

# RRP RLOs/CBOs planning workshop on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Czech Republic

On October 4th, 2023, a planning workshop took place in Prague, involving 33 participants from 23 Refugee Led Organisations (RLOs) and Community-based Organizations (CBOs) from 9 regions, along with UN agencies.<sup>1</sup> The workshop aimed to discuss the 2024 priorities of the regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP)<sup>2</sup> in the Czech Republic, through the feedbacks of RLOs and CBOs.

## Strength of the current response

<b>TP Status</b>	Temporary Protection (TP) Status, associated rights, and humanitarian support by the government are granted and provide assistance and protection to individuals in need.
<b>Integration centers</b>	KACPUs serve as a centralized hub for all essential services, encompassing activities such as registration, TP status processing, and health insurance, streamlining the aid delivery process and making it more accessible to those in need.
<b>Mandatory education</b>	Compulsory education enrollment for refugee children underscores the commitment to ensuring access to education to give children essential learning opportunities during the displacement.
<b>Funding opportunities</b>	The availability of funding opportunities for Ukrainian RLOs and CBOs in 2022/23 offered the needed support to local entities involved in the response, empowering local stakeholders to contribute to relief efforts actively.
<b>Volunteers</b>	The engagement of Ukrainian and Czech volunteers from the early stages of the response shows strong solidarity and a collaborative approach to the response. It enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of the response by leveraging the skills and dedication of volunteers from different regions.

## Weaknesses of the current response

<b>Information Sharing &amp; Feedback Channels</b>	Lack of consolidated information and few feedback mechanisms hinder refugees' access to critical information, such as available services, legal rights, and important updates. Refugees may miss out on essential support, especially during changes in the lex Ukraine, face uncertainty, and become vulnerable to misinformation and exploitation.
<b>Access to Education</b>	More space for refugee children and adolescents in kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools would enhance access to education of refugees.
<b>Coordination and Engagement</b>	Lack of proper coordination can result in duplicated efforts, inadequate resource allocation, and reduced support for vulnerable refugees. Enhanced government engagement in coordination with Ukrainian RLOs/CBOs would benefit the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian efforts.
<b>Access to Humanitarian Benefits</b>	Under Lex V, humanitarian assistance is no longer universally provided to refugees but is directed towards vulnerable individuals. Determining vulnerability involves sometimes a lengthy process, requiring extensive administrative work and additional documentation from UA. This leaves many without aid for months until assessments are finalized. Moreover, some vulnerable individuals may not receive support due to insufficient documentation or recognition of existing certificates by the system.
<b>Labour Protection</b>	Inadequate labor market protection for Ukrainian refugees increases the risk of exploitation, as refugees may accept precarious working conditions due to limited options. Many engage in low-skilled jobs that don't match their qualifications, and the predominance of women among refugees exacerbates protection risks, resulting in harsh working conditions, low wages, and economic vulnerability.
<b>Psychosocial support</b>	The lack of social-psychological support services fails to address the mental and emotional well-being of refugees, who often experience trauma and stress. Unaddressed psychological distress can result in long-term mental health issues among refugees, affecting their ability to adapt and recover.

<sup>1</sup> UA RLOs/CBOs: Ukrainian Initiative in the CR, Prague Maidan Ukrajinské Centrum Nusle, proUkrajnu, Evrosen, Svitlo, Hlas Ukrajiny, Ukrainian Consultation Centre, Gromada, Nova Ukrajina, Cultural Centre DCUL, Humanitarian Aid Centre (CeHuPo), Krajanka, Regional Ukrainian Union of Eastern Czechia, Kalyna, Ukrainian Initiative of South Moravia, Ukrajinské kulturné vzdělávací centrum, Neeka, Ščedryk, Community (informal)-Ostrava, Community (informal)-Pisek, Nadija Centre, SPOLU, Palianytsia UA

<sup>2</sup> The RRP is a comprehensive framework to coordinate efforts between UN agencies and civil society partners, ensuring an effective humanitarian strategy to complement the government's response.

## Priorities and Recommendations for 2024

<b>Access to information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamline, simplify, harmonize, coordinate, and update information platforms, remove redundancy, and maintain accuracy.</li> <li>Create a QR code for easy access to essential information, ensuring easy access to information for newcomers and in-country refugees.</li> <li>Enhance information provision at the <i>kraj</i> level, tailoring content to meet local needs and ensure accessibility for all communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Vulnerable Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplify and expedite access to humanitarian support for vulnerable refugees by reducing bureaucratic obstacles. RLOs can support the identification and referrals of PSN, overcome language barriers, and help reduce bureaucratic obstacles (experience of the diaspora).</li> <li>Recognition of medical certificates for PwD, and chronic conditions from Ukraine, as some vulnerable individuals may not receive support due to insufficient documentation or recognition within the system.</li> <li>Prioritize inclusivity to ensure that all vulnerable groups receive essential assistance during crises, adhering to the principle of "none stays behind."</li> </ul>
<b>Peaceful coexistence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote peaceful coexistence through awareness campaigns that stress the importance of respecting and celebrating diversity, and fostering unity among communities, including diaspora, refugees, and the host community.</li> <li>Increase the number of intercultural workers to bridge cultural gaps and build connections, recruiting and training intermediaries to promote understanding.</li> <li>Strengthen cultural sensitivity of local government service providers through trainings, ensuring effective interactions with diverse refugee groups.</li> <li>Disseminate positive integration stories through various media to highlight the benefits of diversity and encourage inclusive values.</li> <li>Recognize the contributions of the Ukrainian community to the Czech system, including taxation and labor force participation.</li> <li>Support data collection and research to address social cohesion challenges and inform targeted interventions.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand pre-primary and primary education access beyond urban areas.</li> <li>Develop inclusive vocational training for vulnerable refugees and refugees with disabilities by collaborating with institutions, offering financial support, scholarships for accessibility and tailor-made training.</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand mental health services, increasing professionals and facilities to meet growing demand.</li> <li>Train pedagogic workers in anti-bullying measures to foster inclusive environments in schools.</li> <li>Tailor mental health and psychosocial support for vulnerable populations like elderly refugees and those with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve access to General Practitioners (GPs) by addressing language barriers. Expand access to diverse medical specialists for varied healthcare needs.</li> <li>Promote inclusion and awareness of preventive care, educating individuals about its importance and available services to enhance overall health and well-being.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain and expand language courses for newcomers to improve communication and integration, facilitating their access to job opportunities.</li> <li>Streamline the recognition of Ukrainian degrees and qualifications (nostrification) to enhance individuals' economic prospects.</li> <li>Introduce positive discrimination measures offering incentives to employers for hiring individuals from vulnerable groups, promoting a more diverse and inclusive workforce.</li> </ul>
<b>Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage Ukrainian Refugee Leaders and Community-Based Organizations (UA RLOs/CBOs) to inform government policies.</li> <li>Establish regular thematic meetings for UA RLOs/CBOs to participate in working groups, fostering open dialogue and meaningful involvement.</li> <li>Facilitate collaborative meetings with Czech NGOs and UN entities to enhance cooperation across sectors and leverage resources and expertise.</li> </ul>
<b>Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create new funding opportunities to sustain their operations and promote innovation and project expansion.</li> <li>Offer working spaces and in-kind support, including meeting locations, administrative aid, and resource access for smoother operations.</li> </ul>