

Support for refugees integrating into Polish society

33-year-old Inna Kokhanova is a case manager at a refugee integration centre in Warsaw. The centre, run by the HumanDoc Foundation, is one of several in Poland supported by Plan International. Providing integration and support services for refugees in Warsaw, the centres are designed as safe spaces for Ukrainian families.

Originally from Ukraine herself, Inna has been working at the centre since the start of the conflict. Fluent in Polish, she is able to help people organise their official documents or look for work and accommodation. Above all, she shares her optimism and strength with them.



“Each month we have around 200 people coming to our centre, and around 1,000 individual visits. We take each case one by one for diagnosis. All our therapists are Ukrainian. This is very important because they know the Ukrainian and Russian languages, and they can speak, explain and work with people in their mother tongue. It is very important to do this if you want to really help people. It also means that Ukrainian people can work here to earn money, and they know all about war. We also have teachers and therapists that are Polish. Many people speak both languages.

Most of the children receive intensive speech therapy to help them start to cope with the trauma of what has happened since the war. It is vital to keep the lessons they learn going, even at home. One way we achieve this is by providing classes to parents. They can then continue the therapy at home with the knowledge that they have acquired.

Making sure that we can reach every child is our priority, albeit difficult. There are so many people in need, and we try to ensure that nobody gets left behind. The children vary in age. Some are

studying at various educational levels. Some are too young to be in school. We also help children with varying degrees of autism and learning difficulties who benefit from speech therapy. It's not only children that may have needed help before the war, but also those that may have developed some sort of difficulty because of it.

Funding can be hard to keep on top of. We help so many people and want to continue that, but money can sometimes cause issues. There are a lot of people waiting to get in, we try our best to accommodate them all.

I think that every child who sees a little bit of war needs help. No child should have to live through what these children are growing up in. We are all committed to helping alleviate some of the trauma caused by what is happening in Ukraine. Nearly eight million people from Ukraine have become refugees, we need to continue to help as many as we can.”