



Habitat
for Humanity®
Poland

**Ensuring accommodation for refugees arriving from Ukraine,
following the Russian invasion**

Dublin, June 3rd

Millions of families are losing their homes

- large-scale refugee movements of almost 6 million persons have taken place into European countries, including Poland, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Slovakia;
- in Poland, some 3.5 million refugees have crossed into the country from Ukraine since February 24, 2022;
- **projected refugee population remaining by December 2022: 2.6 million;**
- projected refugee population entering by December 2022: 4.3 million;
- nearly all refugees arriving are women and children (circa. 90%).



Housing situation in Poland before the war

- Poland was facing housing difficulties even before February 2022;
- Housing deficit: the average number of rooms per person in Poland was 1.1 with an EU average of 1,7 (Eurostat, 2019). 392 dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants (in EU – 491 dwellings per 1000 inhabitants);
- Initial results of census 2021: 15.2 million apartments, located in 6.8 million buildings (increase of apartments by 12.6%, buildings by 13.3% in comparison to 2011). **12.1% of all apartments are unoccupied**, 10.4% of buildings.



Housing market after the influx of people from Ukraine

- Rental market is saturated: within the first month of war the number of rental offers decreased by 60% and more in majority of Polish cities (Kraków, Wrocław, Warszawa).
 - In Warsaw the number of offers on 24th of February was: 5,673, while on 31st of March: 2,258.
- Rents are growing:
 - In comparison to previous month by: 7% (Warsaw), 8.6% (Łódź), 4-5% (Gdańsk, Kraków, Wrocław);
 - In comparison to previous year by: **19.9% (Wrocław)**, 16.9% (Poznań), 14.9% (Gdańsk), 10.5% (Warsaw).





**Everyone
deserves a
decent place to
live.**



**How can we provide a safe place
for those who have lost it?**

How to improve housing situation?

- **Unlocking existing housing stock** (,investment' apartments, second homes, stock owned by the State Treasury companies) and developing the model of **social rental agencies**,
- Construction of a new housing stock (partnerships, faster procedures, non-profit developers),
- **Increasing affordability** – housing allowances,
- General solutions improving the housing market.



Readapting empty spaces and underutilized properties

- Statistics Office: at the end of 2018 there were **54,204 empty spaces in Poland**;
- Research of 2021: **case study** of three cities including Warsaw, Kielce and Zawiercie **almost 700 buildings and almost 9,000 vacant commercial and residential premises** were identified;
- Local authorities are mostly aware of the challenges associated with empty spaces, including costs of adaptations, poor conditions, need to replace heating sources and ensure energy efficiency and compliance with current standards.



Research results

- „Analysing existing revitalization programs, it was discovered that **vacant residential properties are rarely considered for renovation**. Usually, only vacant non-residential properties considered to have **a negative impact on the surrounding community are selected for renovation**. Further analysis of community revitalization projects and conversations with local residents have identified that empty and neglected properties are on the rise and more often perceived negatively by the community as an unsafe and neglected space which can damage the cultural heritage of the town or city.”
- [https://habitat.pl/files/HabitatPoland_IRMiR_Empty_Spaces_Report_\(English%20Translation\).pdf](https://habitat.pl/files/HabitatPoland_IRMiR_Empty_Spaces_Report_(English%20Translation).pdf)



Rysunek 6. Możliwość przystosowania budynku do celów mieszkaniowych

- Blue – Yes (98)
- Orange – No (31)
- Grey – Don't know (23)
- Light grey – Other (6)

Figure 6. Potential adaptation of empty spaces for residential purposes / Source: own study



Habitat Poland's response

Supporting refugees on the move



Miasto
Stołeczne
Warszawa

- Habitat Poland runs a **reception point at the Warsaw East Train Station**.
- At the point Habitat Poland connects refugees arriving from Ukraine with solidarity housing units – Warsaw households volunteering to host refugees for free and vetted by the city. More than 700 people had been accommodated.
- Habitat Poland has also secured hostel and hotel rooms to supplement the city's accommodation inventory. More than 400 people had been accommodated.



Social rental

- The Social Rental Program acts as a **mediating agency**, leasing units directly with flat owners and then renting them at affordable or subsidized rates to refugees.
- Habitat ensures rents are paid on time and that flats are returned in a condition no worse than at the beginning of the lease.
- Habitat secures flats mostly from the private market.
- People served since February 24: **103**.
- Apartments: **34**.
- Possibility of scaling up – model for municipalities.



Empty Spaces

- A project that started in 2021 in partnership with Habitat Great Britain and a goal to **develop and scale up a sustainable model of refurbishments of empty spaces to increase the affordable housing stock.** First renovations were conducted in 2021.
- At this point Habitat Poland will focus on more affordable land markets like Gliwice to assess the feasibility of acquiring an entire building for refurbishment to use for long-term social rental.



In-kind donations

- A shop to sell donated furniture (ReStore) has become the logistics center and a warehouse for the NFIs distribution (mostly household items, such as beds, mattresses);
- We receive donations that are directed to people fleeing Ukraine settling in in Poland;
- Habitat Poland supported with donations **more than 5,000 people so far.**





“I just want my children to stay alive”

-Marina



When Marina and her daughters fled the war in Ukraine they became refugees in Poland. Since arriving in Poland, Habitat for Humanity have supported the family by securing temporary accommodation in Warsaw.

“When we entered the flat for the first time, it seemed to us that here was a place where we can now sleep in peace, without being woken by sirens in the middle of the night, without having to sit in the hallway for three hours in a row... My children had a good night’s sleep for the first time...”

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