

Poznan-Chudopczyce-Drezdenko 14.08.2007 r.

Thank you BARKA!

We are a group of Poles who spent recent years outside the home country. We left with an intention of improving our material situations. In Poland we had no job and we lost our livelihood. Many of us, often for the last penny borrowed from family or friends, decided to get a ticket and take an opportunity to live and work in England. This was decided with no preparation or ability to speak the language.

Beginnings varied, some of us got a job at once, others after time. By working and making around 200-300 pounds a week we could afford renting a flat, purchasing food and leading a descend life.

Everything was fine as long as there was a job do to. Having neither permanent employment nor contract of service, many were cheated by employers who did not pay us salary. The worst was to work for compatriots. It was them who most frequently did not fulfil their commitments. When a job and money ended, one had to leave the flat. With no resources we were left on streets. Most fell into depression and increasingly cured failures with alcohol. No one thought of returning home. We were ashamed to arrive in home towns and face family and friends with no money. Day after day we found more companions and alcohol.

One got money for drinking in different ways such as begging and asking people or selling coloured metals. On failure one simply went to supermarkets and stole. Gradually our situation became worse. Drinking, hangover, drinking, hangover, no will to work.

Living this way we met people who earlier found themselves on streets. It was them who pointed out places where one can eat for free, bathe and change into clean clothes.

We all were in the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. Help was offered by a few institutions: "Broadway Centre", Methodist Church, nuns of Mother Teresa as well as a pastor from America – Bruce.

Subsequently, having slept in parks or gateways, we were being robbed of documents which enabled us to undertake legal work. We had to count on ourselves. The above mentioned institutions run relief programs only.

In England there is a lack of concern for human being. We were only taken as people for whom the staffs of charities get paid "apiece".

Day after day we became more frustrated. With no hope for better times and close to giving up we found a light in the tunnel.

We learned that representatives of "Barka" Foundation came to London. Among Poles in tough situations there were lots of critical opinions about them. They were said to have come to "clean London off people who touched the bottom" - those who England wants to dispose of. Their help was supposed to be about paying for issuing a passport and taking back to Poland – that's it. However, it turned out that their help was reaching further. We met Grzegorz, Marek and Tomek and they explained to us what their help was about. They dealt with us individually. These people have gone through stuff so they understood us instantly and helped in a complex way. They supported us with having our documents issued and after a couple of days we were in the home country.

In the "Barka" Foundation community home in the village of Chudopczyce we were received very warmly by all community members.

It was a difficult decision for us to give up drinking, old friends and "easy" lives on streets. During a-few-day-stay in the community we learned about enormous opportunities offered by "Barka".

From the beginning we were accommodated in nice rooms with regular beds and clean sheets which we did not have for long.

„Barka” operates a few programs helping people with problems. They provide support with finding a job, establishing social cooperatives, run thematic courses for those who want to retrain.

All who were reconnected have made a decision to stay with the Foundation and want to build our future with these people. It was them who stretched out their hand to us, were able to listen, and helped to relax and to focus on the new opportunities. They appealed to us and explained that outside of home there were lots of our countrymen in difficult situations.

Having experienced the involvement and determination of brothers from "Barka", I am sure these people will be reached.

We would like to express thanks to the Founders of "Barka" – Tomasz and Barbara Sadowski and all brothers and sisters in the community.

We are awaiting our friends from London. Come and visit! WELCOME!

*Janusz, Jurek, Ilona, Bogdan, Paweł, Robert, Darek*

P.S. Please send the letter out to our compatriots in London and let them know of the address where they can meet representatives of "Barka". Also please add pictures to the letter.

Translation: Ewa Sadowska, Barka office in London.