



in partnership with



Country Report **ROMANIA**

MHPSS Services for Refugees from Ukraine

August 2024

Country Report: ROMANIA

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Written and edited by:

Child Helpline International:

Ana Rodrigues, Anastasia Shuster, Nelia Troichuk

Terre des Hommes Netherlands:

Eva Notté, Simona Ružnić Margot Sanders

Reviewed by:

Lorleen Farrugia, Ronja Ulvot

(Child Helpline International)

Editor, design and layout:

Steve Erwood

(Child Helpline International)

1: Background

1.1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, more than **14.33 million Ukrainian refugees have crossed borders** in search of a safer environment.¹ Europe is currently hosting nearly 6 million refugees, with women and children comprising 88% of this population², and 5 million individuals have sought refuge through national protection schemes³.

The **family separation rate stands at 70%**, subjecting children to heightened risks such as sexual violence, trafficking, exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence.⁴

As the data shows⁵, **children's physical and mental health, as well as their education⁶, are at risk both within Ukraine and in refugee-hosting countries.** The increased risks for children put pressure on the already scarce mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) in both Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Child helplines and their partners are playing a crucial role in national child protection systems and the response on a regional level. They are providing psychosocial support services, guidance and accurate information to Ukrainian families and children and local children concerned about the war in Ukraine.

Child Helpline International is the global network of child helplines, with more than 150 child helpline members in more than 130 countries and territories around the world, including 49 members from 41 countries in the European Region, with 29 of these currently using the European harmonized toll-free number for child helplines: 116 111. Throughout the war in Ukraine, with the support of Child Helpline International and others, child helplines have been expanding their services to better support children and young people, and their families and caregivers, who have been affected by the war.

1. World Vision (2023). Child Protection Multisectoral Needs Assessment - Ukraine 2023, p.1, accessed on 22 April 2024 at [Child Protection Multisectoral Needs Assessment - Ukraine 2023 - Ukraine I ReliefWeb](#)
2. For overall refugee numbers: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Operational data portal, Ukraine refugee situation, available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>. The 88% women and children figure is broken down as follows: 52% women, 18% girls, 18% boys. Source: UNHCR, Displacement patterns, protection risks and needs of refugees from Ukraine: Regional protection analysis #2 – Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Slovakia, April 2023, available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/100191> as cited in UNICEF (2024). Ukraine and Refugee Response, p.1
3. There is a continued lack of reliable data on subsets of the child refugee population from Ukraine. Monthly statistics can be accessed at: Temporary protection for persons fleeing Ukraine - monthly statistics, Eurostat, as cited in UNICEF (2024). Ukraine and Refugee Response, p.1.
4. Specific needs include disabilities or serious medical conditions. Source: UNHCR, Displacement patterns, protection risks and needs of refugees from Ukraine: Regional protection analysis #2 as cited in UNICEF (2024). Ukraine and Refugee Response, p.4.
5. Kaufman KR, Bhui K, Katona C. Mental health responses in countries hosting refugees from Ukraine. *BJPsych Open*. 2022;8(3):e87. doi:10.1192/bjo.2022.55, p.1
6. Education Cannot Wait (2024). Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) 2024-2026, pp.3-5

In Romania, Child Helpline International's member is [Asociația Telefonul Copilului](#). Asociația Telefonul Copilului has over 18 years' experience in the field of child and family rights protection. It is the **only non-governmental, non-profit organization in Romania that provides children and adolescents with a national helpline** (using the harmonized 116 111 as mentioned above). With the support of Asociația Telefonul Copilului, **Romania was the third country in Europe to implement the European harmonized number for child helplines** in 2008, following the European Commission Decision 2007/698/EC, amending Decision 2007/116/EC. Children and young people can call free of charge from the fixed and mobile networks provided by Orange, Telekom and Vodafone. The child helpline is aimed at children and young people so they can express their fears, talk about issues of violation of children's rights and abuse that directly affect them and – most importantly – receive help in case of emergency.

2,915,397 calls and 109,598 cases requiring long-term counselling have been registered over 18 years.

Parents also contact the child helpline to request psychological and legal counselling for cases relating to the protection of children's and family's rights.

2,915,397 calls and 109,598 cases requiring long-term counselling from the organization's professionals have been registered over 18 years. In close cooperation with the Romanian police and paramedics from the Mobile Emergency Service for Reanimation, the lives of children in life-threatening situations have been saved, simply by making that one call to 116 111.

Further information about these processes can be found at the following links:

- [video pe stirileprotv.ro](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9STUGqTLkY)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9STUGqTLkY>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsmBGiMJYAw>

Asociația Telefonul Copilului's results have been recognized and awarded at both the national and international level, a shortlist of the awards having been published on the organization's [website](#) and [social media channel](#).

The lives of children in life-threatening situations have been saved, simply by making that one call to 116 111.

Asociația Telefonul Copilului is part of the project **Children's Voices Ukraine**, implemented by Child Helpline International and its child helpline members in Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Romania, and supported by Terre des Hommes Netherlands. This project aims to understand and support Ukrainian children and young people who have fled to other European countries as a result of the war in Ukraine.

Specifically, the project's objectives are as follows:

1. To increase access to and use of child helpline services by children and young people (and their parents and/or caregivers) affected by the war in Ukraine.
2. To maintain and expand the capacity of child helplines to ensure quality services to children and young people in need of care and protection, with a particular focus on children and young people affected by the war in Ukraine.
3. To ensure the inclusion and amplification of children's voices and generate evidence to influence policymaking through reliable collection, analysis and sharing of national and regional data.
4. To increase coordination between regional and national actors and emphasize the role of child helplines in Ukraine and surrounding countries.

Child Helpline International conducted a mapping exercise in each country with a participating child helpline member, to generate a report to help achieve the first of the project's objective and better understand the realities of Ukrainian refugees and the needs of children and young people.

Despite the availability of services in Ukrainian at child helplines in refugee-hosting countries, the data gathered by Child Helpline International indicates that Ukrainian children and young people currently residing in these countries tend not to be contacting the national child helplines. The purpose of this report is to understand the reasons for this. Specifically, the focus is to learn what **barriers exist that are preventing Ukrainian refugees from accessing local support services, especially child helpline services**. The report seeks to **identify the factors influencing engagement** with child helplines abroad by directly asking national stakeholders and young Ukrainian refugees about their needs, knowledge and experience. These factors include accessibility, awareness, stigma, the need for support and psychological readiness to accept help from the user's perspective, and the services available to offer this help from the stakeholders' perspective.

This exercise will also result in the creation of a **sub-regional service map to identify the range of services available to young refugees from Ukraine**. This map will reference the services provided by governmental and non-governmental organizations and their partners, while also examining the gap between service availability and the actual needs of refugee children. This process was achieved through the use of various methodologies, including surveys with children, and in-depth interviews with relevant organizations across the project countries.

Ultimately, the report offers **recommendations for enhancing the accessibility and effectiveness of child helplines** in the four countries bordering Ukraine. Additionally, the results of this exercise will be shared with participating countries, serving as a basis for future updates and improvements to the support infrastructure for children and young people affected by the war in Ukraine.

1.2. Methodology

The methodology applied was **qualitative with some quantitative aspects**. The information for the report was gathered through different means, including desk research, interviews with various institutions and organizations, and information collected through surveys with young people.

The information collected from each of these groups of actors focused on the following:

- Primary data:
 - **Interviews with stakeholders** from the different sectors of refugee response in the country (multilateral agencies, government, civil society, etc.) to obtain information about existing services and experiences with Ukrainian refugees.
 - **Surveys for older children and young people** to obtain information about their knowledge of the services offered by child helplines and their choices regarding looking for support.
- Secondary data:
 - Information on the supply and demand of child protection services, including existing helplines and hotlines in the country, analysis of demographics, and the context for refugee families/children.

There were some **limitations experienced during the development of the report**:

- **Time limitation:** The interviews and data analysis were conducted within just a short time frame. As the report informs subsequent activities of a project lasting for just one year, these had to be completed during the initial phase of the project. This put pressure on completing interviews, surveys and consultations on time and limited the number of answers that the team could collect.
- **Reduced number of inputs:** Despite several invitations for the online interviews with stakeholders, securing timeslots due to the busy schedules of different actors was difficult. Additionally, some organizations no longer support refugees, so their participation was no longer relevant.
- **Involvement of children:** When the mapping exercise was designed, the aim was to involve children in an in-person consultation. This was optional depending on the capacity of member child helplines. The Ukrainian child helpline was the only member who could take this activity forward, so the statements of children collected during in-person activities are from Ukrainian children in Ukraine. The views of refugee children were collected through an online survey.
- **Number of survey respondents:** The online surveys were released over a number of channels. Participation in the survey was on a voluntary basis, and the number of surveys collected was small and not representative of the whole young Ukrainian refugee population. We were only able to identify six relevant Facebook groups in which to share the survey (compared to 13-19 in other countries) and most likely explains the low uptake. In addition, although only 15 young people completed the survey, 42 started it. This dropout rate also impacted the overall response rate reported here. In future, we might consider a shorter survey, or a short survey with optional questions to answer, in order to ensure a higher rate of completion.
- **Incomplete surveys:** Not all the questions in the survey were answered by every child or young person, but we decided to analyse all answers that were given, even though some respondents completed the full survey. The number of respondents who answered will differ for each question, and this will therefore be mentioned.

The following approaches were applied to collect **primary data**:

- Online surveys reached 42 children and young people between the ages of 13 and 26 years old, of whom 30 filled out content questions.
- Five stakeholders from different sectors relating to refugee response participated in either an online interview or written questionnaire.

Including children and adults, a total of 35 stakeholders provided their feedback through this approach.

Approach used	Age range	Total respondents
Online survey	13 years and above	30
Stakeholder interview	Adults	5

As part of the **secondary data** collection, several child protection-related documents and publications, child helpline initiatives and general information in Romania were used. The secondary data was gathered from government, demographics and NGO websites, research documents from national and international organizations and publications, as well as reports from Child Helpline International.

1.3. Context analysis

The context in which children live

From the onset of the humanitarian crisis until 31 December 2023, the **National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption (NAPCRA)**⁷ reported that 7,470 children were registered with the Directorates General of Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPCs)⁸.

According to the official data published by NAPCRA, **119 Ukrainian children have been beneficiaries of social services until the end of December 2023**⁹. There were **33,936 Ukrainian children registered on Romanian territory**, of whom **33,817 children were living in the community**.

In total, as of 1 January 2024, NAPCRA recorded 35,275 Ukrainian children in Romania.¹⁰ This institution uses the Primero case management system to support vulnerable child refugees, enhancing its planning and response efforts through detailed analysis, including the cost analysis of enrolling Ukrainian temporary protection beneficiaries in Romania's social protection system.

7. In Romanian this acronym is ANPDCA.

8. Regional Refugee response for the Ukraine Situation, Inter-agency Operational Update, December 2023; [Romania - Operational Data Portal UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency](#), p.4

9. National Authority for the Protection of Child's Rights and Adoption, Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, data about refugee children from Ukraine, 31 December 2023, accessed at <https://copii.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Situatie-copii-Ucraina-31-decembrie-2023.pdf>

10. Ukraine Refugee Response in Neighbouring Countries: <https://www.unicef.org/media/154866/file/ECARO-Humanitarian-SitRep-Ukraine-Refugee-Response-26-February-2024.pdf>

In Romania several other actors are supporting the wellbeing of refugee children from Ukraine¹¹:

- **ASSOC** enabled access to a range of safe spaces in Baia Mare, Halmeu and Sighetu Marmăției. These spaces accommodated a total of 653 refugees, comprising 89 girls, 73 boys, 358 women and 133 men. The services included support groups, therapy sessions, guidance services, and dedicated spaces for mothers and infants/toddlers.
- **Four Change and DGASMB** provided entry to safe spaces for Ukrainian refugees in Bucharest, with attendance from 33 girls, 51 boys, 72 women and 5 men.
- In partnership with UNHCR, **Terre des Hommes (TdH)** continued to support children in Baia Mare, Bucharest, Braşov, Constanţa and Suceava by providing MHPSS sessions, educational activities, information, referrals and individual protection assistance. The results of these activities were as follows:
 - 236 children in 5 cities received assistance.
 - 1,495 children participated in MHPSS sessions.
 - 168 children engaged in Resilience Innovation Facilities activities.
 - 73 children took part in after-school programmes.
 - Cultural events were organized for 574 children across the mentioned locations.
- **Save the Children** assisted 3,809 children and 6,538 adults from Ukraine through integrated hubs and counselling centres across various Romanian cities. Among them, 109 new children and their families received case management services. In Baia Mare and Suceava webinars and workshops took place, about topics such as parenting skills, bullying in Romanian schools, post-traumatic stress, integration challenges, online schooling and everyday issues, benefiting numerous participants
- **World Vision** reached over 1,000 Ukrainian refugee children through Child Protection and MHPSS programming at “Happy Bubbles” socio-educational centres in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Constanţa, Iaşi, Suceava and Râmnicu Vâlcea. In addition, every two months over 1,500 Romanian and Ukrainian children participate in integration events such workshops and celebrations aimed at fostering intercultural friendships and community ties.

Regarding the **education situation** for Ukrainian refugees in Romania, the following was observed¹²:

- Of the total number of 37,905 children on 2 February, 2024, 10,936 of them were registered in the education system and were participating in national exams according to the Romanian curriculum. 26,969 children were following courses as observers, without participating in the exams.¹³
- Since April 2023, it has become obligatory for Ukrainian refugee children to enrol in Romanian schools or local non-formal education services to qualify for social benefits under the temporary protection scheme.
- Attendance records show that approximately one-third of registered refugee children attend Romanian schools regularly as observers.
- Others attend intermittently while also engaging in education hubs, online courses, and language programmes to enhance their proficiency in Romanian to improve further integration.

- UNICEF has established new partnerships for 2024 with 18 County School Inspectorates and NGOs to expand education hubs and increase Romanian language courses, potentially benefiting an additional 2,000 children.
- There are 27 UNICEF-supported play and learning groups benefiting children aged 2-6 years, which also offer psychological support for parents and integrate Ukrainian teachers into pedagogical training programmes. There are efforts to maintain these programmes with local budgets.
- Between the beginning of 2024 and the end of February 2024, 546 additional children engaged in non-formal education initiatives, 3,732 children received essential learning materials, and 708 educators were trained in inclusive and trauma-informed teaching techniques through UNICEF-supported programmes.

An interesting initiative organized by the Refugee Response Plan Partners (RRP Partners) in Romania, is a Youth and Adolescent Taskforce (YAD TF)¹⁴. The Youth and Adolescent Taskforce (YAD TF) serves as a coordination platform to promote social cohesion and youth participation across sectors. It shares innovative youth-inclusive tools and participatory approaches, aligning interventions with the needs of youth and adolescents. The YAD TF facilitates information-sharing and coordinated efforts among RRP partners to address the isolation and specific needs of refugee youth. In 2023, the task force developed a Telegram channel to provide Ukrainian youth in Romania with a safe digital space for sharing opportunities, best practices and needs-assessment results, and to enhance youth participation and collaboration among members.

Information about the support system¹⁵

According to secondary data found mostly online, 32 services for Ukrainian refugees in Romania were identified. Of these, 21 were services dedicated to MHPSS, 5 were services aimed at supporting cases of GBV, 13 supported families with housing or other matters to help them settle in the country, and 26 are directly concerned with Child Rights Protection.

Among these services, 20 are targeted at adults, while 26 are targeted at children. This information shows that most services are aimed at children, indicating a significant focus on the needs of children, which may be related to their vulnerability and the necessity for specialized support during their integration into a new environment. Services for children include psychological and psychiatric assistance, educational programmes, and activities aimed at social integration and adaptation. Additionally, many organizations focus on providing help and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, including those with disabilities who need psychiatric help. Services such as temporary housing and leisure activities are also offered. This variety of services offering comprehensive support for Ukrainian children in Romania helps them adapt to new living conditions.

It is important to note that there are other services on the ground that may not be mentioned online and which are not included in this report.

11. Regional Refugee response for the Ukraine Situation, December 2023: [Romania - Operational Data PortalUNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency](#), p.4

12. Ukraine Refugee Response for Neighbouring Countries; <https://www.unicef.org/media/154866/file/ECARO-Humanitarian-SitRep-Ukraine-Refugee-Response-26-February-2024.pdf>, p.5

13. Data from the Ministry of Education from the website of Europa Libera Romania accessed at: <https://romania.europalibera.org/a/doi-ani-de-razboi-elevi-ucraineni-romania/32828993.html>

14. UNHCR (2024). Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan, Bucharest, Romania, p.5

15. In this report we consider support services to be all those services related to the protection of the rights of the child, more specifically Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, and others that support refugees, such as housing services.

2: Analysis of primary data

2.1. Experiences of young people from Ukraine residing in Romania and their awareness of child helplines: Results from an online survey

Demographics of respondents

We received 30 responses to the survey from Ukrainian children and young people residing in Romania, of whom 21 (72%) were girls, 6 (21%) were boys, and two identified as another gender (7%). The **average age of respondents was 15.9 years old (range: 13-26)**.

Awareness of child helplines and their services

The Ukraine Response project implemented by Child Helpline International in collaboration with its members played a significant role in awareness raising, especially during its second phase. Asociația Telefonul Copilului was not part of this second phase though, which made a difference in relation to other countries that were involved in the previous phase of the project. Child Helpline International and its members are looking into possibilities of strengthening awareness-raising through communications and advocacy components of the project, either in this or future phases of the project. This is necessary, as **less than a third of the 25 respondents (7, or 28%) who answered the question indicated that they had heard of the local child helpline** that provides counselling in Ukrainian. Of these seven, six answered a follow-up question about how they came to know about the local child helpline, where **three learned about it through social media (50%)**, two learned about it at the refugee centre (33%), and one from another, unspecified, source (17%). There were five children and young people who indicated what services of the local child helpline they were aware of. Most knew that the child helpline offered a space where children could discuss their problems with a professional (4, or 80%). Three indicated they knew it helped when children were being treated unfairly, used or abused (60%), and two knew that it was a place that helped to keep children safe (40%) and that it could offer support for children from Ukraine (40%). Only one respondent indicated that they knew it was a place where they could report abuse (20%).

Help-seeking behaviour

None of the children and young people familiar with the local child helpline had ever attempted to contact it. When asked why not, the responses varied. Two out of five said that they didn't know they could contact a child helpline to address their problems (40%). Other options were selected by only one respondent (each answer representing 20%): because the respondent did not need it, they didn't think they should contact a child helpline to address the problems they were having, they worried about how people might react to what they said, and in one case the respondent indicated that it was for another reason, but didn't specify further. We asked the participants **who they are likely to seek help from when they need it.** Of the 18 respondents to this question, most indicated a **family member (12, or 67%)**, a friend (6, or 33%), or using the internet to research their issue (6, or 33%). Other options were each selected by only one respondent (each answer representing 6%): the police, teachers, private counsellor and social services. One respondent indicated that they had no one to turn to.

Future outlook: Reaching Ukrainian refugees and supporting them

The questionnaire included a series of questions aimed at understanding how best to reach and support children and young people from Ukraine. When the children and young people were asked whether they thought they would contact the local child helpline in the future, a large number responded positively (8 of 22 respondents, or 36%). Thirteen respondent said they did not know (59%), and one person responded in the negative (5%).

To understand the needs of children and young people from Ukraine, they were asked what kind of help they thought they might need someday. With 23 responses to this question, nearly half (10, or 43%) indicated help with their homework, a quarter (6, or 26%) might need help when having issues with a friend, and almost one in five thought they might need help with troubles at school (17%) or with bullying (17%). Other respondents indicated potential needs around troubles with parents (3, or 13%), concerns around personal safety (3, or 13%), or their mental health (2, or 9%) or physical health (1, or 4%).

Respondents were also asked for their suggestions about what should be done to ensure that children knew how to contact the child helpline. Of the 12 respondents who shared their suggestions, the most common one – brought up by six of the respondents – was advertising through posting on social media, with specific mention of TikTok and Telegram. Another respondent suggested reaching children and young people through their parents (“inform the parents, and the parents tell their children”). Lastly, one respondent suggested making the children think that contacting a child helpline is “really normal”. The suggestions of the children and young people are in line with their communication style and the social media networks they use the most. In terms of **communicating with other Ukrainians**, our survey found that they did so mostly online (13 of 21 respondents, 62%). Many also communicated with other Ukrainians through events provided by local organizations (7, or 33%), at school (5, or 24%) or at youth centres (5, or 24%). Four respondents indicated other options: talking with friends, during a walk, at events, or when friends or siblings came to their house. In terms of their use of social media, **all the respondents used Telegram (22, or 100%)**. Other popular platforms were Instagram (17, or 77%), Viber (15, or 68%), TikTok (14, or 64%), YouTube (14, or 63%) and WhatsApp (13, or 59%). Less popular were Pinterest (6, or 27%), Facebook (4, or 18%), Facebook Messenger (2, or 9%), WeChat (1, or 5%) and Twitter/X (1, or 5%).

2.2 Analysis of interviews with stakeholders

Overview of the organizations that were interviewed

To gather information about the stakeholders in Romania, six organizations were available to participate in the interviews. These were **Asociația Telefonul Copilului, UNICEF Romania, UNHCR, National Agency against Human Trafficking, National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption (NAPCRA/ANPDCA) and the Red Cross**. All these organizations had previous experience in supporting refugees or other foreign citizens in the country.

Asociația Telefonul Copilului offers 24-hour online counselling services and cooperates with relevant authorities according to the profile of the cases registered. Three missing Ukrainian children were found as a result of the cooperation between Asociația Telefonul Copilului, Magnolia NGO and the Romanian Police according to the official data presented by the Romanian Police¹⁶. Asociația Telefonul Copilului has also cooperated with the Margareta of Romania Royal Foundation, which supported the services offered by Asociația Telefonul Copilului to the Ukrainian children.

UNICEF Romania focuses on the social inclusion of children.¹⁷ For this reason, it has created – together with partners, the government, central and local authorities and NGOs – two models: a Minimum Package of services and a Quality Inclusive Education. Besides this, UNICEF Romania also works on communication for social change campaigns and works on preventing discrimination and violence against

16. Romanian Police, information accessed at <https://www.politiaromana.ro/ro/comunicate/25-mai-ziua-internationala-a-copilului-disparut-si-exploatat-sexual>

17. Information accessed and adapted from UNICEF Romania: [What we do/UNICEF Romania](#) and from the interviews with stakeholders.

children. In addition, UNICEF empowers parents, caregivers and legal guardians so that children can enjoy a protective and stimulating environment. Lastly, UNICEF also mobilizes resources to support programmes in Romania and other countries. To respond to the humanitarian crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine, UNICEF provides technical assistance to local authorities and NGOs.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, **UNHCR Romania**¹⁸ has provided services, together with local and international partners, that are integrated and multi-sectoral (Child Protection and Community Engagement) to protect refugees and asylum seekers so that they can enjoy their rights and wellbeing. As for direct implementation, UNHCR in Romania conducts capacity-building, awareness-raising and advocacy activities. In addition, UNHCR provides inter-agency coordination and co-chairs the Protection Working Group, under which it also co-chairs the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection working groups. At the global level, UNHCR works continuously to ensure every refugee can exercise their right to seek asylum and be able to return home voluntarily, integrate in the host country or resettle in another country. UNHCR also supports stateless people.

The **National Agency against Human Trafficking** (NATIP) is part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.¹⁹ It carries out information and awareness-raising activities regarding the risks and implications of human trafficking, both among vulnerable target groups and the general population. The preventive dimension of NATIP's activity is based on the analyses and researches related to the trafficking-in-persons phenomenon, the evolution and manifestation tendencies of this type of crime, on the evaluations of the European Commission, the US State Department and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), at the same time aiming to transpose, to the greatest possible extent, the general approach of the international and European level in the preventive efforts in Romania. Since the beginning of the war, NATIP has developed and distributed several sets of informative preventive materials, in Ukrainian, Russian and English, developed in partnership with IGPR – ICPC, IOM-Bureau Bucharest, Eliberare and the ProTECT platform, International Justice Mission (IJM), the Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania – AIDRom, the RoCONNECT Association and the Union of Ukrainians in Romania. In order to carry out the training of the staff from the state authorities, together with the IOM-Bureau Bucharest and the ProTECT platform, NATIP created and sent to the border crossing points with Ukraine (IGPF) informational material containing the identification indicators and mechanisms for reporting and referring possible cases of human trafficking.

The **National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption** (NAPCRA)²⁰ is a specialized body of the central public administration with legal personality, subordinated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice. Its mission is to monitor the observance of the rights of all children and to take all measures to contribute to the creation of a society worthy of children, involving the local and central public administration authorities, civil society, parents and children. The state authority in Romania is responsible for ensuring the implementation and compliance with regulations related to the protection of children's rights and adoption, as well as coordinating the activities of legal and public entities in this field. It represents the Romanian state both internally and externally in matters of child protection and adoption. Additionally, it develops the necessary legal framework to align domestic legislation with international treaties and conventions and manages state assets related to these activities.

18. Information accessed and adapted from UNHCR Romania: [About us – UNHCR Romania](#) and from interviews with stakeholders.

19. Information accessed and adapted from the National Agency against Human Trafficking: [Agentia Națională Împotriva Traficului de Persoane – MINISTERUL AFACERILOR INTERNE \(gov.ro\)](#) and from interviews with stakeholders.

20. Information accessed and adapted from [National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and Adoption \(ANPDCA - Romania\) | Devex](#) and from interviews with stakeholders.

The **Romanian Red Cross**²¹ assists vulnerable people in disaster and crisis situations. Through its programmes and activities for the benefit of society, it contributes to the prevention and alleviation of suffering in all forms, protects health and life, and promotes respect for human dignity without any discrimination based on nationality, race, sex, religion, age, social or political affiliation. The Romanian Red Cross has been actively supporting Ukrainian refugees with several initiatives, such as the establishment of cultural centres and health centres, as well as the implementation of MHPSS-related activities.

Among the work of these six organizations, and according to the information they provided about services from other organizations in the country, several services for refugees in Romania were identified:

- [116 111@telefonulcopilului.ro](mailto:116_111@telefonulcopilului.ro) – 24-hour daily online information and counselling (Asociația Telefonul Copilului.)
- Mental health and psychological support services (MHPSS).
- Medical support.
- Technical assistance to local authorities and NGOs.
- Educational services such as childcare (Monday to Friday, from 12:00 to 15:00/16:00).
- Blue Dots centres operated by UNICEF providing spaces dedicated to mothers and babies/ young children psychological therapy; information and counselling; referral services for cases of violence or health conditions, etc.; first aid on hygiene, health and nutrition; family reunification and restoring family links; registration of the most vulnerable; basic legal advice; and blankets, warm clothes, sanitary kits, toys, hygiene products and baby food.
- Direct counselling and integration work with people on the move, including legal support (for children) and financial support.
- Awareness and prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Human Trafficking.
- Community-based activities.
- Provision of information to refugees.
- Provision of refugee grants for refugee-led organizations.
- Awareness-raising activities for the government to ensure the best interest of the child, and for vulnerable target groups and general population about the risks and implications of human trafficking.
- Translation services.
- Helpline service 119 – 119 services are offered by the General Directions of Social Assistance and Child Protection. Even though this service is available, there is no official data published regarding contacts made to this line by Ukrainian children.
- Referral services to survivors of trafficking (to receive psychological counselling, medical services, and shelter, among others).

Among all the services provided by the interviewees and their partners, the following were the **most searched for among the Ukrainian refugee population**:

- Information regarding how to get the status
- Information about financial and accommodation assistance
- Information about education
- Education services such as childcare

These organizations observed that it is important for refugees to formalize their legal status in the country, as well as have information about education and education services for their children.

21. Information accessed and adapted from Romanian Red Cross: [Romanian Red Cross \(cruceariosie.ro\)](#) and from the interviews with stakeholders.

Asociatia Telefonul Copilului

- Three missing Ukrainian children were found as a result of the cooperation between Asociatia Telefonul Copilului, Magnolia NGO and the Romanian Police, according to [official data presented by the Romanian Police](#)
- On 22 May 2023, Asociatia Telefonul Copilului and the Romanian Police, with the financial support of the Embassy of the United States of America in Romania, launched a [national programme dedicated to the awareness and prevention of missing children cases](#) dedicated to both Ukrainian and Romanian children.
- As of 31 January 2024, 1,320 informational and educational sessions have taken place for 13,295 adults and 49,580 children.

UNICEF Romania and its partners

- UNICEF²² support during the reporting period enabled access to MHPSS for 1,916 children and their caregivers, 6,882 people benefitted from access to safe spaces and protection and support hubs run by UNICEF implementing partners, 1,700 women, girls, and boys accessed GBV risk mitigation, prevention, and/or response interventions and 7,229 people were able to access safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers.
- UNICEF continued collaborating with UNHCR and supporting local and national authorities to provide protection to unaccompanied and separated children. This included 85 children in five residential care facilities in Iasi and Prahova counties, as well as children under NGO care in Suceava and Sighisoara.

UNHCR Romania works with 11 Refugee Response Plan Partners (and 1 reporting partner)²³, who support Child Protection activities. The reported results for 2023 by all partners²⁴ are:

- Child assistance in safe spaces: 16, 909
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Children (including recreational services, group activities, etc): 15,983
- Provision of cash for Child Protection: 550
- Training on child protection and children's rights (including Child Safeguarding and GVB/VAC prevention and response): 686 participants²⁵
- In addition, UNICEF had specialized Child Protection Services (including family reunification and/or alternative arrangements for UASC)

The National Agency against Human Trafficking (NATIP)

During 2022-2023, NATIP carried out more than 820 informative-preventive activities dedicated to the Ukrainian people, registering more than 37,000 direct beneficiaries.

22. Ukraine Refugee Response in Neighboring Countries; <https://www.unicef.org/media/154866/file/ECARO-Humanitarian-SitRep-Ukraine-Refugee-Response-26-February-2024.pdf>

23. Refugee Response Plan Partners - Autism Voice, CNRR, Good Neighbours Japan, Necuvinte, Plan International, RomaJust, Salvati Copiii, SERA, THD, UNHCR, UNICEF, World Vision Romania Foundation – accessed at [Situation Ukraine Refugee Situation \(unhcr.org\)](#) – Child Protection

24. Interagency Results accessed at [Situation Ukraine Refugee Situation \(unhcr.org\)](#) – Child Protection

25. According to the source, the numbers of individuals reached is an estimation and can contain double counting.

The National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption (NAPCRA)

According to the platform Primero, where all child protection cases are recorded and managed, the following Ukrainian children have been registered²⁶:

- 8,164 children: 0 - 5 years old.
- 18,073 children: 6 - 13 years old.
- 7,699 children: 14 - 17 years old.

Of these, 17,036 were boys and 16,900 were girls.

The numbers above are from registrations, and the actual number of Ukrainian children currently under the special protection system is 95.²⁷

In the period 5 January 2022 to 31 March 2024, 235,041 calls were received by the 119 line, which were not only Ukraine related:

01/05/2022 – 12/31/2022 – 108,910 calls
 01.01.2023 – 31.12.2023 – 101 104 calls
 01.01.2024 – 31.03.2024 – 25,027 calls

In this context, NAPCRA points out that the number of calls to the 119 number is not equivalent to the number of cases reported to this unique national number. In other words, there are many situations where repeated calls can be recorded for a single case (e.g., in the first days of operation of the 119 lines, a caller called more than 200 times in a row to report the same problem). Also, the number 119 is sometimes called by mistake or the callers hang up immediately after the call or later, after being called back by the 119 operator.

During the mentioned period, out of total number of calls, 1026 children called, and 21,881 persons, professionals in the field of child rights protection or general citizens called 119. In 7,446 cases where a situation of potential child abuse was reported, additional information, guidance or counselling was provided.

The Romanian Red Cross

According to its Annual Report²⁸, in 2022, the Red Cross assisted 217,541 people affected by the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine at Romanian Transit centres and shelters. Of these, 40% were children.

26. National Authority for the Protection of Child's Rights and Adoption, Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, data about refugee children from Ukraine, 31 December 2023, accessed at <https://copii.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Situatie-copii-Ucraina-31-decembrie-2023.pdf>

27. Information gathered during the interviews to stakeholders. Special protection is outlined in Article 20 of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child. "A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State. 2. States Parties shall in accordance with their national laws ensure alternative care for such a child. 3. Such care could include, inter alia, foster placement, kafalah of Islamic law, adoption or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background." Available at [Convention on the Rights of the Child | OHCHR](#)

28. Red Cross Romania (2022). Annual Report. [Raport-anual-2022-26-mai-final-compressed.pptx \(live.com\)](#), p.12

Reaching Ukrainian Refugees

The organizations interviewed provide services directly or through partners. The **main means to provide these services** are:

- Refugees can receive information during face-to-face meetings as representatives of target groups and receive information through social media
- Contact through helplines of the organizations
- Refugees can participate in face-to-face activities (wellbeing, development, parenting skills)
- Refugees can receive financial aid and access a social food store
- Refugees can access grants for refugee-led organizations.

In terms of the location of the services, **many organizations have their main offices in Bucharest**, but partnerships from respondents where the partner **covers different areas and uses mobile services** to support children were also identified. NATIP works in 15 Regional Centres where refugees can access activities and information. Even though this is a reality of some services, this is not the case for all services where respondents mention that it becomes challenging to benefit refugees who live in remote areas or small towns.

The **schedules of the dedicated services vary**. At the beginning of the war in Ukraine, Blue Dot Centres were opened 24 hours, 7 days a week. A respondent also mentioned that they support informative-preventive activities for refugees for 1-2 hours per week. The Red Cross call centre is open from 9:00 to 20:00 every Monday to Friday. Asociatia Telefonul Copilului's child helpline is available to children 24 hours, 7 days a week, through telephone and online channels during the night.

Regarding **peak times for service usage**, most respondents didn't report a specific time that refugees accessed the services. One respondent mentioned however that Monday mornings were the most frequent times to request assistance, mainly for financial and/or psychological support, and this had been increasing in the last two to three months.

In Romania, the Child Protection Authority is managing a platform called Primero. According to respondents, since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, 35,000 children have been registered on this platform. This tool registers information from different sources regarding age, gender, disabilities if children came from institutions, and if they faced any form of violence (physical, psychological, adolescent pregnancy, use of drugs, if the child is unaccompanied or separated, among other information). This platform was used at six border crossings, and will now be used for all refugees. It was also used in the other 41 General Directions of Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPCs in Romanian). This institution has identified and registered information from the 119 service, counselling and referrals through mobile teams, care and protection.

NATIP also collects information, and in 2023, it identified two cases of children who were "victims of human trafficking".

Respondents also mentioned they receive information from border police, and it contains data disaggregated by age, gender, by transit or stay, unaccompanied or separated children. All data accessed by the respondents helps them to provide better services by knowing who the Ukrainian refugee community is.

While the respondent organizations acquire information and data about the refugees through government institutions, UN agencies and by collecting it themselves, they were also asked **how refugees are getting to know about the services they provide for them**. The following information was gathered:

- **Word of mouth:** People appeared to exchange a lot of information with each other regarding groups or activities they join. One respondent mentioned that new arrivals benefitted most from word-of-mouth recommendations from their family and friends. It was also mentioned that sometimes information for young people is passed on by their mothers in this way.
- **Social media:** Telegram and WhatsApp are popular channels where information circulates. Refugees are also using Viber. Organizations are using Facebook and Instagram to publicize information.
- **Other ways:** Some respondents identified that refugees had suggested having awareness-raising sessions.

Challenges identified

According to the respondents, there is still some stigma received from the host population, most visible in media. There were still double standards in terms of the quality of services received by Romanians and refugees from Ukraine.



One relevant factor that is not cultural but rather functional is the **language barrier**. The respondents mentioned that one way of addressing this was to contract Ukrainian/Russian-speaking staff who could support the development of communications. Nevertheless, translations should still be of high quality. For example, in counselling processes, translation brings additional challenges in being able to correctly interpret what was happening with a child. Asociatia Telefonul Copilului recommends that such services should be done by Ukrainian-speaking professionals, by involving Ukrainians who live in Romania and providing the appropriate training for this role.

In terms of **cultural obstacles**, local partners of the respondents mentioned that there is also a general stigma about MHPSS, and so they are raising awareness about these services. They observed that during case management people sometimes drop out if they don't see quick results. An interesting initiative mentioned by one respondent that might help mitigate this issue is the existence of a network of volunteers from Ukraine who apply psychological first aid.



Future work of respondents and additional insights

Most respondents mentioned that in their next phases, they would continue doing the same work. One respondent mentioned they would focus on reducing their presence at border crossings and instead focus on accommodation centres and employment support for refugees.

According to the respondents, the gaps that still need to be addressed are:

- **Continued psychological support:** The psychological effects of the war in Ukraine need to continue being addressed.
- **Skilled professionals:** There is a need for more and better-skilled translators or social workers with Ukrainian communication skills.
- **Hate speech and xenophobia:** Tackling hate speech and xenophobia on social media and from extremist parties opposing Ukrainian help.
- **Financial assistance:** There is a need for financial assistance for refugees and support with rental coverage.
- **Improved coordination:** Better coordination among governmental and non-governmental organizations is needed. A lot of work has been done to bring ministries together and analyse the normative framework, policy-related instructions, procedures and regulations, but a uniform roll-out has been challenging. Unfortunately, there is a lack of awareness among organizations working on Ukrainian refugee responses about each other.
- **Continued support to vulnerable groups:** Continue to put into practice the Action Plan regarding the prevention of exploitation, sexual abuse, and the risks associated with human trafficking in the context of Ukrainian citizens;
- **Sustainability of services:** Ensure continued access to social protection, benefits and employment. Provide employment opportunities and skill-building opportunities for refugees.

In summary, the various stakeholders must continue to work together, using existing frameworks, to ensure refugees are still able to sustain themselves. This can be done by building skills and financial support for a more successful entry into the job market.

2.3 Data from La Strada Ukraine

We examined the number of contacts that the Ukrainian child helpline, La Strada, had received from children and young people residing in Romania whenever this information is logged.

Thirty calls had been received since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. 100% of calls were received overnight, between 20:00 and 7:00. The three most common reasons for calls were mental health issues, domestic violence from parents, and requests regarding sex education.

3: Summary and recommendations

3.1. Identified needs

Our findings revealed several critical needs for Ukrainian refugee children in Romania.

- **Child helpline:** There is a need to **increase awareness about the local child helpline and its services** for children and youth from Ukraine. **Social media** are the primary channels for increasing awareness and reaching the target audience, particularly Telegram and TikTok, as these are the platforms most widely used by Ukrainian refugees. Furthermore, online platforms are needed for communication, as most respondents connect with other Ukrainians online, making this the best venue for outreach. This is already offered by Asociația Telefonul Copilului, but it needs more visibility among the community of refugees from Ukraine. There is a need to build on the **positive inclination of young people to use the child helpline once they are aware of it**, ensuring they have the information necessary to access it. The fact that 40% of the children and young people who participated in the online survey are open to contacting the child helpline in the future (with the remaining 60% not ruling it out) is reassuring, and means that the child helpline should maintain operations while boosting its awareness. Because the response to the surveys was low, we also encourage a deeper evaluation regarding the outreach activities.
- **Overnight support services need to be aligned:** The need for night-time support by the existing emergency services needs to be addressed to ensure children can be supported at the times they need most. Data from La Strada suggests that Ukrainian children and young people in Romania are tending to contact the Ukrainian child helpline during the night. It is interesting to observe that, although few, these calls to the Ukraine child helpline are taking place during the times that the local child helpline in Romania is closed, although the counselling services of the child helpline in Romania are available 24 hours a day through online channels. Nevertheless, the child helpline 116 111 in Romania is an assistance service according to the EC Decision and not an emergency one, so it will be important to strengthen the 112 emergency service, which is available 24 hours a day, so that it can also provide assistance for children in Ukrainian. This would be the optimal solution given the lack of available Ukrainian-speaking counsellors in Romania.
- **Continued need for skilled professionals:** By providing services in the Ukrainian language, the respondents try to establish connections with the refugee community and ensure they receive the support they need. It was stated that more and better-skilled translators or social workers with Ukrainian language skills are needed to ensure the sustainability of these services.
- **Continued psychological support:** The war in Ukraine is not yet over and its effects are likely to be experienced for many years to come. Child respondents to the survey (33%) mentioned mental health as the second largest reason for potentially contacting the child helpline in the future. In addition, La Strada Ukraine reported that this was also one of the reasons Ukrainian children living in Romania were contacting the Ukrainian child helpline about the most.
- **Continued support for vulnerable groups:** All stakeholders need to be aligned for the continued implementation of the Action Plan regarding the prevention of exploitation, sexual abuse, and human trafficking risks.

- **Hate speech and xenophobia:** There is a need to tackle hate speech and xenophobia on social media and from extremist parties opposing help and/or support for Ukrainians.
- **Financial assistance:** Financial assistance is still needed for refugees as they continue their integration in the country. According to respondents, one of the biggest challenges is rental coverage.
- **Improved coordination among stakeholders who work on Ukraine refugee response:** There are still challenges in the uniform roll-out of strategies and a lack of awareness among organizations about each other.
- **Sustainability of services:** Ensuring continued access to social protection benefits and support to secure employment.

3.2. Recommendations for improved services for Ukrainian refugees

To address the needs we have identified, several recommendations can be made to organizations working to support Ukrainian Refugees in Romania:

- **Increased recruitment of skilled professionals:** Recruit and train more translators and social workers, or other relevant workers, with Ukrainian language skills to ensure effective and sustainable support services for the refugee community. This applies to all organizations providing support to Ukrainian refugees. In fact, organizations could establish a fund for training and capacity-building of Ukrainian professionals to be able to work in the country supporting their community.
- **Sustain and expand MHPSS:** Continue and enhance the availability of MHPSS, as mental health remains a significant concern for Ukrainian children. This support is crucial given the ongoing effects of the war in Ukraine. This can be done by having regular topical meetings with the relevant stakeholders who provide these services, to align schedules, service ranges and fulfil the needs of the different target groups. This is recommended for all organizations working to provide these services.
- **Organize campaigns against hate speech:** Implement strategies to tackle hate speech and xenophobia, particularly on social media and from extremist groups opposing support for Ukrainians. This can be done by collaborating with social media platforms to monitor and address hate speech. Another suggestion is to highlight the services that are provided to Ukrainian refugees that are also offered to Romanians. This would allow the Romanian population to understand that they also have the same access to similar programmes and services as refugees. This is applicable to all organizations working to provide MHPSS services, as well as others who have a wide public in the country, e.g. media channels etc. The organizations working with MHPSS services can engage in collaborations with the mentioned actors (TV channels, radios, etc.).
- **Provide financial assistance:** Continue to offer financial assistance to refugees to aid their integration, focusing on challenges such as rental coverage²⁹. This is mainly applicable to government institutions but also to organizations who can access significant amounts of funding and advocate to regional funding entities to support the country.

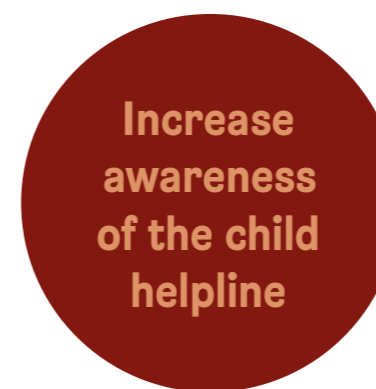
29. There is a new government decision regarding the support to refugees that includes providing financial assistance. Government Emergency Directive NO. 96 / 28.06.2024 <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/284711>

- **Improve coordination mechanisms:** One respondent mentioned that a good way to improve services to refugees is to maintain the web platform Service Advisor³⁰. Ensure regular coordination meetings among stakeholders, to share information and best practices and direct their efforts to meet the demand as well as possible. This should be done by involving all relevant organizations in the country.
- **Continue to protect vulnerable groups:** Strengthen the implementation of the Action Plan regarding the prevention of exploitation, sexual abuse, and human trafficking risks. Provide training for staff on identifying and supporting at-risk individuals, especially in those organizations who interact directly with people, and specifically children.
- **Ensure service sustainability:** Maintain access to social protection and continue to support refugees in securing employment. This can be done by facilitating skill-building workshops and vocational training programmes. This is relevant for both the organization already working on this and also for government institutions such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Regularly assess the effectiveness of implemented measures. Collect feedback from refugees to adapt and improve services continually. This is applicable to all organizations providing services to this community.

In addition to this, **specific recommendations were identified for the child helpline:**

- **Increase awareness of the child helpline:** Use the popular social media platforms Telegram and TikTok to promote child helpline services. Continue to promote the 116 111 number in schools. Given that 40% of children indicated they might contact the child helpline in the future, it is important to continue operating and boosting awareness efforts to ensure these services are well-known and accessible.
- **Continue to provide online support overnight:** Other emergency services are available when child helpline counsellors are not on the line during the night, including the 112 emergency service.

Implementing these recommendations can help address the identified needs and enhance the overall support system for Ukrainian refugees in Romania. This holistic approach will ensure that both immediate and long-term needs are met, fostering better integration and wellbeing for the refugee population



30. Service Advisor is a platform where people can find all services in Romania– accessible at <https://romania.servicesadvisor.net/>

4: Conclusions

This report highlights the **critical need for enhanced mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for Ukrainian refugees in Romania**, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women and children. The findings, based on key informant interviews and secondary data, indicate gaps in current services, highlighting the urgency for comprehensive and coordinated interventions. The psychological toll of displacement and the ongoing effects of the war in Ukraine necessitate robust mental health services. **The provision of such support is vital not only for immediate relief but also for the long-term well-being and integration of refugees into Romanian society.** Addressing mental health issues comprehensively will help mitigate the long-term impacts of trauma and foster resilience among refugee populations.

The analysis reveals that young refugees' awareness of existing support services can be low, necessitating **concerted efforts to disseminate information more effectively.** Additionally, there is a pressing need for **skilled professionals who can provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services.** The current shortage of trained translators and social workers proficient in Ukrainian presents a barrier to effective support and integration.

In response to the main question of this mapping exercise on **what might be the barriers preventing Ukrainian refugees from accessing local support services, especially child helplines**, we reached the following conclusions:

- **Language barriers** remain a reality. It is important that existing services in Romania provide support in the Ukrainian language to refugee children. Currently, this is done through the child helpline through online channels. By having more resources to train Ukrainian professionals, the services can be expanded.
- **Lack of awareness and information about child helpline services** can be the reason for the lack of demand for services in Ukrainian child helpline services. Efforts to increase awareness through social media platforms such as Telegram and TikTok have been suggested as effective methods to reach younger Ukrainian audiences.

In terms of the integration of refugees in the society, there is a growing presence of hate speech and xenophobia towards refugees. This highlights the need for **community engagement and education to build a more inclusive and supportive environment.** Tackling these negative attitudes is essential for the social integration of refugees and for creating a welcoming atmosphere in which they can thrive.

Financial constraints continue to be a significant challenge for many refugees, affecting their ability to secure housing and meet basic needs. The government recently published an emergency directive that ensures refugees from Ukraine have the right to access services and goods. **Sustained financial support and the development of employment opportunities will immensely aid this community's economic stability and independence.** In addition to this, **ensuring that refugees have continued access to social protection benefits is crucial** for their successful integration.



Critical need for enhanced mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for Ukrainian refugees in Romania

MHPSS is vital not only for immediate relief but also for the long-term well-being and integration of refugees into Romanian society

Make concerted efforts to disseminate information more effectively

Skilled professionals who can provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services

Community engagement and education to build a more inclusive and supportive environment

Sustained financial support and the development of employment opportunities

Ensuring that refugees have continued access to social protection benefits is crucial



In order for governmental and non-governmental services to be effective, improved coordination is vital. **Streamlined efforts and collaboration will enhance the impact of interventions and ensure that resources are utilized efficiently.**

Implementing the recommendations in this report can help alleviate the immediate challenges faced by refugees and promote their long-term integration and well-being within the Romanian context. Developing a robust support network and addressing the identified gaps in services helps stakeholders ensure that all individuals, particularly children, have the opportunity to rebuild their lives with dignity and resilience. This approach can contribute to the creation of a more inclusive society where refugees are empowered to contribute positively to their new communities.

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Appendix A: Tools Used

1. Interview guide for Interviews with (international) non-governmental organizations, multilateral organizations, and governmental institutions

The interview can be conducted online or in person. Ensure confidentiality at the location and during the interview to create a comfortable and secure environment.

Highlight that the responses provided by your organization should be as comprehensive as possible, and thank the participants for their willingness to collaborate and contribute to this research. Consent will be obtained from the participants prior to the interview.

Background about the organization's services

1. What kind of assistance does your organization provide to refugees from Ukraine? (prompt options: Informational, Legal, Psychological, Humanitarian, Other)
 - 1.1. If you provide more than one type of service, which are the most often used among Ukrainian refugees?
2. Do you work with other refugee populations, other than Ukrainians, or did you do so in the past?
3. To whom is your assistance primarily targeted? (e.g., at a specific user group by age, gender, needs)
4. What is the estimated number of Ukrainian people you support on an average month (or total in the past year)
 - 4.1. Do you have this information disaggregated by age and gender?

Operational information (time and place)

5. In which ways do you provide your services? (e.g. services online, in-person, other)
 - 5.1. If in person, how far are the services from the communities of Ukrainian refugees?
 - 5.2. What feedback do you get about the location and accessibility of your service?
6. What are the hours of the day that are dedicated to supporting the refugees?
7. Which are the most popular times of week and day?
 - 7.1. Why do you think that is?

Reaching Ukrainian refugees

8. Do you have information about people seeking help when they arrive in your country? (e.g., demographics, ages, etc.)
 - 8.1. If yes, from which source / how do you obtain that data?
9. How do refugees from Ukraine learn about your organization? Prompt options:
 - social networks and messaging apps (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik-Tok, Telegram, Viber, WhatsApp, Signal, OTHER)
 - Government structures (WHICH?)
 - Schools?
 - Partners (WHICH)
 - Word-of-mouth within the refugee community
 - Other
10. Which of these channels are the most successful for reaching refugees from Ukraine?
 - 10.1. What feedback do you get from refugees about that?
11. In what ways has your strategy of reaching refugees changed in the past two years?
 - 11.1. Why?

12. How might your strategy change in the future to enhance the visibility and accessibility of your work among refugee children and youth? (Prompt for answer: ask specifically if there are any plans to reach those in sparsely populated or remote villages and towns.)

13. Do you have regional partnerships to spread information about your services?

13.1. If yes, could you share a list of such institutions? Options:

- Other humanitarian organizations
- Local schools
- Churches
- Authorities
- Public institutions
- Other

Cultural differences

14. How does your organization overcome cultural and language barriers that may complicate interaction with refugee children and their families?

15. Which cultural obstacles did you experience when providing support to Ukrainian refugees?

Future

16. What do you think is still missing to provide better support to refugees in your country?

17. Do you think different organizations are working in a coordinated way in the country?

17.1. If not, how do you suggest to improve this?

2. Survey for Ukrainian young refugees

Introduction to the survey

Hello and welcome!

We represent Child Helpline International, an organization to support children around the world. Today, we invite you to answer a few questions to learn more about the support provided to children from Ukraine in the communities they currently live in. Your opinion matters, and we want to hear your thoughts, views and experiences.

Before we begin, we would like to provide you with some additional information about the survey. Only young people aged 13 or older are eligible to participate in this survey. If you decide to participate, please note that the survey is anonymous and confidential. We want you to feel comfortable and safe in providing your answers. Here's what you need to know:

- Your answers will be totally **anonymous**. It means that no one will know the identity of a person providing certain answers. We will not ask for your name or any other information that could be identifiable with you and your answers.
- Your answers will be kept **confidential**. This means that the research team only will have access to your personal answers. Your privacy is our priority and we will not share your answers with anyone outside the research team.

You are welcome to share and discuss this survey with your parents or guardians, and to seek their advice if you need it.

We want you to feel free to express your thoughts honestly and openly. You will be bound with no obligation to take part in the survey if you don't want to, but your help will count for much. If you decide that you no longer

want to participate, that will be absolutely OK. We will respect your decision without any detriment to you. If you decide to participate in the survey, you will also have the right to choose the questions you want to answer. If you are uncomfortable answering any of the questions, you can simply skip it. Your feelings and confidentiality are important to us, so please only answer questions that you feel comfortable answering. Your answers will help us to better understand children's experiences and perspectives, and will help us to make important decisions about how to improve services for Ukrainian children in the community.

I agree to participate in the survey

- Yes
- No (the survey ends here)
- I confirm that I am at least 13 years old

We will not cover any risks associated with your participation in this survey, but if you are upset over some things about it, or if you have any questions or concerns during this survey, please reach out to us at: ana@childhelplineinternational.org (English) or nelia@childhelplineinternational.org (Ukrainian)

Thank you for your participation and for helping us make a difference in this world.

Survey

How old are you? _____

You must be aged 13 or older to be able to participate in this survey.

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- I do not want to answer

What country are you from?

- Ukraine
- Other

If other, please specify _____

Which country do you currently live in?

- Hungary
- Poland
- Romania
- Slovakia

Suggested routing from here onwards — we would have four routes so that the questions can use the name of the country's child helpline and the information at the end of the survey is relevant to the country they are currently living in.

Have you heard of **Asociația Telefonul Copilului 116111**, a Romanian child helpline that offers children counseling (i.e., if a child feels unsafe, misunderstood, unheard, lonely, or looking for support and protection, there will be someone for him/her to talk to) in Ukrainian?

The helpline operates on the principles of anonymity and confidentiality by providing its services free of charge. Anonymity means that it is impossible to identify the person calling, and confidentiality means keeping the information secret.

- Yes
- No

The navigation depends on the answer “yes” or “no” (if “no”, go to the “All children” section)

If yes,

How did you find out about **Asociația Telefonul Copilului 116111**?

Please choose all that apply

- At school
- At home
- From friends
- From social media
- From flyers/leaflets
- At Blue Dot Centre
- In the asylum centre
- TV
- Radio
- Other

If other, please specify _____

Which of these services does **Asociația Telefonul Copilului 116111** provide?

- A space where children can discuss their problems with a professional
- Help to keep them safe
- Receiving reports on abuse
- Help when children are being treated unfairly, used or abused
- Support for children from Ukrainian
- Other

If other, please specify _____

Have you ever contacted a child helpline?

- Yes
- No

If yes,

Have you experienced any problems when contacting the child helpline?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify _____

Why did you contact the child helpline?

- Help with homework
- Troubles with parents
- Troubles with friends
- Troubles at school
- Bullying
- Concerns about my mental health, such as feeling sad or anxious
- Concerns about personal safety
- Concerns about personal physical health
- Other

If other, please specify _____

If no,

If you have never contacted a child helpline, please tell us why? (Please choose all that apply)

- I don't need it.
- I do not think I should contact a helpline to address the problems I have
- I did not know that I could contact a helpline to address my problems
- I do not feel I have enough privacy to do so.
- I do not have the means of communication (phone or other device).
- I worry about how people might react to what I say.
- I am afraid that my parents might find out about what I say.
- I do not feel safe talking to local counsellors.
- Other

If other, please specify _____

All children

Do you think you will contact **Asociația Telefonul Copilului 116111**, which offers help to children in Ukrainian, in the future if you need it?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Which of the following social networks do you use?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Twitter – X
- YouTube
- WhatsApp
- Telegram
- Viber
- WeChat
- Facebook Messenger
- Pinterest

Where do you communicate with other young people from Ukraine?

- Online
- Youth centres
- At school
- During events organized by local organizations
- Other

If other, please specify _____

What kind of help do you think you might need someday?

- Help with homework
- Troubles with parents
- Troubles with friends
- Troubles at school
- Bullying
- Concerns about my mental health, such as feeling sad or anxious
- Concerns about personal safety
- Concerns about personal physical health
- Other

If other, please specify _____

If you need help with any of these issues, whom you will most likely talk to?

- Family member
- Friend
- Teacher
- Private counsellor
- Child helpline
- I will research online
- Police
- Social services
- Other

If other, please specify _____

What do you think should be done to ensure that children know how to contact the child helpline?

Is there anything else you would like to share about these issues?

Survey results

Thank you for sharing your thoughts. Your contribution will help us create a safer and happier environment for all children.

We understand that some questions may have raised difficult emotions or questions for you. Remember, you are not alone. If you need to talk to someone or seek advice, please contact **Asociația Telefonul Copilului 116111**. Ukrainian-speaking child helpline professionals will be available from 10:00 to 20:00 to provide support and assistance whenever you need it. Your well-being is fundamentally important and we have the resources to provide the help and support you deserve.

The helpline operates on the principles of anonymity and confidentiality by providing its services free of charge. Anonymity means that it is impossible to identify the person calling, and confidentiality means keeping the information secret.

Moreover, if you are unable to contact the child helpline for any reason, you can contact our consultant Nelia Troichuk by sending an e-mail to nelia@childhelplineinternational.org. She is a qualified specialist who is always ready to listen and give advice. Remember that it is absolutely normal and courageous to ask for help when you need it.

Appendix B: Local Service Map

The Margareta of Romania Royal Foundation	Supports children, young people and the elderly through sustainable intervention, based on sharing experience and values between generations.
“Bună ziua Copii” Association	Works for child rights protection, support and counselling for parents to develop parenting skills.
AIDRom – the Ecumenical Association of Churches from Romania	Offers comprehensive educational experience focusing on social integration, cultural awareness, and language proficiency. Aim to enhance refugees from Ukraine understanding of Romanian society and culture while improving their Romanian language skills, enabling better communication and fostering a sense of community and belonging.
	Bucharest; 021 212 4868 Timișoara; 0741 128 903 IAȘI; 0745 992 668
Alaturi de Voi Romania Foundation	Provides support and resources for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups among refugees from Ukraine. Offers tailored assistance, including access to education, healthcare, and community integration programs, ensuring that all individuals receive the support they need to rebuild their lives with dignity and resilience.
Alianta Civica	Provides comprehensive services aimed at improving the socio-economic status of Romani women. These services include educational programs, vocational training, and advocacy for equal employment opportunities.
Anais Association	Provides essential medical and psychological support to women and young ladies, girls who have survived gender-based violence. It aims to address their immediate health needs, offer psychological care to help them cope with trauma, and support their recovery and empowerment through specialized programs and interventions.
Asociația Telefonul Copilului	Toll-free anonymous child helpline for children and young people. Provides confidential and professional support for children and youth in need of assistance, advice, or just someone to talk to with a qualified professional.
Association “Active Ukrainians”	Provides activities for children, especially from Ukraine. Activities like summer camps, language lessons so on.
Atelier Psy Clinic	Offers specialized psychological and psychiatric support to those who are in a difficult situation. Among the services they offer and can be settled through an insurance company (CNAS) are psychology, psychiatry, adult psychiatry, child psychiatry, and addiction treatment.
Bethany Social Services Foundation	Provides educational programs, social services, and emergency response for children, young people, refugees and displaced persons.
Centrul de Resurse pentru Comunitatile de Romi, Cluj Napoca	Committed to supporting Roma women and girls by addressing post-employment discrimination and advocating for their inclusion in the workplace. Additionally, the organization works with local authorities to implement anti-discrimination legislation and policies that promote Roma inclusion, particularly in the field of housing.

Children and Animals Foundation	Promotes as a philosophy the affective and educational relation between children and animals 211-B, Sebastian Street, Sector 5, Bucharest, RO 76321 Romania
Civic Rădăuți Association	Engages children (including children from Ukraine) in a variety of activities is essential for their development and well-being. Indoor activities: handmade, educational games and puzzles, reading clubs. Outdoor activities: nature exploration, sports and physical activities, cultural and community activities.
CONCORDIA Humanitarian Organization	Focuses on childcare, community intervention, education and training, employability and social enterprises, and empowerment of children and young people.
E-ROMNIA	Dedicated to feminist community intervention, providing comprehensive support to Roma women and girls. Their mission includes addressing post-employment discrimination, advocating for workplace inclusion, assisting local authorities in implementing anti-discrimination legislation and building the capacity of young people to address community needs.
Emergency child protection service (119)	Provides rapid response interventions to protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.
Federation of Child Protection NGOs	Works on advocacy and respecting children's rights. Child separation prevention, parenting counselling, and support for parents to acquire identity documents.
Heart of a Child Foundation	Provides social welfare, educational programs, healthcare and rehabilitation for children at risk of school drop-out or family abandonment. Supports children in rural areas.
HIAS	Provides mental health programmes to promote the well-being of individuals, families.
ICAR Foundation	Provides services and support near the border crossings with Ukraine, and comes in support of the Ukrainian migrants during these harsh times by: providing medical assistance, social and psychological counselling services; distributing donations offered by the local communities; close partnership with local centres of the Romanian Immigration Inspectorate, to help with those cases that require immediate assistance; children club activities for children from Ukraine like psycho-social, artistic, recreational activities that aim discover and value children's talents. Bucharest. Phone: +40 21 321 22 21
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Romania	Provides essential support for refugees from Ukraine who are in need: 1. Informational. Offering guidance and resources to help individuals understand their rights and available services. 2. Legal Counselling. Providing professional legal advice to navigate legal challenges and ensure rights are protected. 3. Shelter. Offering a safe and secure place to stay for those in need, ensuring their safety and wellbeing.
LOGS Group	Focuses on supporting migrant and refugee communities by providing: material and legal assistance. Offers essential resources such as food, clothing, and housing support to meet immediate needs. Providing professional legal advice and services to help individuals navigate legal systems, secure their rights, and address any legal issues they may face.

National Organization of Romanian Scouts	Logistical support at the border (accommodation, transport); food/clothes collection services; transport of goods across the border; non-formal education and integration support services.
Plan International Elena Dinon - CPiE Specialist	Provides psychological assistance in various cities of Romania for adults and children of refugees from Ukraine.
RMHC Romania	Finds and supports programmes that directly improve health and wellbeing of children.
Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR)	Provides guidance and resources to help individuals understand their rights, options, and available services. Offers professional legal advice to assist individuals in navigating legal challenges, ensuring their rights are protected and they can make informed decisions.
Save the Children Romania	Specific support for children: social, material, educational, and Romanian language. Social support like helping children integrate into their communities and build social skills. Material support such as providing necessary resources such as clothing, food, and school supplies. Educational support such as offering academic assistance and tutoring to help children succeed in school. Romanian language support such as teaching Romanian to help children adapt and thrive in their new environment.
SERA ROM NIA Foundation	Advocacy and respecting children's rights. Child separation prevention, parenting counselling, support for parents to acquire identity documents.
SOS Children's Villages Association	Day centre, after-school activities. Additionally, child separation prevention, parenting education, counselling, material support, support for parents to acquire identity documents, access to healthcare services, employment, assistance in semi-independent living for children, young people and their parents.
Terre des Hommes Foundation Oksana Buga, Team Leader (Focus on MHPSS)	Provides psychological assistance to refugees from Ukraine, pregnant/lactating women, children, LGBTIQ+, the Roma community, and unaccompanied children.
The Rescue Committee Organization Katarina Mitic, Programme Coordinator	Offers psychological assistance to Ukrainian refugees in Romania, people who have experienced gender violence, people with serious mental illnesses, and unaccompanied children. Consultations are conducted in Russian, Ukrainian and Romanian.
UNHCR Romania	Leads and coordinates the operations to protect refugees so that they can enjoy their rights and well-being. UNHCR works continuously to ensure every refugee can exercise their right to seek asylum and be able to return home voluntarily, integrate in the host country or resettle in another country. UNHCR also supports stateless people.
World Vision Romania	The foundation created child-friendly environments organized to provide daily social and educational services to children of Ukrainian refugees and their families, as well as integration activities in the host community to promote children's integration into the school, prevent violence against children and adults, learn Romanian and socio-professional integration of parents. Centres are social and educational institutions accredited as educational hubs by local DGASPC and ISJ. Children who attend at least 3 days a week / 15 days a month receive certificates of participation.



**Every child has a voice.
No child should be left unheard.**

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Child Helpline International is a collective impact organization with more than 150 members in over 130 countries and territories around the world.

We coordinate information, viewpoints, knowledge and data from our child helpline members, partners and external sources. This exceptional resource is used to help and support child protection systems globally, regionally and nationally, and to help our members advocate for the rights of children and amplify their voices.

Child Helpline International

Bruggebouw Suite 5.08
Bos en Lommerplein 280
1055 RW Amsterdam
The Netherlands

www.childhelplineinternational.org

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