Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation

May 2026

INTER-AGENCY NEWSLETTER

REFUGEE COORDINATION FORUM | ROMANIA

Supporting inclusion, resilience and durable solutions for refugees in Romania.

$48.6M

2026 RRP APPEAL

43
APPEALING PARTNERS

212,334
refugees with temporary protection and refugee status in Romania
(as of end May 2026)

© UNHCR | More than 150 children aged 6 to 14 from refugee and host communities came together for a day filled with joy, discovery and connection at RomExpo Community Centre. UNHCR Romania and its partners, DGASMB, JRS Romania, Salvati Copiii, CNRR, Red Panda, Hub-ul de Caramida and eLiberare, welcomed children from Ukraine and other nationalities in an interactive treasure hunt featuring activities focused on sports, arts and crafts, creativity, cyber safety and children's rights.

APPEAL BY SECTOR
(USD)

Protection	$16.5M
Livelihoods & Socio Economic Inclusion	$16.2M
Basic Needs	$15.7M
Public Health & MHPSS	$10.1M
Education	$9.3M
Child Protection	$8.7M
Gender-based Violence	$6.3M

2026 RESPONSE SNAPSHOT
(as of May 2026)

10%	Funding level
$5.0M	Total received funds* vs. 48.6M appeal
$43.6M	Funding gap of appeal
41	Reportig partners out of 43 appealling partners
32	Partners reporting no new funding received this year for their refugee related projects
7,682	People reached as of May 2026 vs. 144,000 target**

*Data reflects information reported by partners as of the end of Q1 2026.
**Targets reflect planned needs. However, due to funding shortfalls and related implementation constraints, most of these targets are not expected to be achieved.

KEY PRIORITIES

Protection
Ensuring access to safety, legal protection, rights, and essential services for refugees and vulnerable groups.

Inclusion & Integration
Supporting refugees' access to education, employment, healthcare, and social services to foster self-reliance and long-term inclusion.

Social Cohesion
Strengthening trust, solidarity, and meaningful connections between refugees and host communities across Romania.

Localization
Empowering local authorities, civil society, and refugee-led organizations to lead sustainable, community-based responses.

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

© WHO Romania/Mihai Eremia

Operational Context

Within the framework of the Refugee Response Plan (RRP), UN agencies and their NGO partners maintain active coordination with national and local authorities through sectoral working groups. These joint structures are fundamental to delivering a unified, efficient, and all-encompassing response to refugee needs throughout Romania.

Since 24 February 2022, over 5.1 million Ukrainians have fled to countries across Europe.

According to data published by the Romanian General Inspectorate for Immigration (GII) as of end May 2026, a total of 212,334 refugees were granted temporary protection and refugee status in Romania.

This status that entitles holders to access healthcare services, the education system, and employment opportunities.

The response continues to prioritize protection, inclusion, and access to essential services for refugees, while promoting durable solutions, social cohesion, and greater national and local ownership of the response.

Funding Snapshot – Q1 2026

As of the end of Q1 2026, RRP partners in Romania reported USD 5 million in funding received against a revised appeal of USD 48.6 million, leaving major funding gaps across all sectors.
Protection and Livelihoods remain the sectors with the largest financial requirements, each facing funding gaps exceeding USD 10 million, while Basic Needs, Education, Health & Nutrition, Child Protection, and GBV activities also continue to face significant shortfalls.
Despite limited new funding, 14 partners reported ongoing activities supported through available, carried-over, or complementary resources, while 23 partners reported limited or no operational activities due to the absence of dedicated funding.

PARTNERS BY OPERATIONAL STATUS

14 partners
Activities ongoing with current or carried-over funding

6 partners
Activities implemented through other RRP partners

10 partners
No dedicated funding/ Limited activities through voluntary efforts or other fundings sources

13 partners
No funding/ No activities

ACHIEVEMENTS BY SECTOR - MAY 2026

SECTOR	PEOPLE REACHED	TARGET	FUNDING LEVEL
Protection	6,318	35,300	23%
Child Protection	976	5,000	3%
Gender-based Violence	4,365	28,000	9%
Education	1,030	3,300	0.1%
Basic Needs	627	23,400	8%
Public Health & MHPSS	3,375	23,700	11%
Livelihoods & Socio-Economic Inclusion	1,514	13,300	3%

PROTECTION

Supporting Refugees Through Information, Access, and Advocacy

© UNHCR/Mihai Eremia

24
PARTNERS appealing

35,200
PEOPLE TARGETED in 2026

$12.5M
FINANCIAL REQUEST in 2026

Total appeal — Funded / Unfunded

$12.5M: 23.1% Funded, 76.9% Unfunded

WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRS

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

Consiliul Național Român pentru Refugiați

KEY PARTNERS

JRS · Guvernul României – Agenția Națională pentru Egalitatea de Șanse între Femei și Bărbați · Terre des hommes – Helping children worldwide. · Salvați Copiii – Save the Children Romania · unicef for every child · Crucea Roșie Română · Novapolis · Migrant Integration Center Brasov

Full list of sectoral appealing partners: ADPARE | City Makers | East European Institute for Reproductive Health (EEIRH) | EDNAE | FONSS | IOM | JRS Romania | Malva | Metropolitan Agency for Durable Development Brasov | Migrant Integration Centre Brasov | Necuvinte | Novapolis | PATRIR | Plan International | RomaJust | Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) | Save the Children Romania | Dr.Max Foundation | Sibiu Community Foundation | Terre des Hommes | Tineri Pentru Tineri | UNHCR | UNICEF | World Vision Romania

Regional Cooperation Shapes the Future of Protection

As Romania prepares for evolving migration and asylum procedures, protection actors continue to strengthen coordination and exchange lessons learned across borders.

On 26 May, the third Protection Working Group meeting of the year brought together 21 participants to discuss key developments affecting refugees and other forcibly displaced people in Romania. The meeting benefited from the participation of guest speakers from UNHCR Poland and UNHCR Slovakia, who shared experiences related to Temporary Protection transition and recent policy developments in their respective countries.

The exchange provided valuable regional perspectives at a time when countries across Europe are navigating similar challenges. By sharing lessons learned and emerging practices, participants strengthened a common understanding of the protection landscape and the implications for future policy and operational responses.

The meeting also served as a platform to review ongoing advocacy efforts aimed at safeguarding the rights of people seeking protection. CNRR presented the outcomes of coordinated engagement with authorities following the Ministry of Internal Affairs' publication of responses to recommendations submitted by multiple organisations on the draft law concerning the establishment and organisation of screening centres. The discussion underscored the importance of maintaining strong procedural safeguards as new systems are developed.

Building Capacity at Romania's Future Screening Centres

Ensuring that frontline officials can identify vulnerabilities and respond appropriately is essential to an effective protection system.

At the invitation of the General Inspectorate of the Border Police, UNHCR contributed to a training programme organised by the Border Police Personnel Initial and Continuous Training School in Iași for officers serving at Romania's external borders. The training targeted border police personnel who are expected to work in the future Screening Centres established under the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Over two days, on 27 and 28 May, UNHCR delivered specialised sessions on international protection, asylum, UNHCR's mandate, identifying and working with vulnerable persons, and recognising statelessness and risks of statelessness.

By strengthening the knowledge and preparedness of frontline officials, the initiative contributes to ensuring that future screening procedures are implemented in a manner that respects international protection standards and responds effectively to the needs of vulnerable individuals.

PROTECTION

© UNHCR

Community Spaces Promote Wellbeing, Inclusion and Connection

Protection extends beyond legal assistance and case management. It also means creating opportunities for people to connect, learn and support one another.

At the RomExpo Community Centre, UNHCR continued to facilitate activities designed to promote psychosocial wellbeing, social inclusion, language learning and access to reliable information for both refugees and members of the host community.

Women participated in a Women's Club session centred on creativity, empowerment and self-care through a bag-painting masterclass and resilience-building exercises. Child-friendly activities ran in parallel, enabling children to engage in creative expression while supporting the participation of mothers.

Community members also strengthened their language skills and social connections through a Romanian Speaking Club session focused on holidays and future aspirations. In addition, a workshop marking the International Day of Action for Women's Health provided participants with practical health information and the opportunity to engage directly with a medical specialist in a safe and supportive environment.

Together, these activities fostered participation, mutual support and stronger community ties, contributing to a more inclusive and welcoming environment for refugees and host community members alike.

Listening to Communities, Responding to Needs

Effective protection responses are built on meaningful engagement with the people they seek to support.

Throughout the month, CNRR maintained an active presence within refugee communities through outreach activities across multiple locations. Participation in a job fair enabled refugees to access employment-related guidance, while dedicated information sessions provided advice on labour rights and legal pathways available in Romania.

Outreach visits also helped identify gaps in access to healthcare and social protection services, while community discussions created opportunities for refugees to raise concerns related to education, taxation, language learning and interactions with local authorities.

These activities not only connected refugees with information and services but also ensured that community perspectives continue to inform advocacy efforts and programme design.

Supporting Access to Rights, Services and Family Unity

For many displaced people, rebuilding their lives begins with access to information, services and pathways that help restore stability and independence.

Throughout May, CNRR provided protection support to 431 forcibly displaced and stateless persons, including Temporary Protection holders, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. Through individual counselling and case management, refugees received practical assistance in navigating procedures and accessing essential services.

Among those supported were 82 Ukrainian refugees who received guidance on Temporary Protection rights, obligations and administrative procedures. CNRR also facilitated 32 accompaniments for 26 individuals seeking access to medical and socio-economic services, helping overcome practical barriers that often prevent vulnerable people from obtaining the support they need.

Family reunification remained another important area of intervention. CNRR managed nine complex family reunification and reunion cases involving 13 family members. These efforts resulted in the successful arrival of one family member to Romania, demonstrating the life-changing impact of sustained legal assistance and protection support.

Looking Ahead: Housing Insecurity Continues to Drive Protection Risks

Access to safe and affordable accommodation remains one of the most pressing protection challenges facing forcibly displaced people in Romania.

CNRR continues to receive frequent enquiries from Temporary Protection holders residing in other European Union countries who are considering relocation to Romania. While many see Romania as a potential destination for longer-term stability, the availability of housing remains the primary concern. With most state-run accommodation centres already closed or undergoing closure, state-provided accommodation options have become increasingly limited.

The shortage is also affecting refugees already living in Romania. During the month, CNRR handled three urgent requests for emergency housing assistance, highlighting persistent gaps in emergency accommodation and the heightened protection risks associated with housing insecurity.

Addressing these challenges will require continued collaboration between national authorities, humanitarian organisations and local actors to expand access to emergency support while promoting sustainable housing solutions that enable refugees to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity.

CHILD PROTECTION

Protecting and Supporting Ukrainian Refugee Children in Romania

© SCOP Timișoara | SERA/Photographer Livia Mateias

9
PARTNERS appealing

5,000
PEOPLE TARGETED in 2026

$4.2M
FINANCIAL REQUEST in 2026

Total appeal

WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRS

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

unicef for every child

MINISTERUL MUNCII, FAMILIEI, TINERETULUI ȘI SOLIDARITĂȚII SOCIALE
Autoritatea Națională pentru Protecția Drepturilor Copilului și Adopție

KEY PARTNERS

JRS Jesuit Refugee Service

Salvați Copiii Save the Children Romania

World Vision

Terre des hommes Helping children worldwide.

Crucea Roșie Română

Novapolis

Full list of sectoral appealing partners: City Makers | Sibiu Community Foundation | Necuvinte | Plan International | Save the Children Romania | Terre des Hommes | UNHCR | UNICEF | World Vision Romania

Preparing Child Protection Systems for the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

As Romania prepares for the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, child protection actors are working to ensure that refugee and migrant children remain at the centre of new procedures and safeguards.

On 7 May, UNHCR joined the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption (ANPDCA), child protection specialists and migration actors for a coordination meeting dedicated to the child protection implications of the new legislative framework. The exchange highlighted the importance of strengthening national systems to effectively identify, support and protect refugee and migrant children, particularly those travelling alone.

Participants examined a range of priorities, including safeguarding standards, legal representation for unaccompanied children, data collection systems and inter-agency coordination mechanisms. ANPDCA emphasised the need for practical, regionally coordinated training for county-level child protection authorities (DGASPC) and called for additional guidance on provisional representation arrangements for unaccompanied children.

The meeting reinforced a shared commitment among institutions and humanitarian partners to maintain close coordination and continue consultations as Romania advances preparations for implementation of the Pact.

Strengthening Support for Children in Vâlcea County

Access to specialised services remains essential for ensuring that refugee children can thrive and participate fully in their communities.

During a visit to Vâlcea County on 7 May, UNHCR engaged with representatives of DGASPC to discuss child protection and social protection issues affecting refugee families. Encouragingly, no major child protection concerns were identified among refugee children in the county.

While bullying involving refugee children was not reported, local authorities noted that bullying and violence among pupils within the host community remain ongoing concerns. In response, DGASPC and the police continue to implement preventive activities aimed at creating safer learning environments for all children.

The discussions also highlighted positive developments in access to social protection services for children with disabilities. Refugee families continue to access disability certification procedures, therapy and rehabilitation services, with most applications for disability-related benefits reportedly approved. Local stakeholders reported encouraging outcomes for children receiving specialised support, underlining the importance of inclusive national systems that serve both refugee and host community children.

CHILD PROTECTION

Creating Spaces Where Children Can Learn, Play and Be Heard

From creative workshops to youth leadership initiatives, May offered refugee children opportunities to express themselves, build confidence and shape the programmes designed for them.

On 14 May, families gathered at the RomExpo Community Centre for a creative workshop centred around dreamcatcher-making. Nine children, including one child from the host community, participated alongside accompanying adults in an activity designed to encourage creativity, strengthen family bonds and promote positive interaction in an inclusive setting.

Youth participation took central stage a few days later when the Child Advisory Board (CAB) met for the first time since UNHCR assumed coordination of the initiative. Hosted at the UN House in Bucharest on 20 May, the meeting brought together seven young participants who were introduced to the United Nations system and UNHCR's mandate before exploring the organisation's work through discussions with staff from different units.

The session also provided a platform for young people to share their ideas, expectations and proposals for future activities. By creating a supportive and participatory environment, the Child Advisory Board continues to strengthen meaningful youth engagement and ensure that refugee children and adolescents have a voice in decisions and initiatives that affect their lives.

Investing in Better Protection for Unaccompanied Children

Strengthening child protection systems requires not only services on the ground but also the tools, guidance and expertise needed by frontline professionals.

On 27–28 May, UNICEF and UNHCR supported capacity-strengthening activities organised by the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Border Police at the Border Police School in Iași. The training targeted border police officers involved in screening procedures under the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum and included dedicated sessions on assessing and determining the best interests of the child, alongside broader protection considerations for people in vulnerable situations.

At the same time, UNICEF circulated for consultation a revised version of the Guide for the Appointed Representative on the Assessment and Determination of the Best Interests of Unaccompanied Foreign Children in the Context of Migration and Asylum who Enter or are Present on the Territory of Romania. Shared with national authorities, UN agencies and NGOs, the updated guidance represents an important
step towards strengthening safeguards and ensuring consistent support for unaccompanied children across the country.

Together, these initiatives reflect ongoing efforts to equip professionals with the knowledge, skills and practical tools required to protect children navigating migration and asylum procedures.

Save the Children Expands Support for Vulnerable Children

Targeted child protection services continue to help vulnerable children access their rights, strengthen family support systems and address individual protection concerns.

Throughout May, Save the Children reached 205 vulnerable children in Bucharest, Baia Mare, Galați and Suceava through a range of child protection interventions. Children and caregivers received information and counselling on children's rights, available benefits and access to services, helping families better navigate complex support systems.

Case management services provided tailored assistance to vulnerable children through individual intervention plans and social support measures designed to address specific needs. At the same time, parenting sessions, including activities based on the Safe Families methodology, helped strengthen positive parenting practices and prevent child abuse and neglect.

These interventions continue to play a critical role in promoting children's wellbeing, strengthening family resilience and ensuring that vulnerable children receive the support they need to develop safely and reach their full potential.

Spotlight story

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY

Celebrating childhood and building social cohesion

On 29 May, RomExpo Community Centre in Bucharest hosted a virbant celebration of International Children's Day.

EVENT AT A GLANCE

- RomExpo Community Centre, Bucharest
- 150+ children aged 6–14
- Refugee and host community children
- A day of sports, arts & crafts, cyber safety and learning about children's rights

More than 150 children aged 6 to 14 from refugee and host communities came together for a day filled with joy, discovery and connection. UNHCR Romania and its partners DGASMB, JRS Romania, Save the Children, CNRR, Red Panda, Hub-ul de Caramida and eLiberare, welcomed children from Ukraine and other nationalities in an interactive treasure hunt featuring activities focused on sports, arts and crafts, creativity, cyber safety and children's rights.

A DAY FOR EVERY CHILD

Throughout the day, children took part in a variety of engaging activities: sports and team games that promoted fair play and cooperation, arts and crafts workshops that unleashed imagination, cyber safety sessions that built awareness and digital skills, and fun, interactive sessions on children's rights.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Designed around the principle of learning through play, the activities encouraged creativity, teamwork and confidence. Children explored important topics in a fun and interactive way, while building friendships that cross cultures and backgrounds.

COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

The celebration strengthened bonds between refugee and local children, promoting inclusion, understanding and a shared sense of belonging. Moments of laughter, collaboration and respect reminded us that every child deserves to feel safe, valued and empowered.

Arts & crafts

Sports & team games

Learning & creativity

Community togheter

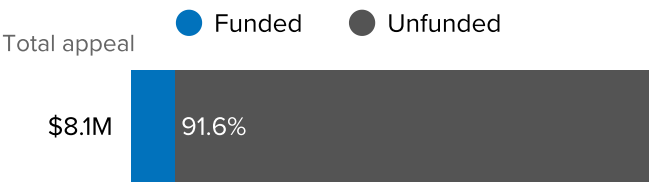
BASIC NEEDS

Supporting Refugees through Integrated Services, Emergency Aid, and Local Coordination

13
PARTNERS appealing

23,400
PEOPLE TARGETED in 2026

$8.1M
FINANCIAL REQUEST in 2026



WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRS

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

Salvați Copiii Save the Children Romania

CRUCEA ROȘIE ROMÂNĂ

KEY PARTNERS

JRS JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE

EDNAE

fundația comunitară Sibiu

AIDROM ASOCIATIA ECUMENICA A BISERICILOR DIN ROMANIA

Full list of sectoral appealing partners: ADPARE | AIDRom | ASSOC | EDNAE | FONSS | Habitat for Humanity | IOM | JRS Romania | Novapolis | RomaJust | SERA | UNHCR

Preserving Dignity Through Essential Assistance

As humanitarian needs evolve, access to basic household items remains a vital lifeline for many refugee families across Romania.

Throughout May, UNHCR continued to work alongside the General Directorate of Social Assistance of Bucharest Municipality (DGASMB) and Help Ukrainians Organization to ensure that refugees facing hardship could access essential non-food items (NFIs), including mattresses and undergarments. Together, the partners supported 52 people in Bucharest and Galați, helping vulnerable individuals maintain safe and dignified living conditions.

While often less visible than other forms of assistance, these distributions play an important role in helping families manage daily challenges and avoid further vulnerability. The support also reflects the sustained commitment of humanitarian actors to remain responsive to emerging needs as the response transitions from emergency assistance towards longer-term inclusion.

The impact of these efforts extends well beyond the month of May. By the end of May 2026, UNHCR had distributed more than 174,219 core relief items (CRIs) to approximately 46,870 Ukrainian refugees, including vulnerable third-country nationals and members of host communities across Romania

Refugee-Led Organisations Strengthen Community Responses in Vâlcea

Local leadership continues to play an increasingly important role in helping refugee communities navigate evolving challenges.

On 7 May, UNHCR visited Vâlcea County to engage with Asociația Voluntarilor Ucraineni Phoenix, a recently supported Refugee-Led Organisation (RLO) that has entered into an agreement with UNHCR. The exchange provided an opportunity to better understand the organisation's activities, structure and ambitions, while exploring avenues for strengthened collaboration and tailored support.

The visit also offered valuable insights into the realities facing refugees at local level. Conversations with community representatives highlighted growing concerns around housing security, including efforts to prevent evictions from accommodation centres and the introduction of new cost-sharing arrangements in privately managed facilities. Strengthening communication with affected communities remains essential to ensuring that emerging challenges are identified early and addressed through coordinated action.

The growing involvement of refugee-led organisations such as Asociația Voluntarilor Ucraineni Phoenix demonstrates the important role community actors play in shaping responses that are informed by lived experience and grounded in local realities.

BASIC NEEDS

© UNHCR

Advocacy Helps Refugees Remain Housed in Galați

Collaboration between local authorities and humanitarian actors has helped avert a potentially serious housing crisis for refugee families.

Housing insecurity remains one of the most pressing concerns facing refugees in Romania. This challenge became particularly visible in Galați, where Ukrainian refugees living in Block M11 received eviction notices following uncertainty surrounding the legislative framework governing their continued stay.

In response, UNHCR engaged with the Municipality of Galați and other relevant stakeholders to highlight the protection risks associated with displacement, particularly for vulnerable individuals. Advocacy efforts encouraged the consideration of extended timeframes as well as interim and alternative arrangements that would prevent families from facing immediate homelessness.

The dialogue resulted in a positive outcome. Residents were permitted to remain in the accommodation facility while contributing towards utility costs, providing much-needed stability and additional time to identify sustainable solutions. UNHCR also reaffirmed its readiness to support vulnerability assessments and protection interventions aimed at securing longer-term accommodation options.

The constructive engagement and flexibility demonstrated by the Municipality of Galați illustrate how local partnerships can help protect refugees from escalating vulnerabilities while fostering practical and compassionate solutions.

Looking Ahead: Housing Remains a Critical Challenge

Access to accommodation remains a major challenge for Ukrainian refugees in Romania. Rising rents, reduced assistance and the closure of cash programmes have increased the risk of evictions, particularly for the most vulnerable households. RRP partners continue to support affected families and advocate for sustainable housing solutions.

Exploring New Pathways to Affordable Housing

As housing pressures grow, attention is increasingly turning towards innovative models that can support both refugees and host communities.

On 28 May, UNHCR participated in the Policy and Practice Exchange on “Exploring Housing Cooperatives as an Instrument for Social and Affordable Housing in Romania”, organised under a World Bank-supported project aimed at improving Romania's regulatory framework for social housing.

The event brought together national authorities, municipalities, international organisations and civil society actors to examine emerging approaches to affordable and inclusive housing. Discussions explored the potential of housing cooperatives, social economy models and integrated social services to address housing needs while strengthening social cohesion and community resilience.

For the refugee response, these conversations are particularly relevant. Access to safe, affordable and sustainable accommodation remains one of the key barriers to inclusion and self-reliance. International examples presented during the exchange demonstrated how community-based housing solutions can improve access to services, foster social inclusion and support longer-term integration outcomes.

Participation in the event reinforced UNHCR's engagement with national stakeholders on housing policies that can benefit both refugees and vulnerable members of host communities, contributing to a more inclusive approach to social housing in Romania.

EDUCATION

Supporting the Inclusion of Refugee and Vulnerable Children Across Romania

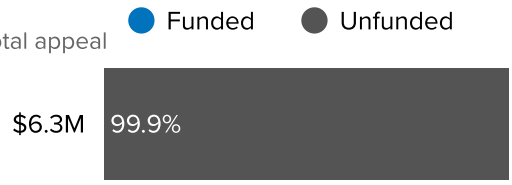
© UNICEF/IoanaMoldovan

24
PARTNERS appealing

3,300
PEOPLE TARGETED in 2026

$6.3M
FINANCIAL REQUEST in 2026

Total appeal



WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRS

unicef for every child

JRS JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE

KEY PARTNERS

MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI ȘI CERCETĂRII

Salvați Copiii Save the Children Romania

AIDROM Asociația Ecumenica a Bisericilor din România

HELP Ukrainians

Migrant Integration Center Brasov Empowering Inclusion

Full list of sectoral appealing partners: ADPARE | AIDRom | AMI | Association Malva | City Makers | Civic Radauti Association | EDNAE | Sibiu Community Foundation | Help Ukrainians | IOM | JRS Romania | National Youth Foundation | Novapolis | PATRIR | Plan International | REF Romania | RomaJust | SECS | SERA | Terre des Hommes | UNICEF | Youth for Youth | YMCA

Keeping Learning on Track for Refugee Children

Despite a decline in the number of active Refugee Response Plan (RRP) partners in the education sector, efforts to support refugee children and their families have continued to help learners access education, strengthen academic performance and build connections within their communities.

Across Romania, education partners have worked to ensure that Ukrainian children can continue learning and integrating into the national education system through a combination of remedial education, language courses, extracurricular activities, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), and social cohesion initiatives. These efforts reflect a shared commitment to ensuring that displacement does not interrupt children's right to learn, develop and thrive.

At the centre of this work is close collaboration between humanitarian organisations, schools and public authorities, helping families navigate educational pathways while strengthening inclusion in local communities.

Investing in the Earliest Years: Learning Through Play and Community Support

Early childhood education continues to provide a strong foundation for refugee children's development and future learning.

Working alongside national, county and local authorities, UNICEF Romania and its partners — Step-by-Step, HOLTIS and JRS Romania — continued to support refugee families in Bucharest, Brașov, Cluj, Constanța, Maramureș, Tulcea and Vâlcea County.

A cornerstone of this support is the network of 14 Play, Learning and Parenting Hubs (PLPHs), implemented in partnership with the Step-by-Step Centre. These community-based Early Education Centres provided services to 278 young children, creating safe and stimulating environments where children could learn, play and develop essential skills.

Through structured and interactive activities, children strengthened their cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development while participating in programmes focused on early literacy, intuitive mathematics, sensory stimulation and socio-emotional learning. Particular attention was also given to language and communication skills, helping prepare children for successful transition into Romanian primary education.

EDUCATION

© UNICEF/IoanaMoldovan

By investing in children's development from the earliest years, the programme continues to promote equitable access to quality education and improve school readiness among some of the most vulnerable children affected by displacement.

Opening Doors to Education Through the RomExpo Education Desk

For many refugee families, understanding how to enroll in school, access services and navigate administrative procedures can be as important as classroom learning itself.

UNICEF continued its support through the RomExpo Education Desk, working in partnership with the Bucharest School Inspectorate (ISMB) to help Ukrainian refugee children access and integrate into the Romanian education system. Through counselling, information provision and administrative support, the Education Desk remained a key point of contact for families seeking guidance.

Demand for services remained high. During the reporting period, the Desk responded to 625 information requests and processed 162 registration requests. Support extended beyond enrolment procedures, with information provided on Romanian language courses, preparatory class (Grade 0) registration, kindergarten enrolment and referrals to complementary services and extracurricular activities.

A particularly important initiative focused on preparing Ukrainian students for national examinations. With support from ISMB, six examination preparation sessions were delivered during April and May for students in Grades 8 and 12. The sessions included sample tests, practical exercises and guidance on examination structures, benefiting a total of 162 students.

The Education Desk also continued to monitor individual cases, identify barriers to education and support children with special educational needs, while facilitating study equivalency procedures and coordinating school mediators to strengthen collaboration between families, schools and education authorities.

School Mediators Help Bridge the Gap Between Families and Schools

Behind every successful school integration story is often a network of professionals helping families navigate challenges and build confidence within a new education system.

Through a UNICEF-supported project, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) provided educational support to 417 children and 192 parents during May. This included assistance to 71 children at the RomExpo Playground, bringing the total number of children supported by the programme during the first five months of 2026 to 624.

Additional activities reached 197 children and 97 adults in Bucharest, as well as 149 children and 95 adults in Constanța. A network of ten school mediators worked closely with parents, schools and inspectorates to address a wide range of educational concerns. Operating under formal protocols with the School Inspectorates of Bucharest and Constanța, mediators supported school enrolment, registration for the upcoming academic year and communication between families and educational institutions.

Families sought assistance on a broad range of issues, including access to educational and recreational activities, linguistic and pedagogical mediation, behavioural challenges in school settings, homework support, Romanian language testing, psychological support and assistance for children unable to attend school due to various circumstances.
The work of school mediators continues to play a crucial role in helping refugee children remain engaged in education while strengthening cooperation between schools and families.

Education Beyond the Classroom: JRS Expands Learning Opportunities

Education support extends far beyond formal schooling, creating opportunities for learning, language acquisition and social inclusion across different age groups.

Under its Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) project, JRS continued educational activities at the Regional Integration Centres in Constanța and Galați, reaching more than 383 migrant and refugee children and 519 adults. Activities included counselling on educational access, school enrolment, social benefits and language learning opportunities.

To support integration, four teachers and one volunteer delivered daily Romanian language courses in various formats, helping participants strengthen communication skills and navigate everyday life in Romania.

In Bucharest, JRS also continued early learning activities for 45 preschool-aged children, while an additional European Social Fund (ESF) project provided educational opportunities to more than 200 children and adults through a variety of learning activities.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate the importance of lifelong learning opportunities in supporting inclusion and self-reliance for refugees and migrants.

EDUCATION

© Save the Children

Save the Children Supports Learning, Language and Inclusion

Targeted educational support is helping refugee children overcome learning gaps while building the skills needed to succeed in Romanian schools.

Throughout May, Save the Children Romania (SCR) continued to provide educational activities for refugees from Ukraine and other vulnerable groups, including preschool children, school-aged children and adolescents. Programmes were delivered through schools and educational centres with the aim of supporting academic progress, facilitating inclusion and strengthening access to education.

Activities included Romanian and English language classes, homework assistance, remedial learning support and after-school programmes. Save the Children also worked closely with families to facilitate school enrolment and strengthen the inclusion of children from diverse cultural backgrounds within the Romanian education system.

In May alone, SCR provided after-school and remedial support to 39 children and one preschool child, while 68 children participated in Romanian and English language classes. These activities continue to provide children with the tools and confidence needed to succeed academically while fostering a stronger sense of belonging within their schools and communities.

Advocating for Fair Access to National Examinations

As forcibly displaced children progress through the Romanian education system, national examinations represent an important milestone on their path towards further education and future opportunities. Yet for many foreign students, language barriers and differences between educational curricula can create additional challenges when preparing for these assessments.

To help address these obstacles, CNRR joined partner organisations in a coordinated advocacy effort aimed at strengthening educational inclusion. Through a joint submission to the Ministry of Education, the organisations proposed a series of support measures for foreign students participating in Romania's 2026 national examinations.

The recommendations focused on reducing barriers related to Romanian language acquisition and curriculum alignment, with the objective of ensuring that refugee and other forcibly displaced children have equitable opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and continue their educational journeys. The initiative reflects ongoing efforts by education and protection actors to promote inclusive learning environments and ensure that displacement does not become a barrier to academic achievement.

Looking Ahead: Sustaining Education Support Amid Changing Capacity

While refugee children continue to benefit from a broad range of educational opportunities, the decline in the number of RRP partners active in the sector highlights the importance of maintaining investment in education services. Continued collaboration between government institutions, humanitarian organisations and local communities will be essential to ensuring that refugee children can access quality learning opportunities, language support, psychosocial services and pathways towards full inclusion in the Romanian education system.

As the response evolves, education remains one of the most powerful tools for helping children recover from displacement, realise their potential and build hopeful futures.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Building Safety and Resilience for Refugee Women and Girls in Romania

14
PARTNERS appealing

28,000
PEOPLE TARGETED in 2026

$2.5M
FINANCIAL REQUEST in 2026

Total appeal — Funded / Unfunded

WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRS

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

Guvernul României — Agenția Națională pentru Egalitatea de Șanse între Femei și Bărbați

KEY PARTNERS

UNFPA

unicef for every child

Full list of sectoral appealing partners: AIDRom | Association Malva | City Makers | Dr. Max Foundation | EDNAE | EEIRH | Sibiu Community Foundation | Necuvinte |Plan International | Tineri pentru Tineri| UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF

Creating Safe Spaces for Women to Connect, Heal and Thrive

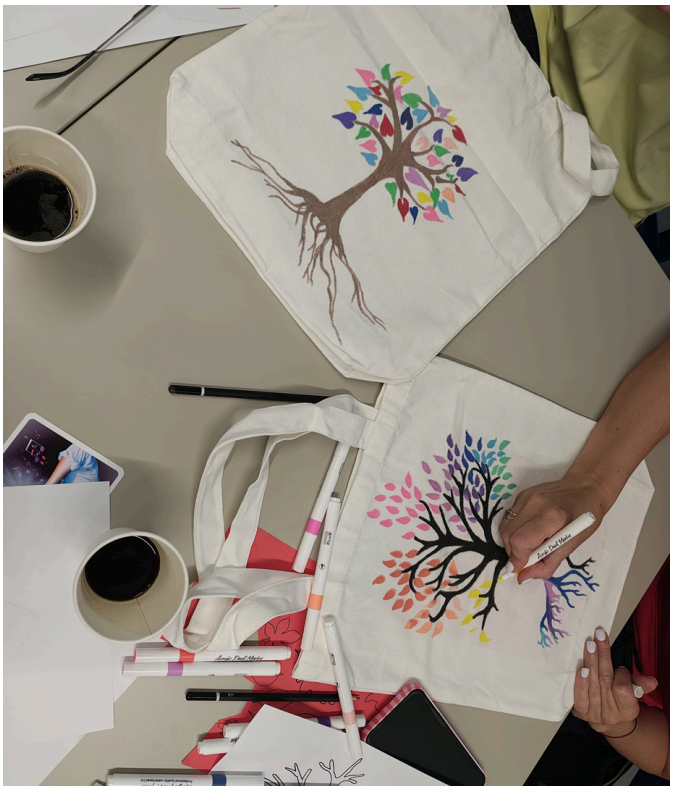
For many refugee women, access to information, peer support and opportunities for self-expression can be just as important as access to services. Throughout May, UNHCR continued to create spaces where women could build connections, strengthen resilience and access reliable information in a supportive environment.

At the RomExpo Community Centre, women gathered for a series of activities designed to promote wellbeing, empowerment and social inclusion. By combining awareness-raising, psychosocial support and practical health information, these initiatives helped foster a sense of belonging while strengthening participants' knowledge of available resources and support systems.

From Awareness to Empowerment: Women Supporting Women

Building resilience often begins with creating spaces where women feel heard, valued and connected to one another.

On 5 May, UNHCR facilitated a gender-based violence awareness session at the RomExpo Community Centre, bringing together eight women to discuss women's rights and the services available in Romania. The session aimed to strengthen participants' understanding of available support mechanisms and encourage help-seeking behaviour when needed.



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

©Dr. Max Foundation

The conversation was followed by a dedicated mental health activity centred around a creative art session entitled "The Tree of Women's Strength". Through art and reflection, participants explored their experiences, strengths and aspirations in a safe and supportive environment.

The impact of the activity extended beyond creativity. Participants shared that the session brought them a sense of joy and belonging, providing an opportunity for self-expression, mutual support and connection with others facing similar experiences. For many, it also offered a valuable respite from everyday stressors and an opportunity to recharge emotionally.

This focus on peer support continued on 26 May, when UNHCR organised a Women's Club session under the theme "Women Supporting Women". Ten women participated in a structured shopping bag painting masterclass, creating personalised "Trees of Strength" that reflected their individual qualities, achievements and internal resources.

Through creativity and reflection, participants were encouraged to recognise their own resilience while supporting and encouraging one another. The tangible items they created serve as lasting reminders of their adaptability, strength and capacity to overcome challenges.

Promoting Women's Health Through Knowledge and Dialogue

Access to reliable health information remains an essential component of women's wellbeing and empowerment.

To mark the International Day of Action for Women's Health on 28 May, UNHCR organised the workshop "Women's Health at Any Age" at the RomExpo Community Centre. The event was delivered with the support of a Romanian specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and welcomed refugee women alongside members of the host community.

The session provided practical guidance on maintaining health and wellbeing throughout different stages of life, while creating a safe environment for open discussion on topics that are often difficult to address. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions, share concerns and receive evidence-based information directly from a medical professional.

By improving access to trusted health information and encouraging informed decision-making, the workshop contributed to greater awareness, self-care and confidence among women from both refugee and host communities.

Looking Ahead: Strengthening Support Networks for Women

The activities delivered throughout May highlighted the importance of safe and inclusive spaces where women can access information, build social connections and strengthen their emotional wellbeing.

Despite these positive outcomes, important needs remain. Many refugee women continue to require opportunities for emotional expression and trauma recovery, alongside strengthened access to specialised services and referral pathways when additional support is needed.

Expanding outreach efforts and increasing participation will remain a priority in the months ahead. Continued investment in peer support networks and community-based initiatives can help ensure that more women benefit from safe spaces, trusted information and meaningful opportunities to build resilience and support one another.

LIVELIHOODS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION

Promoting Refugee Inclusion Through Education, Employment, and Recognition of Qualifications

© UNHCR/IoanaMoldovan

25 PARTNERS appealing

13,300 PEOPLE TARGETED in 2026

$10.9M FINANCIAL REQUEST in 2026

WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRS

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

World Vision

KEY PARTNERS

IOM UN MIGRATION

JOBS FOR UKRAINE

Salvați Copiii Save the Children Romania

Migrant Integration Center Brasov

fundația comunitară Sibiu

NOVAPOLIS

Commit GLOBAL

Full list of sectoral appealing partners: ADDJB | ADPARE | Association Malva | Ateliere fara frontiere | City Makers | Civic Radauti Association | Commit Global | Sibiu Community Foundation | Help Ukrainians | IOM | JRS Romania | Metropolitan Agency for Durable Development Brasov | Migrant Integration Centre Brasov | National Youth Foundation | Plan International | Project Voyager | REF Romania | Salvati Copiii | UNHCR | UNICEF | World Vision Romanian | YMCA

Building Pathways to Employment and Self-Reliance

For many refugees, sustainable inclusion begins with the ability to secure meaningful employment, develop new skills and navigate unfamiliar labour markets with confidence.

Throughout May, partners across Romania continued supporting Ukrainian refugees on their journey towards economic independence through language learning, employment counselling, labour market orientation and entrepreneurship initiatives. These activities helped refugees strengthen their employability, better understand opportunities available in Romania and build the skills needed to participate fully in economic life.

While employment remains one of the most important factors influencing long-term integration, partners continue to observe strong demand for practical guidance on both employment and self-employment pathways, highlighting refugees' determination to rebuild their lives and achieve greater self-reliance.

Language Skills Open Doors to Employment

Learning Romanian remains one of the most effective ways for refugees to access opportunities, build confidence and engage more fully in their communities.

Save the Children Romania continued supporting Ukrainian refugees through a comprehensive package of services aimed at reducing barriers to employment and integration. Recognising that labour market participation is closely linked to language skills, access to information and family support systems, the organisation combined Romanian language learning with employment counselling, childcare assistance, educational support and English language courses.
During May, 64 Ukrainian adults participated in Romanian language classes, helping them strengthen communication skills that are essential for both everyday life and professional integration. An additional 10 adults attended group information sessions focused on employment opportunities and access to public services in Romania.
By addressing multiple barriers simultaneously, including childcare responsibilities that often limit participation in the labour market, these interventions continue to support refugee families in building greater independence and long-term socio-economic inclusion.

LIVELIHOODS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION

© UNHCR/Mihai Eremia

Entrepreneurship Emerges as a Pathway to Independence

For many refugees, starting a business represents not only an economic opportunity but also a chance to regain control over their future.

This growing interest was reflected in the strong participation in a webinar organised by Jobs for Ukraine on 14 May, entitled "How to Start Your Own Business." The online event attracted 136 registrations and welcomed 65 participants eager to learn more about entrepreneurship opportunities in Romania.

Delivered by Ukrainian legal expert Irina Arapova, the session provided practical guidance on establishing and operating a business, covering key legal and administrative requirements. Participants actively engaged throughout the webinar, raising numerous questions and contributing to discussions that highlighted a strong appetite for entrepreneurship among refugee communities.

The high level of interest demonstrated that self-employment is increasingly viewed as a viable pathway towards financial stability, particularly for refugees seeking alternatives to traditional employment routes.

Connecting Skilled Refugees with Labour Market Opportunities

As refugees settle into their new communities, many continue searching for employment that matches their qualifications, skills and professional aspirations.

To support this process, Jobs for Ukraine organised a second online webinar on 22 May entitled "Ukrainians in IT Abroad: Work, Documents, Adaptation & Opportunities." The event brought together 40 Ukrainian IT professionals living in, or considering relocation to, Romania.

Participants received practical information on employment opportunities within Romania's technology sector, administrative requirements, adaptation challenges and professional development pathways. The webinar responded to the growing need for tailored labour market information among highly skilled refugees seeking careers aligned with their expertise.

Alongside community-focused activities, Jobs for Ukraine continued outreach efforts with employers across multiple sectors, including warehousing and logistics. The team explored new partnerships, engaged companies interested in hiring refugees and provided support with candidate screening and shortlisting processes to facilitate recruitment.

These efforts continue to play an important role in connecting employers with refugee talent while helping refugees better understand labour market expectations and opportunities.

Looking Ahead: Demand Remains Strong, Opportunities Remain Limited

Despite continued progress, significant challenges remain in helping refugees secure sustainable employment that reflects their skills and professional backgrounds.

Partners continue to report strong demand for employment counselling, entrepreneurship support and labour market information. The high participation rates recorded across both employment and business-focused webinars illustrate refugees' ongoing commitment to strengthening their economic independence and exploring opportunities for both employment and self-employment.

However, translating interest into employment outcomes remains difficult. Partners report persistent challenges in identifying vacancies suitable for refugee candidates, while highly skilled professionals often struggle to find positions aligned with their qualifications and experience. Employers in some sectors also continue to face recruitment barriers that can complicate candidate matching and hiring processes.

Expanding employer engagement, strengthening pathways between language acquisition and employment, and creating additional opportunities for skills development will remain essential to ensuring that refugees can fully participate in Romania's labour market and achieve lasting socio-economic inclusion.

Spotlight story RRP Partner

YMCA Romania

Creating a sense of hime for refugees in Baia Mare

Since the start of the Ukraine crisis, YMCA Romania has been creating more than support services, it has been creating a sense of home for refugees in Baia Mare.

© YMCA Romania

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM | MHPSS & WELLBEING | GENTLE PARENTING CLUB | SENIORS' CLUB | CAMPS & YOUTH PROGRAMS

A SAFE AND WELCOMING HUB

At the YMCA Hub, children, youth, parents, and elderly people come together in a safe and welcoming space where they can find stability, connection, and care. For many families, it is one of the few places where daily life begins to feel normal again.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

The afterschool program for Ukrainian children aged 6 to 13 offers structure in uncertain times. Here, children receive help with homework, learn Romanian through play, receive academic support, take part in creative and digital activities in a non-formal context, and share a warm meal together. Just as important, they build friendships, laugh, and rediscover what it means to simply be children.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Support goes far beyond education. Two Ukrainian-speaking therapists work closely with children and parents, offering a space where emotions can be expressed and understood. Around this, a wide range of wellbeing activities such as art therapy, yoga, dance sessions, eco-therapy and community gatherings, help restore a sense of balance and joy. Through the Gentle Parenting Club, caregivers find guidance, reassurance, and the strength to support their children. At the same time, the Seniors' Club brings older refugees together, easing loneliness and creating meaningful human connections.

CAMPS, CONNECTIONS AND GROWTH

During the summer, these connections grow even stronger through programs such as the day camps for Ukrainian and Romanian kids ages 6–13 and the international Camp HarmonY for young people aged 15–17. These initiatives bring children and young people in a safe, joyful environment where they learn, develop, and build friendships across cultures. Through outdoor activities, creative workshops, and shared experiences, young people begin to rebuild trust, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITY

YMCA Romania's impact is also felt at the community level. For many Ukrainian families in Baia Mare, the YMCA Hub has become a trusted anchor point, a place to seek support, build connections, and feel part of something again. Through digital learning, employment guidance, outreach via the Mobile Youth Centre, and community gardening initiatives, families are supported not only to cope, but to rebuild their lives with dignity.

Mental health support is at the heart of YMCA Romania's work. Here we provide individual and group sessions for both children and parents, helping them navigate trauma, anxiety, and displacement. As one of the psychologists shared,

> When children arrive, many are withdrawn or overwhelmed. Through time, patience, and safe spaces, they begin to express themselves again. The most important change is when they start to trust themselves and others.
>
> — Psychologist, YMCA Romania

TRANSFORMATION AND HOPE

This transformation is visible in many children attending the program. Some arrive silent and isolated, unsure how to connect in a new environment. Over time, through creative therapies, group activities, and simple moments of care, they begin to speak, to participate, and to build friendships. For parents, this change brings relief and hope.

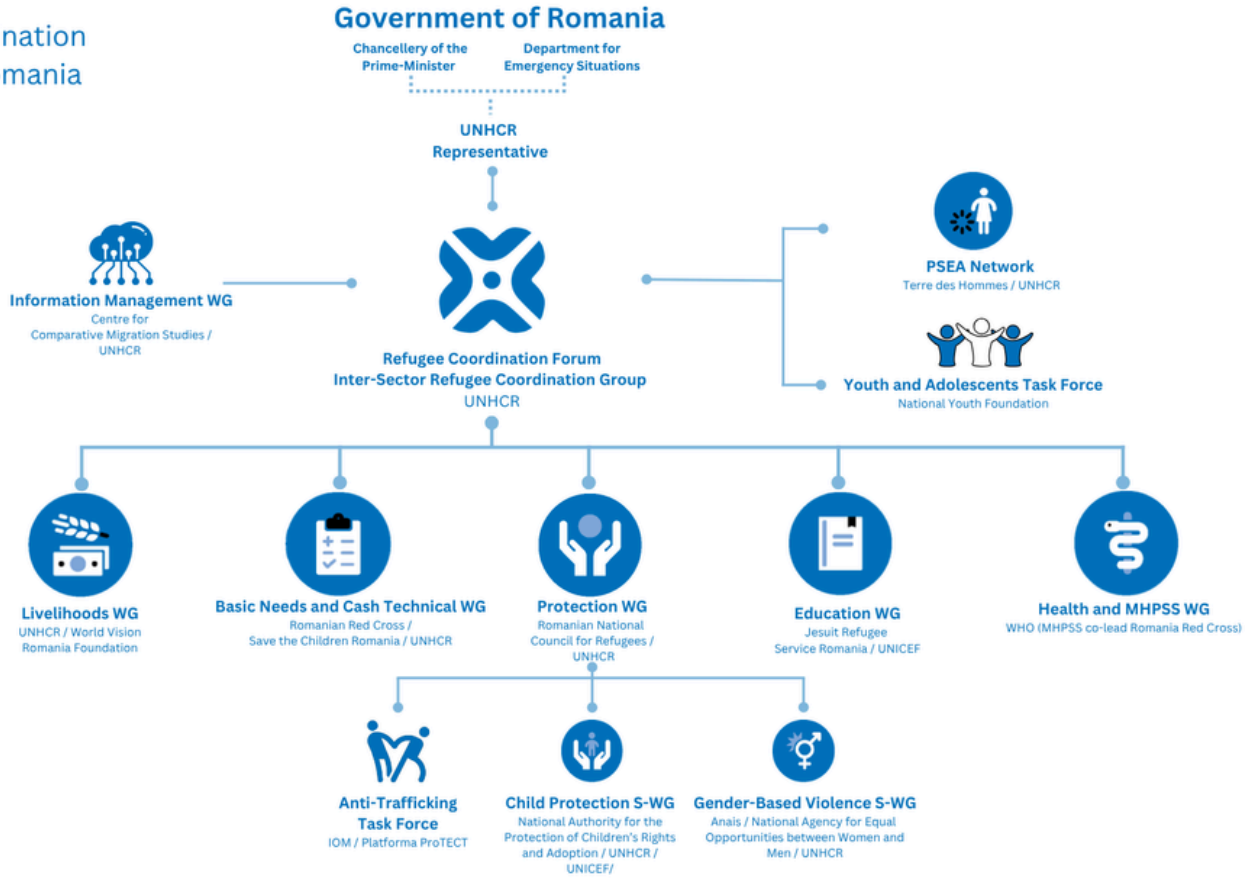
In a time marked by uncertainty, YMCA Romania offers something deeply human:

a place where people feel seen, supported, and not alone.

ymca romania [Learn more about YMCA Romania]

Working in partnership

Refugee Coordination Structure in Romania



In 2026, the Inter-Agency platform comprises of the following 43 appealing partners implementing humanitarian activities in Romania for refugees from Ukraine:

ADPARE | ADDJB | AIDRom | Asociația Moașelor Independente | ASSOC | Ateliere Fără Frontiere | City Makers | Civic Rădăuți Association | CNRR | Commit Global | Drumul Vieții | EDNAE | EEIRH | FONSS | Habitat for Humanity | Help Ukrainians | IOM | Jesuit Refugee Service Romania | MALVA | Metropolitan Agency for Durable Development Brașov | Migrant Integration Centre Brașov | National Youth Foundation | Necuvinte | Novapolis | ParentIS | PATRIR | Plan International | Project Voyager | Roma Education Fund | RomaJust | Save the Children Romania | SECS | Sensiblu Foundation | SERA | Sibiu Community Foundation | Terre des Hommes | Tineri pentru Tineri | UNFPA | UNICEF | UNHCR | WHO | World Vision Romania | YMCA Romania

For more information, please contact the Inter-Agency Coordination Unit:

Simina Costea
Assistant Inter-Agency Coordination Officer, Romania
Email: costea@unhcr.org

Ioana Davidescu
Inter-Agency Coordination Assistant, Romania
Email: davidesc@unhcr.org

Marius Chiricuta
Senior Information Management Associate, Romania
Email: chiricut@unhcr.org

LINKS:

Regional data portal
Romania Page
Ukraine Situation RRP
Refugee Funding Tracker
Romania Refugee Response Plan - Results