

The Inclusive City – Local Strategies in Response to Migration Challenges. The Case of Poznań

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The paper entitled “*The Inclusive City – Local Strategies in Response to Migration Challenges. The Case of Poznań*” focuses on analysing the role of municipal government in shaping integration policies under conditions of increasing population mobility. The starting assumption is that contemporary migration – economic, educational, and forced – significantly affects the functioning of cities, transforming their social structure, labour markets, education systems, and demand for public services. An inclusive city is understood as one that not only responds to current migration-related challenges but also actively develops long-term strategies that foster integration and social cohesion.

The presentation identifies and analyses the key factors shaping the relationship between migration processes and urban functioning, with particular attention to their temporal and spatial variability. Contemporary migration – both internal and international – constitutes an important component of demographic, social, and economic transformations occurring at various spatial scales, with the most visible changes observed in urban centres. Cities are the primary destinations of population flows and, at the same time, spaces where the effects of mobility are most fully manifested – in the labour market, education, housing, public services, and social integration. The changing structure of migrants’ origins, the dynamics of inflows, and geopolitical conditions necessitate flexible responses from local authorities.

The paper pays special attention to the role of local authorities in shaping integration policies and implementing measures that support foreign nationals. It is at the municipal level that concrete tools and programmes most often emerge to address migrants’ current needs – from informational and language support, through educational initiatives, to activities fostering intercultural dialogue and social cohesion.

An attempt is made to identify the key factors determining local approaches to migration, including demographic, economic, institutional, and cultural conditions. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation – involving municipal administration, non-governmental organisations, educational institutions, and migrant communities – as the foundation of an effective inclusive policy. The spatio-temporal variability of migration processes, which requires flexibility and adaptive capacity from local authorities, is also highlighted.

The case study focuses on Poznań – a large urban-industrial agglomeration in western Poland where, in recent years, tools and programmes supporting foreign nationals have been developed in pursuit of a model of an open and diverse city. In recent years, Poznań has established itself as one of the national leaders in developing and implementing comprehensive solutions for migrant integration. A particularly visible period of change in municipal policy in this area has been observed since 2022, following the large influx of immigrants from Ukraine after Russia’s aggression against that state. In turn, the past year has brought a noticeable new wave of labour migrants from South American countries, particularly from Colombia. Although this wave is

significantly smaller than the inflow of war refugees from Ukraine, it also poses new challenges, particularly in overcoming language barriers, addressing substantial cultural differences, and ensuring access to healthcare. The analysis of Poznań's experience demonstrates how municipal government can actively co-create local migration policy, respond to crisis situations, and build a model of an open and inclusive city that meets the needs of a diverse community of residents. It also shows how local strategies can address migration-related challenges while strengthening social capital and urban development.

The paper focuses in particular on presenting the main assumptions of the new "Policy for the Integration of Migrant Women and Men in Poznań for 2026–2031," adopted by the City Council in February of this year. The document outlines a strategy of actions aimed at supporting the shared functioning of foreign nationals and long-term residents of Poznań. Alongside the announcement of the new strategy, a special body – the Council for the Integration of Migrant Women and Men – was established to monitor the implementation and effects of the new directive. Key assumptions of the new policy include cooperation with various stakeholders, as integration is not solely the responsibility of municipal authorities but also of social organisations, employers, and citizens themselves. A range of initiatives has also been planned in the area of language education (particularly in response to the growing number of Spanish-speaking residents, in order to facilitate their access to information and municipal services). Further important areas include labour market support, for example through agreements with employers to better assist migrants in obtaining and maintaining employment. Education of children is another crucial area, with particular emphasis placed on Polish language learning for children with migration experience, taking parents' opinions into account. These measures aim to make integration more effective through the joint involvement of multiple stakeholders in the process.

In the field of municipal activities supporting migrant integration, cooperation with non-governmental organisations plays an important role. An example is the Migrant Info Point (MIP), an initiative of the Migration Research Centre at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. MIP was established in 2013 to support foreign nationals living in Poznań and to provide comprehensive assistance in adapting to new conditions. It is a place where foreigners can obtain information and free support related to legalisation of residence and employment, as well as everyday matters. MIP staff assist with very practical needs, such as completing forms, providing translations, and explaining the complexities of Polish law. Workshops, language courses, training sessions, and integration meetings are also offered, including English classes, relaxation-oriented fitness activities, and handicraft workshops. The main idea behind MIP is the integration of people from different parts of the world with Polish residents, including through building new relationships and friendships and developing useful skills and competences. Integration initiatives also create opportunities for professional development – MIP includes a Labour Market Team of four members who offer consultations on issues such as labour law regulations, legal employment of foreigners, and starting a business.

According to official registers, approximately 80,000 foreign nationals currently reside in Poznań, of whom nearly 70,000 are citizens of Ukraine. Many of them have decided to establish

longer-term ties with the city, which may indicate a relatively effective municipal integration policy.