac, as well as transport of refugees from the Reception Centre in Subotica to the Hungarian border, where they can legally apply for asylum in Hungary (also supported by Caritas Germany).

- A counselling centre in 2017 in Belgrade, which provides counselling, orientation and non-material support to returnees, regardless of whether they were asylum seekers, tolerated refugees or persons without valid residence permits in Germany or other EU countries.
- Occupational and creative activities, language lessons and animation activities for children and adults at the Krnjača Asylum Center.
- Supplementary classes for school children - lessons in mathematics, as well as learning this subject through games in the Bujanovac Reception Centre

5.1.4. ADRA³¹, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency ADRA in Serbia have been active since 1990, both in relief and development programs. By partnering with local communities, organisations and governments, ADRA Serbia is able to influence the quality of life of many people through several impact areas: response to disasters (both natural and man-made), access to education for all and economic empowerment through employment assistance. In each of them, mental health and gender equality are mainstreamed. ADRA puts a special focus on women and girls because they are the most vulnerable to the devastating effects of poverty and crisis. In line with this, ADRA organised a research named "Room for Women and Girls: Female Voices from Refugees and Migrants in Serbia"³² - it is the testimony of 91 women and girls from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran about their stay in Serbia in 2018, more precisely in the Centre for Asylum in Krnjača, Belgrade. They described how their gender affected their lives in various spheres, together with the multiple challenges they often faced. Moreover, they showed how different circumstances and roles in their lives could lead to GBV (gender-based violence). Through numerous activities, ADRA activists and volunteers provided support to these women and girls, striving to make the days spent in the Centre easier and more useful, and to have their needs recognised. The authors of the research state that one of the intentions and purpose of the research is to offer organisations (primarily those which take part in the humanitarian response to the migrant crisis) some conclusions and recommendation for better understanding the position of women and girls in a crisis situation, recognizing that gender roles and identities are the key factors that shape their experiences and that it is important to create responses to this situation.

5.1.5. "Bread of Life"³³ (BoL) from Belgrade is a Christian humanitarian organisation, founded by the Protestant Evangelical church and the Baptist Church in Belgrade in 1992 as a local non-governmental organisation. In the period from 1992-2004 BoL implemented numerous projects with the aim of helping the victims of the war (refugees, IDPs...), but today they have only development programmes, caring for the elderly and supporting the education and integration of Roma children.

Conclusion

In conclusion, considering the actual and evolving context, the churches in Central and Eastern Europe should do more to encourage, initiate and support, the work of churches and Faith Based Organisations with people on the move, and this work should be based on Christian values, rather than on the interests of their current governments and national leaders.

31 <https://adra.org.rs/?lang=en>

32 adra.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/RoomFourWomen_ENG_final-2.pdf

33 <http://www.breadoflife.org.rs/new/en/>

30 http://caritas.rs/caritase/?page_id=29

Ukraine

Kate Rebrova

Rebrova Katerina, psychologist, head of the „Volunteer Psychological Service“ project in the NGO „St. Paul’s Rehabilitation Center“. She was born in Odessa, Ukraine, in 1982. She graduated as a „Practical Psychologist“ and specialised in Art and Trauma Therapy, and has provided psychological support to families, adults and children for 20 years.

The Volunteer Psychological Service was organized in 2014 as an initiative of professionals in the field of mental health who began to provide crisis rehabilitation and support to victims of military operations in Ukraine. Within the next 6 years, we managed to make psychological assistance available for IDP families and we continue to help to solve psychological problems and adaptation.



General Situation

Employment

Ukraine is in the top 10 countries in the world, from which people are emigrating. According to the Center for Economic Strategy,¹ more than 4 million Ukrainians (other experts say almost 5 million) are labour migrants, which means that they go abroad to work (this represents about 16% of the able-bodied population). According to the conclusion of the International Organization for Migration, from the point of view of international human trafficking, Ukraine is a source of migrant flows and a transit route and destination at the same time. About 2.6-2.7 million Ukrainians live at this time abroad.² The state does not know exactly how many Ukrainian citizens left the country permanently, and many continue to work abroad, periodically returning to Ukraine. Migration between neighbouring countries is mainly for a short period (up to 3 months) is also a factor. For example, the number of Ukrainians living in Poland is reflected in the issued residence permits. In recent years, their number has grown to almost 200,000 people. According to estimates of the National Bank of Ukraine, in 2019, about 800,000 - 900,000 Ukrainians simultaneously work on the Polish labour market, among of whom 30% are there on a permanent basis, and the rest are continually replaced throughout the year, which in total gives a figure of more than 1.5 million workers. There is an opinion that Ukraine is losing qualified personnel due to the fact that people from the engineering professions, and the medical sector, who were trained in Ukraine, including with state support and then work abroad. About 60% of Ukrainian workers employed abroad are working and living informally. Last year, however only 12,150 people used the services of legal practices. Almost 90% of the people who tried to go abroad, relied on acquaintances or unlicensed agencies. In 2018, in the Czech Republic, 80% of all informal workers were Ukrainians. For the most part, Ukrainians, that are not legally employed abroad are not protected. People are often injured and become victims of violence. At the same time, employers are not in a hurry to help because they are afraid of fines and punishment for using immigrant labour without legal registration.

¹ <https://ces.org.ua/>

² <http://ces.org.ua/skilky-ukraintiv-poikhalo-za-kordon-i-shcho-z-tsym-robyty-derzhavi/>

Internally Displaced Persons

In Ukraine, as of May 2019, there were 1,377,117 internally displaced persons. According to the Ministry of Social Policy, the largest number of internally displaced people live in the Donetsk region – 486,704 people, Lugansk region – 270,376, and also in Kiev – 146,957 people. In April, the state provided 251,900,000 UAH (about 7,480,000€) for material assistance to immigrants to cover living expenses and the payment for housing and communal services. Moreover, more than 51% of IDP rated their financial situation: „money is enough only for food“ or „forced to save even on food.“

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The migration situation of refugees and those who seek shelter (foreign nationals, who come to Ukraine for protection) remains stable.

The risks and issues are outlined in UNHCR Ukraine Participatory Assessment Report 2019:

1. A long and complicated state procedure for determining the status / imperfection of the procedure (access to the procedure, problems with translators).
2. Status denials and indeterminacy.
3. Worsening access to medical services.
4. Difficulties in the field of employment and self-reliance.
5. Service providers (hospitals, banks) and employers have not enough knowledge about this category of persons and their status.
6. Persons with additional protection do not have access to citizenship.³

Recent Developments

Labour Migration

According to a sociological study on labour migration by the Research & Branding Group:⁴

- 3% of Ukrainians plan to work abroad and do not want to return.
- 9% - of Ukrainian citizens want to go to work and return.
- 1.3 million people want to leave the country in search of a better fate and never come back, and 3.8 million consider labour migration as a way to earn money.

In general, 5.1 million Ukrainians want to go abroad to earn money.

- 80.2% of all respondents do not under any circumstances wish to go abroad to work.
- 9.2% of people, or 3.9 million, left the country for relatives or friends.

There is the opinion that the abolition of visas has pushed Ukrainians towards emigration. On the one hand – the national economic situation is not good and there is a lack of reforms in the country whilst on the other hand - labour migrants from Ukraine face a very serious struggle in the face of the governments of the EU member states. These factors have overlapped, but still today we are talking about a certain increase in labour migration. The number of illegal migrants from Ukraine to the EU countries has increased by 11%.

Trafficking of People

Furthermore, the statistics show that the number of people affected by human trafficking is steadily increasing. According to IOM Ukraine, in 2017 it was revealed that there were 1259 victims of human

³ UNHCR “Ukraine Participatory Assessment Report 2019” Accessed at: https://www.unhcr.org/en/wpcontent/uploads/sites/38/2019/06/UNHCR_Ukraine_Participatory_Assessment_2019_FINAL

⁴ <http://rb.com.ua/blog/migracionnye-nastroenija-v-ukraine-2015-2019-gg/> The survey was conducted by the Research & Branding Group in May 2019 in 24 regions and Kiev among 2001 respondents.

trafficking, in 2018, 1265 people, of whom 490 were women and 775 men. Law enforcement agencies have been identified in criminal proceedings, in 2017 there were 367 victims from human trafficking and in 2018, 223 persons of whom 135 of them were women, 60 men and 28 children). The number of persons who have been granted the status of victims of trafficking is increasing every year - in 2017 – 198 and in 2018 - 221 (among of which 99 are women, 98 are men, 24 are children (13 boys and 11 girls). However, according to IOM Ukraine statistics, as confirmed by experts in this field, in recent years there is a clear tendency to increase the share of victims of trafficking in the proportion of men trafficked (in 2018, this figure reached 61%). Furthermore, in recent years, there has been a steady tendency to increase cases of labour exploitation (according to IOM Ukraine in 2018, this figure has already reached 91% of all cases of trafficking in human beings).⁵ The statistics from the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine differs significantly in this respect, claiming 42% of trafficked people were for labour compared with 39% for sexual exploitation. At the same time, if the majority of men face labour exploitation and women are predominantly sexually exploited and also faced mixed forms of exploitation, in 2018 this figure was 98%.

In carrying out activities to combat human trafficking there are many drawbacks, including:

- the number of victims of human trafficking identified by international organizations and the number of persons who were officially granted this status differs by almost 7 times. This may indicate insufficient efficiency of the officially responsible units.
- It is difficult for victims to prove the fact of human trafficking due to the inability to obtain the necessary supporting documents on their own.
- Insufficient financing of measures against human trafficking from the state budget. At the same time, funds from the local budgets almost insignificant.

Internally Displaced Persons

Compared to April 2018, the number of IDP decreased by 124,902 people. 15% of internally displaced persons were discriminated against, according to research by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).⁶ Internal migrants continue to face difficulties integrating into the local community. The most problematic issues are the search for housing and work, which 90% of internally displaced persons (IDP) carry out without state assistance. 37% of IDP consider the lack of their own housing their main concern.

The study “UNHCR Ukraine Participatory Assessment Report 2019” reflects the main problems of IDP:

- the most urgent problem is housing,
 - risks of forced evictions from places of compact residence,
 - permanent change of rental housing,
 - inadequate living conditions,
 - discrimination in access to administrative services, pensions, housing and employment,
 - issues of social cohesion,
 - limited participation in public affairs, including voting in local elections and single-member constituencies,
- and
- deterioration of health and psychological state.⁷

The report does not contain any comments from people regarding the impact of statements about or manifestations of nationalism and the violation of rights when opinions are polarised.

⁵ https://iom.org.ua/sites/default/files/iom-ukraine_facts-ukr_2019.pdf

⁶ Ibid

⁷ https://www.unhcr.org/en/wpcontent/uploads/sites/38/2019/06/UNHCR_Ukraine_Participatory_Assessment_2019_FINAL

Report of the NGO, ‘Rehabilitation Center of Peter and Paul’, Odessa

The war came to Ukraine in 2014. Since then, at least 1.6 million people have been forced to relocate from war-torn regions to the interior of the country.

Over five years we can talk about a large influx of people to the Odessa region at the beginning of the conflict (2014-15) with the intention to stay for a short time. Subsequent years prompted some of the people to return to the Temporarily Occupied Territories (TOT), in particular, they are talking about returning to the territories of Luhansk and Donetsk. The reasons were the lack of effective state support, especially for the vulnerable population groups; failure of self-sufficiency; lack of proper housing. Some of the people have repeatedly moved between the regions of the country in search of acceptable living conditions (including acceptable ratio of income and the costs of rent and the meeting basic needs). Statistics on such displacement cannot be provided, as the Unified IDP Database is not an effective tool to reflect such data and to enable the public to assist such people, and for the state to assess internal displacement processes and respond to challenges.

Since the appearance of the first families of immigrants from Donbas in the summer of 2014, after the outbreak of active hostilities, in our organisation, with the support of the Lutheran Church, the initiative „Volunteer Psychological Service“ was organized, in which more than 45 psychologist-volunteers took part.

The mission of the initiative was to provide crisis psychological assistance and social support for IDP families. Many of them had experienced the traumatic events. According to a survey of traumatic experience among 690 of the IDP who came to us for help - 100% experienced a change of residence and loss of property; 85% of them survived the shelling; 67% experienced a view of destroyed buildings; 128 people saw people who were wounded or killed, and 75 people lost loved ones.

During 2015-2016 The following projects were introduced and supported: “Socio-psychological rehabilitation of victims of the crisis and conflict in Ukraine”, “Volunteer Psychological Service” and “Psychological Assistance to Immigrants”.

The projects have achieved the following results in assisting IDP:

- Organised the reception of appeals through the dispatch service with an appointment to specialists, depending on the request, for individual psychological crisis assistance for example to see a psychologist, a child psychologist, a family psychotherapist or a trauma therapist.
- Individual and group psychological assistance was provided to 2748 IDP, which adds up to 4972 hours of practical work in Odessa and the Odessa region. A psychodiagnostic assessment of the condition of the applicants was carried out.
- A comprehensive programme for the integration of IDP into a new society was developed and implemented through the following activities: support groups, training, a family art club, coaching sessions, body relaxation groups, social and cultural activities (common for IDP and local residents), and classes on the socio-psychological adaptation of children and methodological tools for them.
- 316 volunteers of public organizations provide assistance to immigrants received methodological assistance.
- The experience in providing social and psychological assistance to the families of immigrants was presented at two volunteer conferences.
- From 01/08/2016 “Brot für die Welt” supported the project “Psychological assistance and rehabilitation for people who suffer from crisis and military conflict in Ukraine”:
- A psychological centre was created: an office for individual therapy and a room for group work were equipped; a clear schedule of specialists, a schedule of groups; regular visits of a mobile group of psychologists in the city and region.
- The author’s programme of psychological rehabilitation for children who are migrants from the anti-terrorist operation zone has been developed and implemented.

As a result of stabilisation of their condition, 4% of immigrants increased their social activity and our organisation became a platform for them to implement their own social projects. Even with a significant improvement in the status of migrants, 30% continue to remain in the “risk group” in relation to the socio-humanitarian and psychological crisis. Most IDP adapted, stayed in Odessa and will no longer return to their previous place of residence.

The Work of Other Organisations

To provide services more efficiently, “Rehabilitation Center of Peter and Paul” developed coordination with other public organizations and government agencies and religious communities and built-up logistics for forwarding clients. We used the “joint response protocol” when placing a woman with a child in a shelter for victims of domestic violence, referring chemically dependent clients to Christian rehabilitation institutions; the organisation of emergency crisis assistance to the families of displaced people affected by the fire in the Victoria Children’s Sanatorium together with the Ministry of Emergencies; sustainable networking, joint management and redirection of clients was organized with the Charitable Foundation “Caritas” and the Jewish community “Hesed”, as well as with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Joint events on the psychoeducation of the population were organized with Charitable Foundation “Caritas”, seminars for employees on the topic of migration with the “Hesed” community. Christmas holidays have become traditional for families of immigrants with the Protestant church. Also, various social and cultural events, holidays and creative festivals were organised in which more than 800 people took part together with other public organisations.

The NGO „Tenth of April“ organized and provided free legal assistance to IDP; supporting and developing IDP communities, refugees; respecting the principle of diversity and inclusion of all members of the community, including national minorities, such as Roma, Crimean Tatars and others. NGO „Association of Creative Intellectuals“ Assembly „, with the support of city authorities has opened a hostel for IDP families recently arrived in Odessa.

The Social Context – Nationalism, Polarisation & Discrimination

Over the past 5 years, in connection with the Russian military aggression, occupation and the crisis situation, in Ukraine there has been a wave-like growth and aggravation of nationalism and polarisation of society, and in periods of stability there is a decrease in these negative manifestations. However, individual manifestations of discrimination in society continue to exist.

Migrants see discrimination in such actions by the state as checking at the place of registration, linking social payments to the certificate of the migrant, low payments for the status of “migrant”, lack of assistance with housing, “stolen” voting rights in the elections, sharp characteristics of the Minister of Social Policy.

Through the long history Ukraine has never been a homogeneous society and now displays a variety of nations living within its’ borders. Of course, the present situation has been infused by a lot of negative influences that raised hostility within the society towards uprooted people, but still there have been many indications to the fact that many Ukrainians are positive about internally displaced persons. A recent study also showed that more than 60% do not support the idea of blocking payments for immigrants and consider it necessary to pay pensions to residents of the occupied territories.

The situation with increasing discrimination, polarisation and nationalism within society is also intensified through a split in relations between the Moscow Orthodox Church and the Kiev Patriarchate. In turn, the NGO sector implemented projects to increase social cohesion of the society, dialogue groups for overcoming the conflict, forums for the exchange of views. Although the NGO sector is also divided into polar groups of organizations.

In close cooperation between NGOs and the city government, on the basis of a competition among IDP, a social advertisement was developed and placed in August 2019 on the territory of Odessa for creating a positive image of IDP. As a result of the work were created public organizations to unite the immigrants themselves.

In Ukraine, the attitude towards migrants and immigrants is very connected with economic factors and the political situation. Also, the relocation question becomes an occasion for manipulation of public opinion from the outside.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, the situation with migration processes in Ukraine is getting worse. The military conflict and the socio-economic crisis initiated a large-scale resettlement of the population inside and outside the country. A huge number of IDP found themselves in difficult life circumstances and still need comprehensive support. There are shortcomings in the structure of support for migrants and at the legislative level, lack of funding and government attention to this problem.

The context of war and pandemic, the context of an unstable political situation create conditions of chronic stress, which quickly depletes the reserve resources of the psyche, especially of such vulnerable categories as migrants. Due to the lack of a systematic rehabilitation and integration of migrants from the state - to public organizations „offer“ a wide field of work. At the same time, public organizations are experiencing challenges related to the search for funding and support for their work. The complete absence of financial and other support from the state, the limited of international assistance makes the work of the sector of nongovernmental organizations rather unpredictable and dependant on external factors.

part two

STORIES OF
“PEOPLE ON THE MOVE”

Dr. Ulla Siirto



Introduction

It was decided to make the first phase of data collection among “people on the move”. Every practitioner-researcher in each country got a same interview framework. The participants had the possibility to choose focus group or individual interviews according to that which was best for their situation. The thematic questions were detailed in order to help the practitioner-researchers to ask about different aspects of the phenomenon. If issues became visible earlier than they were listed in the framework, it was easy to skip them later.

About the data gathering

Data was gathered from six countries, Armenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Serbia, and Ukraine. The practitioner-researcher of the specific country contacted to “people on the move” and in some cases, they used other people in the process of interviewing, for instance in interpretation or translation. Altogether in the research process there were five focus group interviews and 11 individual interviews. In total, 50 people were interviewed. Most of them were refugees (38) or IDPs (3). Others were emigrants, students and one was a returnee. In all the interviews, it was not possible to ask every question because of time limitations. Some questions were so painful that people were crying or were not able to say anything. Some interviews were made by Skype or email, but most were carried out face-to-face.

Analysing the Stories of the “People on the Move”

“People on the move” – Reasons to leave one’s own country

Those who have emigrated to another country have mostly gone there because of better life. The low salary or no working opportunities were the main reasons for leaving a country and emigrating to another. Also, there were students who immigrate into a new country for a while to study a new profession.

Conflicts, wars, and unstableness of the country were reasons of moving inside the country as an IDP or moving or escaping from the country of the origin. There were on the other hand people who have had to leave their own home region for 20 year ago (Yugoslavia collapse), or later because of the war in the Eastern Ukraine. The most of interviewees were refugees since of recent conflicts in the Middle East, but also in other parts of the world. Refugees and asylum seekers had different kinds of stories of the reasons of leaving. Some of them had suffered a lot of the on-going war or long-term discrimination and hatred because of their way of believing, ethnicity or political opinion. Some people had only some minutes to leave and were not able to take anything with. In some countries young men were sent out of the war for quarantining incomes in future for the whole family.

On the way to a new country

The route to the new country was clear for those who just wanted to seek better life from another country, even though also there had been many mentally demanding processes behind: leaving a family, learning a new language, culture and society. But they had been willing to pay this price.

For those who had to escape, the route was more complicated. Some people had a long route to the country where they now are. It might had taken many months or even years. Some people had returned home and left again. Many of the interviewees were not willing to speak about all the difficulties they had on the way, but underline that it was complicated. Many of them spoke about smugglers, who were the only ones giving any information about leaving and new possibilities -no other information was available. Smugglers were there to benefit of people’s situation, and those who had escaped from their countries had payed thousands of euro for their journey. Many of them felt that they were cheated by smugglers and even robbed and left alone without money and knowledge how to go further. Especially there were a lot of smugglers in Turkey. Normally people had to use services of several smugglers on their way to the safe place. However, there was a story about a smuggler, who helped altruistic.

In some cases, there were also programmes especially for Christians living in Muslim countries in the Middle East for organising transportation out of the country. For instance, in Armenia (Armenian Apostolic Church Diocese in Syria) and Czech Republic (Generation 21) there were programmes for organising transportation from the country of origin to Armenia and Czech Republic. These programmes were only for Christians.

In many cases leaving from the country had to done secretly or in very short time. It was not possible to tell the family, relatives, friends, or neighbours, that a person or the family had to leave, since talking about leaving would risk the life of those who left. This concerns both those who left their country in the Middle East, and those who left Luhansk, a part of Ukraine which was occupied by Russia. The lack of communication continues also in the new country or region in order to protect family members who stayed behind.

Challenges of Leaving

Leaving one’s own country also means family breakups, since some family members were not willing to escape, or they had to stay to work or take care of the property of the family in the home country. When all the family members escaped, was it easier since the family was together. However,

sometimes it happened that people got separated on the way. Then it was very worrying until people got to know about each other. If they happened to escape to different countries, they had to apply asylum from there, although Dublin agreement gives a possibility for families to be reunited under one country's asylum procedure.

Many refugees wanted to go to the Western Europe but are now stuck in the Eastern Europe. There are those who have already been in some western country, but returned, due to the Dublin agreement. They have already the experience of living as an asylum seeker in other European country and can compare the current situation to an earlier one. Besides, there are people, who are now living in non-European Union country and have tried to get to the West but been roughly pushed back from European Union (E.U.) border.

It is also possible that a person or family living in an Eastern European country may decide to go to a Western European country and apply for asylum or as they say, they "went to asylum". There is no reason such as persecution behind the decision, but it depends on discrimination and poor living conditions. These people can "go to asylum" for different country regularly and go through the asylum procedure. These people are mainly Roma people. After "being in asylum" they have experiences from different countries and of their services for asylum seekers.

When a family member has moved out to work abroad, children often are left under grandparents' or other relatives' custody. The children are missing their parents a great deal. When the grandparents become too old, as one interviewee explained, the children moved to his parents in the country where they already were.

Challenges of a new environment

The life of those who had voluntarily moved to another country seeking work or a better life was more positive than those who had escaped involuntarily. Even though emigrants also felt different kind of problems with integrating into a new culture and adapting a new language, they had made their own choice. Through their work and everyday life, they started to build up new relationships in a new country.

For those who had escaped internally or internationally the situation was more complicated. One of the biggest problems was also a new, different culture and society and especially a difficult new language. The language was often needed for receiving a job. It also limited ability to make friends with neighbours. Even though an asylum procedure or programmes for internally displaced persons is in place, they provided very minimal support and that not for everyone. Those interviewed described living in the new place as "fighting" or "trying to survive". However, for some the first reaction was of relief and happiness, since they had managed to escape from the war. Mutual help among Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees themselves was said to be important.

In every country there is a system for receiving refugees, but the system is often narrowly defined and is not able to help everyone. Those interviewed felt that there were negative attitudes among the authorities towards refugees from the Middle East or refugees from Muslim countries in general. Besides, some people described how the authorities are corrupt, and the system is very bureaucratic. In every case, it seemed that there was a lack of financial resources for helping refugees. Those who had already received a negative decision on their asylum application and who stayed on as undocumented migrants were especially without official support.

Attitudes of residents of the country to which people had moved were often negative. Those whose appearance was not so different from the local people were not 'visually' telling others that they were refugees. Those who seemed different felt to be discriminated in many situations. The worst situations of discrimination were work and accommodation. Employers did not want to hire refugees and if wanted, they were low paid workers with incomes which did not give them the possibility to live normally. Officially it is not possible to work without documents, and thus, in the cases of undocumented people it meant working in the informal 'grey' market.

The most negative attitudes were against Muslims. However, also Christian refugees felt negative attitudes, since they were also coming from another cultural background, even though they are Christians.

Struggling in everyday life

Many refugees had lived in camps on the way to the country where they now were and, at the beginning, they also were often offered a camp environment for living in the new country. People described this phase as a very difficult period. The camps are situated far from shops and schools. Fellow refugees were sharing a lot of disinformation and fake news, since there was a lack of proper information. This untrue or inaccurate information produced more fear more people who already were traumatised. Also, for some the food at the camps and data schools was questioned since people were not sure if it was halal or not.

Living without money for many years was described as desperate. It was a consequence of leaving property behind or using all the money to pay for smugglers. It was also very much related to the poor services for refugees and asylum seekers in the destination country and possibilities to earn money. Lack of money affected to everything: it meant poor living conditions, unhealthy and poor food, no possibilities to have hobbies, not even for kids. Living as an undocumented person was the most difficult since there was no way to survive and those who were undocumented felt as if they were "nobody". Sometimes they were arrested, placed in a jail and forced to pay money in order to get out of there.

Housing was also a difficult problem. Local people were not willing to rent an apartment for the refugees. If they were willing the rent was very high. Real estate owners were exploiting the vulnerable position of refugees and IDPs. In many cases people had to live in very crowded apartments with their families or even with other families.

Besides, even people who had found a place to live and work, knew where to go and had friends often had a feeling that there is no stability and lack of confidence. Especially internally displaced people were hopeless, and they did not see any ways to return and this affected how difficult they saw the future.

Among other difficult things medication and health care were problems for refugees and IDPs. They did not have health insurance and that was why they could not get health care, except in some acute cases. Living in an unstable situation was challenging for mental health and some described their situation as traumatic or stressful.

Transnational relations

Living separately from the family members made life even more difficult. It was described as "the biggest pain". In some cases, it was not possible to keep in contact for safety reasons. In most of the cases, people could keep contact to their relatives by using internet or phone. Sometimes the internet connection was so poor that it was not possible to communicate. However, for people living transnationally, the internet gives a good possibility to be in contact with the family. People whose status was already clear were able to travel into other countries and visit their relatives. In any case, people were missing their relatives and were worried about those who still live under the conditions of conflict or war.

Lucky ones had relatives nearby, and they were trying to survive together under the difficulties. Some people were also giving information about good neighbours who were friendly and were helping them to learn new society and culture and were treating them respectfully. Many interviewed felt that poor people were more willing to help other vulnerable than those who were wealthy. However, many of them had experienced the negative attitudes of the receiving society and in the neighbourhood, which made them feel bad.

Between Roma people who "have gone to asylum" and then return and those who never have left there were also tensions. The reason for this might be experiences gained from experience of another way of living and hopes to develop current living conditions.

Faith-based-organisations (FBOs) and churches acting for and with migrants and refugees

FBOs and Churches give Hope

Many of respondents had contacts with churches and/or FBOs. Some of them had not realised that they had received help from the church when using services like Diaconia of the Hungarian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Many respondents had used services of many kind of FBOs or churches. Some people underlined, that they did not belong to a certain denomination or that they were not believers. However, they felt that the church people met them in a friendly way. Someone highlighted the fact that he might attend to the church if he gets his social network there.

Spiritual help was mentioned sometimes. The Church was a giver of spiritual support and strengthened believe in God. This aspect was also mentioned in relation to the Mosque. Church or faith community was also seen as a place, where you could meet new people and get wider contacts. When being abroad, a church which uses one's own language was felt to be important to visit, for example, on holidays and it is good to speak and hear one's own language, although you may not be a believer.

In terms of help for refugees and IDPs, the distribution of food and clothes was sometimes mentioned sometimes as an act by the churches for refugees. Some churches and FBOs organised different kind of training for language or gathering new skills, like learning to sew. One respondent even received a sewing machine and could continue earning money by sewing clothes for other people.

There were also more specific FBO or church campaigns which were concentrating on organising the movement of Christians from Muslim countries. An example would be the Armenian Apostolic Church diocese in Syria and Generation 21 in the Czech Republic. In most of the cases, FBOs and churches helped people by advising, giving money for certain purposes such as medication, organising things, legal support, and meeting everyday needs. Some people had lived in the shelter of the church or taken apart in their activities, such as a football club. Receiving help from the church-based-organisation helped everyday life and people were able to use their small amount of money for something else, when they received a food packet from the church.

Church activities had also been a place where it had been possible to make friends with people who had come from the same country of the origin. This had widened people's network and created a basis of mutual help. Through FBOs and churches people also received possibilities to act as volunteers, which gave meaning to their life. Some migrants and refugees shared the fact that they were an active member in developing activities. This included organising cultural activities and different kinds of support group for other migrants. Some people also were volunteers in food distribution. Some people felt it important to help people in a similar situation to the one they had earlier been in. Some people used the time of waiting by studying and developing new skills. Sometimes being involved in a lot of activities was also a way of escaping the trauma of leaving and travelling.

In Serbia there have also been house rebuilding programmes in the areas which the war had destroyed, in former Yugoslavia. These programmes had been managed by FBOs – the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation (EHO) which had helped to rebuild houses in the areas which the war had destroyed.

Complicated charity

Some people were critical towards the help they had or not had received from FBOs or churches. One of them had tried to apply for a place at a Sunday school for her child but did not receive it. Also, the limitation of material and financial help was felt as a frustration, since needs were huge. Some churches seemed to settle people from their own nation before refugees or IPDs. This was understandable, since refugees themselves saw poverty around also among locals. There were also mentions about the difficulties of reaching help offered by a church or FBO as was the fact that help was sometimes kept within a narrow focus.

Giving money helped “people on the move” to cover a difficult situation, but when the situation continues similar for months and maybe years, it does not help. For instance, FBOs had sometimes paid rent, but since they could not do so continuously, people were back in the same desperate situation after the end of the financial support.

Another problem that arose was that different actors give different kinds of advice, related to what is needed to be done by the person on the move in the future. This confused people and made it more difficult to decide what to do next. Another problem was that there were FBOs who claimed they helped refugees, but actually their help was very minimal. There was also disappointment expressed about the help of churches and FBOs. Some people, especially those who were undocumented, had a feeling that they did not receive any help or that help had been distributed unfairly. A big problem was that when a project is ongoing, it gives support for people, but when the project ends, nothing is left.

Grants or scholarship programmes, which some churches/FBOs were running, were felt as complicated. When a person received one, it was good for that person, but it limited the possibilities to apply for any other kind of grant. It also set people in different positions, since some people received a grant and some not. One person also had a feeling that she was blamed for dishonesty when she received a grant. It also caused jealousy in other people, who did not receive it. Furthermore, not everyone knew about grants and the possibility to apply for them. One interviewee viewed giving grants as wasting money.

Hoping for the future

Some people were happy to get away from a country in war. The fact that, in some cases, all the family could be together helps people to integrate and create a new life in a new country. However, many refugees and IDPs thought that they did not have a possibility to integrate. In some cases, people thought that situation was becoming even worse, despite of promises of the government. They were kept in a continually liminal situation, without the possibility to build a new life again. There was not enough housing, training, workplaces, and structure to settle down. The attitudes in the environment also affected how people felt life to be in the new country.

Some people were missing ‘back-home’ very much. Their soul was still in their country of origin, with the people there. Leaving of their country might have been very traumatic for many refugees, and they might have experienced a lot of difficulties on the way and even in the country where they now were living. Some of these people wanted to return. Also, the feelings of ‘not belonging’ in the society, made dreams of returning someday, actual.

Those who would have liked to stay, would have liked to build a new life, but they felt the need of help for that. When financial resources were very limit, it was difficult to build up a life which would have been satisfactory.

Those who had to leave former Yugoslavia have in many cases already have had to build their new life wherever they were. Their experiences were similar to other modern refugees from war areas moving to safe areas and starting a new life as an IDP or refugee. Some of them have never wanted to visit their country of origin, because of painful memories.

Many refugees were dreaming of moving to the West. This was mentioned in several interviews as a future plan. Many of them had friends or family members living in the West and they could compare their life to their friends' and family members' life, which seemed to be better than theirs.

Conclusions to Part Two

When speaking about students and workers who had emigrated to another country it is much easier to compare their experience with those who had been forced to leave. Students and workers had also have had their problems with integration and language, but as they have been willing to move. It helps a lot on a psychological level.

On the other hand, those who had been forced to move had already faced a lot of problems and challenges in their country of origin – living in the middle of conflicts and wars. It continued in many cases with a dangerous travel with smugglers who often misused their vulnerability. A new life in a new country was not easy, since the official reception system for asylum seekers was inadequate and the border control of the western borders was tough. This also challenges FBOs and churches to act and advocate for more humane asylum and integration policy.

Refugees and asylum seekers met difficulties in financing their life, housing, social and health care and finding work, as well as understanding the culture and language of the country. They were also missing their families living in different places. Their networks in the new country were often poor.

Churches and FBOs distributed food and clothes, sometimes helped with grants and training. Some organisations also helped with legal issues or housing. Sometimes help of the churches and FBOs were difficult to access, due to the lack of information and visibility.

It was difficult to form conclusions about the work of churches and FBOs involved in this research, since a some of the interviewees had not received help from the FBO or church whose worker made the interview. When help was received it was often emergency and immediate help for their current situation. In some cases, it was possible to see examples of long-term help, which seemed to give better possibilities for “people on the move” in future.

part three

STORIES ABOUT “PEOPLE ON THE MOVE” FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PROFESSIONALS IN FBOs AND CHURCHES

Dr. Ulla Siirto

Setting of the focus group interviews of the professionals

In every participating country the research setting followed the same kind of frame as in the first phase. The practitioner-researchers took a responsibility of interviewing professionals in their context. Interviews happened during the spring of 2020. COVID-19 affected to the interviews: some interviews were made face to face before the corona lockdown and some of them were made online during the lockdown, and one focus group was conducted even later when face to face encounter was possible again. The professionals were from different FBOs: Armenia from WCC Armenia Round Table Foundation; UNHCR and „Aleppo“ Compatriotic Charitable Organization (4 persons); Czech Rep. from Caritas, Diakonie CCE and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Czech Brethren (4 persons); Hungary from the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hungary (3 persons); Poland from Jesuit Social Centre (WAKCJI), Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland, the Polish Ecumenical Council and Diaconia of the Lutheran Parish in Koszalin (4 persons); Serbia from EHO and its partners from local projects; Evangelical Methodist church (10 persons); Ukraine from Caritas, Tenth of April Rehabilitation Center of St. Paul (6 persons).

There were two parts to the interviews, first professionals discussed the analysis of the interviews of “people on the move”, shared here in Part Two. Then they moved on to the second phase, which was structured by open questions. This part referred to work of their organisation and personal commitment. Some parts of the discussion allowed open questions to which it was possible to reply in written mode beforehand, but it seems that not many local researchers used that option.

The interviews with professionals were held in their mother tongue. Then the practitioner-researcher of each country translated the data into English. Unfortunately, only some interviews were translated completely, but a summary of the interview in English was presented. In the phase of analysis this implied a high possibility that not all relevant information was available for the analysis, but only the part of it which the practitioner-researcher considered as important.

Analysing the Interviews with Professionals in FBOs and Churches

The field of action of churches and FBOs

Most of the professionals were working with refugees, but there were also professionals who were working with IDPs (Ukraine and Serbia) and returnees who were mainly Roma people (Serbia). Some FBOs and churches had a long history of humanitarian work among people on the move, but 2015 was a turning point for many FBOs and churches, since forced migration to Europe had grown quickly. Most of the FBOs were concentrating on vulnerable groups such as women, children, single-parent-families, disabled people and Roma. Some professionals said that young capable men were not among those who were most vulnerable.

Work among “people on the move” consisted of humanitarian (emergency) aid, health care, assisting in social and mental problems of migration, advising and counselling, scholarships for studies, pastoral-psychological support, providing personal documents, capacity building, education and activities for children and families. There was a general tendency to move from humanitarian aid to assistance which supports sustainability. However only a few professionals mentioned of working with communities including a community of local residents as well as newcomers

Some countries like Ukraine and Serbia faced the main challenge of internally displaced people (IDP) and they were concentrated on this issue. This was especially true for Serbia which also faced the phenomenon of Roma people who go to the E.U. as asylum seekers but get returned within three months. There were also refugees in Serbia who are trying to enter the area of the E.U.

The professionals were asked to read through at least the summary of the analysis of interviews of beneficiaries of their action. They confirmed that the analysis sounded very familiar to them, although it caused anger and the reaction that it consisted of prejudices. Prejudices were also said to arise

about the fact that people moving from the East and/or with Muslim background did not give negative feedback of the FBOs work. It was estimated that FBOs were chosen for their good reputation and denominational background, even though they were professionally weaker. Anger arose from the notion that societies and governments in some countries made the new start for immigrants very hard. Besides, there were reactions stating that all the countries have similar kinds of problem. People who are forced into migration were also in more difficult situation than those who were moving voluntarily to another country. It was also identified that more in-depth information is needed for obtaining clearer understanding of the difficult situation of people on the move.

Faith as a motivation for the work

Religion or faith is a complicated aspect of the discussion about humanitarian and supportive work. For most of the professionals who were interviewed, religion or faith gave a motivation to work for and with vulnerable people. By following the basic principles of faith and the Bible, professionals were finding the motivation for their work. According to some respondents in some FBOs this motivation was valued over the professional skills, although these kinds of FBOs were seen to be outside their own organisation. The professionals who were interviewed criticised this kind of motivation in general, since a lack of professional skill can cause harm for people who are in need of support. Also, it was seen if the main motivation is saving souls, not assisting people in their struggles, it excludes some people from the help which they require.

Diaconia-based organisations were not making missionary work, but they were open for religious questions. In general, they wanted to offer low-threshold services. Some organisations had resolved this issue by being neutral in the relationship to religions. They were not mentioning it or speaking about it. In such cases, religion was not used as empowering aspect in a similar way to which culture was used. Some professionals were criticising religion-based motivation in the understanding of helping. All kinds of people were seen as needing help and being in a vulnerable situation when they have had to leave their countries. It was seen as a Christian value to care. For some organisations it was seen to be an extra value they had. According to some participants, “people on the move” respected religious organisations more than municipal or governmental organisations. An additional benefit to the organisation was that if it was already known in the country of origin of the migrant or refugee.

In Armenia and the Czech Republic, special projects to support Christian refugees who had been minorities in their country of origin, mainly from Iraq and Syria, but also from China had been organised. Churches and supporting associations had been especially motivated to help people of the same faith. Nevertheless, the professionals had identified that it had not been that easy, regardless of there being the common link of the same religion. Differences of culture, language and mentality had created barriers and difficulties to integration into the new society.

It was seen to be important that FBOs and churches were helping people from different religious backgrounds. It was a way to build a relationship between people with different faiths and to create a welcoming and convivial atmosphere. If Christians were not assisting people with Muslim background, the gaps between people are seen to be growing.

Faith-based organisations very often had willingness to help people in need. It was the case with people on the move, too. In 2015 and after a lot of people also fled from the Middle East to the Eastern European countries. Some professionals mentioned that they were not prepared for the work among refugees and that is why there had been more work done on the basis of good will than on sufficiently developed practices.

In comparison to other providers of support to people on the move, professionals thought that FBOs were more flexible. Many people needing help were a bit biased in their view of the work of FBOs at first, since they had earlier experiences of other kinds of help. Many professionals said that their organisation was “filling a gap” or “closing holes”, which exist between people and the governmental or municipal support. In some cases, FBOs were the only ones who were working with undocumented people. There were examples in which professionals from churches and FBOs had been able to support the legalising of some people’s stay in a country. FBOs and churches also had volunteers, who were able to help in many cases of work, for example as interpreters. A challenge was that some people were using services of many organisations and were confused, since they received a different kinds of information.

On the individual level the motivation was seen to be arising from meaningful work, serving people and God, a desire to assist people in need or to change the society. Christian faith was seen as giving power to the work in many FBOs.

Migration as a challenge

According to the professionals, migration is almost always a difficult process for people on the move. On the one hand, people were on the move with expectations of better and safer life. They had often been misled by their fellow people about 'a good future in Europe'. On the other hand, in reality, they were facing circumstances which put them into overfull refugee camps with poor conditions. The relegation for those belonging to an upper class in their society of the origin was huge.

Migration caused mental problems when waiting for the migration or asylum legal process to proceed further. When circumstances were poor, with no proper housing but living in a camp or under other poor conditions with no income to support their living, it was very hard for people. They were at the mercy of the society and the organisations who were helping them. It was difficult to find a job, and even if they found one, usually it was a low-paid-job, or they were, by other means, misused.

Coming from a different cultural and religion background was also not easy. Habits and mentality might be totally different. This might lead to misunderstanding, for example, between people who were not of the same sex. Professionals said that a certain way of communication between male service users and female professionals had to be developed to avoid misunderstandings. Work for integration was seen as important. One part of the integration work was organising inter-cultural and inter-religious meetings to get people meet each other.

In many cases, the families of refugees with whom the professionals were working had been split, going to different parts of the world. Some people had themselves had been in other western countries as refugees. They had heard about different kind of services of different countries and were not satisfied when the services, which they received, were worse. This might affect their willingness to integrate in a given society. There is a need to create more links and communication between the local community and people on the move. This link can create cohesion and desire to stay in the country, not to continue on to somewhere else. Building social cohesion and social capital are also creating more integration.

The coping skills of people differed a lot between different immigrants and refugees, according to the professionals. Some people were able to survive very well with a small level of support, but then there were people, who were not able to cope in a new society. This made some professionals to enquire as to whether new professional skills must be learnt by professionals in order to support these kinds of people. The lack of skills caused frustration for the professionals and in one interview, it was said that there are many more failures than successes.

Lack of documents was mentioned as a big problem by the professionals. Refugees were very often asked by smugglers to throw their documents away when entering Europe. Roma people and IDPs sometimes used a false identity and lied to the professionals, because of mistrust. Furthermore, the regularisation and legal processes for refugees and other migrants were complicated and long. All "people on the move" were suffering from disinformation and fake news, which was delivered to them by fellow refugees, returnees, or local people.

As refugees, there were a lot of young men on the move. They were not on the top of priority list of any FBO, although they were without the guidance of their families and relatives or the support of the larger community. They did not like to live in camps, and it made work with them even harder.

Another case were economic migrants, mainly from the East, who were trying to find a job. They are a cheaper labour force than local people and for that reason they were wanted by employers. These economic migrants were blamed for taking jobs of the local people. Another aspect was the lack of skills in the local language which made their life difficult. Many professionals mentioned that teaching the local language is a very crucial factor for integration and building a new life in a new country. Economic migrants in Eastern Europe were often coming from similar kind of culture with a knowledge of Russian, which helped them to learn local language, if it has Slavic roots. However, it was also said to be a disadvantage: some people were not willing to learn a new language because they thought they would be working only a short time in the new country and going back when they have earned enough

money. For refugees coming from the Middle East, it was more complicated to learn a new language.

When government, politicians and media described newcomers as a threat and 'illegal' and not as vulnerable nor as people who are desperately escaping a conflict or war, it causes people in the country to easily in panic and to try to avoid contacts with newcomers - or even to make their lives harder. It was also seen that the most of public authorities were not prepared to work with the people on the move, since they were not able to adjust their language to the understandable level, for example by continuing to use legal-based language and, furthermore, they were not culturally sensitive. Although many different kinds of information are already translated into different languages, there was still a lack of language skills among those working for public authorities and, thus, the communication between newcomers and officials was poor. Maybe this is one reason why "people on the move" were said they wish to get a companion for their visits to the authorities, not that often about being taught how to deal with the authorities.

Governmental structures for assisting "people on the move" were not meeting their needs in all the participant countries. This means that FBOs and other NGOs must take responsibility for different kinds of supportive action, such as in the fields of housing, social services, and health care. There was also a very poor level of communication between the states/municipalities and NGOs and this is definitely needed in order to serve people better. Furthermore, there were some suspicion of corruption in a relation to a migration office. In some cases, stability in the country was weak and the trust in authorities was on a low level. In some cases, FBOs and NGOs were seen only ones who were trying to assist people in need. For sustainable development, a more active role of governmental support through legislation, housing, social benefits etc. was seen to be important.

From humanitarian aid to long-term support

Humanitarian aid is something, which all the FBOs had organised at some point in their actions. It was a tool through which it was easy to start work among people on the move. People were also desperately needy: they were without housing, food, clothes, work and other things which are the basis of a normal life. The problem was also in receiving free help, which depreciated the aid in the eyes of service users, whilst at the same time there were a lot of people who had no possibility to pay for anything that they needed. Organising humanitarian aid was a very concrete way to help people. It was possible to show to the donors how much food and clothes were delivered and how many people were among the help-receivers. It was also gratifying for volunteers and professionals working with people on the move, since people who were receiving help were often thankful.

However, humanitarian aid was seen as a tool to make people passive and getting them into dependency on help providers. For example, there was an experience of helping Roma communities to have a better life by building them new houses and helping them materially by other means, too. After some years, houses were in bad condition and living standards were very poor again. The lesson learnt was not to 'give fish' but teaching 'how to fish'. In later projects Roma people were given materials from which, with support, they were able to fix their houses by themselves.

The problem was that many people were in continuous crisis since their position was unclear or they were continuing their movement. They were not able to get proper housing or an income, which made them dependant on assistance. There were also professional clients, who were visiting all possible sources of assistance and had learnt a manipulative language of demanding services. Many people were living together with other similar people in settlements or camps. This made it hard to integrate into a new society. They did not understand how to live in the new society socially and culturally and they did not even have many possibilities to learn how to do it. Working with children was seen to be important, since their capacity for integration was thought to be good. At the same time, it was seen important to teach them their own language and to be proud of their culture.

The most part of established FBOs preferred long-term, sustainable activities over short-term solid humanitarian aid ones. They had recognised, that, alongside of humanitarian aid, it was important to develop more structural strategies to meet people and create activities which would help people get out from their needy position. Different kinds of step-by-step programmes and socio-psychological support were among the relevant tools for those who had developed their work from a reactive, humanitarian basis to longer-term work with people.

Professionals need sensitive ways of working to encounter vulnerable people whose trust with professionals has been wounded in earlier contacts with authorities. With sensitive encountering beforehand it is seen to be possible to choose a method with which to go further. Addressing vulnerability was prioritised as a key issue in the work.

Advocacy was a part of work of some organisations, but some did not have resources for advocacy. For example, letters and other statements had been sent to authorities about different grievances and in some cases demonstrations had been organised. For example, the statement of Catholic and Lutheran bishops on the UNHCR's Refugee Day in Hungary was noted as a clear message of acceptance of the refugees. It was also underlined that people should not be afraid of giving a room or job to migrants at the same time when the public media was trying to strengthen fears against refugees. Some organisations conduct research and made proposals about results and sent them to authorities. Co-operation between different non-governmental organisations including FBOs and churches would be fruitful for building the pressure to change both legislation and practice.

Work with IDPs and returnees

When Yugoslavia split, many people had to leave the place where they lived, because of ethnicity or religion. Even those who had mixed marriages had, in many cases, to leave. In Ukraine losing the part of the territory to Russian control meant that many people had to leave their home or living area. This displacement of people caused a huge humanitarian crisis locally, but also in other parts of the country. In Serbia many actors have already been developing supporting programmes for more than 20 years. FBOs have been working in this area too. A similar longer-term situation can be seen in Ukraine. After the chaos of first years, different programmes to assist IDPs have been developed.

When assisting IDPs, the professionals had faced prejudices towards their help. There were experiences of stereotypical thinking of FBOs doing the same assistance as the state or municipal social workers and doubts were raised against charity, assistance, or psychological help. Some people even thought that it would be dangerous to seek help. Alongside doubts, there were also feelings of fear, shame and distrust. These kinds of barriers made giving assistance more difficult. There was seen to be a need to develop a 'professional language' to make it easier to reach the needed assistance without shame and fear. The lack of effective state support or problems in co-operation between organisations and authorities were also barriers which need to be overcome. Furthermore, according to the professionals, there were too many people in need compared to the resources available

Work with Roma returnees was mainly concerned with their living and housing conditions as well as with their children's education. Children suffered most from moving in and out, since some Roma families lived in a loop of waiting for the next possibility to move out from the country. When moving, children were losing their class attainment level and lagged behind the other pupils. Education or the possibility of mentorship were the main tools used to improve children's capacity to go back to school at their own grade level. FBOs were also searching school documents from the country of temporary immigration to secure that children will complete their grades. When having the possibility to finish secondary school, it is easier to get a job.

There were also signals of radicalisation among those who are moving in and out. These people belong to Roma Muslim community and were easily discriminated against.

Fear as drivers of racism and populism

People forced to be on the move are living in a very unstable situation. First, they had very often lived for a long time in a warlike situation in their own country. With the hope of better circumstances, they have moved out from the country and searched for safer life. However, the solidarity of European people towards them has weakened or even died after the first solidarity reaction. According to some interviewees politicians were using this situation. But instead of asking people to show their solidarity for the people who were suffering, they emphasised building up a threat of terrorism and an invasion of Islam. That made ordinary people inclined to think of a newcomer as someone who they needed to avoid. Furthermore, the general political atmosphere, which was creating borders, fears and threats was affecting people's views and opinions.

One example of this atmosphere was a case in Serbia, near to the border with Croatia, where people were waiting for the possibility to enter the European Union. At the beginning of the migrant "crisis" in 2015-2016, residents started to see refugees as a threat, who were promoting violence in the area, and parents were against the integration of migrant pupils in the school. This has been changed because the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation started to work with teachers in the border area, by implementing training courses on intercultural education, adapted to the work with migrants, and by supporting small school projects aimed to improve the local and school integration of migrants.

Fear and suspicion were also factors preventing the acceptance of "people on the move" as members of communities and even churches. Some professionals mentioned that it has been difficult to get volunteers to join into the work with people on the move. Churches did not commit themselves to the work as much as some of the professionals interviewed expected. Apart from fears, there were also the "normal" difficulties in communication with people who are in some way "different".

Fear also driven Roma people away from their countries outside E.U. in order to seek asylum in the E.U. They have no possibilities to improve their life in their own country because of common attitudes which are not only discriminatory, but also hostile. "Going asylum" was for a long time seen as a way to get a break from this hostility, to live temporarily under better conditions and to bring a small improvement in the economic position of the family, even though people knew that they would not get asylum from the E.U. After three months they were sent back to their countries. Many of them planned to "go to asylum" again.

Treating "people on the move" as strangers, not making friends with them or communicating with them means that newcomers felt not wanted. This is said to cause segregation as well as their preference to live inside their own communities. A welcoming atmosphere was said to be needed to build up a sustainable society. It seemed to be difficult to promote togetherness and joint work for developing the country together in the society in large, but easier to build borders between different kinds of people. This might be seen in connection to rising right populism, which affects the general opinion of locals about people on the move.

Somebody told a story about a pastor who was preaching about the importance of hospitality towards newcomers and he took them into parish life. He got negative feedback from the parishioners and some members of the parish did not dare to participate in Sunday services or other activities anymore when "people on the move" were there.

Lack of Resources as a Challenge

Almost all participating FBOs were dependent on financing by donors. They were receiving E.U. financing and/or support from other international donors. Some were also receiving financial support from their own church as the supporter of the FBO. Depending on finance coming from external sources demands the following of prescribed conditions for the project or actions, which were not always satisfactory. The reason for this is either that the conditions might exclude some groups of people or that the guidelines were not so flexible that the work could be reoriented when some quick changes to the project plan were needed due to the changes in the context.

Some FBOs criticised this dependency on external finance and wished to get more support from their own church. However, many churches in Eastern Europe are poor themselves and are also receiving financial support from abroad, which makes financing projects difficult.

Those FBOs which had been running projects and programmes for a long time had gathered expertise on how to apply for financial support and how to use it for the people's benefit. They were also able to write holistic and well-argued applications to present to donors. They managed to hire professionals, who were well-qualified and skilled. Alongside this, they could develop more demanding activities, such as supporting people's mental health or creating educational programmes. At the same time smaller FBOs or other church-based actors were not necessarily able to hire educated staff but

took active parish members as workers in their activities. In such cases, staff, and activists working in smaller FBOs and parishes should be educated and trained for work with migrants.

FBOs with a long working history and with a well-structured organisation were also able to collect feedback using several tools and they also carried out research about their work. These kind of feedback reports and research reports gave them credibility in the eyes of donors. Also, successful stories and other testimonies of service users were used to share information about successful actions. It was said that mouth to a mouth messaging about activities was the best advertisement. A lack of resources restricted other marketing strategies, however. Most of the FBOs were using social media for informing about their work and keeping contact with service users. Using social media has been an advantage especially during the period of Covid lockdown.

Some FBOs were also able to ask for supervision, or other kinds of professional support for their work. It strengthened professionalism and gave an opportunity to relieve the burdens of the hard work. This was very important, since in many cases “people on the move” were living in a desperate situation and FBOs might be their last hope of getting out of it. This affected the working atmosphere and forced professionals to give their all to help people in need.

Future steps

According to some professionals who were interviewed, the qualifications of professionals need to be improved. It was also seen to be crucial to create tools for people to use, so that they would be able to find the right service for them. A related issue was that at the moment, NGOs are working quite independently and do not have much coordination and cooperation. That means that the same person can receive similar help from different sources simultaneously while some people are left without any support. Thus, according to respondents, coordination between NGOs and NGOs and the state or municipality should be developed, and new legislation should be developed to support services of assistance and people themselves. Cooperation was thought as to be important in the process of raising the effectiveness of the work. Cooperation between countries was also mentioned as an important factor. This is possible online, as has many have learnt during the Covid lockdown. Social responsibility and sustainability were also needed to be developed, along with new partnerships. Sometimes, NGOs were looking out only for their own benefit and were not interested in cooperation. This organisational need was seen to be above the need of people on the move.

Capacity building and an empowering orientation of the work were seen very important. According to respondents, it could be supported by language and culture courses, but also by more detailed education, which could justify opportunities to improve life in a new country. More participatory approaches are needed because involving people in the process was seen in many ways to be crucial. A participatory approach was seen to be important in building participants’ responsibility and the feeling of ownership of their own life. Developing economic independence and sustainable living was also given importance as well as a community work-orientated approach. By bringing residents and newcomers together it would be possible to build a sustainable community and create social climate and mutuality which would create a good place to live. It was admitted that such work requires awareness arising with all parties.

Sometimes time limited projects were a hinderance to effective work, which should be based on a more flexible and long-term-orientated approach. There is seen to be a need for developing persistent, long term work, but donations were only secured for a certain period. In future respondents wished for more flexibility and certainty.

Advocacy was seen important. The development of legislation was seen necessary and FBOs should try to affect this. The churches behind the FBOs should ensure that work among “people on the move” becomes more visible through their publications and through social media. Furthermore, cooperation between Muslims and Christians was seen to be an urgent need. One suggestion was to produce joint statements on common topics or commitments.

Municipal and national authorities were seen to need education for encountering people from different cultural and religious backgrounds. This is seen to be something with which FBOs could help. Working methods and programmes of FBOs were sometimes so well-developed that it should also be possible to recommend that the authorities adopt certain ‘working model’ more widely in the country.

There is also a need to develop training on how to respond to negative impacts of migration in the host country as well as education in the country of origin to avoid disinformation about living in Europe. The latter, if it could be possible might avoid some unnecessary migration.

Creating employment and work especially with young people, as an approach for reintegration was seen to be important. For example, the Armenia Round Table had built a project for refugee youth and the locals, which created networks of young people and provides scholarships to the most outstanding and vulnerable ones, as well as supporting internship placements and it pays them small monthly allowance; tailored professional training is provided to enable them to enter the employment market and social and cultural aspects of the programme involves them in pilgrimages, ecumenical camps and other activities.

It was also seen that it was important to avoid the same mistakes that Western European countries have made. However, the interviewees did not elaborate exactly what those mistakes were. Developing an integration programme which includes proper language skills learning, was very often seen to be important.;

Conclusions to Part Three

The professionals working for FBOs and churches are well-motivated and often well-skilled to carry out the work among people on the move. They meet different kinds of “movement” and try to react according to the needs of the most vulnerable. Although the skills of professionals need continuous development, especially in how to face difficult and unsuccessful cases.

In terms of project development and finance, it was found that sometimes project outlines and the conditions laid down by donors are inflexible comparing to need and practice, which might change during the process. Although humanitarian aid is continuously needed, developing methods towards more persistent long-term approach is necessary. Pure humanitarian help is mainly focussed on helping people to survive in their daily life but alone, it may hold back the consistent long-term improvement of life-situations. Those FBOs who have a long history of assisting people have developed their work towards more sustainable approach by trying to find solutions which are giving people independence, skills for participation, and for taking responsibility. However, the instability of society and the continuous crises set limits to this aim. The vulnerability of “people on the move” is not easily resolved since very often their legal position is unclear and there is no political will to solve it.

Learning from each other, cooperation and coordination between NGOs including FBOs and churches should on the local level be developed. Thus, it would be possible to avoid overlaps, but also to guide people in need to the appropriate services. Cooperation also gives power to make a political impact on solving the grievances in societies.

The atmosphere of the different national societies is mainly against migration and hostile attitudes are multiplied further by the media and politics. People do not think of refugees as needy and vulnerable, but as possible terrorists, which makes work of those who want to help more difficult. There is a huge need for community orientated work, since different demographic groups are living separately and have only few contacts across diversity, with each other and the host society if any. By building convivial life together it is possible to learn to give practical shape to the humanity between people and to see “other” as a neighbour, who is worthwhile to get to know. It will also create respect and mutuality between diverse groups of people.

part four

CONCLUSIONS FROM
THE RESEARCH
PROCESS

Dr Ulla Siirto





The Process of the Research

The research process “People on the move” has produced interesting results. Working together as co-researchers has been fruitful and all the participants have surely learnt a great deal. Timing has been sometimes difficult, since everyone involved has had different pressing everyday responsibilities. One very important experience of doing participatory research together was to understand that professionals are not alone with these issues but can co-operate and exchange experiences. Later it might be possible to organise joint training and exchange approaches, methods and tools thus, raising capacity of the professionals and volunteers. The experience of being a part of the joint research process also taught also new methods, such as using focus group interviews. In future it could become a “normal” method of collecting information and listening to the voices of people on the move.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it is important to come back to the research questions:

Firstly, the role of faith plays a different role in the different contexts. Sometimes it is somewhere in the background, giving an inner motivation for work among and with people on the move. Sometimes it is more visible and embedded in practice and encounters. It may also be seen in a call to largely to join the activities of the churches and FBOs. For many among “people on the move”, FBOs and churches are seen as reliable actors even though the actual faith may be different. However, it also can be excluding, when certain kind of faith is demanded or when non-faith is not accepted, and actions are limited for certain faith groups.

Secondly, diaconia- and faith-based activities can be seen as concentrating on humanitarian and emergency aid, since demands for a concrete help is huge. However, when it is possible to think of more sustainable, long-term solutions, possibilities are seen to create participation, conviviality, and the possibilities to build sustainable future. This means seeing the service users more as co-actors. In these longer-term processes, the stigma which “people on the move” often carry is reduced and may disappear so that “normal” membership of a local community can grow. This kind of development also enables inclusion and decreases prejudices and discrimination. This is a possible approach towards a convivial life seen as the art and practice of living together in solidarity.

Thirdly, there is also a question about how churches and FBOs are dealing with populism and nationalism. Working on the grassroots level is one thing. However, they must also deal with nationalism and populism. Working with “people on the move” and local residents creates the possibility for local solutions in order to solve disagreements and conflicts. It also creates togetherness with different kind of people and can build an awareness of migration. Churches have a responsibility to prevent and counter hate speech and intolerance against migrants and the violent narrative which surrounds them. On the level of society, there is need for advocacy and speaking publicly on these themes. Churches and FBOs need to produce stronger statements in order to change the narrative. It is important not to see “people on the move” as a threat but as a possibility to develop both society and the churches.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX ONE

THE RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

People on the Move: Diaconia with refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and migrants

The **purpose of the research** is to develop a deeper understanding of who are ‘people on the move’ as a phenomenon and the practice of diaconia and the churches with migrants, refugees, internally dislocated/displaced people etc.

There are **three sub aims**, focused:

Firstly, on the role of faith (including non-Christian faith, too) as an excluding or including factor in relation to the majority and on defining the role of faith for uprooted people. If any examples are found, it would also be important to examine the role of migrant churches in the social/diaconal field.

Secondly, the research will identify how diaconia makes a difference in the case of “people on the move” in terms of securing rights and participation, combating stigma and discrimination and enabling integration and community development.

Thirdly, the research will explore the issues of populism/nationalism and how churches are taking the situation into consideration.

The **findings and recommendations** of the research will contribute to development of the working methods, approaches. Also, weak signals and topics of concerns of the churches and congregational and diaconal actors with the issues of uprooted people will be disclosed. The report on the Research outcomes will be an important contribution to the strengthening of learning processes in the region and to advocacy.

Plan of the research in six phases:

1st phase: Involve the partners from 4 different countries and focus on 4 different contexts (RO, ARM, UKR, SRB, Czech Rep, HU). With participants from each country the Research Theme Group is built. Please, note, that the Research Theme Group Member responsible for the arranging and running the Research process in the local placement is appointed and approved by the steering group. He or she will be also responsible for the connection with Research Theme Group.

The call for Orientation meeting on Skype will be arranged. During this meeting the Research Theme Group Members will get to know each other, share expectations and work together to refrain the research focus. The Research Coordinator and Theme Coordinator will present the aims of the Research, timeframe, detailed process for the next phase.

Another outcome of this phase will be a chapter about the context of the particular country: ‘in’ and ‘out’ migration, the church’s response towards the people on the move, including the professional practices with “people on the move” – a person should write this as a preliminary draft and then reflect/add to it in the process of the research. In this phase it is possible to use also existing statistics, reports and so on. List of questions will be given by Theme Coordinator and Research Coordinator. The final chapter will be verified by the Theme Coordinator and Steering Group.

(Timing: June-September 2019)

2nd phase: preparation phase for the interviews with “people on the move”.

Theme Coordinator and Research coordinator will prepare the process of the data gathering, themes and interview questions. Preliminary version of the interview questions is sent for Research Theme Group Members for their feedback in order to make adding and corrections.

In their working places the Research Group Members prepare for conducting the interviews. The respondents should be carefully chosen, preferably from different places and positions. The sample group is to be specified in each case. The people who will carry out the interviews should be appointed, if needed. In each case with delegating the Research activity to someone else the Research Theme Member should take the responsibility for orientation and training. The paper for the training on how to conduct the interview will be prepared and shared from the Research Coordinator.

(Timing: September 2019-October 2019)

3rd phase: The interviews with “people on the move” will be conducted. Members of the Research Theme Group or appointed persons are doing interviews among people on the move. Careful notes should be taken in every interview. Recording of interviews is recommended if possible. If any other language than English is used, interviews should be translated in English afterwards. Summaries from the interviews will be developed by the Member of the Research Theme Group and shared with the Theme Coordinator. (Timing: October 2019 - November 2019)

Theme coordinator and Research Coordinator will elaborate the results of the summaries. In the light of the obtained results, the questions for carrying out the focus-groups with professionals and “people on the move” will be specified. Further on the consultation meeting on the summaries and draft of the themes and questions for the new focus group between the professionals, who work with “people on the move” and “people on the move”, will be held.

(Timing: December 2019)

4th phase: Second data collection from local workers.

After the consultation meeting Theme coordinator and Research coordinator are going to refine the themes and questions for the focus group discussion between the professionals, who work with “people on the move” and “people on the move” themselves.

Members of the Research Theme Groups will organise the focus groups with professionals and “people on the move” in their organisations. The moderator for the focus group will be delegated and trained if needed. Then the focus groups discussions will be held. Careful notes should be taken in each discussion. Recording of group discussion is recommended if possible. If any other language than English is used, data-summary should be translated in English afterwards. The summaries of these discussions are to be shared with the Theme Coordinator.

(Timing: January 2020 – February, moved to July 2020)

5th phase: Theme Coordinator analyses the obtained data and draws conclusions from it and embracing the whole research process. The evaluation meeting with Research Theme Group will be held about the results of the analysis of the summaries. On the basis of the conducted analysis and evaluation meeting outcomes Theme Coordinator will develop the final paper, share it for the feedback in the Research Theme Group, receive their feedback and format the final paper accordingly.

(Timing: March 2020 – June 2020 moved to September 2020).

6th phase: An International workshop - changed to Thematic On-line Workshop - will be held with the representatives from each country who participated in the research: diaconia/church representatives and uprooted people. The workshop will also draw out the lessons for the further development of the church and diaconal workers who work with people on the move. The results of this workshop will be incorporated into the final paper. The implications for training and learning will be used to inform future publications and interdiac learning programmes. The article about research results in 'interdiac 'Talking Points' will be published.

(Timing: in October 2020)

Research Coordinator: Oksana Prosvirina

Theme Coordinator: Ulla Siirto

Core research group: Kate Rebrova (Ukraine), Vaclav Rados, Petr Sobalik (Czech Republic), Rubina Devrikyan (Armenia), Bertalan Decmann, Attila Mészáros (Hungary), Grzegorz Giemza (Poland), Anna Bu (Serbia)

APPENDIX TWO

INTERVIEWS WITH “PEOPLE ON THE MOVE” & INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Questions for a focus group/an individual interview: “People on the Move”

These questions are for those who, are immigrants in your country, for those, who have moved out from their country for work etc and for displaced people inside your country. Those who have moved out of your country might be difficult to catch unless they have returned. Formulate questions how they are best in the situation but keep the content as the same. Extra questions can be added if there seems to be need for them. Record the questions and afterwards translate them. See more from the guidelines. If you have something to ask, send an email ulla.siirto@evl.fi.

1. Who are you (first name is enough)?
2. From which situation are you now coming?
3. Tell me/us when did you leave your country (both in cases of immigration and emigration)?
4. How long have you been away from your country (is asked also from those, who have returned)?
5. What were reasons for leaving your own country?
6. What did you think when you realised that you need to leave? Describe the process of leaving.
7. How did your family and friends reacted when you decided to leave/you had to leave? Who did you leave behind?
8. How was your journey from home to a new country (interviewer can mention the name of the country)? Long? Short? Complicated? Easy? Using smugglers? Other? (these are given later if needed after an interviewee have told what she/he wants.)
9. How have/had you built up your life in a new context? What have been/was easy, what have been/was difficult? How have/had neighbourhood treated you in a new place? Other remarks?
10. How do you keep contact to your family/relatives back home/ How did you kept contact to your family/relatives while you were working abroad?
11. What kind of support have you got for a) leaving your country and b) resettling to a new place?
12. What kind of support would you have needed, but you didn't get when leaving and when resettling?
13. What kind or role does religion play in your life? If it does play a role, how has it support you during moving process?
14. Have you got support from any faith-based organisation or church during your moving process? If yes, what kind of help? How useful was it? What kind of support you would have wished from faith-based organisation, but you didn't get? If no, how do faith-based organisations and churches should have been helping you? What kind of support and help would you have been needing?
15. Are the activities of this church/FBO somehow differing from other producers' activities in which you have participated? Describe how?
16. Have you felt hate speech or worrying attitudes from other people inside this church/FBO? Describe what kind of? Have you felt hate speech, worrying or frightening attitudes from other people living nearby? If yes, specify your experiences?
17. How do you think about future? Are you staying/moving etc? How do you think your life will continue? What do you wish for the future?
18. Do you want to say something more relating to your process of people on the move?

Guidelines for making interviews

1. Contact to different kind of people (asylum seekers, refugees, immigrants from different reasons) who are participating to any activities of your church/faith-based organisation (FBO) and ask them to participate to an interview
2. You may use individual or focus group interviews. Focus group interview means that you may arrange a group interview for 4-6 persons. An individual interview is more time taking, but there might be possible to handle about confidential issues better. A focus group interview is saving time, since you can make an interview for several people at the same time. It also generates more information, because people remember things from other people's comments and there is no need to repeat every questions for every member of focus group but ask additions from others.
3. Reserve enough time for every interview. One individual interview may take 45 min-1½ hours and focus group interview may take 1½-2 hours.
4. Use interpreters, if needed.
5. Ask a question after each other but given enough time for participants to answer to every question. Remember that many times some issues pop up again later during an interview. This is normal and let people to move back in the issue about which you already have discussed, since new point of views may raise up. Give time to answers and ask if there is still something to add.
6. Give space for everyone (in focus group interview) and encourage them to speak. Notice that some people are more talkative than others, so be careful that everyone has an opportunity to answer. If somebody is quiet, you can ask what she/he is thinking. However, remember to respect also a person's quietness if she/he express that she/he doesn't want to say anything to some point. It is also allowed.
7. Remember just to make questions and let people to tell their experiences and opinions, don't tell your own opinions and experiences. Your task here is to make questions and clarifications (new questions, if needed)
8. When you are starting to get lost in wrong direction (for example speaking about cultural habits in general, not direct link to any activities they are participating), lead discussion back to the question. Be aware, sometimes there can raise up something which is very much related to the topic about which you are discussing, and not to close discussion too early.
9. When finishing the interview, remember to thank an interviewee about her/his words.
10. Make notes during all the interviews. If possible, ask some of your colleagues to participate to the interview and give her/him a task to make notes. Then you are free to speak and list
11. You may also use recording in order to secure, that every important is written down. You can listen a record later and add missing information to your notes. It is not necessary to write every word down, but a content of interviews. Write afterwards a summary of the interview and send it to the theme coordinator.

APPENDIX THREE

QUESTIONS AND THEMES FOR THE INTERVIEWS WITH PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH "PEOPLE ON THE MOVE"

NOTE: Each focus group should have 3-8 people, English version of the results to be sent to Ulla Siirto at the latest by 31.3.2020)

First interview round: reflections on the summary of interviews of 'people on the move'

1. Read at least the summary of the interviews of 'people on the move' (a longer version is also available). What is your first reaction to it?
2. What kind of picture of your organisation/other FBOs/churches is this summary giving? How do you reflect the results? Positive things? Challenges? What is missing?
3. What can you learn about the results? What should be taken in account in the further? How are you going to work with these challenges? And how to develop things which are going well?

Second interview round: what should we do as a church/FBO in order to develop our work with 'people on the move'?

4. How would you describe the work of your organisation in terms of providing support to 'people on the move'? Does it work on level of immediate relief, sustainable assistance towards settlement and wellbeing, etc.? Do you concentrate on material support or spiritual support or holistic approach?
5. What aims do you pursue in your work with 'people on the move'? What kind of approach do you have when working with 'people on the move'? (do you follow some step-by-step programme of providing sustainable support to people or do you use situational approach, basing on responding to particular needs of people or something else?) Describe your approach.
6. What areas of life of 'people on the move' is your organisation/church mostly involved in? Do you work with individual, families, communities? Do you prioritise any group, like most poor, the same religion as your organisation, those who have many children etc.?
7. How do you assess your work with "people on the move" over the time in your context? How do you reflect the achieved results? Do you have any feedback system? If yes, what kind of? How do you usually observe and track the changes in lives of 'people on the move', whom your organisation supported?
8. Think of the challenges that you are facing in your work related to 'people on the move'? To what spheres do they belong? Are they coming from service-users, organisational level, community, city, state levels, other? Which of them are most disturbing and why?
9. How would it be possible to develop visibility of your church/FBO in order to improve accessibility of your organisation?
10. How is your FBO/church trying to advocate for situations of 'people on the move' towards authorities and government? What is done already and what should be done in the future?
11. If you look at work of your organisation from the point of personal involvement, please, complete the sentence "I do this work because"
12. Over the time of work with these people is there anything that you would like to change in your work with them? What and why?
13. What should your church or FBO do with and for 'people on the move' in future?
14. What else would you like to add?

APPENDIX FOUR

QUESTIONS FOR THE COUNTRY REPORTS

What is the general situation of your country related to migration: current statistics of immigration, emigration; legislation and immigration policy; general opinion towards migration?

How has the situation changed during last years: more/less immigration/emigration, how much more/less; changes in legislation and migration policy in your country; changes in general opinion towards migration.

- *How is your church/FBO dealing with migration?*
- *What kind of policy and practices has your church/FBO among immigrant/emigrant? How these practices have developed during the last years?*
- *What can you tell about the work of other churches/FBOs in your country related to migration and how has it changed during last years?*
- *Do churches and FBOs think and do differently related to migration, if yes, how, if no, tell how churches and FBOs follow a current policy of society; is there different voices towards migration in your church/FBO, what kind of voices and how people with different opinions are dealing with each other?*
- *Is there any tendency of growing nationalism, polarisation and discrimination in your country? If yes, how your church/FBO and other churches/FBOs have reacted towards discrimination, polarisation and nationalism?*
- *Is there any specific feature in your context (society and your church/FBO) related to people on the move? If yes, describe this feature.*

People on the Move

stories from churches and faith-based organisations in Central and Eastern Europe

The main purpose of this research is to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon ‘people on the move’ and especially of the practices of churches and Faith Based Organisations which are working with migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people. This main research aim is studied through three objectives.

Firstly, to ask what the role of faith is, as an excluding or including factor in the relation to the majority and to define the role of faith for uprooted people.

Secondly, to ask how diaconia makes a difference when acting among “people on the move” in terms of securing rights and participation, combating stigma and discrimination and enabling integration and community development.

Thirdly, to analyse how churches and Faith Based Organisations are dealing with populism and nationalism.

There is very little well-known research about “people on the move” from the Eastern European perspective and especially so from churches and Faith Based Organisations in the region. For that reason, the research focuses attention on Eastern Europe. This research was carried out as a collaborative process between practitioner researchers in six countries: Armenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Serbia and the Ukraine responded to the call. Practitioner-researchers from every country joined the research team.

We invite you to read of the experiences both of “People on the Move” and those from churches and Faith Based Organisations who work with them. We would like to hear of your reactions to this research and in interdiac we will be following up this theme through our Research Platform, learning programmes and by networking.

