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Terre des hommes
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The research Report:

RIF4UA Project

**the needs assessment of refugees from Ukraine in Brașov (Romania)
and Budapest (Hungary),**

**within the project “RIF4UA – Scaling - up Integrated Services within
Resilience and Innovation Facilities for Ukrainian Refugees
Inclusion”**

**Social
Innovation ⊕
Initiative**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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About the project

The RIF4UA Project is funded by the European Social Fund and aims to support the integration of Ukrainian refugees in Romania and Hungary.

Implemented by Terre des hommes (TdH) Romania, Terre des hommes (TdH) Hungary, and the Agency for Sustainable Development of Braşov County (ADDJB), the project provides integrated services in social and educational support, skills development, and access to the labor market through the RIF Centers (Resilience and Innovation Facilities) operating in Braşov and Budapest.

These centers are designed to support the entire family, offering information and counseling services, language training, complementary education for children, psychological and psychosocial assistance, as well as employment and social inclusion support.

In its initial phase, the project began with a needs assessment of the Ukrainian refugee community and a mapping of relevant local stakeholders, with the goal of identifying existing gaps in refugee support in Braşov and Budapest.

Based on the assessments carried out within the project, Ukrainian refugees will benefit from personalized support in the process of labor market integration, as well as access to local language courses and skills development programs.

Furthermore, the project involves collaboration with local stakeholders to strengthen the capacity of communities to effectively respond to the needs of refugees, thereby facilitating constructive interaction between refugees and host communities.

This report is part of Activity A002.01: Development of a stakeholder mapping based on an updated needs assessment of refugees. It has been prepared by the Agency for Sustainable Development of Braşov County (ADDJB).

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Abbreviations

AJOFM – County Agency for Employment (Agenția Județeană pentru Ocuparea Forței de Muncă)

DAS – Social Assistance Directorate (Direcția de Asistență Socială)

DGASPC – General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection, Brașov (Direcția Generală de Asistență Socială și Protecția Copilului Brașov)

DSP – Public Health Directorate (Direcția de Sănătate Publică)

FG – Focus Group

HU – Hungary

IGI – General Inspectorate for Immigration (Inspectoratul General de Imigrări)

IOM – International Organization for Migration

ISJ – County School Inspectorate (Inspectoratul Școlar al Județului)

JRS – Jesuit Refugee Service (International Catholic Organization)

KATYA – Center dedicated to supporting the Ukrainian community in Brașov

MIC – Migrant Integration Center (Centrul de Integrare pentru Migranți)

NGO – Non - Governmental Organization (Organizație neguvernamentală)

RO – Romania

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Brief

General information. The surveyed refugees are predominantly women (82%) of working age (31–50 years), with over 90% having arrived together with other family members, most of whom have children in their care. Romania records a higher proportion of young people and larger families, while Hungary hosts more individuals over the age of 50. In both countries, the majority have been settled for more than two years.

Social needs and housing. A total of 87% live in rented accommodation, while 76.5% report having received no support in finding housing. The main problems include insufficient living space for families and poor utilities. Discrimination in the rental market is reported more frequently in Hungary. Romania provides a more stable housing experience, partly supported by informal networks and NGOs.

Access to services. Only 53.5% have full access to medical services, while nearly 10% report no access at all. About 64% of parents require educational support for their children, especially in Romania. The most frequently requested services are: public transportation, language courses, children’s education, and social integration programs.

Economic needs. Ukrainian refugees show a high level of education: 70% hold higher education degrees, and 40.5% are employed. Hungary has a higher share of professionally active refugees, while Romania records more inactive individuals—particularly women with children. Refugees request language courses, career counseling, and recognition/recertification of qualifications obtained in Ukraine. There is significant potential for professional adaptation, but also persistent barriers linked to legal and institutional integration.

Psychological needs. Around 60% describe their emotional state as “acceptable,” while 28% report being in difficulty. Some 65% of respondents either need or are uncertain about needing psychological support. Participation in integration activities is moderate (48%), while interaction with other refugees is reported by most (86%).

Adaptability and resilience. Refugees apply a range of coping strategies: family support, personal initiative, and optimism. The overall adaptation level is medium (score 5/10), with a slight upward trend in Romania. Participation in collective activities remains limited, but there is a latent potential for mobilization among the 43.5% who occasionally take part. The sense of belonging to the refugee community is moderate, while informal support is perceived as more effective than institutional assistance.

Other needs. Refugees in need of legal support most often request clarification of legal status, translation of documents, employment and entrepreneurship assistance. Among the most frequently mentioned needs for better integration are: language courses, housing, financial support, children’s integration, legal counseling, psychological assistance, access to employment, and targeted support for vulnerable groups. A clear demand emerges for tailored, accessible, and consistently provided services that enable sustainable integration.

Methodology

The sociological research conducted within the framework of the RIF4UA project – Scaling - up Integrated Services within Resilience and Innovation Facilities for Ukrainian Refugees Inclusion, employed a mixed - methods design that integrated both quantitative and qualitative techniques to ensure a robust triangulation of data. The quantitative survey offered a broad overview of refugees’ perceptions and needs, while the qualitative component provided deeper insights into personal adaptation experiences and the institutional practices involved in delivering support.

The study primarily addressed Ukrainian refugees residing in Romania – with a focus on the Braşov metropolitan area – and in Hungary, particularly Budapest. Alongside the refugee population, the research also engaged institutional stakeholders, including representatives of non - governmental organizations, local public authorities, social, educational, and health service providers, as well as employers and policy experts in the field of integration.

Quantitative survey. A convenience sampling strategy was applied, with questionnaires distributed both online and face - to - face. The final sample comprised 200 respondents, of which 104 were based in Braşov and 96 in Budapest.

Qualitative interviews and focus groups. Participants were selected purposively to reflect diversity in age, gender, family status, and occupational background. At the institutional level, selection targeted key organizations that played a central role in managing the refugee crisis, complemented by structures identified during semi - structured interviews with adult refugees as particularly effective in providing assistance. In total, the qualitative strand consisted of 31 interviews with adult refugees, 6 focus groups, and 13 interviews with institutional representatives.

Data collection was carried out between 16 June and 16 July 2025. Questionnaires were disseminated online via Google Forms and made available in Russian to ensure accessibility. Semi - structured interviews were conducted either face - to - face or through online platforms (Zoom, WhatsApp), depending on participants’ availability. Ethical standards were observed throughout, with particular attention to informed consent and the protection of participants’ anonymity and identity.

Focus groups were moderated by trained facilitators and organized in safe and welcoming spaces, both in - person and online, in collaboration with partner institutions.

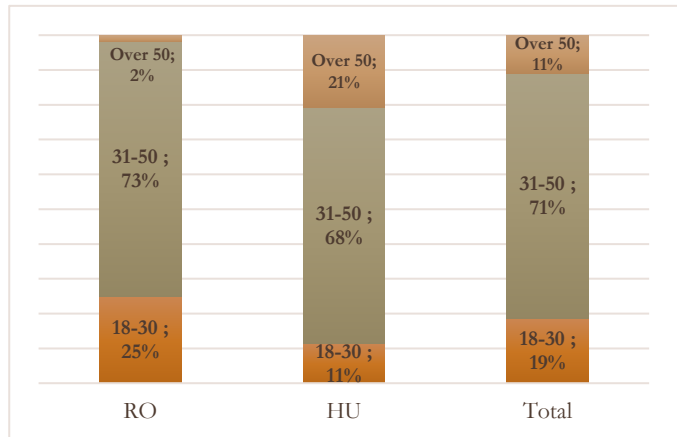
Quantitative data were processed using Microsoft Excel, generating descriptive insights into the distribution of responses. Qualitative data underwent transcription, coding, and thematic analysis with the support of NVivo software, enabling the identification of dominant patterns, cross - cutting themes, and contextual nuances in refugees’ experiences and institutional responses.

Quantitative

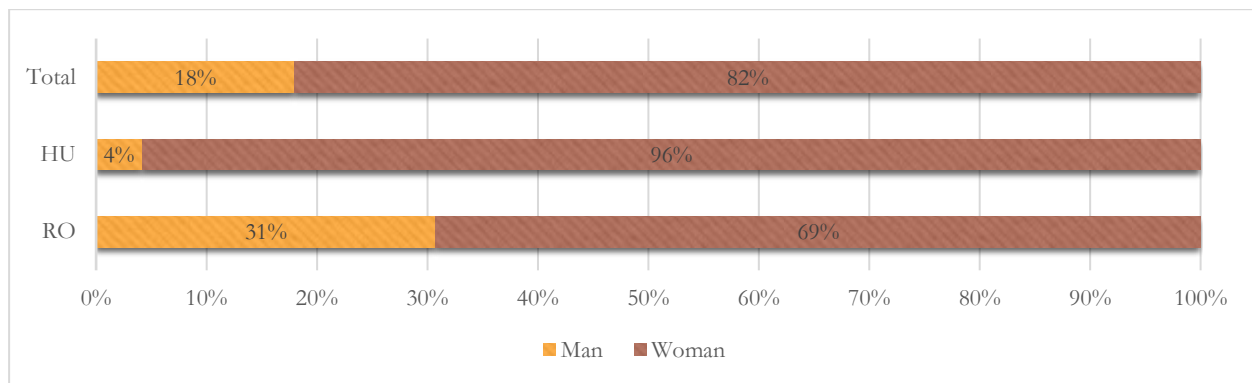
Section 1: General Information

Q1. Age

From the collected data, it appears that Braşov hosts predominantly young and working - age refugees, which may be linked primarily to geographical proximity but also creates demand for educational facilities and economic opportunities related to employment. In contrast, Budapest has a significant share of refugees over the age of 50 (20.8%) among the survey participants, which indicates an increased need for healthcare, care services, and psychosocial support.

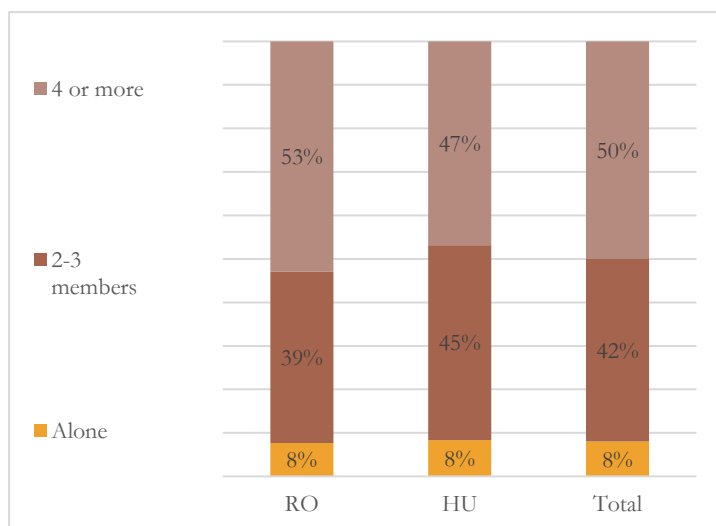


Q2. Sex/Gender



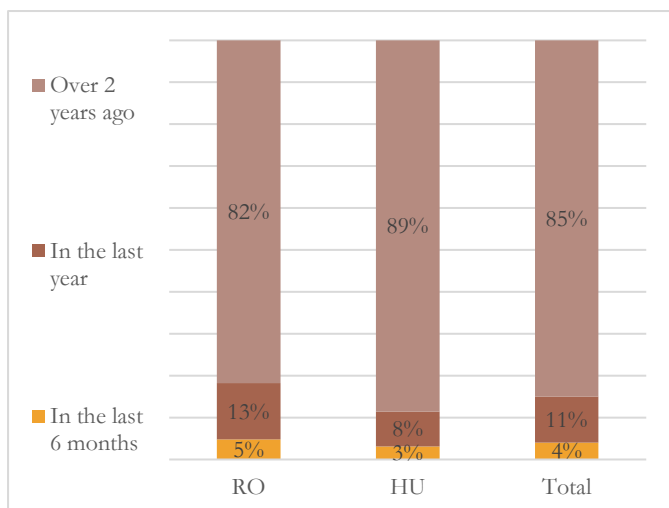
In Braşov, female respondents account for approximately 70%, suggesting a relatively more balanced distribution compared to Budapest, where the proportion of women reaches 95.8%. This may point to a stronger institutional influence in the selection of the sample in Budapest. The overall distribution highlights a clear overrepresentation of women (82%) among refugees, a specific feature of migration caused by the war in Ukraine. Due to restrictions related to military mobilization, most men of fighting age do not have free mobility, which has resulted in a predominantly female migration - often accompanied by children or elderly family members.

Q3. Number of family members



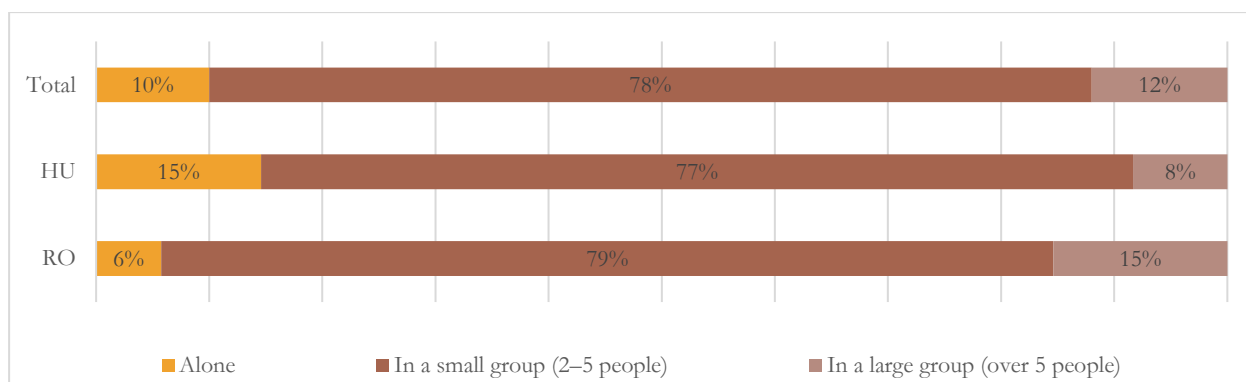
The majority of refugees (92%) did not migrate alone but primarily as part of extended families (50%). Large families (≥ 4 members) are predominant in both countries, though more frequent in Romania (53%) than in Hungary (47%). Single individuals are relatively few (8%), mostly represented by younger respondents. A deeper analysis of the relationship between gender, age, and family size shows that in Braşov, more families include both men and women, especially within the 31–50 age group. In Budapest, however, refugee households are predominantly female, with many adult women, including those over 50 years old.

Q4. When did you arrive in Romania/Hungary?



The vast majority of refugees in the sample (85%) have been in the host country for more than two years, indicating that the integration process has either begun or is underway. This distribution reflects a stabilization of the refugee population, with implications for long - term adaptation potential. By city of residence, Budapest shows a more stable profile of the refugee structure, while Braşov records a slightly higher proportion of recent arrivals (18% under 1 year) compared to Budapest (11%). We consider this to be partly due to the proximity of the border as well as the attractiveness of the hosting area.

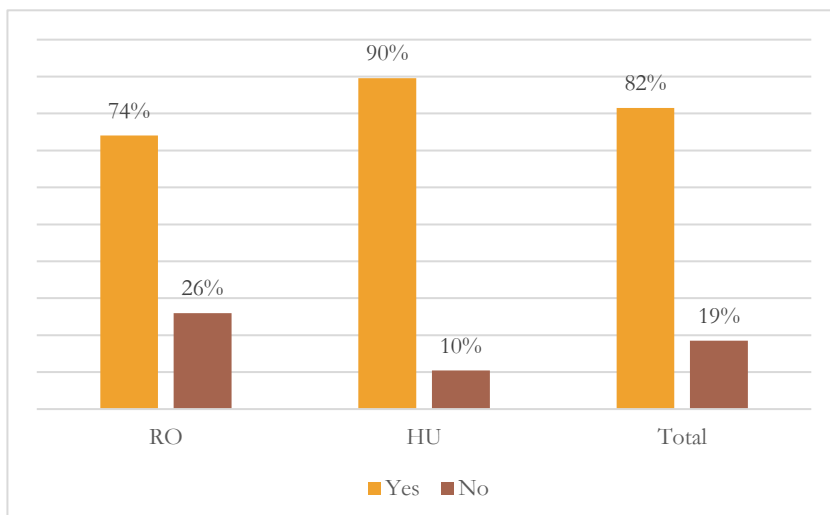
Q5. Did you come alone or with other people?



The majority of refugees (90%) did not arrive alone but came together with others - most often in small groups (2-5 people), likely composed of close family members or friends. Braşov attracts more large groups (15%) compared to Budapest (8%), which may be explained by the higher travel costs, the possibility of multiple and easier border crossings, and the proximity of military operations to the border. At the same time, the arrival and settlement patterns in the host cities differ. Correlated with Q3, we observe that those who arrived either continued to live in the same household composition or reunited with others in order to share living arrangements.

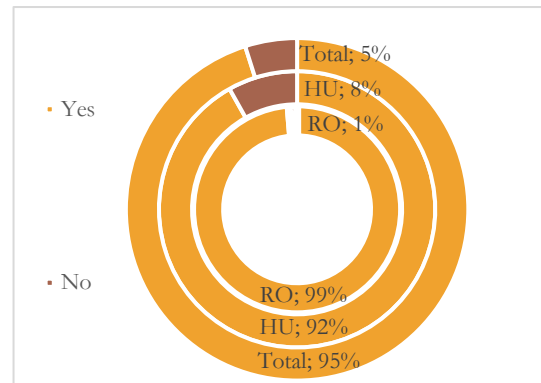
Q6. Do you have children?

The majority of Ukrainian refugees who participated in the survey (over 4 out of 5) reported that they are parents. Although, according to the collected data, Budapest hosts a significantly higher percentage of refugee parents (89.6%), which creates greater pressure on the education, healthcare, and housing systems, Romania shows a more balanced distribution, with a relatively higher proportion of adults without children - potentially young people, students, or single individuals.

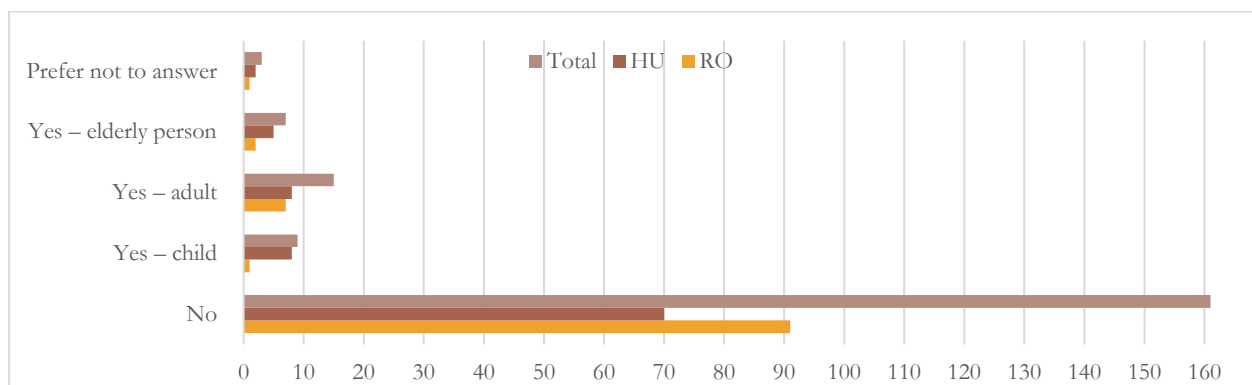


Q7. If yes, are the children in your care?

An overwhelming 95% of refugee parents stated that they personally care for their children, which indicates that settlement in the host locations generally took place together with family. At the same time, about 8% of respondents in Budapest reported the opposite - that they do not have children. This can be explained by the fact that questions Q5 and Q6 did not explicitly specify minor children, and the larger number of respondents over 50 years old in Hungary may have reported their parental status while their children are already adults and not living with them. In the worst - case scenario, this situation may also be explained by family separation among refugees, temporary placement of children with relatives, or institutional care of children.



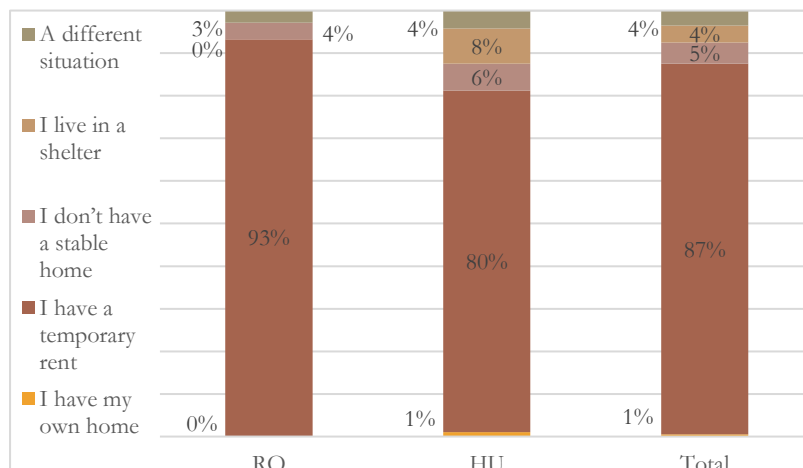
Q8. In the family you are living with in Brasov/Budapest, are there people who are living with disabilities



Approximately 1 in 5 families (19.5%) live together with at least one person with a disability, which implies additional needs for support and specialized services (accessibility, treatments, continuous care). The most frequent category is adults with disabilities (14.5%), of whom 4.5% are elderly, followed by children (6%). Overall, the geographical distribution is relatively balanced, although Budapest appears to record slightly more cases of disability among elderly refugees, which is consistent with the data presented earlier regarding the higher presence of refugees over the age of 50.

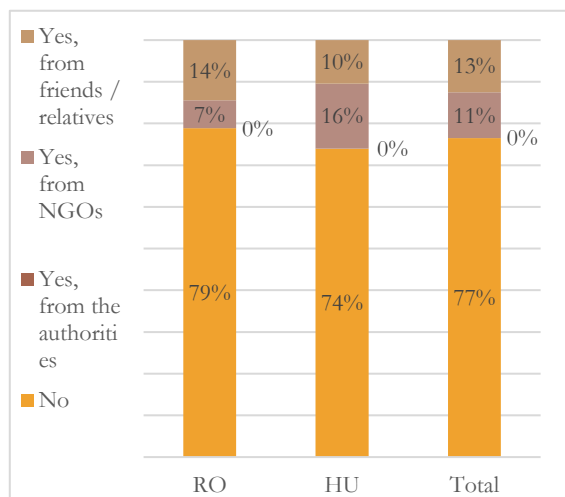
Section 2: Social needs and housing

Q9. What is your housing situation in Romania/Hungary?



87% of refugees live in temporary rental housing, with a slight imbalance between the two host cities. At the same time, Budapest shows greater diversity in housing situations, as 8% of respondents reported living in shelters. This can be explained by the higher rental prices in the Hungarian capital compared to Braşov (Romania). The different situations mentioned mainly refer to student dormitories and social housing.

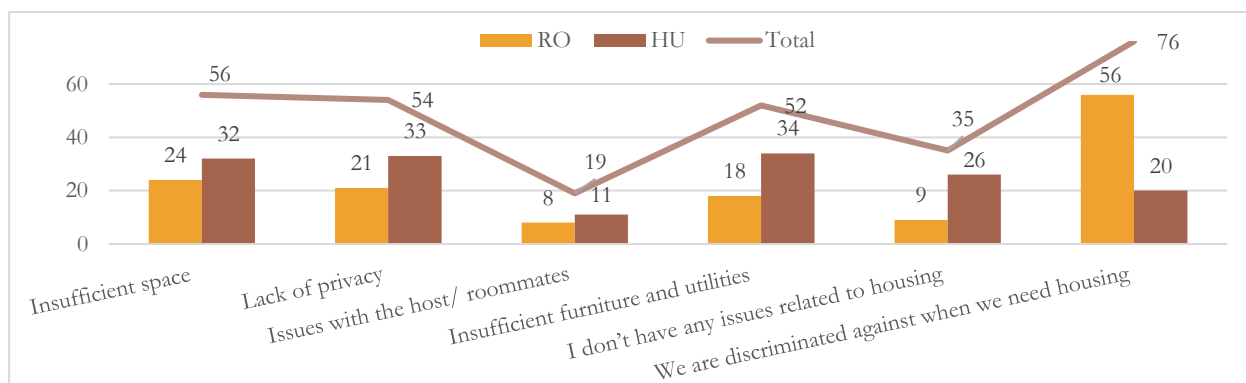
Q10. Did you receive help for identifying a home?



76.5% of refugees did not receive any form of assistance in finding housing. At the same time, informal networks (friends, relatives) and NGOs covered the needs of approximately 24% of refugees. The absence of support from authorities can be explained by the fact that they either did not engage directly in this process and preferred to intervene only financially - as evident from additional responses - or acted indirectly through NGOs. However, it is clear that no communication effort was undertaken by the authorities to make their involvement visible. From another perspective, as mentioned earlier, respondents indicated that the main forms of support received were: material/financial aid; support provided by NGOs and religious organizations; social networks and informal support; temporary institutional accommodation; informational and

logistical support.

Q11. What issues related to housing have you encountered?

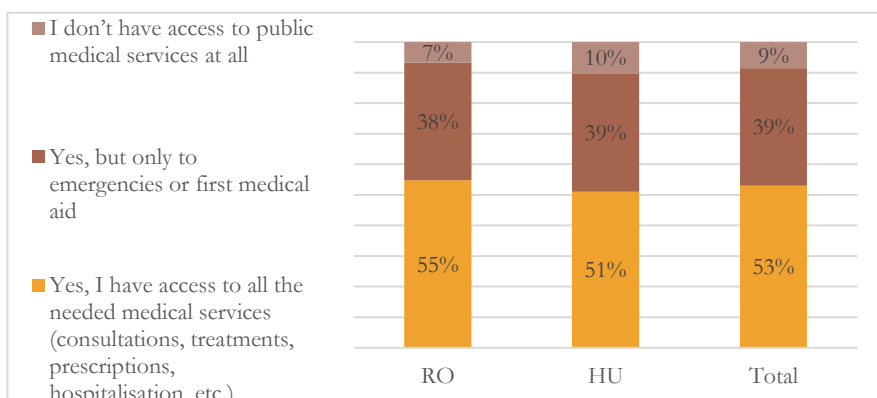


Refugees living in Braşov report a more stable housing experience, with fewer conflicts and greater privacy. Those in Budapest highlight a higher density of housing problems and a significant level of perceived discrimination, including in the rental market for families with children. Nevertheless, a considerable number of respondents - 24 in Braşov and 32 in Budapest - face insufficient living space. Additional responses indicate that the most serious obstacles are related to high rental costs, repeated refusals to rent, and resulting instability and stigmatization linked to nationality.

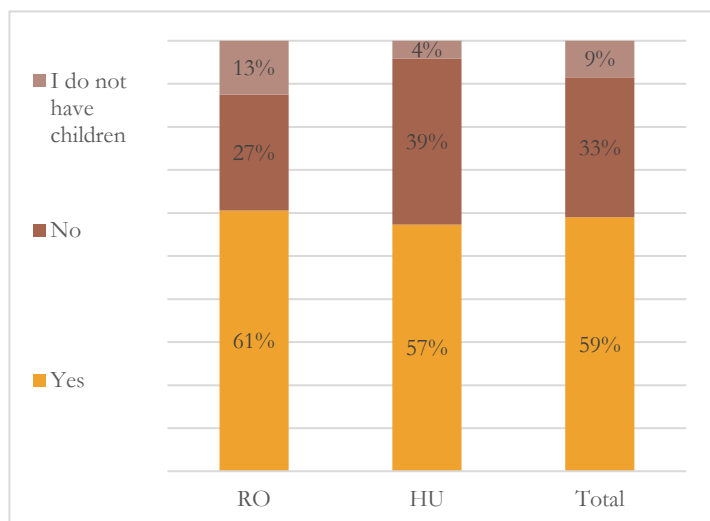
Section 3. Services

Q12. Do you have access to public medical services in Romania/Hungary?

More than half of the refugees report having full access to public healthcare services, while nearly 40% have only limited access to emergency care. A significant share (9.5%) has no access at all, which points to issues of information gaps, institutional integration challenges, or administrative barriers.

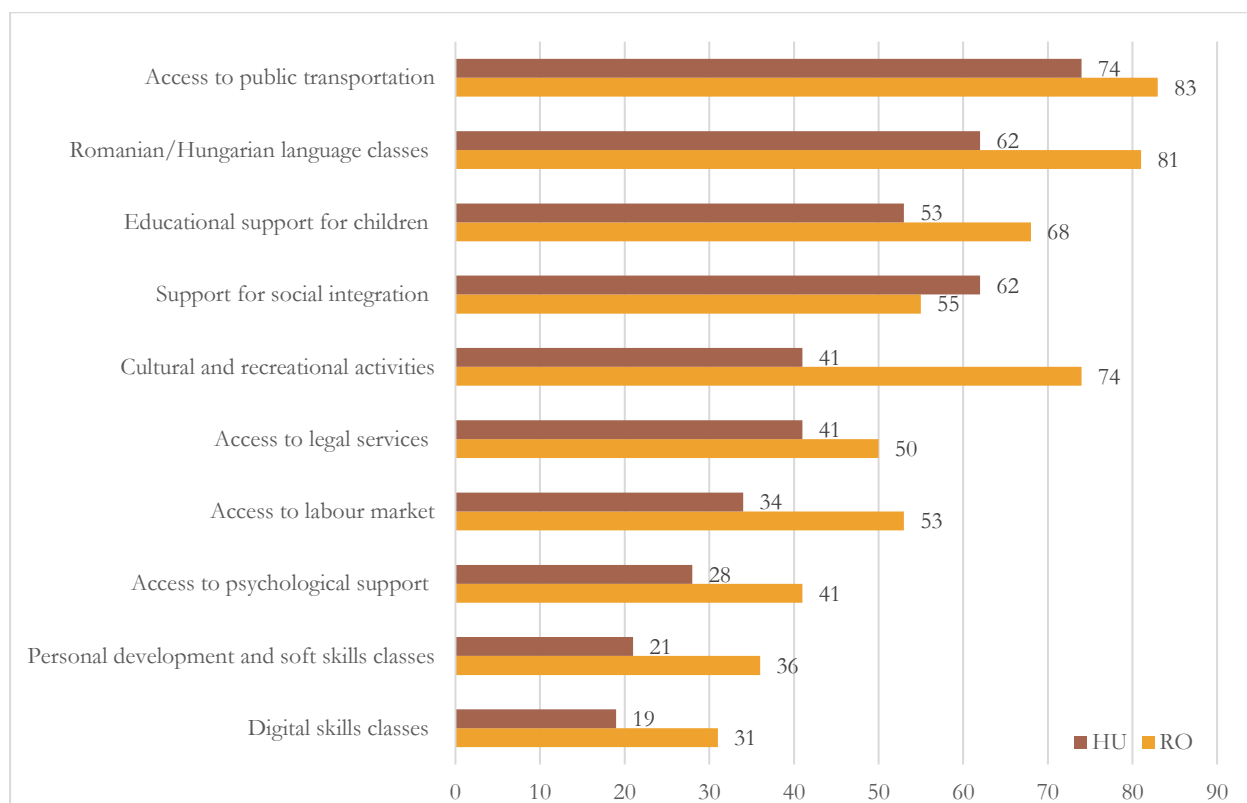


Q13. Do you need support with the education of your children?



64% of parents state that they need educational support for their children. Only one in three parents (36%) report not needing such support. The presence of a consistent share of respondents without children (12%) aligns with the data from Q6. Although this question did not include open - ended responses, the answers from Q10–Q11 suggest several types of requested or necessary educational support: enrollment of children in kindergartens/schools; language assistance (language courses); material support for purchasing school supplies, clothing, and stationery; extracurricular activities; and psycho - pedagogical counseling or integration support.

Q14. What other (public) services are important to you? (Tick a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 relevant options to you)

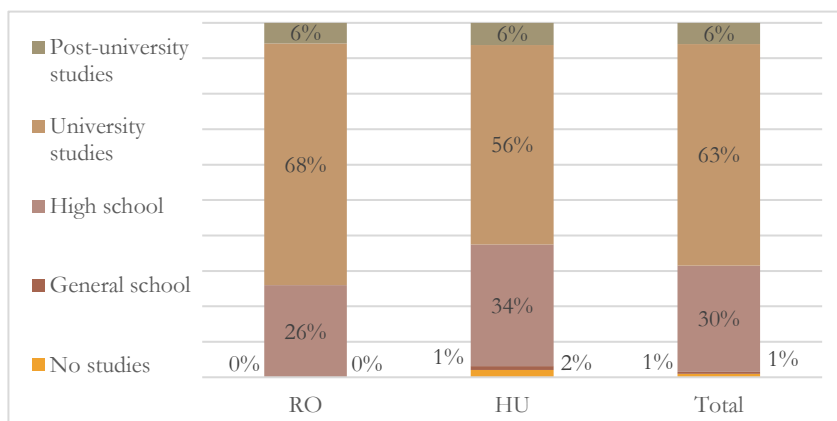


What stands out are the four answers for which there was the highest choice. Both in Budapest and Braşov, in the first place there stand out such services as public transport and local language courses. In Romania these are followed by recreational, cultural, and then educational activities, whereas in Hungary by support for integration and access to education for children. Overall, the refugees in Braşov show a greater demand for cultural and educational integration, while in Budapest the priorities seem to be more administrative: social integration, housing support, legal support. If we were to follow the intensity of the answers, then we would observe that the respondents from Braşov show more activism, which is probably explained more by the age structure of the respondents and which determines the more frequent requests. The larger number of families with children in Romania increases the requests for educational, recreational, and cultural activities, while the larger number of persons over 50 years in Budapest and at the same time of women with children in Braşov increases the number of requests for public transport.

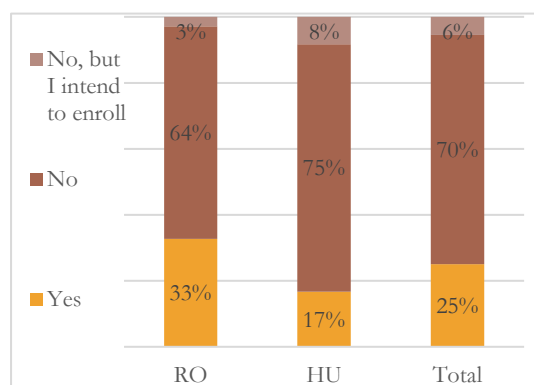
Section 4: Economic needs (employment)

Q15. What is the last level of education you graduated?

Nearly 7 out of 10 respondents have higher education (university or postgraduate studies), indicating a high educational level. At the same time, Braşov has attracted a larger proportion of refugees with university degrees, whereas in Budapest the distribution is more balanced between high school and university graduates, with only a small presence of individuals with lower levels of education.



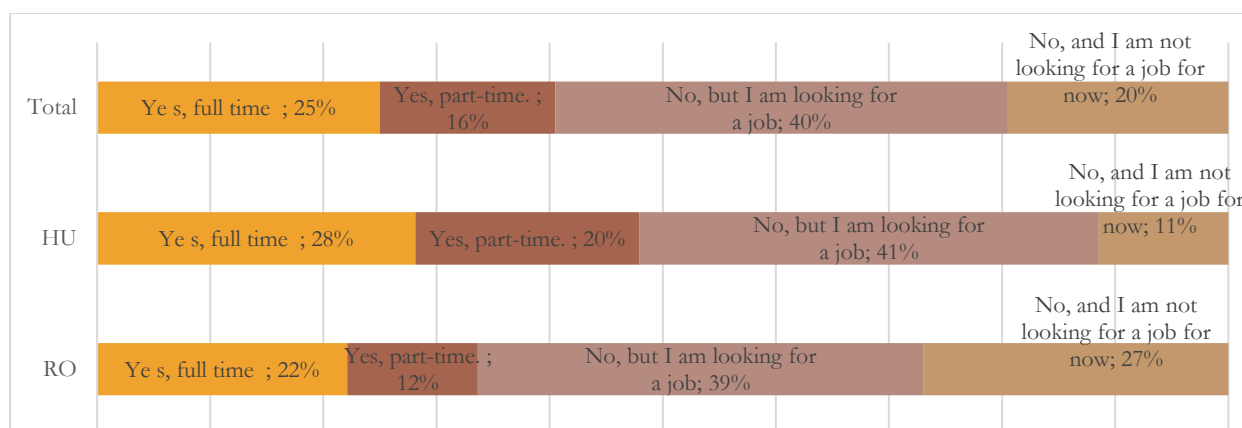
Q16. Are you currently enrolled in a study program?



Approximately 1 in 4 respondents is currently enrolled in an educational program, while another 5.5% expressed a clear intention to enroll in the near future. Responses indicate that Braşov provides a more active educational integration, with about one - third of participants reporting current involvement in a study program, compared to only one - sixth in Budapest. At the same time, the number of those intending to pursue further studies is higher in Hungary than in Romania. A deeper analysis shows that in Braşov, those enrolled in study programs are primarily men aged 18–30 and women aged 31–50. In Budapest, men overwhelmingly responded “No,” while the women engaged in study programs are mainly over 50 years old. On the other hand, more women in Budapest than in Braşov reported planning to undertake a study program, most of them belonging to the 31–50 age group.

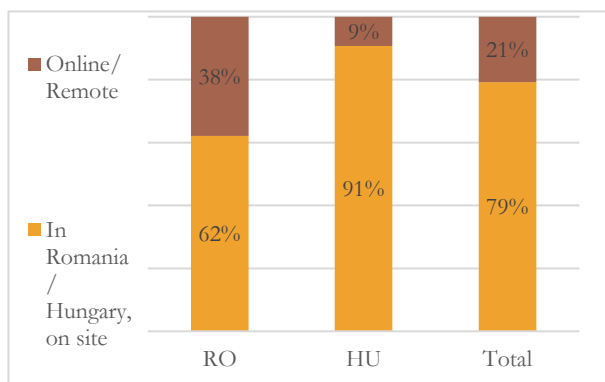
engaged in study programs are mainly over 50 years old. On the other hand, more women in Budapest than in Braşov reported planning to undertake a study program, most of them belonging to the 31–50 age group.

Q17. Are you currently employed?



Out of the total number of respondents, only 40.5% are employed, indicating a moderate level of labor market integration, while another 40% are actively seeking employment. Budapest has a higher proportion of employed refugees, both full - time and part - time (46% vs. 33% in Braşov). At the same time, the number of those who are neither employed nor seeking work is higher in Romania than in Hungary (27% vs. 11%). Correlating these findings with earlier responses, it is worth noting that women predominate (82%) in the sample, and many of them are mothers (Q6–Q7). This helps explain the larger share of economically inactive individuals, particularly in Braşov, where the professional integration of mothers is constrained by the lack of complementary services.

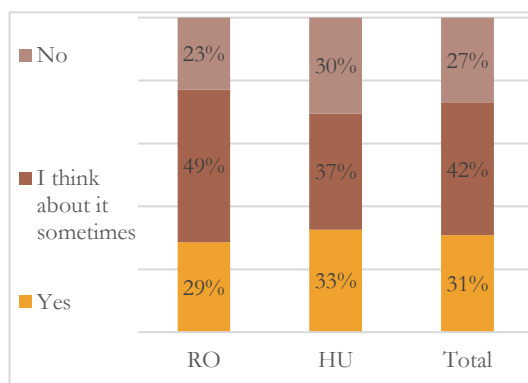
Q18. If YES, where are you working?



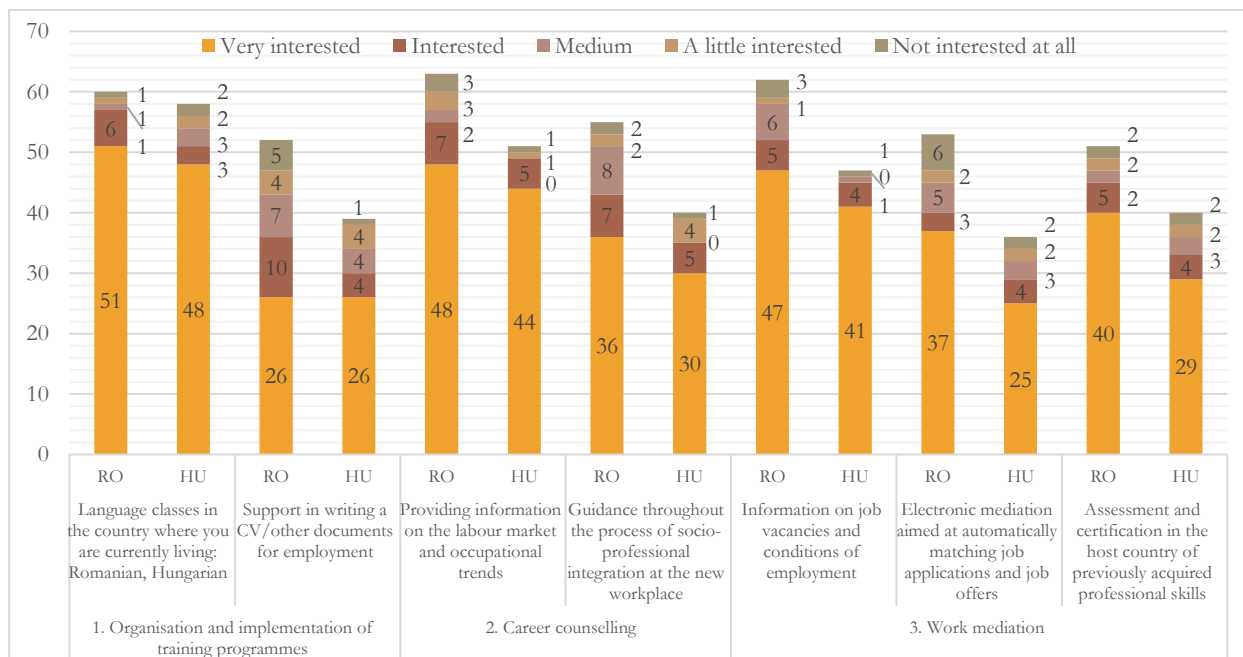
Question Q18 was designed to provide more details regarding employed respondents but was not mandatory, which resulted in fewer answers being collected. The data show that the majority of employed Ukrainian refugees participating in the survey work physically in the host country. Only 1 in 5 individuals works online/remotely. In Budapest, over 80% of employed Ukrainian refugees work locally, which indicates a higher level of labor market integration, while in Braşov, nearly 1 in 3 employed respondents reported working remotely.

Q19. Have you thought about changing your job?

Nearly 3 out of 4 employed Ukrainian refugees think (sometimes or often) about changing their workplace. In Budapest, the proportion of those actively wanting to change jobs is higher (33%), while 30% answered “No,” which is also a higher share than in Braşov. In Romania, employees appear more stable: 29.4% said “Yes” and 23.5% said “No.” The largest differences are found among those who sometimes consider changing jobs - 48% of respondents in Braşov compared to 37% in Budapest. Correlated with previous answers from Q15 (Education Level), we note that the majority of respondents (125 individuals) have higher education, which makes it natural for them to seek other opportunities. In connection with Q17 (Employment), those working part - time or outside their field of qualification may feel overworked, underqualified for the jobs they hold, or underpaid - reasons that explain their search for alternatives.



Q20. What type of support do you need in finding a job?

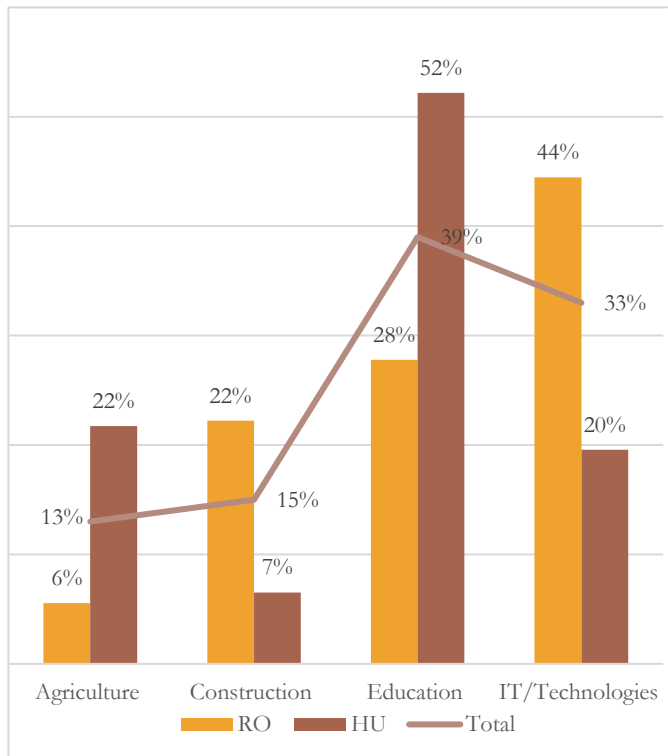


The greatest need expressed by respondents, both in Braşov and Budapest, is participation in local language courses. This highlights the essential role of language skills for access to employment, education, and services. Romania shows a slightly higher predominance of strong interest (“very interested”), while in Hungary more respondents reported medium or low levels of interest - possibly due to additional barriers in adapting to the Hungarian language.

Overall, Ukrainian refugees express interest in career counseling and active, personalized support in the host countries. At the same time, almost all respondents want clear and direct access to jobs and show more interest in traditional (non - digital) job mediation than in IT - based tools. Notably, there is strong interest in the formal recognition of professional competences, which indicates that refugees possess skills and qualifications that are not yet validated in the local labor market.

From the additional responses to Q20, we identified a desire for entrepreneurial and professional initiative, but also confusion regarding access to support from the institutions responsible for this sector.

Q21. In what field do you have experience or expertise?



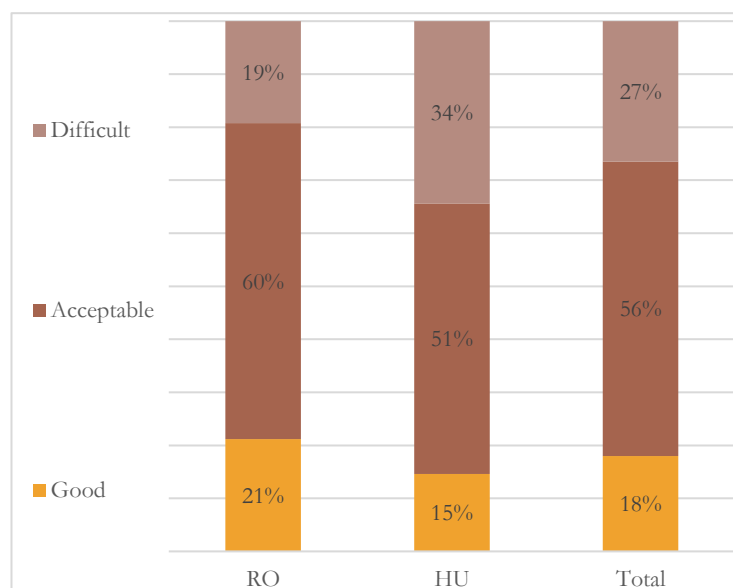
From the total number of respondents, it appears that Braşov hosts more refugees with experience in technical and digital fields, while Budapest hosts a greater presence of those who declared themselves qualified in education and in agriculture. This is in line with Q18, where more people among those who are in Braşov declared that they are employed online, an activity specifically carried out in the IT field. Respondents were also asked to provide details on their specializations and areas of expertise, which allowed the collection of over 70 mentions, grouped as follows: Economics & Finance, Personal Services & Beauty, Education & Culture, Medical field, Legal & Administration, Gastronomy & Food Services, General Services (cleaning, etc.), and others.

The most frequently mentioned qualifications are: “economist” (6 mentions), “medicine” (7 mentions), “cook/chef” (5 mentions), “beauty services” (hairdressing/manicure – over 10 mentions), among others.

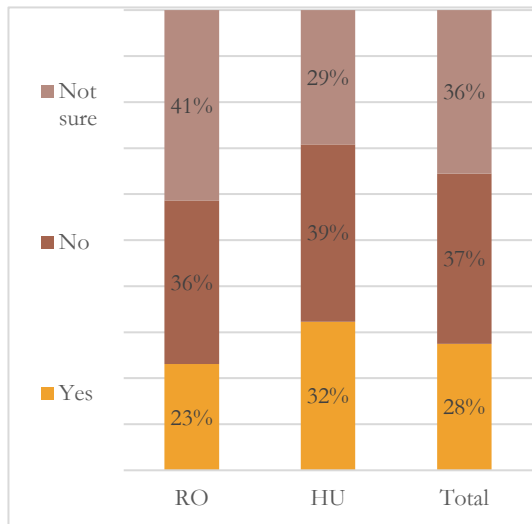
Section 5: Psychological needs

Q22. How would you rate your emotional state in the last 30 days?

The majority of respondents fall into a zone of fragile balance - 111 individuals (around 60%) stated that their emotional state was “acceptable.” Braşov records a higher proportion of positive responses - 22 out of 104 (21%) reported being in a “good” state, compared to only 14 out of 96 (15%) in Budapest. The Hungarian capital, however, has a significantly higher proportion of individuals in emotional difficulty - 33 respondents (34%), compared to only 20 in Braşov (19%). This state is likely generated by housing difficulties, financial stress, or language barriers, as identified in correlation with Q11 and Q14.



Q23. Do you think you need counselling/psychological support?



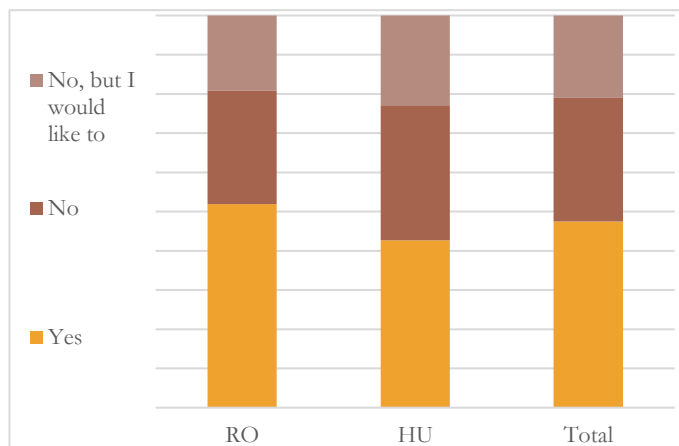
More than one - third of respondents hesitate to respond affirmatively - 71 individuals (38%) stated that they are not sure whether they need psychological support. Affirmative cases are more frequent in Budapest (31 vs. 24 in Braşov), although the sample sizes are similar. This trend corresponds with the results from Q22, where the proportion of those in a “difficult” emotional state is higher in Budapest.

Likewise, out of the total number of respondents, one - third (35%) clearly answered that they do NOT need psychological support, which means that a relative majority (65%) either need support or remain undecided. Respondents who declared a “difficult” emotional state (53 individuals) are most likely those represented within the 55 affirmative responses to Q23. However, the numerical difference also indicates that some of

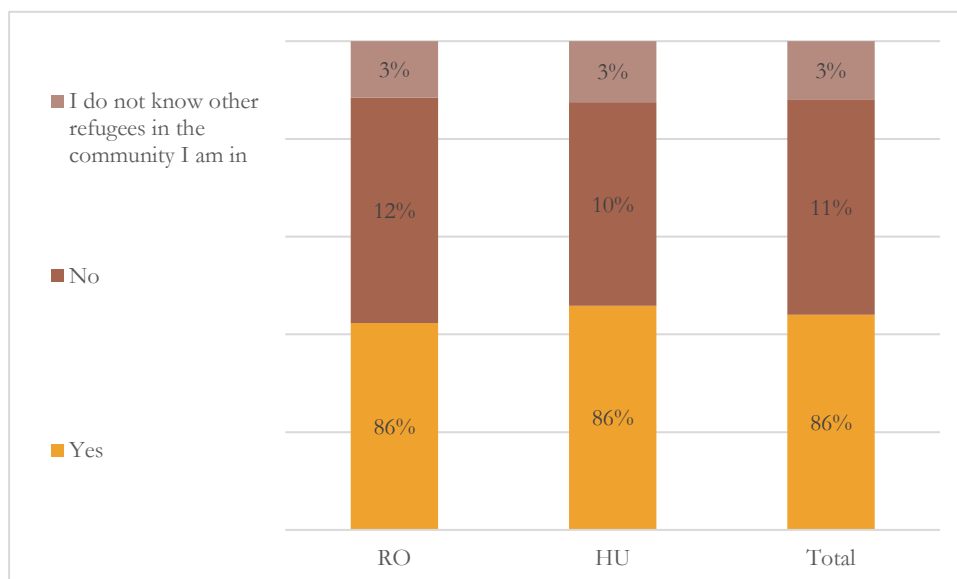
those in difficulty do not recognize or acknowledge the need for support.

Q24. Are you participating in support groups or other integration activities (e.g., Romanian/Hungarian language courses, children's workshops, psychological support groups, cultural events, activities organized by NGOs)?

The majority of respondents report participating in integration activities - 95 in total, approximately 48%. Braşov shows a slightly higher participation rate (54 out of 104 ≈ 52%) compared to Budapest (41 out of 96 ≈ 43%). This may be explained by participation in events organized for children, as Braşov hosts more families with children, which highlights this difference. An important segment states that they do not currently participate but would like to - 42 individuals (21%). About one - third of respondents (32%) do not participate at all and show no immediate interest.



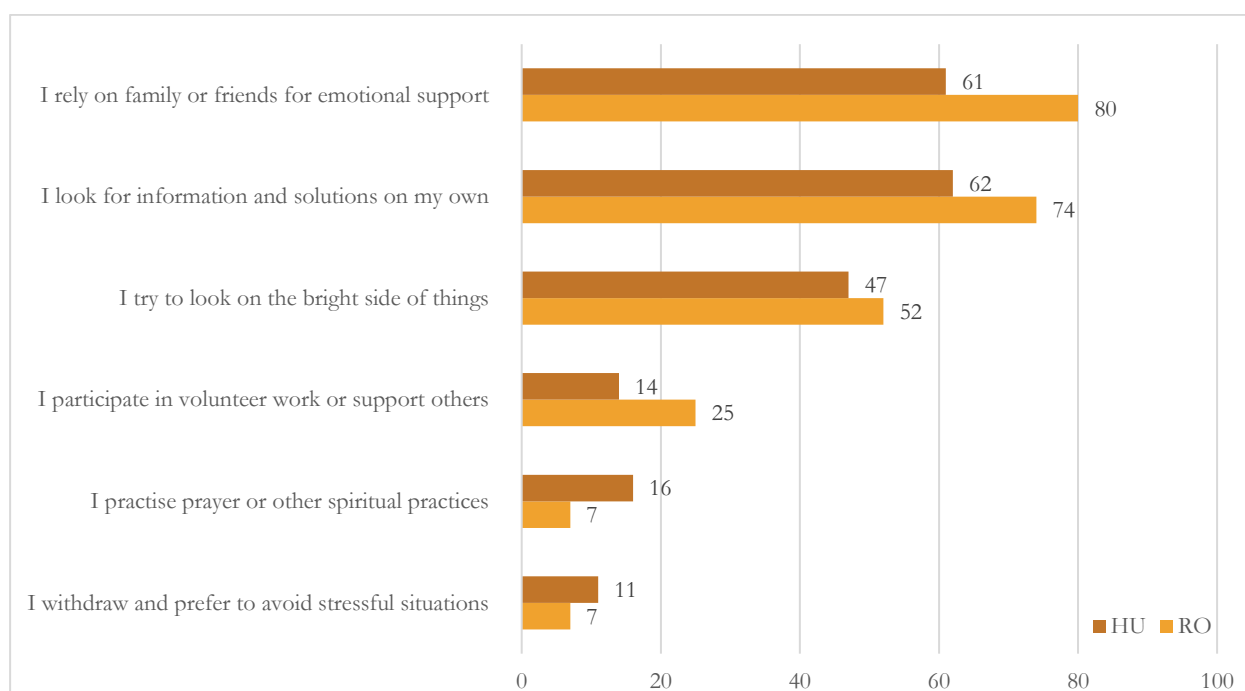
Q25. Do you interact with other people from Ukraine who have taken refuge in the community you are in?



Interaction with other refugees is an almost universal phenomenon, reported by approximately 90% of respondents (172 out of 200). This indicates a high level of social connectivity among Ukrainian refugees. In both Braşov and Budapest, the number of those who declared that they interact is practically the same (≈ 86%–87%).

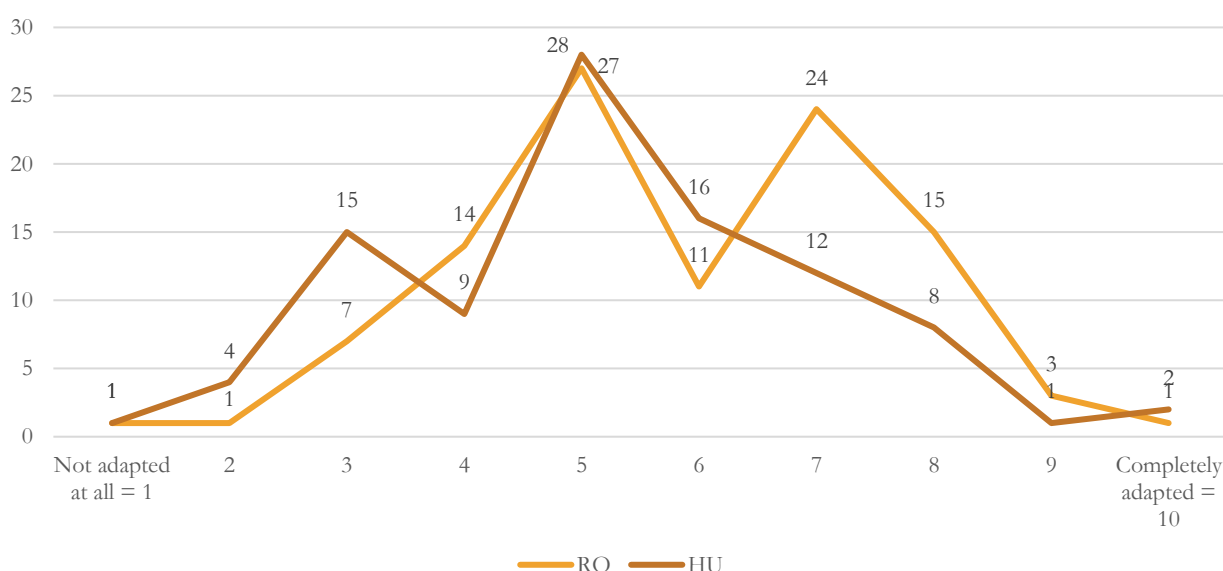
Section 6: Adaptability and resilience

Q26. How do you usually react in difficult situations?



Family and individual capacities to process information are the main sources of support in difficult situations. These are closely followed by the positive internal state reported by the surveyed Ukrainian refugees. Refugees in both countries display a predominantly active and relational adaptation profile. Withdrawal or avoidance of stressful situations is rare (only 18 out of 200), while spiritual practices are reported significantly more often in Budapest (16) than in Braşov (7).

Q27. To what extent do you feel like you have adapted to life in Romania/Hungary?



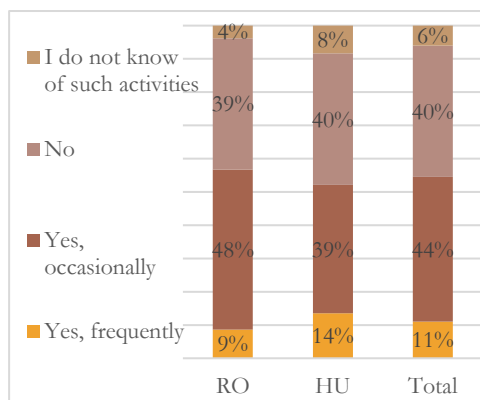
The largest group of respondents (55 out of 200) are positioned at the median level, with a score of 5 points, suggesting partial adaptation. Lower scores (1–3) are more frequently recorded among Ukrainian refugees in Budapest. By contrast, those in Braşov show a slight tendency toward better adaptation, particularly in the 7–8 score range, which can be explained by their more active participation in courses, integration activities, and volunteering (Q20, Q24).

Q28. What types of collective activities have helped you the most in feeling integrate?



The most frequently mentioned activities contributing to the integration of Ukrainian refugees are joint workshops and courses, perceived as the most effective forms of support - indicated by 116 respondents. Informal group meetings rank second (101 respondents), reflecting the need for free social interaction, while 72 individuals stated that voluntary community involvement helps them integrate. Religious activities were reported much more often by Ukrainian refugees in Budapest (20 vs. 5 in Braşov), suggesting the presence of an active confessional network among Ukrainian refugees in Hungary. In addition, both employment and formal/informal social networks significantly contribute to the sense of belonging, as highlighted in the supplementary responses collected beyond those included in the questionnaire.

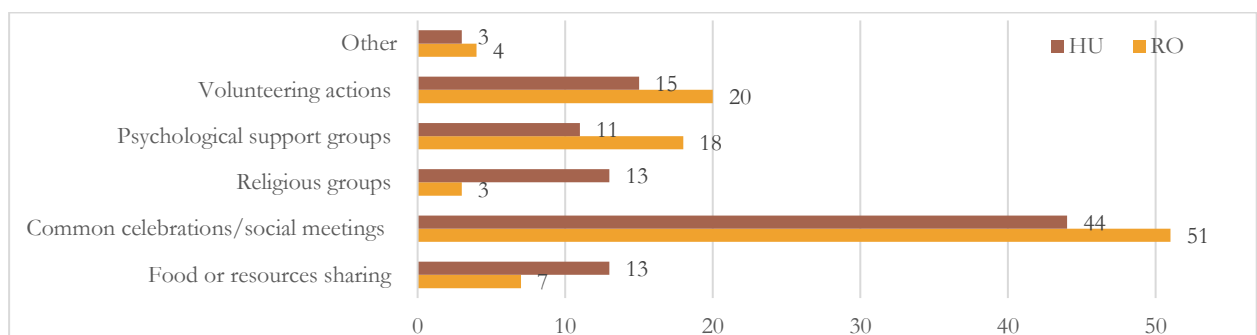
Q29. Have you participated in or initiated collective activities (support, cultural, religious, educational) with other refugees?



The level of participation or initiation of collective activities is relatively low but shows visible potential. Only 22 respondents stated that they participate frequently, with about one - third more in Budapest than in Braşov (14% HU vs. 9% RO) - a modest percentage relative to the total sample. The majority of active participants are occasionally involved (87 respondents), suggesting an openness to collective interaction, which indicates potential but remains dependent on context and opportunity. A little more than one - third of respondents (39.5% or 79 individuals) do not participate at all, with an even distribution between refugees in Braşov and Budapest. At the same time, 12 respondents (especially in Hungary) reported not knowing about the existence of such activities, which points to the need for more effective communication and greater visibility of programs.

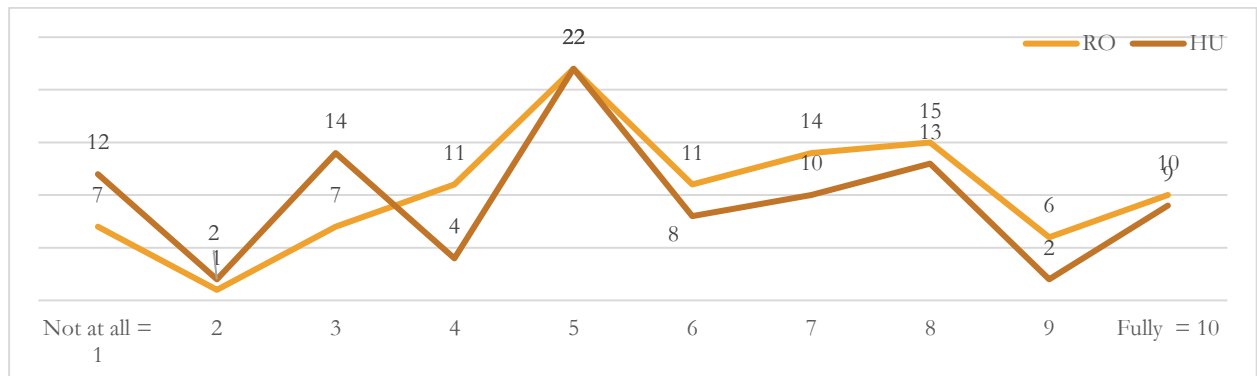
At the same time, 12 respondents (especially in Hungary) reported not knowing about the existence of such activities, which points to the need for more effective communication and greater visibility of programs.

Q30. What activities have you participated in/carried out in a group or community?



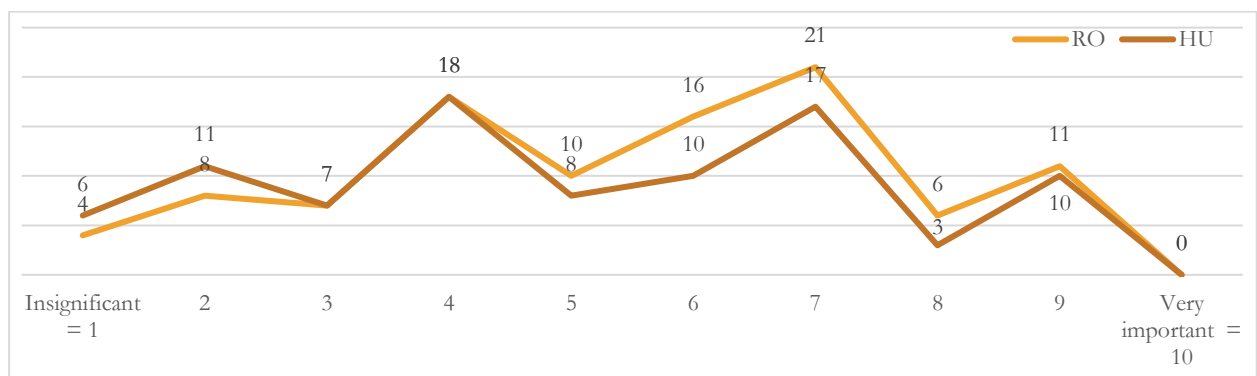
The most frequent collective activities in which refugees were involved are social gatherings and joint celebrations, mentioned by 95 respondents (47.5%). Approximately 17.5% of respondents participated in volunteering activities, while 14.5% reported involvement in psychological support groups. In addition, a significant number (16 respondents) took part in religious groups, especially among those in Budapest. Other activities, mentioned spontaneously by respondents, include organizing concerts, summer camps for children, hiking, online promotion courses, active outdoor games, and team - building activities.

Q31. Do you feel like you belong to a community of refugees in Brasov/Budapest?



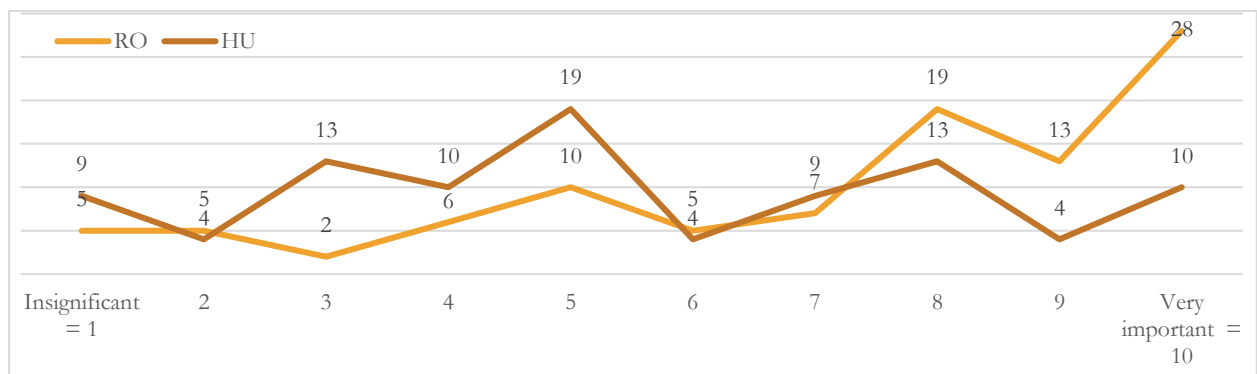
In both locations, the majority of refugees position themselves between moderate and high perceptions of community belonging. Refugees in Braşov report a slight closeness among themselves, reflected in a higher number of respondents indicating a strong sense of belonging (scores 8–10). In Budapest, however, more respondents report feeling disconnected from the refugee community.

Q32. How would you rate the support provided by other refugees in the adaptation process?



Perceptions of support from other refugees in the adaptation process are varied, yet over 40% of respondents gave high scores (7–9), suggesting that informal support among refugees is generally perceived as present. However, approximately 1 in 4 individuals (a total of 43) consider the support from fellow refugees to be weak or very weak. What is concerning is that no respondent gave the maximum score (10) - indicating the absence of a perception that community support from other refugees was considered “very important.”

Q33. How would you rate the support provided by authorities or NGOs if you have interacted with them?

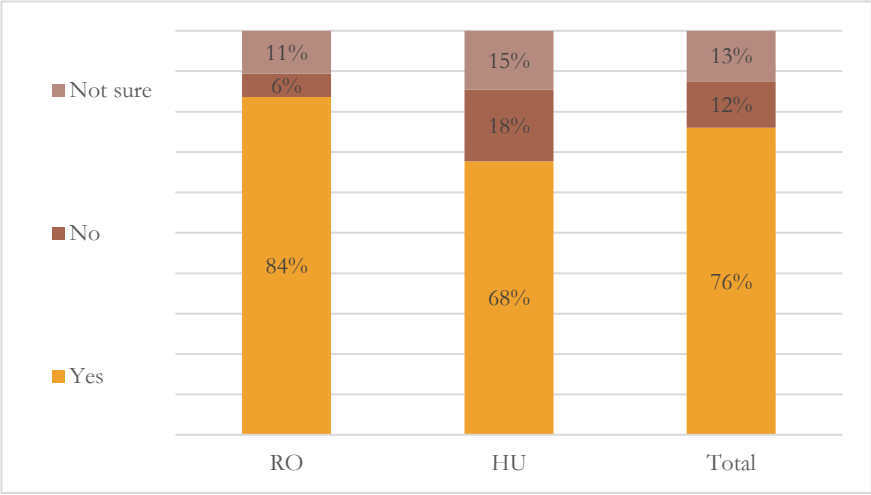


The maximum score (10) was given by 38 respondents - the most frequent rating. The majority of these are from Braşov (28 out of 38). For refugee respondents in Budapest, the experience appears more polarized: a large number of respondents gave low scores (1–3), while the maximum score was less common (only 10 people).

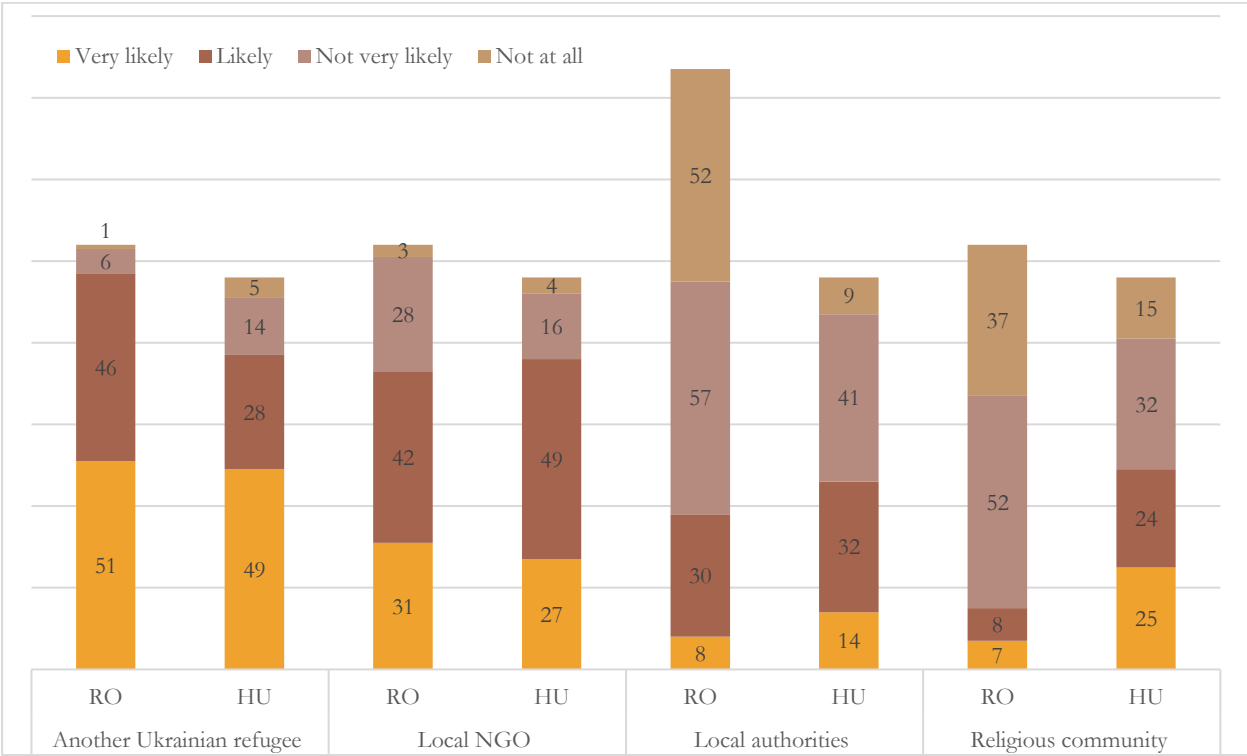
In Romania, the collaboration of Ukrainian refugees with NGOs and authorities is clearly evaluated more positively, with scores of 8–10 given by 60 respondents (approximately 60% of all those who expressed an opinion). In this regard, it can be noted that Ukrainian refugees in Braşov are in an environment perceived as more favorable in terms of support from NGOs and authorities.

Q34. Are you aware of any informal support groups or networks among refugees (e.g. information exchange, mutual assistance, socialising)?

The vast majority of respondents (152 out of 200) state that they are aware of the existence of informal support groups within their communities - a clear sign of an active social network among refugees. These may include WhatsApp groups or other digital platforms, park gatherings, help with translations, mutual babysitting, and similar forms of support.



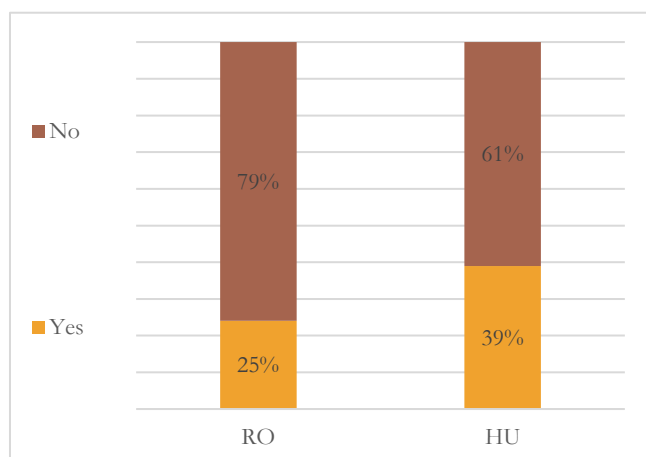
Q35. If you were to have an urgent problem, how likely are you to seek support from:



Refugees in both countries prefer the informal support of other Ukrainians (RO: 97; HU: 77). There is a relatively high and balanced level of trust in NGOs in both countries. Refugees in Budapest include a larger number of respondents who consider NGOs as “Probable” sources of support, which cannot be said about their trust in the authorities. In Braşov, the level of trust in authorities is extremely low: 109 out of 147 respondents stated that they would not turn to them at all or only with hesitation. Meanwhile, in the Hungarian capital, trust is more moderate, but 50% express hesitation (“unlikely” + “not at all” = 50 out of 96). Respondents’ opinions are similar regarding religious structures. Religion plays a marginal role among refugees in Braşov as a source of support, whereas in Budapest, more than half of respondents (49 out of 96) would consider turning to religious communities.

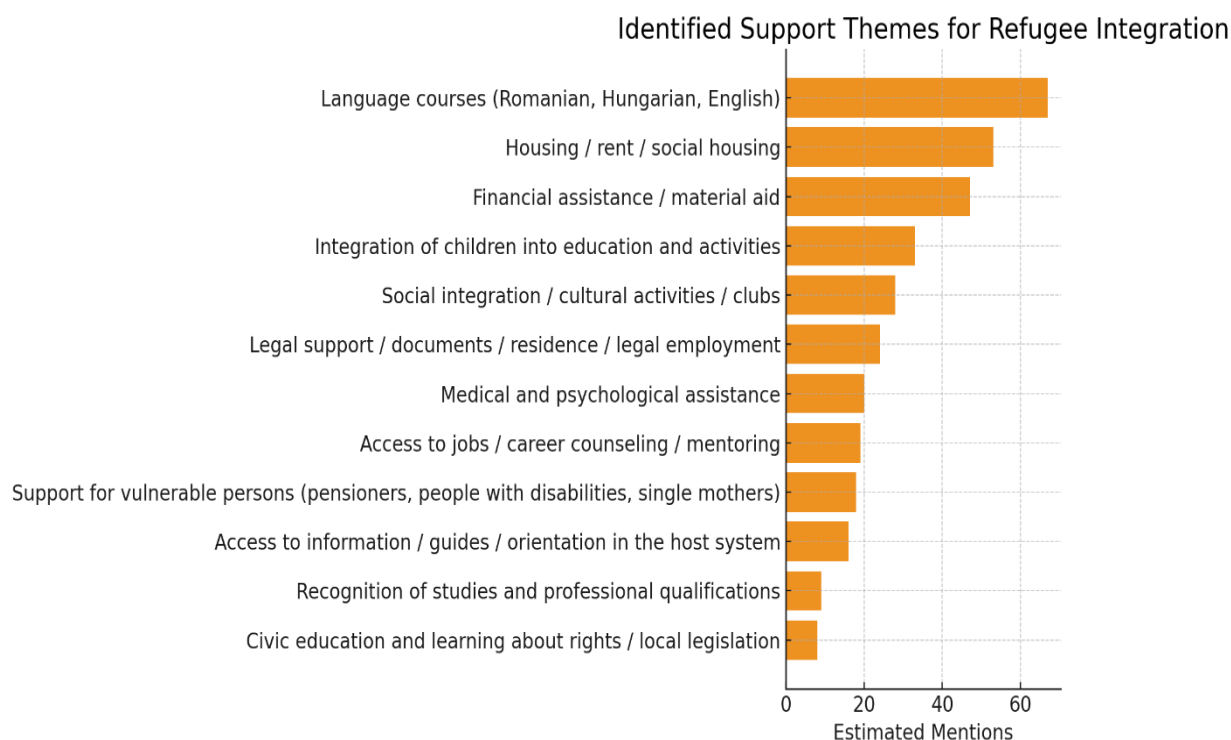
Section 7: Other needs

Q36. Do you need legal support? (for example: documents, work permit)



Most respondents stated that they do not need legal assistance, with a higher share in Braşov (76%) compared to Budapest (61%). At the same time, those who indicated such a need provided clarifying answers. Thematic analysis of these responses highlights interest in: legalization of residence and legal status after the expiration of temporary protection; recognition and translation of official documents; civil status documents; issues related to local administrative errors; access to public services and social rights (education, healthcare); support in employment relations; assistance in entrepreneurship; complex personal situations.

Q37. What other forms of support do you think are necessary for a better integration in the host community?



The open - ended responses provided by Ukrainian refugees outline a complex picture of unmet needs for effective and sustainable integration into the host communities of Romania and Hungary. The most frequently mentioned necessity is access to language courses - Romanian, Hungarian, and, less frequently, English - with an emphasis on adapting these courses to the schedules of working individuals and delivering them in accessible languages (Ukrainian or Russian). Access to decent housing and stable financial support complete the main triad of expressed needs, consistently associated with high levels of stress and instability among refugee families.

In addition, statements frequently referred to issues also identified in Q36: educational and social integration of children, support for recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications, access to legal counseling for residence legalization or business start - ups, as well as cultural and social activities aimed at reducing isolation. A significant number of respondents also emphasized the need for joint activities with locals, involvement in religious communities, and participation in mentoring or volunteering initiatives.

Qualitative

A. Interviews from refugees

I. Personal situation

1. How long have you been in Romania/Hungary? Why did you choose this location?

The data indicate that the choice of Romania or Hungary as a place of residence for Ukrainian refugees is strongly influenced by existing social networks (family, friends, acquaintances) and by immediate employment opportunities. Many respondents mentioned the presence of relatives as a decisive factor: *“I have a sister here, settled for several years”* (Olga, RO) or *“My brother lived here”* (Olena, HU). Others were drawn by the concrete support they received upon arrival - housing, furniture, information: *“We stopped in Braşov and we liked it... we received help with housing and furniture”* (Ekaterina, RO).

Economic factors also play a major role. Even if the initial perception of lower costs was not always confirmed *“I chose Romania for the lower rental costs. I cannot say it was confirmed”* (Victoria, RO), housing affordability remains a recurring motivation.

Another element is the emotional connection with the place, formed earlier through tourist visits or studies: *“I visited Braşov in winter... the city won us over”* (Ana, RO) or *“I had studied here before and had friends”* (Alyona, HU). In Hungary, reasons also include professional continuity *“My husband’s organization continued its activity here”* (Liudmilla, HU) and opportunities for children, especially in sports *“We chose this place so that both my sons could continue their sports activities”* (Hanna, HU).

Overall, the choice of location reflects a combination of support networks, economic factors, and cultural or educational opportunities, complemented by positive experiences upon arrival, which transformed the place into a *“home”* - whether temporary or even permanent.

2. Who are you living with currently? (eg: family, alone, other people)

The responses show that the majority of Ukrainian refugees, both in Braşov and in Budapest, live together with their close family, reflecting the need for emotional support and stability in the context of relocation. In many cases, the family composition includes the spouse and children *“With my family – my husband and our three children”* (Ekaterina, RO); *“I live with my wife and our two sons”* (Oleksandr, HU), and sometimes members of the extended family, such as grandparents or in-laws *“With my family and my mother-in-law”* (Olexandr, RO); *“I live with three adults: my elderly parents and my aunt”* (Alyona, HU).

There are also situations where respondents live alone, either in individual housing or in collective spaces *“Alone, in a dormitory”* (Artem, RO); *“Alone”* (Anna, RO), a situation often linked to separation from family in the host country, conditioned by the choice to settle in a place perceived as safer, either individually or by other family members.

The testimonies of those settled in Braşov reveal a strong dimension of adaptation to modest living conditions while maintaining family cohesion: *“We lived four people in 30 square meters... it’s amazing how we managed so harmoniously... no quarrels, united”* (Ana, RO). In addition, proximity to already-settled relatives was a key factor in choosing a place to live *“We live close to my sister”* (Olga, RO).

In Budapest, the picture is similar: households formed around the family nucleus, sometimes complemented by pets *“With my family: my husband, my son, and our dog”* (Liudmilla, HU), suggesting a desire to preserve elements of normality from life before forced displacement.

Overall, the data highlight that maintaining family unity is a priority for refugees, and that the family support network plays an essential role in managing the challenges of integration and adaptation in the host countries.

From our observations, these responses appear incomplete, as many “families” consist of a woman with children and fewer adult men, but most often this remained unexpressed, which may conceal situations of instability, temporary cohabitation, or reluctance to disclose personal information.

II. Access to services and identified needs

3. Which are the biggest difficulties you have faced since you arrived here?

In Braşov, the majority of interviewees reported that they managed to access the necessary services, especially medical and educational ones, although administrative difficulties were encountered, particularly in obtaining a family doctor “*We don’t have a family doctor, although we tried to register through the Red Cross*” (Ekaterina, RO). The differences between Ukraine’s vaccination schemes and those of the host countries complicated children’s access to kindergarten “*I couldn’t enroll my child in kindergarten due to incomplete vaccinations*” (Natalia, RO), while the reduced school schedule created difficulties for parents. Some resorted to hybrid educational solutions, combining school in Braşov with Ukrainian online education “*My daughter studies both in Romania and online in Ukraine*” (Victoria, RO).

In Budapest, the language barrier emerged as the most frequent difficulty, affecting not only communication but also access to services and daily integration “*The biggest challenge was the language barrier*” (Daniil, HU). Housing problems were repeatedly mentioned, with situations of instability and high rents “*We lived six months in a Christian center, then with friends... expensive and noisy apartment*” (Alyona, HU). Other challenges highlighted include bureaucracy, lack of information, and difficulties in accessing the healthcare system “*The language barrier and access to medical care*” (Liudmilla, HU).

From the perspective of needs, these services require particular attention. Healthcare and children’s education are often viewed as interdependent. In both contexts, community support and personal networks played an important role in overcoming obstacles.

4. Did you need medical, educational, social or legal services? Were you able to access them?

The qualitative analysis highlights that both interviewees in Braşov and those in Budapest reported that access to medical, educational, social, or legal services was strongly influenced by the language barrier, as well as by the local context of the support provided.

In Braşov, many respondents pointed to their lack of Romanian language skills as the main difficulty “*Communication, we don’t know the language*” – Andrei, RO; “*Not knowing Romanian or English*” (Anna, RO). This affected access to medical services “*Language, difficulties in accessing the family doctor*” (Ekaterina, RO) as well as educational support “*Low English and lack of Romanian make it harder to support my child at school*” (Victoria, RO). Family situations, such as that of single parents, further limited the ability to learn the language and, consequently, to integrate “*Being alone with two children, I cannot study the language and I have no help*” (Natalia, RO). On the other hand, specialized centers such as “KATYA” in Braşov provided comprehensive support, including administrative, medical, and employment assistance, which was perceived positively “*We had no problems. We were helped at KATYA with all the necessary services*” (Olga, RO).

In Budapest, the support of NGOs and personal networks was essential for accessing services. Many respondents relied on interpreters “*I used services with the help of interpreters from various organizations*” (Olena, HU) or turned to Ukrainian doctors to overcome language barriers “*For medical check-ups, we turn to Ukrainian specialists*” (Hanna, HU). Problems related to the lack of a family doctor were recurrent “*We don’t have a family doctor now, which is problematic for my parents*” (Alyona, HU), and in some cases, access to medical services was only partial “*Hospital support was not complete*” (Liudmilla, HU). There were also cases in which refugees preferred to manage certain services independently, avoiding intermediaries “*I manage other services on my own in English, avoiding interpreters*” (Tetiana, HU).

Overall, effective access to services is possible in both countries, but it depends on factors such as institutional and community support, language proficiency, and the availability of formal and informal support networks.

5. Do you know of any institutions or organisations that offer support to refugees? Have you contacted them? How was the experience?

The qualitative analysis of responses shows that, both in Braşov and in Budapest, support networks play an essential role in the adaptation process of Ukrainian refugees, providing material, informational, educational, and social assistance.

In Braşov, the Red Cross, Terre des Hommes (TdH), and the KATYA center are consistently mentioned as key support points. These organizations have provided everything from food supplies and financial aid to medical, legal, and language services. Many respondents emphasized the importance of the support received upon arrival “*If it hadn’t been for the organizations helping refugees, it would have been very difficult for us*” (Vitalii, RO); “*I turned to TdH, KATYA, Red*

Cross, a positive experience” (Natalia, RO). Some organizations also functioned as community hubs, facilitating socialization and integration *“I turn to them for social support, to find friends, and for socialization”* (Evhen, RO). Overall, the experience is positive, even if in some cases contact was limited or occasional.

In Budapest, the range of organizations is more diverse, including, in addition to the Red Cross and TdH, structures such as the Helsinki Committee, Budapest Helps, Jesuit Refugee Service, Caritas, Menedék Association, ecumenical organizations, and cultural initiatives. The support was varied - from language courses and children’s camps *“Red Cross – football program for my child... support for learning Hungarian, employment, and business”* (Liudmilla, HU) to substantial financial aid *“TOM covered the rent for 5 months”* (Alyona, HU) and psychological assistance. Information about these organizations often circulates through refugees’ informal networks *“At first I didn’t know about the organizations, but I found out through other refugees”* (Olena, HU).

In both countries, the reported experiences are largely positive, with emphasis on the efficiency, empathy, and diversity of support. At the same time, it is clear that quick access to information about existing organizations significantly increases refugees’ chances of integration and well - being.

III. Education, training and work

6. Have you taken Romanian/Hungarian language classes? Were they useful?

The qualitative analysis of responses highlights that participation in Romanian language courses in Romania and Hungarian language courses in Hungary is generally perceived as an essential tool for refugee integration, but the degree of involvement and the perceived usefulness differ significantly depending on time availability, family context, and personal motivation.

In Braşov, a large part of respondents attended Romanian language courses, most of them appreciating them as *“very useful”* (Natalia, RO; Andrei, RO) or even fundamental for their future plans *“Very useful and important, especially since we want to stay here, develop our business, and be taxpayers”* (Ana, RO). Free courses offered by integration centers, such as KATYA, were mentioned positively (Alexandra, RO; Victoria, RO). However, there are also cases of withdrawal due to family responsibilities *“No, I cannot participate because of responsibilities with my young child”* (Natalia, RO) or due to lack of funds for course organization (Victoria, RO). Some respondents preferred alternatives, such as studying English, considered more useful and accessible.

In Budapest, participation in Hungarian courses is also widespread, organized both by NGOs (Budapest Helps, Baross, Piarists) and by educational institutions. The experience is predominantly positive, with examples of concrete progress *“I have progressed a lot, especially at the Piarist High School”* (Daniil, HU); *“Now I am at A2 level and making progress”* (Olena, HU). However, the language barrier remains a major challenge, as many fail to complete courses due to professional or family reasons (Tetiana, HU; Liudmilla, HU). There are also cases of voluntary non - participation, due to lack of professional necessity (Alyona, HU).

In both countries, learning the local language is perceived as a key element of integration, but success strongly depends on the accessibility and continuity of courses, as well as on participants’ ability to allocate time and resources for study. The lack of these conditions maintains communication barriers and limits full access to services and opportunities.

7. Do you have professional qualifications or work experience from Ukraine? Have you tried to get them recognised here?

The analysis of responses to the question regarding professional qualifications and work experience from Ukraine, as well as attempts at recognition in the host country, highlights a diversity of situations and adaptations, mainly influenced by language barriers, lack of information, and immediate integration priorities.

In Braşov, many respondents stated that they hold higher education degrees or professional qualifications but have not attempted recognition. *“I have two higher education diplomas obtained in Ukraine. I have not yet tried to have them recognized in Romania”* (Yurii, RO). The reasons range from the lack of immediate necessity to language barriers, as one respondent acknowledged: *“I did not recognize the documents because of the language barrier required for interaction with clients”* (Ekaterina, RO). There are also examples of professional reconversion: *“I started producing fruit paste and enrolled in a KATYA project for grants to open a business”* (Ana, RO). Olga (RO), with a background in healthcare, found a way to adapt: *“I legalized my documents without problems. I took cosmetology courses and received a grant for a micro - business in this field.”*

In Budapest, the trend is similar: *“I did not try to validate my documents from Ukraine. I plan to study here through the Stipendium Hungaricum program”* (Liudmilla, HU). For some, the process is underway: *“The recognition of my diploma is in progress”* (Mariana, HU), while others are preparing for this step: *“I translated them and intend to have them officially recognized in Hungary”* (Hanna, HU). Language barriers are frequently invoked: *“Because of the language barrier I have not used it here, but I am considering recognition in the future”* (Oleksandr, HU). There are also cases where recognition is not necessary, such as for Alyona (HU): *“I have a diploma obtained in Hungary, where I studied earlier at Central European University.”*

In both countries, the lack of recognition of studies does not mean inactivity. Many respondents attend courses, retrain, or develop businesses, but without formal recognition, access to qualified professions remains limited, which may lead to the underutilization of highly skilled human capital.

8. What work experience do you have? Have you worked in Romania/Hungary or looked for a job? What obstacles did you encounter?

The analysis of Ukrainian refugees’ responses regarding work experience in Romania and Hungary highlights a complex picture, where language barriers, low wage levels, and lack of recognition of qualifications obtained in Ukraine represent the main obstacles. The language barrier is the most frequently mentioned issue, affecting not only access to well - paid jobs but also the quality of professional relationships *“The main difficulty is the language barrier”* (Vitalii, RO); *“I must first learn the language”* (Victoria, RO); *“It is very difficult to find a job without speaking Hungarian”* (Oleksandr, HU).

Many respondents reported finding only poorly paid jobs or positions below their qualifications *“They don’t hire Ukrainians for well - paid positions”* – Andrei, RO; *“Negative experience – few jobs... low salaries”* (Denys, RO). In Budapest, wage differences between locals and refugees are perceived as discriminatory *“Ukrainians were paid less than other interpreters”* – Alyona, HU). Some worked only occasionally or in informal sectors (*“I worked as a maid in a hotel”* – Hanna, HU; *“I work online”* – Evhen, RO), while others did not seek employment at all, either due to studies or family reasons (*“I didn’t try to look for a job because I had no one to leave the children with”* – Ekaterina, RO).

There are also examples of initiative and adaptation. Some individuals managed to continue their professional activity or open small businesses (*“I opened my own business and always had support”* – Olga, RO), while others found jobs through informal networks (*“I found a job through acquaintances”* – Stas, RO) or in sectors where language was not an essential requirement.

Overall, the data show that the professional integration of refugees depends heavily on language skills, institutional support, and local social networks, and the absence of these factors may perpetuate long - term economic vulnerability.

9. What kind of support would help you to obtain a suitable job?

The responses of Ukrainian refugees in Braşov and Budapest outline a clear picture of the support needs for professional integration. The most frequently mentioned requirement is language learning—both at the basic and advanced levels—perceived as an essential element for employment and social interaction. Examples such as *“Possibly language courses, discussions with an HR manager”* (Vitalii, RO) and *“First of all, language courses”* (Natalia, RO) highlight this priority. In Hungary, Hanna (HU) explicitly mentions the need for *“language courses that would allow me to communicate with the local community.”*

Another major need is access to clear and tailored information about job opportunities, job fairs, specialized websites, or direct contacts with employers. Statements such as *“Access to more detailed information”* (Olena, HU) and *“Contacts of employers”* (Artem, RO) point to the lack of effective communication channels.

Support for recognition of qualifications and professional retraining also emerges repeatedly. Serghei (RO) calls for *“recognition of qualifications and obtaining the necessary documents,”* while Oleksandr (HU) emphasizes the usefulness of *“support programs tailored for people with qualifications but facing language barriers.”*

Some respondents underline the need for mentoring and entrepreneurial support, such as *“mentorship for opening a business”* (Liudmilla, HU) or *“business courses to better understand the labor market”* (Ana, RO). In addition, indirect support, such as after - school programs for children, is perceived as facilitating parents’ employment (Ana, RO).

Overall, the analysis reveals that professional integration depends on a combination of factors: language skills, access to relevant information, diploma recognition, entrepreneurial support, and solutions for family responsibilities. The absence of any of these elements can reduce the chances of obtaining suitable employment.

IV. Interaction with the local community and resilience

10. *How is your relationship with the host community (Romanians/Hungarians)? Did you feel welcomed?*

The qualitative analysis of Ukrainian refugees' responses regarding their relationship with locals in Romania and Hungary highlights a general trend of positive perception and gratitude for the support received, with nuances determined by the language barrier and the extent of direct contact with the community.

In Braşov, most respondents describe their interactions with Romanians as warm and welcoming. Vitalii (RO) states: *"I have only met positive and kind people, and this is one of the reasons why I stayed here,"* while Ana (RO) emphasizes that *"negative people are exceptions and do not define the city."* Direct support, including in emergency situations, is frequently mentioned: Alexandra (RO) recounts that *"from the first day we received support and help, including for housing and work."* However, there are also cases of limited interaction, such as Natalia (RO), who notes that *"we don't interact much with locals; around us there are mainly Ukrainians."*

In Budapest, the general perception is also positive but more strongly influenced by the language barrier. Daniil (HU) describes the relationship as *"neutral,"* and Tetiana (HU) confirms this limitation, though she adds that *"we received support when needed."* Examples of deeper integration also exist: Mariia (HU) points out that *"in three years here, I have not had negative experiences; neighbors are friendly and helpful,"* while Hanna (HU) highlights participation in community activities and the support received from her husband's colleagues.

In both countries, isolated cases of negative experiences are seen as exceptions rather than a general trend. In Budapest, Oleksandr (HU) observes that social opinions can be *"influenced by propaganda,"* suggesting a more complex context of perceptions.

Overall, relationships with locals are largely positive, and informal support plays an essential role in social integration, but the level of interaction and the depth of relationships depend heavily on language skills and community involvement.

11. *Do you have support people or networks (friends, family, organisations)? How important are they to you?*

The qualitative analysis of Ukrainian refugees' responses regarding the existence and role of support networks highlights their overwhelming importance in the adaptation process, both in Romania and in Hungary. Support comes from multiple sources—family, friends, acquaintances, organizations, and religious communities - and is perceived as essential for social and emotional integration.

In Braşov, for many respondents, newly formed friendships and community support compensated for the absence of extended family. Yurii (RO) describes how *"a Romanian family [...] helped us find housing, helped my wife get a job, and supported us during the initial period of adaptation."* Others mention the role of shared activities in strengthening social ties: Vitalii (RO) emphasizes *"biking"* as a means of socialization, while Alexandra (RO) states that she participates in events organized by NGOs, which contributed to her sense of belonging. However, situations of isolation are also reported: *"we have no relatives or acquaintances here. Absolutely no one"* (Natalia, RO), which can amplify emotional vulnerability.

In Budapest, the immediate family remains the main pillar of support. Daniil (HU) mentions the constant help received from his parents and sister, while Oleksandr (HU) highlights the involvement of the sports community and charitable organizations. Religious support is mentioned more frequently than in Romania: *"we go regularly to church"* (Alyona, HU), which provides both moral and social support. Liudmilla (HU) describes a well - defined circle of friends but stresses that close relationships comparable to those in Ukraine are difficult to establish.

In both countries, these networks play a crucial role in reducing the stress of adaptation, facilitating access to information and resources, and maintaining psychological well - being. The differences lie in the dominant type of support: in Braşov, connections with other Ukrainians and NGO assistance prevail, while in Budapest, close family and religious networks have a more prominent role.

12. Do you feel like you belong to a community of refugees here in Braşov/Budapest?

The qualitative analysis of the responses highlights diverse perceptions regarding the sense of belonging to a refugee community, shaped by differences between Romania and Hungary, as well as by personal factors such as the level of integration, support networks, and involvement in collective activities.

In Braşov, many respondents state that they feel part of a refugee community, engaging in cultural, social, or support - related activities. Ana (RO) describes active participation: *“We always take part in events such as Ukraine’s Independence Day or the Day of the Ukrainian Blouse (Ziua Iei),”* emphasizing the role of these occasions in maintaining identity ties. Others, such as Alexandra (RO), value informal relationships: *“We all know each other here and I feel at home, greeting everyone.”* However, there are also perceptions of isolation or lack of cohesion, as Ekaterina (RO) points out, mentioning the absence of *“organization among Ukrainians,”* particularly relevant for children.

In Budapest, the situation appears more fragmented. Liudmilla (HU) notes: *“I have fully integrated into the Ukrainian refugee community here,”* while other respondents feel more distant: *“I don’t feel that I belong to the refugee community [...] I want to integrate”* (Daniil, HU). Participation in cultural and organizational events is also present, as shown by Olena (HU), who is involved in *Egység* and *Nova Hrylja*. However, there are also reservations regarding internal conflicts between organizations, highlighted by Hanna (HU) and Oleksandr (HU).

Two distinct models emerge: in Braşov, the refugee community is more visible and active in the public sphere, with an emphasis on cultural events and mutual support, while in Budapest belonging is more selective and sometimes limited by internal tensions or by the desire to integrate directly into the host society. The difference also seems to be linked to the territorial scale of Braşov and Budapest – with the latter being a much larger space to navigate – as well as to the greater effort required to forge and sustain social connections.

13. What types of support did you offer to other refugees? What did you receive in return from them?

The analysis of responses to the question regarding help offered and received among Ukrainian refugees in Romania and Hungary highlights an active network of mutual support, in which the exchange of information, ad - hoc material assistance, and involvement in community activities prevail.

In Braşov, interactions are frequent and diverse. Vitalii (RO) summarizes simply: *“There was mutual help,”* while Yurii (RO) describes a more structured form of collaboration: *“We constantly exchange useful information with other Ukrainians.”* Online groups, particularly on Telegram, play a central role: *“They have been very helpful, as all the valuable information is structured and organized there”* (Ana, RO). Support is also expressed through concrete assistance: Alex (RO) *“helped with housing and food”* and received similar support, while Ekaterina (RO) highlights the importance of small gestures, such as *“looking after children so that parents can go to the store.”*

In Budapest, although similar actions exist, they seem more selective and often integrated into volunteer or religious activities. Alyona (HU) recalls: *“I volunteered as an interpreter for the Reformed Church,”* while Liudmilla (HU) provided *“both informational and material support (e.g., clothes for children).”* The exchange of items is frequent, as mentioned by Tetiana (HU) and Olena (HU), who also contributed with clothes and translations. Other forms of involvement include cultural and charitable support, such as handmade embroidery donated to auctions by Hanna (HU).

In both contexts, the exchange of information about job opportunities, administrative procedures, or available services represents the core of mutual assistance. The differences lie in the fact that in Braşov, this support is more strongly tied to the local refugee community and online networks, while in Budapest it is more often channeled through organizations, churches, or specific initiatives.

V. Recommendations and feedback

14. What services do you think should be improved or introduced to better support refugees in the coming period?

The analysis of responses shows that, both in Romania and Hungary, the main needs perceived by Ukrainian refugees concern strengthening language support, diversifying activities for children, and improving access to information and services.

In Braşov, the emphasis is placed on Romanian language courses, seen as essential for integration. Serghei (RO) mentions the need for *“Romanian language courses, activities for children, summer camps, informational and legal support,”* while Anastasia (RO) stresses the importance of continuing these courses for *“a foundation and communication.”* The educational and cultural dimension for children is another priority: Denys (RO) suggests *“as many opportunities as*

possible for children,” and Ekaterina (RO) proposes “organizing activities for children together with Romanian children.” Concerns also emerge regarding medical services, such as access to family doctors (Alexandra, RO) or support for pensioners and people with disabilities (Olga, RO). Other proposals include improving employment support and developing small businesses (Ana, RO), as well as increasing access to open information (Vitalii, RO).

In Budapest, the dominant demand is for language support, both through courses and practice with native speakers. Daniil (HU) states that “language education is the most important,” while Tetiana (HU) sees support for Hungarian language learning as the key to integration. There is also a notable need for interpreters in medical and administrative contexts (Olena, HU), as well as for clear information about job opportunities and legal requirements (Oleksandr, HU). For children, summer camps and specific activities are proposed (Hanna, HU), while for adults – certified courses and integration programs. Liudmilla (HU) highlights the importance of housing services, while Alyona (HU) points out the need for a better - organized flow of information, especially for elderly people.

15. *If you could send a message to institutions or organisations working with refugees, what would it be?*

The responses of Ukrainian refugees in Romania and Hungary to this question outline two main directions: deep gratitude for the support received and, in parallel, suggestions for improving certain aspects of institutional and organizational interventions.

In Braşov, the messages are dominated by expressions of sincere gratitude, with an emphasis on the important role of organizations and the local community. Serghei (RO) states: “Without you we would not have managed. Now here in Romania we feel much more confident and safe,” while Denys (RO) appreciates the involvement of many NGOs: “In Braşov everything is very well organized! Bravo!” There are also calls for understanding and tolerance, as highlighted by Anastasia (RO): “There should be no bullying... Ukrainian children are unprotected,” or Natalia (RO), who clarifies: “We don’t take anything away... we pay for everything, just like they do.” Other messages point to long - term integration: “It is time for Ukrainians to integrate into the labor market” (Olga, RO), while Victoria (RO) proposes more psychological support for teenagers.

In Budapest, gratitude remains present, but issues of equity and adapted support are brought forward. Liudmilla (HU) calls for “equal access to services for everyone,” and Alyona (HU) recommends “being closer to people, psychological support.” Daniil (HU) acknowledges the challenge of the efforts made: “I hope you... go beyond your limits to help others.” Other messages, such as that of Oleksandr (HU), remind us of the need for continued assistance even after three years of conflict: “We still need help.”

Overall, a consensus emerges on the value of the assistance provided, but also a maturation of refugees’ perspectives: gratitude is increasingly combined with concrete proposals for long - term integration, protection of vulnerable groups, and equity in the distribution of resources.

B. Interviews from Focus Group

I. General situations

1. *How was the transition from Ukraine to Romania/Hungary for you? How did you feel at first?*

The experience of forced migration from Ukraine was emotionally intense, oscillating between shock, fear, and gratitude. The first reactions upon arrival in Romania or Hungary reflect a wide range of emotions - from anxiety and disorientation to relief and hope - deeply influenced by the individual circumstances of departure and the human support received at the destination.

In Braşov, some refugees acutely felt stress and uncertainty: “Morally it was very difficult” (Maria, FG1), “The transition was difficult, we come from occupied territories” (Viktoria, FG1), “Sadness, confusion, despair” (Kateryna, FG2), “Lost, melancholy, depression” (Kristina, FG2). However, this initial state was quickly counterbalanced by the warm welcome and local assistance. Elena (FG1) notes: “People were extraordinary. We were received with tears and open arms. I respect all Romanians for that.”

Support from the local community and access to services, such as the KATYA center and other aid organizations, played an essential role in adaptation. “We were welcomed by complete strangers who offered us accommodation. Now they are our

friends” (Serghei, FG3). Choosing Braşov was based on factors such as proximity to the border, the presence of acquaintances, job opportunities, or natural surroundings: *“I chose this city for the mountains and tranquility”* (Iulia, FG1).

Departure towards Hungary was chaotic and traumatic. Nina (FG6) describes: *“We were 20 in a 6 - seat compartment. My child was sitting in the arms of strangers. I only felt relief after crossing the border.”* Still, support here was also remarkable: *“A family hosted us, offered us a shower, a bed, and even a plane ticket”* (Nina, FG6); *“The help and kindness of people overwhelmed us”* (Lidumilla, FG6).

It is also noteworthy that many refugees initially believed they would stay only for a few weeks: *“We all left thinking it was just for a few days”* (FG6).

2. *Why did you choose to stay in this location (Braşov/Budapest)? What helped you the most?*

The choice of city of residence was largely influenced by pragmatic, affective factors and pre - existing support networks.

In Romania, the city of Braşov was preferred for its quality of life, natural landscape, and the institutional support offered to refugees. Olga (FG1) mentioned *“the quality of life and the proximity to the Ukrainian border”*, while Maria (FG1) was attracted by *“the possibility of benefiting from free accommodation.”* Others emphasized the beauty of the city: *“It is a very clean, quiet, beautiful city. It won me over”* (Viktorina, FG1).

A decisive source of support was the KATYA refugee center, frequently mentioned by participants: *“The KATYA center helped us the most”* (Sergiy, FG3), *“We found support at KATYA, the Red Cross, IOM, and others”* (Elena, FG2). Others were guided by acquaintances or relatives: *“My sister lived for a while in Braşov, which is why my parents chose this city”* (Denys, Toma, FG3), *“Some complete strangers offered us housing and became our friends”* (Serghei, FG3).

In Hungary, Budapest was chosen for access to services, study scholarships, the presence of charitable organizations, and existing personal networks. One participant (FG4) stated: *“I received a scholarship and support from the Red Cross, which also covered rent for 5 months.”* Other reasons mentioned were *“the possibility of easily finding jobs”* or *“the fact that my partner was already working here”* (FG4). Practically, *“good public transport and access to necessary services mattered a lot”* (FG5).

In both countries, community support and access to information had a decisive impact on the adaptation process. Tatiana (FG2) said: *“I knew there was a strong Ukrainian community and that local organizations were organizing events.”*

II. Access to services and needs

3. *What types of difficulties did you encounter in your first few months here? Are there any that persist today?*

The responses of refugees reveal a wide range of difficulties encountered immediately after arrival, particularly concerning the language barrier, access to medical services, and administrative or social integration.

In Braşov, one of the most frequent complaints is the inability to access a family doctor: *“I could not find a family doctor”* (Olga, FG1); *“I was told I had to pay to see a specialist because the family doctor refused to give me a referral”* (Natalia, FG1).

Similar difficulties are expressed in Budapest: *“Accessing the medical system was not easy. The family doctor was kind, but the referral to a specialist was slow. In June, we were told that the first available dermatology appointment was in September”* (Tetiana, FG6). Many also pointed out persistent problems with communicating with medical staff due to language: *“The language barrier made it difficult even to buy medicine from the pharmacy”* (FG5).

Another major obstacle is the local language. *“The language barrier is present everywhere, even now, in official institutions and in contact with doctors”* (Irina, FG2); *“Even simple things, like going to the store or asking for information, became stressful because of not knowing the language”* (Kateryna, FG2).

Housing problems were mentioned in both countries. *“Rents are very expensive”* (Elena, FG2); *“We had to move several times until we found something stable”* (FG5). In Braşov, the lack of recognition of professional qualifications was a specific difficulty: *“My profession is not recognized here, so I work in another field”* (Serghei, FG3).

Overall, despite progress made in the adaptation process, the language barrier, access to healthcare, and the cost of living remain the most pressing issues in both countries.

4. How was your experience in accessing services (e.g. medical, educational, social)? Did you encounter any obstacles?

Accessing essential services after relocation is one of the most problematic dimensions of integration. Although some refugees have reported positive experiences, for the majority, administrative obstacles, language barriers, and the lack of clear information persist.

In Braşov, the main difficulties concern access to the medical system, particularly in the absence of a family doctor. *“It is impossible to get insulin without a prescription. If you don’t have a family doctor, you don’t get a prescription. A vicious circle”* (Olga, FG1). Others confirm this: *“Family doctors refuse to complete the registration form, claiming that the system is not working”* (Natalia, FG1).

Some face the loss of medical protection, despite having previously benefited from it: *“For three years I used the insurance, then suddenly I was told I no longer had it”* (Iulia, FG1).

Regarding education, opinions are more varied. Some appreciate the attitude of teachers: *“In Romania, children are respected. Here in the village, although it is a small school, the teachers are extraordinary”* (Elena, FG1). In Hungary, however, there have been less positive school experiences: *“My son was bullied and was not offered extra Hungarian lessons”* (Natalia, FG6).

With respect to social and medical services, similar problems are reported in Hungary, with emphasis again on the lack of information and the language barrier: *“The healthcare system is confusing and we received no help. We were sent from one institution to another”* (FG4); *“Many avoid going to the doctor for fear they won’t be able to communicate”* (FG5).

Even when services are available, the absence of translations, misunderstanding of procedures, and unintentional exclusion continue to affect integration experiences.

III. Training and jobs

5. Have you participated in language courses or other forms of training? What do you think about them?

Refugees’ participation in local language courses was frequent, yet opinions on their effectiveness vary depending on context, teaching quality, language barriers, and time availability.

In Braşov, many participants attended Romanian language courses but complained about the complexity of the language and the lack of adapted methods. *“Romanian is very difficult. It’s from another language family than Ukrainian or Russian. For me, it’s like learning Chinese”* (Iulia, FG1). Another common criticism is that classes were taught in Romanian or English without translation: *“The courses I attended were too fast and taught in English, which I don’t know. The result was predictable”* (Elena, FG2).

Daily logistics also made attendance harder: *“It’s difficult to get to the courses physically. You need transport, time, organization. And teaching in Romanian - English discouraged me”* (Inna, FG1).

Nevertheless, some had positive experiences: *“I attended courses ... I am very grateful”* (Natalia, FG1); *“The courses organized by IOM were good, those at the Integration Center ... poor”* (Viktoriia, FG1).

In Budapest, the lack of accessible options and limited time were major barriers: *“I started a few courses, but it’s hard to follow them when you also have a job”* (Tetiana, FG6). However, some regained motivation through their children: *“My daughter goes to a Hungarian kindergarten, so I also started classes”* (FG4).

Many acknowledge that without knowledge of the local language, access to decent work and integration is limited, expressing a strong demand for adapted, free, and long - term courses.

6. How do you feel about integration into the labour market? Have you worked or looked for a job? What helped you or what hindered you?

Ukrainian refugees’ experiences with labor market integration in Romania and Hungary oscillate between limited opportunities, informal work, and forced adaptation.

In Braşov, many were able to find employment, but often in underqualified positions due to the language barrier and the non - recognition of diplomas. *“We work, but our professions are not recognized here. We are forced to accept unqualified jobs”* (Serghei, FG3). For some, employment came through initiatives such as TdH: *“I worked. The TDH employment project helped a lot”* (Alekssei, FG3).

The language barrier is repeatedly mentioned: *“Without Romanian at B2 level, you have no access to a decent job”* (Ksenia, FG2). The situation is aggravated by the absence of effective retraining or career guidance programs. Some women, due to childcare responsibilities, could not take up employment: *“I cannot leave my 7 - year - old daughter alone”* (Kateryna, FG2).

In Budapest, the process is described as equally difficult and often humiliating. Some were only accepted into jobs rejected by locals: *“We were made to do what Hungarians refused. No chance of promotion, regardless of qualifications”* (FG4). The lack of diploma recognition and insufficient language skills remain the main factors of exclusion, although some benefited from NGOs’ support with CV writing or job placement (FG5).

Still, forms of resilience and pragmatism are evident: *“I’ve been working in the same place since 2022 and I also take cleaning or babysitting jobs. I started learning English to have more options”* (Nina, FG6).

IV. Relationship with the local community

7. How do you feel about the locals (Romanians/Hungarians)? Have you had positive or difficult interactions?

Ukrainian refugees’ perceptions of interactions with locals in Romania and Hungary paint a predominantly positive picture, though not without moments of tension.

Many participants described host communities as welcoming and kind. *“Romanians are friendly and good”* (Olga, FG1), and *“they respond with kindness to those who try to learn the language”* (Ksenia, FG2). Some highlighted simple gestures of support: *“Neighbors helped us understand how things work, shared food, and were always kind”* (FG5).

However, the language barrier continues to create communication difficulties: *“We get along well, but we use Google Translate”* (Svitlana, FG2). In Budapest, experiences are more neutral: *“I haven’t had problems with locals, but attitudes vary depending on the situation, especially at the workplace”* (FG4).

In Braşov, some isolated incidents were mentioned: *“A woman in a shop told us: ‘This is Romania, not Ukraine’”* (Kateryna, FG2), and *“a man pushed my 6 - year - old daughter with a shopping cart in a store”* (Irina, FG2). Even so, such episodes are seen as exceptions: *“These situations are rare and do not reflect the general attitude of locals”* (Irina, FG2).

Overall, most participants felt support from locals, while negative attitudes were treated as individual exceptions rather than collective traits. *“It depends on the person. There were pleasant people and less pleasant ones... just like everywhere”* (Nikita, FG3).

8. How did you feel you were welcomed in schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods, etc.? What worked well and what didn't?

At work and in neighborhoods, refugees emphasized the support received from locals. *“At work I was welcomed very well, I love to work, I have experience and I know English. I am grateful that I was given a chance”* (Natalia, FG1). In their neighborhoods, many described good relations with neighbors: *“We have very good relations with our neighbors”* (Elena, FG2), *“People are polite and helpful”* (FG5).

When it comes to schools, responses are more nuanced. While some children were integrated without difficulties - *“Children were well received in schools”* (Olga, FG1) - other parents mentioned episodes of exclusion or initial refusal. *“They accepted us only the second time in the Romanian school”* (Elena, FG2), and *“In the ... school in Braşov they were aggressive, we didn’t dare to send our child”* (Viktoriia, FG1).

A major obstacle is the language. *“Without a good knowledge of Romanian, it is practically impossible for children to receive quality education in Romanian schools”* (Ksenia, FG2). Similar situations were reported in Hungary: *“The first year was hard because of the language, but now it is easier”* (Nina, FG6).

At the same time, acceptance is perceived as being linked to personal attitude: *“No matter who you are, it depends on how you behave. I am a good neighbor and I haven’t had difficulties”* (Denys, FG3).

Thus, language and institutional context profoundly influence the quality of integration, but community support and personal attitude can partially compensate for these barriers.

V. Social support and resilience

9. Do you have friends, relatives, other people or organisations that have supported you? How important was this for you?

The support received at the local level, whether from organizations, relatives, or friends, was described by most participants as essential for adaptation, especially during the first months after arrival. *“Support was very important to me. Lina from the Center ... helped me open a bank account, and Ludmila from the KATYA center supported me in finding a job”* (Natalia, FG1). Similarly, others mentioned assistance provided through KATYA, the Red Cross, Terres des Hommes, as well as through religious initiatives or community centers (FG4, FG5).

Family also played a crucial role: *“The internal support from the family was essential in the first months. It helped us not to give up”* (Irina, FG2); *“It was easier for me because I had sisters here”* (Nikita, FG3). Some respondents also emphasized unexpected help: *“Strangers helped us, which was unexpected and very moving”* (Serghei, FG3).

However, not everyone benefited from such networks. *“I didn’t have anyone. It was very hard without friends and relatives”* (Elena, FG2); *“I wrote to seven organizations and received no answer. It was just me and my child”* (Nina, FG6).

The importance of support was unanimously highlighted: *“It is simply priceless in the process of adaptation”* (Tatiana, FG2). Even where institutional support was limited, interpersonal relationships - either with locals or with other refugees - contributed to creating a sense of safety and belonging.

10. What kind of activities have brought you closer together since you've been in Braşov/ Budapest?

Shared activities played an important role in reducing isolation and strengthening social relationships among Ukrainian refugees in Braşov and Budapest. Although some respondents stated that *“they did not have such activities”* (Olga, FG1), the majority mentioned a series of positive experiences that brought them closer to one another.

For many parents, children’s activities became a catalyst for social relationships: *“Participating in activities for children, workshops, trips, celebrations, brought us closer to other parents and made us feel that we are not alone”* (Irina, FG2). The same was noted in Budapest: *“Events for children also bring parents closer to each other”* (Hanna, FG6), and *“If my child is calm and happy, so am I”* (Nataliia, FG6).

Language courses in Romanian or Hungarian were frequently mentioned as spaces for social interaction: *“The Romanian language courses and volunteering brought us closer”* (Ksenia, FG2); *“I participated in courses and events organized by the Red Cross”* (FG4).

In addition, creative and cultural activities provided a framework for relationship building: *“Workshops, discussions, excursions - all contributed to communication and integration”* (Svitlana, FG2); *“We sang together, made music, such events made us feel human again”* (FG5).

In some cases, volunteering was highlighted as a meaningful way of building community: *“We volunteered and that helped us get closer and better understand people”* (Serghei, FG3).

11. How did you manage to help each other in the absence of institutional support?

In the absence of organized support, Ukrainian refugee communities in Braşov and Budapest often managed to provide mutual assistance through informal solidarity networks. Although some participants stated directly *“No”* (Olga, FG1; Vladislav, FG3), the majority reported that mutual support was a daily reality and an essential resource in the adaptation process.

In Braşov, direct involvement was frequently mentioned: *“Yes, we helped people get to medical institutions”* (Viktoriia, FG1); *“Of course. Many times”* (Elena, FG2); *“We tried to support each other as much as we could”* (Serghei, FG3); *“Yes, we support each other however we can”* (Serghei, FG3). The assistance included not only advice but also concrete actions such as accompanying others or providing translations.

In Budapest, this informal support often took more organized forms through digital technology. *“Participants stated that informal mutual support was very important. Children’s clothes are exchanged, useful information is shared, and communication frequently happens on Viber groups”* (FG4). Other forms of help included *“emotional support through meetings, childcare for others, or assistance with translations”* (FG5).

Support among parents was a particularly frequent form of solidarity: *“We help each other by taking care of one another’s children”* (Nataliia, FG6). Even in the absence of resources, *“the fact that we are together helps the most”* (Lidumilla, FG6).

These testimonies once again highlight the importance of mutual aid and information exchange in contexts where formal support is limited or diminished.

12. *Do you feel like you are part of a community here in Braşov/Budapest?*

Participants' responses regarding identification with the refugee community reflect a broad spectrum of positions, ranging from active involvement to distrust or isolation.

In Braşov, some participants declared themselves strongly anchored in the refugee community: *"Without a doubt, I feel part of the Ukrainian refugee community in Braşov. We face similar difficulties, we support each other, and this sense of unity gives you strength"* (Irina, FG2). Others confirmed a moderate or high level of identification: *"To a large extent"* (Ksenia, FG2); *"I associate myself with the Ukrainian community in Braşov"* (Svitlana, FG2); *"To a great extent"* (Kristina, FG2).

However, a considerable share expressed reluctance: *"I do not identify"* (Kateryna, FG2); *"Not very much"* (Aleksei, FG3); *"Zero"* (Nikita, FG3); *"To a small extent"* (Denys, FG3). Some mentioned the absence of an organized diaspora: *"I think we don't have a diaspora here"* (Elena, FG1). Others expressed disappointment with community support: *"Romanians are on their own, we are on our own. Nobody understands our pain"* (Kateryna, FG2).

In Budapest, responses were even more nuanced. Participants affirmed that they belonged to *"multiple circles"*: some felt more integrated into Hungarian or religious communities than into the refugee group. *"I feel part of the Ukrainian church, but everyday life is connected with my Hungarian colleagues"* (FG4). At the same time, *"participation in volunteering and neighborhood activities"* (FG5) contributed to a sense of belonging.

This diversity suggests that identification with the refugee community is not automatic, but shaped by direct experiences, the degree of involvement, and perceptions of real solidarity.

13. *What helps you stay united or to overcome difficult times together?*

In the face of prolonged crises and uncertainty, Ukrainian refugees in Braşov and Budapest identified several factors that help sustain unity and the capacity to overcome hardships together.

A dominant element is the *"shared pain"*, repeatedly evoked by participants: *"Common suffering, common joys, and communication bring us closer"* (Olga, FG1); *"Our solidarity comes from the isolation of the community caused by the war in Ukraine"* (Denys T., FG3).

Language, values, and shared experiences were also described as key identity markers: *"A common language, a common mentality, a common problem"* (Ksenia, FG2); *"We are united by our history, mother tongue, and the desire to provide stability for our children"* (Irina, FG2).

Another crucial factor is mutual informal support, often compensating for the lack of institutional assistance: *"Help among us, even if just a conversation or support with documents, matters enormously"* (Irina, FG2); *"Friendship and mutual support"* (Natalia, FG2).

In Budapest, family networks, the church, and colleagues emerged as important sources of stability: *"Emotional and practical support from family, churches, friends, or colleagues is essential"* (FG4); *"Listening to each other and giving practical advice is very important"* (FG5).

At the same time, several respondents highlighted individual determination: *"We have no other option"* (Natalia, FG1); *"The belief that life goes on and that there are good people everywhere"* (Elena, FG2).

Overall, relationships among refugees are built at the intersection of shared suffering, common language and values, reciprocal support, and hope for a better future.

VI. Recommendations and solutions

14. *What do you think should be changed or improved to help Ukrainian refugees integrate better?*

Ukrainian refugees in Braşov and Budapest provided detailed and varied responses regarding the difficulties they face and the solutions that, in their opinion, would improve the integration process. Access to language courses adapted to their level and available time is one of the most frequently mentioned needs. *"There is a need for Romanian language courses that are not so fast-paced. The language is very difficult"* (Elena, FG2), *"Romanian language courses make life here much easier"* (Nikita, FG3).

The integration of children into the educational system is another sensitive area: *“I would like a clear program for adapting children in schools and the possibility of learning some subjects in English”* (Viktoriia, FG1), *“Everything depends on the child’s comfort—if they feel good in kindergarten/school, we will stay in Romania; otherwise, we are forced to leave”* (Vladyslav, FG3).

Access to healthcare services also remains problematic. *“Access to the healthcare system must be improved, along with support for finding a job”* (Natalia, FG1). *“Finding a family doctor, vaccinations - these are among the biggest difficulties”* (Vladyslav, FG3).

Participants in Hungary emphasized the importance of affordable transportation, sports programs, and community activities, as well as *“the need for a centralized platform with information about housing, jobs, and social services”* (FG5).

In conclusion, sustainable integration requires structured measures in the fields of education, language, healthcare, employment, and information, with special attention to families and young people.

15. *If you could send a message to the authorities or organisations that support you, what would it be?*

The majority of participants in Braşov and Budapest expressed deep gratitude for the support they had received. *“Thank you for everything you do for Ukrainians. Please keep the centers where people and children can socialize, learn, and spend time together”* (Olga, FG1). Another participant emphasized, *“The good memories outweigh the bad ones, even if it is difficult. We thank you for everything”* (Elena, FG2).

However, alongside words of appreciation, many conveyed concrete appeals for improving integration conditions. Among the most frequent requests were free access to healthcare services, especially for children - *“Please allow free access to doctors, especially for children and young people”* (Natalia, FG1); short vocational training programs - *“Qualification courses, not necessarily university, lasting just a few months to enable employment”* (same source); and the possibility of working without advanced language proficiency.

Participants in FG2 strongly emphasized the fight against stereotypes and discrimination: *“Tell Romanians that we are people just like them. We did not choose this war. Our children are being insulted in parks. We want to go home too. But where can we return?”* (Elena, FG2).

In Hungary, messages were similar: *“We are grateful for the free education, public transport, and social support offered for three years”* (FG4), while others highlighted administrative needs: *“Provide ‘address cards’ so we can register children for health insurance”* (Nataliia, FG6).

In conclusion, Ukrainian refugees express sincere gratitude but also hope that support will continue and adapt to their everyday realities.

C. Interviews from Institutional actors (public or private)

I. Institutional context

1. *What is the role of your organisation/institution? What types of services or activities do you carry out in support of Ukrainian refugees?*

The responses provided by institutions and organizations in Romania and Hungary reflect a considerable diversity of roles and types of support offered to Ukrainian refugees, ranging from specialized public services to community initiatives and humanitarian projects.

In Romania, public institutions focused on providing basic institutional support. For example, AJOFM Braşov offered career counseling and labor market mediation services: *“we provide career guidance and counseling services, as well as mediation and job placement.”* Similarly, DGASPC Braşov intervened in child protection and the integration of people with disabilities, emphasizing *“specialized services for children with special needs”* and *“disability assessment and classification.”*

The Prefect’s Institution of Braşov played a strategic coordination role, ensuring inter - institutional cooperation: *“we were involved in coordinating the County Committee for Emergency Situations and in establishing the Working Group for Refugee Inclusion.”* DSP Braşov ensured public health surveillance, with a focus on preventing communicable diseases: *“we monitored measles, chickenpox, and rotavirus infections.”*

NGOs and local actors complemented the interventions of public authorities. MIC Braşov supported more than 5,000 refugees through a wide range of services: *“legal counseling, Romanian language courses, psychosocial support, and*

intercultural activities.” Similarly, Katya HUB became a “*one - stop contact point,*” providing integrated services from education to administrative and social support.

In Hungary, organizations such as Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hungarian Interchurch Aid, or House of Ukrainian Traditions have developed educational projects, labor market integration, and housing support. “*Our objective is to bring real change, not just one - time help*” (Evangelical Lutheran Church), or have approached the subject with tenacity “*offering the same standard of support to all those in need*” (Menedék Association).

Overall, we consulted a series of key institutions and organizations that carried out coherent support activities, in which collaboration between the state and civil society was essential to ensuring an adequate response to the situation of Ukrainian refugees in both host locations.

2. How did you adapt your work after the refugee crisis in Ukraine began? What were the main challenges?

The outbreak of the Ukrainian refugee crisis forced public institutions and civil society organizations in Romania and Hungary to rapidly adapt their activities, shifting from routine operations to multisectoral emergency interventions.

In Braşov, several institutions were transformed into true coordination hubs. The Prefecture of Braşov noted: “*it was necessary to manage simultaneously issues related to housing, food provision, refugee registration and information,*” while one of the main challenges was “*the linguistic and cultural barrier.*” DGASPC Braşov was compelled to intervene in supporting unaccompanied minors and vulnerable individuals, often facing situations where “*we had no solutions to the identified needs.*”

AJOFM Braşov launched information campaigns, job fairs, and professional counseling activities, but acknowledged that “*refugee participation in job fairs was limited, the main barrier being language.*” DSP Braşov centralized health data, monitored communicable diseases, and dealt with the lack of medical documentation and equivalence of treatments: “*the same medicine was not available, so substitutes had to be sought.*”

On the civil society side, MIC Braşov shifted from routine to crisis mode, introducing a registration system (JIRA) and expanding its team with Ukrainian - speaking staff.

In Budapest, organizations such as Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hungarian Helsinki Committee, or House of Ukrainian Traditions have noted a significant increase in requests and a positive social support, but also challenges. Some institutions acted depending on priorities: “*we had to make sure that basic needs were met first before moving on to other levels of support*”, others depending on compatibilities: “*the educational systems of Hungary and Ukraine differ very much, so we had to constantly adapt.*” Internally, some organizations expanded, others tended to maintain their team sustainably: “*we did not want to hire many people whom we would later have to dismiss.*” The dynamics of resource availability shaped the intensity of institutional involvement in providing support to refugees: “*In the early phase of the crisis, a sudden influx of resources became available ... after three years, these resources decreased significantly ... All this created serious difficulties for long - term planning and sustainability*” (Menedék Association).

Thus, the adaptation of activities required significant efforts in coordination, communication, and institutional response, all within the climate of an ongoing crisis.

II. Interinstitutional collaboration and coordination

3. What other actors (public, private, international) do you collaborate with to respond to the needs of refugees? How does this cooperation work?

Interinstitutional cooperation and cross - sector partnerships proved essential in managing the Ukrainian refugee crisis in both Romania and Hungary. Most interviewed actors emphasized that they expanded their collaboration networks in order to respond effectively to the complex needs of refugees.

In Braşov, collaborations materialized in the form of extended local networks. The Prefecture of Braşov highlighted the creation of a “*Working Group for Refugee Inclusion*”, which brings together “*public institutions, NGOs, universities, international organizations, and refugee representatives*”, an initiative coordinated alongside UNHCR. At a practical level, AJOFM emphasized excellent relations with “*public, private, and international actors*”, including the City Hall, IGI, KATYA, and Ateliere Fără Frontiere. DGASPC acknowledged that “*at the beginning cooperation was difficult,*” but that it gradually improved. In the same spirit, MIC Braşov reported good collaboration but also pointed to “*insularity and lack of information coordination.*” Other actors noted similar challenges, offering a perhaps more realistic image of

administrative hurdles: *“the local interpretation of some normative acts is different and creates blockages,”* stressing that *“we struggle tremendously”* for the recognition of documents. Nevertheless, cooperation with AJOFM, DAS, or DSP was appreciated as efficient and responsive.

In Hungary, the Evangelical Lutheran Church draws attention to the lack of *“stability and practical coordination”*, although it states that *“we are willing to cooperate with anyone..., if it is needed in order to help.”* Hungarian Interchurch Aid emphasizes solid partnerships with international and private actors, but also the involvement of state institutions. Although some meetings with international actors *“... coordinated by UN agencies, had primarily a symbolic significance”*. At the same time, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee *„ often has to take legal actions when soft cooperation methods do not work with authorities”*.

Overall, the analysis reveals a diverse network of collaborations, functional in many cases but fragmented and uneven in others. Institutional, NGO, and international partnerships remain a cornerstone of the humanitarian response, but they require stronger coordination, greater stability, and improved legislative harmonization.

4. Do you think there are gaps in the coordination of services for refugees? What could be improved?

Despite the progress made in coordinating services for Ukrainian refugees, most institutional respondents in Romania and Hungary pointed to persistent gaps, generated by a lack of institutional clarity, communication difficulties, the absence of a coherent legal framework, and resource fragmentation.

Some actors in Braşov stated that *“there were no gaps”* and that *“all dysfunctions were managed promptly.”* However, many institutions acknowledged that the lack of prior experience in managing refugee flows, combined with a shortage of trained specialists and the absence of applicable guidelines, led to blockages. At times, bureaucratic *“firefighting”* became the norm: *“we end up asking whose responsibility it is only after the problem arises.”* Similarly, others highlighted that *“there are no institutional mechanisms for interpreters, emergency response, or clarity of responsibilities.”* In this sense, proposed improvements such as *“creating a unified service guide”* and organizing regular meetings were welcomed, while others emphasized the need for shared digital systems for case tracking and joint databases.

In Budapest, some organizations stressed the lack of state involvement, excessive bureaucratization, and unclear role distribution among actors. One respondent noted that *“there is not enough clarity about who does what... the lack of transparency has been a significant shortcoming.”* At the same time, the withdrawal of major donors and the reduction of available funds paradoxically introduced greater clarity within service - providing institutions: *“it became more transparent... who to approach and for what—which improved and streamlined communication.”* At the same time, there are significant differences in the approach to this subject among actors. Those from Menedék Association consider that *“In the civil sector, market - like dynamics have emerged: resources are becoming fewer and fewer, while organizations compete with each other for the same funding.”* Another recurring issue was the difficulty of sharing data due to legal barriers, which limited intervention efficiency. Respondents also raised alarm bells about the lack of dedicated support for children with special needs, young people without mentorship, and socially isolated parents.

It is clear that the challenges faced by actors (institutions and organizations involved) are similar whether in Braşov or Budapest. Most likely, these can be mitigated by the few concrete solutions suggested by respondents, such as unified service guides or properly managed, accessible databases.

III. Refugees’ needs – for a professional perspective

5. In your experience, what are the most common needs or difficulties faced by Ukrainian refugees?

The responses of entities from Romania and Hungary outline a complex and often troubling picture of the difficulties faced by Ukrainian refugees, highlighting their multiple, persistent, and interconnected needs.

The language barrier is recognized as one of the greatest obstacles. AJOFM Braşov notes that *“the main obstacle [...] is represented by the language barrier, as well as the risk of being employed below their level of qualification.”* In Budapest, the problem is aggravated by the lack of state involvement in offering differentiated courses or institutional support: *“There is no formal training system,”* complemented by the observation that *“foreign language learning is practically non-existent.”*

Access to housing remains a major problem in both countries: *“housing is the most important issue – that our beneficiaries do not live with the fear of being evicted.”* According to the MIC Center Braşov, many return to Ukraine *“not having the*

income necessary to rent a dwelling”, while in Hungary Menedék Association points out that “*because of the imbalance between salaries and rental prices, stable housing is inaccessible for many refugees.*”

Access to health services represents a major problem. Administrative barriers, the compatibility of treatment schemes, as well as the insufficiency of professionals in certain types of conditions “*such as autism or ADHD*” makes “*almost completely hopeless [...] the availability of services.*”

Integration into the labor market is limited both by language barriers and by the lack of social and professional orientation programs, in the view of some institutions: “*there is also a lack of social orientation and employment programs.*”

At the psychosocial level, several institutions report heightened levels of anxiety, uncertainty, and adaptation difficulties—whether in Braşov, where “*many face anxiety and insecurity about the future*” (MIC Braşov), or in Hungary, where “*people suffer from anxiety and live in a state of profound uncertainty.*”

Overall, the institutional responses reveal a cumulative set of difficulties faced by refugees that strongly affect the integration process of Ukrainians. These challenges demand coordinated responses from the actors involved in managing the refugee situation.

6. How would you assess their access to services (e.g. social, medical, educational, legal)? What obstacles exist?

The access of Ukrainian refugees to essential services differs significantly between Romania and Hungary, yet in both contexts a series of obstacles persist despite institutional efforts.

In Braşov, several entities emphasize that access is, in theory, guaranteed and adapted. AJOFM states that “*services are provided either in English or, with the help of local NGO translators, even in Ukrainian.*” The Braşov Prefecture affirms that refugees benefit from “*child allowances, parental leave benefits, the minimum inclusion income*” and access to the healthcare system, while documents are available in Ukrainian.

However, in practice, shortcomings are evident: bureaucracy, insufficient educational infrastructure, inadequate translations, informal refusals, and even discrimination. MIC Braşov notes that “*discrimination is present in accessing services, especially medical ones, where family doctors are unwilling to register Ukrainian families on their lists.*” KATYA reports arbitrary rejections of Ukrainian children in kindergartens, despite meeting eligibility criteria.

In Budapest, challenges are more pronounced. Although the education system is generally receptive, medical services are described as “*barely accessible even for Hungarian citizens.*” Language remains a major barrier: “*without knowledge of Hungarian, people get lost in bureaucracy.*” Even when translations exist, they are insufficient in number and clarity to manage complex situations, particularly in healthcare.

Thus, although legislation provides a support framework, its concrete implementation is undermined by institutional limitations and socio - cultural realities. The result is unequal and often precarious access, requiring sustained efforts and multi - level interventions to ensure effective support for refugees.

IV. Social and professional integration and participation

7. What are the main barriers to integrating refugees into the labour market or into educational/training activities?

The integration of Ukrainian refugees into the labor market and educational/training activities faces a series of obstacles common to both countries analyzed – Romania and Hungary – though with specific nuances shaped by each institutional context.

The language barrier is the most frequently mentioned obstacle, affecting both employment opportunities and access to education and training. In Braşov, AJOFM emphasizes that only a small percentage of refugees speak English at a conversational level, which hinders communication with employers and integration into the workplace: “*We consider the organization of Romanian language courses as highly necessary, as this would significantly increase the chances of labor market integration.*” In Budapest, this barrier is amplified by the fact that “*even those who speak Hungarian ... cannot write, which leads to lost opportunities.*”

The mismatch between jobs and refugees’ qualifications is another persistent issue. Refugees are often employed in fields below their level of training, which undermines self - confidence and creates frustration: “*Many are overqualified for the available jobs, which affects their self - esteem and psychological balance.*” In Braşov, KATYA notes that “*the vast majority end up doing unskilled or semi - skilled jobs,*” partly due to the lack of recognition of diplomas.

Childcare responsibilities, particularly for single mothers, represent a major barrier: *“If I am a single mother with one, two, or three children and cannot enroll them in kindergarten, then what do I do? How can I go to work?”* (Braşov). In Budapest, local solutions such as involving elderly Ukrainians in childcare are being proposed by NGOs.

Discrimination, both formal and informal, is present in both contexts. In Romania, MIC Braşov reports *“employment refusals based on nationality and abuses such as unpaid wages.”* In Hungary, stigmatization of Transcarpathian Roma and refusals by doctors to treat refugees are frequently mentioned realities.

It is clear that effective integration requires coherent policies tailored to local realities, alongside concrete support mechanisms such as translation services, recognition of qualifications, childcare support, and measures to combat exploitation.

8. Are there any successful initiatives for social and professional integration into the local community? What factors contributed to their success?

Based on the responses of institutions from Romania and Hungary, it is evident that there are multiple successful initiatives for the socio - professional integration of Ukrainian refugees. However, the success of these initiatives is conditioned by various factors: inter - institutional collaboration, individual motivation, support from civil society, and the recognition of cultural and educational needs.

In Romania, AJOFM Braşov highlights *“effective collaboration between public institutions and NGOs”* as a central factor in integration, providing examples such as the inclusion of refugees in job fairs and personalized counseling. DGASPC and the Braşov Prefecture complement this picture by referring to language courses and services offered by AJOFM, the County School Inspectorate (ISJ), and other institutions.

ISJ Braşov stresses that the success of integration also depends on the *“speed of decision - making”* by refugees regarding their long - term settlement in Romania: *“the faster this decision is made, the easier things become.”* At the community level, KATYA offers concrete examples of *“four new businesses opened by Ukrainian citizens”* and active participation in language courses, underlining that success is *“more a combination of personal determination and contextual support.”*

In Hungary, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and other NGOs have played an essential role in creating *“living communities capable of supporting integration.”* Educational and artistic projects, such as those developed by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, engaged Ukrainian youth in human rights initiatives alongside Hungarian peers and other refugee groups. This *“mixed - group approach”* was considered essential for authentic integration.

Hungarian Interchurch Aid and Unity Association highlight the success of bilingual schools and joint cultural activities: *“cultivating culture is very important,”* with festivals such as the Borscht Festival becoming symbolic spaces of closeness between communities.

Successful initiatives are built on the involvement of institutional resources, community mobilization, active participation of refugees, and the recognition of their cultural and educational value.

V. Social perceptions and community involvement

9. How do you perceive the local community's attitude towards Ukrainian refugees? Has there been positive engagement or difficulties in acceptance?

Based on the responses provided by institutions in Romania and Hungary, a complex picture emerges regarding the attitudes of local communities toward Ukrainian refugees, oscillating between genuine solidarity and signs of social fatigue or even rejection.

In Braşov, many institutions highlight the strong openness of the community, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the war's outbreak. AJOFM Braşov notes that *“there was, and still is, a positive involvement of all state institutions and NGOs”*, while labor market integration and participation in language courses are seen as indicators of this openness. MIC Braşov emphasizes that *“in 2022, the community was highly receptive”*, but also points to the emergence of *“solidarity fatigue”*, accompanied by negative rhetoric: *“refugees receive more than we do.”*

At the same time, DGASPC and KATYA report difficulties in acceptance, explained by the reluctance of certain groups within the population or by misinformation circulating in the public sphere: *“Public perception is very much shaped by various propaganda messages.”* Furthermore, the Braşov Prefecture mentions concrete difficulties, such as the lack of family doctors willing to take in refugees, largely due to language barriers.

In Budapest, institutions observe an evolution in community attitudes: from massive solidarity in 2022 to a gradual withdrawal of support. Hungarian Interchurch Aid recalls *“the mobilization of the entire country”* but admits that *“society needs to be re - sensitized.”* The Hungarian Helsinki Committee warns of the harmful effects of government - led anti - Ukrainian campaigns, which *“fuel rejection among the population.”* Even so, municipalities, such as Budapest, continue to provide support through projects and camps.

Meanwhile, institutions like the House of Ukrainian Traditions or Unity Association recount positive experiences of coexistence and local collaboration, despite initial adaptation challenges, particularly among children. Where direct interaction occurs, prejudices tend to diminish, making acceptance possible.

The attitude of local communities toward Ukrainian refugees is shaped by a mix of empathy, institutional support, and socio - cultural challenges. It reflects both the potential of civic solidarity and the limitations of integration without sustained support and transparent communication. At the same time, political instrumentalization of the refugee crisis often undermines social unity and imposes narratives that contradict the initial wave of community solidarity.

10. What types of actions could improve social cohesion between refugees and the host community?

The responses of institutions from Romania and Hungary provide a coherent yet diverse picture of the types of actions needed to strengthen social cohesion between refugees and host communities. Although contextual and discursive differences exist, clear convergences emerge around several central themes: direct interaction, joint events, intercultural education, and inclusive public policies.

In Braşov, most institutions emphasize the importance of the active involvement of refugees in community life through participation in cultural events, civic activities, and volunteering (AJOFM, MIC Braşov). DGASPC proposes a comprehensive plan structured around six axes: cultural and educational integration, joint events, education and employment initiatives, media campaigns, social infrastructure, and institutional involvement. These aim to combat stereotypes and facilitate natural and repeated interactions between refugees and locals. The Braşov Prefecture and KATYA highlight trust - building and cooperation through local projects, while also noting civic fatigue and fluctuating levels of public interest.

In Budapest, the tone is more critical, particularly toward the political context and campaigns directed against refugees (Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hungarian Helsinki Committee). These institutions call for abandoning negative propaganda, cultivating a pro - inclusion mindset, and ensuring legislative coherence to support cohesion. Many organizations, such as Hungarian Interchurch Aid, stress the need for public awareness campaigns and continuous actions rather than one - off events. Others, such as Unity Association and the House of Ukrainian Traditions, promote joint activities (clubs, mentorship programs, community projects) and child - focused educational initiatives as effective ways to foster empathy and belonging.

Across both countries, institutions recognize that social cohesion does not emerge spontaneously but must be cultivated through sustained interaction, cultural openness, constant dialogue, and institutional support. Education, civic engagement, and intercultural exchanges are seen as the main tools to reduce social distance and transform differences into bonds of solidarity.

VI. Recomandări și lecții învățate

11. What recommendations do you have for improving the support provided to refugees? What lessons have you learned so far from your work in this field?

Based on the responses of entities from Romania and Hungary, we can formulate a synthetic analysis regarding the recommendations for improving support for refugees and the lessons learned over more than three years of activity in this field.

a. Focus on language courses, access to information, and cultural orientation. Institutions in Romania emphasize the importance of intensive language courses: *“The main aspect ... organizing intensive Romanian language courses,” “language and cultural orientation courses are useful,” “sustained and long - term investments in Romanian language courses,” “language education is very important,” “creating clear guides, translated into several languages, explaining rights, obligations, and available services”*—all considered as prerequisites for the professional and social integration of refugees of all ages.

b. Institutional collaboration and personalized approaches. Several interviews highlight the need for a multi - actor and personalized approach, adapted to the diversity of refugee needs: *“It is still common for adults to work in construction ... even though they previously held more qualified positions ... for example, a neurosurgeon,”* *“although there are many programs available for children, some of them have started spending time on the streets.”* More efficient inter - institutional coordination is proposed, with regular meetings and the exchange of best practices to avoid overlaps or gaps in support.

c. Data infrastructures and digitalization. Other institutions, especially from Braşov, emphasize the need for an integrated national refugee data platform: *“Online platforms updated with essential information,”* *“as I said, this database could help identify their problems,”* *“a platform with certain data”* that would enable inter - institutional access and a complete overview of beneficiaries’ situations. The lack of such interconnection is perceived as a major barrier to intervention efficiency.

d. Long - term support. Hungarian entities call for reform of the legal and institutional framework, shifting from a coercive to a humanitarian approach: *“Problems ... need to be solved ... we should not speak about migrants or refugees, but about people.”* They also stress the need for investments in sustainable programs: scholarships, professional retraining, and support for parents and children. *“A retraining program offered ... could enable them to work at least in a related field.”* The absence of professional reorientation programs and exclusion due to language barriers are considered critical lessons for the future.

e. Stable funding and professional recognition. Some respondents highlight the need for a predictable financial framework. Local NGOs state that they perform invisible but essential work for social cohesion, often without public support: *“We do not always receive recognition, but we continue to work tirelessly because we believe in what we do.”* They also draw attention to the imbalances created by large international organizations, which often overlook local actors: *“mutual recognition and fair distribution of resources.”*

12. Do you consider a common mechanism for learning and exchanging best practices between institutions involved in supporting refugees to be useful? In what form?

All the institutional actors interviewed highlight a broad consensus on the usefulness of learning initiatives and the exchange of good practices, though with nuances and differing perspectives depending on each institution’s role, level of involvement, and organizational culture.

Many institutions emphasize the importance of inter - institutional and cross - sectoral collaboration to optimize support for refugees. *“The need for digital platforms,”* *“working groups and regular meetings”* and *“resource sharing and dissemination of good practices”* are just some of the commonly mentioned solutions in this regard. The support for such ideas stems from the experience accumulated over time, with some suggesting that *“lessons learned should be systematized and transformed into intervention tools.”* Other interviewees expressed more pointed views: *“... it would be better if we discussed real topics and real situations. Practical topics engage me more.”* The difficulty of ensuring constant participation is addressed through proposals such as *“online meetings, ... it is easier ..., or alternatively, ... updates in the form of a newsletter.”*

Particular emphasis is placed on the international and intercultural dimension of good practice exchange: *“essential ... good practices from all over the world, since humanitarian crises also occur elsewhere.”* Although already well explored, this dimension is considered necessary and worth continuing.

Overall, institutions acknowledge that such a mechanism would contribute to the professionalization of support, the strengthening of intervention networks, and the development of a long - term perspective instead of ad - hoc reactions. At the same time, they underline that flexibility, local adaptation, and the genuine involvement of actors are essential for the success of such a mechanism.

Conclusions

1. Context and respondent profile

The quantitative and qualitative data collected in the study show that the Ukrainian refugees interviewed are predominantly women (82%), aged between 31–50, many of whom have children in their care. In Braşov, the profile tends toward young and larger families; in Budapest, there is a higher share of people over 50. More than 85% have been in the host country for over two years, indicating a shift from the emergency intervention phase to longer-term integration.

2.1 Identified needs – integrated synthesis from quantitative and qualitative data

87% of respondents live in temporary rentals; in Budapest, there is also a segment (8%) living in shelters. Common problems highlighted include insufficient space, lack of privacy, and poor utilities. Discrimination in the rental market and housing instability are frequently reported. Finding accommodation is often facilitated by informal networks and NGOs, yet 76.5% stated they did not receive any help in this regard.

2.2. Access to public services

53.5% of respondents have full access to medical services; language barriers and bureaucracy are the main obstacles. In both countries, difficulties are encountered when registering with a family doctor or in dealing with long waiting times for specialists. 64% of parents need educational support for their children (enrollment, language classes, school supplies, extracurricular activities). The most requested services are related to public transportation, language courses, children's education, and social integration. There is a stronger emphasis on cultural activities in Braşov, and on administrative support in Budapest.

2.3. Language and integration

Language courses are perceived as essential, yet participation is affected by lack of time, family responsibilities, and unsuitable methods (too fast-paced, lack of translation).

2.4. Work and economic integration

Most respondents reported a high level of education: ~70% hold higher education degrees. Only 40.5% of those who responded are employed (more in Budapest than in Braşov), but many work below their qualifications in low-paying jobs. They face barriers such as language difficulties, lack of recognition/equivalence of diplomas, lack of childcare services, and discrimination. These lead to identified needs such as language courses, career counseling, recognition of qualifications, entrepreneurial support, and access to job information.

2.5. Psychological health

A difficult emotional state was reported by 28% of respondents (higher in Budapest). 65% either need or are unsure if they need psychological support. Significant emotional support is provided by informal networks and religious communities (especially in Budapest).

2.6. Social and community integration

Interaction with other refugees is very high (~90%). At the same time, the sense of belonging to the local community is moderate—slightly stronger among respondents in Braşov and more fragmented among those in Budapest. Integration is supported by activities such as joint workshops, courses, informal meetings, and volunteering. Respondents in Budapest highlighted the important role of religious activities.

2.7. Legal and administrative support

Clarifying status after the expiry of temporary protection, recognition and translation of documents, access to public services and social rights, and support for entrepreneurship are among the most frequently requested legal and administrative aspects. Legal aid and centralized information are more prominently mentioned in the responses from Budapest.

2.8. Vulnerable groups

1 in 5 families includes a person with a disability (adults, children, or elderly), requiring specialized services. Single mothers face increased difficulties in accessing work and services.

3. Institutional perspectives

Institutions in both countries point out:

- The language barrier as the biggest obstacle to integration in work, education, and access to services.
- Housing as a critical issue, especially in Budapest.

- The need for coordination and information - sharing among actors.
- Vulnerable populations (children with special needs, single parents, the elderly) receive insufficient support.

4. Identified priority needs

- Language courses adapted to schedules and levels, with support/teaching in Ukrainian/Russian to facilitate understanding.
- Support in identifying available housing, subsidies, and combating discrimination.
- Recognition of qualifications and support for retraining.
- Access to work – counseling, traditional mediation, mentoring, entrepreneurial support.
- Support for children through educational integration, extracurricular activities, and psycho - pedagogical assistance.
- Accessible psychological assistance, including through schools and online.
- Legal and administrative support – status clarification, documentation, entrepreneurship.
- Community activities that include locals, fostering social cohesion.
- Protection of vulnerable groups – dedicated programs for single mothers, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

5. Recommendations

... general

- Develop free, flexible, and long - term programs for learning Romanian/Hungarian with interactive methods and translation into Ukrainian/Russian.
- Create public–private housing mediation mechanisms, provide rent subsidies, and expand temporary social housing.
- Facilitate diploma recognition procedures and introduce fast - track retraining programs in fields related to refugees’ professional backgrounds.
- Establish centralized job platforms for refugees, organize thematic job fairs, and expand mentoring and entrepreneurial support programs.
- Implement educational integration programs, psycho - pedagogical support, summer camps, and extracurricular activities together with local children.
- Provide psychological counseling with culturally and linguistically trained counselors, online support, and peer support groups.
- Ensure multilingual legal assistance regarding legal status, access to work and entrepreneurship, and social rights.
- Promote intercultural activities, mixed refugee–local volunteering, and media campaigns to counter stereotypes.

... specific to Romania

- Strengthening support services for single mothers and extended families.
- Expanding formal and informal education programs for youth and adults.
- Encouraging refugees’ involvement in civic and cultural initiatives.
- Developing digital integration platforms (including for remote jobs).

... specific to Hungary

- Expanding housing capacity and combating discrimination in rentals.
- Leveraging the potential of religious networks for integration.
- Promotion of professional mentoring initiatives and individualized psychological counseling.
- Clarification of legal rights and increasing the visibility of local NGOs.

Mapping of needs and required services

Domain	Identified Need	Recommended Service	Priority	Country
Housing	Housing instability, discrimination	Housing intermediation, financial support, social housing	High	Both (more acute in HU)
Children's Education	Enrollment, integration, and language difficulties	Educational support, language courses, extracurricular activities	High	RO > HU
Language	Communication barriers, professional integration	Accessible, flexible courses in Ukrainian/Russian	Essential	Both
Employment	Underemployment, mismatch between skills and jobs	Career counseling, diploma recognition, entrepreneurship support	High	RO > HU
Psychological Services	Fragile emotional state, latent demand	Free counseling centers, mobile or online	High	HU > RO
Legal Support	Documents, residence, work, family	Free, specialized, multilingual legal services	High	HU > RO
Social Integration	Isolation, lack of belonging	Community activities, volunteering, clubs, civic integration	Medium	Both
Medical Services	Partial or no access	Assistance with registration, translation, navigation in the medical system	Medium	Both
Administrative Support	Lack of information, bureaucratic obstacles	Informative guides, multilingual assistance offices	High	HU > RO
Protection of Vulnerable Groups	Persons with disabilities, elderly, single mothers	Tailored assistance, community and financial support	Medium–High	RO > HU

Stakeholder mapping

Braşov (Romania)			
Public Sector			
No.	Organization	Services	Contact
1.	Braşov County Council	Coordination/implementation of projects/services directed at special categories in Braşov	Phone: 0268 410 777 Email: cabinet.presedinte@cjbrasov.ro Web: cjbrasov.ro
2.	Institution of the Prefect, Braşov County	Coordination/management of emergency situations; organization of services directed at special categories in Braşov; ensuring compliance with the law and refugees' rights	Phone: 0268 470 220 Email: cabinet.prefect@prefecturabrasov.ro Web: bv.prefectura.mai.gov.ro
3.	General Inspectorate for Immigration (IGI) Braşov	Residence permit for beneficiaries of temporary protection. Issuance of Personal Identification Number (CNP).	Phone: 0 268 409 956, 0 268 409 955 Email: bv.igi@mai.gov.ro Web: igi.mai.gov.ro/brasov
4.	County Agency for Employment (AJOFM) Braşov	Integration services in the labor market, qualification/requalification courses.	Phone: 0268 411 960 Email: ajofm.bv@anofm.gov.ro Web: anofm.ro/brasov
5.	County Agency for Payments and Social Inspection (AJPIS) Braşov	Organization and provision of services, record and payment of social assistance benefits	Phone: 0268 415 142 Email: ajpis.brasov@mmanpis.ro Web: brasov.mmanpis.ro
6.	DGASPC Braşov (General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection)	Social assistance: prevention of child–family separation, reintegration of children with special protection measures, guardianship authority, domestic violence	Phone: 0 268 417 100; 0 268 414 032 Email: office@dgaspcbv.ro Web: dgaspcbv.ro
7.	Braşov City Hall / Social Assistance Directorate (DAS Braşov)	Submission of documents for reimbursement of food and accommodation expenses of Ukrainian refugees (based on Government Decision 368/2023)	Phone: 0 368 464 081, 0 368 465 415, 0 368 469 995 Email: dasbv@dasbv.ro Web: dasbv.ro
8.	Codlea City Hall / Social Assistance Department	Prevention of child–family separation, reintegration of children with protection measures, guardianship authority, domestic violence	Phone: 0 268 251 652 Email: contact@municipiulcodlea.ro Web: municipiulcodlea.ro/index.php/ro/servicii-publice/asistenta-sociala
9.	Cristian City Hall / Social Assistance Department	Prevention of child–family separation, reintegration of children with protection measures, guardianship authority, domestic violence	Phone: 0 268 257 376 Email: social@primariacristian.ro Web: primariacristian.ro/servicii-publice/asistenta-sociala
10.	Săcele City Hall / Public Social Assistance Directorate	Social assistance: prevention of child–family separation, reintegration of children with protection	Phone: 0268 276 198 Email: primaria@municipiulsacele.ro Web: municipiulsacele.ro/directia-publica-asistenta-sociala

		measures, guardianship authority, domestic violence	
11.	Braşov County School Inspectorate (ISJ Braşov)	Enrollment of Ukrainian children in Romanian schools	Phone: 0 268 511 111 Email: info@isjbrasov.ro; petitii@isjbrasov.ro Web: isjbrasov.ro
12.	Public Health Directorate (DSP Braşov)	Coordinates healthcare services at the county level	Phone: 0 268 547 972 Email: relatiipublice@dspbv.ro; secretariat@dspbv.ro Web: dspbv.ro
13.	Braşov Emergency Children's Hospital	Emergency and outpatient medical care for children: investigations, consultations, treatment, diagnostics	Phone: 0268 415 130 Email: secretariat.scbv@gmail.com Web: spitalcopiibrasov.ro/new
14.	Braşov County Emergency Clinical Hospital	Emergency and outpatient medical care for adults: investigations, consultations, treatment, diagnostics	Phone: 0268 320 022 Email: secretariat@spitaluljudeteanbrasov.ro Web: hospbv.ro

Non - Governmental Sector (NGOs)

No.	Organization	Services	Contact
1.	Migrant Integration Center Braşov	Romanian language courses, information, counseling, socio - cultural events, integration programs, financial aid	Phone: 0 766 282 090 Email: contact@migrantbrasov.ro Web: migrantbrasov.ro
2.	Red Cross, Braşov	Family reunification; private ambulance service; home medical care; elderly care services. Free medical services for Ukrainians.	Phone: 0 268 475 913 Email: cruceariosie.brasov@gmail.com Web: cruceariosie.ro/filiala/brasov
3.	UNHCR / Local Office Braşov	Financial assistance	Web: unhcr.org/ro
4.	Braşov Metropolitan Agency	Livelihoods & economic inclusion, in partnership with World Vision (implementation partner in Braşov); Hub coordination	Phone: 0 268 547 616 Email: office@metropolabrasov.ro Web: metropolabrasov.ro
5.	Katya HUB – Center for Supporting the Ukrainian Community in Braşov	Child protection and educational programs; medical services and psychological counseling; qualification and professional training for Romanians and Ukrainians; cultural exchange events between host and newcomer communities	Phone: 0 732 215 635 Email: contact@katyahub.ro Web: katyahub.ro
6.	Save the Children (Salvați Copiii) Braşov	Educational activities	Phone: 0 744 360 911 Email: brasov@salvaticopiii.ro Web: salvaticopiii.ro/Cine - suntem/unde - suntem - activi/Brasov
7.	Bucuria Darului Foundation	Food, education, shelter, healthcare	Phone: 0 368 465 348 / 0 368 465 349 Email: fundatia@bucuriadarului.ro Web: bucuriadarului.ro

Budapest (Hungary)*			
Non - Governmental Sector (NGOs)			
No.	Organization	Services	Contact
1.	Cordelia Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims	Child Protection; Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	https://cordelia.hu/; cordelia@cordelia.hu
2.	Dnipro Országos Ukrán Kulturális Egyesület	Child Protection	https://openeducation.group/hub
3.	Hungarian Reformed Church Aid	Child Protection	https://jobbadni.hu/en/homepage/; mrsz@jobbadni.hu
4.	Menedék Association Hungarian Association for Migrants	Child Protection; Protection; Mental Health and Psychosocial Support; Legal	https://menedek.hu/; menedek@menedek.hu
5.	Unity	Child Protection; Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	jednisty@jednisty.org
6.	Budapest Pride	Gender Based Violence	https://budapestpride.hu/; info@budapestpride.hu
7.	Emma Association	Gender Based Violence	https://emmaegyesulet.hu/; info@emmaegyesulet.hu
8.	Hungarian Interchurch Aid	Gender Based Violence	https://ukraine.hia.hu/; umtk@hia.hu
9.	Háttér Society Association	Gender Based Violence	https://hatter.hu/; hatter@hatter.hu
10.	NANE – Women For Women	Gender Based Violence; Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	https://nane.hu/erintetteknek/chat-segely/; info@nane.hu
11.	Embassy of Ukraine	Legal	https://hungary.mfa.gov.ua/; emb_hu@mfa.gov.ua
12.	Hungarian Helsinki Committee	Legal	www.helsinki.hu/ukr/; ukrainecrisis@helsinki.hu
13.	Ministry of Justice Legal Aid	Legal	https://igazsagugyiinformaciok.kormany.hu/jogi-segitsegnyujtas
14.	International Organization for Migration	Protection; Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	https://hungary.iom.int/hu/; iombudapest@iom.int
15.	Hungarian Red Cross	Protection	https://voroskereszt.hu/en/
16.	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Protection	https://help.unhcr.org/hungary/; hunbucontact@unhcr.org
17.	Hungarian EMDR Association	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	https://emdr.hu/; hunhelpemdr@gmail.com
18.	MedSpot Foundation	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	www.medspot.hu; orvosisegitseg@medspot.hu

* The organizations on this list are those that regularly participate in the Protection and Inclusion Working Groups coordinated within the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF). The comprehensive list of key actors and their areas of interest is publicly available and regularly updated, including persons and contact points, by UNHCR through internal channels.