Romania

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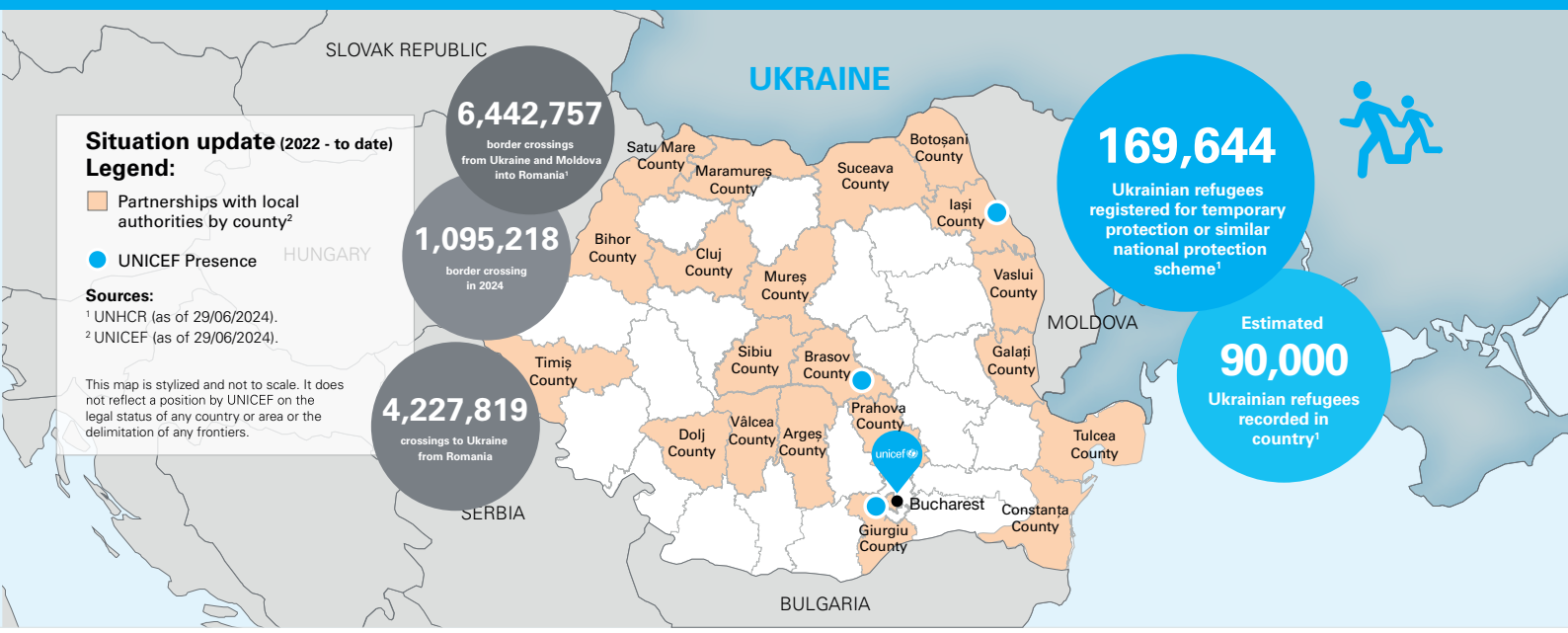
Humanitarian Response for Children and Refugee Families Outside of Ukraine in Romania

unicef
for every child



UNICEF Refugee response programme results (2022 – to date)

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, UNICEF has been working closely with national, regional, and local authorities to expand services for children in education, child protection, health, nutrition, and social protection. UNICEF's work is guided by principles of social cohesion, accountability to affected populations, gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Health

27,427
2,421 in 2024
Children and women received primary health care services through UNICEF supported mechanisms of which

840
485 in 2024
Primary healthcare and hospital professionals have improved capacity in providing quality ante-natal and post-natal care services

Education

45,258
10,438 in 2024
Children accessed formal education, including early learning

19,036
2,798 in 2024
Children accessed non-formal education, including remedial learning and language courses.

42,566
7,424 in 2024
Children received individual learning material

Social and Behavior Change

2,782,977
34,664 in 2024
People reached through messaging on prevention and access to services

Social and Behavior Change

31,524
3,117 in 2024
People provided feedback through established feedback and complaints mechanisms

Child Protection

29,554
2,287 in 2024
Children and caregivers accessed mental health and psychosocial support

228,708
25,810 in 2024
People had access to safe spaces and support hubs

38,590
10,858 in 2024
Children and caregivers that had access to mitigation interventions and response to gender-based violence

8,099
1,200 in 2024
Unaccompanied and separated children that had access to services of alternative care or reunified

Sources: UNICEF (as of 29/06/2024, all time data)

In the spotlight

Oleksandr, a 17-year-old from Ukraine, has a story that reflects the struggles and resilience of countless others affected by conflict and displacement. As a teenager caught in the midst of war, his journey from Odesa to Romania is marked by challenges, lessons learned, and a steadfast commitment to environmental activism.

Arriving in Romania on his birthday, Oleksandr began a new chapter of his life. Despite the challenges of adapting to a foreign land, he remained resilient, embracing the opportunities that lay before him. "My first months in Bucharest were difficult," he remembers. "But amidst the struggle, I discovered a city full of energy.".

Driven by a desire to be an active community member and make new friends, he joined the National Youth Foundation center, participating in UNICEF-supported youth engagement activities. As an active U-reporter, Oleksandr tackles pressing environmental issues with fervor. His interest in ecology began with early participation in school competitions focused on environmental conservation. "I decided to further develop in this area," he explains, motivated by a desire to make a positive impact on the world.

Through UNICEF-supported activities, many young Ukrainians, like Oleksandr, discover new passions, engage meaningfully with their communities, and contribute to society. Youth Hubs are essential instruments for social cohesion and inclusion.

Full story available here "My Main Goal? A Sustainable World": A Ukrainian Teenager's Vision for the Future | UNICEF Romania

Oleksandr, a 17-year-old from Ukraine, came from Odesa to Romania. Amidst the challenges, he discovered a beacon of hope and community at the National Youth Foundation center, supported by UNICEF in Romania

Delivering through partnerships

* This includes partnerships with municipalities and local and central government.

Source: UNICEF (as of 29/06/2024)

UNICEF's partnerships with the Government of Romania at national and local level, other United Nations agencies, NGOs, donors, and supra-national entities (cross-border initiatives) have been crucial in providing services and support to people fleeing the war in Ukraine. Coordinated efforts enabled the seamless operation of a network offering direct assistance, protection, education and referrals to legal aid, medical help, and mental health support.

In 2022, UNICEF and partners, including UNHCR, established Integrated Blue Dots to offer safe spaces and essential services to Ukrainian refugees, first at the borders and later in urban areas. These hubs have served over 370,000 people, with over 220,000 benefiting from at least one service in UNICEF-supported spaces.

Starting in 2023, UNICEF worked with municipalities and decentralized services to transition from Blue Dots to Blue Grid. This initiative focuses on improving refugees' access to quality services provided by accredited service providers, through consolidating the efforts of the public authorities, NGOs and other relevant institutions.

Highlights from the first half of 2024

Approximately one million Ukrainian refugees crossed into Romania from Moldova and Ukraine this year, while about 750 thousand of them crossed back into Ukraine[1]. The number of crossings to Romania doubled in June 2024 compared to earlier months, due to summer holidays and due to recent attacks on major Ukrainian cities which displaced a significant proportion of population. Although refugees visit Romania for transit purposes mostly , the number of refugees registered for Temporary Protection (TP) permits increased from 150,574 in January to 167,947 in June[2] and the number of children enrolled as audients or pupils in the Romanian education system increased by 10,438 in the same period.

In addition to ensuring all women and children from Ukraine have access to essential quality services, UNICEF advocates for long-term solutions and inclusion of refugees in Romanian protection, education and health systems. Following Government Decision, No. 505/2024, temporary protection for Ukrainian refugees has been extended until 2026, with a new TP permit system established. This led to the adoption of Emergency Ordinance 96/2024, granting social benefits to TP beneficiaries in Romania.

Contingency and preparedness for conflict escalation remain among top priorities. UNICEF supports local authorities to integrate a participatory approach with children and youth in developing child-friendly preparedness and response plans and in having a child-friendly operationalization of these plans.

Health and Nutrition are main pillars in ensuring access to essential services for refugees residing and temporarily staying in Romania. Continuing last year's efforts, UNICEF jointly with WHO have advocated for primary health care access for Ukrainian mothers and children and timely payments for health professionals. Concurrently, UNICEF and its partners have focused on building the capacity of health professionals in counties with high refugee densities, covering areas such as perinatal care, immunization, interpersonal communication, and prevention of Gender Based Violence. Over 500 health professionals have been trained to provide essential health services to Ukrainian families.

UNICEF has also supported the delivery of primary health care services in public health facilities and through its partners. In the first half of 2024, 2,421 children and women received primary care, and another 1,154 received Infant and Young Child Feeding counseling and information through UNICEF-supported mechanisms in Bucharest and Ilfov county. Additionally, 21,688 caregivers and child guardians were reached with health information and promotion services via call centers for Ukrainian refugees.

Child Protection is central to UNICEF's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. Collaborating with local authorities and the Government, UNICEF has set high standards for managing cases of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC). As of 1st of June, 8,099 UASC cases were recorded by relevant border authorities and received adequate case management care. UNICEF monitors continuously with local authorities the children evacuated from the Ukrainian protection system and provides technical support to those hosting these children, especially in Iasi, Prahova, Suceava and Brasov. UNICEF's close collaboration with the National Authority for the Protection of Child Rights and Adoption (NAPCRA) continues in 2024, following the handover of the PRIMERO management system and in the common goals to build evidence-based strategies to respond to vulnerable Ukrainian children in Romania.

Prevention and risk mitigation of sexual exploitation and abuse, gender-based violence (GBV), and trafficking form an integral part of UNICEF's response. UNICEF developed a guide for identifying and referring child trafficking cases and conducted a GBV Safety Audit. In the first half of 2024, 25,756 people accessed UNICEF-supported services with safe spaces and reporting channels for sexual exploitation and abuse. Additionally, 10,858 women, girls, and boys received GBV risk mitigation, prevention, and response interventions.

UNICEF's refugee response enables access to centers providing free care, supervision, temporary accommodation and access to special services to vulnerable children and their families. In 2024, UNICEF supported the establishment of the two centers - a Respiro Center in Bucharest to support and provide integrated services to children with disabilities and their families, and a Day Care Center for vulnerable children in Iasi.

UNICEF aims to ensure a smooth transition of these services into the national system, promoting sustainability and strengthening preparedness to meet the needs of vulnerable children.

Education remains a vital area of UNICEF's response and strategy for social cohesion. In 2023, the revisions of the government's cash assistance programme required children to be enrolled in the education system, which increased the number of children accessing education services as audients or pupils. Since 2022, 45,258 children were historically enrolled as audients or pupils in the national education system, while only 14,073 children were effectively considered as attending Romanian schools in June.

UNICEF continues supporting the national and local coordination in improving the refugee children's access to quality education services, including Romanian language courses and learning materials. Special attention is given to identifying options for children who faced difficulties in attending Romanian schools and require some alternative or complementary learning modalities. Over the course of 2024, more than 30,000 individual learning materials, including books, school supplies and laptops, were made available to over 7,500 Ukrainian children. UNICEF, in partnership with national and local NGOs, supported the capacity development of local professionals on trauma-informed teaching and learning and management of linguistic and cultural diversity in classrooms. In addition, UNICEF supported several education hubs to expand refugee children and their parents' access to complementary learning support, including remedial education and learning continuity by the Ukrainian curriculum. Of the total number of 59 education hubs, including early education and care (ECEC), active in Romania at the moment, UNICEF supports directly 23 Primo Hubs (ECEC), two youth centers and 11 education hubs in partnership with local NGOs. UNICEF aims to continue the efforts to support the inclusion of Ukraine children in the national education system and different pathways opportunities to remain connected with learning in order to ensure social cohesion and integration of Ukrainian population in the Romanian society.

Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) remains a priority for UNICEF's response which consisted of three pillars: (1) information sharing on refugees' rights and access to essential services, (2) community engagement, and (3) feedback mechanisms. These contribute to adaptive management of response and to better address the current and changing needs of Ukrainians in Romania. Since January, UNICEF and its partners have reached 34,664 refugees with key messages and essential information to support their access to services and integration, of which 1,338 Ukrainians in Romania further engaged on conversation.

The feedback mechanisms established by partners with technical support from UNICEF allowed 3,117 refugees to share their opinions and concerns vis-a-vis the services received and the activities they engaged in. As a follow up, UNICEF was able to address the most current needs and concerns of the refugees and enabled response action through close coordination with the Government and partners. UNICEF strives to integrate the rights-based approach in its AAP interventions so that all refugees have equal access to information and feedback mechanisms.

Social protection is UNICEF's strategic area of intervention that focuses on system strengthening and investing in preparedness of the national social protection system to shocks. UNICEF partnered with the World Bank in Romania and the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity in assessing the readiness of the national social protection system to shocks. The assessment report provided key policy recommendations for making the national social protection system adaptive and responsive to future shocks[3].

UNICEF's presence and partnerships at the local level are instrumental in addressing the needs of refugees in a sustainable manner. UNICEF embarked on a new partnership with the municipalities of Bucharest and Timisoara to boost the preparedness and response of the target municipalities to the current refugee and potential future crises. UNICEF aims to expand its presence and partnerships on preparedness to shocks in other municipalities with the aim to inform national policies and decisions that enable local governments to become better prepared for future shocks.

Main donors for response in 2024

UNICEF's refugee response would not be possible without the generous contributions from our donors. We would like to express sincere gratitude to our public and private donors for their support in translating the refugee response strategies into concrete actions that bring real change to the lives of refugees in Romania.

Top public donors	Top National Committee donors
United States Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration	Austrian National Committee
Republic of Korea	Danish National Committee
	German National Committee
	Other funds for Ukraine Emergency response distributed through UNICEF's Regional Office

Sources: UNICEF (as of 29/06/2024)

Stories from our work:

In an effort to provide comprehensive support for children's early development and to address the unique challenges faced by families, UNICEF, in collaboration with Holtis Romania, has undertaken an ambitious initiative. With support from the LEGO Foundation, the project aims to train over 650 parental educators among teaching staff in schools and kindergartens throughout Romania, including Ukrainian educators and facilitators.

Ana, a 27-year-old education facilitator from Cernăuți, Ukraine, shared her journey towards becoming an educator, supporting refugee children from Ukraine: „I worked as a chef before coming to Romania. However, upon arrival, I participated in various courses, and now I work as an educational facilitator in a center for displaced persons from Ukraine".

Full story available here:
https://www.unicef.org/romania/stories/not-easy-discussing-war-children-ukrainian-educators-supporting-refugee-parents

Ana, 27-year-old from Ukraine, is an education facilitator working with Ukrainian children.

Looking Ahead:

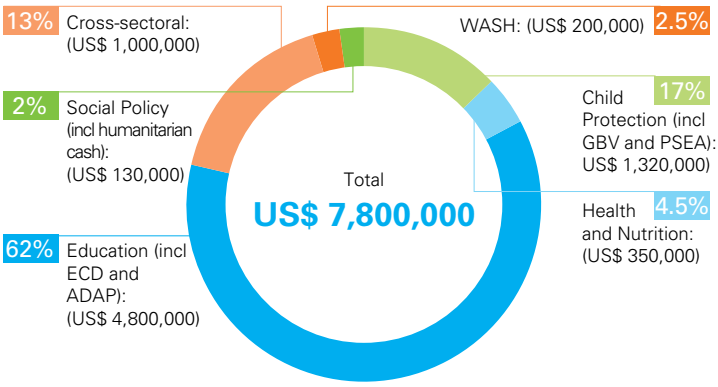
Romanian and Ukrainian refugee children are developing their creativity and social skills through playing at the Kindergarten No3, in Tulcea, Romania.

Ukraine refugee response in Romania has transitioned from being a primarily emergency one where immediate assistance and humanitarian support was provided, to a wider framework for social integration and protection of the most vulnerable children. Through this process, essential integrated services and risk mitigation support were provided to the most vulnerable families, while Ukrainian children were able to access education and the specialized services delivered through partnerships with local communities, NGOs and authorities.

Lessons learnt, experience and the knowledge gained as part of the response to the Ukraine refugee crisis transcend the boundaries of Romania and can be a starting point for cross-border system strengthening as part of long-term emergency preparedness and response. UNICEF works with local authorities and the Government of Romania to strengthen the local emergency preparedness and response, while the conflict situation In Ukraine remains highly unstable.

For additional information on UNICEF's 2024 Humanitarian response for children outside of Ukraine please visit: Ukraine and Refugee Response Appeal | UNICEF

Funding requirements for 2024



Total funding gap:

Total Requirement: US $ 7,800,000 Total unfunded: US $ 1,914,971

Reference:
1. Data Source: Data for Romania | Situation Ukraine Refugee Situation | UNHCR
2. Data Source: Romania: Overview of Temporary Protection Directive | UNHCR
3. Report: Shock-responsive social protection in Romania | UNICEF Romania

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