



2022 FINAL REPORT

Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ukraine Situation

March – December 2022



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Inter-agency financial requirements for activities implemented in Belarus were included in the 'Other countries' chapter of the 2022 RRP.

HIGHLIGHTS

The following key achievements and forward-looking priorities are drawn from the document and reflects an aggregate of the thematic and country chapters.

Key Achievements

Whole of Society Response

The response by the refugee-hosting countries has been remarkable, characterized by concerted, coordinated action at regional level, strong national leadership, an outpouring of solidarity by host communities, as well as an exceptional, unwavering commitment among local municipal authorities and civil societies, particularly local NGOs, refugee-led and community-based organizations. The RRP was built and implemented with and in support of this strong ecosystem of actors and assistance.

Cash Programming

Large-scale cash programmes were critical to urgently meet the basic needs of refugees in the first phase of the response. RRP partners reached 885,000 individuals with cash assistance during the year.

PSEA and MHPSS

Rapid deployment of PSEA and MHPSS experts and the subsequent introduction and establishment of coordination mechanisms for the cross-cutting priorities helped ensure their centrality in the response.

By the end of the year, PSEA networks were activated, and National PSEA action plans were developed in five countries, bringing together 170 partners. More than 46,000 refugees were reached through community outreach and over 3,300 frontline workers were trained on PSEA.

Through coordination, advocacy and direct services provided by governments and MHPSS actors, over 327,000 mental health and psychosocial support counselling and clinical consultations were provided to Ukrainian refugees across the region.

Forward-looking priorities

Education

Despite considerable efforts of States and the humanitarian sector to provide support, enrolment of refugee children from Ukraine in host country education systems remains relatively low, leaving hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian children out of formal education for a second school year in a row. Challenges with low enrolment rates relate to capacity problems in schools, hesitancy of refugee parents to enrol their children, and administrative, and practical and financial barriers in access to education. Addressing these challenges is a key priority for RRP partners moving forward.

Employment

Data shows that while an important number of refugees already obtained employment, this is mostly in low-skilled jobs. Skills mismatches are a key challenge, also linked to language skills and difficulties in skills recognition. Inadequate childcare arrangements affect both recruitment and retention. To support decent work, and with refugees from Ukraine increasingly looking for stable employment

Engagement at Municipal Level

In looking beyond the emergency response toward longer-term planning, there is a need for increased support and access to funding at the municipal-local level, where services essential to longer-term inclusion, such as childcare, permanent housing, active labour market integration, language training, and community integration support, require scaling-up.

REGIONAL CHAPTER

Situation Overview

The Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 marked a dramatic escalation of an eight-year conflict, which had been largely confined to the east of the country, and precipitated a massive humanitarian crisis. Millions were forced to flee Ukraine to neighboring host countries on a scale not witnessed in Europe for decades. By the end of 2022, some 7,9 million refugees had fled Ukraine and sought protection across Europe. The response by the refugee-hosting countries has been remarkable, characterized by concerted action at regional level, strong national leadership, an outpouring of solidarity by host communities, as well as an exceptional, unwavering commitment among local municipal authorities and civil societies, particularly local NGOs, refugee-led and community-based organizations.

At the same time, humanitarian partners, under the overall leadership of host governments, have supported and complemented the national response through coordinated and inclusive interventions. Many of these activities were captured in the original Regional Refugee Response Plan, launched in early March 2022, revised on 25 April 2022 and 'recalibrated' in October 2022 to take into account winter-related needs and other priorities which emerged across the RRP countries. This 2022 End of Year Report looks back at the achievements and challenges of the response to the refugee crisis, both at the regional level and within the countries included in the RRP.

Protection



The implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) for the first time in the EU's history on 4 March 2022 served to swiftly define the legal status of many of the refugees fleeing from Ukraine across EU Member States. As a result of this decision, refugees were able to access protection and assistance without delay and enjoy freedom of movement in the majority of host countries. By the end of 2022, more than 4 million refugees from Ukraine had accessed temporary protection or a similar protected status.

Across RRP countries, refugees were met with unwavering solidarity: members of the host communities volunteered, opened their homes to host refugee families, and donated food, clothing, and other items. Many refugees were able to find work, enroll their children in schools, access health care and psychosocial support, and even sign up for social protection systems. At the same time, significant protection challenges emerged: family separation, inadequate care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children, and risks of gender-based violence (GBV) and trafficking, and risks of sexual exploitation and abuse, among others, continue to pose concerns. Even as some refugees were included in community structures, others became more vulnerable as they exhausted their savings and found themselves unable to work due to language barriers, mismatch of skills, or lack of childcare.

RRP partners sought to support the government and civil society response and address protection gaps by mapping services, identifying vulnerable individuals and groups, and providing appropriate referrals. Coordination structures were established across the response according to the needs in each host country, but generally included a Protection Working Group, Child Protection Sub-Working Group, and in some countries a GBV Sub-Working Group. Protection considerations were streamlined in cross-cutting task forces and working groups, including on MHPSS and Anti-Trafficking. Protection actors assessed risks, developed mitigation measures, and mainstreamed key protection considerations across the response.

Local, refugee-led, and women-led NGOs have played a key role in the response from the beginning of the crisis, giving voice to the particular needs of the refugee population and finding effective solutions in each local context. RRP partners have sought to ensure accountability to affected populations by involving refugees in the conceptualization, design, implementation, and evaluation of protection programming. Going forward, the protection response will increasingly focus on outreach to urban refugee populations, inclusion of refugees in host countries, strengthening of community-based protection mechanisms, and fostering social cohesion. This

will help to ensure that governments are well-positioned to take the response forward in the mid-term, as well as maintaining the central role of refugees in giving voice to their needs and identifying the best ways to address them.

Education



The Russian Federation's invasion severely disrupted the education of hundreds of thousands of children and youth in Ukraine. According to some estimates, up to half of Ukraine's pre-war child population of 7.5 million has been displaced, with some 2 million living as refugees outside of the country.¹ From the start of the crisis, education sector coordination working groups were set up in a number of refugee-hosting countries to coordinate the efforts of many organizations offering help in the education of refugee children from Ukraine.

In the early months of the emergency, at the end of the 2021-2022 school year and throughout the 2022 summer recess, many of these efforts focused on immediate education needs such as language classes, catch-up education, provision of school supplies, safe learning spaces and other.

With the start of the new school year in September 2022, efforts in refugee education largely shifted towards more mid- to long-term education efforts, such as supporting parents in enrolling their children in host country education systems and transitory measures to limit time-out-of-learning, such as continued online lessons and provision of various types of non-formal education. Some hosting countries have also lifted administrative and other barriers to education of refugee children from Ukraine.

Despite the considerable efforts of States and the humanitarian sector to provide support, enrolment of refugee children from Ukraine in host country education systems remains relatively low. Enrolment rates based on available data typically range from 40 to 50 per cent, with some countries performing much better and some worse, leaving hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian children out of formal education for a second school year in a row. Countries with low enrolment rates usually face challenges related to capacity problems in schools, hesitancy of refugee parents to enroll and administrative, and practical and financial barriers in access to education. These challenges will need to be addressed continually to bring higher numbers of out-of-school refugee children from Ukraine into education to mitigate short-term and long-term protection risks related to education, including drops in academic performance, risks associated with being outside the protective environment of the school, lack of social interaction and reduced academic and career prospects.

Health and Nutrition



Countries hosting refugees from Ukraine rapidly amended their respective legislation on health provisions to enable access to national health services. Health sector working groups were established in the first weeks of the response together with the Ministries of Health in several refugee-hosting countries to enable effective coordination of health partners. RRP partners supported the inclusion of refugees into the national health systems through the provision of medicines, supplies, vaccines and equipment and advocated for refugees' access to the full range health services, including treatments for chronic illnesses and medical devices. A further focus was risk communication and social behaviour change communication with a specific emphasis on overcoming information gaps regarding service availability and accessibility, strengthening uptake of vaccinations and infant and young child feeding practices.

RRP partners provided technical support, guidance and tools to countries, monitored refugees' access to health care and protection-related health issues, and supported the integration of refugee health workers in the hosting countries' medical workforce. Partners focused on multisectoral approaches to address needs in

¹ UNESCO, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/mapping-host-countries-education-responses-influx-ukrainian-students>.

sexual and reproductive health, GBV referral pathways, and mental health and psychosocial support and to prevent outbreaks of communicable diseases.

WHO, UNHCR, UNFPA, IOM, UNICEF, and the European Centre for Disease Control established the Refugee Health Extension (RHE) and collaborated on various technical areas to support Ministries of Health and partners with technical guidance, capacity strengthening fostering a coherent regional approach to refugee health needs assessments and monitoring, sharing best practices and contingency planning.

Assessments showed that the majority of refugees can access health services but also highlighted several specific barriers to effective access. These include specifically language barriers, out-of-pocket payments for treatments not covered under the TPD provisions, and difficulties in accessing information on health services which will require continuous support by Ministries of Health and partners.

Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Inclusion



Despite the enabling legal framework, effective access to systems and services was at times hindered by multiple barriers, including language, overstretched national systems, and a lack of targeted services, appropriate information channels, and stakeholder awareness, among others. To better understand gaps, barriers and potential for inclusion, RRP partners carried out a range of assessments to ensure an evidence-base for expanding government efforts to systematically collect and analyze socioeconomic data on the refugee population and address data scarcity relating to socio-economic profiles and inclusion gaps.

Coordination mechanisms were established at the local, national and regional level to link, engage, and connect stakeholders including governments, the private sector, NGOs, refugees, development actors and academia. To foster a common understanding of inclusion, the Regional Socio-Economic Inclusion Working Group compiled practical guidance and available tools on key aspects of socio-economic inclusion.

Data shows that while an important number of refugees already obtained employment, this is mostly in low-skilled jobs. Skills mismatches are a key challenge, also linked to language skills and difficulties in skills recognition. Inadequate childcare arrangements affect both recruitment and retention. To support decent work, and with refugees from Ukraine increasingly looking for stable employment, RRP partners began to promote investment in both support services, as well as language training, upskilling and credential recognition.

As the initial emergency-reception phase gave way to longer-term planning scenarios, RRP partners promoted increased support and access to funding at the municipal-local level, where services essential to longer-term inclusion, such as childcare, permanent housing, active labour market integration, language training, and community integration support, need to be scaled-up.

To facilitate access to social protection, RRP partners progressively aligned and complemented their cash-based interventions to government social protection programmes, coordinated through national Cash Working Groups (CWG), in partnership with line Ministries on Social Protection. Refugees from Ukraine were increasingly supported through information and counselling to enroll in national social protection programmes. Additionally, technical support was provided to selected governments to speed up enrolment and work on interoperable data systems to maximize the complementarity of cash and social assistance. In Moldova, where the social protection system requires further strengthening and where refugees from Ukraine were unable to access social protection under the emergency regime, focus was placed on capacity building of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, backed by the CWG, to ensure interoperability between information management systems for targeting.

Basic Needs



Due to the massive displacement, a number of international and national cash actors developed and launched cash programmes. To ensure a coherent and harmonized approach amongst cash partners, Cash Working Groups (CWGs) were established in the refugee hosting countries, either with Government or local partners co-chairing. These ensured harmonization of cash transfer values, the adoption of common deduplication mechanisms and other key aspects of cash assessment, delivery, and post-distribution monitoring. During 2022, RRP partners managed to reach some 885,000 individuals with cash assistance across the concerned countries.

To measure the impact of the cash for basic needs assistance, standardized post-distribution monitoring surveys were conducted in a number of RRP countries. A large majority of respondents reported having access to the key services and items they need in the local markets (97 per cent). The main immediate basic need that refugees reported spending their money on is food (87 per cent). Other key expenditure categories were health, clothing, health and rent. 88 per cent of refugees noted that cash assistance has enabled them cover at least half of their basic needs. The majority of respondents felt that the assistance had significantly or moderately contributed to improving their living conditions (63 per cent), reduced their feelings of stress (86 per cent) and reduced their financial burden (88 per cent).

Partners also developed and implemented preparedness and winterization strategies in the neighbouring countries. These efforts included the procurement and delivery of NFIs, targeted cash for winter, housing repairs and insulation, collective centre improvements and expansions, and advocacy and coordination with authorities.



World Vision has been able to deliver direct assistance from the first days of war through supporting refugee families and children displaced with basic needs – food & non-food, cash assistance, and psychosocial support.

World Vision has been active in Romania for more than 30 years and currently supports refugees from Ukraine as well as host communities and institutions, with 9 partners in 15 municipalities.

Photo: World Vision/Jon Warren

Cross-cutting priorities

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support



Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) emerged as an early priority in the response and was quickly and effectively integrated across multiple sectors, including health, protection, livelihoods, and education. Central to this was the rapid deployment of technical specialists and the subsequent introduction and establishment of MHPSS coordination mechanisms in the region.

In March MHPSS Technical Working Groups (TWG) were established in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, Czech Republic and Slovakia, in collaboration with national and international actors, including government entities. By April these coordination groups completed service mappings, created comprehensive contact lists of MHPSS actors, and developed and translated information, education and communication materials which were shared across the region. Subsequently MHPSS TWGs were established in Czech Republic and Bulgaria.

Central to the mission of the working groups was the support provided to existing coordination efforts in each country, including supporting capacities within the national systems, such as national health or mental health action plans. Through coordination, advocacy and direct services provided by governments and members of the TWGs, over 327,000 clinical mental health and psychosocial support counselling were provided to Ukrainian refugees across the region. Additionally, through RRP partners in protection, health, GBV, child protection, livelihoods, and education, hundreds of thousands of individuals received community-based mental health and psychosocial support services. These services included activities such as receiving psychological first aid at Blue Dots, parenting groups for caregivers, informal support groups for older adults, psychosocial recreational and arts-based groups for children and other community-based individual and group supports.

Informed by the direct work of partners, and the findings of the Multi-Sector Needs Assessments, common challenges faced in the region were also identified and will continue to be addressed and improved upon. This includes the lack of information and access to both specialised and community-based services, especially in rural areas, and for people on the move. There is also a need for more child specialists and programmes to develop and improve support, particularly for adolescents. Additionally, more Ukrainian-speaking specialists and trained non-specialists are needed, both for wider reach and to account for the cultural barriers and stigma associated with seeking and receiving mental health and psychosocial support.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse



Safeguarding and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) have been key priorities from the onset of the emergency, given the high number of women and children fleeing Ukraine, the wide range of humanitarian and other actors involved in the response, and other risk factors.

PSEA specialists were deployed to the first five RRP countries in the early days of the emergency, tasked with the establishment of PSEA Networks, training and capacity building, awareness-raising, risk assessments, and coordination of partner capacity assessments. The deployees were later replaced by dedicated PSEA Coordinators, recruited by UNHCR to ensure sustained PSEA technical capacity on the ground.

By the end of 2022, PSEA Networks were active in Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, bringing together more than 170 members of UN agencies, international, national and local NGOs, community-based, women-led and refugee-led organizations, and, in some countries, government actors. These Networks spearheaded and maintained oversight of collective PSEA efforts, in line with the National PSEA Action Plans developed in the five countries. All of the Networks are co-chaired by UNHCR and national or international NGOs and are supported by a Regional Safeguarding and PSEA Network.

Achievements in 2022 included training more than 3,300 frontline workers on PSEA, including local NGOs, civil servants, border guards, police and volunteers. Specialized trainings on the SEA investigations for NGO partners were also organized by UNHCR in November 2022, reaching more than 70 UNHCR and partner staff from six countries.

More than 14,600 refugees have been reached through PSEA awareness-raising activities, including through the ICVA-UNHCR Community Outreach Project with the refugee-led organization 'Sme Spolu' ('We are together') in Slovakia. In addition, focus group discussions were conducted in all neighbouring countries to determine the key risks and recommendations from the perspective of the community, including on the preferred communication channels and barriers to reporting incidents. A total of 17 risk assessments were conducted to inform the PSEA Action Plans and risk mitigation efforts.

Service mappings and the establishment of referral pathways for victim's assistance were undertaken to ensure assistance in line with a victim-centred approach. These efforts were conducted in collaboration with GBV Sub Working Groups or actors at national level, building on and reinforcing existing capacities of NGOs, women-led organizations and national service providers.

Gender



A Regional Gender Task Force (RGTF) was established in March 2022 under the umbrella of the Regional Refugee Coordination Forum to ensure the adequate mainstreaming and integration of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across the refugee response.

One of the main achievements of the RGTF was the development of an interagency Regional Gender Analysis, published in October 2022. The report identified gender related trends, gaps and specific challenges faced by women and men belonging to different socio-economic and ethnic groups across Ukraine and neighboring countries, including Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.

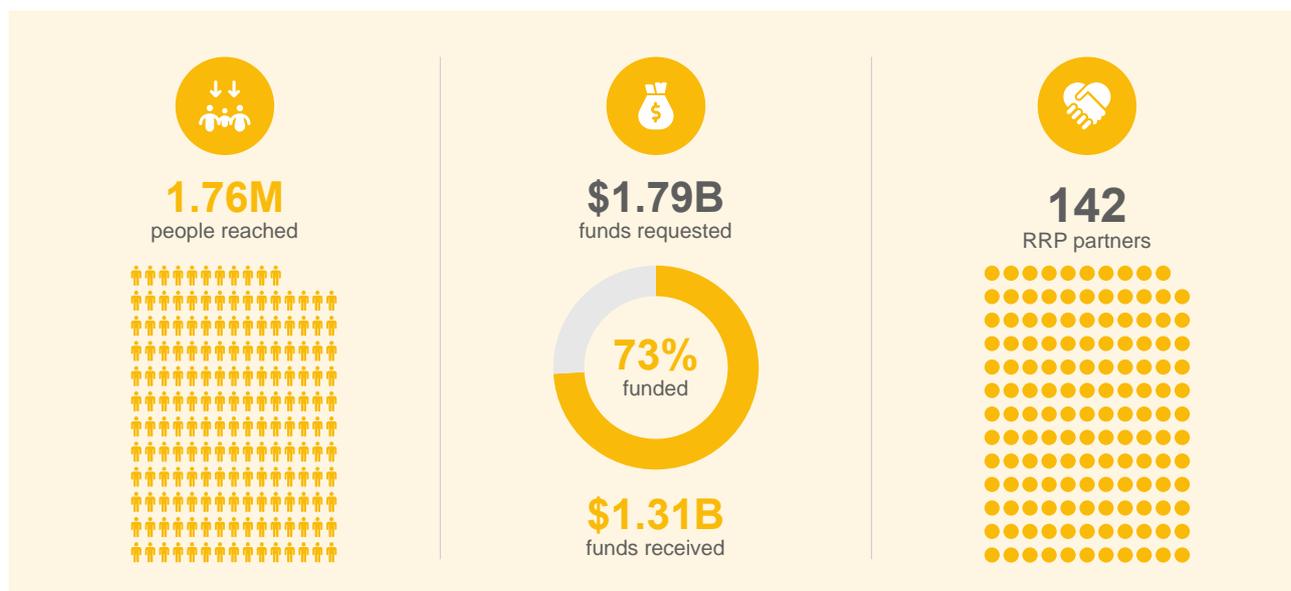
The report provided practical recommendations for decision-makers in the humanitarian response, states, policymakers and donors in relation to the participation and leadership of women-led organizations, women's rights organizations, women and marginalized groups; the prevention, mitigation, and response to gender-based violence; the access to and availability and enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights; and intersectionality of gender and diversity factors.

REGIONAL END-OF-YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS (Mar - Dec 2022)

Within the framework of the inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), 142 partners joined efforts in 2022 to provide protection services and multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to refugees from Ukraine, third country nationals seeking safety and other persons in need across seven countries in the region. The RRP complements Government-led efforts and

builds on the collective efforts being conducted by volunteer groups and other local responders. The number of RRP partners is not exhaustive of all actors involved in the response.

The figures below represent the achievements by RRP partners against the regional RRP indicators.



Sector		People reached	% reached	People targeted
 Protection	Individuals supported in accessing protection and documentation	1.17M	69%	1.69M
	Children provided with child protection services	358.9k	100%	337.0k
	Participants trained on child protection and children's rights	8.3k	100%	6.0k
	Individuals that received information on available services related to GBV	178.1k	44%	404.5k
	Participants trained on GBV prevention, response and risk mitigation	5.9k	48%	12.4k
 Basic needs	Individuals who received in-kind assistance for basic needs	1.01M	100%	834.3k
 Cash	Individuals who received cash assistance	884.9k	72%	1.23M
 Food security	Individuals who received food assistance	539.0k	100%	319.1k
 Health	Consultations provided for MHPSS	327.1k	94%	346.3k
 Education	Children benefitting from national education system	325.5k	39%	845.0k



BULGARIA

Situation Overview

More than 977,000 refugees had crossed into Bulgaria by the end of the year, of whom some 149,000 requested and received Temporary Protection. As of end 2022, some 50,200 of these refugees from Ukraine remained in Bulgaria and resided mostly in the coastal area, as well as larger cities, including Sofia and Plovdiv. Among the refugees registered for temporary protection, 68 per cent were women and girls, while older persons comprised some 12 per cent of the population.

In March 2022, the Government of Bulgaria implemented a national accommodation policy which provided accommodation to refugees from Ukraine in state-owned facilities as well as hotels on the Black Sea coast. This accommodation scheme was extended several times during 2022, and currently runs until 24 March 2023. The government is working on a new Humanitarian Aid Programme for refugees from Ukraine – and RRP partners have offered support to the government in planning the next phase.

Since June 2022, a care-taker government has been in place in Bulgaria following a no-confidence vote in the previous administration. The formation of a new government is still not determined, with general elections scheduled to take place in April 2023, should all attempts at forming the government have been exhausted before then.

Highlights and achievements

Over the course of 2022, partners in Bulgaria in collaboration with local authorities jointly opened six Blue Dots where refugees were supported with essential services and referrals, including safe spaces for children and families, protection and legal assistance, information on available services, and mental health and psychosocial support. Blue Dot hubs also offered referral services for women, including on gender-based violence. To further mitigate the risks of trafficking and sexual exploitation and abuse, partners, in collaboration with the National Commission on Combating Trafficking of Human Beings, conducted a series of training sessions for local commissions, relevant national and local authorities, civil society and volunteers.

In addition to trainings, capacity-building activities for national authorities included the provision of technical support and expertise in order to ensure that refugees from Ukraine had access to territory, registration, reception and services adapted to their needs. Partners also provided capacity building for lawyers on rights under the Temporary Protection Directive and increased legal counselling services including through online tools, expanding access to these services to anywhere refugees had internet connection. In tandem, partners established online information hubs with key information on services and rights under the Temporary Protection Directive, as well as helplines and feedback mechanisms for two-way communication, to ensure the timely outreach and dissemination of relevant information to the refugee community. To help strengthen social cohesion and solidarity within communities, partners worked closely with refugee and local youth, including through community-based activities such as sports.

Back-to-school and learning information campaigns were organized in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and regional education and health departments as well as NGO partners to address the low enrolment of Ukrainian children in Bulgarian schools and ensure children's enrolment in and transition to the next school year. RRP partners also supported learning opportunities for refugee children by distributing learning materials, improving access to internet and providing additional catch-up support for primary school-aged students.

To address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination guidelines and information were translated and disseminated in relevant languages for refugees. Taking into consideration the Bulgarian vaccination requirements for children and adolescents, the Ukrainian and Bulgarian vaccination schedules were

synchronized so that refugees could receive their routine immunizations on time. Further to supporting vaccination activities, RRP partners focused on disseminating health information to caregivers and training health care workers. Together with the Ministry of Health, RRP partners carried out an inter-agency health assessment in November 2022, the findings of which highlighted refugees' current and emerging health needs in Bulgaria. These findings and recommendations informed activities and advocacy efforts to strengthen the health care system and ensure continued access to health care services for refugees and local communities.

In the second half of 2022, RRP partners scaled up assistance for the most vulnerable refugees as winter approached. This included winter-related cash top-ups, as well as winterized relief items such as warm clothes, thermal blankets and hygiene kits.

The Refugee Coordination Model was activated in Bulgaria in support of the Government's efforts from the outset of the Ukraine situation. In late 2022, the inter-agency Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF), led by UNHCR, expanded to include the wider network of civil society organizations and national NGOs in the response. Cash and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Technical Working Groups were also established under the RCF.

Gaps and challenges

Changes in the government interlocutor for managing the response have presented some challenges with regards to coordination. The task force and six sectoral working groups established under the previous government administration to manage the national response to the Ukraine situation were dissolved after the no-confidence vote, with a new operational task force created under the new administration in mid-November 2022. Throughout the political situation, however, RRP partners, through the RCF, continued to work with and maintain support to the government-led response.

Notwithstanding ongoing health interventions and support provided in 2022, strengthening refugees' access to health and MHPSS services was identified as a crucial need in Bulgaria. Focus group discussions and findings of the inter-agency Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) identified difficulties registering with a general health practitioner, including due to a lack of information about the health system, the inability to find a general practitioner willing to accept refugee patients with chronic or severe health needs, as well as language barriers.

Until the government establishes a more predictable and longer-term scheme for refugees in need of accommodation, timely information for refugees and more forward planning on the extension of the accommodation programme is needed.

There is also a need to further enhance communication with the refugee community and access to information for refugees on available services, including health, education, employment and state social protection services. Refugee children's access to education and low enrolment rates remain a challenge, tied to the fact that many refugee children are attending online classes in Ukraine and also due to language barriers as cited by refugees in the MSNA. According to the MSNA, refugees' ability to meet their basic needs remains limited, with many reliant on humanitarian or social assistance to receive or purchase food and non-food items. This is particularly relevant for refugees accommodated under the government scheme, as they have limited financial means to cover food expenses and limited options to prepare their own food in the facilities where they are accommodated. Lack of opportunities for decent work, due to various reasons including language barriers and lack of childcare, is another key challenge facing refugees and priority issue to address for the response moving forward.

Additionally, the national child protection system lacks the capacity to fully meet the needs of unaccompanied refugee children. Legislative provisions on the representation of unaccompanied children with Temporary Protection – and the absence of a legal definition of what constitutes a separated child – limited children's access to rights and services and exposed them to additional risks. Proposals to address gaps were prepared but could not be adopted in the absence of a regular government to include them in the national legal framework. Awareness on and referral pathways for available GBV services and PSEA mechanisms need to also be strengthened, as the majority of respondents in the MSNA answered that they do not know where

to access specialized services if someone in the community experiences GBV – as well as where to complain if someone experiences sexual abuse or exploitation.

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

When refugees from Ukraine arrived in Varna, on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast, in March 2022, the Varna municipality established a Crisis Centre to coordinate the humanitarian response at the Palace of Culture and Sports. Members of the local community self-organized to create strong volunteer networks. These volunteers worked with the local authorities to provide food and basic items for refugees arriving from Ukraine. The municipality also coordinated with local actors to provide key information to arriving refugees on available services, creating a useful information hub.



Volunteers bring in donations of food and basic items for refugees arriving from Ukraine in Varna. Photo: Energy Association

BULGARIA END-OF-YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS (Mar - Dec 2022)



Within the framework of the inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), 4 partners in Bulgaria joined efforts in 2022 to provide protection services and multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to refugees from Ukraine, third country nationals seeking safety and other persons in need. The RRP complements Government-led efforts and builds on the collective

efforts being conducted by volunteer groups and other local responders. The number of RRP partners is not exhaustive of all actors involved in the response in Bulgaria.

The figures below represent the achievements by RRP partners against the regional RRP indicators.



Sector		Reporting partners	People reached
Protection	Individuals supported in accessing protection and documentation	3	145.5k
	Children provided with child protection services		2.2k
	Participants trained on child protection and children's rights		3.3k
	Individuals that received information on available services related to GBV		0.4k
	Participants trained on GBV prevention, response and risk mitigation		40
Basic needs	Individuals who received in-kind assistance for basic needs	3	21.3k
Cash	Individuals who received cash assistance	3	7.4k
Health	Consultations provided for MHPSS	3	20.9k
Education	Children benefitting from national education system	1	4.9k

*This figure corresponds to the highest sector total of the number of people reached rather than the sum of people reached under each indicator, to avoid possible double counting.



CZECH REPUBLIC

Situation Overview

The Czech Republic has one of the highest numbers of registered refugees from Ukraine globally, both in terms of absolute number and per capita. The large Ukrainian pre-war diaspora, the country's dynamic economy with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the EU, and the significant solidarity with refugees shown by host community have led to large numbers of Ukrainians choosing to seek safety in the Czech Republic. As of the end of 2022, 473,216 Ukrainian refugees had received temporary protection status under the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD); among whom approximately 80 per cent are women and children – 47 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively.

After the initial large influx of refugees into the Czech Republic following the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine, the number of arrivals began to stabilize toward the second half of the year. Still, a steady increase in the number of persons granted temporary protection continues of around 10,000-15,000 per month. Many refugees considered the Czech Republic their ultimate destination, though onward and pendular movements also continue. This makes it difficult to establish the exact number of refugees who remain in the country, especially as the country does not have external Schengen land borders with Ukraine. However, the projected population in the RRP of some 500,000 refugees passing through or staying in the Czech Republic in 2022 proved realistic, based on the available data.

The package of national laws – “Lex Ukraine” – passed in March 2022 regulated the legal residence of temporary protection holders in the Czech Republic. The legislation also facilitated the rapid registration of refugees and introduced key measures related to access to health insurance, the labour market and education; humanitarian allowances for refugees; and solidarity allowances for those hosting refugees.

The Czech Government devised a comprehensive adaptation and inclusion strategy to support refugees from Ukraine throughout a three-phased response approach: flight for safety; adaptation and coexistence; and long-term solutions. The strategy is articulated around 13 priority areas, each assigned to a working group, including coordination, communication, financing, digital management, and inclusion.² The government also developed guidance for partners to align their interventions with the government strategy, complementing existing protection schemes. The vision of the Government is to incorporate vulnerable refugees into the social safety nets already in place for Czech nationals.

Highlights and Achievements

In 2022, RRP partners built on existing national protection capacities, complementing the national response where needed, focusing on longer-term, sustainable assistance after the initial phases of the emergency. To support the inclusion of refugees in the government assistance scheme, protection actors provided counselling on access to temporary protection status and related rights, and referrals to available services. Information for refugees on protection risks, such as gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking, and other forms of exploitation, was provided at points of transit and arrival. Online platforms were launched, such as the UNHCR Help Page and IOM Infoline. Emphasis was also placed on enhancing two-way communication with refugee communities. To prevent and respond to cases of gender-based violence and trafficking, specialized organizations provided timely referrals to health, psychosocial support, and legal services. Given that around one-third of refugees are children, RRP partners engaged local NGOs to strengthen the identification and referral of children at risk to child protection, health, and education services. While refugees

² Czech Republic: [Determination of strategic priorities of the Government of the Czech Republic to deal with the refugee wave related to the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation](#), April 2022.

generally encountered easy access to registration for temporary protection and related services, challenges and delays were identified for Roma refugee families from Ukraine; over 2,000 Ukrainian Roma asylum-seekers were supported across the country by RRP partners, to register and receive assistance. Access to mental health and psychosocial support was ensured through referrals to public services and dedicated programmes by MHPSS partners. More than 24,000 children and caregivers were provided with MPHSS through direct service provision and information on access to services.

Enrolment of refugee children with temporary protection status in Czech schools is mandatory by law. RRP partners worked with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport to support access of Ukrainian children to national schools and rolled out capacity-building initiatives for school staff, including over 4,000 teachers and 600 teaching assistants, while promoting a back-to-school campaign. A variety of training programmes as well as mentoring, coaching and peer-to-peer support were provided to teachers and school staff to improve knowledge and skills to provide safe, healthy, and inclusive learning environments, and manage classrooms with students of varying mother tongues, skill levels, and specialized needs, such as for mental health support. Partners also published information brochures for refugees on the Czech education system, in coordination with the ministry. According to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, 50,285 children were enrolled in Czech schools in 2022, while enrolment in the primary schools reached over 90 per cent.³

In close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, refugees' access to the national health system was strengthened, both for primary and specialized care, including mental health care. RRP partners supported high-quality service provision at hospitals and specialized service points for Ukrainians; enhanced hospitalization and laboratory capacity through material support; and provided IT and other medical equipment. Partners also supported the establishment of nine paediatric and adult outpatient centres in university hospitals across the country, providing primary health care services to over 10,500 persons. In collaboration with local health institutions, partners helped facilitate the accreditation of over 500 Ukrainian health professionals, while building capacities for culturally sensitive and interpersonal communication skills among health workers. A health information campaign launched by partners reached over 500,000 individuals through various communication channels – videos, social media, leaflets and posters – and languages on topics such as medication safety, vaccination and MHPSS.

Challenges to accessing basic needs increased in the second half of 2022, due to winter, inflation and rising utility costs. RRP partners worked with line ministries to support the inclusion of refugees in services made available by the Czech Government. Partners reached refugee and third-country nationals in transit and in community centres with essential items and support to access accommodation and employment.

In partnership with the Municipality of Prague, a Follow-Up Centre for Ukrainian refugees was launched to provide comprehensive services. In addition, 23 civil society organizations were supported to co-create projects targeting 15- to 17-year-olds. Over 27,200 people were reached through a social cohesion campaign that provided messages on mental health and psychosocial support in Ukrainian, Russian and Czech. Partners also supported the management of safe shelters and the provision of psychosocial services, as well as legal and reintegration assistance for more than 6,400 identified persons with vulnerabilities and protection needs.

³ <https://www.msmt.cz/deti-ukrajinskych-uprchliku-je-ve-skolach-vice-nez-50-tisic>

Gaps and challenges

Notwithstanding the exemplary commitment and efforts from the Czech Government and society to provide support and protection to refugees, challenges remain. As in other hosting countries, the number of refugees remaining in the country remains difficult to track, hindering planning efforts by the central and local government and humanitarian actors. Reception capacities are exhausted; the shortage of short- to mid-term accommodation arrangements is particularly acute in large cities, particularly the capital Prague. Moreover, prolonged displacement coupled with the rising cost of living, lack of Czech language, the absence of sufficient childcare support and administrative difficulties in accessing employment put pressure on the resilience and coping mechanisms of refugees, underscoring the need for enhanced access to social protection mechanisms.

Municipalities hosting large numbers of refugees are challenged by limited space in schools, particularly in kindergartens or children's groups. Those municipalities require additional finances to increase school capacity and materials while parents and families need more information about and channels to communicate with schools in their areas of residence to increase school enrolment and facilitate learning and integration.

Support for learning the Czech language also needs to be increased. Furthermore, teachers and school staff require capacity-building, including trainings, mentoring and coaching to manage classrooms with students of varying mother tongues, different skill levels, or some who need specialized mental health support. Increasing the number of Ukrainian teaching assistants and psychologists is also critical. In parallel, data gaps need to be filled by mapping non-formal education and learning programmes organized by Ukrainian community organizations or groups.

Moving into the second year since the escalation of the conflict, it becomes increasingly important to guarantee access to national protection mechanisms for refugee children and strengthen preventive child protection services and family support, including by expanding the coverage and scope of statutory child protection services to refugee children, including unaccompanied and separated children and Roma. Strengthening the capacity of the social service workforce to adequately respond to the specific needs of refugee children and families – including by reaching out the most vulnerable and most difficult to reach – and expanding community-based integrated service provision is another priority. Mechanisms for the identification of unaccompanied and separated children are key, as is expanding temporary and community-based care solutions for children. Finally, strengthened coordination between relevant line ministries will be important going forward.

The government has sought to ensure access to health services but resources are stretched, particularly in areas where many refugees have settled. Access to general practitioners remains an issue, particularly outside of the main urban centres, and to paediatric services, due to the lack of paediatricians. Strengthening access for refugees to specialized care and medicines for chronic conditions is another priority for 2023, as well as addressing the language barriers that limit access to health services and the quality of the service provision.

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION



Distribution of bedding aid at a community center in Dobříš, Czechia. Photo: IOM/Anna Šolcová

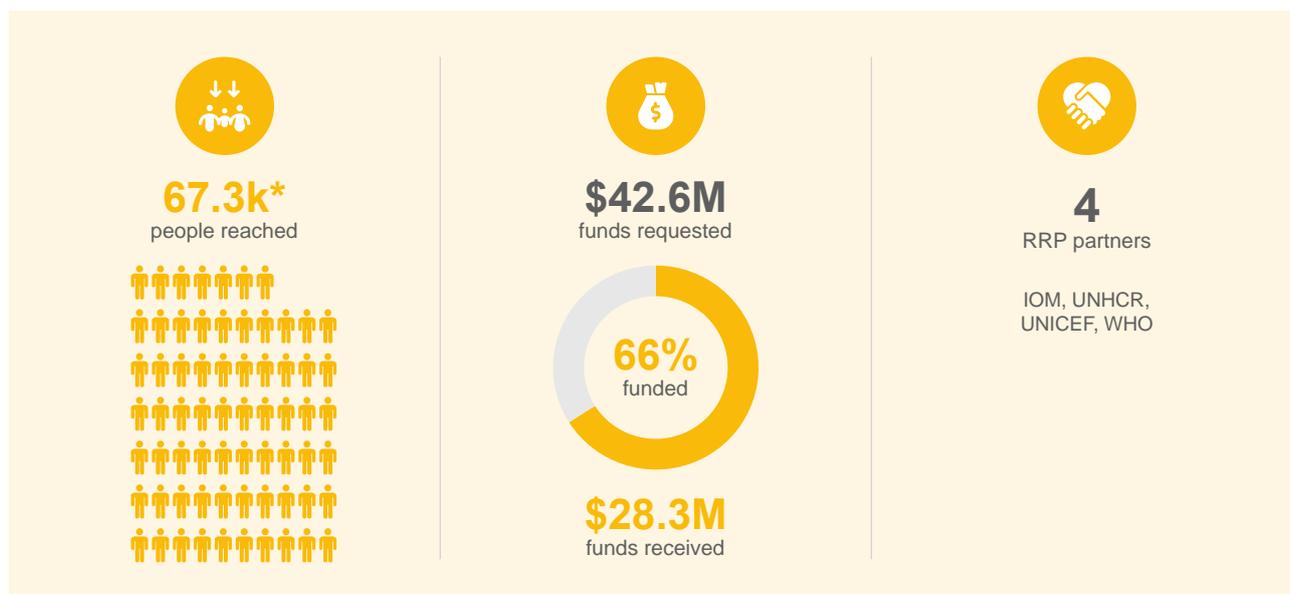
RRP partners complemented the national response, ensuring effective and timely delivery of protection and assistance to the refugees across the country. In addition to line ministries, it is important to acknowledge the contribution of the many NGOs and civil society organizations who worked in partnership with the RRP organizations, such as La Strada, Romodrom, Slovo21, SIMI, OPU, Trigon Ostrava, AIDS Společnost, National Association of Patients' organizations, Narodni Ustav Dusevniho Zdravi (The National Institute of Public Health), Alliance Center Dusevniho Zdravi, Česká odborná společnost pro inkluzivní vzdělávání, ADRA, Konsorcium nevládních organizací pracujících s migranty v ČR (Consortium of NGOs Assisting Migrants in the Czech Republic), Asociace malých a středních podniků a živnostníků ČR (Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Crafts CZ), Krajská hospodářská komora Karlovarského kraje, NADĚJE, MAS Vladař o.p.s., Laxus z.ú., Klubičko Cheb z.s. Nadace Via (Via Foundation), Agency for Migration and Adaption AMIGA, z.s., Brdy-Vltava o.p.s., Ukrajinská iniciativa v České republice, z.s., Dignity Restoring Hope z.s., Slovo 21, z.s., who have contributed to the response with their expertise and commitment.



Within the framework of the inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), 4 partners in the Czech Republic joined efforts in 2022 to provide protection services and multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to refugees from Ukraine, third country nationals seeking safety and other persons in need. The RRP complements Government-led efforts and builds on the

collective efforts being conducted by volunteer groups and other local responders. The number of RRP partners is not exhaustive of all actors involved in the response in the Czech Republic.

The figures below represent the achievements by RRP partners against the regional RRP indicators..



Sector		Reporting partners	People reached
Protection	Individuals supported in accessing protection and documentation	3	4.4k
	Children provided with child protection services		12.1k
	Participants trained on child protection and children's rights		67
	Individuals that received information on available services related to GBV		9.5k
	Participants trained on GBV prevention, response and risk mitigation		31
Basic needs	Individuals who received in-kind assistance for basic needs	3	5.5k
Health	Consultations provided for MHPSS	3	5.7k**
Education	Children benefitting from national education system	3	67.3k



Situation Overview

Between 24 February and end December 2022 over 3.9 million border crossings were recorded into Hungary – 2 million directly from Ukraine and 1.9 million via the Romanian border.⁴ While many refugees transited through Hungary, others temporarily settled in the country or engaged in pendular movements back and forth to Ukraine, particularly to the Transcarpathia region in Ukraine's Zakarpatska Oblast, where many ethnic Hungarians reside. As of the end of 2022, 176,083 Temporary Residency Cards and over 25,000 residency permits had been issued following the start of the full-scale war. Some 33,200 individuals have also registered for temporary protection in Hungary, while other individuals and families who fled Ukraine due to the war remained in Hungary through different legal statuses, including student visas.⁵

One year into the crisis, the influx of refugees from Ukraine has put pressure on the national welfare system. This is against a backdrop of inflation and rising utility and living costs that are adversely affecting host communities and refugees alike. More recent arrivals entering Hungary also show heightened signs of vulnerability, including older refugees who face difficulties accessing health care and pensions, as well as a growing number of vulnerable third-country nationals. Furthermore, dual nationals and families from Transcarpathia, including Roma, continue facing specific vulnerabilities and barriers to inclusion and assistance.

Temporary protection status was introduced by the Hungarian Government in the early stages of the refugee situation to regulate access to social protection, health care and employment. Subsequently, the Government issued legislation aimed at supporting refugees from Ukraine, including the provision of free meals for refugee children in need. In addition to the right to work for both applicants and holders of temporary protection, certified health care professionals from Ukraine were allowed to practice under the supervision of authorized medical professionals in Hungary while in the process of getting their qualifications recognized. State subsidies were also introduced for local employers hiring refugees from Ukraine and schools providing catch-up classes to refugee children from Ukraine. However, challenges remain in practice for refugees to access services, rendering medium to longer-term solutions for refugees from Ukraine difficult, in particular for those outside of Budapest.

Highlights and Achievements

To better facilitate refugees' access to rights and entitlements in Hungary and address protection concerns, RRP partners mapped protection services for child protection, gender-based violence, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and trafficking and supported referral mechanisms. Ties with authorities, including the National Directorate for Aliens Policing, responsible for temporary protection; the Anti-Trafficking Coordinator for Hungary; child protection authorities; and the Municipality of Budapest, were strengthened to enhance complementarity with the government response. Partners also worked on the specific challenges for children and their families to access services under the national child protection system, advocating for the extension of the Child Protection Act to refugees. With the aim of strengthening gender-based violence (GBV) risk mitigation across the response, safety audits were rolled out to assess GBV risks and identify applicable risk mitigation measures.

⁴ [UNHCR Data Portal/Hungary](#), reporting official numbers of the Hungarian Border Police. The numbers include multiple crossings by the same person and multiple nationalities.

⁵ [UNHCR Data Portal/Hungary](#), reporting information from the National Directorate-General of Aliens Policing of Hungary.



An employee of the Hungarian Order of Malta gives formula to refugee children who have been on the road for several days at the temporary help point at the Beregsurány border crossing on February 27. The help point offered food, drinks, hygiene products, over-the-counter medicines and rest in a heated tent. Photo: Hungarian Order of Malta/Csaba Majoros Árpád

Over 25 education organizations, including local NGOs and refugee-led organizations, coordinated their interventions under the Education Sub-Working Group, strengthened ties with national education networks, mapped national and international stakeholders working on education for refugees, and launched several capacity-building initiatives for national partners. To enhance MHPSS services for refugees in Hungary, the MHPSS Task Force conducted three service mapping exercises to identify available services and gaps and coordinate referrals; IASC/WHO MHPSS Guidelines were also translated into Hungarian. The task force collaborated with the Primary Health Care Planning and Development Department under the Ministry of Interior and the North-Central Buda Centre of Saint John Hospital to coordinate MHPSS responses with national authorities and a MHPSS Open Forum event was organized in December in Hungary to bring together national and international MHPSS actors.

Partners supporting basic needs assistance, in particular non-food items, multipurpose cash grants and vouchers, and short to medium-term accommodation, coordinated the delivery of aid and services at the border and main reception centres in Budapest, Debrecen, and Győr and across the country. Partners working at the main entry point of Záhony also joined efforts to provide basic assistance, information, counselling, and temporary accommodation, in close coordination with the Municipality. The Basic Needs Working Group held thematic workshops to exchange good practices and map the availability of services across the country.

Given the need to prioritize collective efforts to safeguard refugees from sexual exploitation and abuse, the task force on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) was established early in the response. The task force developed a PSEA National Action Plan that reflects considerable investment made into enhancing internal organizational capacities on PSEA and awareness of PSEA risks, standards of conduct, and how to report. A “Stay Safe” campaign was rolled out in Hungary, and translated tools were developed to promote good practices on vetting and registering volunteers, “dos and don’ts” for volunteers, and key safeguarding messages. Referral pathways for victims’ assistance were made available and a regional training was held for national organizations in November on investigating SEA allegations.

Challenges

Planning and implementing the response to refugees' needs in Hungary remains challenging due to the lack of unified data on the refugee population in the country and the absence of comprehensive mechanisms to compile key information on the refugee population in Hungary. Reliable data on access to health and education (e.g. enrolment and school dropout data; breakdowns of schools by type and location) are also not systematically available.

Challenges for refugees to access rights and services in Hungary have become more visible over time due to de facto barriers encountered in the existing procedures and the increasingly complex needs of refugees. Integrating refugee children into the public education system, for example, remains difficult given the language barrier and limited level of support. Language barriers also prevent refugees from accessing specific services, such as MHPSS. MHPSS services in the country require further strengthening through the expansion of community-based and resilience-focused approaches, in addition to clinical interventions.

Protracted displacement and resulting socio-economic difficulties increase the vulnerability and dependency on aid for some refugees and have therefore a major impact on the protection environment for refugees. Risks when searching for accommodation, transport, employment, and material support are high, in part due to the unregulated online platforms widely used by refugees to search for these services. Sensitivity around the topic of GBV, the limited number of child psychiatrists and psychologist, and the absence of a clear national system that oversees the response and case management of survivors also remains a key challenge and priority focus area for the protection response in 2023.

Moving into the second year of the displacement, the need for more emphasis on the inclusion of refugees into the socio-economic tissue of Hungary and mid-to-long term solutions has become more and more central. Access to the labour market is hindered by language barriers, administrative hurdles, such as the recognition of qualification from Ukraine, and lack of day care for children, which is discouraging refugee mothers from even looking for jobs. Inclusion is particularly challenging for Roma refugees, who face prejudice and discrimination in accessing accommodation, low school enrolment rates, and scarce job offers. Long-term solutions for issues such as accommodation, basic needs and social protection for the most vulnerable remain urgent as emergency measures grow more costly and precarious. Furthermore, the social protection net in Hungary is not sufficient for the most vulnerable cases, with assistance provided at too minimal a rate to be sustainable.

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION



Refugee children from Ukraine before their performance at the opening event of the Learning Without Borders center run by Migration Aid. Photo: Migration Aid/Zoltán Szabó.

In 2022, RRP partners engaged seven refugee-led organizations in Hungary through small grant scheme arrangements, supporting several community-led initiatives organized by newly arrived refugees and Ukrainian nationals residing in Hungary before the escalation of the conflict in February 2022. The initiatives targeted refugees and, in some instances, local host communities through recreational activities for children, psychosocial support, and provision of information, including on rights and entitlements linked to the temporary protection status. As a result, the protection environment for refugees was strengthened through community engagement, and Ukrainian communities in Hungary (refugees and the diaspora) were connected. Small grants arrangements proved to be flexible yet effective tools. Besides, hundreds of volunteers from the refugee and host community were also engaged in the response, in community centres and humanitarian hubs reaching families with relevant information on access to TP and other legal status and related services, collecting feedback from refugees at transit points, collective shelters and engaging refugees in summer school, recreational activities and information exchange.

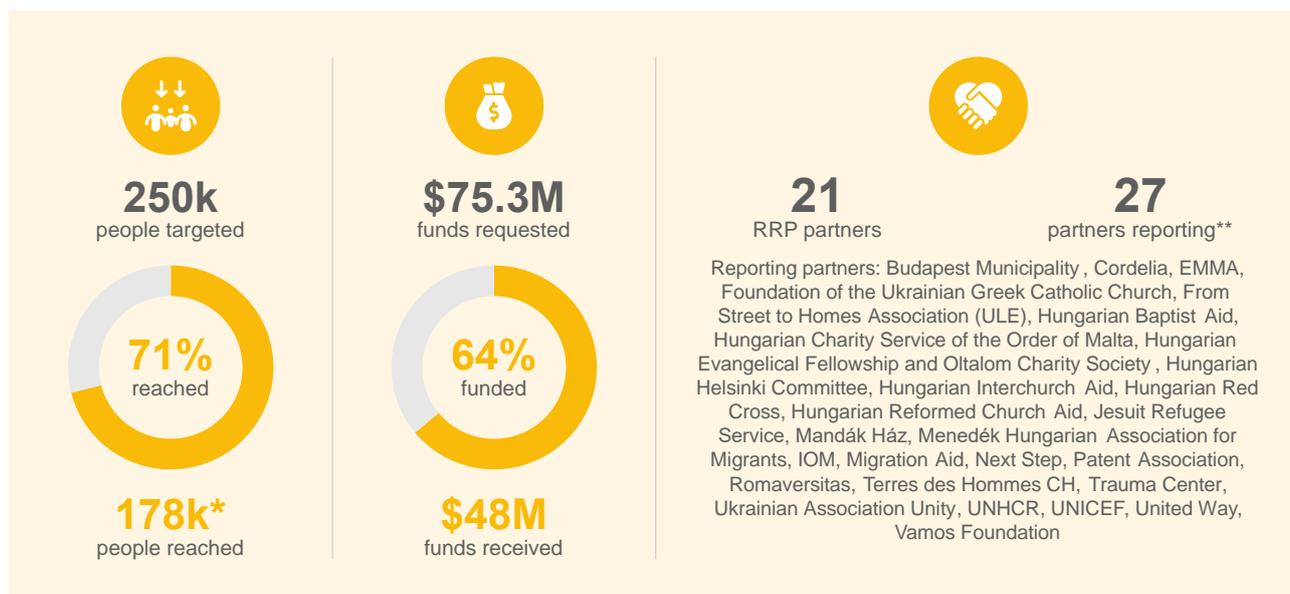
HUNGARY END-OF-YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS (Mar - Dec 2022)



Within the framework of the inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), 21 partners in Hungary joined efforts in 2022 to provide protection services and multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to refugees from Ukraine, third country nationals seeking safety and other persons in need. The RRP complements Government-led efforts and builds on the collective efforts being conducted by volunteer groups and other

local responders. The number of RRP partners is not exhaustive of all actors involved in the response in Hungary.

The figures below represent the achievements by RRP partners and, where relevant, their implementing partners against the regional RRP indicators.



Sector		Reporting partners	People reached	% reached	People targeted
Protection	Individuals supported in accessing protection and documentation	18	39.4k	79%	50.0k
	Children provided with child protection services		4.1k	100%	2.0k
	Participants trained on child protection and children's rights		0.2k	44%	0.5k
	Individuals that received information on available services related to GBV		2.8k	14%	20.0k
	Participants trained on GBV prevention, response and risk mitigation		0.5k	100%	0.5k
Basic needs	Individuals who received in-kind assistance for basic needs	20	77.1k	96%	80.0k
Cash	Individuals who received cash assistance	20	30.6k	87%	35.0k
Food security	Individuals who received food assistance	20	177.6k	99%	180.0k
Health	Consultations provided for MHPSS	17	21.3k	43%	50.0k
Education	Children benefitting from national education system*	17	5.0k	25%	20.0k

*This figure corresponds to the highest sector total of the number of people reached rather than the sum of people reached under each indicator, to avoid possible double counting.
**This includes implementing partners of RRP partners.



REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Situation Overview

As of December 2022, over 750,000 individuals had fled from Ukraine to the Republic of Moldova. (hereinafter “Moldova”). Over 102,000 refugees remained in the country at the end of last year. Most refugees were women (60 per cent), followed by children (46 per cent), and older persons (21 per cent).

Moldova is currently facing a complex crisis with several pressing challenges, including limited economic recovery, rising inflation, and increasing energy prices, while institutional capacities and resources remain under significant pressure.

Despite the challenging circumstances, Moldova remained committed to welcoming refugees and implementing the vision outlined in the Global Compact on Refugees. The country maintained its open border policy for those fleeing from Ukraine throughout the year, upholding the principles of international refugee law and addressing the humanitarian needs of refugees.

From the onset of the refugee movement to Moldova, an inter-agency Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) led by the Government of Moldova and UNHCR was established comprising eight sectoral working groups and three cross-sectoral taskforces. In line with the Refugee Coordination Model, the RCF supported the government’s leadership of the response by ensuring a common strategy and vision among partners that is aligned with government priorities and the needs of refugees and affected host communities.

Throughout 2022, the response of UN agencies, international NGOs, the Red Cross Movement, and local civil society organizations to the refugee situation focused on: a) supporting the government-led efforts on receiving and providing life-saving assistance to new arrivals; b) facilitating access to protection and basic services, and fostering inclusion; and c) providing safe transportation for those moving onwards. Partners also worked towards setting the foundations for transitional measures focusing on the long-term inclusion of refugees in Moldova. Collaboration between RRP partners ensured that over 138,000 refugees and 22,000 host community members were reached and directly supported through the provision of protection services, humanitarian relief items (NFIs), transportation, temporary accommodation and multipurpose cash assistance.

The refugee response in Moldova remains focused on addressing the immediate needs and protection concerns of those at higher risk, including refugees with disabilities, older people and members of ethnic minorities such as Roma refugees. RCF partners also worked to support the strengthening of national systems to deliver humanitarian assistance and facilitate the socio-economic inclusion of refugees.

Highlights and Achievements

In 2022, RCF partners engaged in key inter-agency coordination exercises, including the development and implementation of a winterization plan and an inter-agency contingency plan. 49,000 refugees targeted by the Winterization Plan received winter-related non-food items (NFIs), and 30,000 refugee households and 18,000 vulnerable Moldovan individuals received winter cash top-ups.

Local Refugee Coordination Fora were established in seven localities to improve area-based coordination and increase local participation in the refugee response. The establishment of these local coordination fora helped to increase the participation of local municipalities, local civil society organizations – including women-led organizations – as well as refugee and host community representatives in the overall refugee response, while establishing closer links between localities and national coordination fora.

The Protection Working Group provided critical support to refugees and host community members. Key achievements included successful advocacy for the activation of the Temporary Protection regime and transfer



Seven-year-old Makar and his eight-year-old sister, Adelina, from Odesa, Ukraine, with their mother at the Blue Dot centre in Chisinau. Staff at the Blue Dot centre invited refugee children to participate in recreational activities to help them forget about the war. Photo: UNICEF/VladimirDogoter

of 2,058 vulnerable refugees to 13 EU+ countries. The Gender-Based Violence Sub-Working Group trained some 2,600 frontline responders, distributed over 18,000 dignity kits to women and girls and supported over 13,000 individuals through 28 Orange Safe Spaces. The Child Protection Sub-Working Group identified and provided protection to over 900 unaccompanied and separated children. Approximately 45,000 refugees, including 23,000 children, received multi-sectoral assistance through the Blue Dots across the country.

The Education Working Group provided non-formal education to 34,610 learners and supported the enrolment of 1,823 refugee children in national schools. The Health and Nutrition Working Group worked to strengthen the national health system and provided 44,093 refugees with basic health care, including mental health and psychosocial support services, and 9,470 received primary health care. Over 2,000 health providers were trained, and health promotion activities reached over 200,000 beneficiaries.

The Humanitarian Relief (NFIs), Accommodation and Transportation Working Group provided support to refugees and vulnerable Moldovan households with over 261,139 NFIs, 2.6 million hot meals, and firewood transportation and distribution. Water and sanitation infrastructures were winterized with the provision of heating and hot water at the border crossing points, bus stations and camps both in Planca and Otaci.

The Livelihoods and Inclusion Working Group helped refugees access sustainable income and socio-economic inclusion opportunities, with over 800 participating in vocational courses and job counselling and some 950 refugees accessing formal employment. The Cash Working Group provided support to over 108,000 refugees and 22,000 host community members with Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance. The Logistics & Supply Working Group provided logistical support with a long-term warehousing agreement for over 9,000 m² of space and dispatching over 360 Purchase Orders worth over USD 9.7 million.

The Gender Task Force conducted trainings on Gender in Humanitarian Action and provided funding of USD 1 million for women-led organizations. Over 500 humanitarian and development actors were trained on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), and a joint Inter-Agency PSEA Standard Operating Procedure was developed and approved. The Task Force on Accountability to Affected People ensured access to information for displaced people and the development of effective two-way communication systems, with the Refugee Green Line answering some 55,200 enquiries in 2022. A rumour tracking system was put in place to produce informative posts and moderate online communications and produced over 500 informative posts and moderated 30,739 online communications.

Gaps and Challenges

In the face of the multiple crises faced by the country, the generous response of Moldova must be matched with stronger commitment and support by the international community. Under the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, it is key to promote more predictable and equitable responsibility and burden-sharing to ease pressure on the Moldovan society and support it to address the needs of host and refugee communities in the country. An integrated approach combining humanitarian and development efforts will help the country better prepare for and respond to future uncertainties and ongoing displacement, particularly in support of the government's implementation of the Temporary Protection (TP) regime for refugees from Ukraine.

The activation of TP will provide refugees with a more stable and predictable legal status, allowing them greater opportunities to integrate into the local community, access the labour market and more sustainable work opportunities to achieve self-reliance. However, as Moldova is not a member of the European Union, it does not have access to the same regional response mechanisms and support as EU Member States. It is therefore critical for a range of actors, including development actors, to provide sustained support to guarantee refugees the full range of rights associated with TP, such as access to education, protection, basic health services, and social assistance. Although the government is fully committed to the inclusion of refugees in national systems, resources are limited, and it is necessary to strengthen national systems and services.

While the refugee response in Moldova is increasingly focusing on transitional measures to promote socio-economic inclusion, the ongoing instability in Ukraine underlines the need to maintain emergency response capacities in case of further large-scale arrivals. Reception capacities have been strengthened at border points, including the Refugee Crisis Centres of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Reception Centres in Palanca and Otaci. However, the growing vulnerability of new arrivals requires the provision of basic needs and protection services, particularly for groups at heightened risk.

It is important to continue strengthening the involvement of refugees and host communities, as well as local organizations, in the refugee response, promoting local leadership and ensuring that coordination mechanisms are increasingly inclusive and supportive of local organizations' efforts. This requires promoting greater access to flexible and stable funding for existing national and local actors, and greater involvement from the private sector to support socio-economic development in host communities and access to decent work. Finally, while Moldovan society has provided an exemplary welcome to refugees in their communities and homes, it will be key to strengthen social cohesion interventions to prevent and address rising social tensions and increase the support for host communities. This balance is necessary to ensuring Moldova remains a positive protection space for refugees – and a best example of realizing the Global Compact on Refugees in practice.

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

The Platform for Gender Equality is a voluntary association of over 46 member organizations that since 2015 has acted as a unified voice for the active promotion of gender equality in Moldova. Since the onset of the Ukrainian refugee influx, the Platform has played a crucial role in supporting its members to work with refugee and host community women, promoting capacity building, networking and advocacy efforts. In mid-2022, the Platform was appointed as co-chair of the RCF Gender Task Force, alongside UN Women, and has been actively engaged in facilitating the involvement of local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the refugee response.

The focus of these efforts has been on economic empowerment, gender-based violence prevention and response, and social inclusion. Innovative funding from the Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund has enabled grass-roots women's organizations, including members of the platform, to receive small grants for humanitarian, peacebuilding, and social inclusion projects. For instance, a workshop was held in the village of Pelinia (R.Drochia) to address prejudice and stereotypes among refugee and host-community women, emphasizing the importance of addressing discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion. In Cimislia, a project for socio-economic inclusion of refugee women was focused on local labour market opportunities, entrepreneurship, and small business management. Mobile teams have provided social, legal, and medical support to refugee women, men, boys, and girls in over 20 local communities.

Throughout Moldova, the Platform and its members advocate for gender-sensitive humanitarian support, combating gender-based violence and promoting the strengthening of human rights for all, particularly vulnerable groups. Given that more than 90 per cent of refugees in Moldova live among the host community, the involvement of local, community, and grass-roots organizations in the response is vital.



Women participate in a community project by the Platform for Gender Equality. Photo: Gender-Centru/Doina Chiosa

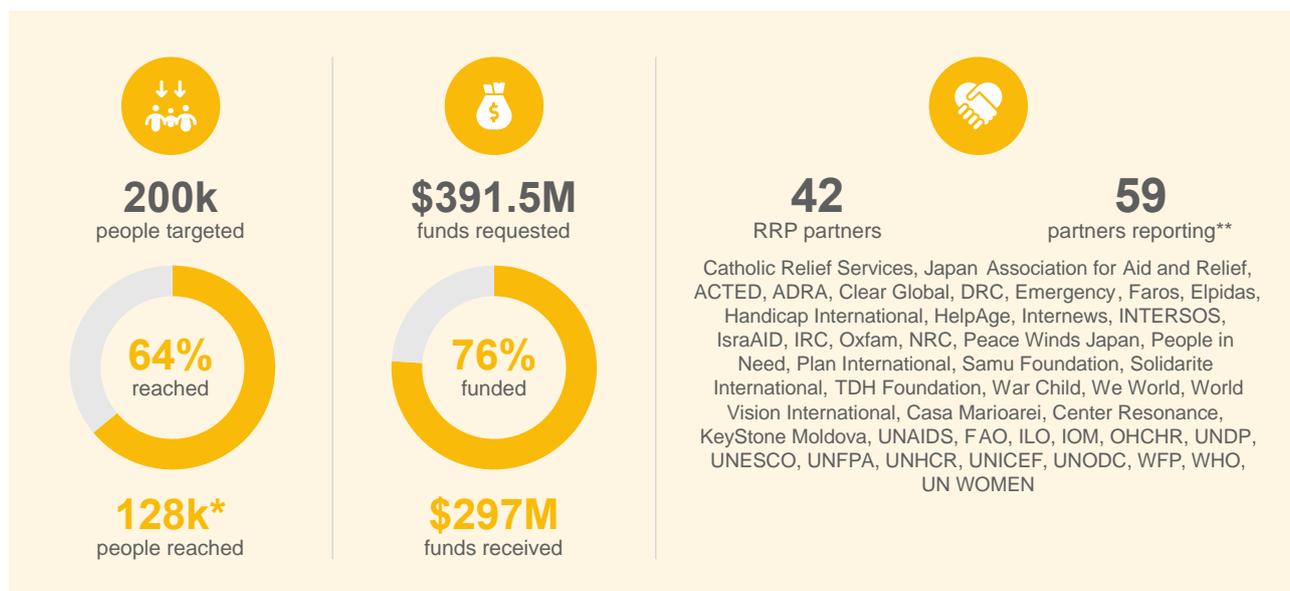
MOLDOVA END-OF-YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS (Mar - Dec 2022)



Within the framework of the inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), 42 partners in Moldova joined efforts in 2022 to provide protection services and multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to refugees from Ukraine, third country nationals seeking safety and other persons in need. The RRP complements Government-led efforts and builds on the collective

efforts being conducted by volunteer groups and other local responders. The number of RRP partners is not exhaustive of all actors involved in the response in Moldova.

The figures below represent the achievements by RRP partners against the regional RRP indicators.



Sector		Reporting partners	People reached	% reached	People targeted
Protection	Individuals supported in accessing protection and documentation	22	98.4k	49%	200.0k
	Children provided with child protection services		23.0k	92%	25.0k
	Participants trained on child protection and children's rights		1.0k		-
	Individuals that received information on available services related to GBV		74.3k	80%	93.0k
	Participants trained on GBV prevention, response and risk mitigation		1.0k	25%	4.2k
Basic needs	Individuals who received in-kind assistance for basic needs	17	89.6k	100%	20.0k
Cash	Individuals who received cash assistance	17	107.7k	72%	150.0k
Food security	Individuals who received food assistance	17	128.7k	100%	20.0k
Health	Consultations provided for MHPSS	14	16.0k		-
Education	Children benefitting from national education system	16	1.9k	5%	35.0k

*This figure corresponds to the highest sector total of the number of people reached rather than the sum of people reached under each indicator, to avoid possible double counting.
**This includes implementing partners of RRP partners.



POLAND

Situation Overview

Since the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine last February, Poland has become one of the main refugee-hosting countries in the world. By the end of 2022, more than 1.5 million refugees from Ukraine had registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes, 65 per cent of whom were women and girls.

The Parliament of Poland adopted in March 2022 the *Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens in the Context of the Armed Conflict in Ukraine*.⁶ The law provided broad protection to refugees from Ukraine who fled the conflict in Ukraine on or after 24 February, including legal status.

Polish society mobilized to support and address the most immediate needs of refugees from Ukraine, including by providing food and accommodation. Over 30 per cent of refugees surveyed in July relied on hosting arrangements by Polish citizens and private initiatives. The national and local governments established a network of collective and transit centres to absorb the enormous needs particularly at the onset of the emergency. In 2022, the Government set up approximately 3,000 sites of different sizes and capacities across the country, able to accommodate up to 135,000 refugees simultaneously. According to estimates from the authorities, over 470,000 refugees used or had access to these sites.

During the year, pendular movements were observed, with some new arrivals. By the end of 2022, 1,508,338, refugees from Ukraine had applied for a Polish unique registration number (PESEL).⁷

In terms of the geographical distribution of refugees, the highest numbers of people applying for temporary protection in 2022 were registered in Mazowieckie Voivodeship (323,307), followed by Dolnośląskie (161,245), Śląskie (145,485), Małopolskie (143,976) and Wielkopolskie (136,474).

Despite the efforts carried out by the Government of Poland and humanitarian partners, refugees with vulnerabilities (e.g. single parents, pregnant women, elderly people, and people with disabilities) saw their unmet needs growing. This occurred in the economic context of high inflation rates and a concomitant energy crisis that contributed to a dramatic surge in the average expenses for accommodation.

Highlights and achievements

Following the arrival of the first wave of refugees in Poland, first responders providing assistance and reception at the border (including hot meals and transportation to other centres) were in many cases volunteers. Additionally, the Government of Poland, through the State Fire Brigade Service, the police, private carriers and the Polish State Railways, organized free transport to arranged accommodation.

Local actors increasingly contributed to coordination meetings and participated in trainings on tools and assessments used by international organizations. Similarly, international organizations improved their understanding of Polish civil society and the approaches to previous arrivals from Ukraine since 2014.

Protection actors provided information on rights and services to over 675,000 refugees who stayed in or transited through Poland since the beginning of the emergency. Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) and national referral pathways were developed to unify and harmonize efforts to respond, prevent and mitigate the risks of gender-based violence. Partners working in the area of mental health and psychosocial support

⁶ <https://www.gov.pl/web/mswia-en/the-government-has-adopted-a-special-act-on-assistance-for-refugees-from-ukraine>

⁷ Government of Poland, Registered applications for the UKR status due to the conflict in Ukraine, January 2023

(MHPSS) facilitated capacity development activities to increase understanding and delivery of MHPSS services in emergencies.

RRP partners provided cash assistance to over 615,000 vulnerable refugees across the country, allowing them to access essential items and services. The cash management system minimized duplication and remained capable of scaling up ahead of harsh winter conditions. Partners working in the shelter sector completed a mapping of 927 collective accommodation sites across the country, identifying how many of them were still active, the number of occupied and free places, needs for infrastructural repairs and useful information on demographics, and most pressing needs.

The Education Sector supported and complemented the Government's efforts to expand access to the national education system for children from Ukraine, leading to the enrolment in the national education system of approximately 197,000 Ukrainian children and adolescents. More than 900,000 non-formal, extra-curricular and alternative learning opportunities were provided to children and adolescents staying in Poland and in transit.

Efforts were also made towards facilitating job opportunities for refugees. In December, three job fairs were organized by RRP partners in Warsaw, Lublin and Krakow. More than 120 companies supported the events, with some 1,500 refugees participating and 1,300 conditional job offers made.

Addressing health needs, partners worked together with the Ministry of Health on access to quality health services through the provision of medicines, supplies, vaccines, and equipment. Access to services was fostered through social behavior change communication and linking refugees to national health services, including through health information booklets in several languages and hotlines. The MHPSS working group in collaboration with the Ministry of Health carried out capacity building initiatives and scaled up service provision at community and facility level.

The significant increase of participation by government officials in different RRP coordination fora in Warsaw and other key locations was critical. During the planning exercise for the 2023 RRP, the Government shared a list of priorities around which sectors developed their strategies to avoid duplications. Similarly, the cooperation between humanitarian partners and local authorities (governorates and municipalities) resulted in coordinated emergency preparedness planning, leading to the preparation and update of winterization and contingency plans.

Humanitarian partners provided humanitarian relief non-food items and winter supplies, in addition to supporting the rehabilitation of public buildings in border areas. These rehabilitation works contributed to supporting the host communities while providing additional shelter space for refugees, thereby also increasing capacity in case of further large-scale arrivals from Ukraine.

Gaps and Challenges

Against the backdrop of one of the largest and fastest refugee influxes ever recorded, at the onset of the response, national and international humanitarian actors in Poland scrambled to find a way to combine the urgency of assisting hundreds of thousands of people in need with the compelling request by multiple stakeholders to rapidly develop common approaches and analyses.

Initial operational challenges were often related to limited ability of actors to quickly upscale and at the same time deliver quality services, coupled with a limited presence of international organizations in Poland prior the emergency. During the initial weeks, grass root and diaspora organizations as well as volunteers swiftly mobilized and were the first responders.

Furthermore, there was limited training capacity of local humanitarian partners on technical issues, such as Psychological First Aid (PFA), basic policies on the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and the lack of a code of conduct responsible for vetting volunteers and staff.

While inclusion of refugees from Ukraine in Polish society and economy progressed rapidly, a part of the refugee population continued to face challenges, as can be illustrated by the accommodation situation. According to official estimates, at the end of 2022 over 80,000 people remained in collective sites and were

not fully self-reliant. A range of entities were responsible for the management of these spaces (voivodeships, municipalities, NGOs and private institutions). Such a fragmented approach made it challenging to undertake a comprehensive mapping of the different structures. As refugees' inclusion in the labour market progressed, a number of obstacles prevented some refugees from gaining access to employment. These included, for instance, language barriers and lack of childcare options. The authorities and RRP partners addressed such barriers to inclusion, but more remained to be done.

While the RRP Poland Chapter was able to mobilize funds amounting to 69 per cent of the total RRP budget, several small-sized national partners only received minimal direct funding.⁸ In October, national organizations wrote an open letter to international organizations and the donor community to draw attention, among other points, to the financial needs of small national organizations. Almost one year into the response, the continuation of exceptional financial support at previous levels is not guaranteed and the numbers of volunteers has declined, while significant needs among some of the refugees remain.

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

Medics from the Polish group Humanosh Med Evacuation have carried out medical evacuations of over 2000 patients from Ukraine.

The Humanosh Med Evacuation Division is a Polish foundation that has been operating continuously since March 2022. In the first weeks, the foundation evacuated children with chronic nephrological and oncological diseases from Ukrainian hospitals, and organized transports to the medical evacuation train of the Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration. Currently, in line with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the group regularly transports the sick and injured to the Medevac Hub Jasionka at Rzeszów airport, where they are picked up by evacuation planes sent by the receiving countries. Transports are also carried out to hospitals in Poland. Specially trained teams work across Ukraine, including directly at the military front line. Moreover, Polish medics conduct medevac trainings for Ukrainian teams. Today, the medical team consists of some 80 people - doctors, paramedics, nurses and Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs). The group has 20 ambulances at its disposal. It also uses two buses received from the Mayor of Piła, which were adapted to the needs of sanitary transport. In 2022, 1992 requests for Medevac were received, 1664 (84 per cent) from Ukraine, 234 (12 per cent) from Poland. In total, 1701 medevac were completed.



Transfer of more than 40 patients from Ukraine by Humanosh Med Evacuation at Rzeszow Airport, July 2022. Photo: Humanosh

⁸ Additionally, USD 62 million was mobilized towards the overall coordinated response. This includes USD 28 million mobilized by RRP partners alongside their initial appeals and USD 33 million mobilized by organizations participating in the coordinated response but not appealing under the RRP.

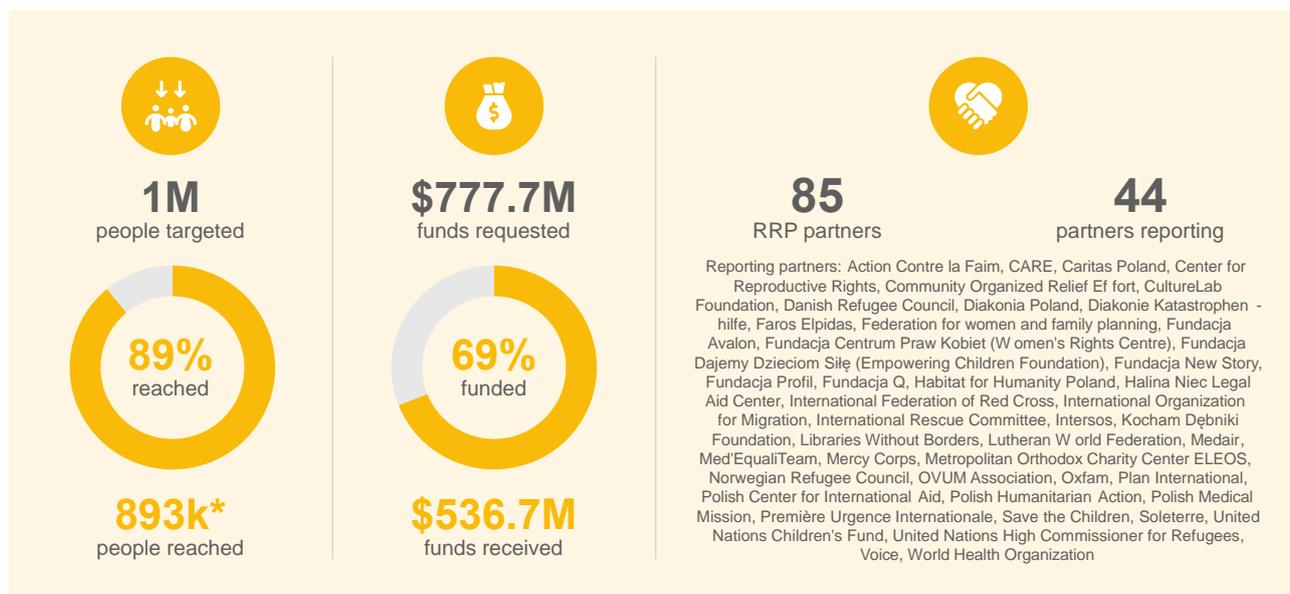
POLAND END-OF-YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS (Mar - Dec 2022)



Within the framework of the inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), 85 partners in Poland joined efforts in 2022 to provide protection services and multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to refugees from Ukraine, third country nationals seeking safety and other persons in need. The RRP complements Government-led efforts and builds on the collective

efforts being conducted by volunteer groups and other local responders. The number of RRP partners is not exhaustive of all actors involved in the response in Poland.

The figures below represent the achievements by RRP partners against the regional RRP indicators.



Sector		Reporting partners	People reached	% reached	People targeted
Protection	Individuals supported in accessing protection and documentation	26	675.5k	66%	1.0M
	Children provided with child protection services		282.6k	113%	250.0k
	Participants trained on child protection and children's rights		2.3k	76%	3.0k
	Individuals that received information on available services related to GBV		52.1k	28%	186.5k
	Participants trained on GBV prevention, response and risk mitigation		2.7k	122%	2.2k
Basic needs	Individuals who received in-kind assistance for basic needs	26	571.1k	92%	619.3k
Cash	Individuals who received cash assistance	26	615.2k	73%	844.7k
Food security	Individuals who received food assistance	26	139.7k	202%	69.1k
Health	Consultations provided for MHPSS**	21	173.2k	81%	214.3k
Education	Children benefitting from national education system	10	197.4k	26%	750.0k

* 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 includes MHPSS services provided by the health partners only (excluding protection and GBV)



ROMANIA

Situation Overview

Over 2.2 million border crossings, including pendular movements, have been recorded into Romania from Ukraine and Moldova since 24 February. As of the end of December, Romania hosted 106,268 refugees from Ukraine,⁹ almost 80 per cent of whom were women and children. Over 101,000 Ukrainians and third-country nationals (TCNs) arriving from Ukraine were granted status under the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), which provides a framework for their legal stay and access to a wide variety of rights and services in Romania. Under the TPD, Romania provided refugees from Ukraine with access to national systems and services such as education, health, housing, social services as well as access to employment services.

Over 90 per cent of Ukrainian refugees under temporary protection (TP) lived in urban and peri-urban areas, primarily in private accommodation within the host communities. Based on the Multi-sector Needs Assessment conducted in October 2022, nearly 70 per cent of respondent refugee households in Romania benefited from the governmental 50/20 programme, through which 50 Romanian lei per person per day were provided for accommodation and 20 lei per person per day for food.¹⁰ Around 7,700 refugees lived in accommodation centres managed by the Government of Romania.¹¹

On 26 July 2022, the Government of Romania launched the National Plan of Measures (NPM) for the Protection and Inclusion of Displaced Persons from Ukraine and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection in Romania. The NPM – drafted with inputs from RRP partners- represented a progression from the acute emergency to the longer-term protection and inclusion phase of the response. To draft the NPM and support its implementation, the government established working groups focusing on protection and inclusion in the areas of health, education, employment, housing, vulnerable persons, children and youth, anti-trafficking and gender-based violence (GBV). RRP partners adapted their plans to align with and complement the NPM, while allowing flexibility to respond to emergencies and emerging needs. RRP sector leads and co-leads participated in the governmental working groups, ensuring synergies and communication of policy priorities.

Since the start of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, refugees in Romania have been able to benefit from effective government-led support mechanisms. RRP partners worked in support of the national refugee response, delivering complementary assistance in the areas of protection, GBV, child protection, education, health care, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and the provision of multi-purpose cash, hygiene kits, core relief items and food.

To facilitate refugees' access to response services, one-stop centres, such as the integrated service hub at RomExpo in Bucharest, the CATTIA Center in Brasov or the Nicolina Center in Iasi were established and provided a comprehensive set of services and support, from registration to cash assistance and material items to information and counselling. Similarly, Blue Dots provided information and referrals for refugees on the move or in main areas of concentration of refugees. Mechanisms were also put in place in the early days of the refugee influx – in coordination with emergency authorities – to identify and refer vulnerable refugees at the border points, including unaccompanied and separated children, persons with disabilities and persons with serious medical needs, to specialized NGOs and services. RRP partners successfully launched helplines and information websites and support the government-run information website for refugees in Romania to raise

⁹ Source: Department for Emergency Situations, General Inspectorate for Border Police, General Inspectorate for Immigration, 04 Dec 2022. See: UNHCR Data Portal, Romania page, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/234?sv=54&geo=10782>

¹⁰ UNHCR–Reach, Romania - Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA), [key preliminary findings](#), November 2022.

¹¹ UNHCR, Operational Data Portal/Romania, [Overview on Sites and Locations](#), accessed 17 November 2022

refugees' awareness on their rights and help them navigate the available support services. In parallel, RRP partners provided multi-purpose cash assistance to enable refugees to meet their basic needs.

Highlights and Achievements

In line with the Government's National Plan of Measures, all sector actors worked closely together to coordinate and provide complementary support to the national response through technical advice and capacity-building initiatives and through direct protection assistance for refugees. In 2022, over 177,000 refugees benefitted from protection interventions such as counselling and case management services and over 1,000 staff, volunteers and authorities received trainings on protection to improve the quality of the response and address needs of refugees, including gender-based violence (GBV) knowledge and skills on prevention and response.

Since the onset of the conflict through the end of the year, 155,000 refugees from Ukraine received information (35,000) and legal advice and counselling (120,000). Towards the end of 2022, the Protection sector noticed an increase in the number of refugees remaining in Romania that have been exposed to a prolonged period of stress and are in greater need of protection-related services.

A key success in the Child Protection sector was the joint initiative to establish and roll-out *Primero*, an open-source software helping outreach workers identify and register refugee children, including unaccompanied and separated children, and to refer them to specialized services as needed. By the end of January 2023, the National Authority for the Protection of Child Rights and Adoption (NAPCRA) reported that 18,782 children had been registered. This is now seen as a good practice in the region with potential for developing cross-border case management and referral mechanisms.

During 2022 the Cash Working Group supported the harmonization of cash transfer values and targeting eligibility criteria for organizations providing cash, in line with the recommendation from Government of Romania. A risk matrix was also developed to support agencies for planning and cash programme designing. A total of 66,000 refugees benefitted from cash assistance through RRP partners.

Partners worked with the Government of Romania to support Ukrainian refugee children both through formal and non-formal education modalities, in a complementary manner, with about 4,000 children registered in the national education system and nearly 6,000 engaged in alternative yet formal learning programmes by the end of 2022. Efforts were also made to promote social cohesion activities such as the delivery of language training courses in Romanian and encourage social interactions between Ukrainian refugee children and their Romanian peers. This work also contributed to addressing more systemic and capacity development needs such as limited enrolment capacities, with nearly 35,000 children receiving recreational and basic learning materials.

More than 30 partners of the Health, Mental Health (MHPSS), and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) working groups provided health services to more than 100,000 refugees from Ukraine in 2022. RRP partners supported primary health services at the RomExpo one-stop-shop for refugee services in Bucharest, and refugee-inclusive family medicine clinics, providing more than 2,000 consultations in 2022 and procuring more than \$1.1 million of medical items and supplies in line with Government requests and priorities in 2022.

Gaps and Challenges

As the war continues in 2023, it is expected the new arrivals will differ in terms of socio-economic status and vulnerabilities; people with fewer financial means who had previously remained in Ukraine may be forced to leave as the conditions deteriorate, particularly through the winter months and as the conflict progresses, including people with specific needs such as older people, persons with disabilities and unaccompanied and separated children. Economic vulnerabilities are also expected to affect refugees already in Romania as their longer-term displacement depletes financial savings and increases the risk of using negative coping mechanisms. The continuity of governmental programmes and of cash assistance are key in ensuring dignified living conditions to refugees who cannot otherwise meet the needs of their families; as these programmes evolve, fostering inclusion in national systems, such as education and labour, is essential. The protection risks facing new arrivals are high, and include human trafficking, GBV, separation of children from parents and caregivers, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), as well as high levels of psychosocial distress associated with conflict. With children comprising one-third of the total number of refugees who have crossed into Romania from Ukraine, the systematic identification of children at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation remains critical.

Gaps continue to hamper refugees' access to national protection schemes and the labour market, ultimately impacting their inclusion in Romania. For example, the Temporary Protection document in the country does not include refugees' area of residency, which causes delays and challenges for refugees to benefit from family doctors who are the entry point into the Romanian health care system. This also hinders the state from being able to carry out proper social welfare monitoring and assessments to ensure vulnerable refugees (e.g., older persons and persons with disabilities) are included in these schemes. Documents issued by authorities to confirm residence are not always accepted by service deliverers at local level.

The demand for enrolling Ukrainian refugee children in Romanian schools was initially relatively low, mainly due to language barriers and the expectation that the stay in Romania would be limited, with, as a result, a preference given to online learning or education hubs offering classes based on the Ukrainian curriculum. However, these alternative options are not sustainable in the long run and renewed efforts are very much needed to ensure the progressive integration of refugee children in and through the national education system, while preparing them at the same time to return to Ukraine when the situation allows.

To improve access to services, refugees from Ukraine need accurate and up-to-date information on rights and services available to them. RRP partners will work with government institutions – in line with relevant NPM dispositions – to scale up efforts to provide information to refugees from Ukraine on service availability, and on the practicalities to access these. As expressed by refugees, language barriers remain one of the most significant obstacles for inclusion, notably to access medical and psychosocial care, legal counselling, education and the labour market.

Partners also noted that human resources challenges and the unpredictability of funding cycles also limited the ability to scale up long term programming. Lack of availability of critical mental health and psycho-social support services for children and adolescents continues to be a key service gap.

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Romania was established in 2000 and is currently working with more than 140 staff and more than 150 volunteers.

Under the RRP, access to education for refugee children in Romania remains a priority and a commitment of the partners under the RRP. JRS is supporting Ukrainian refugee children with enrolment and attendance in Romanian schools, as well as with non-formal learning activities. JRS is currently running a comprehensive educational programme as part of a wider approach to promoting self-reliance among the refugees and comprehensive support for inclusion. The project has a dual purpose – to promote social cohesion by bringing Ukrainian children in close contact with their Romanian peers and to allow parents to participate in the labour market while their children are attending schools.

To strengthen the national education system, JRS employs more than 100 Ukrainian teachers who are seconded to Romanian schools, in coordination with the respective local School Inspectorates. This allows Ukrainian children to continue their national educational curriculum while in Romania and, at the same time, to be included in schools, get access to the Romanian curricula, to interact with Romanian children which, in turn, enhances social cohesion and inclusion. Through the 23 Education Hubs and various educational centres supported by JRS, over 2,500 children are enrolled and attending classes in Bucharest, Constanta, Galati, Braila, Ploiesti and Medias.



Photo credit: Activities in the education Hub at School 11 in Constanta, May 2022, @JRS

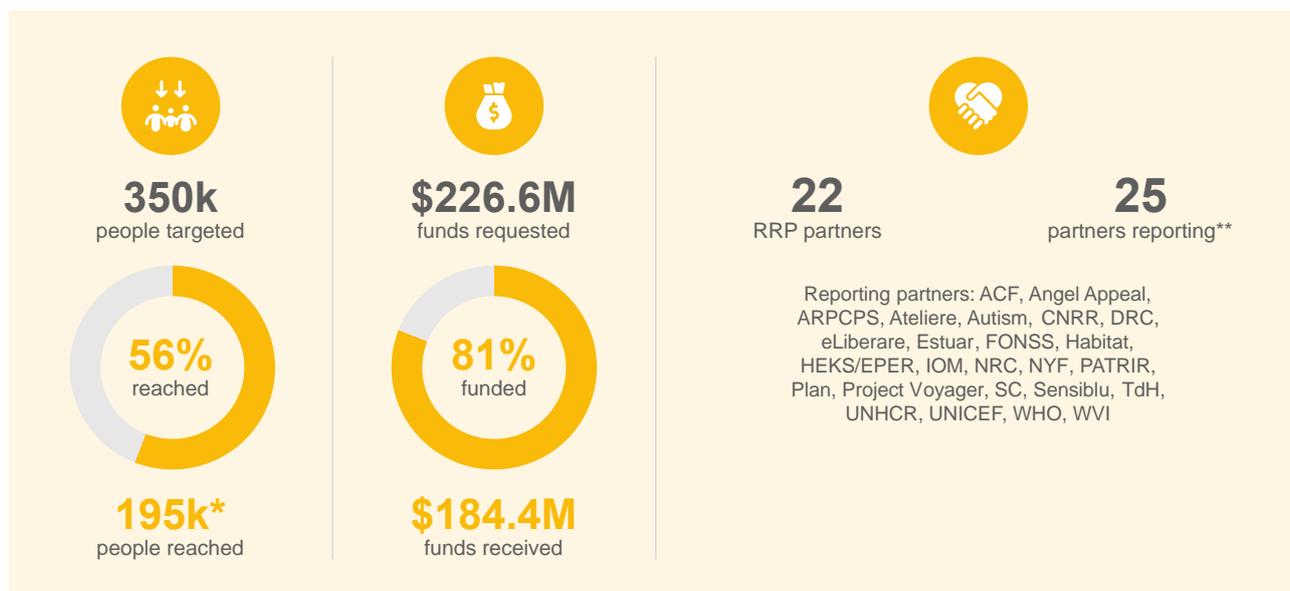
ROMANIA END-OF-YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS (Mar - Dec 2022)



Within the framework of the inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), 22 partners in Romania joined efforts in 2022 to provide protection services and multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to refugees from Ukraine, third country nationals seeking safety and other persons in need. The RRP complements Government-led efforts and builds on the collective

efforts being conducted by volunteer groups and other local responders. The number of RRP partners is not exhaustive of all actors involved in the response in Romania.

The figures below represent the achievements by RRP partners against the regional RRP indicators.



Sector		Reporting partners	People reached	% reached	People targeted
Protection	Individuals supported in accessing protection and documentation	15	129.0k	100%	120.0k
	Children provided with child protection services		18.0k	36%	50.0k
	Participants trained on child protection and children's rights		0.9k	58%	1.5k
	Individuals that received information on available services related to GBV		33.0k	33%	100.0k
	Participants trained on GBV prevention, response and risk mitigation		1.1k	22%	5.0k
Basic needs	Individuals who received in-kind assistance for basic needs	12	195.0k	100%	50.0k
Cash	Individuals who received cash assistance	12	66.0k	55%	120.0k
Food security	Individuals who received food assistance	12	93.0k	100%	50.0k
Health	Consultations provided for MHPSS	11	49.0k	100%	40.0k
Education	Children benefitting from national education system	7	35.0k	100%	10.0k

*This figure corresponds to the highest sector total of the number of people reached rather than the sum of people reached under each indicator, to avoid possible double counting.
 **This includes implementing partners of RRP partners.



SLOVAKIA

Situation Overview

In 2022, more than one million Ukrainian and third-country nationals (TCNs) in need of international protection and assistance crossed into Slovakia. Women and children constituted 78 per cent of the overall displaced population.

The Government of Slovakia generously kept the borders open and led the response to the Ukraine refugee situation. National, district and local authorities rapidly responded to the large numbers of arrivals in need of humanitarian aid. In the spirit of solidarity, local communities, as well as the private sector, the civil society, refugee-led organizations, faith-based associations, and thousands of Slovak volunteers worked together with humanitarian actors to complement the government-led efforts. Together with international NGOs and United Nations agencies, these actors provided significant support at border reception points, first accommodation centres and urban areas.

The refugee response in Slovakia took on a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder “whole-of-society” approach. The response assessed the specific needs of refugees and advocated for their rights and access to services. Emphasis was placed on accommodation, access to health care, education, legal counselling, child protection, specialized services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), as well as prevention and risk mitigation mechanisms, livelihoods and economic inclusion, social protection and socio-economic opportunities.

Slovakia adopted three packages of laws in connection with the situation in Ukraine, including the Act on Asylum and the Act on Residence of Foreigners, aimed at facilitating the integration of those fleeing Ukraine. The legislative packages covered residence and temporary protection, access to the labour market, education, transportation, accommodation, social protection and health care. Temporary Protection (TP) status had already been accessible to refugees arriving from Ukraine and their families since 1 March 2022 and as of end December 2022 a total of 104,764 individuals had applied for temporary protection in Slovakia.

Based on existing Government-owned and -led structures and the experience of local responders, the inter-agency response during the first phase of the emergency complemented efforts throughout the implementation of the multi-sectoral Refugee Response Plan (RRP). In total, 21 partners joined forces and coordinated actions to support the Government in improving the efficiency and quality of the assistance and services provided. In cooperation with the Government, UNHCR established the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) with sectoral coordination mechanisms, including Working and Sub-Working Groups on key areas of protection, GBV, inclusion, child protection, health, mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS), information management, cash-based interventions, as well as Task Forces for the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and anti-trafficking. In an effort to maximize coordination at field-level, the RCF East served as a platform for coordination of all partners operating in the border regions of Kosice and Presov, in particular at the border crossing points.

Highlights and Achievements

Throughout 2022, RRP partners were present at border crossing points, transit and reception centres, collective sites, help desks and other areas where Ukrainian refugees and TCNs continued to arrive or seek help. Within the framework of the RRP response, over 152,000 individuals were assisted through multi-sector interventions. Communication channels and feedback mechanisms were established and strengthened.

In addition to providing information on available rights and services, partners worked together to reinforce reception conditions and ensure non-discriminatory treatment, including for TCNs. In coordination with local authorities, referral pathways were developed and strengthened to ensure refugees could access necessary services.

To respond to basic needs, over 51,000 individuals received non-food items. Three Blue Dots safe spaces were established and supported by RRP partners, providing over 67,839 children and their families practical support, including access to Temporary Protection and national protection systems. Partners reinforced existing national protection structures through capacity building and training on best interest of children and child-centred approach.

Among the RRP partners, UN agencies in cooperation with IFRC supported the Government to provide over EUR 20 million in universal and targeted cash support. This included support from May to September 2022 to the Government's Material Needs benefit programme (multi-purpose cash) for over 58,000 people. Cash support was provided through six-months payments to some 500 people caring for individuals with disabilities or specific needs; a one-off payment for education and development covering 34,000 children and a one-off winterization payment to 44,000 vulnerable individuals to address winter-related needs, such as increased energy bills and to purchase winter clothing. Winterization efforts also included the distribution of non-food items to more than 23,000 individuals.

In close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports, the National Institute for Education and Youth, and municipalities across the country, partners ensured a system-wide approach to the inclusion of Ukrainian children in the education system. In addition, partners provided non-formal learning activities. In total, over 40,000 refugee children were supported in accessing formal or non-formal education, while some 23,000 benefited from the distribution of learning materials. In addition, capacity building for all partners in the response was further promoted including on child protection and children's rights, PSEA, GBV, LGBTQIA+ and disability awareness, resulting in the training of over 1,700 Government and partner staff trained.

Addressing health needs, partners worked together with the Government on ensuring access to quality health services, including through the provision of supplies, vaccines, medicines and equipment, support to infant and young child feeding and counseling, and the dissemination of MHPSS-related messages and health-related materials. Over 52,000 individuals, the majority children and women, received primary health care services, including basic paediatric services, through newly established clinics. Some 41,000 consultations were also provided for MHPSS.

Gaps and Challenges

Institutional capacity-building remains crucial, including in child protection response, prevention, mitigation and response to gender-based violence, disability inclusion, social protection, sustainability of service delivery, local responders and optimization of mid-term and long-term planning. The lack of reliable, disaggregated data on the number of refugees from Ukraine on the territory of the Slovak Republic and their location of residence, together with the absence of administrative data, is a major challenge for evidence-based policy making.

Despite the favorable protection environment for refugees in the country, there remain major challenges in addressing vital services. This includes access to longer-term accommodation, given the limited accommodation capacity and lack of a social housing system. Access to the labour market remains difficult, given the language barriers, decent work opportunities, skills recognition (in certain sectors), as well as lack of childcare, as does access to quality health care, especially for persons with underlying serious health conditions and those in need of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). Gaps in the response include access to comprehensive health services including non-communicable diseases, education and other learning opportunities for adults, available social protection mechanisms, ensuring specialized services and inclusion for GBV survivors and LGBTIQ+ individuals.

Among the key priorities for 2023, is strengthened access to and outreach by state child protection services, including to identify children at risk, particularly unaccompanied and separated children. Moreover, access to education remains a key priority with two out of three Ukrainian children currently not enrolled in the Slovak school system. Education and social inclusion opportunities are particularly affected due to a limited lack of school places in areas of high concentration of Ukrainians and scarce opportunities for informal learning opportunities. Limited pathways for recognition of qualifications of Ukrainian health, education and other professionals are a major barrier.

Efforts should continue towards minimizing and eliminating barriers to inclusion and to actively promote interactions that foster social cohesion. Most refugees are highly educated and willing to work and contribute to their host communities, but they need sustained support to ensure socio-economic inclusion.

Funding, and in particular for local responders, will continue to be a major issue for the continuation of activities in 2023. The inter-agency RRP for Slovakia has been an essential source of funding for all partners in the country. Additional support and funding opportunities should be explored collectively and in cooperation with the Government, donor community and private sector.

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

Beyond humanitarian relief, the examples from local partners involved in the RRP have exemplified how the transition to longer-term protection and solution efforts, as well as efforts for social cohesion, must be considered from the outset of an emergency.

One of the focus areas of Mareena, a national NGO, is social inclusion. Through targeted community activities for refugees from Ukraine, such as language courses and socio-cultural events, this national responder aims to raise awareness of diversity, further promote inclusion, including access to the labour market, and enhance social cohesion. Through outreach to volunteers among the refugees, Mareena also strengthens community-based protection, needs mapping and information provision. The national NGO Equita has championed the establishment of primary health care services in the capital Bratislava, in partnership with regional health authorities. By employing Ukrainian health workers, the organization provides to refugee children and their families a broad spectrum of preventive and curative health services, including child immunization and MHPSS, as well as health promotion and education.

IPčko, a national NGO specialized in mental health and social support has been supporting refugees with the aim to address in particular the needs of women and the elderly affected by the war.

Additionally, this local responder is providing regular psychosocial supervision of humanitarian workers, volunteers and interpreters to mitigate secondary trauma. Mobile teams have concentrated their efforts on community engagement activities to mobilize resources within the refugees community to foster resilience, social cohesion and include host community in activities.

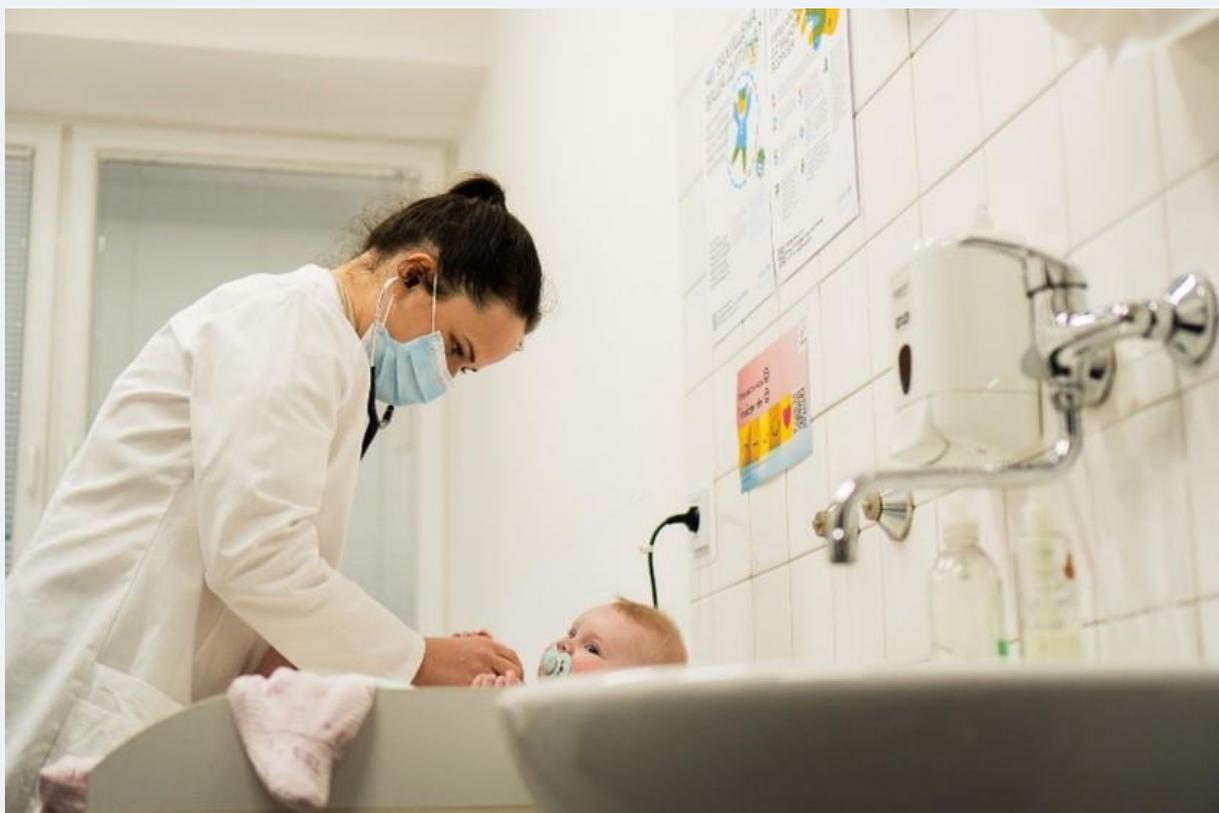


Photo: Tatiana, a Slovak doctor, examines a baby in the clinic for refugees from Ukraine in Bratislava. @UNICEF/Stanišlava Kazimirova

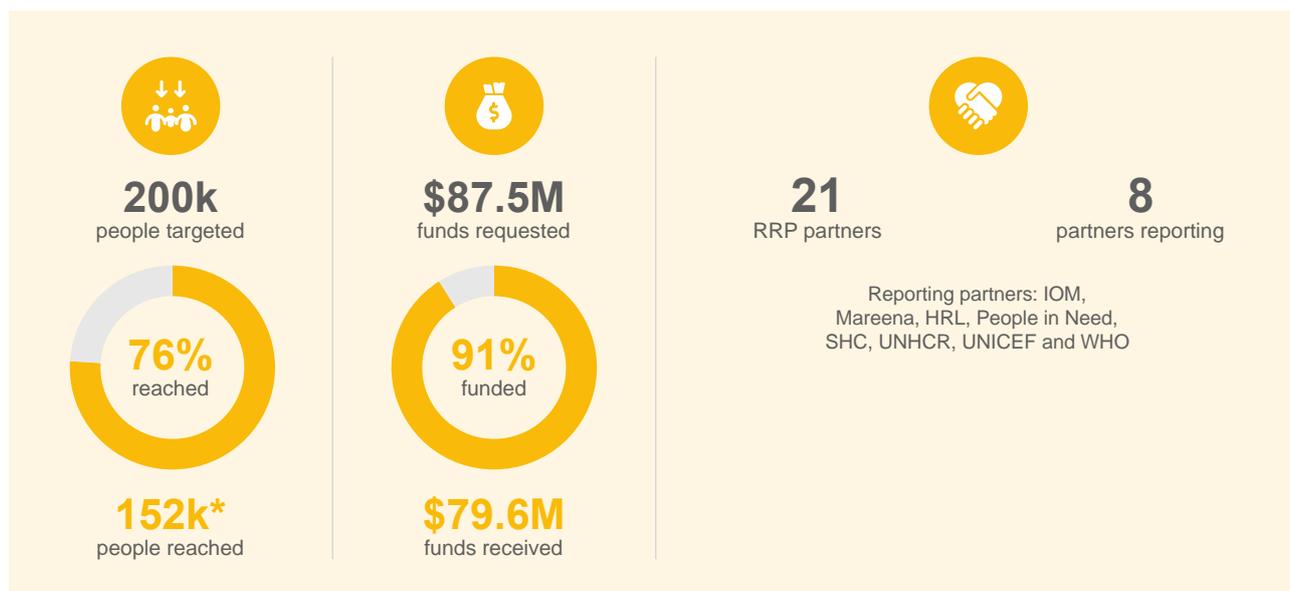


SLOVAKIA END-OF-YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS (Mar - Dec 2022)

Within the framework of the inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), 21 partners in Slovakia have joined efforts to provide protection services and multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to refugees from Ukraine, third country nationals, other persons in need, and impacted host communities. The current number of the RRP partners is only indicative and not exhaustive of the operational number of humanitarian partners in Slovakia. The RRP in Slovakia complements the

Government-led efforts and it builds on the collective and coordinated work already being done in the country, including with the support of volunteer groups and other local responders, and promotes an area- and needs-based approach.

The figures below represent a non-exhaustive list of achievements by partners against the regional RRP indicators.



Sector		Reporting partners	People reached	% reached	People targeted
Protection	Individuals supported in accessing protection and documentation	7	81.0k	41%	200.0k
	Children provided with child protection services		17.0k	100%	10.0k
	Participants trained on child protection and children's rights		0.6k	59%	1.0k
	Individuals that received information on available services related to GBV		6.0k	100%	5.0k
	Participants trained on GBV prevention, response and risk mitigation		0.5k	98%	0.5k
Basic needs	Individuals who received in-kind assistance for basic needs	6	51.0k	78%	65.0k
Cash	Individuals who received cash assistance	6	58.0k	73%	80.0k
Health	Consultations provided for MHPSS	7	41.0k	98%	42.0k
Education	Children benefitting from national education system	6	14.0k	47%	30.0k