

## **“Training in Barka’s models of social work for vocational education and training professionals”**

In recent years, the Barka Foundation in Poland has been enjoying increasingly high interest from the local and international vocational education and training professionals (more than 200 study groups from abroad alone have visited Barka up to date). The two-weeks study visit program to Barka Poland is designed to provide professional and thorough training in Barka’s models of social work for vocational education and training professionals whose day to day roles include the design or delivery of training, professional development or careers guidance, globally. Barka Poland's methodology, both in theory and practice, has been developed by professionals in a number of fields (psychologists, social workers, economists, lawyers, educational workers, etc.) over the period of twenty years. Barka Foundations management, including the Sadowski family, is very dedicated and professional. Tomasz and Barbara Sadowski, the founders of the Foundation, are personally engaged in the training and supervision of the progress of each study group to Barka Network.

Barka IE would like to send 11 participants in total to participate in two-weeks training in Barka Poland. The participants will fly to Poland in two groups (one in July and one in August) . During a study visit, groups will undergo both a theoretical and practical training, and have an opportunity to visit such Barka Network projects as: Barka’s communities (Barka’s first and one of the most important projects), such as those in Chudobczyce and Wladyslawowo (the first quasi-cooperative created in village Wladyslawowo in 1989), social cooperatives, Social Economy Centres, Social Integration Centres, Social Animation School, and many more.

In terms of the training, the participants will learn about:

- Recognizing and development of the potentials of individuals who were formerly perceived as ‘ballast’ or burden for the local community and now have become ‘the capital of the local communities’ and are included in the support for others in need, and in rendering services to the benefit of the local community
- How to work with a broad variety of partners in communes all over the country in order to bring about the development and inclusion of those, who are socially excluded persons and the action of local communities

- Revitalization of neglected and bankrupt buildings, warehouses, workshops, and working places making it possible for formerly excluded persons to function independently as rightful citizens
- Forming of social cooperatives, as self-employment companies and the development of persons with legal qualifications and education, so that they could become more enterprising, generate their income, not only relying on benefits and become consumers and contribute to general economic growth in local communities
- Involvement in the progress of bio variety in former state owned farms, transformed into ecological farms
- Developing international networks of support to vulnerable migrants, ethnic minorities and refugees

The visit will enable the participants to obtain confirmation that Barka Foundation Poland provides suitable and professional services to its beneficiaries on their return from the Ireland. It will also allow the participants to understand more about the context Eastern European clients come from, their motives for coming to Ireland and what might be the barriers to help people recover or return when they get into difficulties in Ireland. It will also permit to explore a very different model for assisting with the recovery and inclusion of individuals in trouble and to see whether and how this might 'fit' with what is currently taking place in Ireland.

The program is designed for vocational education and training professionals, whose work concerns, directly or indirectly, Eastern and Central European migrants (but effectively could be adapted to any migrant group in any country as well as to the native population of any country). The aim is to provide those organizations, official institutions, and their employees with the necessary understanding of the context their Eastern European clients come from, their motives for coming to Ireland and what might be the difficulties to help people recover or return to their home countries when their situation in Ireland is very difficult.

The participants can also be: various levels of Dublin City Council's employees; local councils employees from other cities and regions of Ireland in which Barka operates with, or is set to begin its cooperation soon, government delegates, employees of non for profit organizations and charities, employees of day centres, outreach workers, detox centres which cooperate with Barka IE.

The aim of the program is to enable vocational education and training professionals from Ireland to experience a post-communist country and learn how the 'broken' line of history has interrupted the development of communities and how the capacity and confidence of individuals has been reduced by the years of state control. It will enable them to meet and listen to people who are rising above these difficulties and taking the lead in their communities. During the course of the visit they will have a chance to observe:

- The approach Barka takes of meeting people on an open human level (which sometimes might be lost in the 'professionalisation' of services). It will allow them to experience the inclusion throughout the organization and the equality in the interactions between people.
- The importance of the European Union in supporting countries and communities like this.

The visit will facilitate their own work, and will enable them to disseminate this knowledge further to their bosses, colleagues, befriended organizations, etc. therefore making this knowledge and experience available to an even wider group of Irish governmental and non-governmental workers, to enable them to carry out their tasks in a more effective way, reaching back for example to the cultural and linguistic knowledge.

Approximate placement flow dates:

15.07-27.07.2012 The first study group (5 persons).

30.07-03.08.2012 Evaluation and dissemination of the project's results.

5.08-17.08.2012 The second study group (6 persons).

20.08-24.08.2012 Evaluation and dissemination of the project's results.