

2024 RRP Workshop for RLOs/CBOs. Budapest, 23.09.2023

The workshop on the 2024 Refugee Response Plan gathered refugee-led (RLOs) and community-led (CBOs) organizations actively engaged with refugees, including refugees fleeing Ukraine after February 2022, members of the Ukrainian diaspora, Roma minority, refugees, and migrants of other nationalities. These volunteer-based organizations primarily offer practical, hands-on assistance to new arrivals and increasingly extend their support to those who remain in Hungary and avail themselves of temporary protection. The workshop was facilitated by UNHCR and co-facilitated by three RLO/CLOs: Somnakuno Drom Roma Női Civil Egyesület, Ukrainian Association, Unity and UREC, the Ukrainian Refugee Education Center.

Participants: Parasolka, Ukrán Nemzeti Kulturális és Oktatási Alapítvány, AKSEN Project, Dnipro Országos Ukrán Kulturális Egyesület, Ukrán Remény Egyesület, Ukrán Hagyományok Háza, Somnakuno Drom Roma Női Civil Egyesület, XXI. Századi Roma Nők Egyesülete, UGCC Foundation in Hungary, African Women Association Hungary, Ukrainian Refugee Education Centre, Ukrainian Association Unity.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Vulnerable refugees.** Enhance protection and inclusion for the most vulnerable refugees, such as women, single parents, children with special needs, refugees with disabilities or serious medical conditions, older refugees, and Romani refugees, by increasing numbers of case managers, cultural mediators, and social workers, with a focus on recruiting from Ukrainian and Romani communities. This will provide closer support and assistance, particularly to vulnerable refugees outside urban areas.
- **Language barriers to integration.** Address language barriers in accessing services by increasing the offer of language courses for Temporary Protection (TP) holders, including both children/students and adults. This will bolster enrollment and participation in schools and facilitate access to the labor market. Additionally offer translation services for documents and consultations, particularly in hospitals and for specialized medical care, and streamline the recognition and equivalence processes for disability and medical certificates for chronic conditions. Simplify diploma equivalency and recognition procedures.
- **Access to health.** Remove administrative hurdles that hinder refugees' access to subsidized medication, particularly for TP holders without a TAJ number, which sometimes forces them to return to Ukraine for affordable medication.
- **Employment.** Improve support for TP holders in understanding labor and fiscal laws, including assistance with employment contracts and tax declarations, along with expanding legal support services for labor-related matters. Also, increase awareness among employers about Hungarian labor laws and refugee rights. Tackle labor exploitation, black market labor, high-risk jobs, and underpaid positions. Additionally, work towards refugees securing employment in their respective fields rather than unrelated work.
- **Peaceful coexistence.** A large emphasis has been put on peaceful coexistence by RLO and the CBOs: encourage community integration through joint events and festivities involving both refugees and host communities; promote integration through creative workshops and art events that bring Hungarians and refugees together. Additionally, leverage the power of sports by organizing free group activities.
- **Coordination.** Partners encourage more extensive coordination among key stakeholders, including NGOs, UN agencies, RLOs, and government departments at both central and local levels, including municipalities, to efficiently identify, refer, and address urgent protection cases and vulnerabilities while ensuring that all TP holders, regardless of their educational level, employment status, or background, have unrestricted access to available services and information. This is especially critical for refugees with disabilities. Collaboration with educational entities to enhance the school offerings and jointly combat bullying is of utmost importance, as is coordination with the Disability Inclusion Department of MOI for example.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED by the RLOs

Assistance to vulnerable refugees

- Strengthen systematic identification and referral procedures for vulnerable TP holders, including females, single parents, children with special needs, refugees with disabilities or serious medical conditions, older refugees, and Romani refugees, along with tailored services and accessible information on accessing essential services.
- PSN are not systematically identified/referred due to lack of procedures in place; they also lack tailored services, in particular in health, education and employment, and of accessible information on how to access those services. These challenges are particularly acute for refugees hosted outside of urban centers.
- Programs to assist Romani refugees should engage Romani social workers, case managers and enumerators to effectively monitor their impact, as Romani refugees are often not aware of discriminatory practices and barriers to accessing services.
- Services for children with specific needs should be provided through national support structures and professionals proficient in Ukrainian language, eg. psychologists and development teachers.
- Increase the number of social workers/case managers, particularly Ukrainian and Romani cultural mediators and managers, particularly in rural areas, to facilitate integration, and provide information/counseling through home visits, support in compiling relevant documentation, and school enrollment support for vulnerable refugees. More efficient coordination should occur among organizations offering services to ensure smooth, fast, and confidential case management of complex vulnerability and protection cases.

Integration of refugees and self-reliance

- **Health.** Address barriers to healthcare access for Temporary Protection (TP) holders and refugees, including a lack of awareness among healthcare professionals and refugees regarding TP entitlements, translation needs, missing vaccination certificates for school enrollment, high vaccination costs for newborns, and administrative obstacles like the absence of a TAJ number. In particular:
 - Address translation needs for healthcare, including communication with healthcare providers, counseling with general practitioners and specialists, and translation of documentation. Offer free translation services and provide information brochures on accessing healthcare services, along with bilingual documents for those who require them, especially individuals with disabilities.
 - Remove administrative hurdles that hinder refugees' access to subsidized medication, particularly for TP holders without a TAJ number, which sometimes forces them to return to Ukraine for affordable medication. Also streamline the process for newborn vaccinations, making them easily accessible and free, while expediting TP status through birth certificates. Also, address the issue of missing vaccination certificates, which can hinder children's enrollment in school.
- **Education:** Enhance educational support for Ukrainian refugee children by raising awareness among school personnel about refugee rights and needs, advocating to remove admin barriers to enrollment, employing “integration teachers”, cultural mediators and setting up joint bodies to support students, teachers, parents, by including Ukrainian teachers in schools, by prioritizing language learning through preparatory programs and free language schools, and promoting social cohesion initiatives to inform host community children about refugee challenges and preempt/mitigate issues like bullying.

▪ **Employment:**

- Improve support for TP holders in understanding labor and fiscal laws, including assistance with employment contracts and tax declarations, along with expanding legal support services for labor-related matters. Also, increase awareness among employed refugees about Hungarian labor laws and refugee rights.
- Expand the offer for integration and language classes and childcare support, in particular for parents raising children with disabilities and women with multiple children.
- Simplifying diploma equivalency/recognition processes and work towards refugees securing employment in their respective fields rather than unrelated work.
- Tackle labor exploitation, black market labor, high-risk jobs, and underpaid positions.

Peaceful coexistence:

- Encourage community integration through joint events and festivities involving refugees and host communities, such as cooking sessions, storytelling, festive day celebrations like Fazan (carnival), and joint pilgrimages. Consider focusing on Hungarian holiday celebrations in the future.
- Promote integration through creative workshops and art events that bring Hungarians and refugees together. Additionally, leverage the power of sports by organizing free group activities like ball games, yoga, and Nordic walking.