



Regional Refugee Response  
for the Ukraine Situation  
2024 END-OF-YEAR REPORT



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Cover photo: *Czech Republic - Ukrainian baby in outpatient centre in Pribram hospital accessing quality healthcare. @UNICEF/Anton Filonenko*

Geneva, Switzerland, February 2025

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## REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The war in Ukraine has been the fastest growing and largest displacement crisis in Europe since World War II, leading to a large-scale regional refugee response.

The 2024 Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for the Ukraine Situation outlined the multi-sector response strategy of local, national and international humanitarian partners and included country chapters detailing the support to the host Governments of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The 2024 RRP detailed practical and specialized support from partners to host countries through four pillars. These included ensuring refugees could access legal status and rights, offering targeted assistance to refugees with specific needs and vulnerabilities, enhancing refugees' self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion as well as fostering social cohesion between refugee and host communities.

Mainstreamed across these four strategic objectives were a number of cross-cutting response priorities, such as mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS); accountability to affected people; protection from sexual exploitation and abuse; localization; Government ownership and maintaining emergency capacities.

This end-of-year report, covering 2024, captures the progress and achievements made against the strategic objectives and identifies gaps and consequences of underfunding. It also includes advocacy messages targeting Government, donors and other key stakeholders and highlights the important work done by local and national partners. It is accompanied by regional and country-level reporting on funding levels and output indicators and should be read alongside the Refugee Response Plan covering 2025-26.



## Regional progress against strategic objectives

Throughout 2024, inter-agency assessments, including the Socio-Economic Insight Survey (SEIS),<sup>1</sup> have underscored the progress made towards strengthening protection, socio-economic inclusion, healthcare, and education for refugees from Ukraine. Advancements in legal status and protection have been safeguarded through the extension and continued implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), ensuring that refugees maintain access to safety, rights, and essential services across host countries.<sup>2</sup> Efforts have been made to address inconsistencies in TPD implementation and monitor legal status retention for those temporarily returning to Ukraine. These measures have helped mitigate risks of premature return and ensured continued access to protection mechanisms.

Protection monitoring highlights improvements in response mechanisms addressing family separation, violence against women, boys and girls, and human trafficking. Targeted interventions have expanded services for vulnerable groups, leading to better inclusion in national systems and increased accessibility of national services, housing, and employment. Collaboration with national and local organizations has been instrumental in strengthening protection mechanisms and addressing documentation gaps, which have been reduced through legal assistance initiatives.

Progress in economic inclusion has been marked by increased labour market participation among refugees. Employment rates now range between 40 and 60 per cent across host countries, supported by initiatives enhancing language proficiency, skills recognition, and vocational training. Efforts to improve access to labour market information and upskilling programmes have contributed to reduced unemployment rates among refugees, though continued efforts are required to ensure fair employment protections and prevent exploitation.

Host countries have made significant strides in healthcare access, despite existing challenges. Targeted interventions have reduced barriers for 17 per cent of refugees who previously faced difficulties accessing healthcare.<sup>3</sup> Improved awareness campaigns and policy adjustments have enhanced service delivery for those with chronic conditions and disabilities. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programmes have been expanded, with 36 per cent of refugee households now reporting at least one member accessing MHPSS services<sup>4</sup>, improving overall mental well-being and reducing stigma.

Inclusion in education has seen advancements, with increased refugee enrolment in national education systems. Efforts to transition children from informal or online learning to formal education have yielded positive results, ensuring long-term educational and social stability. Capacity-building programmes and language support have facilitated increased inclusion into host country schools, reducing the risks of dropping out from education and improving the quality.

Initiatives aimed at stateless individuals have improved access to documentation, legal status, and essential services, although challenges remain. Policies addressing the specific needs of

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<sup>1</sup> SEIS 2024

<sup>2</sup> Moldova has separate, national legislation.

<sup>3</sup> [Navigating Health and Well-being Challenges for Refugees from Ukraine](#), February 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid



marginalized groups, including the Roma community, have been reinforced, with a focus on combating discrimination and enhancing data collection to inform more inclusive responses.

## Regional Gaps and consequences of underfunding

Continued efforts remain necessary to build on these achievements, with an emphasis on reinforcing protection systems, advancing socio-economic inclusion, and fostering stronger social cohesion. Collaborative engagement with host governments, national and local NGOs, civil society, and international partners will be pivotal in securing these advancements. Sustained local ownership and leadership of the response will be crucial for ensuring long-term stability and self-reliance for refugees from Ukraine. As the crisis persists, vulnerabilities continue to escalate, particularly in areas of protection, economic inclusion, healthcare, and education. Protection monitoring indicates increasing challenges in areas such as MHPSS, family separation, violence against women, boys and girls, and human trafficking remain critical concerns. Children, older persons, and individuals with disabilities are particularly at risk due to limited access to national services, housing, and employment opportunities. The demographic composition - where women and children constitute the majority of refugees - necessitates targeted interventions.

Violence amongst close relations remains a significant issue yet underreporting and stigma continue to hinder response efforts. Legal and linguistic barriers further restrict victims and survivors' access to critical support services. Meanwhile, households with specific needs, such as those with disabilities and chronic illnesses, struggle to secure healthcare, social protection, and employment. Persistent documentation gaps, with 23 per cent of respondents reporting missing or possessing at least one expired document,<sup>5</sup> impede access to essential rights and services, often prompting temporary returns to Ukraine.

Economic inclusion remains a major challenge. Employment rates range from 45 to 75 per cent across host countries and unemployment remains disproportionately high at 9 per cent, compared to 4 per cent among host nationals. Combined with underemployment and low wages, the poverty rate amongst refugees from Ukraine stands at 23 per cent, almost double that of hosts. After correcting for the fact that refugees also suffer from excessively high housing expenses as compared to nationals, this rate rises to 40%. Key barriers to better employment include limited language proficiency, a mismatch between employment backgrounds and available jobs, non-recognition of skills, and limited vocational training opportunities. These factors often confine refugees to informal or low-wage employment and increasing risks of exploitation. Expanding access to labour market information, upskilling initiatives, and fair employment rights remain critical.

Educational inclusion remains inconsistent, with persistently low enrolment rates in host country schools and continued reliance on informal or online learning, raising concerns over long-term social and educational outcomes. Many adolescents have spent four years outside formal education, heightening risks of isolation and limiting future economic opportunities. Urgent measures are required to sustainably include refugee children into national education systems.

<sup>5</sup> [Displacement Patterns, Protection Risks and Needs of Refugees from Ukraine – Regional Protection Analysis](#).

<sup>6</sup> EU Labour Force Survey

Stateless individuals continue to face barriers in obtaining documentation, legal status, and essential services, including housing, healthcare, and education. Marginalized groups, such as the Roma community, encounter additional discrimination, underscoring the need for inclusive policies and enhanced data collection.

Coordinated efforts remain essential to strengthening protection systems, ensuring inclusion in national services, and expanding economic opportunities. Addressing these core challenges will be vital in securing the long-term well-being and stability of refugees from Ukraine. Continued collaboration with host governments, national and local NGOs, civil society, and international partners will be necessary to sustain and enhance response efforts in the coming year.

## Advocacy message

**Ensuring legal certainty for refugees is vital as most cannot return due to the ongoing war.** For Ukrainians, the pull of home is strong. However, while 60 per cent of refugees hope to return, insecurity, housing shortages and limited job opportunities keep most from doing so for now. Even if the guns fell silent today, the scale of the destruction and the huge numbers of displaced people make recovery a daunting task that will not happen overnight.

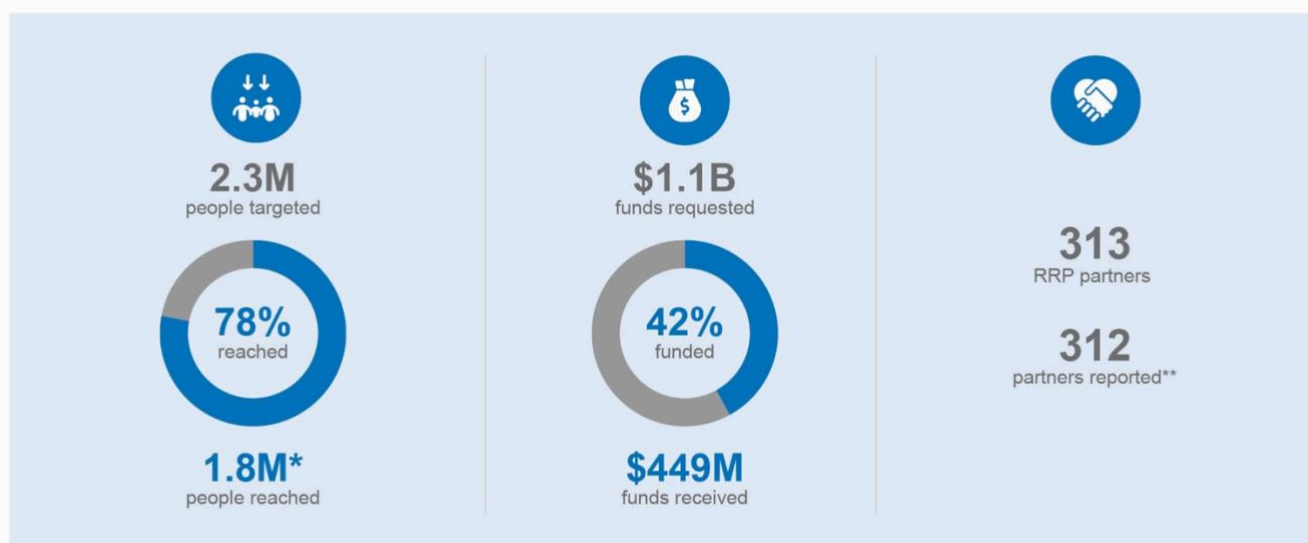
Extending the Temporary Protection Directive beyond March 2026 and facilitating alternative residency opportunities would provide stability and socio-economic inclusion. Access to clear information through platforms like Ukraine is Home support informed decisions on staying or returning. Host Governments should allow short-term visits without risking legal status to help maintain ties and supports long-term return decisions. Premature returns risk renewed displacement, requiring targeted support for the most vulnerable refugees to sustain themselves in host communities.

**Ensuring refugees can access jobs, social protection, healthcare, and education is not just a humanitarian imperative** – it strengthens economies and societies and makes them more resilient. By including refugees into national systems, strengthening labour market access, and ensuring targeted support for vulnerable groups, host governments can reduce costs, enhance self-reliance, and build more cohesive, resilient communities.

**Strengthening local institutions** – municipalities, national and local organizations, civil society and public services – ensures longer-term inclusion at lower costs. Increased direct, flexible funding and strategic partnerships with national and local actors will enhance coordination and maximize impact, creating a sustainable, nationally led response where refugees can contribute to economic and social development.

**The Ukraine refugee response has provided lessons in effective coordination, inclusion, and service delivery** – lessons that would enhance the response to all refugees, regardless of nationality. While statuses may differ, refugees face common challenges in accessing rights, services, and social cohesion. By applying inclusive policies and harmonizing responses, host countries can build more efficient, equitable systems that ensure all refugees can contribute and thrive.

# REGIONAL END-OF-YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS (2024)



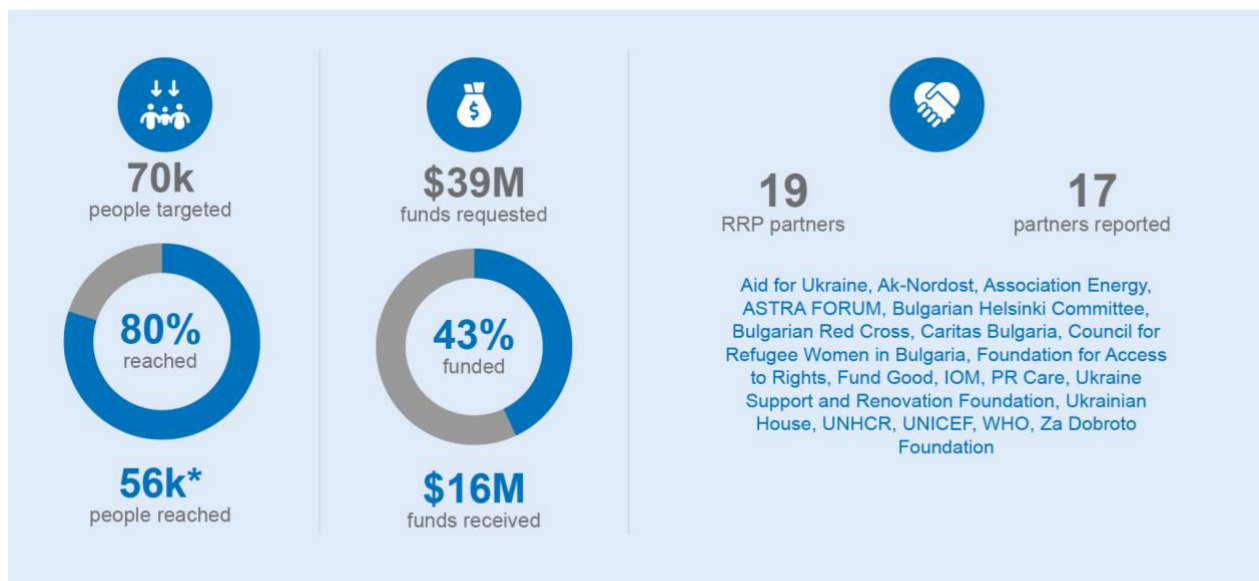
Sector		People reached	% reached	People targeted
Protection	Individuals who have been supported accessing protection services	1132K	115%	982k
	Children provided with child protection services	364K	71%	516k
	Participants trained on child protection and children's right	15K	140%	11k
	Individuals who benefitted from specialized GBV programmes	356K	85%	416k
	Trained humanitarian response actors and government personnel on GBV Knowledge on Prevention, Response, and Risk Mitigation Measures	6K	82%	7k
Livelihoods & Socio-Economic Inclusion	Individuals who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions	196K	34%	572k
Health & Nutrition	Health consultations provided to refugees	96K	25%	384k
	Health care providers trained to provide health services to refugees	20K	94%	21k
	Individuals reached through counselling sessions or health education with information on health topics, available services, and how to access health care	175K	51%	342k
Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)	Focused and specialized services MHPSS consultations provided	155K	78%	198k
	Individuals participating in MHPSS services and activities	313K	82%	382k
Education	Children enrolled in formal education in host countries	306K	84%	367k
	Children participating in non-formal education programmes in the host countries	220K	65%	340k
Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)	PSEA network members and partner personnel trained on SEA risk mitigation, prevention and response	5K	105%	4k
Basic Needs	Individuals who received assistance for basic needs	425K	64%	665k

\*The number of individuals reached is an estimate based on the highest number of individuals reached per activity, per sector and/or per region, to avoid double counting.

\*\*This figure is the total of all RRP partners reporting - one partner may therefore be counted multiple times if operating and reporting in more than one country.



## BULGARIA



\*The number of individuals reached is an estimate based on the highest number of individuals reached per activity, per sector and/or per region, to avoid double counting.

## Progress against the strategic objectives

In December 2024, Bulgaria's caretaker government adopted the decision to extend the national humanitarian programme for refugees from Ukraine until March 2025. The programme includes government-sponsored accommodation in state facilities and hotels, availed mostly by vulnerable refugees such as single-headed households with minor children and older individuals. In the second half of the year, RRP partners raised awareness on the rights of refugees with specific protection needs and provided capacity-building to national authorities on interviewing applicants for international protection and on ensuring protection-sensitive entry systems. Capacity-building was also provided to child protection authorities and social service providers on child protection case management and the needs of unaccompanied and separated children.

In the 2024–25 school year, some 4,800 children were enrolled in Bulgarian schools (primary and secondary education), marking a 34 per cent increase from the previous semester. This was preceded by inter-agency efforts on vaccination campaigns for children (a prerequisite for school enrolment) with the Ministry of Health – as well as a nationwide information campaign for school enrolment organized by the Education Working Group with the Ministry of Education and Sciences (MoES). RRP partners provided education grants to refugee families, reaching more than 2,600 refugee children (ages 6-17), to support their access to primary and secondary education. In Q4, RRP partners, in coordination with the MoES, provided trainings to 90 schoolteachers in Burgas, Haskovo, Plovdiv, Sofia and Varna – with the objective of capacitating teachers on inclusive education and teaching Bulgarian as a foreign language. Additionally, the Council of Ministers in

July 2024 adopted a decree facilitating the access of refugees with Temporary Protection to Bulgarian state universities; this was followed by the decision to allocate a quota of 400 spots in state universities for refugees.<sup>7</sup> In line with these developments, RRP partners provided information sessions to refugee youth on university enrolment in community centres and reimbursed 82 students' enrolment fees, enabling them to start higher education.

Partners continued to provide targeted support to refugees with specific needs. This included community-based mental health services; support to children with special needs and their caregivers to enrol in public kindergartens and schools; and support in accessing the government's social protection schemes. RRP partners also reached more than 10,200 individuals with multi-purpose and winter assistance to meet basic needs in the second half of the year. Referrals between service providers (RRP and other inter-agency actors) were strengthened with the use of the inter-agency referral form amongst partners. Bulgarian Network of Compass Protection and Inclusion Centres provided services to refugees, including legal assistance and mediation to access essential services, child protection and educational support services, Bulgarian language courses, MHPSS, and socio-economic inclusion and access to social assistance.

Partners provided capacity-building to refugee-led organizations on topics ranging from community-based protection to fundraising and proposal writing. The inter-agency Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) network organized a Training of Trainers (ToT) on PSEA key principles and training facilitation skills for 20 PSEA focal points and alternate focal points in November 2024. The focal points have further developed training plans for 2025 to deliver additional trainings within their organizations. The ToT underscores the collaborative efforts in advancing the zero-tolerance policy aimed at preventing SEA among people forced to flee.

RRP partners reached more than 38,000 individuals with livelihoods and socio-economic inclusion interventions. Bulgarian language classes – for both adults and children – have been highlighted as integral in facilitating access to services and opportunities. Other services included career counselling, job place facilitation support, vocational trainings and mentoring for refugee entrepreneurs. Partners reinforced social cohesion between refugee and host communities through a variety of activities in community centres for both refugee and local communities, and highlighted success stories in contributing to the national economy and development.

## Gaps and consequences of underfunding

In February 2025, Bulgaria's government has extended the validity of TP in line with the EU Directive until March 2026. For legal predictability and access to protection, it remains essential that alternative forms of residency enhance legal certainty and socio-economic inclusion for refugees, aligned with international protection. Refugees should also receive comprehensive and accessible information on legal status options, along with necessary legal support.

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<sup>7</sup> Bulgaria Council of Ministers [Resolution 264 / 25.7.2024](#); European Commission [National reforms in higher education](#).

<sup>8</sup> [Ukrainian refugees: Council extends temporary protection until March 2026](#)

There is also a need for to strengthen national referral systems to identify potential victims of human trafficking and refugees with specific needs. Identifying vulnerable refugees early is essential for ensuring they can access their rights. Gaps in referral pathways and the lack of social and educational support in government-sponsored accommodation, which are often located away from residential areas or outside of city centres, remain challenges. Refugees' transition from such emergency accommodation to longer-term, affordable housing is essential to facilitate their access to essential services and self-reliance opportunities. The Government's commitment to ensure financial and administrative resources to implement needed identification and referral procedures; address specific needs of vulnerable refugees; and ensure meaningful access to social protection remains important.

At the end of 2024, less than half (46 per cent) of Bulgaria's 2024 financial appeal was funded. Funding gaps have affected RRP partners' ability to provide language courses (for children, youth, and adults); specialized mental health services; services for victims and survivors of violence against women, boys and girls; capacity-building on protection plans and safety responses for vulnerable persons; and mid-term accommodation support for refugees wishing to transition from government-sponsored accommodation to private accommodation. Ensuring that funds reach community-based and refugee-led organizations remains important for sustainable localization efforts.

## Advocacy message

As Bulgaria has formed a government in 2025, it remains important to ensure that refugee inclusion remains high on the new government's agenda through the following measures:

The adoption of a longer-term humanitarian assistance programme, rather than short-term extensions, will allow for refugees' planning and well-informed decisions. A transition from humanitarian accommodation support should be developed in line with a long-term inclusion programme for refugees, particularly taking into account the situation of the most vulnerable refugees.

Systematic identification of refugees with specific needs and assessment of their vulnerabilities, to ensure timely linkages to key services. Strengthening referral pathways on key services – e.g., MHPSS, violence against women, boys and girls, social protection – remains important, particularly for those with specific needs (children with special needs, older persons, victims and survivors of violence, etc.).

Addressing barriers to healthcare services through enhanced information provision on how to access health insurance; language support at healthcare facilities; community health care mediators to support community-based facilitation and navigation of the health care system; and inclusion of refugee health workers in the Bulgarian health system.

Continued access of refugee children to kindergartens, daycare and schools is essential for both refugee children and their caregivers, as it enables refugee children to continue their education in Bulgaria while their caregivers work. By collaborating with RRP partners, government support for targeted programmes that address low enrolment rates, early childhood education, and catchup support for refugee children in schools will help meet their long-term educational needs.

Government leadership of the existing refugee coordination model in Bulgaria – i.e., coordination with civil society at the national and local levels – remains an important objective. Additionally, securing sustainable funding for municipalities, community-based and refugee-led organizations is vital for supporting localization efforts and sustaining essential community empowerment activities.

### **Partner Spotlight: Ukraine Support and Renovation Foundation**

Ukraine Support and Renovation Foundation (USRF) – a community-based organization and RRP partner – is focused on addressing school bullying faced by refugees in Plovdiv, the fourth largest refugee-hosting region in Bulgaria. In the Compass Protection and Inclusion Centre, USRF psychologists organized four information sessions with parents on the topic of bullying and adjusting to new environments prior to the start of the 2024-25 academic year – and with teenagers on tools and practical tips for responding to bullying in schools, reaching some 40 individuals.

During a meeting organized by the Plovdiv Regional Inspectorate of Education in March 2024, attended by psychologists from local schools, USRF presented the challenges faced by refugees adapting to new environments and introduced the guidelines on addressing bullying, which outline how educational institutions can address bullying incidents. USRF has successfully helped around 30 families cope with bullying, offering comprehensive support to children, parents, and schools. USRF aims to ensure refugee children are safe, have access to quality education, and are equipped with the tools they need to adapt to their new lives. In November and December, they organized a follow-up training for teenagers attending Bulgarian school. USRF also plans to work with Bulgarian psychologists and provide guidance for teenagers from the host community as well.

### Partner Spotlight: Aid for Ukraine

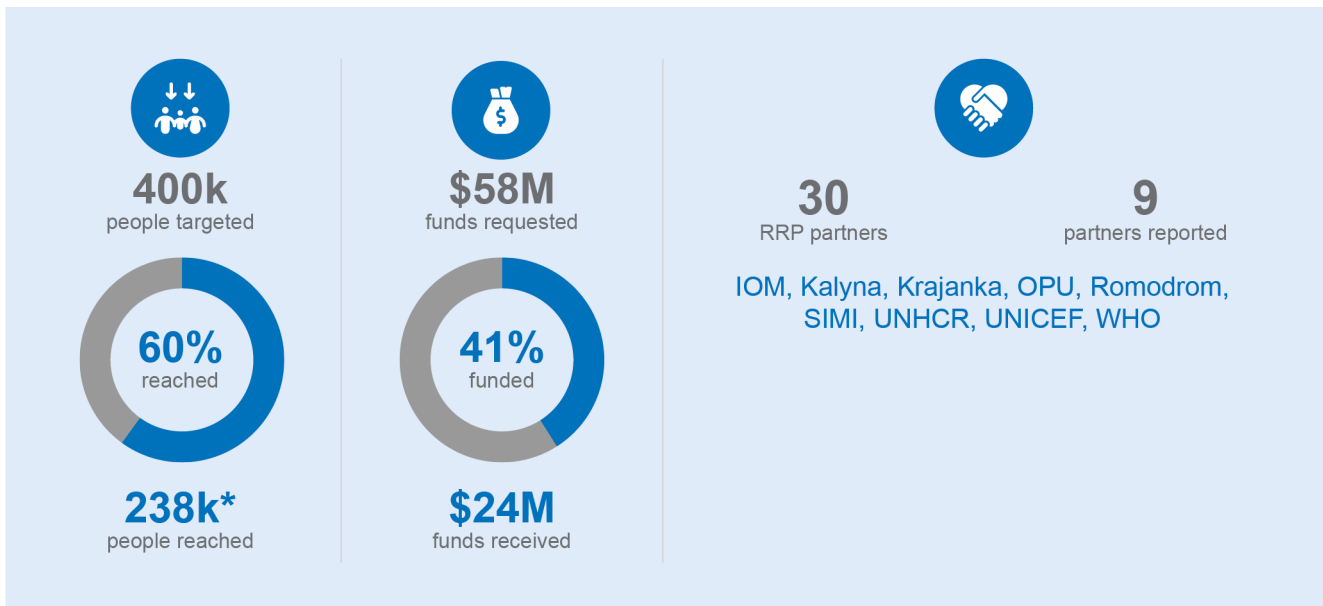
A Refugee-Led Organization and RRP partner, Aid for Ukraine supports refugee children with special needs and their caregivers in Bulgaria, offering individual and community-based mental health and psychosocial support services. The Ukrainian Hive center run by Aid for Ukraine in Sofia provides a safe and supportive environment where children with disabilities can engage in educational and recreational activities. A community online group has also been formed to share experiences and information among refugee families. The aim of the Together We Can Do More project is not only to provide targeted assistance but also ensure support for refugee children's inclusion in national social services, particularly access and additional support in schools. Activities have been complemented by advocacy and awareness-raising efforts in Bulgaria through recent presentations in national conferences and to members of the National Assembly, elevating the needs through refugee voices.



*Volodymyr, age nine, and his mother arrived in Bulgaria from Zhytomyr, Ukraine and found support at the Refugee Support Center in Ruse, established with the assistance of RRP partner, UNICEF. Two years later, they are still in Ruse and Volodymyr is now in second grade studying at a Bulgarian school. © UNICEF/ Nikolay Stoykov*



## CZECH REPUBLIC



\*The number of individuals reached is an estimate based on the highest number of individuals reached per activity, per sector and/or per region, to avoid double counting.

## Progress against the strategic objectives

The Refugee Response Plan (RRP) in Czechia has demonstrated significant success in supporting Ukrainian Temporary Protection holders, making substantial progress in achieving its strategic objectives. Through dedicated efforts by RRP partners, 167,900 individuals accessed protection services in 2024. This included legal aid, mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS) consultations, and guidance on available services, ensuring refugees received the assistance they required. The provision of accurate and timely information about available support systems and legal amendments was a crucial element in navigating the evolving legal landscape and changing refugee needs. A strong emphasis was placed on prevention of child from harm, with 70,000 children benefiting from specialized services out of the targeted 72,000.

RRP partners have also actively worked on preventing and addressing violence against women, boys and girls. Their efforts reached 71,800 refugees through specialized Safety and Protection support programmes – far surpassing the initial target of 52,000. Additionally, 100 humanitarian and government personnel were trained in violence prevention, strengthening long-term protective mechanisms.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services were also a major focus area. RRP partners conducted 8,600 consultations, exceeding the planned 5,000. Furthermore, 56,000 TP holders engaged in MHPSS services and activities. Particular attention was given to children and adolescents, with 31,000 children participating in non-formal education activities, facilitating their

social inclusion. Initiatives such as psychological support for teenagers, school of Ukrainian culture, and Czech language lessons have played a crucial role in empowering TP holders.

Socio-economic inclusion efforts have also been a priority. Through social counseling and active engagement with landlords, RRP partners facilitated access to affordable housing – despite limited availability – while also supporting labor market entry by offering language and up-skilling courses and promoting ethical recruitment. Capacity-building efforts have further strengthened local actors, NGOs, and government agencies: specialized trainings on labour rights, crime prevention, sensitive conflict resolution, intercultural workshops for social workers, and debt prevention sessions, enhanced the capabilities of over 900 stakeholders.

RRP partners assisted TP holders in overcoming language barriers and accessing essential health services by providing interpretation support, accompanying them to medical appointments, helping with registration at healthcare facilities, scheduling consultations with specialists, and facilitating access to mental health care through referrals and counseling services. More than 87,000 TP holders were reached through health education with information on health topics and available services.

Safe spaces were established across Czechia to provide protection, support, and a sense of community for Ukrainian refugees. These spaces included dedicated shelters, community hubs, and transitional housing in Prague and Brno, where young refugees could find stability and access essential services. In addition to safe accommodation, these spaces offered mental health and psychosocial support, legal aid, and social engagement activities such as cultural exchange and skill-building opportunities, including language lessons, employment guidance, and social gatherings, helping TP holders regain autonomy.

Overall, the RRP has achieved remarkable success, with 195,000 TP holders supported out of the planned 400,000. Given that 40% of the necessary funds have been successfully raised, this marks a significant achievement, demonstrating the effectiveness and impact of the RRP in Czechia.

## Gaps and consequences of underfunding

Despite the achievements of the Refugee Response Plan in Czechia, some challenges remain due to limited resources, particularly in housing, employment, healthcare, education, and youth rights protection. Affordable housing continues to be one of the main concerns, exacerbated by the fact that many TP holders remain locked in low-skilled jobs with limited opportunities for career growth.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> According to the most recent survey, around 60 per cent of employed TP holders worked under their qualification (December, 023): [Příjmy a zaměstnanost uprchlíků narostly. Ztráta bydlení zdarma ale prohloubila chudobu.](#)

The end of free state-provided accommodation significantly increased the demand for durable housing solutions.<sup>10</sup> While teams of RRP partners consisting of social and intercultural workers effectively managed the surge in housing-related requests, their limited capacity strained their ability to provide adequate support. Many refugees were assisted in applying for humanitarian and emergency financial aid, yet housing insecurity persisted. Administrative barriers, delayed payments, and address registration issues further complicated access to financial assistance, leaving some TP holders without timely support.

Healthcare access remains another challenge, particularly for refugees with complex medical conditions. The limited availability of healthcare providers, coupled with language barriers, resulted in long delays for essential medical services. Oncology patients and individuals with undiagnosed disabilities faced particular obstacles in receiving timely care. To some extent, these challenges also affect Czech nationals, as the overall capacity of healthcare providers remains limited, leading to extended wait times.

Education access for refugee youth also presents significant challenges. While the Czech government has worked to facilitate entry into secondary schools, only 7,278 Ukrainian refugee students were enrolled as of September 2024, representing just 31 per cent of the eligible age group. Many schools struggle with inadequate resources, limited capacity, and insufficient guidance for working with refugee students. Career counseling, support for adolescents with different mother tongues, and MHPSS remain key challenges. The lack of adequate services hinders refugee youth from being included into the education system and transitioning into safe and meaningful employment.

Unaccompanied and separated children, as well as refugee youth, continue to face barriers in accessing safety and rights protection services. The capacity constraints of local social and legal protection authorities may impede an effective response, making it difficult to prevent precarious labor conditions for refugee youth and ensure their well-being.

A major obstacle to addressing these issues is resource mobilization. The increasing number of global crises has diverted attention and funding away from the Ukrainian response, making it difficult to secure the necessary financial support. Addressing these challenges requires sustained



*Ukrainian children engaged in activities within mental health services provided through the Alliance of Community Mental Health Centres. © WHO Hana Bolinova*

funding, stronger coordination among stakeholders, and improved service delivery to ensure the long-term stability and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees in Czech society.

### **Partner Spotlight: Kalyna**

Kalyna, established in 2022, runs a dynamic community centre in the heart of Pardubice, bringing refugees and Czechs together. Their community cafe provides a space for Ukrainians and Czechs to meet, get to know each other, and provide mutual support. Support groups tailored for youth, young children, stay-at-home mothers and other vulnerable groups prevent isolation and allow TP holders to benefit from leisure and recreational activities, whether it is a photography course or movie night. In addition, Kalyna offers Czech language courses, consultations on housing and employment opportunities, and employs a community-based approach to tackling specific issues in schools, such as bullying, by engaging families and local schools for solutions. Through their team of professional psychologists and volunteers, Kalyna provides individual and group psychotherapeutic support to Ukrainian refugees requiring specialized support to tackle low self-esteem, family disputes and challenges in school. Kalyna contributes to the well-being and resilience of refugees fleeing war by supporting them to stand on their own feet and to find their place in Czechia.

### **Partner Spotlight: Organization for Aid to Refugees (OPU)**

The Organization for Aid to Refugees (OPU) operates three Transitional Houses – two in Prague with 10 places and one in Brno with 6 places – providing safe and stable accommodation for young refugees and separated minors. These facilities help beneficiaries develop essential life skills, ensuring a smoother transition to independent living. A key focus is on supporting young refugees from Ukraine, with 12 individuals accommodated last year. Beyond housing, OPU provides Czech language classes, tutoring, and financial assistance to improve their skills and future prospects. Refugees receive help with job searches, education, and inclusion into Czech society, including cultural orientation and participation in community activities. The one-year programme offers individualized support, including legal aid and employment assistance. By fostering self-sufficiency, OPU's Halfway Houses play a vital role in empowering young refugees to build stable and independent lives in Czechia.

## **Advocacy message**

Vulnerable TP holders, such as older people, single parents, and individuals with disabilities, need targeted support to overcome systemic barriers. Investing in specialized services and comprehensive support systems will ensure their needs are met and promote their successful inclusion into society.

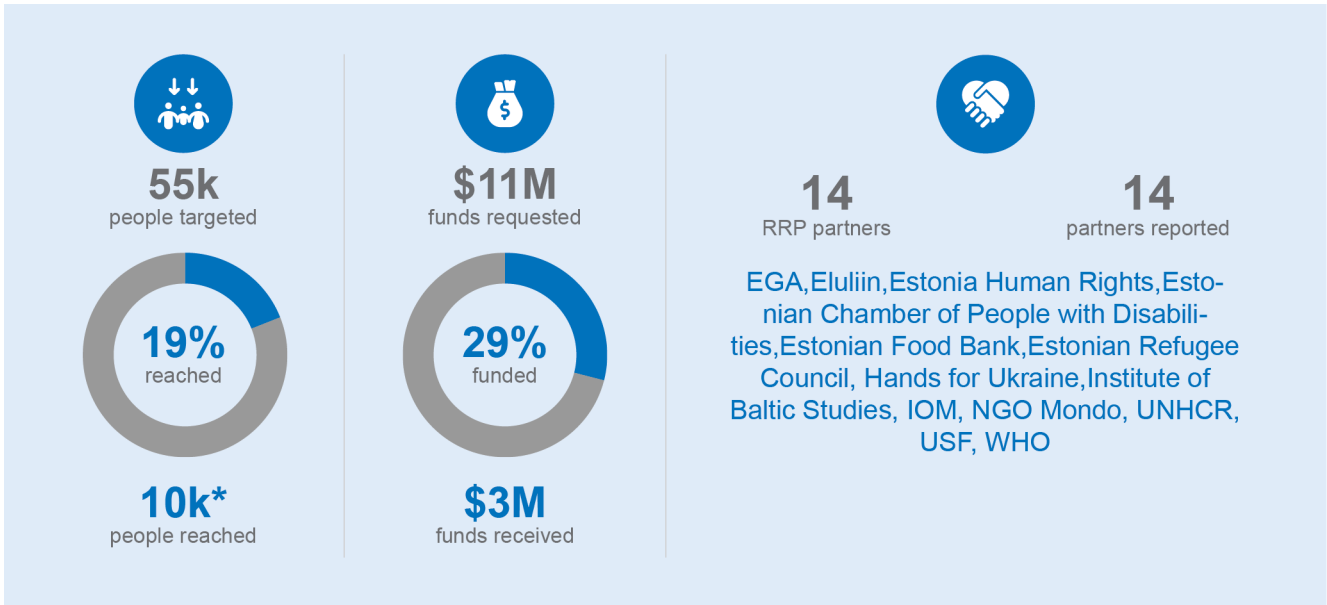
Ensuring stable and affordable housing for TP holders is essential for their successful inclusion. As increasing focus is placed on self-reliance, it is important to develop sustainable housing solutions. Supporting vulnerable groups, such as families with children and older people, is key to preventing TP holders from falling into income poverty and fostering social cohesion.

TP holders face barriers in entering the labour market, including challenges with qualifications recognition and limited language skills. To unlock their potential and foster economic participation, it is crucial to provide tailored employment support and improve recognition of foreign qualifications.

To better support refugee youth, RRP partners advocate for wider access to secondary education, strengthening labour rights protection services, providing vocational trainings and mentorship, and facilitating safe employment opportunities. Enhanced MHPSS support and increased funding for youth programmes are essential to their well-being. Strengthening collaboration among government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector is crucial to ensuring long-term opportunities and successful inclusion into Czech society.



## ESTONIA



\*The number of individuals reached is an estimate based on the highest number of individuals reached per activity, per sector and/or per region, to avoid double counting.

## Progress against the strategic objectives

In 2024, RRP partners in Estonia made commendable progress in supporting refugees from Ukraine and complementing the refugee response led by the national authorities, despite significant funding challenges. By the end of Q4, only 28.5 percent of the required \$10.6 million had been raised. Nevertheless, partners reached approximately 14,000 (40 percent) refugees from Ukraine, prioritizing safety protection, targeted assistance, access to services and community engagement.

Access to legal and protection services remained a key priority. Nearly 9,000 refugees benefited from legal assistance, counselling and community-based support services. More than 340 refugees received individual legal assistance, while 2,000 refugees benefitted from community-based protection and support services. Partners supported more than 6,000 refugees to access protection services through counselling and referrals. Partners also engaged in policy advocacy, particularly on temporary residency rights and appeal processes.

To support vulnerable groups, partners provided tailored counselling services and ensured physical and information accessibility, using diverse communication channels. Refugees actively organized and facilitated community-based activities, including peer support groups. Feedback mechanisms allowed refugees to raise concerns and inform programming.

Initiatives were taken to build the capacity of national and local actors to support refugees. Over 100 education professionals working with refugee children received training on inclusion and trauma-sensitive education using UNHCR's training material "Teaching About Refugees –

Guidance on Working with Refugee Children Struggling with Stress and Trauma”. Additionally, partners provided training to border authorities, social workers and district nurses engaged in MHPSS services for refugee children.

To promote the social and economic inclusion of refugees, partners facilitated digital skills development and language support. Over 500 refugees were directly supported by Ukrainian digital envoys through workshops on employability and digital skills, alongside innovative solutions such as online help desks, chatbots and other tools to help navigate both Estonian and Ukrainian e-services. These initiatives aimed to enhance digital skills, improve access to services and support inclusion into the Estonian labour market. Additionally, 40 refugee teachers from Ukraine participated in Estonian language courses, supporting their professional and social inclusion.

Community empowerment and social cohesion activities played an important role in fostering inclusion. Regular engagement with refugees ensured they were aware of their rights and available services. For instance, a Refugee Forum with 25 diverse members was established, strengthening refugee representation and engagement. Partners organized inclusive events engaging more than 700 individuals from refugee and host communities, fostering dialogue and addressing prejudices. Partners also organized regular communication interventions, including public discussions and social media campaigns, to raise awareness and address misinformation.

To address urgent needs, partners distributed food assistance to nearly 3,000 vulnerable refugees. More than 460 refugees in transit received temporary accommodation and cash assistance for living necessities. Mental health services were provided; 350 refugees received psychological and psychiatric consultations, and an additional 400 refugees benefited from psychosocial support. In partnership with Tallinn University’s School of Natural Sciences and Health, 15 art therapy groups were formed, supporting close to 140 children aged 7-15.

Despite resource constraints, RRP partners in Estonia continued to support safety and well-being needs, enhance refugee self-reliance and contribute to refugees’ access to public services efforts alongside national initiatives.

## Gaps and consequences of underfunding

Despite commendable progress in 2024, gaps remain in humanitarian assistance provided by civil society partners to refugees from Ukraine in Estonia, particularly due to funding shortfalls and operational challenges. By the end of the year, only \$3 million of the required \$10.6 million had been raised, leaving a critical \$7.6 million funding gap. This limited the ability of humanitarian partners to fully implement planned programmes that support government-led efforts in assisting refugees.

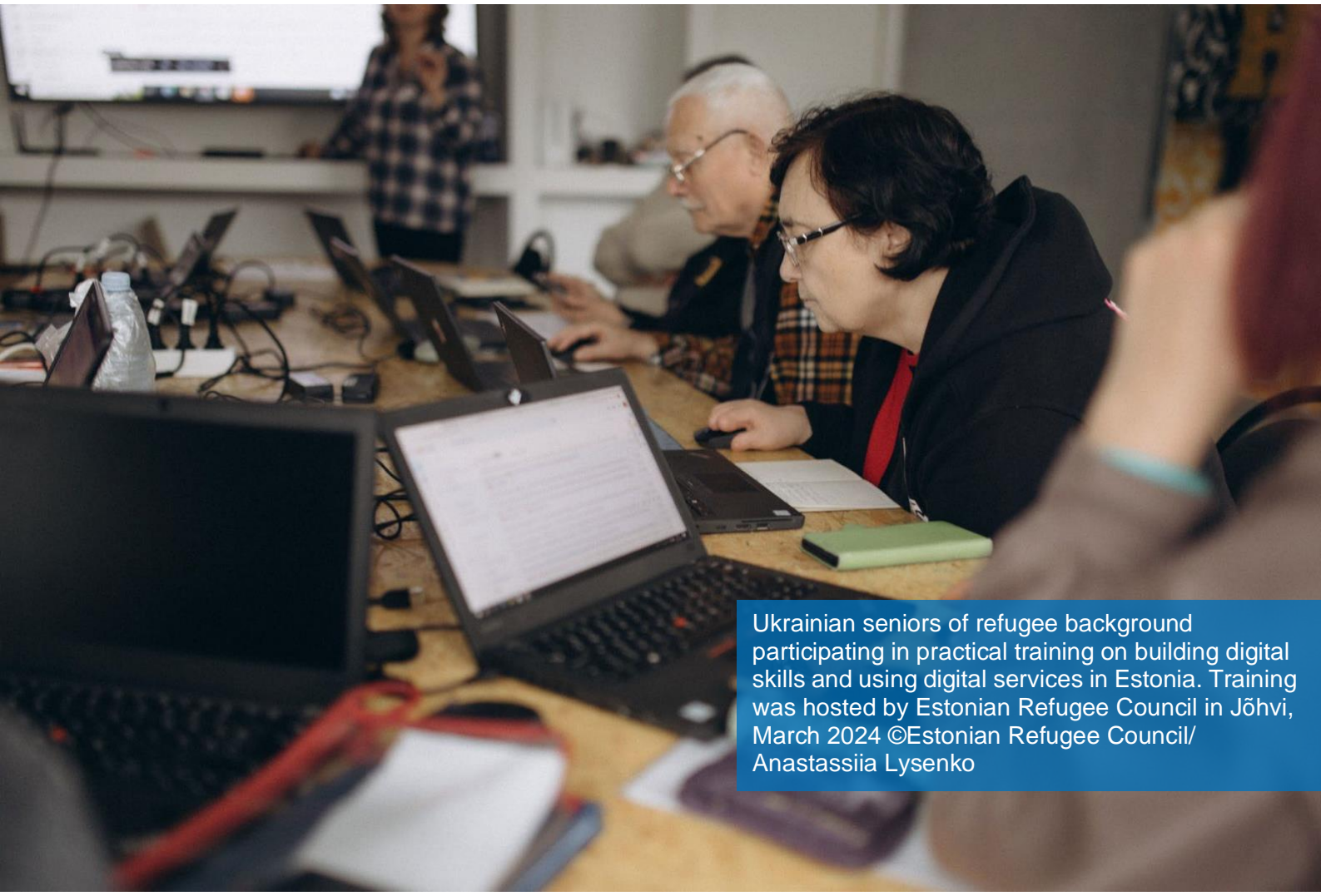
Partners prioritized safety and rights activities, such as legal assistance, counselling and community-based services. However, due to funding gaps, other planned activities related to socio-economic inclusion and education participation were scaled back, affecting more targeted efforts to support refugees’ access to public services and resilience.

Operational challenges, including staff shortages and increased demands, further compounded the situation. Some planned events had to be postponed, and delays in reporting impacted timely decision-making and strategic planning. Moreover, while cooperation with local authorities provided valuable insights, limited resources hindered the ability to sustain meaningful engagement, affecting advocacy efforts.

This highlights the need for increased funding to maintain and enhance the scope of humanitarian services that support national efforts in ensuring a well-coordinated and sustainable response for refugees in Estonia.

## Advocacy message

Sustained funding is essential to building on the progress made in 2024 and ensuring continued support for refugees in Estonia, complementing national efforts. Protection services such as legal assistance and counselling, cash assistance to protect lives and keep well-being for vulnerable refugee groups and community engagement have played an important role in fostering refugee inclusion and resilience. Without sufficient resources, these efforts risk being scaled back, affecting access to services and opportunities for socio-economic inclusion. As the response evolves in 2025 and 2026 with a more targeted approach, continued investment is needed to sustain complementary interventions and address emerging needs in support of national efforts.



Ukrainian seniors of refugee background participating in practical training on building digital skills and using digital services in Estonia. Training was hosted by Estonian Refugee Council in Jõhvi, March 2024 ©Estonian Refugee Council/ Anastassiia Lysenko

### **Partner Spotlight: SA Ukrainian War Refugees' Psychosocial Crisis Support Fund**

In 2024, the SA Ukrainian War Refugees' Psychosocial Crisis Support Fund (USF) focused on empowering Ukrainian refugees, promoting self-sufficiency and supporting refugee-led initiatives. Central to this effort was the Ukrainian Center, a refugee-led organization founded in late 2023 by four Ukrainian women. Originally supported by USF, the Ukrainian Center in 2024 independently led multiple programmes, including MHPSS, activities for children and cultural events. These initiatives, partially supported by the Ministry of Social Affairs through the Pärnu City Government, have become crucial to the well-being and inclusion of refugees into Estonian society.

Despite the closure of the Tallinn Center in the summer of 2024 due to funding limitations, the Ukrainian Center in Pärnu has thrived, serving as a hub for refugees. USF helped strengthen the community by establishing the Pärnu Civil Society House (Vabakonna Maja), a shared space where the Ukrainian Center and other local NGOs collaborate, maximizing resources and enhancing their reach. One notable achievement was the creation of the Estonian Language Hub, which runs twice a week with support from the Ministry of Culture. Additionally, cooperation with the Red Cross Pärnu county Branch enabled joint activities that further supported the refugee community.

USF reached approximately 2,000 individuals in 2024, offering critical psychosocial support, cultural programming and educational opportunities. The year marked progress in building refugee-led, sustainable initiatives that reduce dependence while fostering participation and community cohesion.

### **Partner Spotlight: e-Governance Academy**

In 2024, the e-Governance Academy (eGA) made significant strides in empowering Ukrainian refugees in Estonia through the Digital Empowerment of the Ukrainian Community in Estonia (DEUCE) project. This initiative, designed to enhance digital skills and resilience, played a pivotal role in supporting refugees as they navigated e-services in both Estonia and Ukraine. The project's focus on building digital skills and providing practical solutions has had a profound impact on individual refugees, families and the wider community.

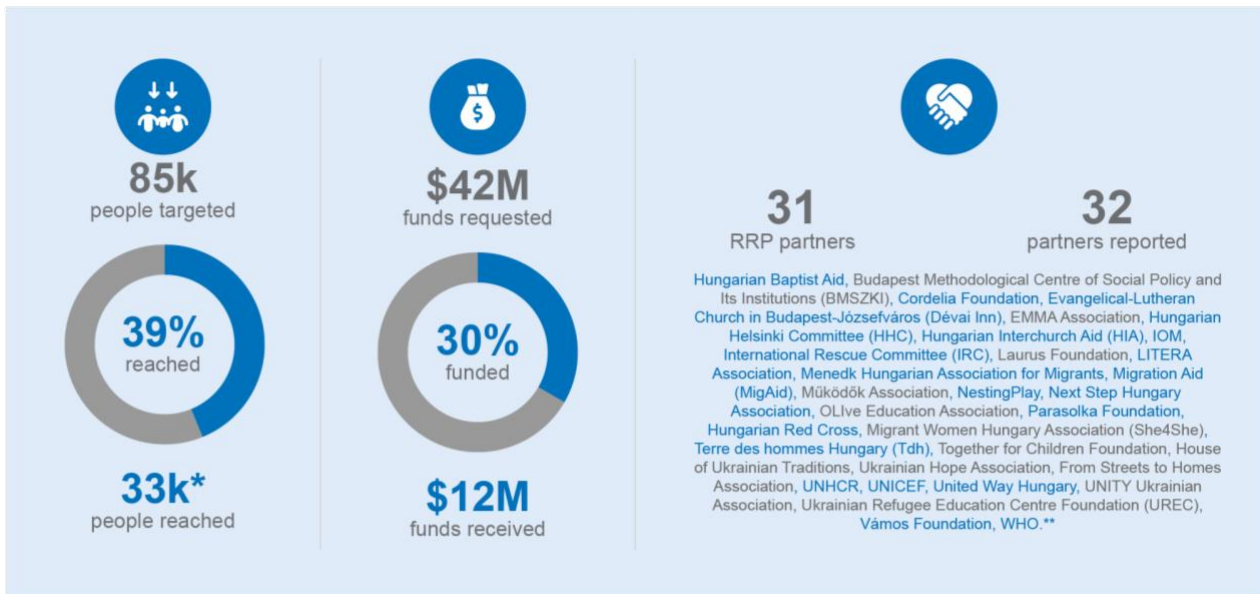
By the end of 2024, the first cohort of 31 digital envoys had directly supported over 500 individuals and reached an additional 40,000 through communication efforts. These envoys, recruited and trained by eGA, have worked on several key initiatives, including the Tartu Help Bot, a Telegram-based tool providing 24/7 assistance to those navigating life in Estonia, and the Scam Map, a community-driven resource to educate refugees on fraud prevention. Other initiatives, such as workshops on professional empowerment and guidance on Estonia's digital education systems through Easy Studium, have also been invaluable in supporting the inclusion of Ukrainian refugees.

Looking ahead to 2025, 30 new digital envoys will join the initiative. Through open recruitment and service design workshops, volunteers have collaborated to develop practical solutions, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants.

Through the DEUCE project, eGA has not only provided refugees with essential digital skills but has also demonstrated how empowering individuals can lead to stronger, more inclusive societies, showcasing Estonia's leadership in digital innovation.



## HUNGARY



\*The number of individuals reached is an estimate based on the highest number of individuals reached per activity, per sector and/or per region, to avoid double counting.

\*\*In black are partners that reported activities but did not appeal in the RRP.

## Progress against the strategic objectives

Between January and December 2024, 31 organizations, including refugee-led groups, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as United Nations Agencies, provided support to around 33,000 refugees across Hungary. Out of this, more than 10,000 refugees received support in Budapest and almost the same number in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, the region nearest to the Ukrainian border.

With 71 per cent of refugees in Hungary displaced for more than two years,<sup>11</sup> their needs have evolved, and the focus of programmes evolved from basic needs toward socio-economic inclusion. Based on the appeal budget, the share of activities addressing basic needs declined from 36 in 2022 to 10 per cent in 2024, while support for socio-economic inclusion grew from 9% to 17% over the same period.

RRP partners continued advocacy and collaboration with the government authorities at all levels to strengthen the protective framework for refugees, to ensure access to territory for all those fleeing Ukraine, and access to legal status and fundamental rights, including for marginalized groups. Through protection monitoring, consultations with refugees, information provision and service delivery, they identified and addressed barriers to accessing rights and services in a coordinated manner. Almost 28,000 people were supported accessing protection services, such as specialized

<sup>11</sup> [Hungary: Socio-Economic Insights Survey 2024.](#)



services to refugees in vulnerable situations and new arrivals, including 5,400 children, 3,300 older refugees, 2,000 refugees with disabilities, as well as 1,800 Roma refugees.

In addition to the above, partners also delivered specialized services for women and children, including more than 2,200 people receiving case management and referrals for child protection,<sup>12</sup> violence against women, boys and girls<sup>13</sup>, as well as the national referral guidance. RRP partners also provided child protection interventions including recreational, psychosocial and parenting support activities to children, with almost 4,000 children accessing child-friendly spaces and support hubs in 2024. Direct service delivery was complemented by awareness raising campaigns and capacity building for service providers related to the risks of violence against women, boys and girls, child protection and human trafficking, as well as sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), reaching over 1,200 professionals.

To support self-reliance, a key priority to facilitate socio-economic inclusion, RRP partners provided targeted support to enhance access to education and training opportunities, facilitate employment and long-term housing, and to support refugees in accessing services. Partners actively promoted inclusive policies, fostering partnerships between government agencies, local communities and refugee-led organizations, to create an environment where refugees can not only meet their basic needs but also actively contribute to the economic and social fabric of the country. Key activities included language support for adults and children, awareness raising efforts among employers about refugee rights and skills, workshops to prepare refugees for job applications, and job fairs and other events to facilitate job placements. Furthermore, upskilling initiatives enhanced refugees' employability. Through these activities, partners supported more than 3,700 people with accessing employment and skills, 5,000 children and adults with language training, and 11,000 children with catch-up classes and learning support.

Refugees' access to health care services was enhanced by the provision of language support, including accompaniment and communication with health care providers, translation of medical documentation, information sharing and awareness raising among refugees and service providers. Partners also supported efforts to overcome administrative barriers, facilitating over 4,000 consultations with health care professionals for refugees. Mental health needs were recognized as a key priority area, and partners provided capacity building to actors in the refugee response, supporting more than 12,000 refugees with MHPSS services and activities.

Despite a growing focus on inclusion, partners continued to maintain key services at border crossing points, including counselling and orientation for new arrivals who accessed Hungary to seek safety. Across Hungary, partners including refugee-led organizations, also distributed non-food items to refugees in high need. In addition, partners provided multipurpose cash or vouchers to cover basic needs, and support families in highly vulnerable situations, such as those with serious disabilities. Combined with a one-off winter support, economic support and safety grants reached over 6,500 individuals. As part of that, assistance was provided by several partners, specifically to facilitate access to housing for those most in need. Post-distribution monitoring highlighted the importance of economic empowerment as a socio-economic inclusion tool,

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<sup>12</sup> [Hungary: Where to Turn if a Refugee Child is at Risk.](#)

<sup>13</sup> [GBV Referral Pathways Hungary.](#)

particularly for covering food, health care costs, accommodation, clothing, and education-related expenses.

## Gaps and consequences of underfunding

In 2024, Hungary extended Temporary Protection until March 2026 in line with EU legislation, a very positive step. Nevertheless, uncertainty regarding longer-term solutions impacts the socio-economic inclusion prospects of refugees, with the need for longer-term solutions remaining a priority, alongside access to social protection schemes.

In terms of sectorial priorities, accessing stable employment remains a challenge for refugees, with many facing limited job opportunities, particularly in prior area of experience, as well as risks of labour exploitation. Refugees who find work, earn 35 per cent less than the national average wage, further exacerbating economic insecurity.<sup>14</sup> To address these issues, employment programmes must be expanded to include further language training, job counselling, and legal assistance to address exploitative employment practices. Support for caregivers and single mothers through flexible work arrangements and alternative care solutions are also essential. Investments should be made in skill recognition and job search support to realize the potential that refugees from Ukraine bring to Hungary.

In relation to socio-economic inclusion, language remains among the primary obstacles affecting employment, education, and access to health care. Expanding language support services is crucial for maximizing opportunities for socio-economic inclusion and strengthening refugee resilience. This includes providing language training in schools and for adults, interpretation in health care settings, and translation of documents and certificates.

Enhancing access to education for refugee children and youth requires addressing persistent language barriers, increasing enrolment in Hungarian schools, and supporting students' mental health and well-being. Expanding targeted language programmes is crucial, particularly among secondary school students who face higher non-enrolment rates. Inclusive educational environments should focus on strengthening anti-discrimination measures and fostering cultural inclusion, while targeted efforts should prioritize access to higher education and bridging programmes that support students beyond secondary school.

Access to healthcare is a persistent challenge for refugees, with over 20 per cent struggling to obtain medical care due to language barriers, long wait times, and administrative hurdles. Mental health requires equal attention, with specialized medical services, such as trauma-informed care and child-focused MHPSS, needed to address the psychological toll of the crisis. Increasing the

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<sup>14</sup> [Hungary: Socio-Economic Insights Survey 2024.](#)



*The Artemisszió Foundation is conducting educational and community programmes, supported by United Way Hungary. ©Plus You Creative Studio/Flora Mihalik*

access to psychosocial support, counselling, and community-based protection services on all levels remains a critical need.

Access to housing has seen further growing needs in 2024, with the discontinuation of state-subsidized accommodation in August 2024 for refugees from areas of Ukraine designated by a government decree as “non-war-affected”.<sup>15</sup> Refugees in Hungary continue to require both accommodation assistance programmes and financial assistance to secure shelter. This could be facilitated by providing access to existing housing programmes and reliable social safety nets. In addition, tailored accommodation programmes supporting refugee access to private accommodation could also provide longer-term security and facilitate social inclusion.

Local communities and various humanitarian organizations, including refugee-led initiatives in Hungary have been actively supporting government efforts to address the above needs. However, with a shrinking funding landscape, the ability of partners to respond remains constrained, in particular as national benefit schemes evolve and new needs emerge. With the Hungary appeal 30 per cent funded, essential programmes face significant resource constraints, hampering the continuity of services. Limited funding has already resulted in several organizations not renewing their targeted projects in Hungary, while others had to scale down significantly. These reductions hinder the ability to transition refugees from immediate assistance to long-term socio-economic stability, leaving many in precarious conditions. To address these gaps, sustained funding is critical, along with the comprehensive inclusion of displaced people into state social safety nets. Ensuring that local and refugee-led initiatives are adequately resourced will not only protect refugees’ rights but also promote their long-term well-being.

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<sup>15</sup> Government Decree 104/2022. (III. 12.)

## Advocacy message

Given the ongoing war and its lasting impacts, maintaining the rights and assistance granted to temporary protection beneficiaries in Hungary remains essential. Despite potential developments in the hostilities, the challenges faced by many individuals, especially those in vulnerable situations, will persist. Access to affordable and stable housing, employment, education, including language learning, medical care including mental health and psychosocial support, as well as specialized support for those in vulnerable situations remain critical, along with efforts to reduce administrative and practical barriers to accessing these rights. Temporary protection holders continue to remain outside the scope of key legislation such as the Social Act, Family Support Act, Disability Act, and Child Protection Act, limiting their ability to access social protection services. Legislative or administrative measures enabling their inclusion are needed to address these gaps, alongside efforts to build the capacity of service providers to support this group.<sup>16</sup>

### Partner Spotlight 1: AKSEN Project

The AKSEN Project (Assistance to Kids with Special Educational Needs), is a grassroots initiative established by Ukrainian professionals under the administrative umbrella of the Blue Forest Foundation in Hungary. In 2024, the AKSEN Project provided developmental sessions, individual consultations with medical specialists, and workshops to more than 40 children and their families as part of the Adaptive Children's Sensory-Motor Program to help them navigate Hungary's inclusion system. Additionally, the Summer Rehabilitation "Family Workshop" offered speech therapy, art therapy, logorythmic sessions, and recreational activities in 2023, benefiting over 80 children with special educational needs, and their parents.

AKSEN is the first initiative in Budapest providing structured developmental support in Ukrainian language, ensuring children receive care in their native language. Through expert-led programs and strong community engagement, AKSEN is making a lasting difference in the lives of refugee children and their families.

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<sup>16</sup> As highlighted by RRP partners in the [Child Protection Advocacy Note](#) and the [Social Protection Brief](#).

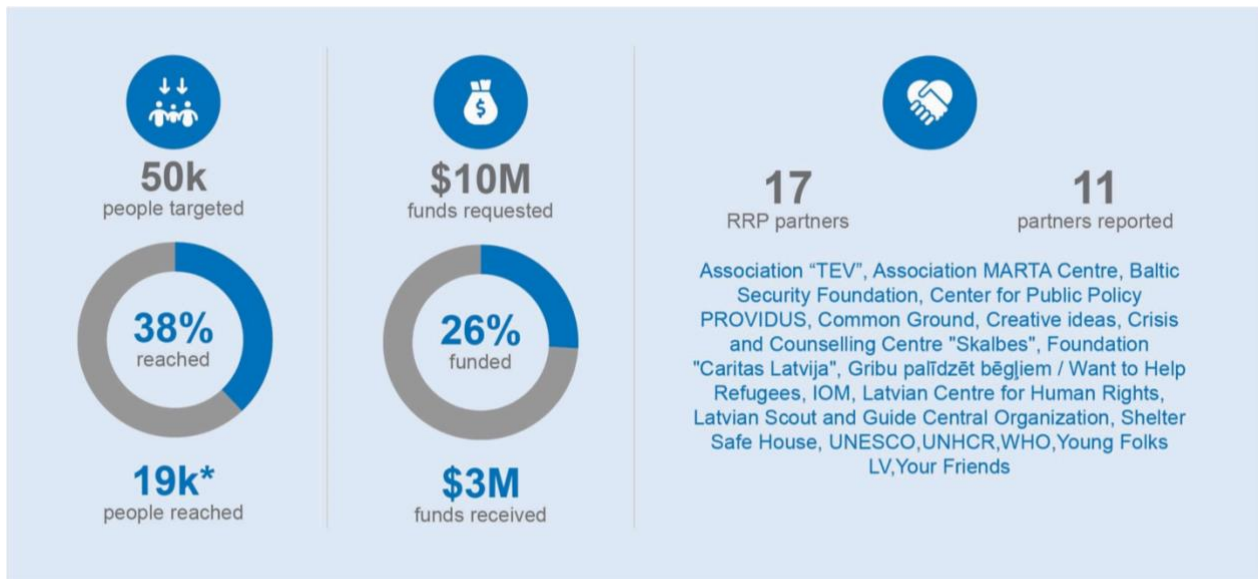
## Partner Spotlight 2: Terre des Hommes

As part of the Building Bridges project, Terre des Hommes aims to support the successful inclusion of refugee children. Two Resilience Innovation Facilities (RIF) were established in Budapest and Győr, offering both educational and socio-economic opportunities to children from refugee and host communities. This included workshops, catch-up and language classes, and youth-led initiatives, reaching close to 1,000 children and youth. The project also strengthened the capacities of formal and non-formal service providers to better address the needs of refugee children and youth.

The *Including Children Affected by Migration* (ICAM) methodology, which aims to provide primary and secondary schools with a methodology to support the integration of children affected by migration into the school community, was introduced to 5 schools (3 in Budapest and 2 in Debrecen), and the *Support My Friends* methodology was rolled out in Győr and Debrecen, with children trained as peer supporters.



## LATVIA



\*The number of individuals reached is an estimate based on the highest number of individuals reached per activity, per sector and/or per region, to avoid double counting.

## Progress against the strategic objectives

At the end of 2024, RRP partners in Latvia provided critical assistance to over 18,400 refugees from Ukraine, reaching 39 per cent of those in need despite significant funding constraints. By the end of the year, partners had secured only \$2.5 million, or 26 percent, of the required \$9.7 million. Operating within these limitations, partners focused on addressing basic needs, ensuring protection, and supporting socio-economic inclusion, education, as well as mental health and psychosocial well-being.

Partners provided humanitarian aid to over 10,300 refugees, including food and essential goods for vulnerable refugees, and temporary accommodation, safety grants, and transportation support for those in transit. To strengthen refugee protection, partners reached more than 6,100 individuals, offering legal assistance to 459 refugees and consultations to nearly 4,000 individuals on migration, employment and family reunification. Partners engaged over 770 individuals from refugee and host communities through outreach activities, ensuring they had access to key information on available services for refugees. To support evidence-based planning and coordination, partners conducted over 900 interviews through the protection profiling and monitoring exercise and the Socio-Economic Insights Survey (SEIS).

To promote socio-economic inclusion, partners provided rent assistance and financial support for school-related costs to over 850 individuals. Partners also organized business creation training and economic empowerment events for 170 refugees, equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to access employment. Through counselling, referrals and guidance services,

partners further strengthened refugee inclusion in Latvia.

In education, partners supported 464 refugee students with learning assistance to improve their Latvian language skills and access the national education system. Partners also provided Latvian and English language courses and conversation clubs for over 130 individuals, including children, to facilitate their inclusion into local communities.

Partners provided MHPSS services to around 180 individuals, ensuring access to essential care for those affected by displacement. To enhance collaboration in this area, partners organized a conference on MHPSS in times of crisis, bringing together key government institutions, NGOs, UN agencies and civil society organizations. Partners also translated WHO and IASC MHPSS materials into Latvian, strengthening the capacity of Latvian professionals working with refugee communities.

Despite financial challenges, partners made tangible progress in Latvia, improving access to essential services, strengthening protection mechanisms and promoting the socio-economic inclusion of refugees from Ukraine. Continued investment remains critical to sustaining these efforts and addressing the evolving needs of displaced populations in 2025 and 2026.

## Gaps and consequences of underfunding

At the end of 2024, despite the dedicated efforts of partners, there remain gaps in the refugee response in Latvia due to the funding shortfall, which has limited the partners' capacity to expand support services. While progress has been made, particularly in addressing immediate needs, funding constraints have hindered the full implementation of livelihoods and socio-economic inclusion activities. There is a particular need for further investment in livelihood support, such as language courses and mental health services, especially in regions outside of Riga, to help refugees make progress toward economic self-reliance and to ensure their well-being.

Moreover, while efforts have been made to provide targeted services to vulnerable groups, the lack of adequate resources has meant that support remains limited. Addressing these gaps with increased funding is crucial to ensure refugees' inclusion into society and to help them realize their potential as contributors to Latvia's social and economic fabric.

## Advocacy message

Sustained funding is essential to build on the progress made in 2024 and ensuring continued support for refugees in Latvia, complementing national efforts. Increased support for employment and language training, alongside tailored childcare support, will be important in enabling refugees to pursue sustainable livelihoods. Additional resources for education, including teacher training, structured Latvian language courses, and comprehensive support for refugee children, are vital to ensuring long-term inclusion. Expanding MHPSS services and mitigating labour exploitation risks should also be prioritized to foster a safer and more supportive environment for refugees. These actions will support refugees in Latvia with achieving self-reliance and contributing meaningfully to their host communities.

### Partner Spotlight: Creative Ideas

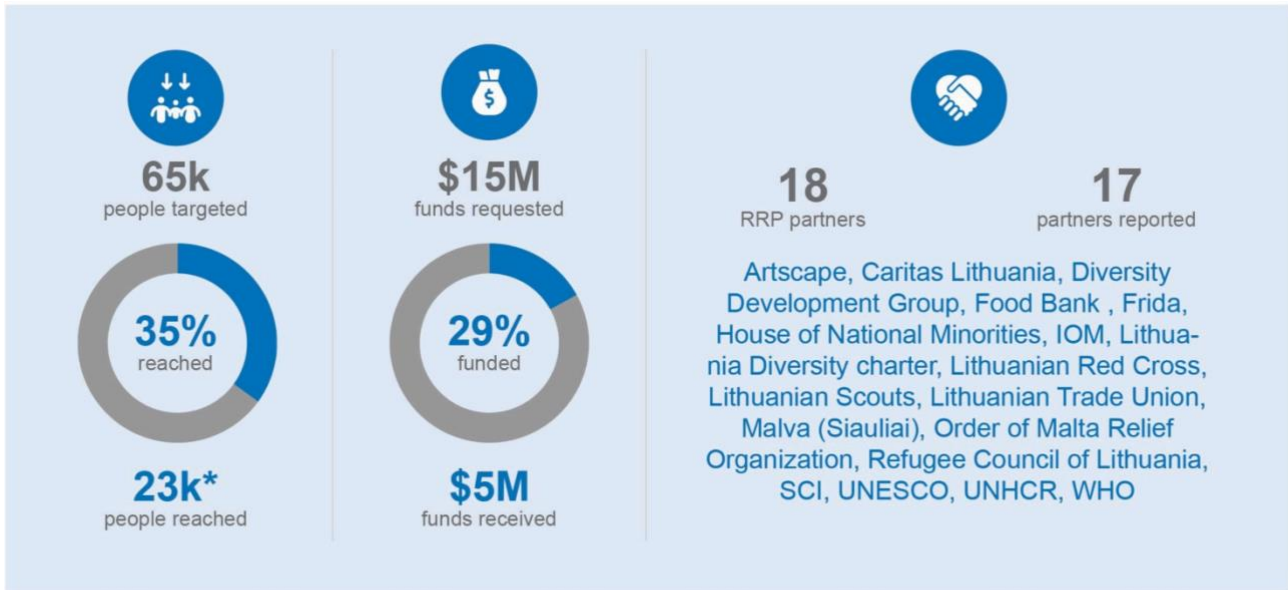
The NGO Creative Ideas has made significant strides in supporting the inclusion of Ukrainian refugees in Latvia through several impactful initiatives in 2024. Their project "United in Culture - Welcoming Ukrainian Refugees" garnered recognition, receiving the prestigious European Label of Recognition in Language Learning from the European Commission. This accolade was awarded in recognition of the project's positive impact on Ukrainian refugees, providing essential language training, cultural engagement activities and opportunities to explore Latvian and Polish cultures. Additionally, the initiative was featured in the European Commission's publication *Building Hope: Europe's Solidarity with Ukraine*.



Daria, her mother Yefrosinia, her children – Sofiia and Stepan, and their dog Grynĭa (Donetsk region) are on their way to Finland. Yefrosinia uses a stick to walk, so the long journey was much harder for her than for her family. With the support of IOM Latvia, the family had a chance to rest for a couple of days. © IOM Latvia



## LITHUANIA



\*The number of individuals reached is an estimate based on the highest number of individuals reached per activity, per sector and/or per region, to avoid double counting.

## Progress against the strategic objectives

At the end of 2024, the RRP partners achieved significant progress in delivering essential services to refugees from Ukraine. A total of over 27,300 (57 percent) of refugees from Ukraine, benefitted from these efforts. The primary areas of focus during this period included the provision of safety protection services and the advancement of socio-economic inclusion initiatives.

A total of 14,180 individuals received protection services, including legal counselling, information, awareness-raising and capacity-building activities, as well as targeted support for refugees with specific needs. Psycho-social support and educational support were also provided. Partners provided legal assistance to over 1,300 individuals and assisted with administrative procedures such as residence permit applications. Through outreach activities such as community events and information group sessions, partners reached around 8,670 individuals, ensuring they were aware of their rights and available services. Partners also provided training to 113 border guards on asylum interviews. In the area of child protection, partners reached more than 2,100 children through various MHPSS services and provided training to social workers working with children, developing their capacity in providing psychological first aid to refugee children.

Initiatives undertaken by partners to promote socio-economic inclusion reached 9,500 individuals. These included training programmes focused on entrepreneurship, business creation and employment skills development, designed to equip refugees with the tools necessary for self-sufficiency and long-term inclusion into host communities. Through these, partners supported over 5,100 individuals to develop their capacity for self-employment and economic independence.

Partners also provided counselling on employment and social benefits to around 3,580 individuals, helping them navigate the labour market. Language support was also a key component, with over 530 refugees receiving language training to enhance their employability.

Partners provided critical support to 2,900 individuals, including rental assistance to 780 individuals and safety grants to 243 individuals. This support helped meet essential needs and prevented negative coping strategies. Additionally, around 2,000 hygiene packages and 1,500 cards for essential goods were distributed, benefiting approximately 1,880 individuals, including newly arriving families with children and single-headed households living below the poverty line, ensuring they had the resources to rebuild their lives.

MHPSS services played a critical role in helping refugees cope with the challenges they faced. Partners reached 740 individuals through consultations provided by social workers and psychologists. Special support was extended to victims of violence and human trafficking. Psychological group sessions for women focused on critical topics such as self-awareness, stress management and PTSD, fostering improved well-being and a stronger sense of community.

**To promote social cohesion, community engagement activities strengthened social networks and ties between refugees and host communities, supporting long-term inclusion. Partners organized events, capacity-building activities, and training, reaching over 1,500 individuals and fostering stronger connections.**

## Gaps and consequences of underfunding

Despite commendable progress in 2024, significant gaps remain in humanitarian assistance provided by civil society partners to refugees from Ukraine in Lithuania, due to funding shortfalls and operational challenges. By the end of the year, only \$4.5 million of the required \$15.5 million had been raised, leaving a critical \$11 million funding gap. This impacted humanitarian activities, limiting partners' ability to fully implement planned programmes and meet the diverse needs of the refugee population.

More funding is required for legal aid services, which remain a lifeline for refugees to adapt to changing policies.

The economic assistance programme remains underfunded, despite being an essential lifeline for newly arrived refugees and single-headed households with children. Many vulnerable families continue to face financial hardship, while delays in state rent assistance have added pressure on household budgets, increasing reliance on humanitarian aid.

Partners report a need for more specialized support services for children experiencing distress. These services play a crucial role in providing stability, emotional support, and structured activities for children facing displacement. The lack of such support, due to funding constraints, can leave children more vulnerable to stress and anxiety. Meanwhile, there is sustained demand for MHPSS



services particularly for children and parents, with available resources remaining limited.

Most adult refugees arriving in Lithuania are women, many of whom assume primary caregiving responsibilities. Their access to employment is constrained by challenges in accessing daycare services and flexible job opportunities. Rising housing costs and a lack of affordable accommodation present further challenges, particularly for single caregivers with young children. Without additional support, financial strain

in particular among vulnerable refugee households may increase. Strengthening funding for essential services will be critical to ensure stability and facilitating meaningful participation opportunities.

## Advocacy message

Sustained funding is essential to building on the progress made in 2024 and ensuring continued support for refugees in Lithuania, complementing national efforts. Continued investment in protection services, including legal assistance, ensures refugees can access their rights and essential support systems. Addressing funding shortfalls in economic empowerment and rental support is critical to preventing financial hardship, particularly for single-headed households with children, who face the greatest barriers to stability.

Investing in child protection services, including the expansion of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), is essential to safeguarding children's well-being.

Employment-focused initiatives, including access to flexible job opportunities, daycare services, and Lithuanian language training, are essential to supporting refugee self-reliance. Strengthening these services will foster meaningful social and economic inclusion, ensuring long-term stability for refugees in Lithuania.



*Maria\*, 13 years old, together with her mother, Aleksandra\*, 47 years old, is provided with individual psychological counselling by Save the Children Lithuania psychologists © Save the Children Lithuania/Gelbėkit Vaikus  
\*Name have been changed to protect identity.*

**Partner Spotlight: Refugee Council of Lithuania**

In 2024, the Refugee Council of Lithuania implemented the "Addressing Ukraine Situation Response in Lithuania by Building Entrepreneurial Competencies and Digital Skills for Refugees" project, which focused on building the entrepreneurial and digital capabilities of Ukrainian and other refugees to support their inclusion into Lithuania's socioeconomic landscape. The project reached 1,086 refugees, equipping them with key skills through workshops on entrepreneurship, digital skills, and cybersecurity, alongside social networking events and Lithuanian language courses.

One of the success stories of the project is Svitlana Stepanenko, who, after participating in the Refugee Council's training, successfully launched her own online bookstore, Svitlobook. Specializing in Ukrainian children's literature, her bookstore provides young readers in Lithuania with access to educational and cultural materials that help preserve their native language and culture while fostering inclusion into their new community.

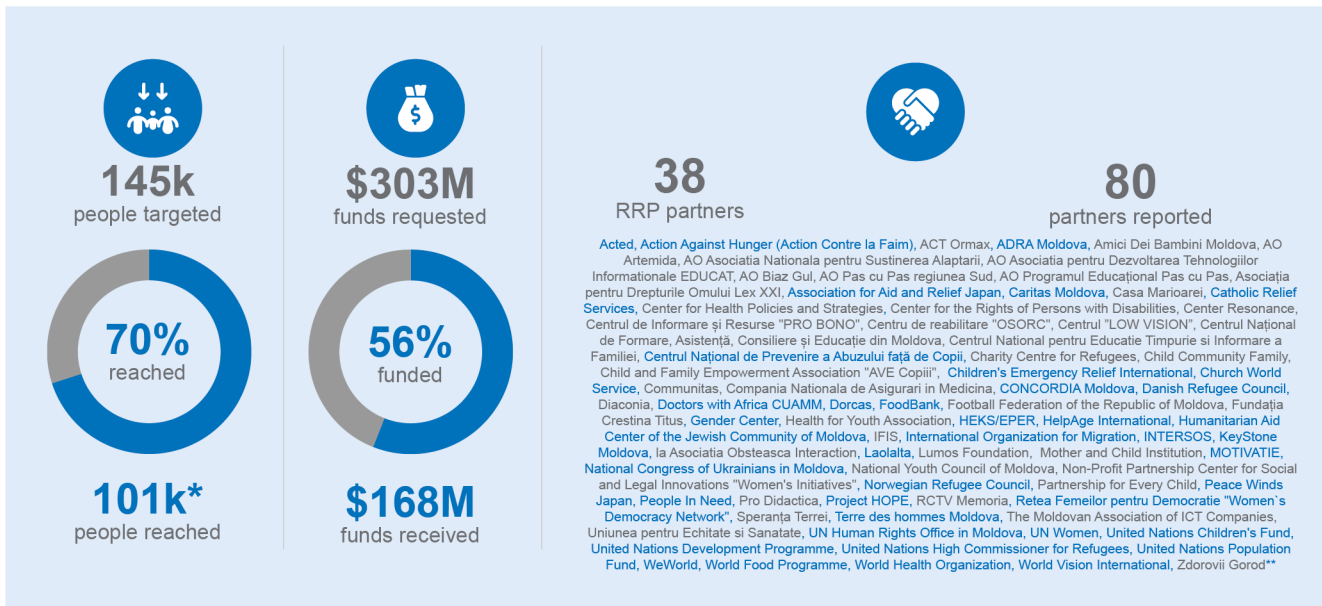
**Partner Spotlight: Save the Children Lithuania**

In 2024, Save the Children Lithuania played a crucial role in supporting refugee families, pregnant women, and children by improving access to social protection, education, and healthcare services. Social workers provided essential guidance to 591 adults on their rights and available national support systems, while 72 caregivers and teachers participated in parenting and education sessions to strengthen their ability to care for children.

MHPSS remained a priority. Structured group activities helped 558 children through the "Team Up" programme, which uses movement and play to foster emotional well-being, while 39 children participated in the "Healing and Education through the Arts" programme. Additionally, 49 children and 57 caregivers, including pregnant women, received individual psychological counseling. To promote resilience, 1,056 children received MHPSS home-kits, and 300 children attending the Ukrainian school in Klaipėda benefited from MHPSS activities funded by WHO. Save the Children also organized a winter celebration for children at the Vilnius Refugee Reception Center, reaching 40 Ukrainian children.

Save the Children Lithuania underscores the need for sustained investment in refugee safety protection, inclusion support, and child protection services to prevent further vulnerabilities and ensure long-term stability for displaced families.

## REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA



\*The number of individuals reached is an estimate based on the highest number of individuals reached per activity, per sector and/or per region, to avoid double counting.

\*\*In black are partners that reported activities but did not appeal in the RRP.

## Progress against the strategic objectives

In 2024, joint action by RRP partners reinforced the protection and inclusion of refugees from Ukraine. Key developments included the Government of Moldova's decision to develop the national programme for the phased inclusion of foreigners, including refugees, in alignment with the National Development Plan 2025-2027. The national plan is expected to be presented for public consultations during the first quarter of 2025. Additionally, amendments to the Temporary Protection regime expanded health coverage for refugees holding TP status and extended its implementation until March 2025.

Protection activities reached a total of 101,00 individuals, including 28,400 who received legal assistance. RRP partners also provided targeted protection support to 12,300 individuals with specific needs. On average, partners reported that 6 per cent of their beneficiaries were people with disabilities. To foster social cohesion, 27,100 individuals participated in activities aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities. Local coordination was further strengthened through six Referral Pathways Workshops held across Moldova. These sessions engaged approximately 250 participants from local public institutions, civil society organizations, international NGOs, and UN agencies, enhancing the identification and referral of persons at heightened risk and improving the delivery of protection services at the local level.

Interventions targeting violence against women, girls and boys benefited 14,850 individuals through information sessions and 26,419 individuals in prevention activities. Additionally, 10,000 individuals were referred to specialized support services, 6,000 received psychosocial support, and

1,200 persons were trained on related areas. The Counter-Trafficking Task Force trained 1,500 workers and managed two hotlines receiving 3,360 calls.

Throughout the past year RRP partners continued supporting the inclusion of refugee children in Moldova's national child protection system. Over 59,100 refugee and host community children at-risk or victims and survivors of violence, abuse and neglect, and their caregivers were identified and/or assisted. This included more than 250 unaccompanied children who were identified and supported, and over 19,900 children who received child-friendly Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services. The sector also strengthened child protection capacity by training over 3,200 people on child protection, including government Child Protection Specialists recruited under Moldova's ongoing social assistance reform (RESTART) and other authorities.

In 2024, RRP partners transitioned from broad, inclusive programmes to more targeted approaches. A key milestone in this shift was the development of a targeting methodology based on a scorecard formula, aligned with findings from socio-economic profiling surveys. Designed collaboratively with government authorities, national and international NGOs, UN organizations, and community-led groups, this methodology has already been adopted by several partners, laying the foundation for a unified targeting framework under the Common Cash Facility Approach.

To strengthen coordination and prevent duplication, the Cash Working Group enhanced partner engagement with the Refugee Assistance and Information System (RAIS), with 13 partners currently onboarded. Through these coordinated efforts, RRP partners provided economic assistance to 84,300 individuals, including 56,700 refugees from Ukraine. Additionally, 12,200 individuals received winter-related support. A significant milestone was the inclusion of Temporary Protection holders in the government's winter assistance program for energy-vulnerable households.

The Basic Needs Working Group, in collaboration with partners, continued to provide humanitarian assistance throughout the year. In border reception centres, services were recalibrated to ensure an adequate response, while optimizing resources, maintaining the provision of transportation and food to newly arriving individuals. RRP partners provided food assistance to 30,600 individuals, hygiene kits to 15,600 people, and winter items to 9,100 individuals, while 1,300 individuals received humanitarian transportation support. The Refugee Accommodation Center (RAC) consolidation process optimized resources, leaving 26 operational RACs housing 1,700 individuals, while 3,300 benefited from rental support. Additionally, over 400 individual private accommodation units benefited from insulation and energy efficiency improvements.

Considering the volatility of the situation in Ukraine, RRP partners maintained a robust preparedness posture and updated the Inter-Agency Refugee Contingency Plan while supporting cross-border coordination between governments and partners in Romania and Moldova. In 2024, key preparedness measures included the rehabilitation of refugee accommodation centres, preparations for the rapid scale-up of services at border points, and the prepositioning of core relief items. This included the transfer of USD 3 million worth of Core Relief Items to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, reinforcing national emergency preparedness and response capacity for future shocks.

Health sector interventions expanded access to essential services, reaching 143,000 individuals through health promotion initiatives and training of over 6,700 healthcare workers. Overall, partners facilitated more than 90,000 medical consultations through reimbursements to the National Health Insurance Company or via vouchers, with approximately 77 per cent provided to women and children. A key achievement was the successful advocacy by RRP partners to expand the health benefits package for Temporary Protection holders to include specialized outpatient care, certain medicines, and medical products. MHPSS services reached 49,500 individuals, including 10,000 who received specialized psychosocial support.

In education, 3,314 refugee children were enrolled in Moldovan schools by the end of the year, including 835 children in preschool education. Partners successfully established 98 EduTech labs, equipped with furniture and ICT resources where children could study Ukrainian lessons online from a school setting, monitored and mentored by trained teachers and facilitators. A total of 479 children were supported to continue their education in line with the Ukrainian curriculum. Additionally, 66,600 children (62 per cent refugees) participated in non-formal educational activities, including life skills programmes and Romanian language classes. Roma inclusion efforts supported 237 Roma individuals in education programming, enrolling 163 children in schools. Furthermore, the Refugee Education Working Group finalized the Roadmap for the Inclusion of Refugee Children in Moldovan Schools for government endorsement, which provides detailed cost estimates for the interventions needed to support the inclusion of refugee children in the national education system.

Livelihoods support expanded, with 9,800 individuals benefiting from employment and skills development programmes. Partners provided vocational training to 1,600 individuals and language training to 700. Private sector engagement grew, with 29 companies trained on refugee employment. Nineteen public childcare facilities were renovated or expanded to support refugee women's workforce participation. The launch of the [www.dilo.md](http://www.dilo.md) platform further facilitated employment opportunities by enabling refugees and employers to connect, exchange information, and access job opportunities.

Through the Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), 7,400 women, including 2,100 refugees, participated in peacebuilding and humanitarian activities via 18 grassroots projects led by women's organizations, providing critical institutional support to national and local women-led and women-rights organizations, including refugee-led organizations, that have been at the forefront of the response.

## Gaps and consequences of underfunding

While the extension of TP until March 2025 provides a temporary solution, the current legal framework governing TP limits refugees' ability to be fully included into Moldovan society. Certain essential rights and services are not extended to TP holders, and the annual renewal of the status creates uncertainty, which undermines refugees' ability to contribute to and participate in the community. Additionally, the ongoing high volume of asylum-seekers places significant strain on



Moldova's asylum system, challenging its capacity to process claims efficiently and address complex protection needs.

The national child protection system is facing substantial funding gaps, with key services still heavily reliant on humanitarian partners. Low salaries for child protection staff and inconsistent referral processes, particularly for unaccompanied and separated children transitioning from Border Police to the Guardianship Authority, remain significant challenges. Moreover, difficulties in identifying children who become separated within Moldova complicate the protection response, leaving many at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Related to violence against women, girls and boys, there is a need to improve support to victims and survivors and to create opportunities to gain financial independence, a critical step to reduce risks and to support their recovery and inclusion. Continued and consistent capacity sharing on related principles is needed to amplify entry points for the safe disclosure of violence. This is particularly important since mandatory reporting laws represent a barrier for victims to seek help and access life-saving support.

Education continues to be a challenge, with enrolment rates of Ukrainian children in Moldovan schools remaining low. Factors such as a preference for online learning, insufficient Romanian language support, and a lack of school capacity, particularly in Chişinău, are hindering refugee children's inclusion into the national education system. The absence of a system to monitor online learning progress and attendance exacerbates the situation, making it difficult to track educational development and address gaps in children's learning. Refugee children with disabilities and Roma refugee children also face specific challenges to their education opportunities.

Healthcare access is significantly hindered by a registration gap, with only 12,000 out of 68,000 TP holders registered with family doctors, limiting refugees' access to essential healthcare services. Operational issues, such as changing entitlements, the lack of integrated IT systems, and reliance on paper-based documentation, further delay healthcare services. Vulnerable refugees, particularly older persons and those with disabilities, face additional barriers in accessing specialized care, including rehabilitation services, medicines, and quality assistive devices, compounding their marginalization.

The lack of affordable housing and the absence of social housing options make it difficult for vulnerable refugees, especially older individuals and ethnic Roma, to secure long-term, adequate housing. This lack of housing further impedes their ability to move beyond temporary accommodation and be included into Moldovan society. Moreover, due to a combination of operational challenges and limited funding availability, cash-for-rent initiatives are insufficient to meet existing needs, especially for the most vulnerable groups.

Labour market inclusion remains a significant challenge, with refugees facing low formal employment rates, high informality, and a mismatch between available skills and local job requirements, particularly in rural areas. Barriers such as low wages, Romanian language requirements, and limited flexible work options disproportionately affect women. Despite TP status providing access to the labour market, the absence of national resources for employment

activation measures (such as skills development, job matching and counselling) and the continued barriers to self-employment limit refugees' ability to achieve economic self-reliance.

Marginalized groups, particularly the Roma refugee community, face compounded challenges. Severe educational marginalization, limited access to information due to low literacy, and widespread discrimination hinder their ability to access services, employment, and inclusion opportunities. Continued advocacy and targeted support are necessary to ensure that these communities are not further excluded.

## Advocacy message

In 2024, the Government and people of Moldova continued to demonstrate unwavering solidarity with refugees from Ukraine, taking concrete steps to foster their inclusion while maintaining a welcoming environment and a strong protection space. With the forthcoming launch of the National Programme for the Phased Integration of Foreigners, including refugees, international partners should uphold the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) by ensuring sustained solidarity and responsibility-sharing.

Continued financial support is critical to enable RRP partners to bridge gaps that remain unaddressed by national and local public services and systems. This is particularly essential for highly vulnerable refugees, who constitute half of the refugee population in Moldova according to the RRP partners vulnerability scoring. Additionally, RRP partners continue to support the Government in implementing transitional measures that reinforce national systems and promote long-term refugee inclusion.

At the same time, the Government of the Republic of Moldova should sustain its commitment to refugee protection and socio-economic inclusion by advancing policies in key sectors such as education, health, social protection, and livelihoods, while ensuring the effective implementation of the National Programme. This requires a whole-of-society approach, with meaningful engagement from development actors and donors to build resilient and inclusive national systems that benefit both refugees and host communities. Aligned with the principles of the GCR, efforts should focus on promoting inclusion and resilience for all by addressing immediate access barriers and structural challenges that hinder inclusion.

To advance these objectives, the Government of Moldova, RRP partners, and donors should:

- strengthen the asylum and border management policies to ensure protection-sensitive entry systems fully aligned with Moldova's international refugee law obligations and regional commitments. This includes strengthening fair and efficient asylum procedures, safeguarding access to territory and international protection for those in need.
- Define legal stay arrangements with adequate protection safeguards for refugees from Ukraine beyond TP status, recognizing the protracted nature of the conflict and the limited prospects for voluntary and safe return in the foreseeable future.

- Ensure financial and technical support for the implementation of the National Programme for the Phased Integration of Foreigners.
- Finalize and support the implementation of the Education Roadmap, promoting the enrolment of refugee children in Moldova’s education system, and strengthening inclusive learning environments. Additionally, establish a mechanism to monitor the education status of all refugee children in Moldova.
- Expand access to healthcare for refugees, particularly in underserved areas, by addressing administrative barriers to registration and enhancing the availability of specialized care and rehabilitation services.
- Strengthen livelihoods opportunities through flexible work arrangements, vocational training, self-employment opportunities, and targeted childcare services to enhance refugees’ economic self-reliance.
- Reinforce prevention and response mechanisms on violence against women, girls and boys, including revising mandatory reporting requirements, improving service provider capacity, and strengthening the child protection system, particularly the referral process for unaccompanied and separated children between the Border Police and Guardianship Authorities.
- Ensure continued assistance for the most vulnerable refugees during programme transitions, including economic empowerment, safety grants and sustainable housing solutions that safeguard dignity and protection.
- Maintain adequate levels of emergency preparedness to be able to effectively respond to potential new displacement scenarios. This requires sustained investment in reception capacity, government-led shock response mechanisms, and coordinated cross-sectoral and cross-border response planning.

### **Partner Spotlight: CONTACT Centre**

Active since 1995, CONTACT Centre empowers civic initiatives and promotes active citizen participation in Moldova. In 2024, to support localization efforts within the Refugee Coordination Forum, CONTACT led a capacity development program across the country, engaging 43 participants - including local authorities, CSOs, social workers, and volunteers.

The program provided training on non-profit management, project management, resource mobilization, partnership development, advocacy, refugee protection, and response to violence against women, boys and girls. To further strengthen local capacities, CONTACT offered individual mentoring to 31 participants, supporting them in policy development, strategy formulation, fundraising, and partnership building—enhancing community-led responses for refugees and host communities.

### Partner Spotlight: MOTIVAȚIE Association

Since 2000, the MOTIVAȚIE Association has been advocating for a society where persons with disabilities (PWDs) can live with dignity, independence, and equal opportunities. Led by and for PWDs, MOTIVAȚIE provides employment services, promotes accessible environments, and combats stigma and discrimination.

Recognizing the increased challenges faced by PWDs in displacement, MOTIVAȚIE expanded its support to Ukrainian refugees in 2022. In 2024 alone, it reached 1,800 people, providing employment training, direct assistance, and essential support - including transportation, medical and mobility equipment, medications, food, hygiene kits, psychosocial support, and legal aid.

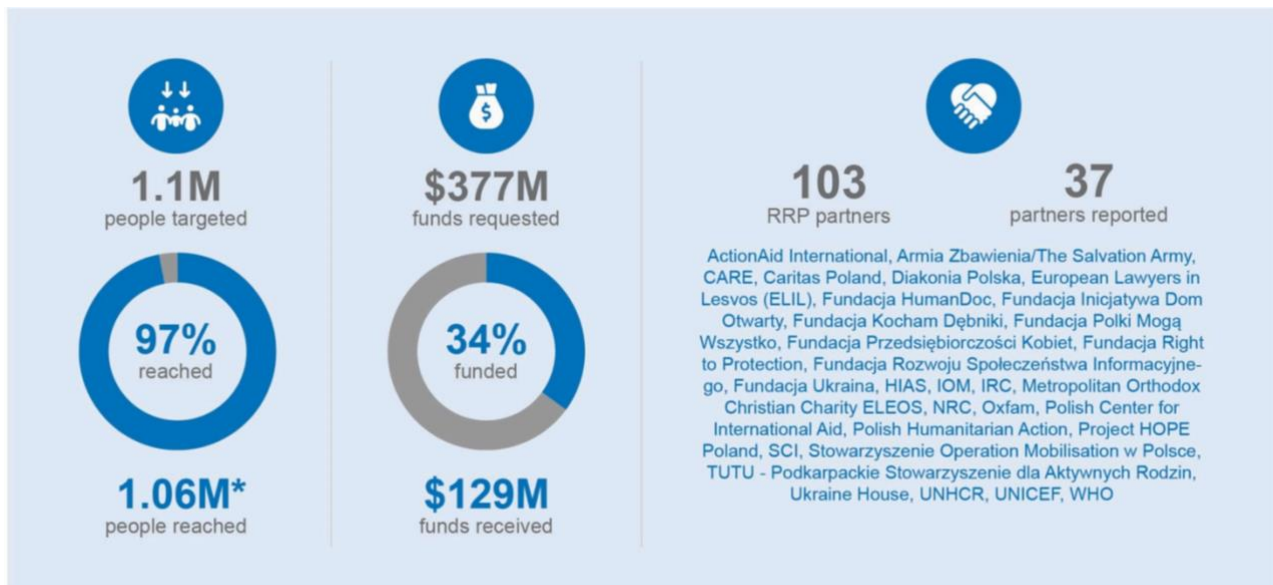
As an active member of the Refugee Coordination Forum's Disability and Age Task Force, MOTIVAȚIE strengthens disability inclusion across humanitarian efforts. Through targeted training, it has enhanced the capacity of over 50 social workers across Moldova, ensuring more inclusive responses for refugees and host communities alike.



*A group of women displaced from Ukraine who participated in a baking vocational training organized by NRC Livelihoods team at Insula Sperantelor, Chisinau. April, 2024. ©NRC / Michele Carezis*



## POLAND



\*The number of individuals reached is an estimate based on the highest number of individuals reached per activity, per sector and/or per region, to avoid double counting.

## Progress against the strategic objectives

In line with key RRP Protection-specific advocacy messages, partners worked alongside the Government of Poland to develop long-term solutions for refugees from Ukraine, ensuring sustained protection, improved access to essential services, and greater opportunities for inclusion. This support included creating an option whereby refugees could opt to apply for a temporary residency permit valid for up to three years in exchange for renouncing temporary protection status.<sup>17</sup> The government also extended the provision allowing Ukrainian psychologists to work without diploma validation from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2025, limited to services for Ukrainian citizens. RRP partners supported 523,000 refugees with rights and services information, referred over 114,000 individuals with specific needs, and provided legal aid to some 26,500 people. Over 72,000 accessed psychosocial support, 11,000 benefitted from specialized safety and protection initiatives for women, girls and boys, and 920 humanitarian personnel received training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). Additionally, 2,500 individuals were trained on protection principles, and 260 municipal and civil society members received inclusion training.

As of October 2024, over 200,000 Ukrainian children and youth are studying in Polish schools. The introduction of compulsory schooling in September led to an increase of 18,000 new students, mostly adolescents, many of whom had been out of school for up to two years and required specialized learning, language, and mental health support. A total of 23,000 students enrolled in

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc/zezwozenia-na-pobyt-dla-obywateli-ukrainy-objetych-ochrona-czasowa>



Polish schools for the first time; 58 per cent of Polish schools are hosting Ukrainian students. Seventy percent of Ukrainian refugee students in secondary education are in vocational programs, while 52 per cent still follow the All-Ukrainian Online School, increasing dropout risks. Polish language barriers persisted, with declining participation in language classes. The Education Sector has been active in designing the "School for All" programme to support inclusion.

Significant changes to the Special Act were reflected in the work of the shelter sector as of 1 July.<sup>18</sup> Shelter partners collaborated with the Ministry of Interior to monitor collective centres and tackle emerging challenges<sup>19</sup>. Since July 2024, all collective sites have been under Voivode supervision, reducing fragmentation and promoting refugee independence while streamlining data collection. Although cutting the 40+ subsidy negatively affected some NGOs,<sup>20</sup> it curbed private-run accommodation misuse and, along with revised school co-payment policies, encouraged many families to leave collective centres.

The establishment of the Cash for Rent Technical Working Group in January 2024 helped harmonize programming and data coordination. Collaboration between shelter actors and authorities remained strong, with joint advocacy efforts addressing housing solutions within the Special Act amendments. A mapping of collective centres was conducted, enhancing information-sharing and coordination. While the collective centre population declined steadily, reaching 29,000 by year-end, the demographics shifted, with a higher share of elderly and people with disabilities, requiring specialized support. Authorities identified this as a key priority, reinforcing the need for tailored assistance to the most vulnerable residents.

In 2024, Health partners focused on strengthening Poland's healthcare system to support Ukrainian refugees, including providing essential medical equipment and pharmaceutical products and improving access to specialized and rehabilitative care for children and vulnerable populations. Programs were put in place to provide healthcare access to refugees affected by infectious diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, and viral hepatitis, ensuring treatment, vaccinations, and linkage to necessary services. Food assistance was provided to children facing social exclusion and other vulnerabilities, ensuring their health and development needs were met, regardless of nationality. Trainings for healthcare managers and professionals were provided to strengthen local healthcare responses, particularly in cases of sexual violence and emergency preparedness. Efforts to combat health misinformation and improve crisis communication through specialized workshops equipped health professionals with skills to manage health crises effectively and support vulnerable populations.

In the area of Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Accountability to Affected People (AAP), partners reached over 32,900 individuals through community centres or via partners' outreach activities. Several partners delivered with INTERPOL a PSEA Training of

<sup>18</sup> Changes in the Special Act: <https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc/nowelizacja-ustawy-o-pomocy-obywatelom-ukrainy-w-zwiazku-z-konfliktem-zbrojnym-na-terytorium-tego-panstwa2>

<sup>19</sup> including but not limited to inadequate information campaigns and delayed NGO–Voivode contracts, which increased uncertainty among the refugee population

<sup>20</sup> The 40+ subsidy was a financial support mechanism designed to assist refugees living in collective centres, either by subsidizing the centres' operations or by directly supporting refugees' accommodation costs. While it helped provide immediate shelter, concerns arose over its potential misuse and dependency, leading to policy changes aimed at promoting refugee independence.

Trainers for 30 participants from Polish law enforcement agencies. The UN's Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate delivered trainings on a victim-centred approach for 30 members of the PSEA Network. National NGOs and UN Agencies collaborated on and launched PSEA awareness-raising videos for refugees in five languages. In June the PSEA Network and AAP Working Group merged to create the PSEA-AAP Network, reaching even more local actors. Network members participated in an in-person refresher training on PSEA, the Inter-Agency Risk Assessment methodology and data collection.

## Gaps and consequences of underfunding

In 2024, partner organizations under the RRP sought over \$377 million in funding. While advocacy efforts with national and international stakeholders continued throughout the year, donor contributions reached \$128.7 million (34.1 per cent) by year-end, impacting the scale of the response.

Refugees without valid travel documents continued to face challenges in confirming their identity and accessing legal status, with many unable to secure adequate legal assistance. Findings from the 2024 SEIS<sup>21</sup> highlighted persistent psychological distress among refugee households – especially among single parents, the elderly, and those with chronic illnesses – underscoring the urgent need for sustained community-based mental health support. Additionally, the discontinuation of financial support for private hosts has left many refugees without stable accommodation and at heightened risk of homelessness, as documentation and administrative barriers continued to impede their ability to secure formal rental agreements, financial aid, and social services, further compounding their vulnerability.

Child protection monitoring revealed persistent challenges faced by refugee children from Ukraine, including social isolation, loneliness, and discrimination, with increasing needs for mental health support that went largely unmet due to funding constraints. Limited resources also hampered access to individualized case management for children at risk. Additionally, refugee children from Ukraine are more exposed to the risk of violence and neglect, often separated from their parents and with fewer mechanisms of support when entering adulthood. Meanwhile, essential support services for victims of violence remain compromised by underreporting and gaps in multisectoral support, which restricted access to safe spaces, psychosocial assistance, and legal aid.

According to the SEIS Survey,<sup>22</sup> 27 per cent of refugees identified upskilling as a critical need, while 22 per cent sought skills recognition to access better job opportunities. Limited resources and capacity constraints among organizations, particularly those with less experience, led to significant gaps in re-skilling and up-skilling opportunities for refugees. These efforts were further hindered by barriers such as the lack of affordable childcare and housing solutions, which created additional challenges for many female refugees and single-headed households seeking employment. The limited availability of flexible working arrangements further restricted access to

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<sup>21</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/poland-socio-economic-insights-survey-seis-results-analysis-november-2024>

<sup>22</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/poland/poland-socio-economic-insights-survey-seis-results-analysis-november-2024>

stable jobs, making it difficult for those with caregiving responsibilities to balance work and family needs.

The availability and quality of Polish language classes as a foreign language remained inadequate, significantly restricting inclusion and employment prospects. Due to underfunding, many language programs could not be expanded to meet demand, leaving thousands without the necessary language skills for economic participation. 28 per cent of respondents cited language proficiency as a major barrier to finding work, and only 18 per cent reported fluency in Polish, limiting their ability to access stable, well-paying jobs.

Despite a 69 per cent labour force participation rate among working-age refugees, a significant portion remained in lower-wage sectors such as manufacturing, accommodation & food services, and trade, often in positions below their qualification levels. To enhance socio-economic inclusion, expanding language training, skill certification, and accessible, flexible childcare support remains crucial in ensuring long-term financial stability for refugees in Poland.

While the Government of Poland assumed more responsibility for managing collective shelters, funding shortages made it challenging for government agencies and NGOs to fully support the most vulnerable residents. Many NGOs played a crucial role in helping the elderly, people with disabilities, and others with special needs, but limited financial resources led to gaps in accessibility, specialized care, and programmes like language support and job training, which are critical for inclusion and independence. Despite the dedication of those working on the ground, the strain was evident, and the need for more funding remained pressing. With more substantial financial support, NGOs could have provided more stable, long-term solutions while the government assumed full responsibility, ensuring that displaced individuals, especially those at the highest risk of isolation, received the care and opportunities they needed to rebuild their lives.

According to the PSEA and AAP Network, the limited operating capacity of complaint and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) was a key challenge in 2024. SEIS data show that 27 per cent of Ukrainian refugees lack access to safe and confidential CFMs, only 30 per cent of those who used these channels received an appropriate response, and 56 per cent had never tried them – highlighting the urgent need to strengthen these channels and raise awareness about the importance of feedback.

Additionally, recent amendments to the Special Act, including the closure of shelters with fewer than ten residents, have led to uncertain housing situations and increased risks of homelessness, thereby exposing refugees to higher risks of exploitation and abuse, and further exacerbating sexual exploitation and abuse concerns.

Access to healthcare remained a challenge, with language barriers and long waiting times preventing refugees from receiving timely medical attention. Many partners faced funding shortfalls, limiting their ability to sustain health services, including mental health support. Without adequate financial backing, gaps in healthcare provision persisted, impacting the overall well-being of the refugee population in Poland.

## Advocacy message

Ensuring that refugees can rebuild their lives with dignity requires ongoing support, particularly in securing work permits, essential services, and stable housing. With financial aid for private hosts ending, rising rental costs, and a shortage of social housing in municipalities, families without secure accommodations risk missing key opportunities to improve their skills, access better employment, and keep their children in school. As Poland reviews amendments to the Special Act in 2025, it is crucial to protect refugees' legal status, work rights, and access to public services, including comprehensive healthcare and mental health support.

For refugee children, adjusting to school comes with challenges, such as language barriers, and the struggle to feel included. Recognizing intercultural assistants, expanding language programmes, and training teachers in inclusive education would help children feel more supported and thrive in their new environment. Beyond education, refugees need real opportunities to work, access affordable housing, and secure childcare. Keeping work permits in place and supporting financial empowerment through credit can help families become self-sufficient and contribute to their communities. Better coordination between authorities will ensure that refugees receive the support they need without unnecessary delays. Enforcing fair recruitment practices will also protect them from exploitation. As Poland navigates legislative changes, prioritizing protection, stability, and inclusion will not only benefit refugees but also strengthen communities as a whole.

### Partner Spotlight: Eleon

Fleeing war is challenging for anyone, but for parents of children with disabilities, it is even harder. The Eleon Foundation, originally founded in Ukraine, registered as a refugee-led organization in Poland in 2022 to support Ukrainian refugees, especially children with disabilities. Operating in Lubelskie Voivodeship, it provides essential services, educational support, and fosters a sense of belonging. In partnership with UNHCR, the foundation organized hippotherapy sessions, benefiting 146 children and their families in 2024. A key success story is Nikita, a young refugee who, with his mother, found crucial support through the foundation, improving his confidence and resilience. Looking ahead, the Eleon Foundation plans to expand its services and, in 2025, will finally have a dedicated space in Lublin to strengthen its impact. Their mission remains to create a nurturing environment where every child can thrive despite the challenges of displacement.

**Partner Spotlight: Towards Dialogue**

Following the war in Ukraine, Towards Dialogue has provided direct support to over 50,000 Roma refugees in Poland. This support includes legal aid, shelter, food, healthcare, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and employment activation services. The foundation has conducted over 3,000 legal consultations, assisting Roma families in securing residency permits and accessing essential social services. Additionally, the foundation has helped hundreds of Roma children enroll in Polish schools while providing language courses and vocational training.

As a leading advocate for Roma rights, Towards Dialogue operates Poland's only Roma Community Center, located in Warsaw, serving as a hub for cultural preservation, education, and empowerment.

Through this center, the foundation has organized over 200 workshops, cultural events, and training sessions, fostering greater understanding between Roma refugees and Polish society.

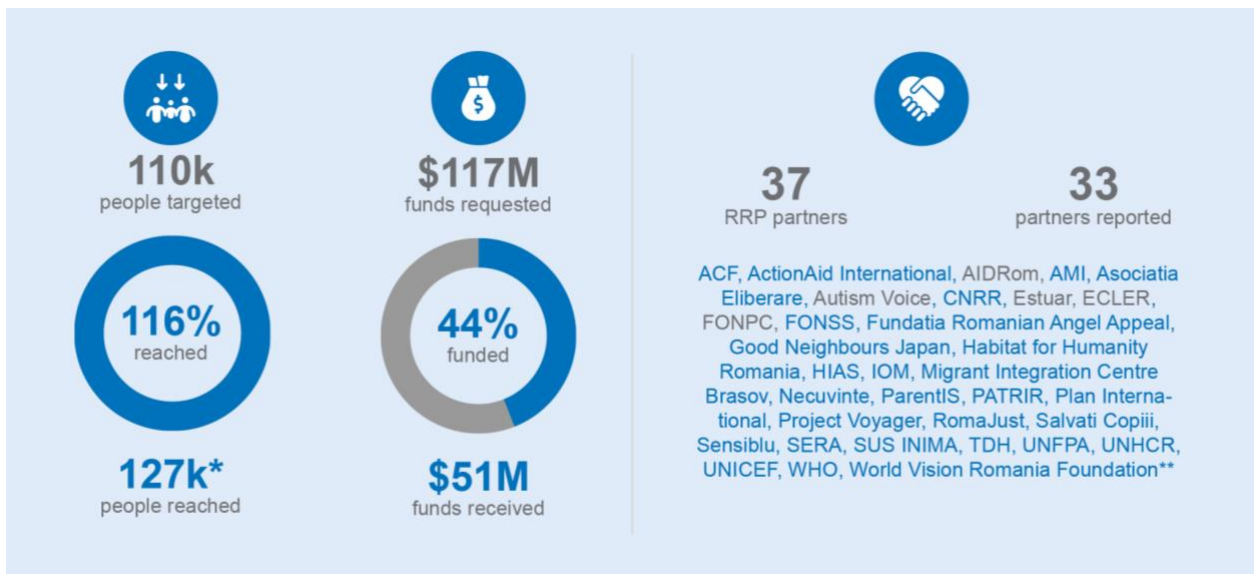
The foundation has published influential reports exposing the exclusion of Roma refugees from mainstream humanitarian aid, urging policymakers to tackle systemic discrimination.

Moreover, the foundation actively engages in advocacy efforts at the national and international levels. The foundation collaborates closely with the Polish government, local authorities, and international institutions to push for inclusive policies, better protection mechanisms, and systemic solutions that address the unique challenges faced by Roma refugees. Their advocacy efforts include policy recommendations, public awareness campaigns, strategic litigation, and direct engagement with decision-makers to promote equal access to rights and services.

Towards Dialogue has emerged as a vital bridge between Roma refugees and the broader humanitarian response, seamlessly integrating advocacy with tangible, life-changing support. The foundation remains committed to building an inclusive society where Roma have equal access to rights, services, and opportunities.



## ROMANIA



\*The number of individuals reached is an estimate based on the highest number of individuals reached per activity, per sector and/or per region, to avoid double counting.

\*\*In black are partners that reported activities but did not appeal in the RRP.

## Progress against the strategic objectives

In 2024, significant progress was made in strengthening the protection environment for refugees in Romania. RRP partners worked closely with the Government of Romania to include Ukrainian refugees holding temporary protection into national social protection schemes. A major milestone was the issuance of Emergency Ordinance No. 96/2024 on 1 July, granting refugees access to social benefits on par with Romanian citizens, including allowances for children, disability, unemployment, minimum income, and scholarships. This measure enhanced the sustainability of support for vulnerable refugees. RRP partners actively advocated for this development and contributed to key discussions.

Empowering refugees was crucial to supporting the protection environment. Over 54,000 refugees received information on rights, services, and prevention of violence against women, boys and girls through help desks, campaigns, and digital platforms. Over 7,000 refugees benefited from targeted protection interventions, including legal assistance, while over 13,000 refugee children accessed specialized child protection services. Services were provided through various service providers and one-stop centres managed by RRP partners, including RomExpo in Bucharest, the Nicolina Centre in Iași, the Ukraine House in Cluj, and the KATYA Centre in Brașov, which facilitate comprehensive service provision and better linkages with government services.

To enhance socio-economic inclusion and increase self-reliance among refugees, the livelihoods sector engaged civil society, the private sector, and authorities in a "whole of society" approach. Over 8,700 refugees attended Romanian language courses, while almost 13,000 refugees

accessed vocational training, entrepreneurship opportunities, and employment support. As a result, more than 7,000 refugees secured jobs with active labour contracts. Employment outcomes improved, with 43 per cent of surveyed working-age Ukrainians declaring to be employed by year-end, up from 33 per cent in 2023 and 15 per cent in 2022. Additionally, over 24,000 refugees with specific needs received economic support to meet their basic needs. By the end of the school year, nearly 40,000 Ukrainian children were enrolled in Romanian schools, up from 4,361 in December 2022, though actual attendance challenges remain due to language barriers and parental preference for the Ukrainian curriculum. Nearly 75 per cent of refugee households in need of medical services were able to access healthcare support. However, limited Romanian language skills, job mismatches, and scarce opportunities continue to hinder greater inclusion.

With diminishing resources, RRP partners shifted from broad interventions to targeted programming for vulnerable groups. A refined vulnerability assessment scorecard, developed by 21 RRP partners and the municipalities of Bucharest and Braşov, was rolled out to improve aid targeting across sectors.

While Ukrainian refugees have been warmly welcomed, social attitudes are shifting. To sustain social cohesion, RRP partners reinforced national systems thereby benefitting host and refugee population, training over 5,000 service provider staff, including 1,800 staff trained on PSEA, 120 health workers on clinical rape management, and 814 teachers on MHPSS and inclusive education. A health translation hotline was launched, and an "Employment Agency Guide" published in multiple languages on the National Employment Agency (ANOFM) website.<sup>23</sup> More than 11,600 refugees and host community members participated in joint events to foster inclusion.

RRP partners also supported local solutions. Coordination networks, several in the form of Refugee Inclusion Working Groups, led by county Prefects and/mayors came together to support strategies for refugee inclusion, demonstrating successful localization efforts. Initiatives to seek local solutions included developing local referral pathways, deployment of county coordinators and cultural mediators to support healthcare access, and the strengthening of local strategies to include refugees into county services. These initiatives have laid the foundation for a more inclusive and sustainable response to refugee needs in Romania.

## Gaps and consequences of underfunding

By the end of 2024, the RRP was funded at 44 per cent (USD 51.4 million) of the USD 117.2 million requested. Livelihoods remained the least funded sector, receiving only 11 percent of the required funding. All sectors faced significant funding shortfalls, with gaps particularly pronounced in Child Protection, Support for Victims of Violence, Basic Needs, Education, and Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Inclusion. 13 appealing partners reported receiving no new funding throughout the

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<sup>23</sup> See <https://www.anofm.ro/?idpostare=28529>

year. This directly impacted organizations and programming: 11 of the 37 RRP partners scaled down activities, while 5 partners phased out or suspended operations entirely. Despite intensifying donor outreach efforts – including mentoring sessions on accessing European funding and initiatives to engage the private sector through networking events – funding remained challenging.

These funding gaps jeopardize efforts to support the socio-economic inclusion of refugees. While around 40,000 refugee students were enrolled in the Romanian education system at the end of the school year, 24,500 remain in transitional student status due to language and administrative barriers. According to the Socio-Economic Inclusion Survey (SEIS), only around 50 per cent of Ukrainian refugee students regularly attend schools in Romania. The lack of funding hinders efforts to increase attendance and support retention. Education hubs supported by civil society play an important “bridge” function to Romanian schools, but the sustainability of hubs is at risk, potentially leading to school dropouts. Additionally, language classes for children and non-formal education programs of RRP partners has been scaled down due to financial constraints.

Economic participation is also at risk, with only 11 per cent of the required funding received for Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion programming. This shortfall affects the continuation of language classes, job search assistance, and vocational training programs for those eager to enter the labour market.

Funding shortages also impacted immediate humanitarian support. Programs to complement government assistance to the most vulnerable are being scaled down and a lack of funding for service providers puts refugees at risk of losing temporary shelter, potentially forcing them to return to Ukraine or live in precarious conditions, exposed to health risks and severe poverty.

Child Protection and Health actors report reduced psychosocial support for children, increasing the risk of mental health disorders stemming from war trauma and displacement. Insufficient funding for violence against women, girls and boys threatens essential services for victims and survivors, including support programs and awareness campaigns, particularly concerning the reported rise in violence amongst close relations linked to family reunifications and mixed host-refugee households.

## Advocacy message

The refugee response in Romania remains of critical importance, requiring both immediate humanitarian support and long-term strategies towards the socio-economic inclusion of refugees. While significant progress has been made, continued assistance is necessary to ensure that refugees can access essential services, be included into local communities, and contribute to the Romanian economy. Sustained commitment from all stakeholders – including government, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector – is crucial to achieving these goals.

The Government of Romania made remarkable efforts to create a comprehensive housing support programme for refugees from Ukraine, ensuring their basic needs were met through collective accommodation. However, the phasing out of this assistance programme, presents challenges and

potential protection risks for vulnerable refugees currently in shelters or in need of collective accommodation. Many refugees have complex needs, such as disabilities and serious medical conditions, which hinder self-reliance without ongoing support. Ensuring their housing needs remain met is crucial. RRP partners urge continued support for these vulnerable refugees through sustained collective accommodation, building local capacity for social and protection services, and maintaining the ability to accommodate new arrivals or emergencies requiring medium-term housing.

With significant increases in the registration of refugee children from Ukraine into the formal education system, barriers remain to ensuring their effective attendance and participation. RRP partners will continue to advocate for increased support for the inclusion of refugee children in the Romanian formal education system and to rekindle efforts to enhance actual school attendance. This includes catch-up and remedial programmes, tailored support services, language assistance, training teachers to teach Romanian as a foreign language, and social cohesion activities.

While refugees from Ukraine have the same access to the national healthcare system as Romanians, practical barriers persist. Issues such as registering with a family doctor and accessing specialist medical services, including vaccination, remain key concerns. RRP partners will continue working with the Ministry of Health, the National Health Insurance House, and (sub)national authorities to ensure equitable access to health services for refugees. This will be achieved by addressing registration challenges, supporting refugees in navigating the healthcare system, and ensuring that essential health information is easily accessible.

Beyond humanitarian assistance, socio-economic inclusion is key to ensuring that refugees can become self-sufficient and contribute to their host communities. Private sector engagement is essential in this regard, both through direct programming support and funding for national NGOs working in the refugee response. Investments in skills training, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurship support will not only benefit refugees but also strengthen the Romanian labour market and economy. Encouraging partnerships between businesses and NGOs can facilitate innovative solutions for refugee economic inclusion.

With only 44 per cent of the requested funds received in 2024, RRP partners urge continued financial support. Underfunding risks undermining progress made in humanitarian areas and impacts the sustainable inclusion of refugees in Romania. Critical shortfalls in the fields of livelihoods and economic inclusion, education, and violence against women, boys and girls must be addressed to ensure that refugees can build stable and dignified lives in Romania.

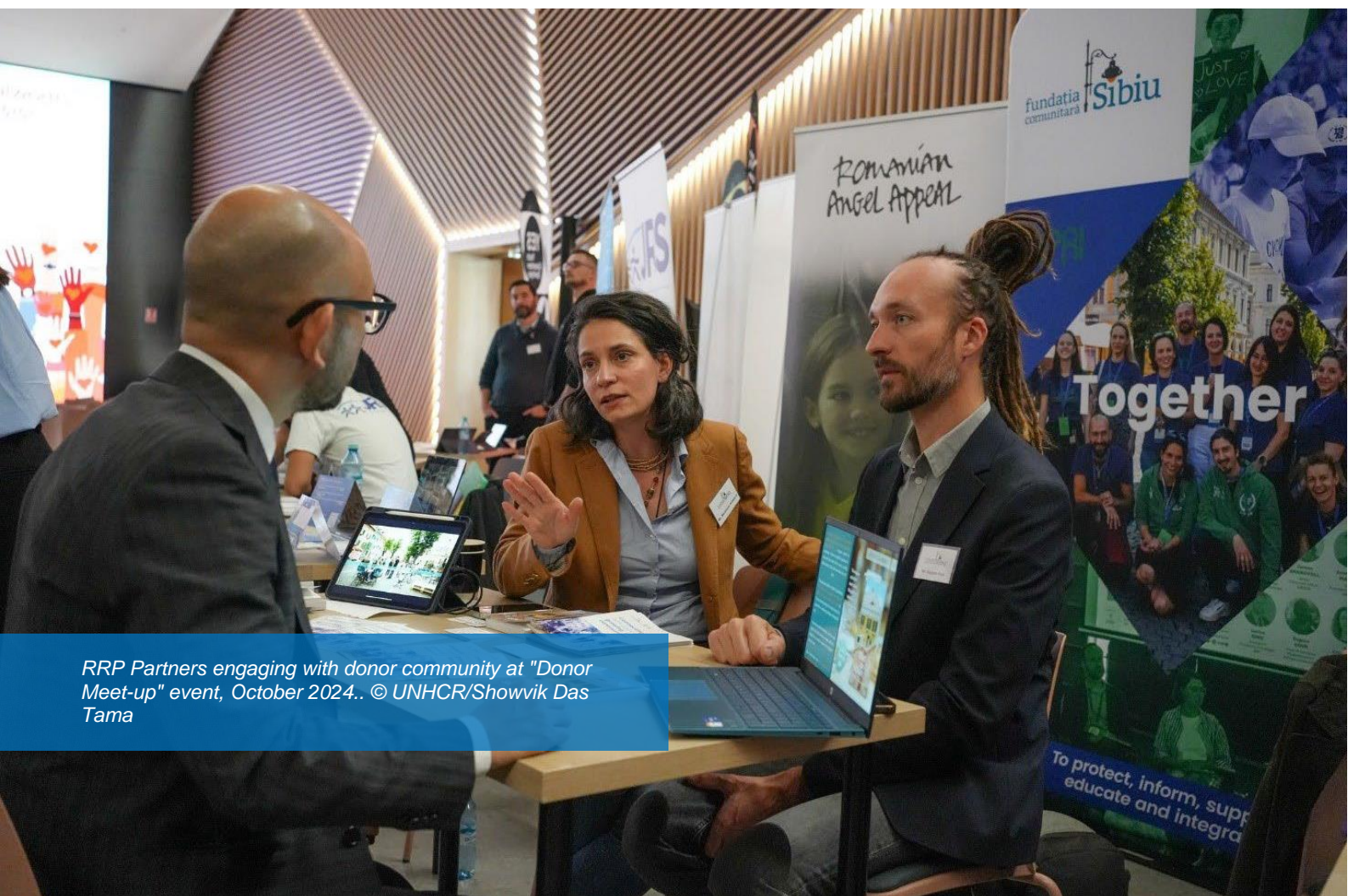
A collective and sustained effort is required to ensure that refugees not only receive essential humanitarian assistance but also have the opportunity to rebuild their lives with dignity, security, and economic independence.



### Partner Spotlight: Novapolis

In September 2022, Novapolis established the ROUA Centre in Constanța to assist Ukrainian refugees. The centre supported 1,418 refugees in 2024, serving as a key community hub in the southeast of Romania. The centre facilitates socio-economic inclusion through employment support, entrepreneurship training, and business development. The centre also provides essential services for refugees, including protection assistance, legal aid, psychosocial support, Romanian language courses and the provision of core relief items for the most vulnerable. Healthcare specialists provide guidance on family health, vaccinations, and infant care.

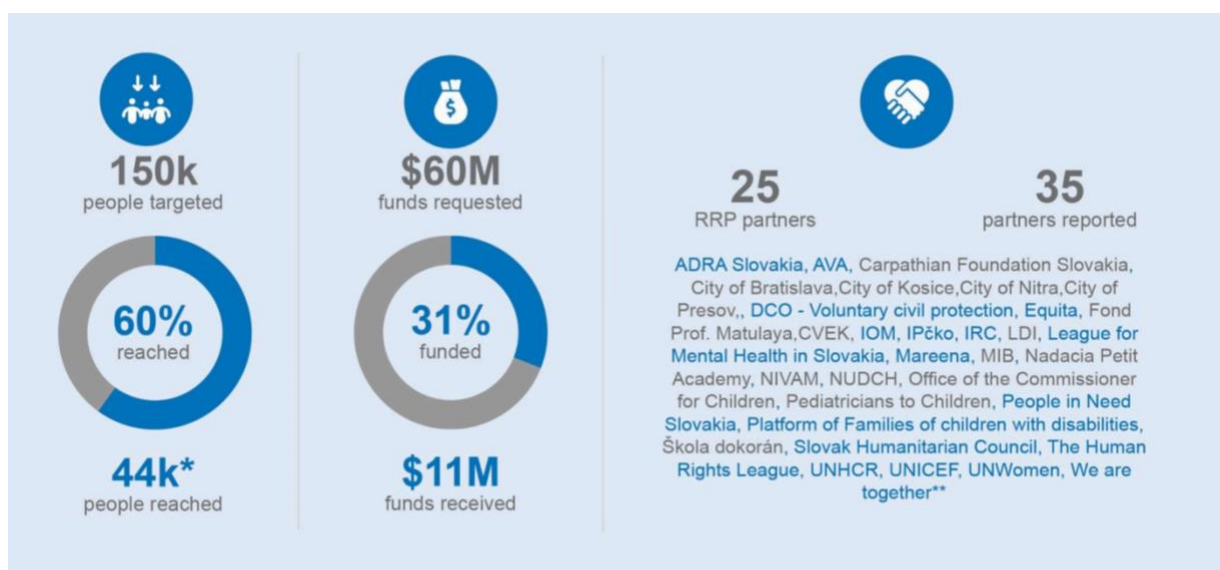
ROUA also collaborates with partners on the prevention of and response to violence against women and girls, including through online training sessions for local and central stakeholders on migration, trafficking in persons and cooperation for assistance to victims and survivors of trafficking and violence and with public institutions on information on labour rights. The project strengthens cooperation between civil society, public institutions, and other actors, enhancing protection for refugees and third-country nationals through advocacy, community consultations, and capacity-building initiatives.



RRP Partners engaging with donor community at "Donor Meet-up" event, October 2024.. © UNHCR/Showvik Das Tama



## SLOVAKIA



\*The number of individuals reached is an estimate based on the highest number of individuals reached per activity, per sector and/or per region, to avoid double counting.

\*\*In black are partners that reported activities but did not appeal in the RRP.

## Progress against the strategic objectives

Throughout 2024, Slovakia continued to show exceptional support for refugees, with the Government leading the efforts to provide protection and assistance to refugees from Ukraine. In February, the Government extended Slovakia's temporary protection (TP) status until 4 March 2025, following an EU decision. At year-end, extension of the TP Directive in Slovakia beyond March 2026 was in process.

RRP partners supported the Government in its efforts to enhance refugee protection and inclusion in the country. Efforts included monitoring of new arrivals, strengthening of national support mechanisms as well as local capacities to host the existing case load and new arrivals. Inter-agency partners also continued to complement the government-led economic support programmes with targeted assistance. In 2024, close to 17,000 people received assistance, including cash, for their basic needs. RRP partners continued to identify specific needs, including persons with disabilities, single women, children at risk, minorities and older persons, for referrals to specialized services. Throughout the year, a total of 51,000 people were reached with various protection services.

The socio-economic inclusion of refugees was improved through both legislative changes, including in the area of self-employment, as well as through job counselling, language classes, CV writing, childcare and support with overcoming bureaucratic barriers by RRP partners. Various livelihoods and economic inclusion initiatives benefitted a total of 34,450 individuals. Leadership

by the Government, strong support from municipalities, as well as the key role of community-based and refugee-led organizations were particularly important in realizing inclusion activities.

Social cohesion among the refugee and host communities was promoted through various community and awareness-raising activities that facilitated social interaction, cultural exchange, increased understanding of refugee rights and contributed overall towards an environment free of xenophobia and exclusion of refugees and other minority groups. Again, the involvement of local actors and refugee-led organizations was key at ensuring a bottom-up approach to such efforts among the communities across the country.

TP holders in Slovakia enjoy access to public healthcare services. RRP partners worked to increase awareness of services available to TP holders, and to provide support in accessing these. In 2024, some 8,500 refugees were reached with information and counselling on health topics, 18,500 refugees received health consultations, while 34 healthcare providers were trained to provide health services to refugees. Furthermore, 23,900 individuals participated in mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services and activities, while 25,800 MHPSS consultations were provided.

In 2024, RRP partners expanded access to quality on violence against women, boys and girls by strengthening prevention and improving referral mechanisms, while ensuring high-quality, victim- and-survivor-centred care. Throughout the year, close to 11,000 people benefitted from specialized safety and protection programmes. Coordination and programming initiatives were strengthened through community outreach, data analysis, advocacy, and capacity-building, coupled with the provision of safety grants as immediate assistance to victims and survivors of violence, and employment initiatives to increase self-sufficiency and independence of survivors or those at risk of violence. To strengthen the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), RRP partners trained a total of 534 PSEA network members and partner personnel. RRP partners also worked with authorities and relevant practitioners through capacity-building and information sessions on how to identify and address trafficking in persons, particularly focusing on the trafficking of children, due to the number of under-age Ukrainian refugee students in Slovak universities, who are at a high protection risk, including risk of labour exploitation.

A key education achievement – and result of RRP partners' advocacy efforts – was the introduction of compulsory education for Ukrainian refugee children starting in the academic year of 2025/26. In 2024, 10,632 Ukrainian children with TP status were enrolled in Slovak schools and kindergartens. Furthermore, 3,272 children were participating in informal education programmes, while 1,500 education staff were trained or supported throughout the year.

## Gaps and consequences of underfunding

While the protection environment remained overall favourable, refugees in Slovakia, especially those most vulnerable and the newly arrived, also continued to have urgent needs and face various challenges.

The Government of Slovakia has enabled TP holders to access significant portions of the public social protection system, however certain social benefits remain inaccessible for refugees due to their legal status, as TP is not linked to temporary or permanent residence in Slovakia. These benefits include, but are not limited to, parental, child, birth and unemployment allowances, as well as compensation for persons with disabilities. On the other hand, it is commendable that the Government designed certain social and humanitarian benefits specifically for TP holders.

While TP holders have access to healthcare services, some practical barriers remain, including language, unavailability of appointments the refusal on the part of some healthcare professionals to provide services.

In August 2024, the operating hours of the Border and Foreigner Police were reduced, leading to longer waiting times in securing an appointment to apply for TP status. Some refugees were waiting up to 6 weeks for an appointment and during this time could not access any of the services available for TP status holders, including accommodation for new arrivals. This is particularly concerning for the most vulnerable refugees who do not have the necessary financial means or existing family networks in Slovakia to meet their urgent needs.

Regarding accommodation, the Government's robust support system to TP holders – which ensured increased access to accommodation through subsidies given to private property owners who offered their apartments and houses to refugees, owners of non-commercial collective accommodation sites, and to commercial accommodation providers – was in place until June 2024. As of June 2024, accommodation support was available for new arrivals for the first 120 days, and beyond then only for those meeting the Government's vulnerability criteria. At the end of the year, the Government announced further reduction of support from 120 to 60 days, to be implemented in 2025. RRP partners worked to meet the gap, however the covering of additional accommodation costs is expected to be a burden especially for older people, single mothers and people with disabilities in the second half of the year.

In 2024, the inter-agency response continued to be negatively impacted by a funding shortage. Due to lack of funding, RRP partners were forced to prioritize activities, resulting in unmet needs. Funding constraints have an adverse impact on many key activities that have the potential to facilitate strengthened socio-economic inclusion, such as language classes and daycare for children to enable the employment of the parents, particularly that of single mothers. With limited funding, it will also be challenging for RRP partners to cover the gap left in the provision of accommodation support.

## Advocacy message

Recognizing the capacity challenges faced by the Government, RRP partners appeal that the long waiting times for the issuance of TP status be addressed as soon as possible. RRP partners stand ready to support the Government, as appropriate and feasible. Furthermore, RRP partners recommend introducing measures to ensure that access to accommodation is provided to the most vulnerable TP holders. This could be achieved, for instance, through mobile outreach services for

vulnerable individuals who are unable to seek accommodation subsidies in person at the municipalities; providing emergency accommodation for new arrivals and those at risk of homelessness; expanding the criteria of vulnerable groups eligible for accommodation support; informing in advance of changes related to accommodation provision; and introducing minimum standards for collective centres.

Partners also recommend enabling TP holders' access to additional services, such as parental, child, birth and unemployment allowances, and to increase access to Disability Allowance-related assessments, including by ensuring they are conducted in the languages of the refugees and take into consideration any specific needs of applicants. Finally, raising awareness among healthcare workers of refugees' rights, including to healthcare coverage, is also critical

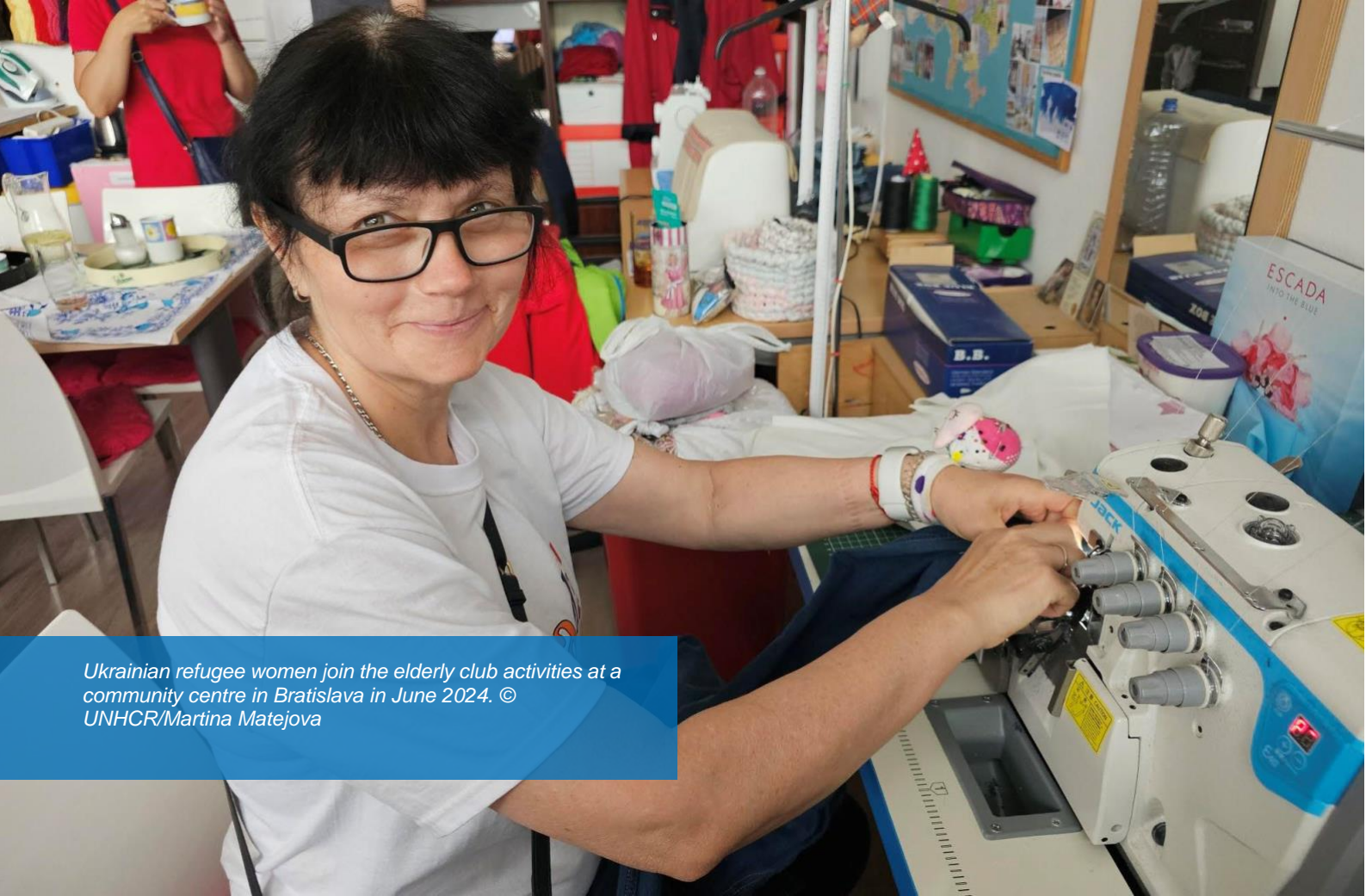
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### **Partner Spotlight: Mareena**

In 2024, Mareena, a Slovak NGO and RRP partner, worked towards inclusion and integration of refugees in Slovakia, among other activities. Mareena organized Slovak as a second language courses at various levels, as well as weekly language cafes which help refugees improve their Slovak language skills while also serving as a platform to build connections with other participants. Mareena also enhanced social cohesion across five regions by hosting large-scale community events that facilitated intercultural exchange and strengthened community ties, with the help of both local and refugee volunteers. One of the key events was the Mareena festival held in Bratislava in September, bringing together a large variety of activities representing different cultures.

To strengthen employment of refugees, Mareena provided employment counselling in integration centres, participated in Slovakia's largest employment fair's, Profesia Days, with an information stand to provide information and counselling to any refugee participants looking for employment in Slovakia as well as organized two roundtable discussions for employers to increase awareness of refugees as potential contributors to the labour market. They also organized information sessions to new arrivals to increase refugees' awareness about life in Slovakia, including practical guidance on how to find job or enrol children in schools.





*Ukrainian refugee women join the elderly club activities at a community centre in Bratislava in June 2024. © UNHCR/Martina Matejova*