

Inter-institutional cooperation – role of public institutions and NGOs

“I want to help refugees”
NGO, Latvia



**GRIBU
PALĪDZĒT
BĒGĻIEM**



«I want to help refugees» was founded in 2015 by a group of like-minded people with the aim of volunteering their support for asylum seekers in Latvia in moments of crisis. At the time, Latvia had agreed to accept relocated asylum seekers from other EU countries. At first, it started as a Facebook group which currently has 23.8K members.



In 2016, «I want to help refugees» was registered as an official NGO for transparency reasons and to start writing project applications and attract funding. During the following years we continued to work on a relatively small scale, with the number of paid employees fluctuating from 0 to 3.



edo savu
eco velosipē
bēgļiem no Ukrainas!

24.02.2024. brought significant changes. «I want to help refugees» took the initiative and created a network of approximately 20 NGOs, who were ready to support Ukrainian refugees. The immediate response of the government sector was to establish an «Operational Management Centre» (OMC), an inter-institutional working group, led by the Mol. Since we were coordinating the NGO network, we were designated as the representatives of the NGO sector at the OMC.



Since 2022, we have organised various events and meetings for supporting or organising support for Ukrainian refugees, as well as providing guidance for Ukrainian RLOs. We have been one of the organisations that have been implementing various integration measures funded by the Society Integration Foundation of Latvia.



There is one type of event that particularly demonstrates the level of trust between our organisation and the public sector – the biannual Meeting for stakeholders involved in supporting Ukrainian refugees at the premises of the Mol. The last meeting was focused on education issues, and it gathered representatives from NGOs, including RLOs, government institutions, as well as international experts in the field of refugee education. The event is held at Mol premises, and the invitation is signed and sent by the Minister of the Interior, however all the rest is organised by us.



Ukraine to Latvia

Information for Ukrainians coming to
Latvia

Arrival

Long-term stay

Cities and regions

Social support

Transport

Housing

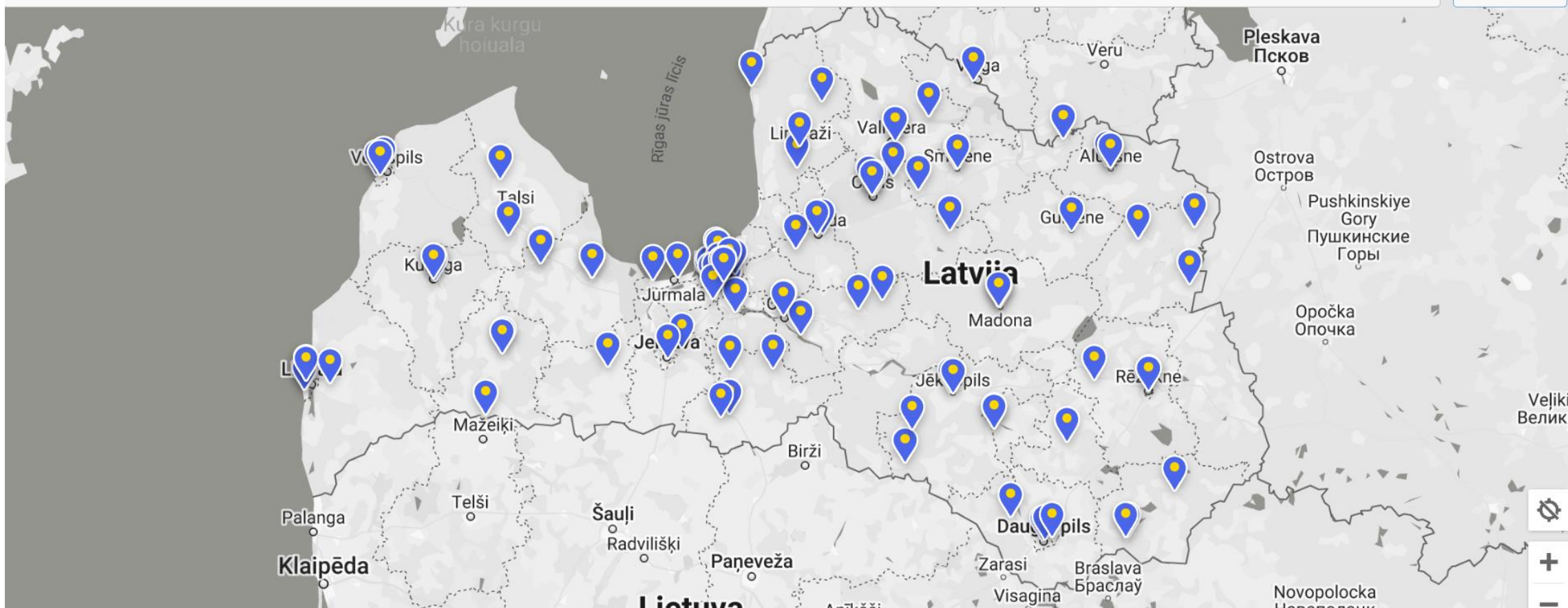
Healthcare

Another great example of the level of trust between us and the public sector is the fact that we are maintaining the website <https://www.ukraine-latvia.com/> It contains the most important and up-to-date information and links to other resources for Ukrainian refugees arriving and staying in Latvia. The website was created by an IT company 3 days after the full-scale invasion, but soon we took it over and have been keeping it up-to-date ever since. This is still the main information resource for Ukrainian refugees in Latvia, and a banner with a link is included in all government websites.

Meklēt



FILTRĒT ☒



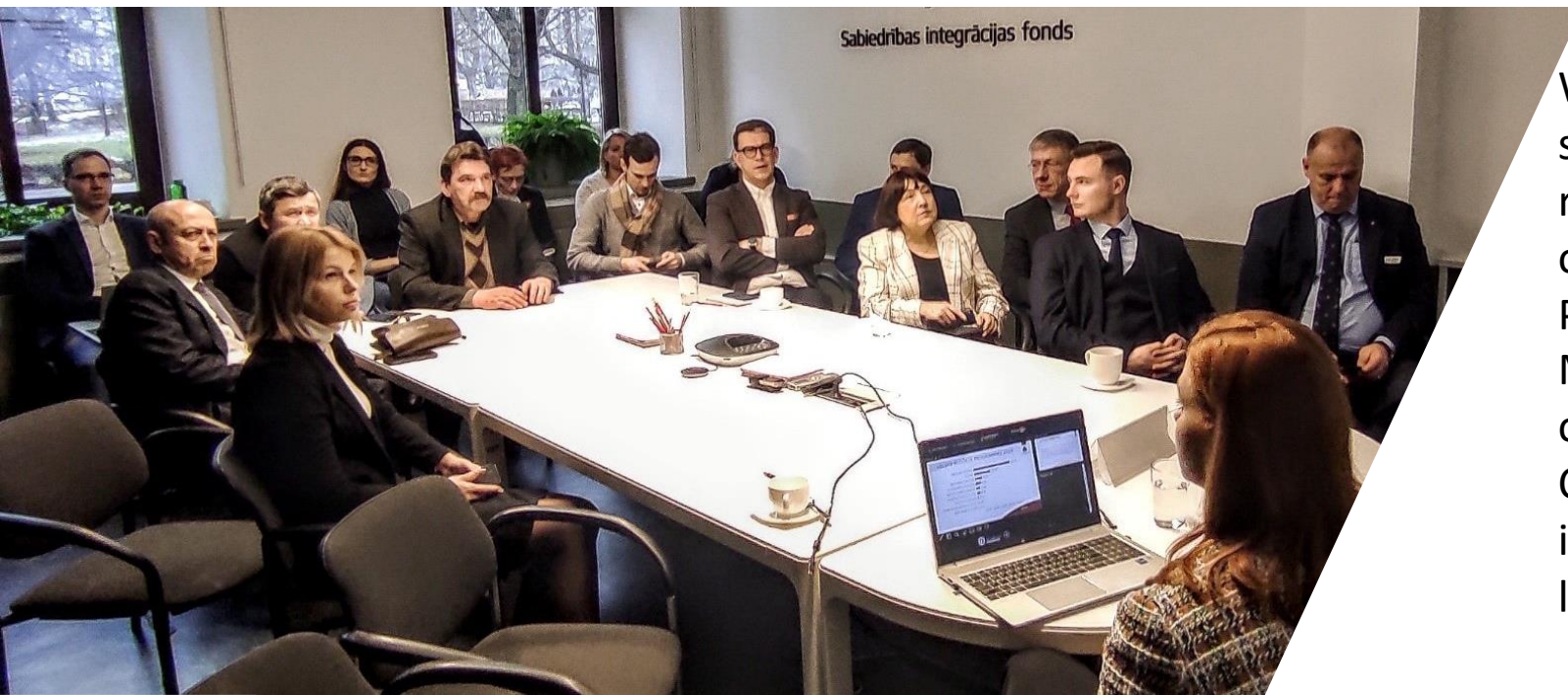
We also created a Charity Map (<https://www.palidzibaskarte.lv/en>) with all the spots where refugees can receive help. Initially, it was available in 4 languages (Latvian, Ukrainian, English and Russian), but now also in Arabic and Dari.

Riga Support Centre for Ukrainians



NVO at
Підтримка неурядових організацій

Soon after the full-scale invasion Riga Support Centre for Ukrainians was established, which provided immediate support for housing, registration, employment, etc. We found out that many Ukrainian refugees have different questions, some general, some requiring non-standard solutions. Therefore, we established an NGO information point at the Centre. The Centre is now moved from the city centre to the outskirts, but we are still maintaining our information point.



We are also continuing our advocacy work, striving for the best possible policy and regulation in the interests of Ukrainian and other refugees. We are participating in Parliamentary Committee, Cabinet of Ministers and other meetings, providing our opinions on new legal acts and amendments. Currently, an overarching challenge in all areas is shifting the focus from a crisis response to a long-term integration support.



At the same time, we are continuing to support our initial target group – asylum seekers applying for the regular asylum procedure. We are still providing humanitarian aid, visiting detention centres and advocating for a better solution to the Belarus border situation.

Thank you!