



# DRC and integration of refugees in Denmark

AMIS

**DRC** DANISH  
REFUGEE  
COUNCIL

# Agenda

11:00-13:00

About DRC

Reception and integration of refugees in Denmark

Ukrainians – 3 years after



# About DRC

# Danish Refugee Council (Dansk Flygtningehjælp)

- Founded in 1956 – Hungarian refugees
- Largest Danish NGO with programs in 40 countries – emergency aid, protection, reconstruction etc.
- 8,000 employees
- In Denmark:
  - > Counselling of asylum applicants
  - > Integration activities
  - > Advocacy



# DRC Integration (appr. 110 employees and 5,500 volunteers)

- Employment
- Children & Family
- Volunteer
- Projects
- Knowledge & Development
  - > *Knowledge Center for Vulnerable Refugees*
- DFUNK

<https://pro.drc.ngo/where-we-work/europe/denmark/>

**DANSK  
FLYGTNINGE  
HJÆLP**

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## Integration

# DRC's Integration Circle



- **A dignified life** as a vision for integration activities: Support and enable refugees and migrants to be part of a community and to enjoy equal rights and opportunities in Denmark.
- Language proficiency, employment, participation in civil society, and an inclusive society are pivotal for the quality of life, empowerment and future possibilities of refugees and migrants.
- Meeting the individual with a focus on resources.



**Any questions or reflections?**

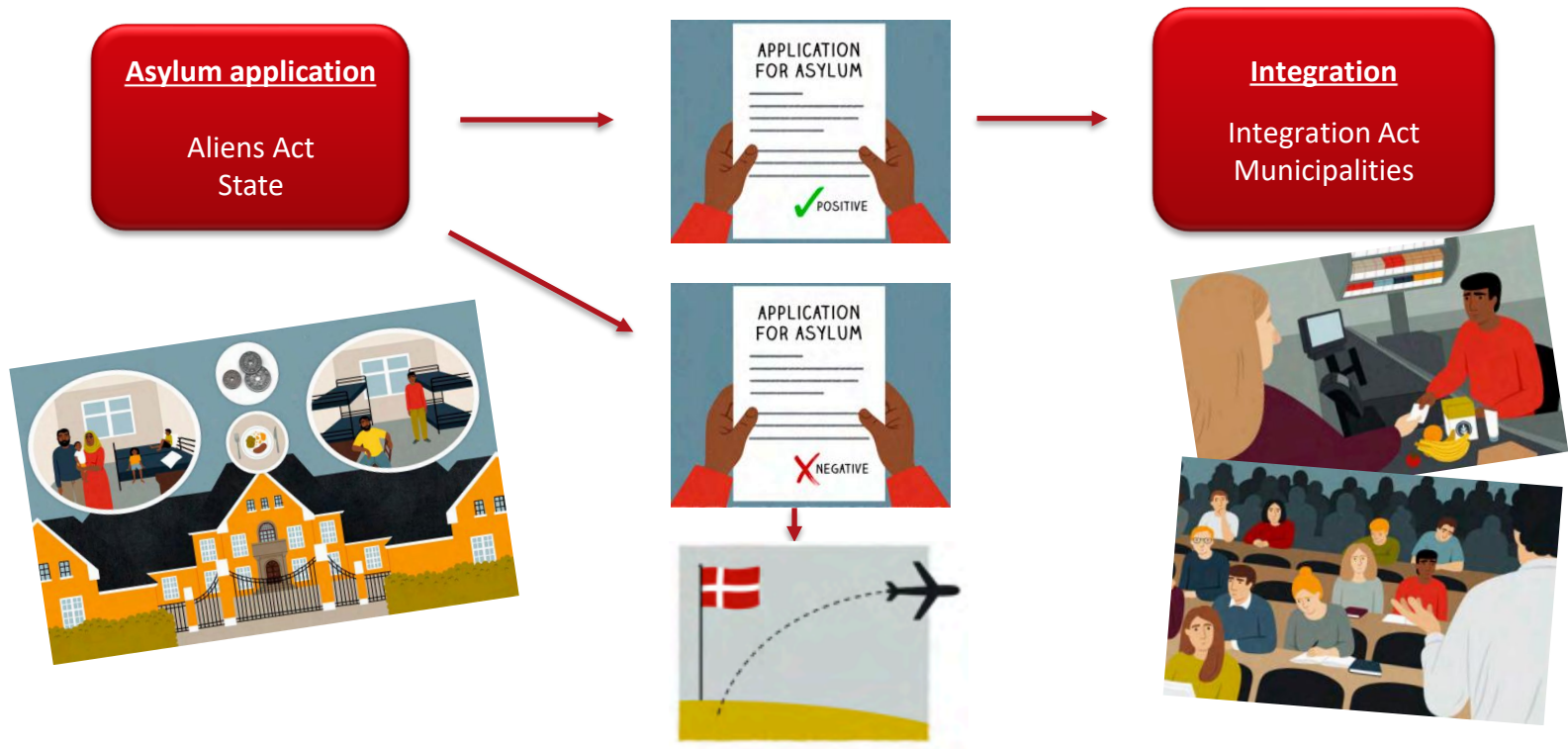




# Integration of refugees in Denmark



# Asylum and integration



# Asylum applicants and refugees i Denmark

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Asylum appl.	21,316	6,266	3,500	3,559	2,716	1,515	2,099	4,597	2,482	2,333
Residence permits	10,849	7,494	2,750	1,652	1,777	601	1,357	1,400	1,343	864

	Residence permits	To and incl. 2023
1	Syria	22,000
2	Bosnia-Herzeg.	21,000
3	Iraq	19,000
4	Iran	16,000
5	Stateless	15,000
6	Somalia	14,000
7	Afghanistan	13,000

Asylum appl.	2024
Syria	452
Türkiye	267
Eritrea	230
Afghanistan	185
Stateless	124

Ukrainians since  
24/2 2022:  
Appr. 53,000 got  
residence

# Trends in policy

- Many legal changes in recent years
- Some years with fewer asylum applicants (and refugees)
- Focus on temporary stay and return
- More difficult to obtain citizenship
- Focus on employment – early measures, women
- Restricted access to certain welfare benefits
- Refugees via UN resettlement programme
- Refugees evacuated from Afghanistan
- Displaced Ukrainians



# Residence permits (Aliens Act)

- §7.1 Convention status
- §7.2 Protection status
- §7.3 Temporary protection status
- Special laws (evacuated Afghans, displaced Ukrainians)
- Temporary residence permits
- Can apply for permanent residence permit after 8 years

# The Danish Integration Act

- Quota system dispersing refugees to (almost) all municipalities
- Introduction programme for refugees – up to 5 years
- Responsibility of municipalities – individual plans



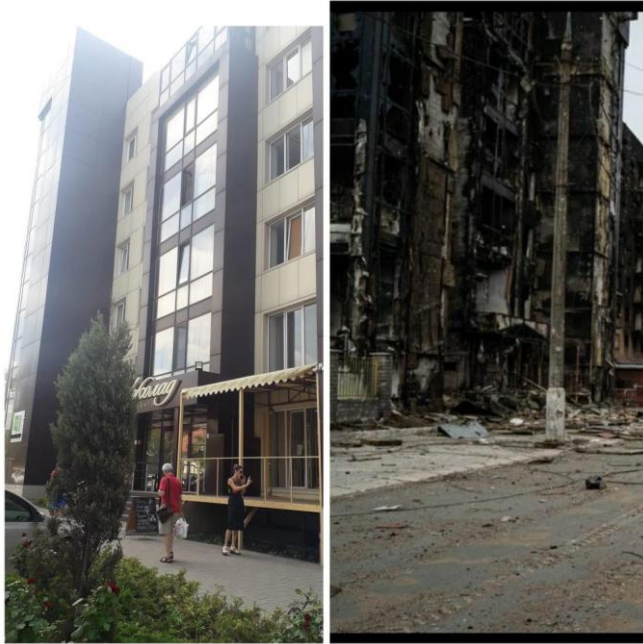
## Entitlements:

- Affordable housing
- Free Danish language tuition (up to five years)
- Help finding employment
- Unemployment benefit (low)
- Health care, mental and social care (trauma rehabilitation etc.)

## Obligations:

- Attend language training and pass test
- Actively participate in employment promoting schemes

# All refugees are shaken



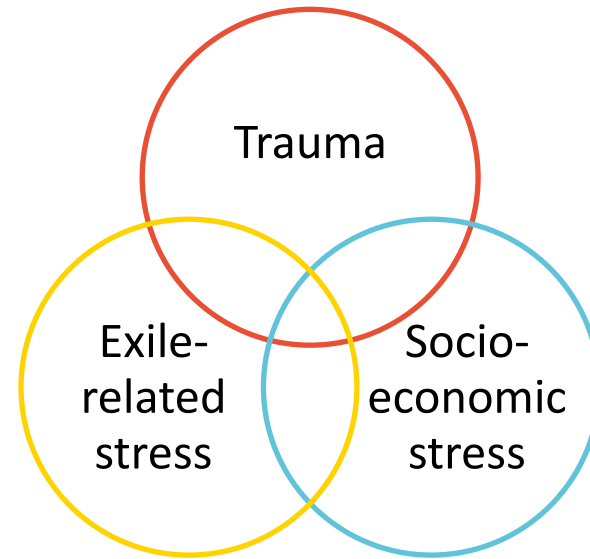
- Extreme conditions and events
- Losses
- Fundamentally changed situation
- Cultural differences
- Minority
- Client

# Focus on mental health and wellbeing

## Trauma

- 30-45 % of refugees have trauma-related symptoms (DK estimate)
- 13-25 % of refugees in high-income countries have PTSD
- 43 % of Syrian refugees affected by PTSD
- Employment rate in Denmark for refugees being treated for PTSD is below 10 %
- Refugees receiving treatment for PTSD (in DK) have, on average, lived in Denmark for 14½ years
- Measures to identify trauma are in need of improvement

## Holistic approach





# Conditions in exile are crucial

## Risk factors:

- Uncertainty about asylum and stay
- Separation from family
- Lack of network
- Low socio-economic status i exile
- Loss of status
- Language barriers
- Perceived discrimination

## Protective factors:

- Family reunification
- Social network
- Employment (or education)
- Language proficiency
- Permanent housing
- Access to health services
- Coping strategies

*Source: Preserving and Improving the Mental Health of Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Umar Ikram and Karien Stronks for the Health Council of the Netherlands, 2016*



**Any questions or reflections?**



# Displaced Ukrainians

3 years after the full-scale invasion

# Displaced Ukrainians in Denmark

- 6.8 mill. Ukrainian refugees and 3.6 mill. IPDs
- 53,000 got residence in DK – most women and children
- **Temporary residence** via special law until March 2026
- Covered by Integration Act with **same rights and obligations as other refugees**



# 2022 -> 2025

Ukrainians will be in Denmark  
for short period  
Ukraine is similar to Denmark,  
so will be easy



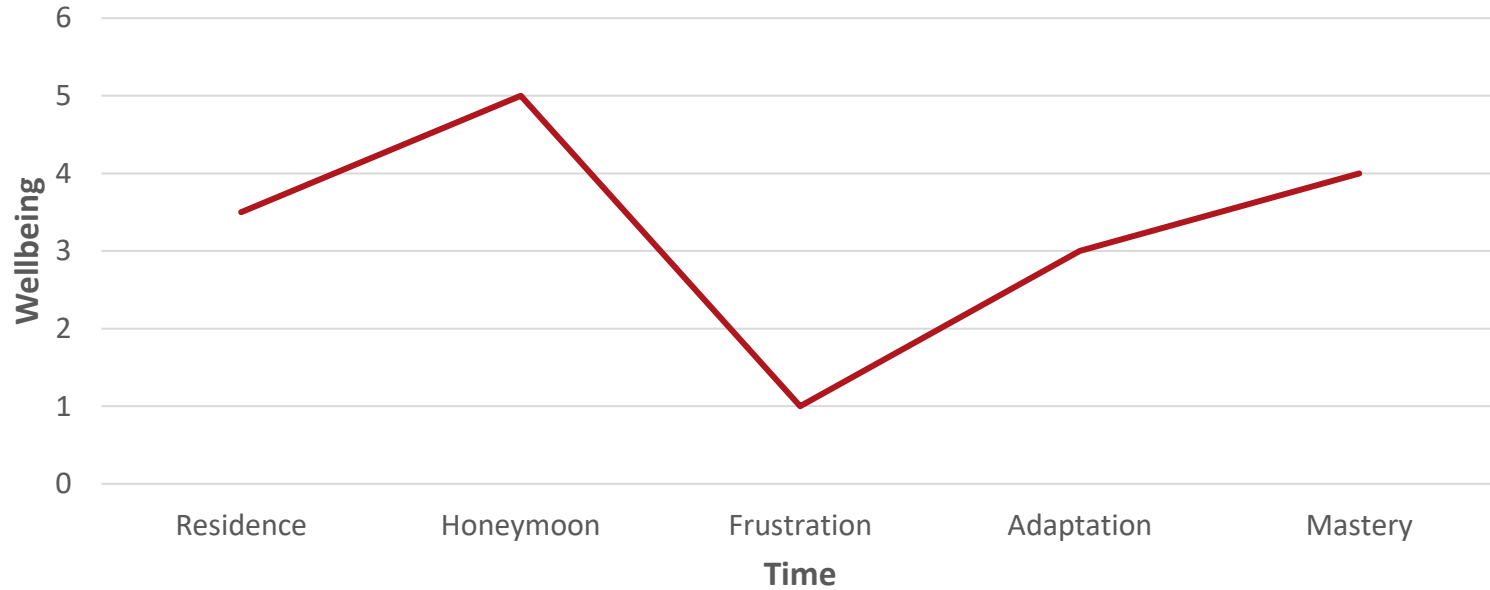
Prolonged stay in Denmark  
Denmark is in some ways very  
very different from Ukraine  
Ukrainians face same  
challenges as other refugees

# What do we know about wellbeing?

## Report from Uni Cph (2024)

- More than 40 % exposed to war
  - 25 % report symptoms equivalent to PTSD
  - 60 % want to stay in DK
  - Worry about family in Ukraine
  - Concern about access to health services
  - 13.3 % often unwanted alone (population in DK: 6.3 %)
  - High level of trust in Danish authorities
- 58 % in employment (other refugees after 3 years dk: 42 %)
  - 25 % on (low) unemployment benefit
  - Temporary shared housing
  - Low motivation reg. Danish language (changing)
  - Very different daycare and schools in Denmark
  - Elderly having a hard time

# Process of adaptation





# Panel-sessions with Ukrainian refugees

- 3 panels w/ 9 participants in each
  - > 2 with adults, 1 with youth
  - > January 2024
- Done in Ukrainian with interpretation to Danish
- Focus on exile, future, and needs



# Overall impressions from panels

## Future – stay or go?

- The pendulum swings away from Ukraine
- Great need for stability and to envision a future
- Temporary stay and uncertainty is troubling
- Desire to stay in Denmark
- To be recognized and seen as a human being (not just a refugee)

- A great desire to be able to make roots, to establish and envision a future.
- Currently, it is difficult to see meaning and future both in Denmark (due to temporariness) and in Ukraine (due to chaos, uncertainty, and lack of belief in positive changes).

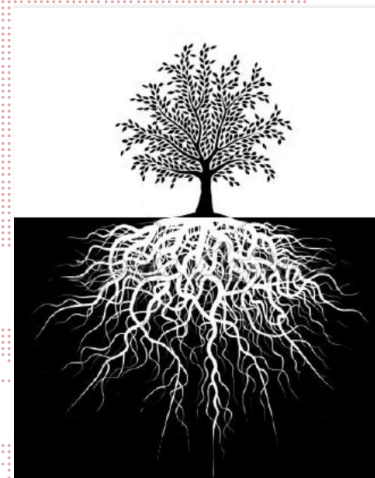
# Quotes from the adults

There is stability in Denmark compared to what was and is in Ukraine. When I arrived in Denmark, for example, I saw it said '1998' on the banknote. For me, it was a sign that there hasn't been massive inflation like in Ukraine, and that there is more stability in Denmark.

We prefer the education system in Denmark. Here in Denmark, it seems like they care about the children in the schools.

# Adult-panels

- Uncertainties make it difficult to plan
- Need for stability – how and where to get it?
- Geography (having Russia as a neighbor is never safe)
- Children's safety, well-being, and future is crucial
- Living conditions in Ukraine vs. Denmark
- The longing for Ukraine mainly concerns close ones, home
- Elderly participants find it hard to see future prospects
- Language and employment are important
- To be recognized, to contribute, to have a role
- Experiences of being looked down upon
- Desire for a path to permanent residency



## Quotes from the youngsters

I was supposed to become a doctor, that was the plan, but it has changed now. My parents wanted me to become a doctor, but now I have realized that I want something else. Perhaps to be a psychologist.

We feel some pressure. But for me, I think that I am only obligated to my parents, not my country. My country should give me something, for me to have a duty to defend it.


My parents have returned, and I am alone here. I want to stay; I do not see my future in Ukraine. I am from Kharkiv. It will be very difficult to find work there, and all buildings are destroyed; all educational institutions are destroyed.

# Youth-panel

- Clear and unequivocal desire to stay in Denmark
- Desire for permanent residency and citizenship
- Lost faith in Ukraine for the next many years
- Where can one develop, educate oneself, pursue dreams, travel?
- Following online education because parents insist
- Important to learn the language
- Experience more freedom (and less insecurity) in Denmark
- Experience involvement in school
- Danish youths can be a bit challenging – slang and language, desire for planning
- Do not want to be lumped together as refugees



# What does it mean in terms of support?



Focus on having to go 'home'  
soon

Low motivation to learn  
Danish

Low motivation for school

Low focus on 'integration'  
(beyond paid job)

Low awareness of integration  
services like DRC

Greater focus on long-term  
stay

Desire to learn Danish

Interest in school/education

Need for networks and  
support

More 'integration'

Need for long-term solution





"There is a need for long-term solutions [...]. Children are experiencing illbeing for too long, and there is a shortage of teachers with competences in *Danish as a second language*."

"The combination of insufficient Danish language skills, high educational ambitions, and a Danish school system that differs significantly from the Ukrainian one challenges young Ukrainians' transition from primary school to secondary education."



# DRC Integration's activities in DK

- Various **hotlines** (for volunteers, professionals, Ukrainians)
- Courses and **training** (e.g. pedagogues, teachers)
- Translated info-**material** to Ukrainian
- **Website** about life in Denmark (in Ukrainian): <https://velkommentildanmark.dk/>
- Scaling up **volunteer network**
- Psycho-social group programs (**MindSpring**), play groups for children, groups for seniors
- Professional **psycho-social support**
- **Screening project** for some municipalities (labour market)



## ЖИЗНЬ В ДАНИИ

На этом сайте вы, как новоприбывший украинец, можете прочитать и посмотреть фильмы о датском обществе и о жизни в Дании в целом. Здесь вы сможете, среди прочего, получить больше информации о детях, уходе за детьми и школе, медицинском обслуживании и работе в Дании.

Выберите тему ниже и узнайте больше.

Добро пожаловать в Данию.



**Any questions or reflections?**



Thank you!

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