

## EWSI Analysis on Voluntary and Citizens' Initiative: Lithuania

### 1 INTRODUCTION

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Are considered as citizens' initiatives all activities mobilising large numbers of volunteers (e.g. in workplaces, schools, local communities, etc.) to support immigrants' long-term integration and/or open up the public to integration matters and diversity. **These initiatives most notably involve people-to-people or mutual learning activities** matching migrants with mentors, peers or people volunteering their time or space. These initiatives may concern housing, mentoring, child or university-level education, extracurricular activities for children, lifelong learning, language learning, information provision, assistance with public services, translation, job preparation, awareness-raising/advocacy, etc.

Given EWSI's thematic focus, the emphasis is placed on citizens' initiatives focusing on long-term reception (e.g. during the asylum procedure) and integration (of beneficiaries of international protection and/or other categories of migrants), and not on the **initial front-line humanitarian reception for asylum-seekers** (e.g. food, clothing, shelter before entering the reception phase).

### 2 LONG-ESTABLISHED VOLUNTEERS/CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

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*Description of initiatives that have been running for several years.*

NGOs as [Caritas Lithuania](#) and the Lithuanian [Red Cross Society](#) are working with volunteers but their activities are fragmented and often not refugee or migrant integration-oriented. They also run integration projects such as a [Consulting Centre for Migrants](#) in Vilnius, providing information on labour market or cultural integration, but without involving volunteers.

However, one example of initiatives implemented with the help of volunteers is Caritas' inclusive and social day centre [Kultūry įkalnė](#) (Cultural Uphill) that has been operational since 2008. The project brings asylum seekers and the local community together around joint activities, such as computer literacy classes, board game tournaments, as well as social, legal and psychological counselling for adults.

## 3 NEW VOLUNTEERS/CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

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*Description of major initiatives started only recently, particularly since the large numbers of refugee arrivals in 2015.*

The Lithuanian society started to follow good practices of foreign local community engagement in 2015. Eventually, two Facebook groups were created, where support for refugee resettlement and integration are the focus point. Citizens do not only support the processes of resettlement, but are also ready to help with accommodation, legal issues and other important aspects of integration. [Read more](#)

1. [Assistance for refugees in Lithuania](#) has 800+ members (November 2016)
2. [I welcome refugees](#) has more than 3800 likes (November 2016).

Unfortunately, no other integration project aiming at working with a large number of volunteers or local community members are initiated.

## 4 PROFILE OF VOLUNTEERS

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*Description and comparison of the profile of volunteers active in old versus new initiatives.*

Unknow

## 5 INNOVATION ASPECT

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*Description and comparison of innovative or entrepreneurial aspects of the old versus new initiatives.*

In the Lithuanian context, the innovation of new initiatives lies both in their willingness and capacity to involve large numbers of volunteers, as well as their very nature of grass-roots “organisations”.

## 6 ADDED VALUE

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*Description of the added value of such initiatives (both long-established and new), including the uniqueness of their activities compared to the existing practices of the (1) state and (2) NGOs.*

At the current stage, these groups are participating in shaping public debates and opinion on refugee resettlement and integration, and are planning to participate in integration processes of relocated refugees actively.

## 7 IMPACT

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*Description and comparison of the impact of old versus new initiatives.*

Will long-standing NGOs take the responsibility in managing these resources, or will local community members will continue to mobilise themselves? Or will they together create platforms for self-sustainable integration processes? The impact, if any, of new initiatives is unknown for the moment.