Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation

January 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

199,221

Ukrainian Temporary Protection holders in Romania
(as of 31 December 2025)

Men	Women	Boys	Girls
72,499 (36%)	74,375 (37%)	26,860(13%)	25,487(13%)

APPEAL BY SECTOR (USD)

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

2026 TARGETS

3,800
Support for Public Authorities
personnel trained

10,800
Strengthening Social Cohesion
participants from both refugee and host communities in initiatives and events

1,800
Romanian courses for integration
people provided with Romanian languages classes

PEOPLE TARGETED BY SECTOR

Protection **35,300**	Education **3,300**
Child Protection **5,000**	Health and Nutrition **23,700**
Gender-Based Violence **28,000**	MHPSS **9.800**
Basic Needs **23,400**	Cash Assistance **20,700**
Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Inclusion **13,300**	

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

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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 the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) and its 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 31 December 2025, a total of 201.752 Ukrainian nationals and third country nationals were granted temporary protection 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.

2026 RRP Appeal Overview

As the second and final year of the 2025–2026 Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) under its current regional framework, the 2026 appeal reflects the continued transition of the response towards inclusion, sustainable support approaches, and stronger national systems and local ownership.

Following the mid-term **Validation Exercise,** the 2026 appeal was revised to USD 48.6 million, bringing together 43 appealing partners, including three new organizations joining the response. The plan 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.

Overall financial requirements decreased by 33% compared to initial 2026 Appeal, while the planned volume of cash-based interventions was reduced by half in 2026, reflecting both the impact of funding constraints and partners' efforts to prioritize essential services and critical interventions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

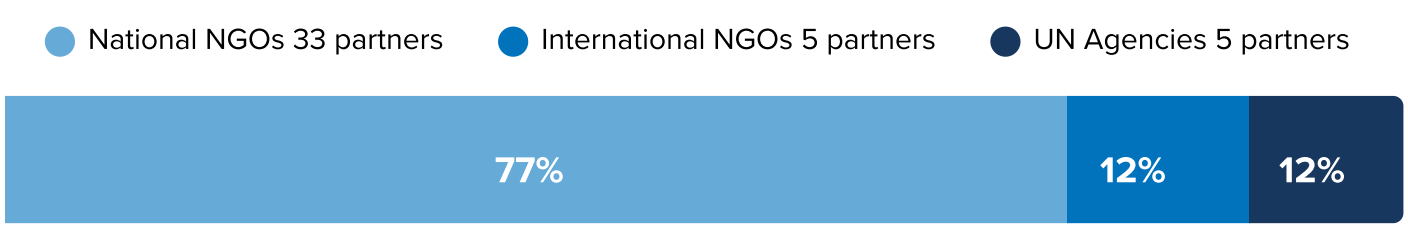
43
Appealing partners

$48.6M
2026 Appeal

33%
Decrease vs. initial 2026 Appeal

76%
Partners are National NGOs

COMPOSITION OF PARTNERS BY ORGANIZATION TYPE



The 2026 Validation confirms sustained partner engagement, with nearly all partners from 2025 continuing their participation and three additional organizations joining the RRP.

National NGOs continue to represent the backbone of the response, accounting for nearly three-quarters of all partners

UN Agencies continue to represent the largest share of overall funing requirements.

Spotlight story - RRP partner

©ADDJB | Vocational counselling session organized by ADDJB for refugees in Brasov

ADDJB

Agenția de Dezvoltare Durabilă a Județului Brașov

Supporting refugee integration in Brasov County

130
benefited from individual counselling

40
received psychological and vocational support

50
participated in Romanian language courses

> "I understood what I want from a job and what I can do next."
>
> - Anna, refugee from Ukraine

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Since May 2025, the Brasov County Sustainable Development Agency (ADDJB) has been actively supporting Ukrainian refugees through the project "RIF4UA – Scaling-up Integrated Services within Resilience and Innovation Facilities for Ukrainian Refugees Inclusion", implemented in partnership with Terre des Hommes Foundation.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Through this project, ADDJB provides services aimed at supporting refugees' professional integration, including psychological and vocational counselling, employability workshops, CV development support, interview preparation, and Romanian language courses

IMPACT ON REFUGEES

To date, over 130 individuals have benefited from individual counselling, more than 40 have received psychological and vocational support, and approximately 90 have participated in employability workshops. In addition, around 50 refugees are currently attending Romanian language courses, essential for their integration.

Anna (20, Belgorod-Dnestrovsk, Ukraine) is one of the project's beneficiaries. After arriving in Brașov, she participated in counselling sessions and employability workshops. "I understood what I want from a job and what I can do next," says Anna. With the support of the ADDJB team, she developed her CV, clarified her career direction, and secured a job in the hospitality sector, while continuing her university studies.

Katerina (25, Kharkiv, Ukraine) shares a similar journey of adaptation. After taking part in ADDJB activities and learning Romanian, she successfully found a job as a receptionist in Brașov.

Each of these stories shows that beyond the support provided, what is truly being rebuilt is confidence in a new beginning.

> "I realized that I can adapt and build a new beginning here
>
> - Katarina, refugee from Ukraine

SUPPORT JOURNEY

Individual counselling → Employability workshops → CV & interview preparation → Romanian language courses → Job placement & integration support

Learn more about ADDJB

addjb
Agenția de Dezvoltare Durabilă a Județului Brașov

PROTECTION

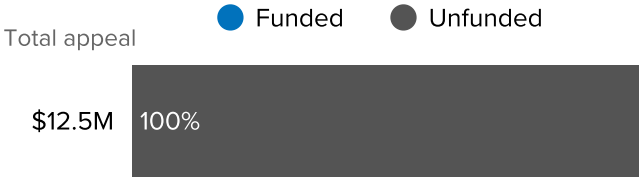
Supporting Refugees Through Information, Access, and Advocacy

© UNHCR/Mihai Eremia

24
PARTNERS appealing

36,000
PEOPLE TARGETED in 2026

$12.5M
FINANCIAL REQUEST in 2026



WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRS

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

Consiliul Național Român pentru Refugiați

KEY PARTNERS

JRS · 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 partner: 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

Advancing Financial Assistance Disbursement and Psychosocial Support for Refugees

Significant progress was recorded in the implementation of the governmental lump-sum financial assistance programme for refugees from Ukraine. According to information provided by the Department for Emergency Situations (DSU) and corroborated by beneficiary feedback from across the country, approximately RON 5.6 million out of the total RON 8.2 million allocated had been disbursed by 14 January 2026. This represents a notable milestone for a programme introduced through Emergency Ordinance No. 96 of June 2024 that had previously experienced serious operational delays. Authorities are currently taking active steps to resolve outstanding cases, including situations where beneficiaries are no longer residing in Romania or do not hold an active domestic bank account, demonstrating a continued commitment to ensuring the programme reaches all eligible recipients.

In parallel, UNHCR continued to prioritize the psychosocial well-being of forcibly displaced persons through structured, community-based activities held at the Romexpo Community Centre and in Constanța throughout January. A dedicated psychological counselling session, facilitated by a Ukrainian-speaking psychologist, provided refugee women with a safe and culturally sensitive space to process stress, navigate ongoing change, and strengthen their emotional resilience. These sessions form an integral part of UNHCR's Women's Club activities, a sustained initiative designed to promote healing, self-care, and meaningful social connection among refugee women navigating the challenges of displacement.

Strengthening Community Engagement and Access to Information in Constanța

UNHCR further reinforced its community engagement and information outreach efforts in Constanța through two complementary and well-received activities. In close collaboration with Comunitaria (Centrul pentru Resurse Civice – CRC), and with the active participation of local authorities and CNRR, a dedicated information session on the Minimum Inclusion Income (VMI) was organized to equip refugees with clear, practical guidance on eligibility requirements, application procedures, and associated obligations. The session responded to a strong and sustained demand among the refugee population for accurate and accessible social assistance information, helping to reduce uncertainty and improve navigation of available support systems.

Alongside this, a cultural workshop centred on Petrykivka painting — a traditional Ukrainian decorative art form — brought together participants from various community structures in a spirit of openness and cross-cultural dialogue. The workshop served as both a celebration of cultural heritage and a vehicle for strengthening social cohesion within the refugee community, with participants expressing strong appreciation for the activity and significant interest in continued engagement of this kind.

CHILD PROTECTION

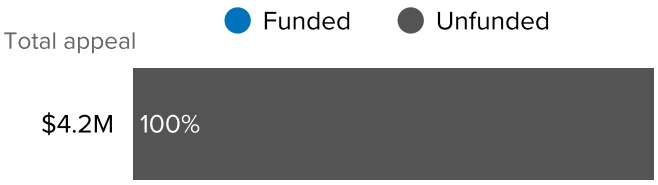
Protecting and Supporting Ukrainian Refugee Children in Romania

© SCOP Timișoara | SERA/Photographer Livia Mateiaș

9
PARTNERS appealing

4,957
PEOPLE TARGETED in 2026

$4.2M
FINANCIAL REQUEST in 2026



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 partner: City Makers | Sibiu Community Foundation | Necuvinte | Plan International | Save the Children Romania | Terre des Hommes | UNHCR | UNICEF | World Vision Romania

Fostering Child Well-Being, Creativity, and Language Development Through Safe Space Activities

In January 2026, UNHCR delivered a series of child-friendly recreational and creative activities at the Romexpo community centre, engaging children aged 6–12 across three sessions. Activities included upcycling with fabric paints, jar lantern making, and a Romanian-speaking club, each designed to promote self-expression, creativity, and confidence in a safe and inclusive environment. The speaking club session specifically supported early language acquisition through games and guided conversations, drawing on similarities between Ukrainian and Romanian vocabulary to build enthusiasm and communication skills.

Sustaining Integrated Child Protection Services Across Multiple Locations

During January 2026, World Vision Romania and Save the Children collectively delivered child protection services to hundreds of refugee children and caregivers across Bucharest, Constanța, Baia Mare, Galați, Iași, and Suceava. Interventions encompassed time-bound case management, individual counselling, documentation support, and inter-institutional coordination, facilitating access to health, social, and protection services.

DMHPSS support continued through individual consultations, while parenting sessions — including the Safe Families methodology — were organized to prevent abuse and neglect. Mobile teams operated in collaboration with local authorities to extend reach to vulnerable children.

© UNHCR | Refugee children and families participate in a creative Christmas crafting workshop at the RomExpo Centre in Bucharest.

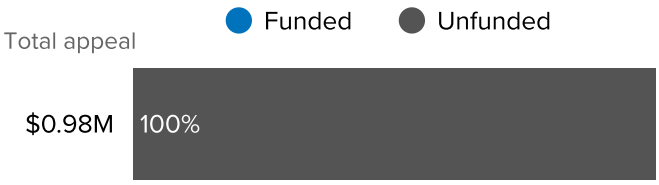
ANTI-TRAFFICKING

Preventing trafficking risks and strengthening protection mechanisms for refugees and vulnerable groups.

6
PARTNERS appealing

1,576
PEOPLE TARGETED in 2026

$0.98M
FINANCIAL REQUEST in 2026



WORKING GROUP CO-CHAIRS

ProTECT

IOM UN MIGRATION

KEY PARTNERS

eLiberare

ADPARE

JRS JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE

Full list of sectoral appealing partner: ADPARE | IOM | JRS Romania| Necuvinte | Novapolis | Terre des Hommes | World Vision Romania

Strengthening Anti-Trafficking Advocacy, Awareness, and Operational Capacity at the Border

In January, eLiberare advanced efforts on multiple fronts to strengthen child protection and anti-trafficking responses for refugee and migrant children. A joint submission was prepared together with KIND (Kids in Need of Defense) for the report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, focusing specifically on the rights of migrant, refugee, asylum-seeking, and stateless children at risk of or affected by trafficking, with particular attention to the situation of unaccompanied and separated Ukrainian children under temporary protection.

In parallel, eLiberare and KIND launched an online awareness campaign targeting Ukrainian children through the Kompass platform, aimed at informing children about their rights and available services while raising awareness of trafficking indicators and protective behaviours. In-person awareness sessions are currently being planned for rollout beginning in February, extending the campaign's reach beyond digital channels.

A significant operational milestone was achieved through the co-organization of a two-day Joint Operational Training on Frontline Responses to Child Trafficking at the Ukraine-Romania border, held in Suceava. The training brought together 20 participants from the Romanian and Ukrainian Border Police, as well as Frontex representatives, and pursued four core objectives: reinforcing professional networks and bilateral collaboration between the two border services; improving frontline capacity to identify child trafficking at the border; deepening mutual understanding of child protection approaches across both national contexts; and establishing effective cross-border referral pathways for child protection cases.

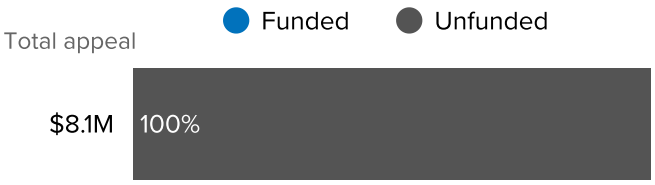
BASIC NEEDS

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

13
PARTNERS appealing

23,376
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 Asociația Ecumenică a Bisericilor din România

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

Sustaining Essential Relief and Expanding Basic Needs Coverage Across Romania

Throughout January 2026, UNHCR sustained its commitment to meeting the essential needs of forcibly displaced persons through continued distributions of non-food items (NFIs) in partnership with the General Directorate of Social Assistance of Bucharest Municipality (DGASMB). Essential items including body towels, mattresses, and blankets were distributed to 169 people in Bucharest County, reflecting the ongoing dedication to preserving the dignity of displaced populations. As of the end of January 2026, UNHCR has cumulatively distributed more than 170,364 core relief items (CRIs) to approximately 46,818 Ukrainian refugees, including vulnerable third country nationals and members of the host community across Romania — a milestone that underscores the sustained scale and reach of basic needs programming since the onset of the response.

Advancing Research and Evidence-Based Dialogue on Refugee Housing

On 23 January, the Jesuit Refugee Service Romania (JRS Romania) launched the National Report entitled "Access to Housing for Ukrainian Refugees in Romania – Between Challenges and Models of Success." The report was developed under the SMART_UA project — a European Commission-cofinanced initiative implemented through the Social Innovation Initiative+ — which brings together a consortium of 11 partners from Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary, including civil society organizations, academic institutions, and local authority representatives. The project focuses on two core areas: housing and employment. Within the housing component, the initiative evaluates current conditions of access to housing for Ukrainian refugees in Romania, identifying key obstacles as well as examples of good practice. The findings are intended to serve as a foundation for structured dialogue with local authorities and will be complemented by additional activities designed to further support refugees in navigating the housing landscape.

Strengthening Coordination and Setting Priorities for 2026

On 29 January, the kick-off meeting of the Basic Needs and Cash Working Group was convened under the Inter-Agency framework, bringing together partners to review the impact of 2025 activities and set priorities for the year ahead. Partners highlighted the significant scale of assistance delivered during 2025, including cash support provided to 17,000 individuals and basic needs assistance — including NFI distributions — reaching 43,000 people. Looking ahead, the group identified key priorities and actionable objectives for 2026, with particular emphasis on strengthening coordination with related working groups to deliver a more integrated and coherent response to the most pressing needs of refugees in Romania. Special attention was placed on reinforcing the capacities of national and local institutions to deliver welfare and basic services for forcibly displaced populations on a sustainable basis.

Improving Access to Social Benefits Through Targeted Community Outreach

On 30 January, as a direct outcome of UNHCR's accommodation monitoring activities in Constanța — which identified significant information gaps affecting refugees' access to basic needs and social benefits — UNHCR organized a dedicated information session for the Ukrainian refugee community on the Minimum Inclusion Income (VMI) social benefit. Delivered in collaboration with local partners and the local social assistance authority (DAS), the session addressed monitoring findings related to eligibility criteria and application procedures, with a particular focus on vulnerable households disproportionately affected by these gaps.

EDUCATION

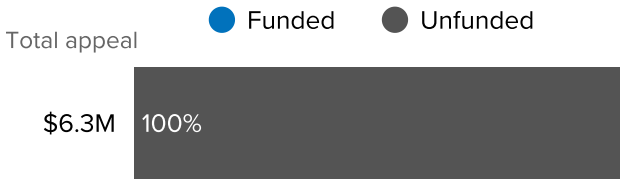
Supporting the Inclusion of Refugee and Vulnerable Children Across Romania

© UNICEF/IoanaMoldovan

24
PARTNERS appealing

23,376
PEOPLE TARGETED in 2026

$6.3M
FINANCIAL REQUEST in 2026



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 partner: 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

EDUCATION

Sustaining Education Support and Inclusion Services for Ukrainian Refugee Children

Throughout September, UNICEF and its partners continued to strengthen inclusive education services across Romania, working closely with national, county, and local authorities as well as NGOs to ensure continuity of support. In collaboration with Step-by-Step, HOLTIS, and JRS Romania, UNICEF supported activities in key cities hosting large refugee populations, including Bucharest, Brașov, Cluj, Constanța, Maramureș, Tulcea and Vâlcea. A central element of this work is the network of 16 play, learning, and parenting hubs (PLPHs) developed with Step-by-Step, serving around 359 children, primarily from Ukraine, through age-appropriate programmes that promote early literacy, intuitive mathematics, socio-emotional development, and sensory stimulation. A strong emphasis on language acquisition and communication helps prepare young learners for a smooth transition to primary school.

At the start of the new school year, Step-by-Step also supported the enrolment of 188 new Ukrainian and Romanian children across several counties, prioritising inclusive early education and psychosocial support. Meanwhile, HOLTIS delivered a national training session, Positive Approach to Children's Behaviours, reaching more than 1,800 education staff across the country, while 32 parental educators, including Ukrainian educators, were active in schools to strengthen family engagement. These interventions align with UNICEF's broader efforts to enhance teacher capacity and promote social integration for refugee children.

Facilitating School Enrollment and Administrative Navigation at the RomEXPO Education Desk

At the RomEXPO Education Desk, coordinated efforts with the Bucharest School Inspectorate (ISMB) focused on supporting the educational inclusion of Ukrainian refugee children and their families by addressing a wide range of administrative and procedural barriers. In January alone, the desk handled 48 registration requests and 173 total education-related inquiries, reflecting the sustained demand for guidance and hands-on assistance among the refugee population.

Specialized support was provided to parents for the preparation and submission of study recognition and equivalency files, enabling Ukrainian children to transition from audient status to full enrolled student status within the Romanian system. Families received tailored guidance on required documentation, procedural timelines, and applicable regulations. Assistance was also extended to facilitate the placement and enrollment of Ukrainian children as auditors in nurseries, kindergartens, and schools across Bucharest, with staff actively bridging communication between families and educational institutions.

In addition, support was provided for the preparation and submission of application files for Romanian language proficiency assessments — a critical step for school integration and academic progression. Continuous communication with parents was maintained throughout the month, delivering timely and accurate information on school holidays and academic calendars, access to scholarships and social support measures, and the rights and obligations of children within the Romanian education system.

Expanding Reach Through School Mediators and Direct Educational Support

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), operating under the UNICEF-funded project, provided support to a total of 381 children during the reporting period, including 33 children at the RomEXPO Playground. A pool of 10 school mediators delivered assistance across Bucharest, where 126 children and 83 adults were supported, and Constanța, where 145 children and 94 adults received services. These mediators responded to requests from parents of children enrolled in Romanian schools — both as audients and registered pupils — as well as from school management and inspectorates, working in close cooperation with the local School Inspectorates in both cities.
School mediators provided daily in-class assistance to children at the primary education level, including dedicated support for children with disabilities. The most frequently raised concerns from parents centred on enrollment and registration processes, early childhood education options, and assistance with completing and submitting documentation to School Inspectorates. Children, meanwhile, expressed demand for leisure and organized activities, academic support including homework assistance and in-class language help, and access to language learning courses and certification pathways.

Under the AMIF-funded project, JRS extended its reach further by implementing a broad range of activities across the Constanța and Galați Regional Centres, with coverage extending to Tulcea and Brăila. These included counselling services on access to education, enrollment procedures, social benefits, and language courses, as well as direct educational activities for more than 471 migrant children and 617 adults. Four teachers and one volunteer were engaged in organizing daily Romanian language courses across various formats. JRS also continued to provide structured learning activities for 60 preschoolers at its Bucharest venue. Under a separate ESF-funded project, JRS organized additional educational activities for more than 200 children and adults in Bucharest, further extending the breadth of education support available to the refugee and migrant population in the capital.

FRAGILITIES AND EMERGING PRESSURES IN THE REFUGEE PROTECTION LANDSCAPE

© Romanian Angel Appeal | photo realised by a RAA Youth Worker

Stalled Financial Assistance and Deteriorating Shelter Conditions

Despite partial progress in disbursements, the lump-sum financial assistance programme for refugees from Ukraine continues to fall significantly short of full implementation, with approximately RON 5.6 million disbursed out of a total RON 8.2 million allocated as of 14 January 2026. A substantial proportion of eligible beneficiaries remain without the support they are entitled to, and the authorities are still working to resolve outstanding cases involving beneficiaries who are no longer residing in Romania or do not hold active domestic bank accounts. Sustained uncertainty — reflected in the high volume of inquiries received through UNHCR, CNRR, and partner organizations, including through informal channels such as Telegram groups — points to persistent financial vulnerability and anxiety among the affected population. Inconsistent application of the programme by local authorities, stemming from a lack of clarity on its operational status, has further prevented some temporary protection holders from submitting applications, compounding existing access barriers. While a proposed resolution involving the publication of an official announcement on the DSU website has been discussed and agreed upon at the weekly DSU coordination meeting, the measure remains under review at the Prime Minister's Chancellery level, leaving the issue unresolved in the interim.

The withdrawal of government financial support to accommodation centres at the end of December has simultaneously placed the most vulnerable refugees at acute risk of displacement. The most critical situation is in Vâlcea County, where more than 250 individuals currently residing in accommodation centres face potential eviction, and solutions are being sought in coordination with local authorities following the issue being raised at the weekly DSU meeting. The closure of the Katya Hub in Brașov has added further pressure on coordination structures, with CNRR absorbing case management responsibilities for 14 highly vulnerable individuals — including three persons with disabilities and 11 beneficiaries of the Minimum Inclusion Income — in the absence of a permanent replacement service, raising concerns about the sustainability of support for complex cases beyond transitional arrangements.

Shrinking Child Protection and Psychosocial Services

The confirmed phase-out of World Vision Romania's child protection service delivery beyond the limited transition period represents a significant and immediate service gap for refugee children and families. Many families — particularly those with complex disability and health-related files — require sustained, hands-on navigation and follow-up that is difficult to replace through short-term support alone. The loss of this structured case management capacity risks leaving the most vulnerable children without continuity of care precisely at a time when their needs remain acute. Persistent gaps in translation, interpretation, and multi-institutional coordination continue to present practical barriers for families seeking access to child benefits, specialized healthcare, and school inclusion, with navigation support increasingly reliant on ad hoc arrangements rather than structured systems. These developments raise serious concerns about the ability of remaining actors to absorb referrals and maintain protection standards, particularly for children with ongoing and complex needs as transitional arrangements conclude.

Beyond case management, broader psychosocial support gaps are emerging across locations. Reduced programming risks leaving refugee women and children without access to safe spaces, preventive information, and consistent support for disclosure and emotional processing. Continuous mental health and psychosocial support — including for children with severe disabilities receiving physiotherapy and rehabilitation services — requires sustained resourcing to avoid regression in functioning and well-being. The importance of child-friendly spaces, peer connections, and participatory approaches that empower refugee children has been consistently underscored by partners, yet reduced partner presence and staffing constraints across NGOs are weakening outreach capacity and the quality of referral pathways.

FRAGILITIES AND EMERGING PRESSURES IN THE REFUGEE PROTECTION LANDSCAPE

© Bethany Social Services Foundation [SERA]/Photographer Dan Constantinescu

Escalating Risks of Child Trafficking and Weakened Cross-Border Protection Pathways

Unaccompanied and separated Ukrainian children, including those under temporary protection, remain among the most vulnerable populations to trafficking and exploitation, yet the systems designed to identify, refer, and protect them continue to face structural limitations. Frontline professionals — including border police, social workers, and reception staff — require sustained, institutionalized training and regularly updated normative guidance to effectively recognize trafficking indicators and activate appropriate referral mechanisms. The normative framework developed in partnership with NAPCRA to guide frontline professionals in identifying, referring, and responding to child trafficking cases represents an important step forward, but its rollout and consistent application across all relevant institutions requires continued follow-up and monitoring to ensure impact at scale.

Cross-border referral pathways between Romanian and Ukrainian authorities remain underdeveloped, and the absence of consistent, standardized procedures risks leaving children without timely protection responses at critical points of entry and transit. While the two-day Joint Operational Training held in Suceava — bringing together 20 participants from the Romanian and Ukrainian Border Police and Frontex — has contributed to strengthening bilateral professional networks and shared understanding of child protection approaches, sustaining and deepening these gains requires ongoing investment in joint operational exercises and formalized cooperation mechanisms. Awareness among children themselves about trafficking risks, their own rights, and available services remains limited, particularly among newly arrived children, those digitally isolated, or those living outside formal reception structures. The ongoing online campaign and planned in-person awareness sessions represent important complementary efforts, but broader and more systematic outreach is needed to reach all at-risk children.

Evictions from Households and Uncertainty Continues

Refugees across Romania continue to face considerable challenges in meeting basic needs, with access to stable and dignified accommodation remaining the most pressing concern, particularly for vulnerable households. In Vâlcea County, a concrete risk of eviction has been identified that could affect a significant number of refugees hosted in private collective accommodation — many of whom are elderly persons, persons with disabilities, or individuals with other specific vulnerabilities. Landlords have expressed growing concerns regarding delayed payments and the lack of clarity and transparency from authorities regarding a potential extension of the government support programme (OUG 96/2024) beyond 2025. This uncertainty is increasing the likelihood of evictions and further undermining refugees' ability to maintain access to safe and dignified housing, with no clear resolution in sight at the time of reporting.

Fragmented Education Integration and Systemic Barriers to Inclusion

The reduction in the number of active RRP partners in the education sector is progressively narrowing the coverage and continuity of support available to refugee children navigating the Romanian education system, at a time when integration needs remain substantial. A critical and foundational gap persists in the availability of reliable, disaggregated data on enrolled and attending refugee children, making it difficult for authorities and partners alike to identify those in need of remedial support, improved language instruction, Latin script literacy development, or specialized services for children with disabilities or special educational needs. Without this data infrastructure, targeted and proportionate interventions cannot be effectively planned, resourced, or scaled.

Schools willing to integrate migrant children continue to lack adequate institutional support, including specialized teacher training on multiculturality and inclusive pedagogy, and the network of school mediators — while delivering valuable services across Bucharest, Constanța, and other locations — remains insufficient relative to the scale and geographic spread of need at the national level. The high volume of enrollment-related inquiries handled at the RomEXPO Education Desk — 48 registration requests and 173 total inquiries in January alone — reflects the ongoing complexity of administrative navigation for refugee families and the sustained demand for dedicated guidance that risks going unmet as partner capacity contracts. After-school and extracurricular programmes for children with employed parents are scarce, and targeted initiatives for adolescents and youth are largely absent from the current response landscape. Finally, the regulatory framework governing intensive language courses, proficiency assessments, and final examinations for migrant children has yet to ensure parity with national students, representing a persistent systemic obstacle to full academic participation, credential recognition, and long-term educational integration within the Romanian system.

Spotlight story - RRP partner

Metropolitan Agency for Durable Development Brașov

Supporting refugee inclusion through language learning and livelihoods support.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the Metropolitan Agency of Durable Development Brașov (AMDDBV) has supported refugees through CATTIA Center, and later on, Katya HUB, a community center in Brașov that brought together local authorities, international organizations, and NGOs to provide coordinated assistance.

Alongside humanitarian aid and social support, a strong focus of AMDDBV's work has been livelihoods and economic inclusion, helping refugees gain the skills and connections needed to rebuild their lives independently.

LANGUAGE AS A PATHWAY TO INTEGRATION

One important component of this effort was the organization of Romanian language courses, designed to help refugees integrate into the local community and access employment opportunities. For many participants, learning the language was the first step toward finding stable work and regaining confidence after displacement.

Individual counselling → Employability workshops → CV & interview preparation → Romanian language courses → Job placement & integration support

Svitlana's story

Svitlana, arrived in Brașov after fleeing the war in Ukraine. Determined to become independent and support herself, she enrolled in the Romanian language classes organized at Katya HUB.

With persistence and support from the teachers and community, she gradually gained the confidence to apply for jobs.

Soon after completing the course, Svitlana secured a position at one of Brașov's most well-known and highly rated hotels, marking an important step toward stability and self-reliance.

At the beginning of this year, during a conference organized at that same hotel, the AMDDBV project manager unexpectedly met Svitlana again.

When she recognized her, Svitlana approached with emotion, asked for a hug, and said: "Thank you for helping me. Without Katya HUB, I would not have managed."

For the team at AMDDBV, moments like this reflect the long-term impact of supporting refugees not only with emergency assistance but also with opportunities for learning, employment, and dignity.

> "Thank you for helping me. Without Katya HUB, I would not have managed."
>
> - Svitlana, refugee from Ukraine

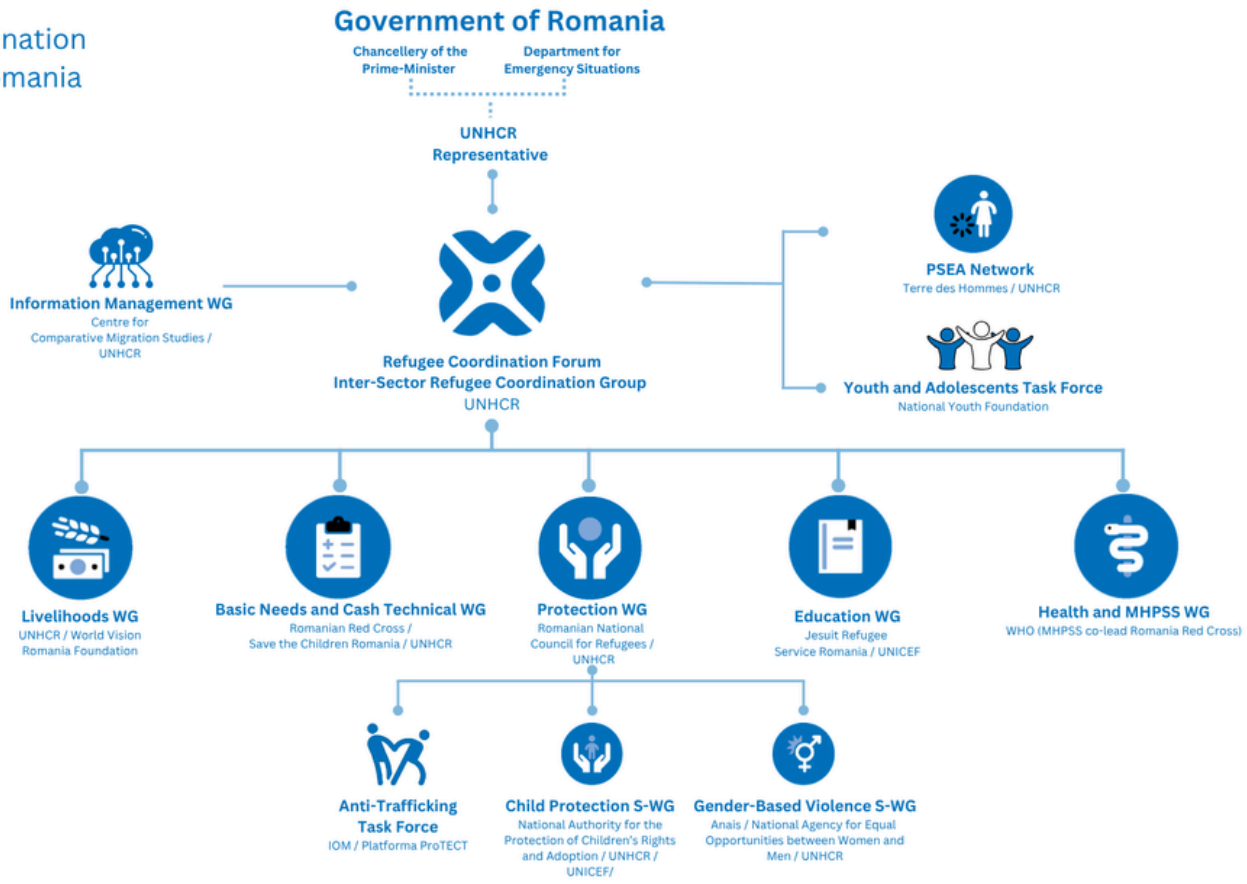
Looking ahead

Due to the lack of dedicated funding in 2026, AMDDBV is not currently implementing refugee-specific programs. However, the organization remains ready to resume such initiatives when resources become available.

Learn more about AMDDBV

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

LINKS:

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