

RESEARCH REPORT

**ON THE RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEW-BASED RESEARCH ON
PROFESSIONALS AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH REFUGEES
AND THE FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH ON REFUGEES**

CARPATHIAN FOUNDATION - HUNGARY

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INTRODUCTION

In the framework of the project of the Carpathian Foundation - Hungary implemented in Heves, Hajdú-Bihar and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties, we conducted a qualitative research (in addition to the questionnaire survey) between March and May 2024. The project staff conducted twenty structured interviews with professionals and volunteers working with refugees from Ukraine, and an external researcher conducted three focus group discussions with the refugees targeted by the project. The results of these are summarised in the report.

The aim of the qualitative research was, on the one hand, to get information from professionals and volunteers working directly with refugees about the results and difficulties of professional activities, the situation of refugees in general, the differences between the chances and opportunities of Roma and non-Roma refugees, and the situation of refugee women and children. On the other hand, in the focus groups, refugees were asked about their background, experiences in Hungary, difficulties, cases of discrimination and plans for the future¹

1. ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The interviewees were contacted by the project staff and were interviewed in face-to-face structured interviews which lasted 40-50 minutes on average. The primary criterion for selecting respondents was that they have relevant information on the topic, and have 'first-hand' experience with and about refugees. (It should be noted that several potential interviewees declined to be interviewed, typically citing the sensitivity of the topic). Of the twenty interviewees, the following number are working/have worked and are working/have worked in some way with refugees in each county: eight in Heves county (one of them is from Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county, which is not involved in the project), ten in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, and two in Hajdú-Bihar county. The main characteristics of the interviewees are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Interviewees' occupation/relevant position and location of operation (county)

Interviewee's serial number	Interviewee's occupation/relevant position	County
1.	volunteer	Heves (and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén)
2.	social coordinator	Heves
3.	university lecturer	Heves
4.	volunteer with an aid organisation	Heves
5.	HR manager	Heves
6.	kindergarten teacher	Heves

¹ The interview transcripts can be found in the Annex.

Interviewee's serial number	Interviewee's occupation/relevant position	County
7.	kindergarten teacher	Heves
8.	teacher	Heves
9.	contract soldier	Hajdú-Bihar
10.	teacher	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
11.	social worker	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
12.	volunteer with an NGO	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
13.	volunteer	Hajdú-Bihar
14.	teacher, programme coordinator	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
15.	kindergarten teacher	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
16.	project coordinator at an NGO	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
17.	hospital nurse	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
18.	social pedagogue, educator	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
19.	head of kindergarten	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
20.	professional nurse, social worker, volunteer	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg

1.1. Characteristics of the interviewees

The vast majority of interviewees are women (16 women, 4 men), with mixed professional backgrounds and experience. As Table 1 shows, there are several teachers, nursery teachers, social workers, soldiers, hospital nurses, university lecturers, and others who work with refugees as volunteers. The background and motivation for working with refugees is even more mixed. Many of them, besides having come into contact with refugees at work (in kindergartens, schools, healthcare, as workers of aid organisations and NGOs), have also volunteered to help refugees, some for personal reasons (e.g. because of their Transcarpathian origin), and most of them are still working with refugee children, adults and families.

The activities also vary: in addition to kindergarten and school education, there is also afternoon tutoring, teaching children with special needs, nursing, health care and social work, organisational, logistical and coordination tasks, information provision, adult education, donation events, etc. There is an interviewee who came into contact with refugees as the HR manager of a for-profit company that also employed Ukrainian guest workers, when they were looking for accommodation and employment for family members of their employees. Another interviewee, working as a social coordinator for an aid organisation, has been working with refugees and organising their care at county level since the end of February 2022. Our university lecturer interviewee participated in grassroots relief operations initiated by individuals, taking donations to the border. Our contract soldier interviewee spent seven months on duty at the Ukrainian-Hungarian border, in cooperation with the police. One of our volunteers is a real estate agent who has volunteered with several NGOs; they have been involved in the care of Ukrainian refugees and organising donations since the outbreak of the war.

'I was born in Transcarpathia, although I no longer have a significant number of relatives or acquaintances there. I left there a long time ago, I have no ties with those who were born since then, but it is still my homeland. It was immediately clear that I would help in any way I could. This is the personal part of it, and the other is my work. (...) I don't think that there is a more serious situation than this, on the basis of which solidarity should be expressed.' (Interviewee 14)

'I started working with refugees in the humanitarian programme as a field worker in April 2022. Before that, I had worked with Roma women a lot. I was mainly in contact with Roma refugee women from Transcarpathia.' (Interviewee 16)

'My first contact with refugees was in February 2022, at the Záhony border. In the beginning I volunteered, helping to distribute donations, blankets, hot tea, helping to brief them, often giving them spiritual support, reassuring them that they were in the right place and that they would not be harmed. However, because of my qualification, if they had minor physical injuries, I helped them as best I could.' (Interviewee 20)

'The motivation to help was the same as my job, helping people socially. I fully empathise with their situation, which is why I try to alleviate their problems to the best of my abilities. Through my contacts, I try to find donors for them donations from outside {the NGO} and raise funds for them.' (Interviewee 4)

'It was natural for us, there was no question of helping where and how we could. If we had not received a request from our employees, we would have done it anyway. But our colleagues working here came to us, desperate for help. Together with them, we were worried especially about how young men in particular could get across the border.' (Interviewee 5)

'We were working mostly with the police, helping them with their work, and we went to the smaller villages nearby together. In fact, we were told by the Hungarian population that it was reassuring for them that we were out there because they were frightened by the sudden large influx of refugees.' (Interviewee 9)

'In the beginning, we reached out to them, found out where there were place hosting refugees, then assessed the needs and delivered the donations accordingly. Later, the owners of the host accommodation themselves contacted us because they had heard that we were helping. (Interviewee 12)

1.2. Professional/civil activities, achievements and difficulties

In the second block of the interview, we asked in detail about the characteristics of the relevant professional activities and collaborations carried out by the respondents, the tools, the methods, the number of refugees reached, as well as the results and difficulties. As indicated above, the interviewees are engaged in a variety of different activities and have come into contact with refugees from Ukraine in different ways, roles and tasks. Accordingly, they reported different experiences, of course from their own and/or their organisation's perspective, so we were able to gather a wide range of information.

The majority of the interviewees in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Hajdú-Bihar counties were in contact with Hungarian-speaking Roma refugees from Transcarpathia, but there are exceptions (e.g. kindergartens with children of Ukrainian origin who do not speak Hungarian), and in several cases there is a mixture of Roma and non-Roma, or Hungarian and Ukrainian-speaking refugees. The interviewees in Heves county work mostly with refugees of Ukrainian origin who do not speak Hungarian.

1.2.1. Professional/civil activities and cooperations

Based on the twenty interviews, the relevant activities can be grouped into four broad categories, which are overlapping in several cases, and in some cases the interviewee may also be involved in voluntary activities in addition to their paid work with refugees. With this in mind, the following main groups have been formulated: 1. Kindergarten and school education, teaching, work of kindergarten teachers and teachers; 2. Coordination, logistics, organisation, provision of supplies in an aid organisation or NGO; 3. Voluntary activities; 4. Other activities.

1. Kindergarten and school education, teaching, work of kindergarten teachers and teachers

The group includes six interviewees, four of them are involved in kindergarten education and two in school education, i.e. they are or have been working with refugee children as kindergarten teachers or teachers. Two of our kindergarten interviewees had one or two refugee children in their group, the other two - somewhat surprisingly - did not want to answer this question. One of them highlighted how they are striving to help the only refugee boy in the group who does not speak Hungarian (another child graduated from the kindergarten last year) to be included in the group and help his daily education (ICT tools, translation software, learning some Ukrainian words and phrases, 'to help him integrate, to make him feel more at home in our environment, in our kindergarten'). The other kindergarten teacher (and teacher for children with special needs), who also has a Ukrainian-speaking refugee child in their group (there used to be more), worded similar sentiments. Another interviewee, in addition to the usual kindergarten education, also provides special education (movement development, movement therapy, cognitive development), including several developmental sessions a week, mostly for children whose first language is Ukrainian.

In terms of cooperation, one of our interviewees pointed out that they used to have an assigned assistant and an interpreter, but that this is no longer necessary. Another kindergarten teacher reported a more complex professional collaboration: liaising with the specialised service, the expert committee, other kindergarten teachers and the psychologist (if necessary), which is also part of her work in the kindergarten. According to our head of kindergarten subject,

there was no 'institutional link', they only worked together with a part-time language teacher. The fourth interviewee in this group did not talk about any cooperations.

'During the different kindergarten activities, we teachers assess the children's developmental level, so we know which children need additional activities. With refugee children, we knew immediately that they needed more attention, as many of them spoke less or no Hungarian. (...) As with the other children in the group, we undertake everyday kindergarten work, kindergarten pedagogy tasks and special education outside the group. Some of them come to me for developmental sessions, some for just one hour a week, and others for daily sessions. I mostly do movement development, movement therapy, cognitive skills development, fine motor skills and attention-memory development.' (15.)

'It started last year, at the beginning of the year, because I also work with groups, not just as the head of institution. Children were placed in my group. Refugee families from Ukraine who settled in our municipality. This is how I came into contact with them. At that time, because of the kindergarten, on a daily basis. Some of them are no longer in contact, because they have since left for school. But the children came to kindergarten every day, so it was a very positive relationship.' (19.)

One of our two teacher interviewees, who is also a school director, told us that they support their Hungarian-speaking refugee students from Transcarpathia with special equipment, additional lessons and a mentoring programme. In the latter, an empathetic teacher and student help refugee students to integrate, study and adapt to their new environment. In addition, they assess the skills and abilities of the children arriving to them and place them in classes accordingly (in practice, this means that a third grader refugee child, for example, is placed in first grade). Our other subject works three times a week for 45 minutes in the afternoons with native Ukrainian-speaking students; last year there were more of them, this school year their number is down to two. In terms of cooperation, the interviewee only mentioned that they usually coordinate with the colleague who teaches the children.

'The school usually comes into contact with Ukrainian students via different routes. For example, families may come into contact with the educational institution through the state authorities, refugee organisations or other NGOs. As for our institution, we have some students from Transcarpathia, they speak Hungarian. This puts us in an 'easier' position, they live in the area and as we are a district school we are obliged to take them. It is indeed challenging, but it can also be an extremely important and rewarding task. It is important to understand and respect their cultural backgrounds, their linguistic needs and any trauma caused by being separated from their homes or fleeing.' (Interviewee 10)

'The mentor helps the student to understand the school system and culture, provides language support to help the student connect with the school community and make friends. Our mentoring programme usually provides long-term support to help Ukrainian refugee students succeed in school. And the aim of the additional lessons is to catch up.' (Interviewee 10)

'(...) last year I was teaching them like that, starting in October maybe, and I was teaching them three times a week for forty-five minutes. So there were two double lessons in this one day. And the other one, so another forty-five minutes, on another day. And then we went through with it like that, there were even older children in the group, but this year we heard from what I understood from the communication that they had gone abroad or looked for a better life elsewhere, and then these two girls stayed with me this school year.' (Interviewee 8)

2. Coordination, logistics, organisation, provision of supplies at an aid organisation or NGO

Six interviewees were included in this group, they work with refugees as staff of aid organisations and NGOs and are involved in activities, programmes and projects targeting refugees. As the designation of the group indicates, the activities and tasks carried out are multifaceted; they include coordination, logistics, organisation, organisation and distribution of donations, all of which started almost immediately after the outbreak of the war, also, the provision of various services, mainly healthcare and social, and delivering those to the refugees, as well as the various administrative tasks related to eligibilities, documents, accommodation, kindergartens, schools. Overall, these are the most common types of activities, but several interviewees highlighted or mentioned advocacy and legal assistance when needed. One interviewee stressed that their organisation played an important coordinating role, coordinating the work of several NGOs and aid organisations, which also meant close cooperation with several larger and smaller organisations. Another interviewee, also working for a major aid organisation, pointed out among other things that they were able to set up their warehouses almost immediately after the outbreak of the war, thanks to their extensive network of contacts and relevant experience, and that they collected a lot of donations and they were contacted by many. They also mentioned that they were able to take 15 refugees (parents and children) to lake Balaton for a few days 'to recharge their batteries'. Another (Roma) interviewee also talked about complex activities and how they were able to help with communication between some of the aid organisations and Roma refugees. Another subject works in a special area, on the field; they deal with women's sexual and reproductive rights, support during pregnancy and childbirth, and related donations; their target group is mainly Roma women from Transcarpathia. This organisation has close connections with interpreters, health professionals, doctors, NGOs, schools and kindergartens.

'We were the gypsy team, we didn't have a table, we didn't have a banner, we didn't even have the money to get some donations. The people from Pest also left the area after a month because they ran out of support. We tried to help the Roma refugees by volunteering, but with zero forints. I tried to establish a good relationship with all the organisations, talk to everyone, so that if diapers or anything else was needed, they would give them to the Roma refugees too. We were out there every day, and sometimes we even went out at night, because we heard that the gypsies from Transcarpathia were only allowed to pass on the evening train. It really was like this. (...) There were some organisations who were happy that we were out there, because when the Roma refugees stormed the 'buffet', the staff of the organisation were very scared, but we noticed it, quickly went there and helped them in the distribution or asked them to be quieter.' (Interviewee 13)

'We developed a system of what it was that we needed... and then they always asked us, and that was a relief for us. We knew what 130 people needed, because we started with about 130 people in February-March 2022, and then in another city we had a team of 70 people, the people were arriving mostly from Transcarpathia. That team was ours as well. Here we have 80 people, of whom about 60 are Ukrainian refugees.' (Interviewee 2)

“Refugees are a special story, because apart from the one wave of refugees we had here a few years ago, we have not typically done major refugee work, but we are able to perform well in disaster situations. (...) Our organisation then took on the role of coordinator, and as soon as social services and healthcare services were provided, we started to take care of the children, in connection with admission to kindergarten, schooling and so on. Because with refugee status came obligations, so we tried to help Ukrainian refugees to meet the obligations that they have under the legislation in force in Hungary.’ (Interviewee 1)

‘. The refugees were arriving, the colleagues from the emergency services brought them. What do refugees need? Toiletries, water, soft drinks, non-perishable food, that's the most important at first, and that you talk with them. Try to reassure them to some extent, as much as possible in such an impossible situation. We have equipped our warehouses, everything was ready within a few days, and the refugees kept arriving. When I recall, we started with 130-140 people at the end of February - beginning of March. From then even to the present day, although the numbers have dwindled.’ (Interviewee 2)

‘After the outbreak of the war, we also felt we had to help, so we collected donations and took them to {villages}, but it didn't work for long because they wouldn't let a truck full of donations cross the Barabás border. In addition, we welcomed and hosted families from Ukraine in the temporary shelter for families. They were allowed to stay here for two weeks, during which time they had to find accommodation. We tried to help them with that too. Seven families came at first.’ (Interviewee 11)

‘This is a fieldwork, a complete case management. Specifically related to women's sexual and reproductive rights and health, initially supporting pregnancy and childbirth, and then including contraception, and anyone who needed help with abortion. This consists in giving them information on how it works here in Hungary, on how prenatal care works, because it is different here than in Ukraine, and on whom to contact, on finding the connections and accompanying them for examinations.’ (Interviewee 16)

There are significant differences in the number of refugees reached, which of course depends to a large extent on the type of activity and service provided, and the type of municipality or municipalities (county town, small towns, villages) in which the organisations work. Two of them mentioned a target group of 130 to 140 refugees, one interviewee said they reach 200 people and another said they reach or have reached 200-250 refugees, while another interviewee is in regular contact with 35 people (15 families), typically providing them with various donation packages.

3. Voluntary activities

Two interviewees can be clearly classified in the volunteer group, but it may be important to distinguish whether the interviewees are (also) working with refugees as part of their paid work or only as volunteers. One of them is a university lecturer and researcher who, as mentioned earlier, was involved in an organisation of private individuals, an informal group that collected and took various donations to the border immediately after the outbreak of the war. This interviewee is also a member of a charity that has implemented a project targeting refugees (typically distributing non-perishable food, medicines, vitamins, hygiene products), which was coordinated by our interviewee. In total, they have been in contact with more than 200 refugees (living in urban collective accommodation and guesthouses) and have worked with a wide range of actors (universities, municipalities, companies, organisations). The other subject, a real estate agent also mentioned above, has been volunteering for a long time with various organisations, and after the outbreak of the war they became involved in fundraising, coming into contact with several actors (relevant institutions, host communities, municipalities).

'These people have arrived at two refugee shelters in the city and we have established intensive contacts at both sites. At that time, you could say that this contact was daily, now I would say it's irregular, so I couldn't exactly say, but I'm not there on a weekly basis, but when we start a project like this, I show up and represent our association in helping the beneficiaries (...) we gave them residents non-perishable food, non-prescription medicines, (...) dietary supplements, vitamins, and specifically feminine hygiene products. (...) So I was also responsible for the management of all the needs of these two homes, and obviously the purchase of goods, their distribution, so all kinds of coordination activities.' (Interviewee 3)

'Clearly the university was the most important and providing the most, where a working committee was also set up, typically with representatives of the assisting bodies and authorities. I was invited there as an external volunteer and it was a great opportunity for learning, it was a great team and we worked a lot together. (...) The municipality, with companies, there was a shop selling hairdresser's equipment, they helped the project several times, but typically with the support of individuals. Among the NGOs, I would also mention the Community Foundation, which provided grant funding for the excursions for refugees.' (Interviewee 3)

'We were at {café}, some of us were making the usual love sandwiches, and while we were doing that we were thinking about how we could help the refugees, because in this period all the NGOs and civils stepped up and wanted to help, including us. A video message from the head of the foundation reminded donors that we welcome donations of all kinds, mostly non-perishable dry food, canned food, hygiene products for handheld bags, blankets, clothes. So many people stepped up, brought donations, and transferred money to the bank account to support the mission. We have contacted the heads of institutions and reception centres who have worked to host refugees, either permanently or temporarily. We had connections to many municipalities. (...) In the beginning, we contacted them, found out where there were places to host refugees, assessed the needs and delivered the donations accordingly. We were later contacted by the owners of the host accommodation themselves because they had heard that we were helping.' (Interviewee 16)

4. Other activities

The other category includes the five interviewees or types of activities that do not fall into any of the above categories. In addition to the aforementioned contract soldier and the HR manager, this group included our subject who worked as a teacher and educator in a university college for advanced studies, and who brought young refugees into the college; in the first part of the post-war period there were tens of young people, now there are four “in their sight”. Our interviewee who worked as a nurse did translations at first and then was also involved in the care of refugees, participating in 'medical care', dealing with Ukrainian (Ukrainian and Russian speaking) refugees, about 30 in total. This group also included the high school teacher who came into contact with Ukrainian refugee youth at work; they had to accommodate more than 200 people immediately after the outbreak of the war; this interviewee is currently working with about 100 Ukrainian- and Hungarian-speaking refugees, with whom she is in ‘everyday contact’. Another of our interviewees has also come into contact with refugees as a specialised medical nurse and social worker, as well as through voluntary work.

'We have also recruited young people involved in this over our headcount. Because this is an extraordinary situation, and our profile is not exactly to help people fleeing war. But we felt obliged to do it, and we found a way. And the way to do it was by using church donations from the West... While they are full members, their stipend is not from the institutional budget, but from donations from the West. It had to be managed, it had to be solved to make it possible, and there were a lot of different factors to take into account.' (Interviewee 14)

'In the morning, we were given the instructions on where, to which border crossing to go, and after the briefing, we set off. Most of the time I was in {municipality}, we were on duty with a team of eight. Four people were on duty at the border crossing and four people were on duty alongside police officers. Our job at the crossing point was to help the customs officers with the paperwork.' (Interviewee 9)

'I help in getting the most important documents required for work (social security card, tax card, etc.). I don't have any regular daily tasks, but I mainly help out when someone is admitted to us. It is important to help those who need it to find housing. The company has its own property, but we also rent apartments so that we can provide housing for those who need it.' (Interviewee 5)

'A lot of the time I also address the psychological problems of refugees, there are a lot of young adults here. If someone is sick, I coordinate to get medical help, I also took one refugee with nerve paralysis for two weeks to physical therapy. I struggle a lot with the care provided by the healthcare facility because they are not aware that a refugee with dual citizenship is eligible for the same care as a Hungarian citizen in Hungary today.' (Interviewee 18)

The college cooperated with the 'charity service and the church' and received support from them. Our nurse interviewee has been in contact with several important organisations (UN, Menedék Association, Red Cross) in different ways. The interviewee, who was a qualified teacher and worked as an educator, reported other types of cooperation, which were also extensive (temporary family homes, mayor's office, police, Lifeguard Association). Both mentioned the Somnakuno Drom Roma Women's Civic Association. Our specialist nurse,

social worker and volunteer respondent also talked about extensive cooperation (with kindergartens, schools, social and other professionals, interpreters, GPs and nurses). The interviewee, who was working as a contract soldier, was, as it was mentioned, mostly involved with the police because of his job.

1.2.2. Results, difficulties, shortcomings

On the one hand, the interviewees reported a number of difficulties they had encountered in working with refugees, typically - as highlighted in the general experience (1.3.1) - related to language barriers, finding work, employment and accessing services (in relation to language skills or lack thereof, and legal status, relevant documents, existence/lack of permanent address). In addition to the systemic difficulties, there were naturally various individual and specific difficulties that the professional, volunteer and/or organisation/institution concerned tried to overcome. Overall, although not all our subjects talked about it, that there were and are visible results of this work, which of course vary according to the activities carried out. Many highlighted as an important achievement the fact that they have managed to overcome language barriers for both adults and children, that children who attend the institution already speak and understand Hungarian; that they have managed to empower people and create a safe environment for them; that they have managed to get them access to the necessary services (especially in the field of healthcare), even if this often involved many obstacles and conflicts; that they have managed to find suitable kindergartens and schools for children and jobs for parents.

'I consider my work to be effective, although it is a very long process, because the first problem we have to address in each case is housing. Once they have that, they have to find a way to get into the labour market, but everything requires valid documents and a job offer. It's a very complex and complicated task, but we now have families who have started their lives from scratch here in Hungary and are now able to buy their own home.' (Interview 20)

'I consider my own work to be successful, as I have personally accompanied around fifty refugee women throughout their pregnancy and was actively involved in helping them even in the six months after giving birth. They managed to get all the documents with my help.' (Interviewee 16)

'We had two little girls who didn't speak Hungarian at all, and that was our biggest difficulty, that we had to teach them Hungarian so that they could speak fluently and so that we could understand each other. We have successfully addressed this problem, so further developing can now go ahead smoothly.' (Interviewee 15)

'In the short, medium and long term, I judge our work with refugees to be outstandingly effective, as they have received the best and most exemplary care in the county.' (Interviewee 17)

'I think it's very successful, because I can see the will in these people, they seem to develop a secure vision of the future, which I think is also thanks to us. We encourage them not to give up, no matter what harm or hurt they may have suffered.' (Interviewee 18)

'Language was one of the problems. Some of them didn't speak Hungarian, didn't understand the language, so they just smiled at every question. One of the children, if I remember correctly, had a vocabulary of two words, good and thank you.' (Interviewee 19)

'The language-related difficulty, and actually the fact that I can't keep in touch with the parents either like that, so no. I can't, so I can't communicate with them. Now that's more of a problem, I can't find the connection with them.' (Interviewee 8)

'We really try our best to help them. We can communicate with each other, if there is a problem, we try to help them as much as possible, now with the school, so that they can stay an extra year, we also helped them with where to submit the papers, what information to fill in. So, if anything like that came up, we always helped .' (Interviewee 6)

'They mainly have language-related difficulties, and I would perhaps mention emotional help in addition (...). These are obstacles that I think we can address successfully. We try to engage them in different activities, which periodically but successfully distract them from their emotional difficulties. (...) I see the success in building a good relationship with them and in the fact that we can help them a little bit in their livelihood.' (interviewee 4)

'What is very important is that we have managed to unite families, whatever life brings, they are together. (...) The biggest difficulty is that they had to leave their homes and they don't know when they can go home (...). It's a bit easier for adults, they work, they have a social life. Children who do not speak Hungarian have the hardest time, as they are isolated from their friends and environment at a very formative period in their lives. I experienced it as a failure that we could not help a Ukrainian-speaking teenage girl, that we could not find a school for her. (...) Maybe it is a result of the fact that the people we have taken in have been here for two years, they have not gone elsewhere, they say they are happy here. (...) Keeping track of legislation and changes is difficult. There is almost always a task that requires 'investigation', and there is also one now.' (Interviewee 5)

'I think the biggest confirmation for us is when the little boy comes to the group with a smile on his face and that he has friends. He does not feel alone, he does not feel excluded. I think this is very important. It's also very positive that the parents and the mothers and grandmothers we meet every day leave {the child} here feeling safe'. (Interviewee 7)

'When I really got involved on a daily basis, the results were clear. (...) We managed to get the organisation of programmes, the children's programmes on track, we managed to obtain extra support that the refugees needed, washing machines for example. I also consider this to be a very important achievement. The most important result would be that we could send these people home with their spirits strengthened as well. My level is not sufficient for this. Of course, there is always more to do, but I think it was effective.' (Interviewee 3)

'What was difficult for us that no Ukrainian mum could understand why buckwheat is so expensive here, why it's not cheaper like at home. The food culture is different. We already know what should be in a Ukrainian food package to make it a useful, good package for them. Because no Ukrainian mum will eat a liver pate bun. (...) We already have routines and habits for that, and that's approximately how we work.' (Interviewee 1)

1.3. Situation of refugees, discrimination situations, practices

1.3.1. General experience

The experience regarding the situation and opportunities for refugees is also mixed. These are influenced by a number of factors, but mainly by county, type of municipality, origin of the refugees (Ukrainian or Roma), languages spoken and education (although many work in much lower positions compared to their education). According to our interviewees, refugees face the greatest difficulties in accessing employment, language, housing, services (especially healthcare services), and some also spoke about problems in educational institutions, segregation of children and inadequate education. One of our respondents said that 'for them, every day is still a transition. The expectation to integrate may not be justified, because they may not want to'. At the same time, there are also positive stories, positive experiences of refugees who have managed to find work and housing, to integrate into their new environment, and to provide their children with an adequate institutional education.

According to the experience of our interviewees, on the one hand, a relatively large number of refugees work, typically in jobs and positions different from those in Ukraine, and their employment prospects are - naturally - largely determined by their knowledge of Hungarian (one interviewee from Heves county mentioned that many of the Ukrainian refugees in her sight speak English well, but not Hungarian). On the other hand, especially the Roma refugees from Transcarpathia - due to their low education, lack of qualification and not least strong prejudices and discriminatory practices against them - are unable to find work or are only offered casual, seasonal, typically agricultural, day labourer, undeclared work (which means a lack of security and vulnerability, and it is no consolation that most of them did not have a better labour market position in Ukraine).

'Some of them are women who worked in shops, others in factories. I also know a teacher who taught children in Ukraine and is a factory worker in Hungary. Here they work mostly in factories.' (interviewee 4)

'Well, it's quite a broad spectrum, starting from the retired, some are shop assistants, some are homemakers with three children, but there was also a middle manager in a cosmetics company, they have since left Hungary. It's quite a broad spectrum, I couldn't specify, there were unemployed people as well among them. Currently, they do physical work, subordinate physical work. They can't do much else because of the language barrier; where they don't have to speak much, they just show them what to do, they can do only simple jobs. But there was a lady gardener, for example, and (...) she was also very keen to get a job in her own profession. In the end, he even asked me to let her decorate the environment where she lives, and even that was not achieved, and it was not a question of money.' (Interviewee 3)

'The parents said that there were perhaps some difficulties with health care at the beginning, until they had valid documents, but once they had documents, this was eliminated. In my experience, when it comes to finding a job, they will take any job, they won't decline, they are happy to take a job if there's an opportunity, because they don't have much choice.' (Interviewee 15)

'Many people want to go back. I am talking about Ukrainians in particular. Even though the house is bombed, everything is gone. This roughly sixty people (...) stayed here. Some of them are retired. They are eager to go home, to their own homeland. The so-called young people, there are young married couples, 35-40 years old with young children, are starting to integrate. They've got a job, they've had a baby, they're, as we were talking, trying to find some opportunity here, maybe get out of that dormitory room, find a place to rent. As for the people from Transcarpathia, well, they are also eager to look for jobs, maybe they are trying as well.' (Interviewer 2)

'Many people have stayed here in Hungary. Some people still live in public housing with their families. (...) Not to mention healthcare. Neither nurses nor doctors are trained in how to care for refugees. Not even the people working at the government office. They have zero housing options, and if they are gypsy refugees, then it's minus ten, and there is not much work.' (Interviewee 13)

'Sad fortunes, life situations, frightened looks, not to mention the children. Eyes swollen with weeping, all hope lost for the future. I talked to all the mums with the help of the junior interpreter and they left behind a lifetime's work overnight. Some people arrived with a plastic bag, really, what they thought was important, is all they brought with them. On the other side, it was nice to see as the days went by, how they opened up to each other more and more, how friendships were formed. Maybe the children were the ones who didn't really understand the whole situation. (...) Every family had a little bit of saving, so it was easy to continue living. There is one family left here in {municipality}, her child is now studying at a university and the mother is working.' (interviewee 12)

'There was a refugee woman who gave us a training course, she was a dance teacher here in Hungary and also there in Ukraine, she came to Hungary when the war broke out. They take all kinds of jobs, administrative jobs, physical jobs, whatever they are offered, whatever they have the opportunity to do, they take. Typically they do not do the same work here in Hungary as they did back home in Ukraine, even though they have the qualifications.' (Interviewee 15)

Some of the interviewees, mainly in Heves county, were dealing with non-Roma refugees, among whom there was a high proportion of middle class individuals and families with higher education, they were better informed and had some savings and resources. However, most of our interviewees in Hajdú-Bihar and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties were mostly in contact with Roma refugees from Transcarpathia, with low levels of education and little or no resources, but there are also different experiences in these areas. It is clear, however, that while there are general prejudices against refugees (even if some of our subjects experienced solidarity and helpfulness), there are significant differences in the treatment of and practices with Roma and non-Roma refugees; Roma refugees in Transcarpathia face serious prejudices and discriminatory practices, which will be discussed in detail in the next subsection.

1.3.2. Cases of discrimination, other incidents

Half of the interviewees had not encountered any cases of discrimination against refugees. Five of them came into contact with refugees in Heves county, five in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Hajdú-Bihar counties, and most of them are kindergarten teachers, teachers who say that their institutions do not differentiate between refugee children, but the HR manager of the for-profit company, among others, also did not experience such cases. It is not irrelevant that these interviewees were, and still are, largely dealing with non-Roma refugees. Two respondents reported more generalised discrimination and conflicts between Roma and non-Roma (Ukrainian origin) refugees.

However, ten interviewees had experienced numerous cases of discrimination, many of them serious incidents, in the course of their work. These are very mixed, and not necessarily limited to Roma refugees, but are exacerbated by Roma origin, as several interviewees pointed out. Our subjects have encountered discrimination and unacceptable treatment at the border, when accessing various - mainly healthcare - services, when dealing with administrative procedures, when looking for accommodation and jobs. One of them pointed out the rejectionist attitude of the mayor and the local government, and several of them also mentioned the general rejectionist attitude of Hungarian society and domestic institutions towards Roma, which is even more pronounced in the case of the Roma refugees from Transcarpathia. According to one of our interviewees, 'refugees of Roma origin have a harder time. If you are a refugee and a Roma on top of that, it's a huge disadvantage, because racism is strong in Hungary'. The interviews are quoted at length here as this is the best way to get a sense of the incidents, their background and context, particularly the cases of serious police abuse experienced by the contract soldier on the Ukrainian-Hungarian border.

'The way they treated the Ukrainians was a disgrace. The policeman and I were doing a round when he told us to go to the aid point, and we went in and saw the Ukrainian refugee being forcibly removed, because allegedly he had already been there for a package, and not once, but twice or three times. (...) The ones who came from the national defence were not even allowed to rebuke them, so to speak, because we were only in a supporting role, but the policeman and the customs officer rebuked them with not so little force, and there were times when the customs officer even slapped the person. The point is that there was a man who came over with his family. (...) they were Roma, they were totally normal, you could already tell by looking at them. They told them why they wanted to come over, they were let through, they were taken to the aid point, where they received the aid package, which they took home to Transcarpathia, and then they came over again, and the customs officer grabbed the young man on the Hungarian side, and then they dragged him into a so-called 'garage', where they slapped him a few times and told him that they were not allowed to come here anymore. But they got played, and later this family was able to come over again. (...) We couldn't really do anything about it, only our colleague from the police, who told them that maybe they shouldn't do this, because it would get them in trouble. They understood that, but it was clear that they were ignoring what the police officer was saying. So there must have been other cases like this.' (Interviewee 9)

'A group from Transcarpathia came over, about fifty of them, at about one o'clock in the morning, and the worst thing was that they were crammed into the same garage (...) and they were talked to like dogs. (...) 'Why the fuck are you coming over? Why come over here, you've no business here! Be glad we let you in!' (...) In this group, there were babies, toddlers, older people, women, and yet they didn't even consider not to talk like that at least in front of the children. (...) This rant went on for at least 15 minutes. Then a minibus, a police minibus, came to pick them up and take them away. (...) Those who came from Transcarpathia and were Roma, only they were talked to like dogs, the Ukrainian, the non-Roma refugees were spoken to nicely. (...) There was one time when a bus came through, it was full of women and children, so there was not a man on it. Then a Hungarian customs officer man got on the bus and asked them a disdainful, mocking question: 'What do you want in here? So, what, your husbands are off to war, what's it like without him?'" (Interviewee 9)

'We were on a night shift, doing a round, when we noticed two guys on bikes, the son and his father. They were refugees from Transcarpathia, and Roma. The policeman stops them: 'Put the fucking stolen bike down! Get off the bike, put your hands up! Where are you from, you gypsy?' The man told him nicely that he was from Transcarpathia, and that this relatives are here in {municipality} with whom they are staying. The policeman answers: 'Now, listen, you're going to get yourself in the car and we're going to take you back to Ukraine.' And that's when we told the policeman to stop it already!' (Interviewee 9)

'I remember the day when hundreds of people arrived from {a municipality in Ukraine}, and they were all Roma. The mayor knew that gypsies were arriving on the train arriving at the time. He told all the organisations that a train full of gypsies was coming. Then everyone closed down. There is no buffet, no hot food tent, no medical room, and even the toys have been packed away. There were a lot of people, women, women with children, and we started to scramble with the mayor so that at least they would have water until the next train comes. He gave it to them, but begrudgingly. (...) We have talked about what is happening in {municipality} at many international forums, but we have only received promises, no real help from anyone. These people could do their dirty work with impunity. Not to mention that they didn't even distribute the accumulated donations in kind collected in the container.' (Interviewee 13)

'At the collection point I visited, there were only Roma left. I was told by locals that it was because everyone else had moved on. Which means that they had the means not only to cross the border, but also to go further west through some kind of network of contacts. (...) So then, the ones who stayed were the most destitute. People who really had no money, no cars, no contacts. At the same time, I experienced both a sense of solidarity and a desire to help, but I also immediately experienced prejudice. (...) They did their job, because the mayor said that was the job, but I didn't really feel that there were any emotions. I attribute this specifically to prejudice against the Roma. I think that Hungarian society is in a very bad state in this respect, prejudice is very strong, whether you are a Ukrainian Roma or a Roma from Hungary. All the Roma in our country are affected by the same prejudice.' (Interviewee 14)

'This happened in the village near the border where the gym was set up. When I was there, there were only Ukrainian Roma refugees staying there. Each family in a different corner of the huge gym. A typical gym with a thick carpet, on which they slept. The helpers who worked there told me that they had brought their best bed linen from home to have bed covers here, and the ones who came were all lice infested, so they had to burn these linens. But they told

me this in a way to illustrate what kind of damage those refugee families caused them. What was even worse was that all the supporting professionals were of the same opinion and attitude.' (Interviewee 14)

'Sometimes they didn't want to care for them, or they didn't want care for them in the way they should. It was also not clear how to get into the healthcare system. On the other hand, so that they are not discriminated against, so that they get what they are eligible for. Moreover, I think this is a disadvantaged situation in many ways, and the Roma people at home are also facing this, but here we even had the situation where, for example, the nurse said that they were only coming over to pick up the donation. So refugee status brought additional judgment.' (Interviewee 16)

'I have different cases, for example, there are schools where our Roma refugee children are segregated, have separate timetables and reduced hours. To this day, there are schools where they only have three days of education in a week, with a maximum of four or five lessons. They find it very difficult to integrate into both institutions and society. Unfortunately, it still happens that even their neighbours turn away from them, even though they have jobs and their children go to school and kindergarten, they are still looked down upon, simply because they are Roma refugees or because they speak Hungarian less fluently. When it comes to renting a flat, I have to say that their chances are almost nil, the average Hungarian, when they hear that they are refugees, don't even listen to them, they say that the flat has already been rented out, or they ask if they are refugees and they say that they don't want to rent to them. In terms of finding jobs, they almost only get day labour, which they are very happy about, but these are only seasonal jobs.' (Interviewee 20)

'My own colleague (...) came over as a pastor from Transcarpathia. They had been planning it for a long time. Now the war was the final trigger, because they had more children and they didn't see the education for the children as being secure, and that was their motivating factor. And they became our colleague because they volunteered to be a translator. And they have a car with Ukrainian plates, and the tyre was cut out with a knife in front of a hospital because it had Ukrainian plates.' (Interviewee 1)

'There was a nurse who said things like refugees are just crossing over again and again to Hungary to pick up donations. They come and they go, they're always where it's beneficial for them, so it was absolutely a judgmental attitude. There was also someone who gave birth, and then the doctor made a comment like, 'Why are you giving birth to your baby to Hungary, now we have to provide for it. So they were saying things like, 'we're going to pay their living expenses'. I have unfortunately personally encountered this kind of midwife behaviour as well.' (Interviewee 16)

1.4. The situation of women and children

The interviews included a separate block of questions on the situation of women and children. On the one hand, what the women were doing for a living in Ukraine and what they are doing in Hungary, what their chances are on the labour market, and whether they face any further disadvantages or hardships (apart from being refugees and - often - Roma). On the other hand, we also asked whether the children in our interviewees' sight receive institutional care and education, whether they attend kindergartens and schools and what kind of help they receive there, what quality of care and education they receive, and whether they have experienced discrimination or other problems in these institutions. Most of the interviewees have some experience or opinion on the issues; one interviewee who works for an NGO specifically working with Roma women shared a number of important details during the interview. Experience with kindergartens and schools is, of course, primarily, but not exclusively, that of the specific interviewees' (kindergarten teacher, teacher).

The above-mentioned staff member, whose clientele consists in 95 percent of Roma refugee women, and who has 'accompanied' forty to fifty such women during their pregnancies, has expressed many difficulties in accessing healthcare and has repeatedly experienced prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices of some actors in the healthcare system. As mentioned earlier, Roma refugee women from Transcarpathia find it much harder to find work or only access the worst labour market positions, typically undeclared. In addition to low education and child-rearing, their situation is not made easier by the fact that, although they speak Hungarian, they do not speak it nearly as well as Ukrainian; they do not understand at all or have difficulty understanding many things, especially when it comes to administrative matters. One of our interviewees was typically dealing with women who were homemakers in Ukraine, at home with young children or pregnant; in Hungary they are largely living from seasonal work, day labour, working undeclared. Another interviewee said that the women also had mostly casual jobs and low-skilled jobs in Ukraine, and typically do similar work here. At the same time, one of our interviewees from Heves county pointed out that most of the refugee women of Ukrainian origin were well educated, in good positions in the labour market or were having a business in Ukraine with their families.

'On contraception, for example, we have been able to bring women into private care. We had a case where a Roma refugee woman did not receive care, she was not given a cancer screening without money, she was not eligible for it, only private care. It was very difficult to find a doctor who would treat them, because there was so much discrimination. (...) We had the possibility to take refugee women to a private medical clinic, but this also was not easy, because here too we encountered constant discrimination and racism. We've had cases where they've specifically singled out the woman, and I think that's outrageous, you pay for it, and you still have to experience racism. Obviously we didn't go back there again, so it wasn't overt racism, but indirect racism, you could feel it in the tone of their voice, for example, there was a lot of questioning about how they got here in the first place, how they should go to the public institution. But eventually we managed to find doctors where that didn't happen.' (Interviewee 16)

'They ask for our help to sign up with job agencies, they want to work by all means, whether in factories or for contractors. Some of them are of Roma origin. (...) It's not easy for them, especially for women who have young children. In terms of employment, there is almost only seasonal work, public work.' (Interviewee 18)

'{Among the refugee women in Ukraine} there were some who had a secure job, but there were also others who were raising children and not working. I think that whatever work they did in Ukraine, it will be very, very difficult for them to find work here in Hungary without outside help. (...) Usually they can work undeclared, and it is usually seasonal work, such as apple picking or melon picking. Pregnant women and women with young children are generally in the toughest situation in the labour market. They are in a difficult situation because they are the ones who don't have access to any work, because they have to stay at home with the child until the child is, say, admitted to an educational institution. The best case is if there is a husband and he can go to work. I have had few experiences of women having jobs where they could have worked permanently as, say, cleaners or in a cafeteria, for example. In any case, only those who speak Hungarian have found jobs.' (Interviewee 14)

'I think their situation is not very good, they are usually under-educated, and it is very difficult for the children to integrate into kindergarten and school, because the Hungarians are not welcoming, or they don't speak Hungarian well and they can't understand each other. They don't have much chance in the labour market, and what they do have is temporary. Personally, I see the difference in that when the refugee is a Roma, because it is harder to get a job if they are of Roma origin. (...) They usually have no profession, they know Hungarian, but they don't speak it very well. Most of them were all homemakers back home in Ukraine, but here they can only do casual labour.' (Interviewee 20)

'Most of them had restaurants, boarding houses, businesses. Some of them are the young generation, wives of engineers. They were homemakers, wealthy wives. As for the Transcarpathians, there too, the husbands worked, carpenters', builders', roofers' wives and several children. (...) Their situation here is much worse, maybe better for the people from Transcarpathia, but of those who came from the business sector near the front it is much worse. Women are worse off here, they don't have the same opportunities as at home. Even now, there are writers, doctors, family entrepreneurs, some who have gone to America, to the Netherlands.' (Interviewee 2)

'The language barrier is also there. What I see is, but that's just my subjective opinion, that we are not tolerant and we don't really want to accept their education, their value. They will certainly be able to find a job, but not in their original profession, and they will work for less salary because they are women.' (Interviewee 19)

'(...) we were constantly providing help, but for some reason we had the interesting feeling that the Ukrainian citizens were very distrustful about stating their real education and real work experience. There are not as many economists in the world as many such young Ukrainian women I have spoken with. There was one who said that she was a veterinarian, we arranged a job for her, but then she never wanted to be a veterinarian. Obviously psychologists can see the reason, a specialist can explain it. Like their material resources, they are reluctant to show and give away their inner resources.' (Interviewee 1)

'Many of the women we are in contact with started working, started working straight away. The women are insistent, fantastically insistent, insistent in an exemplary way. They are insistent in relation to themselves, for their comfort, for personal grooming. Sorry to talk about this, but yes. This also needs to be discussed. They have no problem with jobs. Some of them have their husbands here, so they are probably luckier being together. But there are two ladies who live alone and arrived with children. They are trying to integrate, taking the children to school, to kindergarten.' (Interviewee 2)

Experiences regarding the institutional care for refugee children and their situation and opportunities are mixed. There are interviewees, as it was mentioned, mainly kindergarten teachers and teachers who believe that refugee children are adequately supported in kindergarten, in school, to help them integrate and catch up (but often in a way that they are taught separately from other children in school). However, several of our respondents reported that it was very difficult to get children into kindergarten and school because of inadequate reception, lack of preparation and language difficulties. One of them also said that mothers were reluctant to send their children to kindergarten, which is compulsory in Hungary and of course essential for preparing them for school. On the other hand, children are often taught in schools in isolation, which makes it very difficult for them to integrate and be accepted.

'In my experience, refugee children were easily accepted and managed to integrate. I think that here in kindergarten there is no problem yet, maybe higher up, in school there are problems, there are increasing problems among the students. (...) Here in the kindergarten we work a lot on the correct use of the Hungarian language, for example we learn Hungarian poems and songs together. (...) I'm also a special needs teacher, so these sessions are tailored to the individual. I work with the children one-on-one, with a particular focus on their delays, such as fine motor skills, where this is developed to help the child learn to eat with a utensil or to hold a pencil correctly. (...) The feedback is that our development classes are effective, as we have refugee children who have successfully started primary school.' (Interviewee 15)

'Because these children who attend my sessions are not sitting in class, and then I deal with them in the afternoon or I take them out of class. So I have not experienced any discrimination. I even brought them to my class and they played with the children.' (Interview 8)

'I have experienced cases of discrimination in children's institutions. There are schools where refugee children are specifically isolated from other children, where education is also isolated, for example they have separate timetables.' (Interviewee 16)

'(...) a distinction has to be made between managing organisation and managing organisation, because one is managed by the municipality and the other by the university. The city has made several arrangements for refugees in its own care, and has clearly refused to allow those living in homes run by the university or the Catholic Church to access them. (...) the whole process was extremely disappointing. The issue of kindergarten for Ukrainian refugee children, so it's impossible, and how do I explain to the refugees in Home A that it is allowed in Home B, but they do not have these options in Home A. So that was one of the issues preventing them from being able to go to work.' (Interviewee 3)

'I think {the refugee children} are getting adequate education, they get the same as Hungarian children. The institutions have admitted them and tried to help them catch up.' (Interviewee 17)

'I think they have now been integrated into the Hungarian education system, the institution I know has been welcoming and open, and is helping them with various experiential programmes to help them unwind, relax or possibly deal with the trauma they have experienced.' (Interview 18)

'It was difficult, but we have now achieved that all children can go to kindergarten and school. Whether they go to the same place varies from one municipality to another. (...) I don't think these children are getting a proper education, because they are still isolated and they are not getting enough lessons. What I see is that refugee children are not really accepted into the institutions. There are smaller classes, teachers try to give them catch-up lessons, but they do it in very few hours.' (interviewee 20).

'Children receive a proper care and education. They seem to really like going to school, where they have integrated successfully. They were welcomed by the institutions. They have friends in schools, they are loved. Teachers listen to them, they are in contact with parents. {A} small kindergartener has also been successfully integrated into the kindergarten, although as far as I know the child speaks little. According to my information, when the children were enrolled in schools, they received catch-up education, but after that it was probably no longer necessary. Schools organise camps where Ukrainian children can participate, but I see that parents don't like to let their children go. They insist on being near them, or they are simply very worried for them.' (interviewee 4)

'It's different with children, I would make a big distinction between kindergarten- and school-age children. We had a lot of problems with enrolling them to kindergarten, they didn't want to understand it. Kindergarten is not compulsory in Ukraine, but here it is. The mothers were reluctant to let their children go to kindergarten because of a loss of trust and frustration, but two years have passed and now she presented with that she hasn't let the children go to kindergarten for two years and now she has to send them to school and she doesn't know a word of Hungarian.' (Interviewee 1)

'For those who stayed here, kindergarten and school are compulsory for their children. Yes, but none of the schools were prepared to accept children who could not read, write or count at the age of ten. Because in Ukraine school is not compulsory and Roma parents preferred not to send their children, there was no sanctioning. The situation is different here. Now here too, NGOs have sought a solution, and are holding tutoring and catch-up programmes for these children to help them integrate more easily into school.' (Interviewee 5).

1.5. The future of refugees

We also asked the interviewees how they see the future and opportunities for the refugees they come into contact with. Experience shows that those who had the resources have more or less managed to integrate, at least to find work and housing (with housing often being precarious) in Hungary, or - typically Ukrainian, i.e. non-Ukrainian-Hungarian dual citizens -

have moved on to the West. The type of citizenship (also) plays a decisive role here, as dual citizens (due to their Hungarian citizenship) are not accepted or treated as refugees in other countries. Several interviewees pointed out that those stayed in Hungary who did not have the opportunity to move on, but many clearly stayed because they want to return to Ukraine, even if their livelihood and future there (also) is uncertain; among the latter there are both Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians (mostly Roma). Some reported that there were people had moved on but returned to Hungary because of various difficulties. Some of our interviewees also said that the Hungarian state should do more to ensure that the fate and future of refugees in Hungary is adequately managed. This means that the overall picture is mixed, as illustrated by the experiences appearing interview that approach the problem in different ways.

'My experience is that in the beginning, many people wanted to go back to their country, but in today's context, many people are trying to settle here and make a living here, because the outcome of the war is very bleak. The situation is different for Ukrainian citizens and dual citizens. Those with dual citizenship are better able to get their eligibilities here, but when the asylum card expires, those with Ukrainian nationality will go home to somewhere in Ukraine. Dual citizens have an easier time of it.' (Interviewee 16)

'Clearly the state should take more responsibility in this. I think that life for refugees in this country is anything but easy. We hope that in a couple of years this will change.' (Interviewee 14)

'The dispersal has already started, so those who have come over are going left and right, and I think it will continue. In my opinion, some of them will stay here and blend into society, but the rest will either go back to Ukraine or move on.' (Interviewee 15)

'I think the state should facilitate the situation of refugees. They should be told what their rights are here in Hungary, what their options are, and who they can turn to with which problems. (...) I think they will have no other option but to try to fully integrate into Hungarian society, which is otherwise very welcoming towards them, at least for the most part. If they achieve that, they are more likely to find a more secure job, for example.' (Interviewee 17)

'I see that they have a will for their own future. They are looking for opportunities. I don't know what will happen here in a year or two, but for now we can acknowledge that with this effort they will be able to fully integrate into Hungary and build a healthy life here.' (Interviewee 18).

'The situation is less likely to change in the next year or two, as the outcome of the war is highly uncertain. Many tried to move on, to emigrate to other countries, but most of them returned to Hungary. I see it more as the majority wanting to stay, and wanting to build a whole new life here in Hungary, wanting to find a long-term job and settle down.' (Interviewee 20)

'(...) last year there were a lot more children who came to us to {school} and they have left Hungary. It was just used as a kind of stepping stone to keep them going. (...) Besides, the parents don't speak Hungarian either, and it's even more difficult to get them to do so than it might be for the children. Because if they stay here for a few years, they will indeed be compelled to learn Hungarian. But parents are unlikely to be persuaded.' (Interviewee 8)

'They may be so settled in that they may not even want to go home. They are really comfortable. They organise programmes, we see them as ordinary, as integrated, as if they were born in Hungary.' (Interviewee 7)

'The ones who stayed are those who don't have an opportunity anymore or don't want to, I think a high number of people who stayed have some kind of connection, even if they don't talk about it. Their immediate family member or close acquaintance has been here as a worker or has been visiting here. (...) It's difficult to say that, because I think those who stayed here in Hungary are waiting to go home tomorrow. And they will always look forward to going home tomorrow. (...) But it's very difficult to put it into perspective. (...) For those who want to stay here, I think they have all the opportunities and support to go through a perfect new integration process.' (Interviewee 1)

'I don't see anything positive. What they are trying to do after two years is positive. But what we know from the state (...). What can we do to help them? Citizenship on short notice? (...) It would be so nice to help them. I know that everyone wants to go home, including pensioners. I see sadness on their faces.' (Interviewee 2)

'If there are people who want to settle here, I think why they couldn't do so. I don't want to and I can't differentiate between someone from Ukraine, Germany or the Netherlands. Why differentiate between person and person if both want to work and integrate. Obviously there are language barriers, but I think they can be overcome, and I know that refugees, at least a portion of them, are trying to learn the language.' (Interviewee 3)

2. ANALYSIS OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

As part of the qualitative study, three focus group discussions lasting almost two hours were conducted in April and May 2024, one each in Heves, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Hajdú-Bihar counties. The participants were adults from the target group of the project (plus some children), and the groups were organised by local project staff. Our aim was to get information from the refugees in our sight, to get to know their background, their experiences and to reflect on the problems, difficulties and needs they raised.

2.1. The Hajdú-Bihar and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county focus groups

The participants of the focus group discussions in Hajdú-Bihar and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties were Roma refugees of similar social status and background, mostly from Transcarpathia, with one or two refugees who were non-Roma but spoke Hungarian. Nine people participated in the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county group, mainly women, to a lesser extent men, mostly relatives and family members, so on the one hand their circumstances are similar, but on the other hand the family members (mainly women and men) have different experiences in the field of employment. One of the participants graduated as a social worker in Transcarpathia and is currently a university student in Hungary, while the others have typically completed nine to ten grades, one of them only having completed three grades, as they put it, 'having trouble reading and writing'. The Hajdú-Bihar county discussion was attended by eight women, plus two younger primary school girls (who came with their parents), there were no men in the group. Here too, there is a low level of education, completed primary education at most, but some have completed secondary school. This discussion was also attended mainly by family members and relatives who live and work together, but who live in two different parts of the town. Both groups included several parents with young children and primary school-age children.

2.1.1. Economic activity, activities

The vast majority of participants were or are in very low labour market positions both in Ukraine and in Hungary, and many of them were unemployed back at home. In Hungary, the majority of adults work (mainly undeclared) and some parents are at home with their children. Many highlighted that, despite all the difficulties, people still earn much more in Hungary (moreover, in the eastern and north-eastern parts of the country) than in Ukraine, and that they can find work here.

The majority of the participants in the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county group were unemployed in Ukraine, but some worked in a car parts factory. The women currently work for the contractor who provides them with accommodation; they 'work outside in the fields', doing day labour (tobacco farming) for ten hours a day, for a thousand forints an hour, undeclared. Women also have to complete other tasks: 'I was working yesterday, carrying buckets full of bricks and sand'. But, as they say, the contractor is 'a decent man, he pays

properly'. They don't know how long this work will last, but this year is secure for them. One of the young mothers, who is currently at home with two young children, used to work for the local contractor, alongside her several-months-old children. The male family members work for the same contractor, but they are declared as building halls in different parts of the country. The work is dangerous, they go home every ten days, but they say they earn well (250-300 thousand forints net per month); 'you can't complain'. One of the young men has close family members still staying in Ukraine, he can support them from this salary. A woman with young children is a public worker in a kitchen, earning around 80-100 thousand HUF per month. The university student's mother, who has a degree in tourism, currently works as a cleaner, her father works for a 'window company' and has his own farm in Ukraine.

Many of the participants from the Hajdú-Bihar county group had previously (even from Ukraine) worked in the Czech Republic (picking cucumbers, planting, factory work in winter) and Hungary. In Ukraine, too, people typically lived from agricultural work and day labour; 'somehow we made a miserable living'. Many of the family members work in a local chicken farm, but are not declared. Their housing, even if of poor quality, is provided by the contractor. Chicken farms rotate 12-hour shifts (24 hours off after 12 hours), they earn 300 thousand forints per month. It is also a common opinion among this group that they have an adequate job, earn good money and the contractor is a 'decent person'. One of the participants pointed out that they do not work much in Hungary now, preferring to go to the Czech Republic from time to time. The women with young children are at home with their children; the two girls who took part in the interview with their parents are still in primary school.

'My partner and I were out here in Hungary before the war broke out, only the children were at home, two girls and the older boy. When the war broke out, we were at work, the problem was that the children couldn't come over, I would have had to go home to pick up the baby, me and the father.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'I completed primary school and then we came to work with my mum and dad. Sometimes I'd be at home, then my partner and I would start going to Hungary, we'd go home, we'd be at home, we'd rest, then we'd go back. (...) We were living in peace, we bought a house, we didn't know that this war thing was going to happen.' (young girl, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'Because our work is usually there {Czech Republic}, the income, because there, if the family goes out, five people who are labour force, to work, because I can work with my daughter-in-law, for example, in shifts. (...) We go there too for seasonal work, and now seasonal work will start from the end of May.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'My partner and I found {the job}, an acquaintance of ours is from here, we worked for him, and he offered that there is chicken farming if we wanted to come with the family. We came, our family, we met our current boss, I don't want to say the name. (...) He's actually a very nice person, a very good boss, helpful in everything, we can't say anything bad about him.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'We've got jobs, we can make a living, what more can I say. (...) Well, I haven't gone to any workplace. I went to this farmer, uncle {X}, give me a job. Okay, well, get to work tomorrow. (...) In Ukraine I have nowhere to go, nowhere to live.' (elderly woman, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county)

'There are even less jobs at home, not even a quarter of what we have here. Here, at least, even if the money is not much, you can make a living, even without an education. Not at home.' (young girl, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county)

2.1.2. Housing, housing conditions

The majority of participants in Ukraine has or had their own property, but the quality of their housing was not high (small village house, flat in a block house). Some participants live in rented accommodation in Hungary (in small villages) in relatively decent conditions, while several of them, although not emphasised, are reported to live in very poor conditions, in overcrowded conditions, and often in precarious accommodation based on the information received. A family in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county in Hungary has already bought a small village house that needs to be renovated.

In the Hajdú-Bihar county group, two families are, as mentioned, accommodated by their employer, one in a house and the other in a former café. They do not have to pay rent, but they do have to pay utility bills; the former family pays 70,000 HUF a month, the latter earlier paid 70,000 HUF, now 150,000 forints, which is deducted from their salary (i.e. they do not pay it themselves). The contractor offered each family a property for sale (for 8 and 16 million HUF respectively), which they could pay in instalments or work off (the families did not take up the offer). One family from Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county also lives with the contractor who provides the work, in fact in an agricultural building. The university student lives in a rented flat in a city with her parents and brother.

'My house burnt down in 2022, it wasn't the war yet at the time. (...) I was at home with the three children, because I also have a little boy, 16 years old, and at about four o'clock in the morning the roof of the house caught on fire, and then we had no way of saving anything, we could only escape through the window. And then a month later this war came about. We were able to flee here, because all our papers, everything was burnt. (...) To this day it is not known how this fire happened.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county).

'We don't really want to buy a house here, because it costs a lot of money, and I'll tell you as it is, we can't afford it, because it's not like we're going to buy a house now, and then stay here.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county).

2.1.3. Experience with institutions and services

The majority of participants experienced some difficulties, many of them inappropriate treatment, when accessing services and dealing with administrative procedures. Several highlighted that administrators are typically unhelpful to them because of their refugee status and - in particular - their Roma origin. However, there are also positive experiences, cases

where parents and/or children have received appropriate care and treatment. That said, the most common negative experiences are in the health sector. Some of these are due to the lack of documents and/or a registered address in Hungary, others are due to prejudice, discriminatory practices and language difficulties (they speak Hungarian but do not understand a lot of things, especially when it comes to official procedures, and they find it harder to read and write). Several young women had already given birth to their children in Hungary, but both groups included a young mother who had gone back to Ukraine to give birth. A male family member, although a declared worker, had to pay 70,000 forints for medical treatment in Hungary. Often, when a child is ill, the GP will not 'take' the child or give him/her a certificate, so unjustified absences are accumulating for the child. One of the participants complained about the documents office, where 'they really hate Ukrainians, I dare to say that, without any objections'.

'The other day my son-in-law had a kidney ache, but I've had such a problem before. (...) My shoulder was very sore, the older girl said, come on, Mum, we're going to the doctor's office, to the family doctor. We went and the girl said, 'Examine my mum, she's not well. And then the doctor says do you have a social security card? I say, unfortunately, no, because we are not from here, we didn't even know where to start, we were so fresh then. Well, the GP literally told me that I can't do anything for you, so you should just leave. Sorry, where is the help then. (...) So the doctor didn't help.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'We had the same with the doctor, that he had refugee status, granted asylum, and they didn't want to admit him to give {the child} the vaccine. Because they have not heard that those with asylum status can be admitted. And so we went to {a town}, and there the head physician told me that if they didn't take him, I could call ÁNTSZ (currently the National Centre for Public Health), that they didn't admit him, and I reported them, and then they admitted him. And so he's had all his vaccinations and he's been admitted to kindergarten.' (younger woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'I didn't mention that I have a very, very big problem with this here in Hungary. I can read and write, but here it's like when a paper is put in front of me, it's a question of surname and, of course, first name. And at home, the question is surname and first name, and I asked about this three-child allowance, for gas, to be given some discount. (...) The administrator asked me to please tell me now what my surname is and what my first name is. (...) Where should I write what, I say, please be so kind to inform me, because I do not understand the question. And then there was such a conflict, as if the administrator thought I was so stupid: So why did you come here from Ukraine if you don't understand? By what right did you get, the administrator is saying, Hungarian citizenship if you don't understand the Hungarian language? (...) We are in a different world, we speak Hungarian, but not at the level we should. I've had several problems with that so far.' (middle-aged woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'(...) the child wasn't well received {at the city emergency care}, didn't get the care, the medical care, because the child was a refugee. They kept the child in for a few hours, and then they let them out, sent them home, and the child vomited and vomited and vomited for weeks. And they just didn't give anything and the child had to go home. (...) Did not receive medical care, the child simply did not receive any care.' (older woman, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county)

'I was supposed to pay three hundred thousand forints. Then one of the doctors said what kind of passport do you have? I said I have blue and red, then he tells me to give him the blue one, I paid 70 thousand.' (middle-aged man, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county)

'When I had to get a social security number, they told me very 'nicely' that you are not a Hungarian citizen and you have no rights here and so on. (...) I listened and said thank you very much and we left.' (woman, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county)

'I have a little girl, one year and five months old, born here in {town}, she was born premature, she is sickly, has to be carried to a lot of tests, but thank God she is fine, no hereditary or how should I say, no trace of that she was premature. Okay, but it's just that it would be nice to be home.' (young woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

Parents' experiences of kindergarten and school are mixed and quite numerous, as most of the participants have children of kindergarten and/or primary school age. Some of them consider the institution which their child attends to be adequate; one participant from Hajdú-Bihar county pointed out that they were very satisfied with the child's school and teachers, and there was also a participant from Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county as well who expressed their satisfaction. At the same time, many of them shared negative experiences of difficulties in enrolling their children to kindergarten or school; frequent mocking, ridicule and ostracism of refugee children, especially, but not only, Roma children, against which teachers do not take much action; some teachers are also not very welcoming and do not really help refugee children to integrate. One of the lessons learned from the focus group in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county is that there are schools where children are mostly taught separately from the other students on specific days (three times a week), and even have different times for breaks. One of the participants' children, however, is the only Ukrainian (non-Roma) refugee in a village school of 150 students, studying with the others; attending catch-up classes in the main subjects (alone), but is not otherwise supported by the institution to integrate; as the parent put it, the child still 'has to defend themselves'.

In the Hajdú-Bihar county group, there was no experience of children being taught separately, but conflicts and difficulties abound here too. Bullying of children (by some classmates, as reported by the two primary school participants) was common, and there were several cases of parents in conflict with teachers. It should also be mentioned that one of the participants, a university student (whose Ukrainian degree is roughly equivalent to an OKJ [national accredited course] in our country), experienced prejudice from students and teachers in a higher education institution, which was the main reason why she applied to another institution (where she already feels very comfortable, she is a student of a college for advanced studies as well). One of her sisters has already started primary school in Hungary, is now in second grade, and is an excellent student; and her older sister has finished primary school here and is currently attending a vocational secondary school (the family, as mentioned, is not Roma and speaks Hungarian well).

'It was hard for her {her child} to get used to it. (...) And it's not so bad now, but at first the child was teased a lot, didn't want to go to school because of that. (...) The child also speaks broken Hungarian. (...) We went to a psychologist, and then the child opened up more, because

the child's so withdrawn anyway, doesn't like to go out in public. But now it's a bit better, she's a bit braver than before.' (young woman, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county)

'At first the child had difficulties integrating into primary school, went there three times a week, was not put in a class because the child didn't know Hungarian. (...) My grandchild is a first grader, and well, an excellent student. The teacher said that by the end of the year my grandchild would be the best.' (older woman, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county)

'The first time I went in, it was nice, a lot of people looked at me, said hello, I said hello back, I didn't go to class for the time being, they took me down to the headmaster's office, showed me around. Then my mum and dad came to pick me up at noon. And I started school first thing in the morning. Well, they always told me that the new girl was here and she was Ukrainian and everything. (...) Nothing happened. Then, when {the other refugee girl} came, she came in, made friends, it was easier for her because I was there, and then it was a bit better. (...) They told us to go back to Ukraine {my classmates} and I lunged at them. They took me to the director's office, but they didn't say anything yet. They said we'll go help in the kitchen, we'll get a little penalty and we went to help in the kitchen. (...) Now this teasing period is back again, I don't know why. They always tease me about how I go to school, and how we look, and they call {the other refugee girl} a gypsy, and me too, and how we look, how we walk, we don't have brand shoes.' (primary school student, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'The point was that {her daughter} was not allowed to do gymnastics at home, she can't do gymnastics at all, she had a weak heart, and there is a paper at home that says she has a weak heart. (...) The teacher was always nagging her to play ball and stuff. So he was always teasing the little one, so she didn't want to go to school. (...) The teacher won't leave her alone, she should exercise. (...) I went to the director first, I asked them that you have such and such, please call the teacher for me. (...) I asked the teacher what was wrong with my child. There is nothing wrong with her, except that {the girl} doesn't do gymnastics. I said, do you understand that my child is not allowed to do gymnastics? Well, why don't I bring a doctor's note, why don't I go home and pick it up and all that. I told him, listen, it's not just around the corner, that I'm just going home today and get a doctor's note. (...) I can't go home and quickly come back to you with a doctor's note.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'There was one occasion when it was {her daughter's} birthday. At home, we bring something to class because it's a birthday. (...) Well, there was the teacher sitting at the door, {the girl} went in, but there's a bad custom that you're not allowed to go into the classroom unless the bell is ringing, so you have to stand outside if it's raining, if it's cold. (...) Well, we took the bag with the two girls, (...) and those who went through the school door were all turned out. (...) That was in February. (...) And with such a loud voice to the little one, 'Turn back already, you're not allowed to come in here. It was so insulting, because she's a new kid, if the kids are going to be so disgusting to her, at least the teachers would be understanding.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'They tease you, they look down on you. (...) They also called me a Gypsy, a Ukrainian, and looked down upon because I don't have brand clothes or shoes.' (primary school student, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'I can say that this society, among children, I experience it with my younger son, he's always fighting. (...) They call him a Ukrainian, because everyone is Roma, they can't say he's a

gypsy.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'There was another problem. (...) There was an example that {her child} didn't understand. But I told her, my daughter, ask the teacher what you don't understand. Because if you don't understand, you have to understand. And she asked about it, that she did not understand the exercise. {The teacher} said they are not paid for this. (...) I went to the director. (...) because it did not feel right.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'The reason they won't pursue this is because there are two disgusting people in the class who pick on the child. (...) They comment several times on what the child's wearing, what the child looks like, why the child doesn't have brand shoes. Well, I am so sorry, everyone buys what they can afford. (...) We were also {at school}, that {the child} will not go to school, because the child will not get used to it. Then the director said that this is not the way it works in Hungary, it was in the beginning, then you won't get support, then they will take the child from you, but we don't have that. So why don't they help them to get over it, it's not so easy, it's not easy for us, it's not easy for an adult to start a new life, not to mention for two children. (...) so why don't they help? Then why do they ask why {the child} has so many absences, why there is no certificate? But they don't ask if there is a problem that might be keeping them out of school. (...) And if the child could bring a paper, of course they would bring the paper.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

2.1.4. Plans, future

The participants in both interviews are planning their future in Hungary (most of them dual citizens). Many people (parents, young people and children) also said that they are homesick and would like to return to Ukraine, but know that they will not have the opportunity to do so in the near future. None of them would like to go to Western Europe (they have no realistic chance to do so due to their dual citizenship and lack of language skills); one family from Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county tried to go to Germany, but due to their Ukrainian-Hungarian dual citizenship they did not get adequate help, the family members were accommodated separately, so after a week they returned to their employer and host, where they live in very bad conditions. Another participant, who is currently working as a public employee, clearly plans to work in Hungary; she would like to be a translator (speaks Ukrainian, Hungarian, Russian, English) and her child would like to work at the NAV (National Tax Office). The university student girl does not want to go home either, because the opportunities here are still better than in Ukraine, but her father, who runs a farm at home, is eager to go home. The wife and children of one of the male participants live in Ukraine, but he cannot to go home.

Participants in the Hajdú-Bihar county group generally do not plan to return to Ukraine, mostly because of their children's school and the job opportunities (which are mostly undeclared jobs, with poor working conditions, but still offer a better quality of life compared to the one in Ukraine); one of them has already bought a house in Hungary. Another participant's child has been admitted to a secondary school in Hungary ('a good school'); and one of the families would not be able to go home anyway, their house in Ukraine burnt down earlier and they are trying to start a new life here. Some participants, however, said that despite the relative safety here, they would rather go home if the war were over. One of the two primary school girls said that she 'loves it here', but misses home very much. The other

wants to go home: 'My mum and dad are at work, I'm at home on my own, it's not so good now. I want to go home.'

'So that's how we are, what can I say, Hungary offers us security, but it is not ours, it is not ours. Of course, it is natural that when the war is over, when we know that our sons and our men are safe at home, then of course we want to go home. They welcome us, but they know that we are not theirs, that we do not belong to Hungary. (...) Children are going to school, they have not been accepted for a long time, they are being called Ukrainians, so there are problems, even though Hungary offers security, but one would like to go home.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'Thank God we went to work, we worked a lot to be able to buy an apartment in Hungary. We had small children, we can't go around, we had to buy an apartment, start our little life. (...) Even in Hungary, you could find some kind of job, either near Nyíregyháza or in Budapest.' (older woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

'I don't want to go home, because I don't see a future there. There are no jobs, I cannot find a job. The social system there is completely different from here. It's no good here, but it's much better than at home. So I don't want to go. (...) It's my father who is very insistent, because at home, he has a farm and he lead it and worked with it. He is the one who really wants to go home, but unfortunately he can't.' (university student girl, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county)

'My little girl wakes up every morning saying, 'Mum, we're still not going home? Not just home as in visiting home and coming back, but really home.' (younger woman, Hajdú-Bihar county)

2.2. Experiences of the Heves county focus group

The focus group in Heves county was attended by seven young Ukrainians (four boys, three girls) aged between 18 and 21, all living in collective accommodation and coming from Eastern Ukraine, typically from the Donetsk region. The conversation was conducted with Ukrainian-Hungarian interpretation, which made communication difficult, and we also cannot use quotations in this case. It should be noted that some of the participants were very shy and distrustful, obviously due to their young age and vulnerable situation, and shared very little of their experiences during the interview. Nevertheless, we have managed to gather some relevant information in the main areas.

2.2.1. Education, housing, health, work

The majority of the seven young people arrived in Hungary more than two years ago, shortly after the outbreak of the war, four of them alone (one at the age of 16, another a few days before his 18th birthday), three with family members (mother, sibling, other relatives). One of the boys' family had been living here before, so they were able to reunite in Hungary; another boy who arrived alone now lives with his mother (in a collective accommodation). Five are studying, all in distance (online) education, in Ukrainian schools; four of them in higher education (cybersecurity, medicine, English-German studies), one in high school; one of the

girls is also working. They are mostly satisfied with online education, although, as one of them pointed out, teachers are often unable to teach due to power cuts or lack of internet, and a participant studying to become a doctor can only receive theoretical training through distance education. One boy who is not a student has been unsuccessful in his application to a university in Hungary (mainly because he did not have a language certificate here), but wants to study computer technology. The other is looking for a job, having previously worked at two places here.

The seven young people live in two different accommodations, some alone and some with family members. Overall, they were satisfied with the accommodation; one of them pointed out that everything was new when they moved in, and that the conditions were good (electricity, internet, hot water is always available and they also receive food). One participant living in another accommodation was also satisfied with the conditions, but indicated that they no longer receive free meals (they used to, but no longer do if they are over 18, or, for people of working age, only if they have a child under 18). Another young person highlighted the fact that they share a room with another family member, which makes it difficult to participate in distance learning. Despite their request, they were not given a separate room, even though there are empty rooms in the accommodation (although their other family members have already requested three rooms in total).

The young people do not have much experience with the national healthcare system, but one of them had a serious illness; they said they received proper care and did not have to pay (although they were taken to a hospital in a county town by a municipal car; the residents of the other accommodation do not receive such assistance). Another working participant pointed out that in case of sickness, sickness benefit can be arranged quickly and easily with the GP. Difficulties mentioned include the fact that, unlike in Ukraine, many medicines are only available on prescription; dentists are expensive; and language barriers make it difficult to see a GP (which requires the help of an interpreter, which is not a good situation).

Two people reported experiences or difficulties in finding a job. One of them, who left their last job to go to university, has been unable to find a job since. They sent their CV to several places (including Budapest) (construction, kitchen work), but received no reply. The problem, they say, is that they don't speak Hungarian and have no significant work experience at the age of 18. The other young person, who arrived later, finds it difficult to start looking for a job because of a lack of information and knowledge, and has not yet received any help. One participant (working in a bakery) pointed out that refugees working elsewhere earn much more than they do; if they had to live in a rented accommodation, they would certainly not be able to cover it.

2.2.2. General experiences, difficulties and plans

Some of the participants said that they typically meet 'nice people' in Hungary and that they have not experienced 'particularly negative things'. One participant mentioned that they had been in some bad situations ('not a big problem, but still an inconvenience'), for example when the driver on a local bus did not accept the pass issued to them because they had no

permanent address, and was dropped off a few times. Many of them go to the gym, and one of them even got a free pass because they were the first Ukrainian refugee there. They were given a discounted pass to the local beach, which was also mentioned as a positive (which is sometimes not accepted on entry).

Some of the participants regularly travel to Budapest, where they experienced minor incidents (with more aggressive beggars), but not because of their refugee status or Ukrainian origin. One young person found themselves in an 'uncomfortable situation' in the 'migration department' of the municipality when they tried to communicate in English. They were told not to use English whereas they were speaking English with the client in front of them (they went to the office with an interpreter next time). Another participant applied for a subsistence allowance more than two months ago, but has not received the benefit they are eligible for. Another young person mentioned that they have not received a reply to their letter regarding the admission process from a university in Hungary for almost a year (since last summer); another cannot find a German language course which is taught in English (the private teacher charges €25 per hour).

Five of the seven participants would like to return to Ukraine after the war, but they know that this is not a possibility in the short term, so they have other plans for the time being. Two would move to Budapest, mostly due to the job opportunities, but they and others are thinking of moving on to Western Europe (they speak English). The medical student would definitely like to work in Ukraine, but if the war drags on too long, they would like to try Western Europe. Two young people would not go back even after the war, they would like to move on to Germany, Italy or the Netherlands, even if not in the near future.

ANNEX

Interview draft (structured interviews with professionals/volunteers)

1. Introductory questions, background information
 - What are your qualifications? Where are you currently working? What is your profession, function, position?
 - How did you come into contact with refugees, how did you get involved in working with them, and around when? Why do you meet them and how often?
 - What motivated you to help? How do you feel, to what extent do you understand the situation and everyday life of refugees, how much do you know about their problems and difficulties?
2. Professional activities, tools, results, difficulties
 - Please explain in detail the framework and the type of work you do with refugees. What are the daily/regular tasks, activities, methods, tools?
 - Approximately how many refugees do you work with and how many do you have contact with? Where do they typically come from, from which areas and municipalities, and what language do they speak?
 - What do you see as their biggest difficulties? Which of these can you respond to, which can you solve, which can you manage, and which cannot?
 - How effective do you consider your own work/you and your colleagues' work to be? In what way and over what timeframe will these results and improvements be approximately visible?
 - With whom and with what actors (institutions, organisations, professionals, etc.) do you consult during your work? Who do you work with, how, and in what way? How successful and effective are these partnerships?
 - What deficiencies or difficulties do you experience in your own work with refugees?
3. The situation of refugees, discrimination situations, practices (the focus is mainly on Roma and non-Roma refugees, but experiences with Ukrainian refugees in general are also important)
 - Please estimate what proportion (approximately what percentage) of the refugees in your sight might be of Roma origin.
 - Do you think Roma and non-Roma refugees are treated the same way in Hungary? Do you see any differences in this area? Are there systemic differences? Is there a difference in social attitudes towards them?
 - If yes, please tell us about your (relevant) experiences, in particular but not limited to: authorities, institutions, services (police, local government, social services, child welfare, child protection, health services); renting a flat, looking for a flat; finding a job, employment; everyday life (in shops, on public transport, etc.), other.
 - How did you find out about these? Were you involved, did you see it or were you told about these? If the latter, who told you?
 - How do you think these discriminatory practices can be more deeply explored and tackled? Who, what actors may play a role and have a task in this? Do you see a realistic chance of this changing?
 - What is your experience, what plans and ideas do refugees have? Is there a difference between Roma and non-Roma refugees?

4. Situation of women and children

- How do you see the situation of refugee women, children and young people in general? What are their chances in the labour market, education and training? Do you see any difference regarding these between Roma and non-Roma?
- What did the women in your sight typically do for a living in Ukraine? What do they typically do in Hungary?
- Do the children in your sight go to nursery, kindergarten, primary school, secondary school? If not, what is the reason? Do children typically go to one place, one institution, or does it vary, is it different?
- Do you think these children are receiving adequate care and education? How well did they integrate, how well were they accepted by the institutions (the staff, the children's community)? Do the institutions help them with any extra activities or programmes (language courses, catch-up, tutoring, cultural-leisure activities)? If so, what are they and how effective do you think they are?
 - Have you experienced or heard of problems, cases of discrimination, practices in these 'children's institutions' or in connection with them? If so, which ones and how did you come to know about these?
- Do you have any activities, tools, programmes specifically for women and/or children and young people? If so, please present them. How effective and efficient do you consider these to be? And what else would be required?

Closing questions

- Do you have any other experience or information that might be relevant, but I did not ask, it was not mentioned?
- What do you think is needed to help refugees more effectively? Do you have any specific ideas or concepts? Who, what actors (state, local government, NGOs) would have a role to play in achieving this?
- How do you see the future of refugees in Hungary in the next year or two?

Focus group topics, questions (Hajdú-Bihar county, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county)

1. Background of the participants

- Where and when did they come from?
- With whom are they residing in Hungary (family members, relatives, etc.)? Do they have children, how many, how old are they? What are they (the children) doing at the moment, are they attending any institution?
- What are their qualifications, what did they do in Ukraine?
- What are they doing in Hungary? (work, raising children, studying, other)
- Why are they taking part in the discussion?

2. Being a refugee in Hungary - in general

- How do they feel here, what are your experiences 'in general'? (as an introduction) Do they have any negative or positive experiences they would like to share?
- Who and where can they get help if they need it? What help do they ask for, have asked for, or receive? And what else do they need help and support with?
- How satisfied are they in Hungary with the following (which are relevant to the participants, they have experience with them)? Why are they satisfied or dissatisfied?

- with the accommodation where they currently live,
- with the benefits, services, institutions, concerning children,
- educational and learning opportunities,
- job opportunities,
- healthcare services, doctor,
- leisure and cultural programmes and entertainment options.
- with people, with the community in general.

3. Being a refugee in Hungary - integration, discrimination, incidents

- How well are they able to, or how well do they want to, integrate into Hungarian society and their immediate environment? Are there any communities or groups that they belong to or participate in in some way? If so, which ones, where, how? If not, why not?
- And what about their children in this respect? In their opinion are they accepted and welcomed by the kindergarten/school community? Do they have friends? Do they go to a community?
- Are there obstacles to their (the participants') and the children's (school, work, community, etc.) integration?) If so, which are they? What is their experience of this?
- Do they feel that it is difficult to integrate because of their refugee background or because of their Roma origin, or both?
- Have the participants and/or their children been in situations where they felt discriminated against, treated unfairly, or even humiliated? If so, where, who, in what situations? (Due to being a refugee and/or Roma?) If this has happened, has it been reported somewhere, to someone? Did anything happen after reporting it, in response to it?

4. Future, plans

- Where do they imagine their future and that of their children (in Ukraine, Hungary, elsewhere) in about 3-5 years? And later, in 5-10 years? Why?
- What are their plans and ideas for the future? What can they do to achieve this? What are the obstacles to achieving their plans and goals? What help do they need to do this?

Focus group topics, questions (Heves county)

1. Background of the participants

- How old are they, where are they from and when did they arrive?
- With whom are they residing in Hungary (family members, relatives, etc.)?
- What are their qualifications, what did they do in Ukraine?
- What are they doing in Hungary? (study, work, other)
- Why are they taking part in the discussion?

2. Being a refugee in Hungary - in general

- How do they feel here, what are your experiences 'in general'? (as an introduction) Do they have any negative or positive experiences they would like to share?

- Who and where can they get help if they need it? What help do they ask for, have asked for, or receive? And what else do they need help and support with?
- How satisfied are they in Hungary with the following (which are relevant to the participants, they have experience with them)? Why are they satisfied or dissatisfied?
 - with the accommodation where they currently live,
 - educational and learning opportunities,
 - job opportunities,
 - healthcare services, doctor,
 - leisure and cultural programmes and entertainment options.
 - with people in general.

3. Being a refugee in Hungary - integration, discrimination, incidents

- To what extent are they able or even willing to integrate into young communities and groups in Hungary? Do they find such groups and communities? If so, where and how? If not, why not?
- Are there barriers to their integration (school, work, community, etc.)? If so, which are they? What is their experience of this?
- Do they feel that it is difficult to integrate because of their refugee background or because of their Roma origin, or both?
- Have they been in situations where they felt discriminated against, treated unfairly, or even humiliated? If so, where, who, in what situations? (Due to being a refugee and/or Roma?) If this has happened, has it been reported somewhere, to someone? Did anything happen after reporting it, in response to it?

4. Future, plans

- Where do they see their future (in Ukraine, Hungary, elsewhere) in about 3-5 years? And later, in 5-10 years? Why?
- What are their plans and ideas for the future? What can they do to achieve this? What are the obstacles to achieving their plans and goals? What help do they need to do this?