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# Challenges of contemporary migration

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**28th AEMI Meeting  
Gdynia, 3-6 October 2018**

# Workshops:

## Oral history of Polish emigrants

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At Emigrant's Archive we gather and present the stories of Polish emigrants. Our work deals with oral history - we are interested in the records of personal experiences of individuals rather than lectures. We believe that each, even seemingly simple emigration route, is unique and, therefore, worth preserving. Emigration is more than leaving the country. What exactly – that is the question we would like to find the answer to by doing our projects.

In my presentation I will try to share with you our methodology, practices and bring focus to a case study of Children of Pahiataua – a story about Polish WW II refugees from Poland to New Zealand.

## Newcomers in Emigration Museum in Gdynia – good practices

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In the last couple of years we're witnessing an increase of immigrants who decided to choose Tricity as their new home. Cultural institutions are facing the challenge to not only involve new inhabitants in the cultural life of their city, but also to create a friendly and open atmosphere that will invite them to be a part of society of Gdynia. According to that, Emigration Museum will share its best practices in terms of diagnosis and answering the needs of immigrants in an active and integrating way.

## Failures and successes in integration in Poland. Lessons learned of the “culture” working group implementing Immigrant Integration Model in Gdańsk

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How to integrate immigrants/refugees/newcomers with the host community using culture as a tool? How should the institutions of culture change themselves in order to become more open, more flexible and able to create shared, integrating spaces. What should be done to prepare so called hosting, local community to accept new members? How to support immigrant artists that want to develop their art? How to empower properly immigrant activists/leaders/formal and informal groups so that they can be more independent and provide self-advocacy? How to make the multicultural face of the city more visible whilst not making it superficial at the same time? What are the most common mistakes in this field? Where to get the inspirations from? These are the main questions that both public institutions of culture and non-governmental organizations but also immigrants themselves are struggling with.

## Solidarity across sectors. Managing integration through integration

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When ISC (Immigrant Support Center) started in 2012, our aim was to deliver information, legal and employment advice, language courses etc. to the migrants. We discovered very soon though that our impact is very limited and started to notice the need for system change in the areas of health, education, housing, and the labour market. We realized that even if we could make people aware of their rights/duties the integration takes place in so many areas that 'belongs' both to the public sector (health units, employment institutions, schools etc.) and to all of us, in neighbourhoods.

We need to integrate to do integration! We observed that there is a need for a shared understanding of inclusion/exclusion dynamics, roles we all have in the process of integration and developing standards/ policies that will ensure immigrants' equal treatment and non-discrimination. We had to reach out to all sectors to share/give away the idea. In this way Gdansk policy on integration has been developed and currently we are working with the Pomeranian region, where all 20 counties are discussing integration of immigrants and preparing for integration. We work cross-sector, sometimes very much out of our 'comfort-zone' but there is no other way than close co-operation between all of us, all stakeholders, to make integration work.

## **Refugees' life stories as European cultural heritage: Experiences from the EU project "Specially unknown". Workshops on cultural participation, integration and cultural heritage in Europe**

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Within in the past decades, war, persecution and suppression brought millions of refugees to Europe. Most of them fled from African and Arabian states. EU member states show different policies in dealing with the question of integration of third member state refugees. One common way is the use of language courses and integration courses in co-operation with cultural institutions like museums.

A closer look on museums and archives shows that traces of refugees can hardly be found there. Facing this lack, the EU project "Specially unknown" collects life stories from refugees in four European cities. Following a participative concept, field workers from different national or ethnic refugee communities are trained to conduct oral history interviews. In a co-creative process, museums, NGOs and other cultural institutions develop cultural events and presentations.

Three member organizations of AEMI, The Red Star Line Museum Antwerps, The LWL Industrial Museum Bochum and Generique in Paris work together with the NGO Rete Italiana, Turin on the project "Specially unknown" which is led by the foundation BMP in Amsterdam.

In three parallel workshops we want to share our experience and foster mutual exchange.

**Workshop 1:** Oral history methods and practice

**Workshop 2:** Networking and co-operation on a European level

**Workshop 3:** Working with refugee communities