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Construction Sector Help Guide: Poland



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Introduction

Poland's construction sector is one of the country's essential economic pillars, employing well over a million people and contributing significantly to national growth. It supports a wide range of activities, including the construction of public infrastructure such as roads, railways, bridges, hospitals, and schools, as well as the development of housing, commercial buildings, and renovation projects in cities and rural areas. These activities not only drive economic development but also shape the daily lives of communities across the country.

The sector offers a broad variety of job opportunities, from physical labour and basic on-site assistance to highly specialised technical professions. This diversity makes construction one of the most accessible industries for newcomers to the Polish labour market. For refugees in particular, the sector provides a realistic and achievable route into employment. Many roles do not require formal qualifications at the beginning, and employers are often accustomed to working with international teams, especially as the sector depends increasingly on foreign workers to address ongoing labour shortages.

With time, workers can build experience, expand their skills, and move into more specialised positions. Poland has a well-established vocational and qualification system, meaning individuals can gain recognised certificates, licences, and trade-specific credentials. These qualifications open the door to higher pay, greater job security, and long-term career development.

This guide is designed to support refugees, job coaches, VET educators, employers, and organisations involved in labour market integration. It explains how the construction sector in Poland works, what skills are needed, how to enter different professions, and which training pathways are available. It also provides step-by-step guidance, clear job descriptions, and reliable links to useful services. The goal is to ensure that newcomers and those supporting them have the knowledge needed to navigate the sector confidently, safely, and successfully.



01

Understanding Poland's Construction Sector



Understanding Poland's Construction Sector

Poland's construction sector is a large and diverse industry that plays a vital role in supporting the country's economic growth and modernisation. It covers a wide variety of activities, employs people with many different skill levels, and is closely linked to other branches of the economy such as manufacturing, transport, energy, and real estate. For refugees, it is one of the most accessible sectors to enter, as many employers are open to hiring newcomers and offering opportunities to build skills over time.

1.1 Why the construction sector is important in Poland

Construction is central to Poland's long-term development plans. Over recent years, the country has invested heavily in:

- **Infrastructure projects**, such as new motorways, railway upgrades, bridges, tunnels, and transport hubs
- **Urban development**, including commercial centres, hospitals, schools, and public buildings
- **Housing and residential estates** to meet population growth and modern living standards
- **Modernisation of utilities**, such as water networks, heating systems, and electrical grids
- **Energy efficiency improvements**, including thermal insulation and renovation of older buildings

These ongoing investments create a steady demand for workers across a range of trades and skill levels.



Understanding Poland's Construction Sector



1.2 Structure of the construction workforce

Poland's construction workforce is diverse and made up of people with many different levels of experience, responsibilities, and training backgrounds. Understanding how the workforce is structured helps refugees, employers, and support organisations identify suitable entry points and realistic career pathways.

Poland's construction workforce includes:

◆ 1. Skilled workers

Professionals such as electricians, plumbers, bricklayers, tilers, roofers, and machine operators. These roles usually require vocational training, exams, or certification.

◆ 2. Semi-skilled workers

Workers with some experience who can support technical tasks, for example as helpers to electricians or plumbers, or who operate certain tools under supervision.

◆ 3. General labourers

Workers who carry out physical tasks such as cleaning sites, moving materials, preparing work areas, and assisting different teams. This level is often the entry point for refugees.

◆ 4. Technical and supervisory roles

Construction technicians, site foremen, quality controllers, health and safety specialists, and project coordinators. These roles usually require Polish language ability and formal qualifications.

Understanding Poland's Construction Sector

1.3 The role of foreign workers and refugees

Over the last decade, foreign workers have become essential to the functioning of the Polish construction sector. Many employers rely on international teams due to:

- Ongoing labour shortages
- Ageing workforce in skilled professions
- Decreasing interest among younger Poles in manual trades
- Growth in construction demand, especially in infrastructure and housing

Refugees and migrants from Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Asian countries now form a significant part of the workforce. This has created workplaces where multilingual communication is common and employers are more familiar with cross-cultural teams.

For refugees specifically, construction offers:

- **Immediate employment opportunities**
- **Flexible entry requirements**
- **A clear pathway to recognised qualifications**
- **High demand for practical skills**
- **Potential to build a long-term career**



You can dream, create, design and build the most wonderful place in the world. But it requires people to make the dream a reality.

Walt Disney



Understanding Poland's Construction Sector

1.4 Key types of construction activities in Poland

The sector consists of several sub-areas, each offering different types of work.



1. Residential construction

Building new flats, houses, small estates, and renovation of older buildings. Roles include bricklaying, painting, plastering, roofing, tiling, insulation, flooring, and carpentry.



2. Commercial construction

Work on offices, hotels, shopping centres, warehouses, and industrial buildings. Sites are often larger and may require more advanced coordination and certification.



3. Civil engineering and infrastructure

Large-scale projects such as roads, railways, bridges, tunnels, airports, and water systems. These sites require specialised skills such as machinery operation, concrete work, steel fixing, and technical installation.



4. Installation and finishing

Electrical installation, plumbing, heating systems, ventilation, air conditioning, interior finishing, and insulation. These trades are in constant demand.



5. Landscaping and outdoor works

Urban green spaces, park creation, outdoor paving, fencing, and garden construction. These roles are suitable for workers who prefer outdoor, physical tasks.

Understanding Poland's Construction Sector

1.5 Benefits and challenges of working in construction

Benefits

- **High demand for workers**, including entry-level roles
- Opportunities to learn quickly through practical work
- Pathways to better paid technical jobs
- Recognised qualifications available for those who want to progress
- Employers accustomed to international and multilingual teams
- Variety of work environments (indoors, outdoors, small teams, large projects)

Challenges

- Work can be physically demanding
- Some sites require understanding of basic Polish safety instructions
- Weather conditions affect outdoor work
- Certifications may be needed for specialised roles
- Long working hours in some periods
- Understanding these benefits and challenges helps refugees and support organisations prepare workers for realistic expectations.

Understanding Poland's Construction Sector

1.6 Construction as a stepping stone to long-term stability

Construction is more than temporary employment. It can be a path to:

- **Stable income**
- **Polish-recognised credentials**
- **Technical specialisation**
- **Supervisory or leadership roles**
- **Self-employment** (e.g., starting a small renovation or trade business)

Many refugees successfully develop long-term careers in construction because progression is based on practical skills and experience rather than formal education alone.



1.7 Who this sector is suitable for

Construction may be a strong choice for individuals who:

- Prefer practical, hands-on work
- Can work in teams
- Are comfortable with outdoor or physical tasks
- Want clear opportunities for advancement
- Are open to learning technical skills
- Can manage flexible working hours
- Are motivated to gain certifications

It may be less suitable for people with significant mobility limitations, medical restrictions, or a strong preference for administrative or office-based work.

02

Entering the Polish Construction Labour Market





Entering the Polish Construction Labour Market

Entering Poland's construction sector is a realistic and achievable pathway for many refugees. The industry offers opportunities at different skill levels, and employers are often open to hiring individuals who are new to the country. This section provides clear step-by-step information on legal requirements, preparation, typical job roles, and what newcomers should expect when joining the sector for the first time.

2.1 Legal Right to Work

Refugees and individuals with temporary protection have the legal right to work in Poland without needing a separate work permit. This makes the process of entering the labour market more straightforward.

Key points

- You do **not** need to apply for a work permit.
- Your employer must notify the local labour office (*Powiatowy Urząd Pracy, PUP*) of your employment.
- You must hold a valid document confirming your legal stay in Poland (e.g., temporary protection certificate, PESEL UKR, or residence permit).

What this means for refugees

- You can start working as soon as an employer is ready to hire you.
- You may apply for any job, including skilled roles, provided you meet the qualification or safety requirements.



Entering the Polish Construction Labour Market



2.2 Initial Steps Before Starting Work

Before starting any construction job in Poland, all workers must complete a few mandatory steps related to safety and health. These rules apply to Polish citizens and refugees equally.

◆ 1. Medical Examination

- A doctor must assess whether you are fit to perform your job.
The examination checks:
- General physical ability
- Ability to work at height (if required)
- Vision and hearing
- Any health conditions that may affect safety

You receive a certificate confirming your ability to work.

◆ 2. BHP Safety Training

BHP stands for *Bezpieczeństwo i Higiena Pracy* (Occupational Safety and Hygiene).

This training teaches:

- How to use tools and equipment safely
- How to prevent accidents
- Emergency procedures
- Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Basic workplace hazards

All construction workers must complete this training before entering a site.

◆ 3. Workplace Induction

Each construction site has different risks. Your employer will explain:

- Site layout
- Team structure
- Daily routines
- Safety rules for that specific site
- Who to contact in emergencies

This ensures newcomers understand how to work safely and confidently.





Entering the Polish Construction Labour Market

2.3 Entry Points for Refugees

Many newcomers begin with roles that require physical ability and basic training rather than formal qualifications.

Entry-Level Roles (Accessible for Beginners)

These positions are suitable if you are still learning Polish or do not have Polish certificates.

- General construction labourer
- Demolition helper
- Renovation support worker
- Material handling and loading
- Cleaning and preparation of sites
- Helper to skilled workers (electricians, plumbers, masons)
- Landscaping and outdoor maintenance

These roles allow refugees to gain:

- Practical knowledge
- Understanding of Polish work culture
- Experience working with tools and materials
- The chance to progress into skilled positions

Entering the Polish Construction Labour Market



2.4 Skilled Roles for Workers with Experience

Refugees with previous experience in construction can often move more quickly into skilled roles.

Skilled Trades

- Bricklayer / mason
- Painter and decorator
- Plumber / sanitary installer
- Electrician
- Carpenter / joiner
- Tiler
- Concrete worker
- Steel fixer
- Insulation worker
- Machine operator (e.g., digger, loader, forklift)

Employers may ask for:

- Proof of previous experience
- Demonstrations of practical skills
- Ability to understand safety instructions
- Certification for technical equipment
- Trial days or skills testing are common ways to show competence.



Entering the Polish Construction Labour Market

2.5 Roles Requiring Certification or Licensing

Some roles require official authorisation for safety reasons.

⚡ Electrical work

Requires SEP certification (up to 1 kV for most beginner roles).

🚧 Machinery operation

Requires a licence from the Technical Inspection Office (UDT).

👷 Work at height

Requires a medical clearance specifically permitting work above 3 metres.

🔥 Heating and boiler installation

May require specialised training and examination.

Refugees who do not yet have these qualifications can take courses later to move into better-paid roles.

2.6 Language Considerations

Although entry-level roles may require only basic Polish, improving language skills helps with:

- Understanding instructions
- Safety on site
- Building trust with employers
- Progression into skilled or supervisory positions

Refugees are encouraged to learn basic workplace vocabulary as early as possible.

Common site words include:

- *młotek* (hammer)
- *rusztowanie* (scaffolding)
- *kask* (helmet)
- *uwaga* (watch out)
- *przenieś* (move this)

Support organisations often offer free or low-cost Polish classes.



Entering the Polish Construction Labour Market

2.7 What Employers Expect from Newcomers

Employers in the construction sector usually look for:

- Punctuality and reliability
- Ability to follow instructions
- Respect for safety rules
- Teamwork and communication
- Willingness to learn
- Positive attitude

Experience is helpful but not always necessary at entry level. A worker who shows commitment and learns quickly often gains opportunities to progress.

2.8 What Refugees Can Expect When Starting Out

Starting a construction job in a new country can be challenging. Refugees often experience:

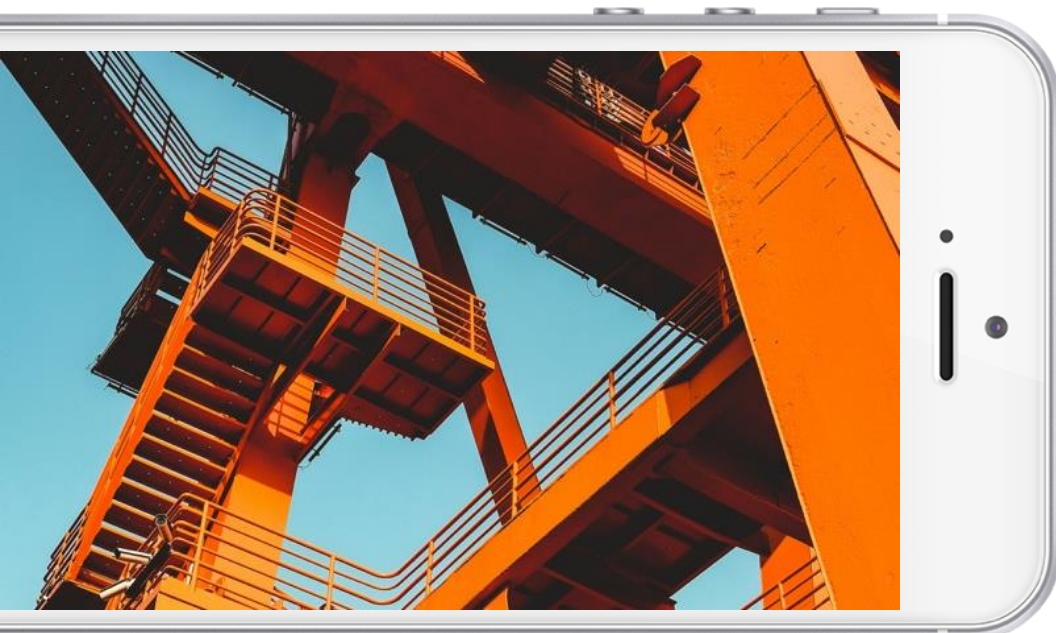
Positive aspects

- Immediate employment opportunities
- Supportive teams with other foreign workers
- Opportunities to progress into skilled trades
- Learning through practical tasks

Common challenges

- Fast-paced environments
- Cold or hot weather conditions
- Communication barriers
- Understanding Polish documentation and contracts

Support from job coaches, employers, and educators is essential in the early stages.



03

Key Construction Trades in Poland





Key Construction Trades in Poland



Poland's construction sector includes many different trades, but several stand out as especially important for refugees entering the workforce. These trades offer strong employment prospects, clear training routes, and opportunities for long-term career development. Below are four core professions that combine high demand with accessible entry pathways.

3.1 Mason / Bricklayer

Masonry is one of the most traditional and essential professions in construction. Bricklayers build the structural elements of houses, commercial buildings, and various infrastructure projects.

What the job involves

- Constructing walls, partitions, and façades using bricks, concrete blocks, or stone
- Laying foundations and preparing surfaces
- Mixing mortar and operating basic machinery
- Reading simple construction drawings
- Working with scaffolding and tools such as trowels, levels, and cutters

Skills and qualities needed

- Physical strength and stamina
- Good hand–eye coordination
- Ability to follow instructions precisely
- Awareness of safety rules, especially at height
- Patience and attention to detail

How to enter the trade

Many refugees start as assistants and learn on the job. Training options include:

- Practical training through employers
- Vocational school (*Branżowa Szkoła I Stopnia*)
- Short masonry courses at training centres
- Craft examinations that confirm competence (Journeyman certificate)

Prospects

Skilled bricklayers are always in demand. Over time, workers may progress to more specialised roles, site supervision, or self-employment.

Key Construction Trades in Poland



3.2 🎨 Painter & Decorator

Painting and decorating is a versatile trade involving both interior and exterior finishing work. It is a common entry route for refugees because it does not always require advanced qualifications to start.

What the job involves

- Surface preparation (cleaning, sanding, filling, priming)
- Applying paints, varnishes, and protective coatings
- Wallpapering and decorative finishes
- Using hand tools, rollers, brushes, and sprayers
- Working safely on ladders and basic scaffolding

Skills and qualities needed

- Strong attention to detail
- Patience and a steady hand
- Good colour awareness
- Ability to follow safety instructions
- Reliability and cleanliness in work areas

How to enter the trade

Refugees may begin as helpers, gradually taking on more responsibility. Entry routes include:

- On-site learning under experienced painters
- Courses in finishing works
- Recognition of practical skills through trials
- Medical clearance for working at height

Prospects

Painters can progress to specialised decorative work, equipment operation (e.g., spray systems), or small independent renovation services.

Key Construction Trades in Poland

3.3 Plumber / Sanitary Installer

Plumbers are essential across all sectors of construction, and demand for this trade continues to grow due to ongoing modernisation of heating, water, and sanitation systems.

What the job involves

Installing water supply and drainage systems
Fitting radiators, boilers, sinks, toilets, and showers
Maintaining and repairing leaks or blockages
Reading installation diagrams and technical plans
Ensuring systems meet safety and hygiene standards

Skills and qualities needed

- Practical problem-solving
- Manual dexterity
- Ability to work in confined spaces
- Focus on safety and accuracy
- Technical thinking

How to enter the trade

Some refugees start as assistants, learning during real projects. Steps towards qualification include:

- Hands-on training with employers
- Vocational training in sanitary installation
- Plumbing-related qualifications and exams
- Journeyman or master craft certificates

Prospects

Plumbers often progress to heating system installation, advanced maintenance, or certification-based specialisations. Experienced plumbers can earn well and may become self-employed.



Key Construction Trades in Poland



3.4 ⚡ Electrician

Electrical installation is one of the most regulated and respected trades in the sector. While it requires certification, refugees with experience can progress quickly.

What the job involves

- Installing wiring, sockets, lighting systems, and control panels
- Testing and repairing electrical faults
- Following technical plans and safety procedures
- Maintaining electrical systems in buildings
- Using tools such as testers, drills, cutters, and insulation equipment

Skills and qualities needed

- Logical thinking and problem-solving
- Good mathematical understanding
- Strong focus on safety and precision
- Ability to identify wiring and equipment types
- Steady, careful workmanship

How to enter the trade

To work independently, electricians must obtain SEP certification (up to 1 kV for most roles). Paths include:

- Assistant roles supporting certified electricians
- Vocational schooling in electrical installation
- SEP courses followed by examinations
- Gaining experience through supervised practical work

Prospects

Certified electricians are in high demand in all regions. Progression routes include specialisation in automation, renewable energy systems, or electrical supervision roles.



04

Recognition of Prior Learning and Skills



4. Recognition of Prior Learning and Skills

Many refugees arrive in Poland with valuable experience in construction, even if they do not have certificates or documents to prove it. Poland offers several ways for individuals to show their skills, gain formal recognition, and access better job opportunities. This section explains the four main routes available to refugees who wish to validate their previous knowledge and progress in the sector.

4.1 Practical Skills Assessment by Employers

Many construction companies in Poland use practical assessments to understand a worker's abilities. This is especially helpful for refugees who do not have documents from their home countries.

What this usually includes

- A short trial day on a construction site
- Demonstrating basic tasks (e.g., laying bricks, painting a wall, connecting pipes)
- Safe use of tools and equipment
- Ability to follow instructions
- Awareness of safety rules

Why this pathway helps refugees

- No documents are required
- Skills are judged fairly based on performance
- You can enter the workforce quickly
- Employers often offer training after a successful trial

Typical outcomes

- Hiring into an assistant or semi-skilled position
- Recommendation for additional training
- Identification of a suitable qualification route

This is the simplest and most common first step for newcomers.



Recognition of Prior Learning and Skills

4.2 Craft Examinations (Journeyman and Master Certificates)

Poland has a long-established craft examination system, overseen by the **Chambers of Crafts**. This system allows workers to gain respected Polish trade certificates, even if they did not complete formal schooling in Poland.

Certificates available

- **Journeyman Certificate (*Czeladnik*)** – confirms competent practical ability
- **Master Certificate (*Mistrz*)** – advanced recognition of experience and theoretical knowledge

Why are these certificates valuable

- Recognised across the entire country
- Strongly trusted by employers
- Often leads to higher wages
- Allow progression to self-employment in some trades
- Provide a Polish qualification even without school documentation

Trades commonly assessed

- Masonry
- Painting and decorating
- Carpentry
- Plumbing
- Tiling
- Roofing

What the exam includes

- A theoretical test (often basic level)
- A practical skills demonstration
- Safety and work organisation knowledge

Who this route suits

Refugees with strong experience in a specific trade who want a formal, Polish-recognised certificate.

Recognition of Prior Learning and Skills

4.3 Recognition of Foreign Qualifications and Documents

Some refugees arrive with certificates, diplomas, or work references from their home countries. In many cases, these can be reviewed and recognised by Polish institutions.

Possible documents

- Vocational school diplomas
- Technical trade qualifications
- Training certificates
- Employment records or reference letters
- Apprenticeship certificates

What the recognition process may involve

- Translation of documents
- Verification by educational authorities
- Assessment of whether the qualification matches Polish standards
- Issuing a confirmation or equivalency document

Benefits

- Faster access to skilled roles
- Ability to enter advanced training directly
- Confirmation of status without needing to repeat training

Who this route suits

Workers who can present original documents or copies confirming their education or professional background.



Recognition of Prior Learning and Skills

4.4 Vocational Training and Upskilling Programmes

When a refugee does not have documents or when their previous qualifications cannot be formally recognised, they can still build new skills through Poland's vocational training pathways.

Types of training available

- Short practical courses (e.g., tiling, plastering, plumbing basics)
- Longer vocational programmes at Branzowa Szkoła or training centres
- Specialised courses such as:
 - SEP electrical courses (for electrical certification)
 - UDT machinery operation licences
 - Thermal insulation training
 - Health and safety (BHP) training

Why is this route useful

- No previous documents required
- Suitable for beginners or those changing professions
- Leads to Polish-recognised certifications
- Often funded through labour offices (PUP) or integration programmes
- Opens doors to higher-skilled, better-paid jobs

Where training is available

- Public training centres
- Vocational schools
- Private construction academies
- Labour office programmes
- NGO-supported skills courses

Who this route suits

Anyone who wants to learn a new trade, improve their skills, or move from a low-skilled job to a skilled profession.

05

Safety, Rights, and Employment Standards in Polish Construction





Understanding Poland's Construction Sector

Construction work in Poland is regulated by strict safety and employment standards designed to protect all workers, including refugees. Understanding these rules helps individuals stay safe, avoid exploitation, and make informed decisions when starting and progressing in the sector. This section explains the essential requirements, workplace rights, contract types, and standards that newcomers need to know.

5.1 Mandatory Safety Requirements

Safety is a top priority in construction due to the physical and technical nature of the work. All workers must meet certain safety requirements before entering a construction site.

Key safety elements

◆ BHP Training (Occupational Safety and Hygiene)

This is compulsory for every worker. Training covers:

- Safe use of tools and equipment
- Identifying workplace hazards
- Fire safety procedures
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Emergency procedures
- Basic first aid awareness
- Workers must repeat this training regularly.

◆ Medical Examination

A doctor must confirm whether a worker is physically able to perform their job safely.

This includes:

- General health check
- Vision and hearing
- Clearance for lifting and physical tasks
- **Work at height** clearance (if required for the role)

◆ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Provided at no cost to the worker by the employer. This typically includes:

- Safety helmet
- Gloves
- Protective boots
- High-visibility clothing
- Safety glasses
- Hearing protection (if required)

◆ Site-Specific Induction

Each construction site has its own risks. Before starting work, individuals must receive instructions on:

- Site layout and access routes
- Hazard areas
- Emergency exits
- Supervisor contact details

Understanding Poland's Construction Sector

5.2 Rights and Responsibilities of Workers

Refugees working in construction have the same rights as Polish workers. Understanding these rights is essential for safe and fair employment.

Rights include

- To work in safe conditions
- To receive BHP safety training and PPE
- To stop work if conditions are unsafe
- To be paid the agreed wage
- To receive breaks during the workday
- To receive written information about their job and contract
- To access holiday pay and sick pay (for *Umowa o pracę*)

Responsibilities include

- Following site safety rules
- Using PPE correctly
- Reporting hazards to supervisors
- Following instructions from team leaders
- Respecting co-workers and maintaining good communication

Workers who understand both their rights and responsibilities are better prepared to build stable employment relationships.



Understanding Poland's Construction Sector

5.3 Employment Contracts and Pay Conditions

Understanding Polish employment contracts helps refugees avoid confusion and ensures they are protected at work. In construction, three main types of contracts are used.

Contract Type	Description	Level of Protection	Notes
Umowa o pracę	Standard employment contract	★★★★★	Best option for long-term work; includes holidays, sick pay, overtime rules
Umowa zlecenie	Service contract	★★★	Provides flexibility but fewer protections; common in construction
Umowa o dzieło	Contract for a specific task	★	Not usually suitable for construction; limited protections

Important points

- Contracts should be given **in writing**, ideally before work begins.
- Workers should be told clearly about pay, working hours, and responsibilities.
- Employers must register workers with social insurance systems, depending on contract type.
- Pay is often hourly, but may include bonuses for performance or difficult conditions.

Good practices for refugees

- Ask for a written contract, not a verbal agreement.
- Keep copies of pay slips and attendance records.
- Do not accept unsafe working conditions, even if pressured.

Understanding Poland's Construction Sector

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Understanding Poland's Construction Sector



5.4 What to Expect on a Polish Construction Site

Construction sites in Poland can vary in size, atmosphere, and organisation. Some are small renovation teams working on private homes; others are large-scale projects with hundreds of workers. Refugees can expect the following:

◆ Team Structure

Most teams include:

- Site manager
- Foreman or supervisor
- Skilled workers
- Assistant workers
- Labourers

Refugees may start as labourers or assistants before moving into skilled roles.

◆ Language and Communication

- Basic Polish is helpful for safety and teamwork
- Many teams include workers from Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, and Central Asia
- Simple instructions are common on busy sites
- Visual communication (hand signals, demonstrations) is frequently used

◆ Typical Work Conditions

- Early start times (often 7:00 or 8:00)
- Outdoor work in changing weather conditions
- Physical tasks such as lifting, carrying, and cleaning
- A mix of quiet and noisy environments
- Breaks during the shift for food and rest

◆ Workplace Culture

Workers are generally expected to:

- Be punctual
- Work steadily throughout the shift
- Show initiative where possible
- Support team members
- Demonstrate respect for safety rules

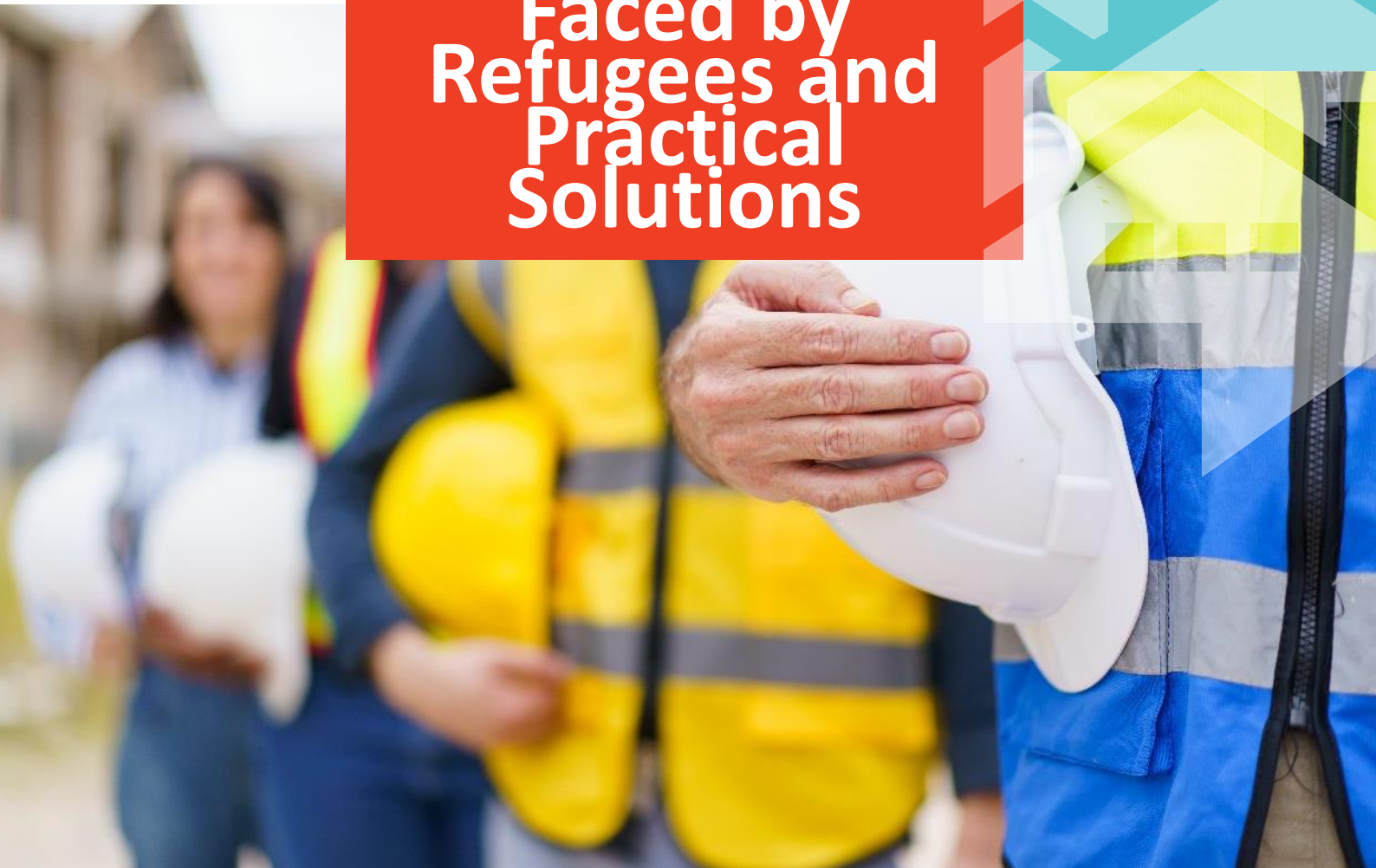
◆ Opportunities for Progression

- Moving from helper → semi-skilled worker → skilled worker
- Gaining certificates for machinery or technical tasks
- Building trust with supervisors
- Learning more Polish
- Taking vocational or craft exams

Refugees who show motivation and reliability often advance quickly in Polish construction environments.

06

Challenges Faced by Refugees and Practical Solutions





6. Challenges Faced by Refugees and Practical Solutions

Entering a new labour market is rarely simple, and refugees face a unique set of barriers when joining the construction sector in Poland. Many of these challenges relate to language, documentation, workplace expectations, and integration. This section explores the key difficulties and offers practical, realistic solutions that help refugees succeed and remain safe at work.

6.1 Language Barriers and Communication Challenges

Language is one of the most significant barriers for refugees entering the sector. Construction work relies heavily on clear instructions, safety warnings, and teamwork. Difficulties understanding or expressing information can affect safety, confidence, and job performance.

Common challenges

- Difficulty understanding technical terms or safety instructions
- Limited ability to communicate concerns or report hazards
- Reduced confidence when asking questions or seeking clarification
- Misunderstandings with supervisors or colleagues

Practical solutions

- **Workplace-specific Polish language courses**, focusing on tools, materials, safety vocabulary, and everyday communication
- **Bilingual induction materials** provided by employers
- **Buddy systems** pairing newcomers with a more experienced co-worker who speaks their language
- **Visual aids**, such as diagrams, colour coding, labels, and demonstrations, to reduce reliance on spoken instructions
- Encouraging supervisors to **speak slowly**, offer short instructions, and check understanding

Why this matters

Improved communication enhances safety, builds trust with employers, and creates opportunities for workers to progress into skilled positions.

Challenges Faced by Refugees and Practical Solutions

6.2 Lack of Documentation and Qualification Recognition

Many refugees cannot provide official certificates or proof of previous work experience. This can make it harder to access skilled roles, even when they have strong practical abilities.

Common challenges

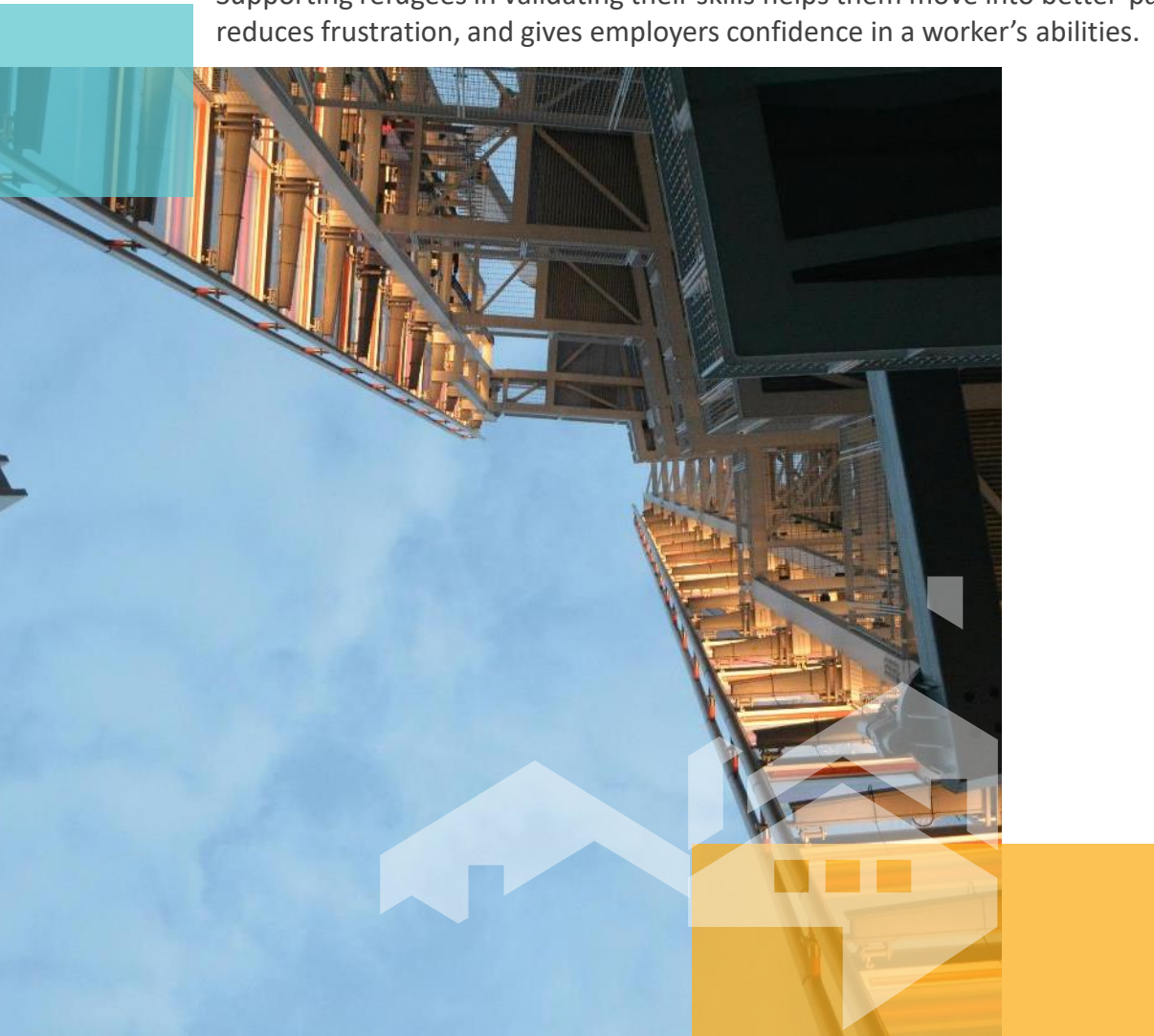
- Missing diplomas, work references, or training certificates
- Foreign qualifications not directly recognised in Poland
- Difficulty demonstrating experience to employers
- Confusion about Polish training and certification systems

Practical solutions

- **Practical skills assessments** with employers (trial days, tool-based tests)
- **Craft examinations**, which give Polish-recognised certificates based on practical knowledge
- **Translation support** for any available documents
- **Information sessions** explaining how the Polish qualification system works
- **Tailored career advice** from VET staff to guide refugees through certification routes

Why this matters

Supporting refugees in validating their skills helps them move into better-paid roles, reduces frustration, and gives employers confidence in a worker's abilities.



Challenges Faced by Refugees and Practical Solutions

6.3 Unfamiliarity with Workplace Culture, Expectations, and Rights

Starting work in a new country often means adjusting to different workplace norms and expectations. Polish construction sites may differ from those in a refugee's home country in terms of communication style, working hours, safety rules, and management structure.

Common challenges

- Uncertainty about rights and obligations
- Difficulty understanding employment contracts
- Differences in punctuality expectations and organisation
- Limited awareness of safety responsibilities
- Nervousness about asking questions or reporting concerns

Practical solutions

- **Clear explanations** of contract types, pay systems, and basic rights before employment begins
- **Induction sessions** for refugees focused on workplace culture and expectations
- **Translated guides or visual materials** explaining common site rules
- **Mentoring programmes** offered by employers, NGOs, or VET institutions
- Encouraging employers to provide **structured feedback** during early weeks

Why this matters

A clear understanding of workplace expectations helps workers adjust more quickly, improves retention, and reduces misunderstandings between supervisors and new employees.



Challenges Faced by Refugees and Practical Solutions

6.4 Practical and Personal Challenges Affecting Employment Stability

Refugees may face additional challenges outside the workplace that influence their ability to stay in employment or attend training.

Common challenges

- Unstable or temporary housing
- Transport difficulties reaching job sites
- Childcare responsibilities
- Financial pressures requiring immediate income
- Stress, trauma, or health concerns
- Frequent changes in legal or residence status

Practical solutions

- **Transport assistance**, such as carpooling arrangements or travel subsidies
- **Flexible training schedules** or evening classes where possible
- **Information on childcare services**, social benefits, or support programmes
- **Close cooperation** between employers, NGOs, and local labour offices
- Access to **health services**, including mental health support
- Encouraging realistic progression plans that balance work, training, and personal responsibilities

Why this matters

Addressing these practical barriers helps refugees maintain steady employment and reduces early drop-out from jobs or training programmes.

07

Support Services, Training Opportunities, and Employment Resources





7. Support Services, Training Opportunities, and Employment Resources

Refugees entering the Polish construction sector can access a wide network of support services, training programmes, and employment resources. These services help individuals find jobs, build new skills, understand their rights, and integrate into the workplace. This section outlines the most important sources of assistance available across Poland.

7.1 Public Employment Services (Powiatowy Urząd Pracy – PUP)

Local labour offices (*Powiatowe Urzędy Pracy*) are one of the main sources of free support for refugees seeking work or training in construction. Every district in Poland has its own office, and services are available to all legally residing jobseekers.

What PUP can offer

- **Job matching and vacancies** for entry-level and skilled construction roles
- **Funding for vocational courses**, including plumbing, masonry, electrical basics, and machinery operation
- **Career advice and counselling** tailored to individual skills and experience
- **Support for obtaining qualifications**, such as craft exams or safety training
- **Workshops**, including CV preparation and interview practice

How to access services

- Register in person at your local office with identification and documents confirming your legal stay
- You will be assigned a career adviser who guides you through available opportunities

Useful link

Where to find your local office: <https://psz.praca.gov.pl>

Support Services, Training Opportunities & Employment Resources

7.2 NGOs and Community Organisations Supporting Refugees

Non-governmental organisations across Poland provide refugees with practical assistance that helps them prepare for work in construction. Support is available in multiple languages and often includes personalised guidance.

Types of support available

- Legal advice about employment and residence status
- Help understanding contracts and workers' rights
- Polish language classes at beginner and intermediate levels
- Job-search assistance and referrals
- Mental health and social support services
- Workshops on workplace culture and communication

Key organisations providing support

- **Caritas Poland** – humanitarian support, language help, job guidance <https://caritas.pl>
- **Polish Migration Forum** – employment counselling, psychological support, integration workshops <https://forummigracyjne.org>
- **International Organisation for Migration (IOM) – Poland** – job support, legal advice, community activities <https://poland.iom.int>
- **Local NGOs across major cities** offering training, translation, and employment assistance

These organisations often cooperate with employers, VET centres, and public services to ensure coordinated support.



Support Services, Training Opportunities & Employment Resources

7.3 Vocational Training Centres and Construction Courses

Access to high-quality training is essential for refugees who want to progress from entry-level jobs to skilled construction roles. Poland's training system offers several routes for gaining technical knowledge and recognised qualifications.

Training options

- **Short practical courses** in plastering, tiling, carpentry, insulation, plumbing basics, and painting
- **Full vocational programmes** at *Branżowa Szkoła* or adult education centres
- **Specialist certification courses**, including:
 - SEP electrical authorisations
 - UDT machinery operation licences
 - Courses in renewable energy installation
 - Thermal insulation and energy efficiency training
- **Safety and occupational health (BHP)** courses

Who can join

Refugees with legal stay in Poland may join most programmes, and many are available free of charge through labour offices or NGO partnerships.

Where to find training

- Public vocational training centres
- Private construction academies
- Local PUP offices (they often fund courses)
- National qualification platform:
<https://kwalifikacje.gov.pl>

Training helps refugees build confidence, gain formal recognition, and access better-paid positions.



Support Services, Training Opportunities & Employment Resources

7.4 Job Search Platforms and Employment Channels

Refugees looking for construction work in Poland can use a variety of job platforms, recruitment agencies, and community networks. Knowing where to search increases the chances of finding safe, legal employment.

Main online job platforms

- **Pracuj.pl** – general job listings, including skilled trades <https://www.pracuj.pl>
- **OLX Praca** – common for entry-level and manual roles <https://www.olx.pl/praca>
- **Praca.pl** – construction and technical job listings <https://www.praca.pl>
- **Praca dla Ukraińców** – focused on opportunities for Ukrainian speakers [Pracadlaukrainy.pl](https://pracadlaukrainy.pl) – <https://pracadlaukrainy.pl/>

Other helpful employment channels

- Recruitment agencies specialising in construction
- Telegram, WhatsApp, and Viber community job groups used by migrant workers
- Local construction companies hiring directly
- Recommendations from NGOs, mentors, and training centres

Good practices for safe job searching

- Always ask for a **written contract**
- Avoid offers that require upfront payment
- Check the company's registration details
- Confirm wages, hours, and responsibilities before starting
- Ensure the employer provides BHP training and medical checks

These steps help refugees find legitimate work and avoid unsafe or illegal employment situations.



www.welcomeworkproject.eu

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