

The FREE Refugee Idea

The goal of our campaign is to raise awareness about refugees and to end hate speech against them. The FREE Refugee concept is based on the statement defined by our team: ‘We seek to FREE refugees from the mental and physical shackles that society has placed on them.’

As two main metaphors for our campaign we have chosen a house and a bird.

The house. This metaphor is intended to evoke warm feelings associated with a safe place and building a home together. The message is that each of us is a part of a house that we can build together. Each of us, despite our differences, adds irreplaceable value to this house.

In our campaign, we characterize Poland as “The Polish House”. The Polish house is a safe place, home for all people regardless of their ethnic or national backgrounds because Poland is a place rooted in ethnic diversity- and for that reason, refugees and migrants should be welcomed into the Polish House.

Initially, it was extremely difficult for us to focus and choose the direction of our project. We entertained several ideas during concept ideations: should we communicate our message via a life size installation, documentary video, infographic posters or other forms of creative expression. Following several discussions where our team weighed all of the pros and cons of each media option, we decided to make a thematic visual campaign in social media. In today’s world, over 500 million people from around the world have Facebook profiles and, therefore, the majority of these people get most of their news and information from social media platforms. In fact, it has been stated that over 1/3 of Americans alone receive their daily news from Facebook. With this in mind, our team decided that if we created a strategically planned and designed campaign, then our message could be rapidly spread throughout our networks by capturing the attention of friends and families to

ultimately raise awareness about the harmful affects of hate speech on marginalized communities-particularly migrants and refugees. A focal point in our campaign was capitalizing on people's emotions. Through this technique, we explored what we (as humans) value, what we miss or lack in our lives, and what would happen if the things that we loved most were taken from us by a perceived societal majority group. Before placing the questions on the posters, we asked these questions to ourselves- how would WE feel if WE were refugees? If something so devastating and traumatic happened to us that we had to flee our beloved homes to a place where we were viewed as inferiors? One of the main reasons that people are indifferent to injustices to minority groups is often times a lack of knowledge. We sought to use our knowledge, recourses and skills to grab the attention of our viewers and at least make people answer to our posed questions internally. [poster no. 1/home]

THE POLISH HOUSE

In 2013,

there were 38.5 million people in Poland

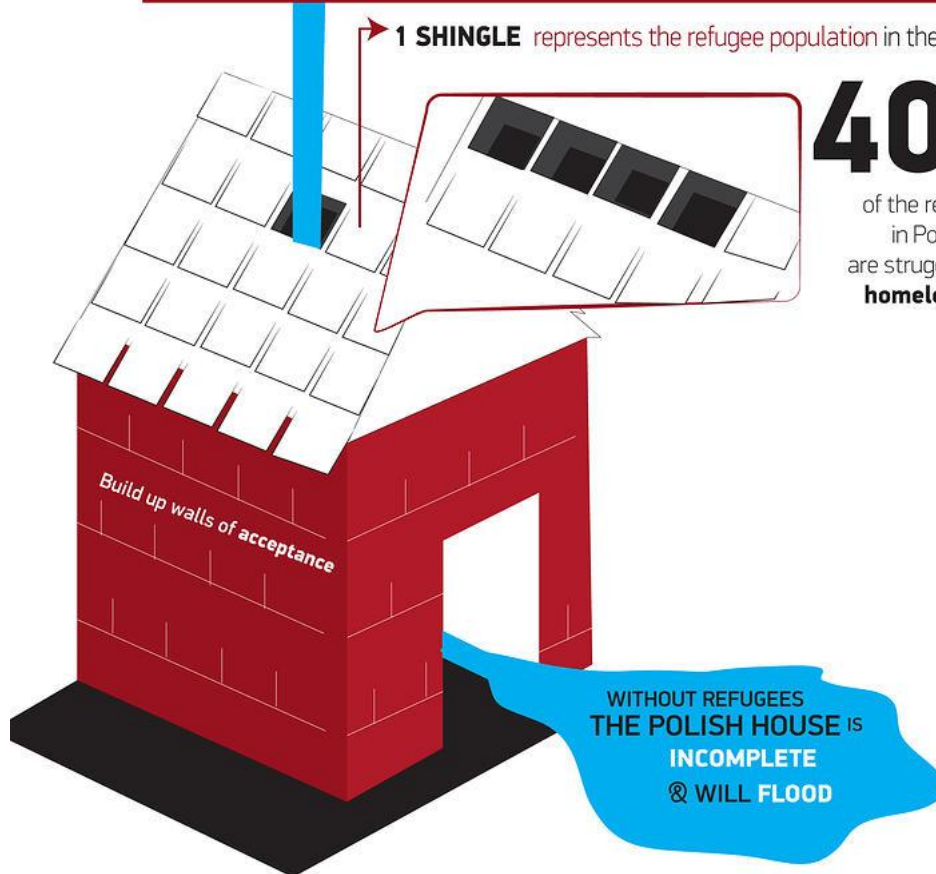
and **888** people in the Polish Population are refugees



1 SHINGLE represents the refugee population in the Polish House

40%

of the refugees in Poland are struggling with homelessness



LET'S MAKE THIS HOUSE A HOME

FreeRefugee 

The bird – the symbol of migration and peace. In our campaign, the bird is an allegory that represents a refugee. The bird is carrying the sticks in it's mouth to build a nest or it's home. It is migrating in order to find a safe place to stay, a safe place to live, and a place to start a new life. [\[a bird logo\]](#)



We designed a special graphic devoted to the World Refugee Day that is celebrated worldwide on 20th of June each year. We encouraged Facebook users in our combined Polish, Ukrainian and American social media networks to put this graphic as their profile picture on the World Refugee Day (for the whole weekend: 20-22nd of June 2014). To share more 'active' message within the graphics, the following sentence was added: 'I advocate for the refugee rights', with the reference to the website freerefugee.com (for everyone who would like to learn more about the campaign and our missions).



The colors of the campaign

White and red are the basic colors of the Polish flag [\[picture\]](#)

These two colors served as a first inspiration for our total campaign design: red (and its variations) has become a basis color for the main logo of the website and for all the graphics/posters as well.

CHANNELS/WAYS OF COMMUNICATION

We decided to choose two main channels of communication:

1. Facebook page: FreeRefugee (<https://www.facebook.com/freerefugeepl>)
2. Website: www.freerefugee.com (<http://www.hiafreerefugee.wix.com/freerefugee>)

Through both of these platforms, we created original graphics and infographic posters to visually display our message relating to the statistics of hate speech and hate crimes committed against migrant and refugee peoples in Poland.

BUILDING THE NETWORK

Referring to the workers of „Fundacja dla Somali”, we came in touch with most of the NGO’s, institutions and associations in Poland that are dealing with the refugees issues. The names of 25 contact organizations are listed below:

Afryka Inaczej (www.afryka.org) Autokreacja (www.autokreacja.org), Caritas – Centrum Pomocy Migrantom i Uchodźcom (www.migranci.caritas.pl), Dom Kaukaski (www.domkaukaski.org), Dunaj Instytut Dialogu (www.dialoginstytut.pl) Fundacja Forum na rzecz Różnorodności Społecznej (www.ffrs.org.pl), Fundacja Międzynarodowa Inicjatywa Humanitarna (www.mih.ihif.eu), Fundacja Ocalenie, Fundacja Ormiańska KZKO (www.fundacjaormianska.pl), Fundacja Polskie Centrum Pomocy Międzynarodowej, Fundacja Rozwój Oprócz Granic (www.frog.org.pl), Helsińska Fundacja Praw Człowieka, Instytut Spraw Publicznych - Program Polityki Migracyjnej, IOM Polska, Kontynent Warszawa – Warszawa Wielu Kultur (www.kontynent.waw.pl), Nasz Wybór (www.naszwybor.org.pl), Ośrodek Badań nad Migracjami, Polska Akcja Humanitarna, Stowarzyszenie na rzecz Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Obywatelskiego PRO HUMANUM (www.prohumanum.org), Polskie Stowarzyszenie Edukacji Prawnej, Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej, Stowarzyszenie Vox Humana, Stowarzyszenie Wolności Słowa (www.sws.org.pl), Towarzystwo Przyjaciół I Społecznego LO (www.towarzystwo.bednarska.edu.pl), Zgromadzenie Słowa Bożego (Księża Werbiści).

Two of these organizations have responded (until recently¹) to our e-mail messages and inquiries. The responses have been very positive, and these organization are ready to support our project and to collaborate with us.

Timeline of the project:

14-16th of June (Saturday -Monday) concept of home/house and a bird/eagle – as two main metaphors of the project

17th of June (Tuesday) – FreeRefugee has joined Facebook network.

19th of June (Thursday) - launching the website FreeRefugee.com

20th of June (Friday) – World Refugee Day

22nd of June (Sunday) – over 300 likes of FreeRefugee on Facebook, over 1 500 viewings, 401 people who react to the post on Facebook

14-23.06.2014 - in these days the World Refugee Day was celebrated in different cities all over Poland (events in Łomża, Warsaw, Cracow, etc.)

Facebook Page Content:

- 1) Infographics about the hate speech against different minorities in Poland
- 2) Articles from UNHCR/Amnesty International about refugees, who they are and how do they live
- 3) Statistics about the number of refugees
- 4) Announcements/information about events concerning the refugees' issues (World Refugee Day) that take place in Poland.

The posts' frequency => 2 posts per day

Results in numbers:

- ➔ **312 page likes (from 17.06-23.06.2014)**
- ➔ **4,6 K total post reach (organic)**
- ➔ **2 K the max reach of one post.**

¹ Until the end of June 2014 – the report time.

THE PROBLEM OF HATE SPEECH IN POLAND

Working on our project, our team has been inspired by the latest study performed by the Warsaw University Centre for Research on Prejudice and the Stefan Batory Foundation. The reports on hate speech in Poland (national opinion poll: „Mowa nienawiści. Raport z badań sondażowych”) was published this year in Polish².

In the report, the ‘hate speech’ phenomenon is defined according to what respondents from minority groups defined as offensive/aggressive talk against them (as examples of hate speech). The results of the survey showed that the representatives of the minorities firmly declared that statements seen by them as examples of hate speech should be forbidden.

The survey also showed what minority groups encounter hate speech against them most frequently. These groups are LGBTQ people, Romani people, black people, Jewish people, Muslim people, and Ukrainian people.

In order to increase awareness on the issue of hate speech in Poland, we have decided to present statistics concerning three of these groups: **Ukrainians, Muslims and black people** (*Nota bene*: the rest of the minorities were the main subject of social campaigns of other groups involved in the 2014 Humanity in Action Fellowship).

Where do we encounter hate speech in Polish society?

As far as hate speech against Ukrainians is concerned, the survey showed that young people encounter instances of such hate speech mostly on the Internet (46 percent of young Poles) and when talking with their friends (21 percent). Adults encounter such language mostly on the Internet (26 percent), when talking with their friends (19 percent), and on TV (20 percent).

The Internet is also the main vehicle for hate speech towards Muslims - both for young people (55 percent) and adult Poles (28 percent).

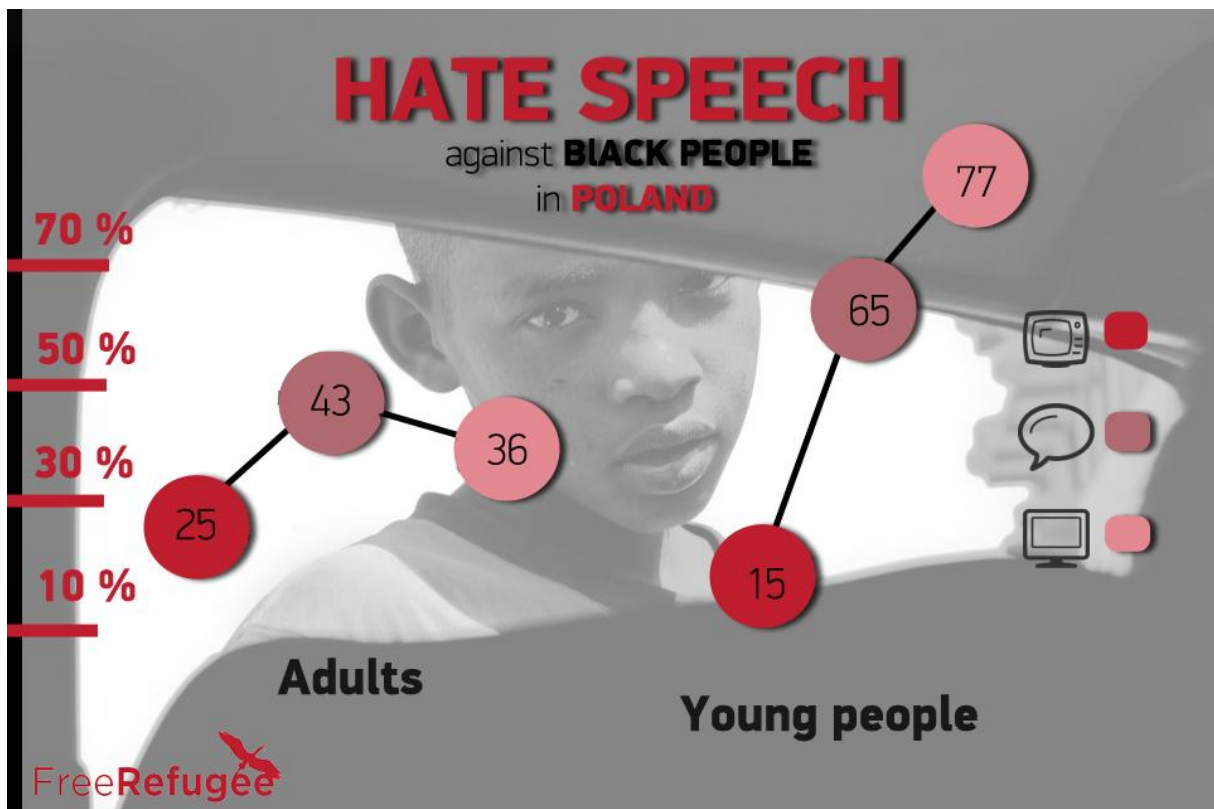
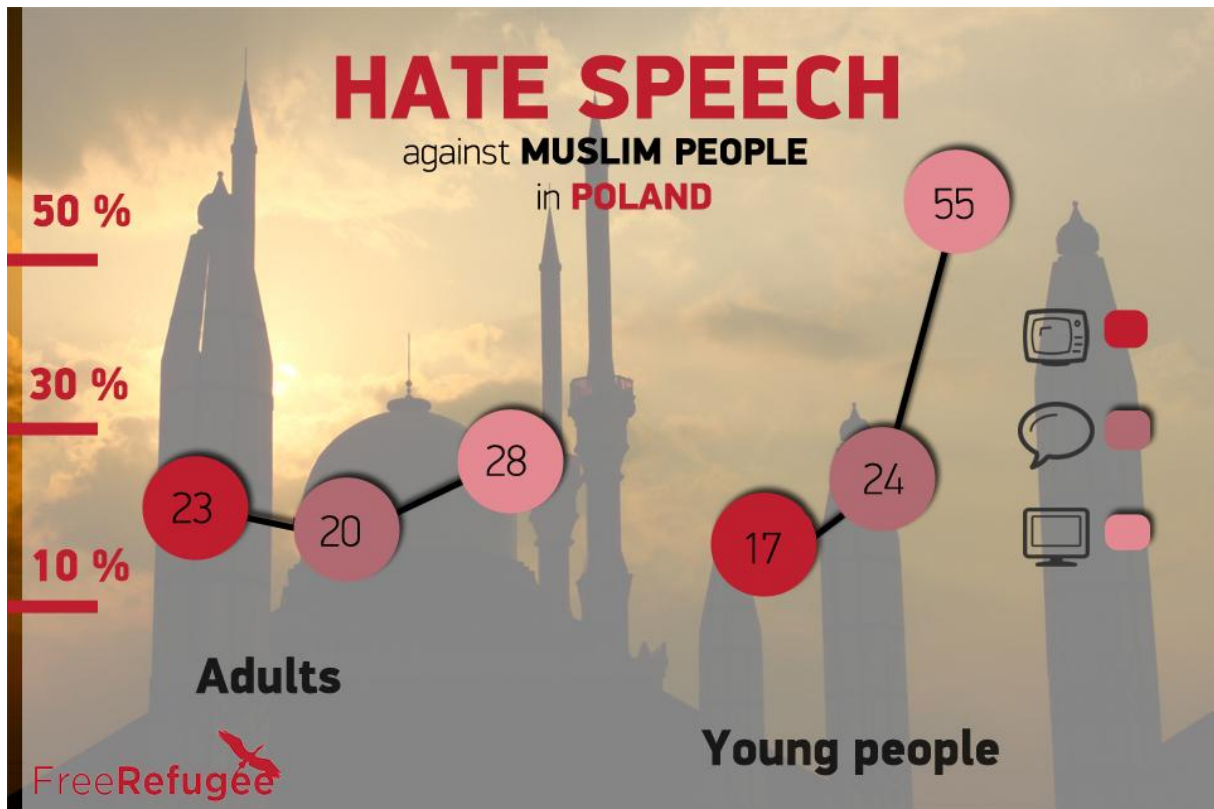
² Bilewicz Michał, Marchlewska Marta, Soral Wiktor, Winiewski Mikołaj, *Mowa nienawiści. Raport z badań sondażowych*, Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego, Warszawa 2014. The results of the report were presented during the conference in the Polish Parliament, on 12th of June 2014. The summary of the report is available in English. The Polish version is available online: http://www.ngofund.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/raport_final_poj.pdf [8.05.2015]

Hate speech towards black people in respondents' environment appears the most often on Internet as well. (70 percent - for young people, 29 percent - for adults).

Summarizing average results of the survey: hate speech is encountered first and foremost on Internet; the second place takes talking with friends. The third place as the most common place to encounter hate speech – is TV.

FREEREFUGEE INFOGRAPHICS with statistics, based on the Bilewicz's Report on hate speech:

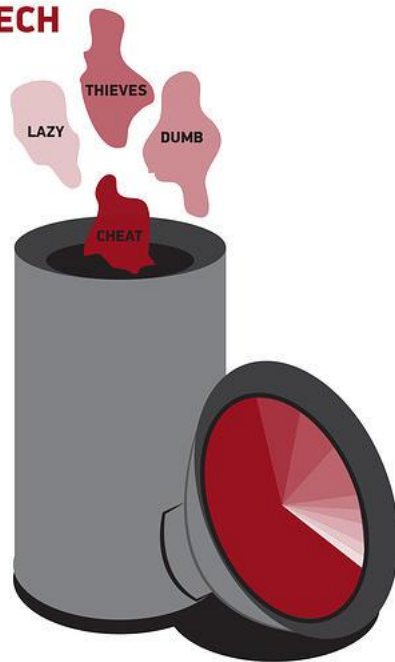




TRASH HATE SPEECH

25%

of comments towards ethnic minorities are **NEGATIVE** INCLUDING REFUGEES



REFUGEE ETHNICITIES IN POLAND

- RUSSIAN FEDERATION
- BELARUS
- SYRIA
- UKRAINE
- AFGANISTAN
- STATELESS
- IRAQ
- EGYPT
- KYRGYZSTAN

LET'S MAKE THIS **HOUSE** A *HOME*

FreeRefugee



NO HATE AGAINST REFUGEES.

FreeRefugee



BEZ NIENAWIŚCI WOBEC UCHODźCÓW

FreeRefugee 

IMAGINE series

[3 graphic examples]



IMAGINE

YOU HAVE TO LEAVE YOUR HOME AND FLEE TO AN UNKNOWN COUNTRY.

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?



FreeRefugee

IMAGINE

THIS IS YOUR NEW HOME.

WOULD YOU FEEL FREE?



Conclusions.

Our campaign was made with the intention to make our viewers think about these issues and how hate speech has played a role in their personal lives as either victims or offenders. We ultimately sought to alter the mindset of at least one person who had some prejudices against refugees to make them see that we are all experiencing this human life despite our race, religion, origin or sexual preferences. If just one person's mindset was altered, then our campaign was successful. We hope that by continually shedding light on the commonalities of all mankind, with the help of other advocates for refugees and minority rights, our planet (in particular the countries where we live Poland, USA and Ukraine) would one day become better and more just place to live.

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Różni, ale równi. Prawo a równe traktowanie cudzoziemców w Polsce, red. Witold Klaus, Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej, Warszawa 2013.

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Ziemia obiecana? warunki pracy cudzoziemców w Polsce, red. Witold Klaus, Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej, Warszawa 2011.

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