

Born in Ukraine. Finding Hope in Romania.

CONTEXT

Since the onset of the Ukraine crisis in February 2022, the Romanian population has provided unprecedented generous support to refugees from Ukraine. In July and August 2023, UNHCR conducted an awareness campaign to promote social cohesion and inclusion between refugees and host communities in Romania for six weeks. The campaign, titled “*Born in Ukraine. Finding Hope in Romania*”, highlighted the stories of six Ukrainian refugees from all walks of life to showcase their gratitude towards the people and various institutions of Romania for the essential support they provided.

The awareness campaign also aimed to tackle misleading narratives about refugees through distribution of latest information and data on refugee situation. In particular, the campaign outlined facts and figures about refugees and challenged unsubstantiated negative views through a dedicated webpage. UNHCR sought to address the most pressing refugee issues with tailored content and messages through a mix of channels on social media, radio, outdoor advertisement, national TV and press. While developing campaign messages, UNHCR consulted with stakeholders and partners to analyse existing narratives concerning refugees from Ukraine in Romania.



KEY MESSAGES

The overall messages of the campaign were developed in coordination with partners and stakeholders to:

- **Sustain empathy and solidarity** expressed by the people of Romania while welcoming and supporting the refugees from Ukraine.
- **Cultivate a sense of social cohesion and refugee inclusion** by showcasing concrete stories of their journeys and refuting misconceptions about the Ukrainian refugees.
- **Show support** not only by taking the refugees in, but also calling out narratives on refugees not supported by facts - when such false narratives are seen in the public domain.

CAMPAIGN DURATION AND AUDIENCE

The awareness campaign took place over a period of six weeks (3 July – 11 August 2023) in which messages and visuals such as photography and videos were disseminated in various forms. UNHCR also conducted one week of testing on social media to identify audiences and to optimize content for the main campaign. During the campaign, the most engaged audience on digital platforms were adults **above 35 years old** who were interested in **media, entertainment, news and politics**.

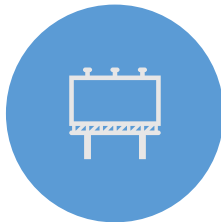
CHANNEL STRATEGY AND IMPACT

The campaign reached a large audience delivering the message at a high frequency and providing wide exposure in refugee hosting cities of **Bucharest Brasov, Constanta, Timisoara and Cluj**. Messaging was carried out through a mix of channels, namely social media platforms, digital outdoor ads, TV, radio and press. UNHCR received over **17.7 million digital impressions** on social media and **over 100,000 people** visited UNHCR Romania’s campaign website where refugee myths and facts were addressed. The press coverage from the campaign was unexpected, reaching **over 20 million audiences** with interviews, features on myths and facts, and refugees’ personal stories.



2,468,742

Unique digital reach
(12% of Romanian
population)



75

Digital outdoor
advertisements in
5 cities



226

TV video on
7 channels



378,753

Young people
reached through a
music platform



102

Press coverage
including social
media amplification

TV VIDEO



TV video (30 seconds)

Eight days of TV advertisements reached national coverage across seven key channels in Romania, including Pro TV, Antena 3, Prima TV and Realitatea Plus.

[Născut în Ucraina. Regăsind speranța în România - companie UNHCR România - YouTube](#)

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Overall, there were overwhelmingly more positive reactions than negative ones** in the comment section and reactions towards Ukrainian refugees on social media platforms, mainly Facebook. However, three frequent misconceptions and other narratives were found as follows: i) Refugees receive more benefits than Romanians, ii) Refugees are unwilling to integrate in the community, and iii) Historical and bilateral matters.
- In a pre- and post-campaign review of social listening, the sentiment of conversations around refugees was predominantly positive. This meant that negative attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees may take place in offline discussions or within other forums. This conclusion also stems from the observation of similar wordings noted in the negative comments amplified by a small self-contained group of people.
- One of the main concerns about the campaign was the potential backlash from populist groups/views. However, the positive sentiment acknowledged during the landscape review prior to the campaign was maintained throughout. The negative comments did not seem to have much impact among other persons and their previous positive opinions concerning refugees.