

CASE STUDY

How Boxtribute facilitates a locally-led, emergency response in urban Poland

PREPARED BY BOXTRIBUTE · 2026

PARTNER

IB Polska & Dråpen i Havet

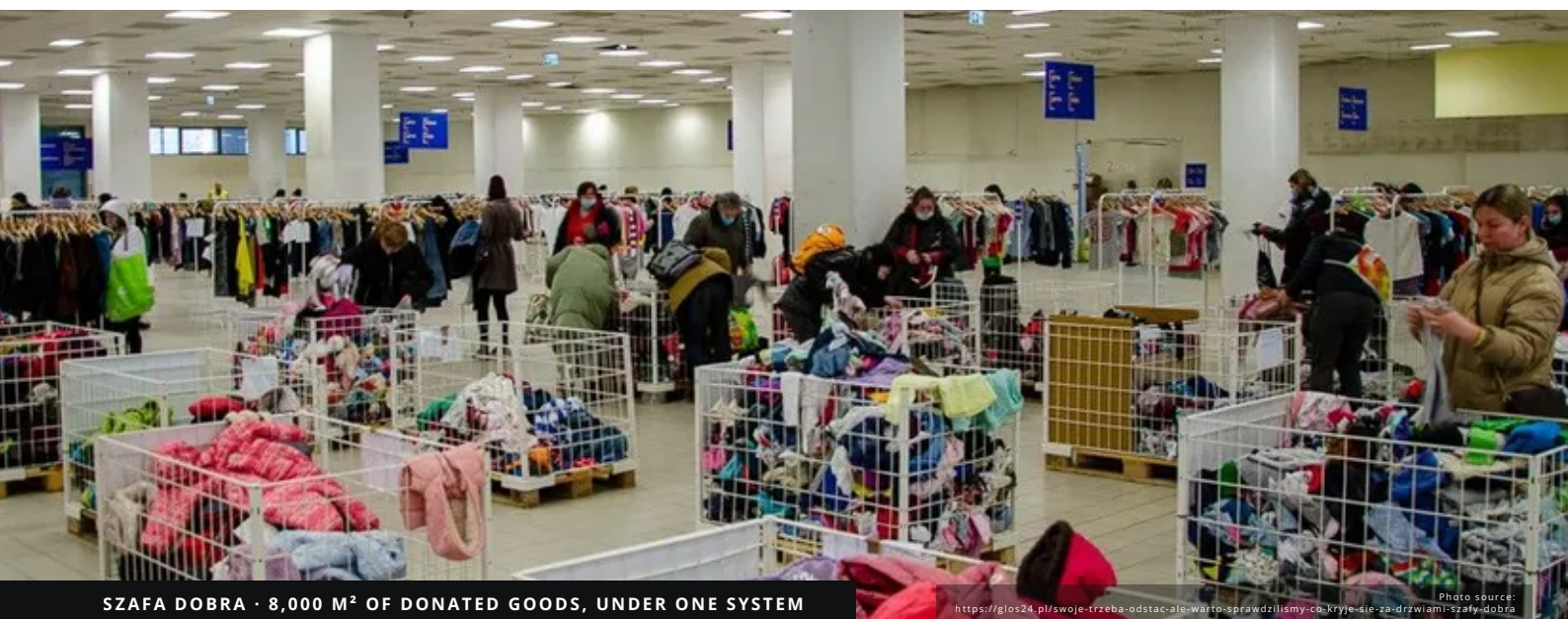
LOCATION

Krakow, Poland

RESPONSE START

February 2022

MODALITY

Choice-based NFI distribution

SZAFKA DOBRA · 8,000 M² OF DONATED GOODS, UNDER ONE SYSTEM
Photo source: <https://glos24.pl/swoje-trzeba-odstac-ale-warto-sprawdzilismy-co-kryje-sie-za-drzwiami-szafki-dobra>

01 / OVERVIEW

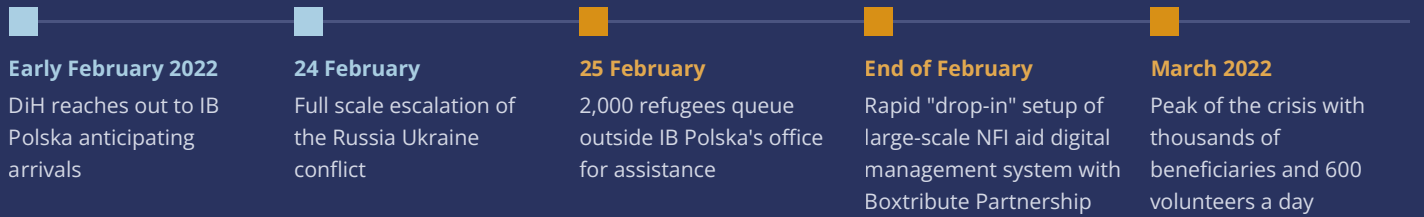
Fundacja International Bund Polska (IB Polska) is a Krakow-based civil society organisation founded in 2004, with a long-standing focus on community-based work including psychosocial support, assistance for people with disabilities and social activation through volunteering, education, and self-development. Prior to the Ukraine crisis, the organisation operated with a small team of eight staff members, primarily delivering local community-based programmes.

The escalation of the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine occurred in February 2022. Anticipating an increase of arrivals, Dråpen i Havet (DiH), an NGO with extensive experience in NFI distributions and long-term user of Boxtribute, reached out to IB Polska to discuss distributions of urgently needed items for Ukrainian refugees.

On 25 February alone, over 2,000 people queued outside IB Polska's office in need of essential supplies, **signaling an urgent need to rapidly scale up operations and support.**

Despite having no experience in humanitarian aid before the crisis, IB Polska were able to scale their operations in partnership with Boxtribute and DiH to serve over 86,000 people. Boxtribute provided the systems, technology and distribution expertise through their tech platform which enabled IB Polska to recruit and coordinate 10,000+ volunteers, and successfully manage large volumes of donated goods.

FROM CHAOS TO COORDINATION · FOUR WEEKS



02 / THE CHALLENGE

IB Polska faced a crisis and needed to move from chaos to coordination in a matter of days, while maintaining accountability for people seeking assistance.

- 01** A sudden, large-scale influx of displaced people in an urban setting
- 02** No prior systems for NFI distribution or emergency response — no warehousing, inventory management, or distribution experience
- 03** Huge volumes of unsorted donated goods arriving continuously
- 04** A team of 7 volunteers that rapidly grew to hundreds per day, with constant turnover and no previous humanitarian experience
- 05** High requirements for accountability and coordination from authorities and partners

SCALE OF THE RESPONSE

PEOPLE ON THE TEAM

Before the crisis	8 staff
At peak response	150 staff
Volunteers at peak, per day	600 / day

“There were mountains and mountains of clothes - with no established system to manage them.”

RYZSARD BENDA · WAREHOUSE COORDINATOR



A FREE-SHOP MODEL: PEOPLE CHOOSE WHAT THEY NEED

Photo source:
<https://ib-polska.pl/szafa-dobra>

03 / THE BOXTRIBUTE SOLUTION

Together, the teams established Szafa Dobra (“Wardrobe for Good”), a choice-based NFI distribution centre.

Anticipating the crisis, DiH reached out to IB Polska before the first wave of arrivals and deployed one of their experienced coordinators to Krakow. Boxtribute was introduced as the core solution to support in the setup of operations and peer-to-peer knowledge transfer.

8,000 m²

A decommissioned shopping mall transformed into a functioning warehouse and free-shop distribution site.

< 60 min

To train a volunteer with no prior experience in warehouse management and distributions.

Weeks

From office-floor distributions to a full multi-site operation running on one system.

While initially distributions occurred at the IB Polska office, within weeks, a decommissioned shopping mall with 8,000 m² space was transformed into a functioning warehouse and free-shop distribution site. With Boxtribute introduced as the core system for warehouse and inventory management, the team were able to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>01 Structure the sorting, categorisation, and storage of donated goods using QR-based workflows;</p> | <p>02 Maintain real-time visibility of stock levels across a rapidly changing operation;</p> |
| <p>03 Support consistent processes despite daily changes in staff and volunteers;</p> | <p>04 Provide a simplified, easy-to-use system that could train volunteers with no prior experience in under 60 minutes.</p> |

DONATION TO DISTRIBUTION — THE QR-BASED WORKFLOW

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 |
| <p>Intake
Unsorted donations arrive continuously at the site.</p> | <p>Sort
Goods categorised by type, size and condition.</p> | <p>Label
Each box gets a QR code and a location in the warehouse.</p> | <p>Free shop
People choose the items they need, with dignity.</p> | <p>Stock view
Leadership sees stock levels in real time, across sites.</p> |

“

In Szafa Dobra was when we had 11,000 people in one day, and every four hours there were 300 new volunteers to organise. In 2021, I would have said that doing all this was impossible.

MARIA WOJTACHA · EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IB POLSKA

”

“

It was incredibly easy to explain to volunteers.

RYSZARD BENDA · WAREHOUSE COORDINATOR, FIRST TIME WORKING IN LOGISTICS

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Photo source: <https://publicystyka.ngo.pl/szafa-dobra-dzialanie-ktore-pokazalo-dobroci-i-gotowosc-do-niesienia-pomocy>

04 / IMPACT & RESULTS

86,000

BENEFICIARIES
REACHED

10,000+

VOLUNTEERS
MOBILISED

100,000

VOLUNTEER HOURS
CONTRIBUTED

8 → 150

STAFF, SCALE-UP AT PEAK
RESPONSE

- Set up of a fully compliant, accountable NFI stock management and warehouse system
- Sustained operations across multiple physical locations
- Real-time visibility into stock levels to support leadership decisions and reporting
- Digitisation that led to reduced risk, by improving traceability and operational clarity
- Aid distributions that were meeting core humanitarian standards, best practice for aid delivery and protection mainstreaming

For IB Polska's leadership, the most significant change was **confidence that operations were accountable**, that resources were being used responsibly, and that the organisation could manage scale without losing control.

What began as an emergency response later transitioned into longer-term social support, integrated with the city's social protection systems (MOPS), supporting both displaced Ukrainians and vulnerable Krakow residents.

05 / KEY TAKEAWAYS

An Accountable Local Scale Up

Rapid local scale up does not mean sacrificing accountability. IB Polska moved from eight staff with no distribution experience to 150 staff, 600 volunteers/day, and an 8,000 m² distribution site within weeks. Real-time stock visibility, structured workflows and clean handovers meant that accountability was maintained as the operation grew, rather than reconstructed afterwards.

Cost Efficiency

Boxtribute enabled IB Polska to pivot their programming and rapidly scale up. Because volunteers with no logistics experience could be trained in under an hour, strong community engagement translated directly into operational capacity, with over 100,000 volunteer hours mobilised at substantial cost savings.

Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Transfer

IB Polska leveraged field experience from both DiH and Boxtribute to rapidly set up an emergency NFI response. Boxtribute provided the platform, operational system, and distribution methodologies; DiH deployed one of their own coordinators on-site for implementation guidance. IB Polska adopted these methodologies as their own, going on to serve over 86,000 beneficiaries.



FROM EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO LONG-TERM SOCIAL SUPPORT

CONCLUSION

Through the right partnerships, such as the one established between Boxtribute, DiH and IB Polska, locally led organisations can rapidly deliver large-scale aid when supported by simple, transparent systems. The systems support from Boxtribute did not replace human judgement or leadership; rather, it strengthened it. **This is an evidence-based example of how localisation can be fast, accountable, and scalable when trust in local actors is matched with the right digital systems.**