



HUNGARY

July – December 2023

Since the escalation of the crisis, 38,000 refugees from Ukraine applied for Temporary Protection (TP) in Hungary, and 25,800 Ukrainians applied for work permits. New TP applications have stabilized, averaging 650 monthly. By December 2023, Ukrainian nationals had made over 1.5 million border crossings into Hungary, maintaining a stable average of 4,000-5,000 crossings daily. The numbers encompass new arrivals and in-transit refugees as well as pendular movements, which increase during school breaks and holidays. Temporary visits to Ukraine were also recorded, for family, healthcare, or document purposes.

With numbers stabilizing, the Government emergency transit services at BOK Sports Hall were suspended in August. New arrivals are received at Keleti and Nyugati railway stations, while RRP partners continued to assist crossing refugees at entry points and across the country. In December 2023, the Government portal - Safe in Hungary - was launched, providing information on legal status, assistance, and emergency contacts for Ukrainian nationals and dual nationals.

The consultations for the 2024 Refugee Response Plan (RRP) in Hungary brought together over 35 organizations. Discussions among partners aimed at revising response priorities based on 2023 achievements, needs, and gaps in the response. The full 2024 RRP 2024 is accessible [here](#). Aligned with Government-led efforts in Hungary, 31 partners across multiple response sectors are appealing for USD 42 million in 2024 to address refugee needs. The plan was launched in Geneva on 15 January and will be launched in Budapest on 28 February.

KEY FIGURES*

38,314	72%	9,523	16,488	9,420
Refugees granted Temporary Protection status in Hungary (NDGAP) **	Of the refugee population from Ukraine are women and children (MSNA, December 2023, UNHCR)	Individuals assisted with livelihood and socioeconomic inclusion services (RRP partner reporting)	Children participating in non-formal education activities (RRP partner reporting)	Households received cash assistance (RRP partner reporting)

2023 REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN ***

USD 1.7 B	56%	USD 62.7 M	40 %	37
Overall financial requirements	Overall percent funded	Hungary financial requirements	Hungary percent funded	Partners appealed for the Hungary response

*See the [Operational Data Portal for the Ukraine Refugee Situation](#) and the [Hungary portal page](#) for more details on refugee population figures and information resources. ** In addition, as of December 2023, 27,256 residence permits were granted to Ukrainian nationals since March 2022 (source: National Directorate General for Aliens Policing; this includes permits issued for the first time only; renewals are not counted). *** See the [Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan](#) for a breakdown of sectoral response priorities and requirements and the [Refugee Funding Tracker](#) for RRP funding information.

General Coordination Updates

The consultation process for the 2024 refugee response plan began in September 2023. It involved over 35 organizations, including refugee-led and community-based organizations, local and international NGOs, and UN agencies. The outcomes of the consultations are available here ([RLO/CBO](#); [NGO/UN](#)). Thirty-one partners are part of the 2024 RRP for Hungary, with a country appeal of USD 42 million for activities planned to strengthen the socio-economic inclusion of refugees (39% of the budget appealed), protection (37%), and basic needs assistance for new arrivals, refugees in transit, and in-country refugees. The full RRP plan is available [here](#). It was launched in Geneva on January 15.



Left: 12 Refugee-Led Organizations and Community Based Organizations attended a planning workshop in Budapest on September 23. Right: 24 organizations / 40 participants attended the humanitarian planning workshops organized by the RCF in Budapest on September 26. © UNHCR



The Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) report was released in December. The findings of the MSNA 2023 laid the groundwork for discussion on the needs and vulnerabilities of refugees in Hungary to adjust the response and plan adequately for resources in 2024. The assessment, guided by the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF), involved nearly 700 adult respondents from refugee households across 18 counties in Hungary. The data collected was complemented by qualitative information gathered through focus group discussions organized with refugees. The full report is available [here](#).

In December 2023, the Government launched the [Safe in Hungary portal](#). The website offers information on TP, assistance and services, on the legal status of dual nationals (Ukrainian – Hungarian) and emergency contacts.



The [Budapest Helps! Information and Community Center](#), established by the Municipality of Budapest, IOM, and UNHCR, celebrated its one-year anniversary with a photo exhibition and musical performances. The Center, an important resource for refugees and displaced individuals, has engaged nearly 14,000 Ukrainian refugees with over 1,700 events, including legal awareness sessions, language classes, recreational activities, psychosocial support sessions, and community-building activities.



Art classes for children at the Budapest Helps! Center. © UNHCR

September 9. Celebration of the anniversary. © UNHCR

September 9. Budapest Helps! Center, local music event. © UNHCR

Sectoral Achievements



Protection, Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence

Achievements and Impact

- In 2023, RRP partners provided information on services and refugees' rights to nearly 45,600 individuals across the country through outreach and info points, mainly in Budapest and at the border crossings, targeting in-country and transiting refugees. In addition, 3,880 refugees were provided with one-on-one counselling on benefits and entitlements of TP status in Hungary by protection partners.
- Over 10,500 refugees with specific needs and additional 4,200 refugees at heightened protection risks benefited from integrated case management and received targeted protection assistance, counselling and referrals to specialized services. Legal partners provided legal assistance to nearly 650 refugees, an additional 770 were reached through legal awareness sessions.
- Between 25 November and 10 December, an interagency 16-day campaign against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was launched and engaged 1,500 individuals with 18 events across the country.
- Safe spaces and child protection hubs across the country operated by RRP partners engaged over 16,600 refugee children in community activities. Here children could play, learn, and receive support in a secure environment.
- Over 4,200 refugee children received individual case management and specialized child protection services from RRP partners. The achievement includes measures targeting unaccompanied/separated children with family reunification support; protection of children from trafficking, abuse, and other forms of exploitation; legal aid, including advocacy for and ensuring legal safeguards and relevant documentation, such as birth registration and documentation.
- Training and capacity building: GBV partners trained over 430 personnel on GBV prevention, response, and mitigation measures and over 700 partners' personnel and members of the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Task Force were trained on SEA risk mitigation, prevention and response. Almost 2,500 front liners and professionals took part in capacity-building initiatives to enhance their ability to identify and respond to child protection cases, including 250 law enforcement officials working in border crossing points who were trained on prevention of child trafficking. Also, almost 200 participants for Government and humanitarian actors were trained on legal matters.

- Examples of partners' interventions for the reporting period:

NestingPlay: In July and August, a range of activities were organized for Ukrainian refugee women, promoting emotional well-being, physical health, skill enhancement, and cultural integration. A total of 290 women and girls were assisted, with 16 new participants during the reporting period.

UNICEF: in partnership with Kek Vonal Helpline, the 'Talk about it/ Beszélj róla' campaign was launched in September to help children feel comfortable seeking help when they encounter problems such as bullying, self-harm, problems in integrating in school, etc.

InterchurchAid: A multi-stakeholder roundtable involved 23 NGOs and civil society organizations sharing experiences in addressing GBV cases in November.



UNHCR GBV Roundtable, Budapest, November 2023. © UNHCR



Refugee children engaged in recreational activities, Hungary, 2023. © UNICEF



Socio-Economic Inclusion: Employment, Education, Health, Mid/long-Term Accommodation

Achievements and Impact

- As per government data, 5,014 Ukrainian children are enrolled for the 2023/24 school year in 1,525 schools across the country in kindergartens (19%), primary schools (75%), and secondary schools (6%). RRP Education partners organized nonformal education and catch-up classes for over 15,700 refugee children in Hungary during the year, and additionally, almost 2,300 children were provided with learning materials.
- 2023 MSNA data highlighted that 71% of refugees within the working age bracket (16-64) are employed; however, discussions with refugees suggest that they are often underemployed, working in jobs that require lower skills compared to their level of education and offer low wages. 9% are unemployed, with primary reasons including language barriers and challenges in obtaining recognition for their educational qualifications. The remaining 20% of working-age refugees fall out of the labor force (not employed, not looking for employment, or not able to work). 11% of refugees lack formal employment contracts. In 2023, partners have significantly expanded livelihood interventions: 7,900 refugees received professional, skills and language training by RRP partners, primarily in Budapest, and over 1,300 received support for job placement, including livelihood counseling.
- Partners increased efforts to move refugees out of short-term accommodation (less than one month), securing private mid to long-term options for over 5,200 refugees, while over 2,500 received counseling on housing options in Hungary.
- RRP partners facilitated healthcare access for over 5,600 refugees nationwide and enhanced the skills of 315 health workers working with refugees. Mental health and psychosocial support were prioritized, involving over 15 partners who provided over 12,000 focused psychosocial consultations, over 1,150 specialized consultations and engaged nearly 8,900 refugees in community-based psychosocial activities.
- Examples of partners' activities for the reporting period.

Malta: 245 Ukrainian refugees were supported in integrating into Hungary by managing living expenses, securing employment, demonstrating proficiency in Hungarian, finding accommodations, and enrolling children into schools for an independent living.

IOM Hungary launched a 4-month social inclusion project, funded by AMIF and the Ministry of Interior of Hungary, with activities such as cash-based allowances, mental health support, job counseling, language classes, and community-based events, aiming for long-term self-sufficiency and integration.

Psi Pont operates a platform connecting over 300 psychologists, psychiatrists, and mental health professionals, offering MHPSS services online to refugees from Ukraine in 13 languages.

United Way: Through the #UnitedForUkraine program, support has been extended to 50 organizations, with ongoing communication facilitated through thematic newsletters and online partner meetings. In response to the growing need for collaboration and sharing best practices among partners, a successful conference was organized in September, attracting professionals beyond partner organizations.



A young refugee from Ukraine attends UNICEF supported catch-up classes at the Dorcas Ministries Refugee Accommodation Centre in Debrecen, Hungary. © UNICEF/UN0802883/Ruszthi



Children in the 4-week summer camp program; activities included visits to museums, adventure parks, and recreational activities, with MHPSS support. © Terre des hommes



Interagency workshop, Budapest, October 30, 2023. © United Way



Basic Needs

Achievements and Impact

- Nearly 60,000 refugees were provided with in-kind food assistance, such as food parcels and groceries, mainly in Budapest and Szabolcs Szatmar Bereg counties, by 11 partners; an additional 18,170 refugees were provided with prepared meals, mainly in Budapest.
- Over 65,600 refugees were provided with non-food items, including hygiene kits (26%), clothing (23%), blankets (19%), and kitchen sets (including furniture and home appliances; 17%); assistance also includes items for winterisation as well.
- Over 4,300 refugees were provided with short-term temporary accommodation arrangements (under 1 month), mostly in Budapest and at the border.
- Cash and voucher assistance served to support the integration efforts of vulnerable refugees, with over 9,300 households reached in 2023 with multipurpose cash assistance, cash for basic needs, and protection. Partners prioritized technical discussions on cash and voucher assistance; key topics included transfer value calculation, deduplication of assistance, and assistance mapping. Winterization cash assistance saw harmonized transfer values and successful deduplication through data-sharing agreements.

- Examples of partner interventions for the reporting period.

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Municipality of Budapest, initiated a cash assistance program for Ukrainian refugees aimed at alleviating the hardships faced by refugee households with children. The program combines unconditional cash transfers to provide financial means and referrals to essential services for children, such as healthcare and education. It has successfully provided cash assistance to 1,386 refugee households, benefiting approximately 2,500 children. Additionally, through the partnership with the Budapest Municipality, a comprehensive database profiling Ukrainian refugees in Budapest has been established, including an initial vulnerability screening to facilitate targeted support.



@UNHCR Registration of beneficiaries of assistance, Budapest, November 2023.

UNHCR launched a winter cash payout for individuals aged 60 years and above (including TP holders/applicants, refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons/applicants) in Hungary. The cash program targeted 500 older refugees and was aimed at helping address winter needs by purchasing essential winter supplies such as warm clothing, heating fuel, and shelter upgrades.

Working in partnership

To support preparedness and coordination effort of the response, through the RCF in November partners revised the contingency plan to help ensure sufficient level of preparedness is maintained in case of any contextual change were to occur.

In 2023, partners and civil society, aligning with RRP Objective 4, significantly bolstered activities promoting social cohesion for refugees nationwide in Hungary. Refugee and community-based organizations, joined by the Ukrainian diaspora, played a crucial role in mobilizing communities, solidarity, expertise and resources addressing unique refugee needs. Beyond urban centres, local partnerships were formed, engaging numerous volunteers and amplifying refugee voices. Activities included catch-up classes, language courses, psycho-social support, cultural exchanges, and community awareness events. The Ukrainian diaspora contributed to skills development and networking, specifically supporting Ukrainian refugee teachers and health professionals in adapting to Hungary.

Among good practices there is the Social Cohesion Lab by the refugee-led organization UA Unity, who set up a dynamic space in Budapest for refugees and locals to interact, share experiences, and build connections. This initiative, built on the success of cultural and art events, aims to foster social integration and create a positive perception of refugees among the local community, as a response to the expressed desire of refugees for more interaction and inclusion within the local society.



@UNHCR Refugee children at the UEFA Final in Budapest, Sevilla vs Roma, 2023.



@UNITY, Christmas Celebration, Hungary, December 2023

31 RRP organizations have contributed to the reporting in 2023: American International School of Budapest | Budapest Methodological Social Center | Cordelia Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims | Dévai Fogadó | Foundation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church | Hungarian Baptist Aid | Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta | Hungarian Evangelical Fellowship / Oltalom Charity Society | Hungarian Helsinki Committee | Hungarian Interchurch Aid | Hungarian Red Cross | Hungarian Reformed Church Aid | International Rescue Committee | Jesuit Refugee Service | LITERA Association | Menedék Hungarian Association for Migrants | Migration Aid | Next Step Hungary Association | Pszi Pont | Romaversitas Foundation | Menekültek Online Segítő Társasága (Refugee Help Digital Network) | SOS Children's Villages | Terre des Hommes - Switzerland | Trauma Center | Ukrainian Association UNITY | United Nations Children's Fund | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees | United Nations Migration Agency | United Way Hungary Foundation | Vamos Foundation | World Health Organization.

In addition, the following organizations reported activities for refugees in 2023 (even if initially not part of the RRP appeal): Adventist Development and Relief Agency | Budapest Municipality | Food Bank Aid Foundation Budapest | EMMA Association | IFRC | NestingPlay | Partners Hungary | From Street to Homes Association

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LINKS: [Regional data portal](#) – [Hungary Portal](#) – [Ukraine Situation RRP](#) – [Refugee Funding Tracker](#)