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INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE INTO THE LABOR MARKET IN
ROMANIA – BETWEEN CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS MODELS
NATIONAL REPORT
January 2026

SMART UA

**Scaling the successful social inclusion and
integration of Ukrainian refugees in Hungary,
Romania and Slovakia through an innovative
multi-stakeholder cooperation**



SMART UA

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NATIONAL REPORT ON EMPLOYMENT OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES: MARKET ANALYSIS AND GOOD PRACTICES

Romania

January 2026

Authors

This national report was prepared by **Florin Lazăr and Smaranda Witec** (Association of Schools of Social Work in Romania and University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work) based on the labor market analysis and the mapping of institutional and non-institutional actors involved in supporting access to labor market for beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine in Romania.

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LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

Introduction

This national report is part of the work of WP3 – Labour Market Analysis and Identification of Good Practices of the project Scaling the successful social inclusion and integration of Ukrainian refugees in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia through an innovative multi-stakeholder cooperation (Acronym SMART UA) (Project number: ESF-SI-2024-UA-01-0074) and is designed as part of an analysis at the level of three European countries (Romania, Hungary and Slovakia), within work package 3, following a common methodology and a standardized format.

Objective - To analyze refugees' access to employment and identify models that support integration and improve employability, with a focus on sustainability, inclusion, and systemic impact. The report is based on a mixed approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data, and aims to provide a structured overview of labor market access, barriers to access, existing support mechanisms, and the relevant policy framework.

After the outbreak of war in February 2022, a large number of people from Ukraine arrived in Romania, either for temporary or long-term stays. As the forms of support established through either European or national mechanisms have been reduced, the pressure to find a job has increased, and implicitly on the labor market. In this context, understanding labor market dynamics and existing support mechanisms is essential for informing sustainable and inclusive interventions.

The report aims to answer the following research questions: what are the main barriers Ukrainian refugees face in accessing and maintaining employment; how do public, private, and civil society actors respond to these challenges; and what support models can be considered good practices with replication potential.

In the report, the term "Ukrainian refugees" is used in a broad analytical sense. When discussing rights, policies, and support mechanisms, the legal term "beneficiaries of temporary protection" is used, in accordance with EU legislation and the applicable national framework in Romania.

1.1. Methodology and data sources The methodology used includes documentary analysis of the legislative framework and relevant initiatives in the field of employment, the application of a questionnaire addressed to Ukrainian refugees, and the organization of a focus group with institutional actors involved in supporting access to employment.

Questionnaire (quantitative component)

The questionnaire was administered by JRS Romania between September 26 and 30, 2025, to 32 Ukrainian refugees living in Romania. The research tool was translated and administered in Ukrainian to ensure better understanding of the questions and more inclusive participation. The questionnaire collected information on the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, their employment status, the difficulties they encountered in accessing and maintaining a job, the types of support they received, and their current perceived needs.

Focus group (qualitative component)

The qualitative component of the research included a focus group organized on September 25, 2025, at the JRS Romania headquarters, with eight participants representing key institutions and organizations involved in the employment of Ukrainian refugees. The focus group was attended by two representatives of ANOFM (National Agency of Employment of Labor Force) and one representative each from UNHCR, IOM, Terre des hommes Foundation, AIDRom, Ateliere Fără Frontiere Organization, and JRS Romania. The discussion was moderated by a representative of JRS Romania, with co-moderation provided by an expert from the Association of Social Work Schools in Romania.

The focus group aimed to explore institutional perspectives on systemic barriers, inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, the role of different actors in supporting access to employment, and solutions considered effective or promising, according to the WP3 guide.

Data analysis

The data analysis was carried out by integrating the quantitative results from the questionnaire with the recurring themes identified in the focus group, with a view to triangulating the information and providing an interpretation geared towards the labor market. The data collected is exploratory in nature and is not representative at the national level, but it offers relevant insights into the experiences of refugees and how existing systems respond to their needs.



The report is structured in two main parts. The first part is dedicated to labor market analysis and includes an analysis of supply and demand, the identification of barriers to access, a presentation of existing support programs, a SWOT analysis, and a review of the policy and regulatory framework. The second part is dedicated to documenting good practices, based on three interviews with relevant actors, and aims to highlight intervention models that can contribute to the development of more sustainable and inclusive employment solutions for Ukrainian refugees in Romania.

In line with the WP3 framework, the analysis aims to understand labor market dynamics and functional support mechanisms, rather than assessing impact or making quantitative projections.

1.2. Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the SMART UA project, with the aim of protecting the rights, safety, and dignity of all participants involved in the data collection process.

Participation in the research activities was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to the participants' involvement in questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups. All participants were thoroughly informed about the objectives of the study, the nature and duration of the activities, the type of questions asked, and how the collected data would be processed and used. Consent was given in writing or verbally, depending on the specific situation of each activity. The research did not involve the provision of services, material benefits, or financial support to participants. The scientific approach aimed exclusively at obtaining relevant data to support and improve policies and programs dedicated to supporting the integration of Ukrainian refugees into the labor market.

The rules on confidentiality and personal data protection were complied with throughout the entire research process. The data were systematically anonymized, and any element that could have allowed the direct or indirect identification of participants was removed during the analysis and reporting stages. Access to the data was restricted to members of the research team, and it was stored securely in accordance with European and national data protection legislation (GDPR).

Data collection from refugees was carried out with particular attention to the specific vulnerabilities of this group. The research tools were linguistically and culturally adapted, including by translating and administering the questionnaire in Ukrainian, to ensure accessibility and comprehensibility of the information. Participants were free to skip questions or withdraw at any time without consequences for their status.

During the interviews and focus groups, participants were informed in advance about the recording of discussions and the exclusive use of the materials for research purposes. The activities were

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facilitated in a safe, respectful, and gender- and socio-culturally sensitive environment to create conditions conducive to free and informed expression.

By applying these ethical principles, the research maintains a balance between the need to produce empirical data relevant to labor market analysis and the fundamental responsibility to protect the rights, dignity, and well-being of participants—particularly refugees—throughout the data collection and analysis process.

2. Job demand analysis

2.1. Labor demand

At the national level, employers have declared over 30,000 job vacancies in the records of the National Employment Agency , a significant part of which are also open to Ukrainian citizens, especially in counties such as: Bucharest, Cluj and Timiș.

According to data provided by the National Employment Agency and labor market trends, the main areas where there are job vacancies are:

1. Manufacturing and Production Industry

This remains the most active sector, with a constant demand for:

- **Unskilled workers** in the assembly and fitting of parts (especially in the automotive and electronic components industries).
- **Manual packers** and cargo handlers.
- **Fabricators-assemblers** in the textile industry.

2. Construction

Due to the major labor shortage in this sector, there are numerous opportunities for:

- **Unskilled workers** in building demolition, masonry or finishing (mosaic, tiling).
- Specialists in installations and cladding.

3. Services and HORECA

Sectors with high staff turnover offer positions such as:

- **Kitchen help** , cleaning staff in hotels and restaurants.
- **Commercial workers** in retail and supermarkets.

4. Transport and Logistics

Once the necessary documents are obtained or equivalent, refugees can access positions in:

- **Drivers** for road freight transport.
- **Couriers** , a field with explosive growth in big cities.

Analyzing the data in dynamics, we observe a substantial increase in Ukrainian refugees registered with employment agencies from almost 20,000 in 2023 to almost 25,000 in 2025, as well as a relatively constant increase in those who managed to find a job (from less than 600 people at the end of 2022, to almost 3,500 at the end of 2025). The increase in 2025 was also supported by subsidies granted to employers who employ unemployed people from vulnerable groups, a category that also includes refugees.

Year	Registered Ukrainian citizens (Cumulative total)	Jobs occupied (cumulative)
2022	~5,300	583
2023	19,716	2,143
2024	23,941	2,734
2025	24,958	3,411

Source: ANOFM, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026

It should be noted that many Ukrainian citizens work in Romania without being registered with the ANOFM, using private platforms or direct contracts, so the real number of people employed at the national level is significantly higher than that monitored by public services.

Of the 32 respondents to the questionnaire, 11 (one third) are looking for a job. In terms of the fields in which they are looking for work, 6 mention services (cleaning, hospitality, retail, etc.), followed by those who choose office/administrative work (5) and education (4). Four people are looking for jobs in health and social care, and two in IT/technical occupations. It should be noted that the question was multiple choice, so the total number of options exceeds the number of respondents who said they were looking for a job.

Another question was asked to those who have a job but are looking for another one. Thus, 10 (31.3% of the total) are looking for a higher salary, 5 are looking because their current job is insecure or temporary, and another 5 are looking for a job closer to home/family. Two of the respondents want a job that is closer to their level of qualification/experience.

Focus group participants confirmed that the demand for jobs is predominantly in the services sector, HoReCa, construction and unskilled workers, which is not very attractive for highly educated refugees from Ukraine. However, some also accept jobs below their level of education.

2.2. Sectoral and territorial disparities

According to ANOFM data, most jobs occupied by refugees from Ukraine at the level national were in areas that do not emphasize on knowledge of Romanian language:

- **industry** : Manufacturing of automotive wiring harnesses, electronic components and subassemblies.
- **Construction**: Unskilled and skilled workers (masonry, painters).

- **HORECA:** Kitchen, cleaning and serving staff.
- **Retail/Commerce:** Commercial workers and merchandise handlers.
- **Services:** Maintenance and cleaning staff.

In terms of sectoral disparities, the data collected suggests that the overall supply of jobs is greater in areas requiring relatively low levels of qualification/training, while Ukrainian refugees tend to have a medium-high level of education. In terms of sectors, services and administration/office work are the most sought after by refugees from Ukraine (according to questionnaire responses), which partly corresponds to what is generally sought after on the Romanian labor market.

A press release issued by ANOFM on January 5, 2026, provides detailed information on the demand and supply of jobs for Ukrainian refugees from the beginning of the conflict until December 31, 2025, so we are reproducing most of it here:

"- 24,958 Ukrainian citizens registered in the records of territorial agencies subordinate to the National Employment Agency (ANOFM) to benefit from information, professional counseling and labor mediation services, during the period 24.02.2022-31.12.2025.

Most Ukrainian refugee citizens registered in the AJOFM/AMOFM Bucharest records were in the counties : Constanța (6,113), Bucharest (5,526), Ilfov (2,037), Maramureș (1,647), Brașov (1,666), Galați (1,089), Suceava (960), Iași (787), Cluj (763), Timiș (617), Sibiu (614), Vâlcea (571), etc.

– 3,411 Ukrainian citizens were placed on the labor market as a result of the employment services provided by the ANOFM.

The professions of employed Ukrainian citizens are: automotive wiring harness makers , automotive industry specialists , fabricators textile industry , construction workers, violinist, drivers , Horeca industry trades , sales representatives, fishermen, confectioners, teachers, car mechanics, IT, pastry chefs , waiters, packers, chefs, data processing operators, hairdressers, manicurists, beauticians, green space caretakers , cargo handlers, food industry workers, unskilled in the field of electricity, unskilled in road maintenance, textile industry chemist, car sales workers, machine operators , social workers, translators, aircraft industry workers, dental technician, engineer, architect manager, design engineer, unskilled worker in non-ferrous metal casting, ship engineer, sales manager, quality controller, plastic mass operators, social parent, floating crane operators, ship agent, photographer, administrative officials .

– 773 employers showed their willingness to employ Ukrainian citizens, declaring 6,424 job vacancies available for these people as well.

The fields of activity for the job vacancies declared by employers are: restaurants; manufacturing of electrical and electronic equipment for motor vehicles and for motor vehicle engines; hotels and other similar accommodation facilities; construction work of residential buildings and non-residential ; manufacture of other wearing apparel (excluding underwear); preparation of fibers and spinning of textile fibers; construction of ships and floating structures; manufacture of footwear; manufacture of furniture n.e.c .; manufacture of other electric and electronic wires and cables ; manufacture of rolling stock; business and management consultancy activities, etc.

In this regard, most jobs offered by employers are for: unskilled worker in assembling, mounting parts; manual packer; cook's assistant; unskilled worker in the garment industry; textile article assembler-assembler; kitchen worker (large dishwasher); unskilled worker in demolishing buildings, masonry linings, mosaic tiles, tiles, sandstone, parquet; waiter's assistant; unskilled worker in breaking and cutting construction materials; goods handler; welder; hotel maid; unskilled worker in packaging solid and semi-solid products, etc". (ANOFM, 2026)

The data from the questionnaire do not allow for a territorial analysis, given that all respondents were from the Bucharest-Ilfov region.

From ANOFM data, the distribution of employment by counties shows a concentration in more developed counties:

1. **Bucharest Municipality:** The largest volume of hiring, due to the diversity of the labor market.
2. **Bistrița-Năsăud:** An important employment hub in the industrial area.
3. **Arad and Timiș:** Border counties with a strong automotive industry.
4. **Constanța:** Numerous jobs in the tourism sector and port services.
5. **Cluj:** Employment in services and the components industry.

2.3 Anticipated trends

1) Employment rate growing slowly, with stagnation/plateau in unskilled/semi-skilled occupations

- From 2022 to 2025, the number of Ukrainian citizens registered with the National Employment Agency increased steadily, and effective employment was achieved mainly in unskilled occupations (assembly, manufacturing, cargo handling), respectively in HoReCa and construction; this mix suggests continued **slow growth , with a tendency to stabilize** (plateau) in segments with structural demand for unskilled labor.

- ANOFM press releases and materials show that the positions declared by employers accessible to refugees are mostly operational, which supports the hypothesis of maintaining the occupational distribution in favor of entry-level jobs.

2) Persistence of skills mismatch – many skilled refugees remain underemployed

- The lists of occupations in which refugees have taken up employment include both skilled trades (IT, engineering) and many unskilled positions; reports indicate a **mismatch** between the qualifications of some refugees and the nature of the jobs available, a phenomenon that will continue without targeted interventions (training, skills assessment, sectoral intermediation).
- The ANOFM and government guidelines emphasize the assessment/recognition of skills and training, signaling that the problem is institutionally known and that it is expected to **persist** if these measures are not intensified.

3) The language barrier remains a determining factor in moving to better-paid jobs

- ANOFM materials emphasize the provision of language and qualification courses; the fact that these services are maintained indicates a **continued demand** and that the level of Romanian is an essential bottleneck for vertical occupational mobility – a trend that will continue in the coming years.

4) Regional concentration in large counties and areas with opportunities – but with room for rebalancing

- The dynamics of registrations by county (Constanța, Bucharest/Ilfov, Brașov, Maramureș, etc.) shows a **concentration** in a few centers; this distribution is expected to be maintained, although AJOFM programs may facilitate relocation to areas with high staff shortages, especially in industry and construction.

5) Extending temporary protection until 2026 supports the stability of employment relationships in the short -to medium term

- The temporary protection established by GD 367/2022 (implementation of Decision (EU) 2022/382) provides access to work; administrative practice and specialized information indicate the extension of the protection mechanism, which will **stabilize** employment relationships in the short to medium term (contracts correlated with the validity of permits) -(OM. 1938/2024),
If temporary protection is not extended, it is expected that difficulties in accessing the labor market will increase.

6) The demand for ANOFM services (mediation, training, skills assessment) remains high

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- Because refugees have access to active measures **under the same conditions as Romanian citizens**, and employers can use public mediation **free of charge**, we estimate the **maintenance or moderate increase** in the volume of services used (scholarships, assisted interviews, courses).

7) Increasing the degree of access to general subsidies for employers (Law 76/2002) – especially articles 80 and 85

- Amid the staff shortage and territorial communications regarding budget availability, **increased interest** from employers is anticipated for the 2,250 lei/month schemes (graduates, unemployed people who are difficult to employ), where Ukrainian refugees meet the legal criteria (registered, target category).
- The legal basis (Law 76/2002 + GD 174/2002 Norms) remains stable and used in practice, supporting a trend of **normalizing** employment through standard instruments, not through ad-hoc schemes.

8) Access to regulated professions will remain a slow area

- Diploma recognition procedures and the exclusion of regulated professions from the "self-declaration" regime maintain significant **frictions**; without accelerated recognition mechanisms, **slow integration** in these segments is likely.

9) Intra-regional competition (secondary migration to other EU countries) may limit employment in Romania in skilled occupations

- **mobility** options within the EU and more attractive salary policies in other states may maintain an **outward flow** of qualified candidates; the anticipated effect: **capping** the share of qualified jobs filled in Romania.

10) Continuity and expansion of public policy interventions on the "Occupation" pillar (GEO 100/2022)

- The national plan of measures explicitly provides for strengthening the capacity of the public employment service, inventorying skills and increasing information/training – elements that indicate **the continuation** and possible **expansion** of interventions aimed at integration into the labor market.

3. Job supply analysis

3.1. Profile of respondents

The employment questionnaire was completed by 32 Ukrainian refugees in Romania. The questionnaire was administered in Ukrainian, and all data analyzed comes from respondents' self-reports.

The age structure indicates a predominant participation of working-age adults, half of whom are between 35 and 44 years old (16), 2 are between 25 and 34 years old, and the rest are over 45 years old. No responses were recorded from the 18–24 age group. The data thus indicates a concentration of respondents in the middle and mature age segments.

In terms of gender, the sample is predominantly female, with 3 of the 32 respondents being men and 29 women.

In terms of length of stay in Romania, most respondents report a long presence in the country. Most have been in Romania for more than 2 years (almost 85%), with only 4 having been in the country for less than 1 year.

In terms of marital status, 26 are married, 19 are with their spouses in Romania, and 7 are without them. One is single or widowed, and 4 are divorced/separated.

Table 1 Respondent profile (summary)

Characteristic	Categories	N	%
Gender	Women	29	90.6
	Men	3	9.4
Age group	25–34 years	2	6.25
	35–44 years	16	50
	45–54 years	10	31.25
	55–64 years	4	12.5
term STAY	≥2 years	27	84.4

The size of the households in most cases includes at least 3 people, representing approximately 78% of the respondents (2 households with 6 people and one with 7 people were also reported, respectively 25 people), only one person being alone and for another 6 there being 2 members in the household. Half of them are together with the child/children and the spouse, and 11 of the 32

(almost 35%) are only together with the child, only 1 being alone and one only with the parents or other relatives.

Regarding the presence of children with their parents, most have children over 10 years old, the average being approximately 2 children/respondent (a total of 57 children per 32 respondents). In 4 cases the children are at most 3 years old, which suggests that they were born after the war began in 2022.

Table 2 Number of children by age group

0–3 years	4
4–6 years	10
7–10 years	14
11–14 years	16
15–18 years old	13
Total	57

Health status

In terms of health, 13 of the respondents (40.6%) say they have health problems that limit their daily activities, and 11 (approx. 34%) have someone in their family who has health problems and needs daily help. These are factors that may limit the availability of refugees from Ukraine to become active in the Romanian labor market.

Among health problems, most mention mobility, vision, and mental health issues, and a few have multiple health problems.

The financial situation of the household

From the perspective of the financial situation of the households in which the respondents live, most have difficulty making ends meet from month to month (8 out of 26 who chose an answer), while another 8 say they are barely getting by. Only 5 respondents say they are doing well with their current income or that they have no financial problems. Another 5 say they cannot meet their basic needs. **The financial situation of refugees from Ukraine is predominantly precarious, exposing them to the risk of poverty.**

3.2 Skills, education , recognition

Education level

The respondents have a high level of education, with most having at least post-secondary and university education (bachelor's and master's degrees). A small number of respondents report lower levels of education (minimum high school – general or vocational).

The distribution of respondents according to their level of education is as follows:

- **ISCED 7 – master 's degree (MA or equivalent) : 12 respondents (37.5%)**
- **ISCED 3 – education secondary higher education (high school , general or professional) : 7 respondents (21.9%)**
- **ISCED 5–6 – studies undergraduate degree (BA or equivalent) : 5 respondents (15.6%)**
- **ISCED 4 – post- secondary non- tertiary education : 7 respondents (21.9%)**
- **ISCED 8 – studies doctoral (PhD or equivalent) : 1 respondent (3.1%)**

No answers were found for ISCED levels 0–2 (education primary or secondary lower).

Recognition of qualification

In order to more easily find a job in Romania, recognition of experience or qualifications is important because it would allow refugees from Ukraine to have a job closer to their potential, and, in principle, at a higher salary level.

Recognition of the qualification in the country was mentioned by only 1 respondent, while one had it partially recognized, and another had its recognition request rejected. Most did not request recognition of the qualification in Romania (84.4% of the total, respectively 27 respondents), which may suggest on the one hand the fear of receiving a negative response or that they do not plan to stay long-term and find a job in accordance with their studies.

The match between the level of education or experience and the job held

When asked about the match between the level of education or work experience and the current job, 6 of the 17 who have a job say that the work they do can be done without any qualifications, 6 state that the match is partial, and only one answers that the job is in line with the experience and education and only one that it is below their qualification level. Based on the answers to this question, it appears that 15 out of the total 32 respondents (46.9%) are not currently working.

Regarding **other household members** , in 10 cases one (9) or more (1) work, while 16 (50% of total respondents) respond that no one works in the household.

Attitudes towards employment

To measure attitudes towards the labour market, a series of statements were proposed to respondents, with responses ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree. Some of these capture the willingness to work, the perception of employment opportunities or the level of salary. Given the small number of respondents, the averages for agreement with each statement are presented, which we considered to better illustrate the dominant opinion.

Thus, the lowest degree of agreement (average 1.83 out of 4) is with the statements “I can easily find jobs that match my qualifications and experience” and “My current job provides sufficient income for living expenses”. With the first statement, only 2 respondents strongly agree, and with the second 3 agree. The two statements capture on the one hand the difficulty of finding a job that matches the qualifications and experience of refugees, and on the other hand the relatively low level of wages of those who have a job.

The desire to work in Romania is captured by the high score of agreement with the question “I would like to continue working in this country in the long term” (average 3.07, 75% agreeing with the statement), while the questions “Lack of language skills prevents me from finding a better job” (average 3.04) and “If I learn the language well, I will be able to work in a job that matches my qualifications and experience .” (average 2.83) capture the role of the language barrier in finding and keeping a better job or one that is closer to the level of qualification held by the respondents. For almost two thirds of the respondents, it is important to work in a job that matches their education (average being 2.74). It is worth noting the slightly lower score (2.31) of agreement with the statement “It is difficult to balance professional and family responsibilities (e.g., childcare)”, with 20 disagreeing and 9 agreeing. This distribution of responses shows that maintaining a balance between professional and family life is an important issue for some of the respondents, all of whom agreed with the statement having (young) children or dependents.

Table 3 Statements regarding employment - averages

Statement	Average
I can easily find jobs that match my qualifications and experience.	1.83
My lack of language skills prevents me from finding a better job	3.04
My current job provides enough income for living expenses	1.83
It is important for me to work in a job that matches my education.	2.74
It is difficult for me to balance work and family responsibilities (e.g. childcare).	2.31
I would like to continue working in this country long term.	3.07
If I learn the language well, I will be able to work in a job that matches my qualifications and experience .	2.83

Status on the labor market

In terms of their status on the labor market, respondents find themselves in various situations. Most of those who responded to the questionnaire are not working, while some (4) are self-employed/entrepreneurs or are working. Some say they are employed or self-employed, while others are unemployed and looking for work, on maternity leave, students, or doing odd jobs.

The distribution of respondents according to their current status on the labor market is as follows:

- **Unemployed , looking for a job : 6 respondents (18.8%)**
- **inactive status (with a disability , caregiver , unemployed who is not looking for a job) : 7 respondents (21.9%)**
- **Employees / entrepreneurs : 4 respondents (12.5%)**
- **Makes work occasional : 2 respondents (6.25%)**
- **In maternity leave : 3 respondents (9.4%)**
- **employees full -time : 5 respondents (15.6%)**
- **staff with part-time jobs: 4 respondents (12.5%)**
- **Students (part-time) : 1 respondent (3.1%)**

From those who work, 10 work with contract (31.3% of total respondents), and 5 without contract, which makes them vulnerable and THEM expose exploitation risk or abuse.

4. Skills gap analysis

The integration of Ukrainian refugees into the labour market in EU Member States – including Romania – is carried out under the European Directive on Temporary Protection, a mechanism that ensures rapid access to rights (residence, work, education, services) and which was extended, following Council decisions and EPRS analysis, until 4 March 2026. This framework reduces legal barriers to entry into the labour market, but does not eliminate skills mismatches and emerging deficits in the digital and green spheres (EPRS, 2024).

4.1. Inconsistency between refugees’ qualification and labor market needs

Overstaffing and underutilization of human capital

Operational evidence from Romania shows a gradual inclusion in employment services, but the

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transition to jobs matching qualifications is slowed down by language and procedural barriers. High volumes of counseling/mediation (tens of thousands of people informed in 2023; thousands connected to courses/services) indicate high demand for job matching and suggest that some of the employment initially takes place in occupations below the level of qualification (a classic sign of skills mismatch in the early stages of integration). This interpretation is supported by the interventions of NGOs with a portfolio of vocational training + language + legal counseling, designed precisely to avoid stagnation in precarious jobs—e.g., the holistic JRS model (Bucharest, Constanța, Galați, Brașov, Mediaș), which reports both progress and persistent challenges: language barriers, recognition of qualifications, short-term contracts (UNHCR, 2023; JRS Europe, 2026).

Recognition of qualifications and regulated professions

The AIDA/ECRE report (Romania update, 2023) highlights the specific regulatory and practical aspects of access to work and recognition of qualifications, emphasizing that regulated professions (e.g., health, education) involve procedures and standards that can delay entry into positions commensurate with training, favoring the temporary underutilization of human capital. Similar observations appear in UNHCR operational coordination documents (2023), which note the crucial role of legal advice and referrals to specialized services in unblocking career paths. [\[asylumineurope.org\]](https://asylumineurope.org) [\[data.unhcr.org\]](https://data.unhcr.org)

The linguistic dimension and "contextual" skills

In Romania, Romanian language courses are widely used as a tool to reduce mismatches: in 2024, 9,286 people were supported with livelihoods, employment services, and language courses, and UNHCR documents highlight the role of these services for employability and occupational matching. The same direction is observed in the IOM and AIDRom programs, which include orientation, language, vouchers, and facilitating access to public services, a sign that the integration of "contextual" skills (language, procedures, organizational culture) remains a prerequisite for entry into skilled jobs (UNHCR, 2023; AIDRom, 2024).

Family factors and readiness for (re)entry

In terms of children's education, UNESCO shows that the measures taken in 2023 (linking access to support with school enrollment) led to rapid increases in enrollment, which indirectly eased time constraints on parents (mainly mothers), facilitating participation in language/upskilling courses and the search for suitable employment (UNESCO, 2024).

4.2. The deficit of digital and green skills

The digital divide—a cross-cutting barrier to occupational mobility

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Programmatic evidence from Romania shows that organizations with national coverage have begun to integrate digital components into livelihood programs, but demand exceeds supply: JRS Romania, for example, reports expanding digital literacy and IT courses to overcome barriers to accessing more stable jobs, but notes that digital proficiency remains uneven, especially for adults re-entering the labor market after periods of interruption. At the same time, multi-sector profiling (MSNA) confirms that livelihoods/employment are among the priorities of refugee households, and access to digital tools (recruitment platforms, online courses, digitized administrative procedures) is becoming an operational determinant of integration. [jrseurope.org], [migrationcenter.ro]

"Green" skills – the emergence of an alignment gap

Program documents in Romania (UNHCR, IOM, AIDRom, World Vision) focus on language, counseling, legal support, MHPSS, education, and general vocational training; Explicit references to "green" curricula (energy efficiency, waste management, environmental standards) are rarer, suggesting a gap in supply compared to the dynamics of the green transition. There is a risk that refugees will remain concentrated in traditional segments of the labor market if "green" upskilling is not integrated into local integration programs. [reliefweb.int], [romania.iom.int], [<http://www.aidrom.ro/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/AIDRom-Annual-Report-2024-EN.pdf>], [<http://www.aidrom.ro/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/AIDRom-Annual-Report-2024-EN.pdf-Ann...rt-2024-EN>], [wvi.org]

The intersection of "digital– green "

From the perspective of implementation in Romania, many green occupational pathways (e.g., energy efficiency maintenance, compliance reporting, sustainable logistics) involve the use of applications, monitoring, and digital reporting. Without functional digital literacy, beneficiaries remain less employable in such roles. JRS digital literacy programs and vocational training initiatives reported by partners (UNHCR RRP) show both progress and the need to scale up to digital modules applied to occupational niches (including "green" ones). [jrseurope.org], [reliefweb.int]

Conclusions and implications for policy/programming in Romania

- (1) Reducing mismatches requires strengthening qualification recognition pathways and expanding language courses with an occupational component (Romanian for work), using existing networks (UNHCR, IOM, AIDRom, JRS, World Vision).
- (2) The digital divide can be mitigated through micro-certifications and short literacy/digital application modules integrated into employment packages—an approach already initiated by JRS, but with potential for expansion at the inter-agency level.

(3) The green skills gap calls for the piloting of "green" curricula (energy efficiency, waste management, EU environmental standards) co-developed with local employers and linked to existing legal/educational counseling; operational documents indicate room for growth for such components.

(4) Supporting parental participation depends on maintaining access to education for children; accelerating enrolment (after 2023) has been a stimulus for adults' willingness to upskill/engage—it is important that this effect be preserved in the medium term. [reliefweb.int], [romania.iom.int], [<http://www.aidrom.ro/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/AIDRom-Annual-Report-2024-EN.pdf>], [<http://www.aidrom.ro/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/AIDRom-Annual-Report-2024-EN.pdf-Ann...rt-2024-EN>], [jrseurope.org], [wvi.org] [jrseurope.org] [reliefweb.int], [romania.iom.int], [<http://www.aidrom.ro/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/AIDRom-Annual-Report-2024-EN.pdf>] [unesco.org]

5. Competitive analysis

5.1. Employers, levels of wage and benefits

Employer profile and dominant sectors. The integration of Ukrainian refugees in Romania is mainly supported by employers in services and sales, industry/processing and machine operation, cleaning/auxiliary services, with occasional presence in education and administration – a pattern confirmed by the CSCM assessment (2023) and the IOM report (2024), which indicate these occupational families as the most common in employment. In addition, a quantitative study for Romania shows that individual factors (e.g., gender, marital status, and, especially, proficiency in Romanian) influence the likelihood of employment, suggesting that sectors with initially low language requirements absorb the first entrants into the market (Teodorescu, Petre, & Aivaz, 2025).

The (qualitative) integration analysis for the period 2022–2024 reinforces this sectoral distribution and contextualizes the role of the ANOFM in mediating employment (Mészáros, 2024).

Public mediation and demand dynamics. By October 2023, ANOFM reported 19,691 registered Ukrainian refugees and 2,238 mediated hires, with 538 companies posting 5,296 dedicated jobs—indicating concentrated demand in segments with low barriers to entry (Cedefop/ReferNet Romania, Nov. 21, 2023). This is consistent with the IOM 2023–2024 profiles, which show active labor force participation of around 47–56% (in the active sub-sample), with occupational distributions dominated by basic services and machine operation. [unesco.org],

Salary levels. In local markets, entry-level wages for refugees are often close to the minimum wage or in the bottom third of the distribution; market estimates indicate ~€900–1,200/month, with seasonal peaks of up to ~€1,500 in industry/manufacturing (amounts reported by recruitment platforms and regional economic press), and employment patterns frequently remain fixed-term or flexible. Although these values favor rapid employment, literature and quantitative data point to

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the risk of underemployment (overqualification) when formal skills are not utilized in appropriate positions (Teodorescu et al., 2025; IOM, 2024; KPMG, 2023).

Non-wage benefits -as a competitive advantage. In the competition for labour, employers differentiate their offer through provided accommodation and transport , meal vouchers and, occasionally, childcare support – benefits frequently mentioned in market assessments and confirmed in interviews with mediators/NGOs (CSCM; specialised media reports). However, these benefits do not fully compensate for the modest salary levels , which keeps competition high for better-paid positions, where barriers (language, recognition of qualifications) intervene. Academic analyses of the institutional framework (Mészáros, 2024) and recognition/training barriers (Gafiuc, 2024) support this interpretation. [eur-lex.europa.eu], [assets.kpmg.com]

5.2. Existing training channels

Public channels – standardization and coverage . ANOFM offers career counselling , Romanian language courses, vocational training and assessment of informally acquired skills – key infrastructure for the transition from entry-level jobs to more stable positions (Cedefop/ReferNet, 2023). In practice, the capacity of these services must be put in relation to IOM data: many active people reach the market through personal networks (37%), recruitment agencies (26%) or social media/job -portals. (~25% cumulative), which suggests the need for interoperability between public and private/digital channels (IOM DTM, Q2 2024). At the academic level, studies on access to education and training in Romania (Mareci et al., 2023) show that institutional barriers (language, documents, resources) affect participation, with indirect effects on employability . [migrationcenter.ro]

Non-governmental channels – occupational flexibility and adaptation . JRS Romania integrates vocational training (IT, HORECA/services, cleaning, electricians) with Romanian language courses , digital literacy and employer links , a model appreciated for adapting to local demand (JRS Europe/JRS Romania, 2026). IOM Romania (InterACT; BRIDGE) operates a network of integration centres (guidance, language, counselling, vouchers) with the objective of creating coherent livelihood pathways . AIDRom offers practically oriented Romanian language courses and socio-professional integration activities -; these services act as a “springboard” to technical courses or job matching. From an academic perspective, culturally responsive and trauma -informed pedagogies are recommended to make Romanian language courses for refugees more efficient (Pentón Herrera, 2023), and quantitative studies/surveys show educational conditionalities with an impact on insertion (Porumbescu, 2023).

Digital platforms and online courses – “hybrid” intermediation . The ecosystem includes platforms that offer job -matching , online courses and counselling (e.g. Jobs4Ukraine listed by UNHCR Romania), but effective access depends on functional digital skills , which segments the competition between candidates. Correspondingly, studies on access to education/training signal

differences in participation generated by digital resources and educational support , with implications for the chances of occupational transition (Coșciug et al, 2023).

Conclusions

High competition in low-skilled segments, where employers offer entry-level salaries and benefits packages (accommodation/transport/vouchers), and rapid entry is facilitated by low language requirements; training efforts (language + skills) are decisive for upward mobility. Positions matching qualifications remain relatively few without recognition of diplomas and specific training; institutional policies and mechanisms influence the speed of transition (Mészáros, 2024; Gafiuc, 2024). Training channels are fragmented: public (standardized but with limited coverage) vs. NGOs (flexible but project-dependent). The integration of culturally responsive and trauma-informed pedagogies into Romanian language courses can increase retention and training outcomes (Pentón Herrera, 2023), and more coherent educational support improves employability (Mareci et al., 2023; Porumbescu, 2023, pp. 18–27).

6. Barriers in labor market access

The analysis of barriers to access is based on the difficulties reported by respondents in both finding a job (Q17) and keeping their job (Q18). Respondents were able to rate the importance of each barrier on a 10-point scale (1=not at all, 10=to a very large extent) for each of the two situations (accessing and maintaining/retaining a job).

For the summary analysis, and taking into account the small number of respondents, we included all barriers in a single table reporting the average values.

Table 4 Main barriers to accessing and maintaining a job

Barrier	Average Access	Average Maintaining
Language barrier	7.9	8.1
Lack of recognition of qualifications	6.8	7.0
Lack of appropriate qualifications	6.1	7.3
Lack of digital/IT skills	5.6	6.0
Lack of work experience in this country	6.4	7.0
Lack of childcare services	6.5	7.0
Health problems or disabilities	5.9	5.9
Legal work restrictions	4.6	5.8
Discrimination (e.g. nationality, gender, age)	5.3	6.1

Barrier	Average Access	Average Maintaining
Precarious working conditions (low wages, long working hours, instability)	7.4	7.6
Difficulties with transportation/distance to work	6.8	7.1
Lack of available jobs	6.9	7.1
Lack of support (from organizations, employment services, employers)	6.2	6.4
Other	5.1	4.7

Note: The averages were calculated based on valid responses to questions regarding the assessment of the importance of each barrier in accessing and keeping a job, on a scale from 1=not at all, to 10=to a very great extent. The higher the average, the more important the respective barrier is considered. Values in Bold are the highest/lowest.

Aggregate data shows that language barriers are perceived as the most important, both for accessing a job and for keeping it (averages of 7.9 and 8.1 out of 10 points, respectively). Working conditions poor (low wages, long working hours, instability) is the second most important barrier to finding a job. The lack of jobs (average 6.9) is in 3rd place among the barriers to accessing a job, suggesting that refugees from Ukraine, despite the apparent availability of jobs in the Bucharest-Ilfov area in general, face difficulties in accessing the labor market. As revealed by the analysis of job demand and supply, there is a discrepancy between the available jobs and the qualifications held by refugees from Ukraine, so they have lower chances of finding jobs in accordance with their training. On the other hand, the language barrier is an important one, especially in occupations that require an advanced level of knowledge of Romanian or English.

Lack of recognition of qualifications and difficulties with transportation are rated with an average score of 6.8 out of 10, placing them in the top 5 access difficulties. Although steps have been taken to facilitate the recognition of qualifications of Ukrainian refugees in Romania, this is still perceived as a significant barrier, requiring an investment of time and resources. Barriers considered to be of lesser importance include legal restrictions on work and discrimination.

A global analysis of the barriers is presented below:

1. Critical Barriers (Scores > 7.5)

- **Language (Access 7.9 / Maintenance 8.1):** This is the most severe obstacle. The increase in the maintenance score suggests that while a refugee can obtain a basic job without Romanian, integrating into a team, understanding complex instructions, and getting promoted are nearly impossible without language skills.

- **Precarious working conditions (Access 7.4 / Maintenance 7.6):** Low wages and long hours are major barriers. Refugees accept jobs below their level out of necessity, but instability and fatigue quickly lead to job abandonment.

2. Structural and Logistical Barriers (Scores 6.5 – 7.3)

- **Lack of appropriate qualifications (Retention 7.3):** There is a gap between the skills held and the local market requirements. This becomes an acute retention issue when the employer notices a lack of specific skills required for the job.
- **Recognition of qualifications and local experience (Scores 6.8 – 7.0):** The absence of a professional history in Romania and the bureaucracy of diplomas makes access to skilled positions difficult, forcing refugees into unskilled sectors.
- **Childcare and Transportation (Scores 6.5 – 7.1):** These are infrastructure barriers. Without an accessible childcare system and efficient transportation, maintaining a stable work schedule is extremely difficult for refugee mothers.

3. Moderate Impact Barriers (Scores 5.5 – 6.4)

- **Discrimination (Retention 6.1):** Although the score is lower at hiring (5.3), the risk of discrimination increases with the passage of time within the team, affecting retention.
- **Digital skills and institutional support (Scores 5.6 – 6.4):** These are considered secondary barriers, indicating that the efforts of support organizations and digitalization have managed to partially mitigate these risks in recent years.

4. Low Impact Barriers

- **Legal restrictions (4.6 / 5.8):** Romania's legal framework (Temporary Protection) is considered quite permissive, being the least restrictive barrier in the access phase. However, the uncertainty of the extension of these rights increases the maintenance score (5.8).

7. Employment support mechanisms

The analysis of support schemes is based on information reported by respondents on the **actual support received** in the field of employment and on **current needs and suggestions** regarding the necessary support.

7.1 . Employment services accessed

The analysis of the data provided in the questionnaire highlights a major dependence of Ukrainian refugees on the non-governmental sector and a critical deficiency in institutionalized support services. Of course, given the small number of respondents, these data must be viewed with caution and do not allow generalization to all refugees in Ukraine or all forms of support provided to them.

Table 5 Types of aid received and providers

	Public Employment Service (AJOFM) % (n)	NGO / non-profit organization % (n)	Training center / school / university % (n)	Employer % (n)	Friends / family / informal network % (n)	Other % (n)	Did not receive support % (n)
Professional training/development	3.12 (1)	15.62 (5)	-	9.37 (3)	-	6.25 (2)	59.37 (19)
Career counseling/guidance	6.25 (2)	40.62 (13)	-	3.12 (1)	6.25 (2)	3.12 (1)	40.62 (13)
Professional placement	6.25 (2)	18.75 (6)	-	3.12 (1)	18.75 (6)	3.12 (1)	50 ((16)
Recognition of qualifications	3.12 (1)	6.25 (2)	-	3.12 (1)	6.25 (2)	3.12 (1)	78.12 (25)
Foreign language courses	3.12 (1)	50 ((16)	6.25 (2)	-	6.25 (2)	12.5 (4)	21.87 (7)
Something else	6.25 (2)	34.37 (11)	9.37 (3)	-	6.25 (2)	9.37 (3)	34.37 (11)

Next, the responses in the table above are analyzed according to the type of provider (public, non-governmental, employers) and then unmet needs are identified, starting from the premise that these are captured by the "did not receive" option in the table.

7.2. Services of public employment agencies (AJOFM / ANOFM)

The ANOFM offers registered Ukrainian citizens various free services: “professional information and counseling, job mediation, vocational training, EURES assistance services” (ANOFM, 2026).

The involvement of state public institutions in the integration process is **marginal**, recording extremely low participation rates:

- **Counseling and Placement:** Only **6.25% (2 responses)** of refugees turned to AJOFM for professional guidance or placement on the labor market.
- **Training and Recognition:** The impact is even lower in the area of qualification courses or diploma equivalency, with a percentage of only **3.12% (1 response)** .

Public service is not the first option for refugees, indicating either a lack of information or bureaucratic barriers that discourage accessing AJOFM.

7.3. NGO and training interventions

The non-profit sector is **the main pillar** of support, almost entirely replacing the absence of state services:

- **Foreign language courses:** It is the most successful service, with **50% (16 responses)** of refugees benefiting from NGO support.
- **Career counseling:** A significant percentage of **40.62% (13 responses)** rely on non-profit organizations for career guidance.
- **Training and Placement:** NGOs also dominate these segments (15.62% and 18.75%, respectively), exceeding the capacity of informal networks (friends/family).
- **Formal education:** Training centers and universities have a minimal presence, being active only in the area of foreign language courses (6.25%) and "other" services (9.37%).

In the open-ended responses to the question regarding other forms of support received, refugees (17 who wrote about such other initiatives) predominantly referred to the activities of NGOs.

The main **themes identified** are the following:

Employment support

CV writing assistance (in Romanian and English)

Providing **job listings**

Participation in **job fairs** (e.g. JRS, Jobs4Ukraine)

Information on **labor rights** and their protection

Education and vocational training

Foreign language courses (Romanian, English) for adults and children

Entrepreneurial training

Personal development courses for children

Non-formal educational activities

Educational support for children

Access to **school education** (including Ukrainian curriculum)

Additional online lessons

Integration of children in **schools in Romania**

Educational support through dedicated centers (e.g. "Ostrivets" Center)

Legal assistance and information

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Legal advice

Information on legal and administrative rights
Support in understanding the legal framework in Romania

Medical and psychological support

Healthcare

Psychological counseling

Support for family emotional well-being

Social and community support

Help received from:

International and national organizations (JRS, IOM, AIDRom, World Vision, Red Cross, Concordia)

Family and relatives from Ukraine

Informal networks (internet friends)

Indirect material support (e.g. vouchers)

Support for integration and autonomy

Meetings about starting a business

Strengthening skills for socio-economic integration

Increasing the autonomy of refugee families

Gratitude and positive evaluation of support

Explicit expressions of **gratitude and appreciation** to supporting organizations

Positive evaluations of the impact of interventions on families and children

7.4. Employer initiatives

Direct involvement of employers in the training and integration of the refugee workforce is **very weak** :

- **Professional training:** Only **9.37% (3 responses)** of employers offer on-the-job training.
- **Integration:** Companies do not offer language courses and are symbolically involved in qualification recognition or placement processes (3.12%).

Employers seem to adopt a passive position, waiting for ready-made candidates, instead of investing in their adaptation.

7.5. Unmet needs

This is the most alarming category, indicating a massive deficit in assistance at key points:

- **Recognition of qualifications: 78.12% (25 responses)** of refugees did not receive any assistance. This is the biggest systemic barrier, blocking specialists in unskilled jobs.
- **Professional training: 59.37% (19 responses)** were left without support for retraining.
- **Professional placement: Half of the sample (50%)** had to find a job on their own or turn to acquaintances, without specialized assistance.

In conclusion, while NGOs manage to partially cover the need for communication (Romanian language) and counseling, there is a **support gap** in the area of official certification of skills and in the direct involvement of the state and private companies.

7.6 . Support needs for engagement

Question Q19, “What type of support would help you most?”, explicitly assessed the level of need for different types of employment-related support on a scale from “not at all necessary” to “extremely necessary”. The responses indicate high needs in several areas, particularly with regard to: Language courses (average 4.13), followed by Training or retraining (3.75) and Assistance in finding a job (3.69). The lowest scores are given for "Legal advice (contracts, rights, procedures)" (3.25) and "Mediation with the employer" (3.16).

Table 6 Type of support received - averages

Support type necessary	Average
Translation/interpretation services	3.41
Legal advice (contracts, rights, procedures)	3.25
Mediation with the employer	3.16
Information services (where to find a job , procedures)	3.47
Social Assistance/ mentoring	3.31
Foreign Language courses	4.13
Assistance in finding a job	3.69
Recognition of qualifications	3.44
Childcare assistance	3.41
Training or retraining	3.75
Professional counseling	3.41

Note: Averages are calculated on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 – Not at all necessary, 2 – Slightly necessary, 3 – Moderately necessary, 4 – Very necessary, 5 – Extremely necessary) to the

question “What type of support would help you the most?” Higher average scores indicate a greater need for support.

By globally analyzing the list of needs expressed by respondents, we can group them into 3 categories, depending on the degree of urgency:

1. Priority Needs (Score > 3.70) — "Very necessary"

- Foreign language courses (4.13): This is by far the most critical need. Exceeding the 4.0 threshold indicates that the language barrier is perceived as the main obstacle blocking all other integration opportunities.
- Training or retraining (3.75): Refugees feel an acute need to adapt their skills to the specific requirements of the Romanian market or to learn new jobs that would allow them greater financial stability.

2. Facilitation and Access Needs (Score 3.40 – 3.69) — "High Need"

- Assistance in finding a job (3.69): There is a high demand for active mediation services (not just listings with ads, but concrete support in the recruitment process).
- Information Services (3.47): Indication that many refugees still face a lack of clarity regarding legal procedures and sources of secure employment.
- Recognition of qualifications (3.44): An essential technical need for specialists (doctors, teachers, engineers) to avoid unskilled work.
- Translation Services, Childcare and Career Counseling (all at 3.41): These three needs have identical scores, highlighting a package of logistical and psychological support necessary to be able to work (translation for documents/interviews, child safety and career guidance).

3. Social and Legal Support Needs (Score 3.16 – 3.31) — "Moderately necessary"

- Social assistance / mentoring (3.31): The need to have a support person (mentor) to facilitate adjustment to the living and working environment in Romania.
- Legal Advice (3.25): The importance of understanding legal rights, employment contracts, and procedures for protecting against abuse.
- Mediation with the employer (3.16): Although it has the lowest score on the list, it remains an above-average need, indicating the need for an arbitrator or facilitator in the direct workplace relationship to prevent conflicts or misunderstandings.

Overall, the most important need is Education (language and skills), followed closely by Integration Logistics (finding a job, childcare and diploma bureaucracy). All indicators above 3.0 show that the refugee population requires complex support, not just isolated measures.

8. SWOT analysis of the labor market

Strengths

- Favorable legislative framework: Refugees benefit from temporary protection, which gives them the right to work without special employment permits, significantly reducing administrative barriers for employers and refugees.
- Eligibility for active employment measures. Ukrainian refugees registered with territorial employment agencies benefit from the same services and active measures as Romanian citizens (information, counseling, mediation, vocational training).
- Availability of a significant number of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. The Romanian labor market is characterized by structural labor shortages, particularly in construction, manufacturing, HoReCa, and services, areas that are accessible to refugees.
- Diversified professional experience and skills of refugees. Some Ukrainian citizens have technical, IT, engineering, education, or vocational qualifications, representing valuable potential for the labor market.
- Willingness to integrate: There is a strong desire among the community to become financially self-sufficient.

Weaknesses

- Language barrier. Lack of Romanian language skills limits refugees' access to skilled jobs and reduces occupational mobility, affecting long-term integration.
- Mismatch between qualifications and job opportunities. Most available jobs are for unskilled workers, while some refugees have higher qualifications, leading to underemployment.
- Difficult recognition of qualifications for regulated professions. Access to the labor market for regulated professions (doctors, nurses, architects, etc.) requires complex procedures for the recognition of diplomas, which delays professional integration.
- Limited territorial mobility. The concentration of refugees in certain counties reduces their ability to access employment opportunities in other regions of the country where there is a labor shortage.
- Care responsibilities: Most refugees are women with children, which limits their working hours or availability for certain jobs.

Opportunities

- Integration of refugees in sectors with chronic staff shortages. Romania can use the potential of the Ukrainian workforce to fill the shortage in construction, industry, agriculture, transport, and services.

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- Access to European funding and programs dedicated to inclusion. The implementation of the National Action Plan for the Protection and Inclusion of Displaced Persons from Ukraine allows for the development of projects financed by European and international funds. [legislatie.just.ro]
- Expansion of vocational training programs and language courses. The development of Romanian language and vocational training courses can increase the employment rate and the quality of integration into the labor market.
- Incentives for employers through existing measures under Law No. 76/2002. Employers can be further motivated to hire eligible refugees through existing subsidies and general facilities (Articles 80 and 85).
- Digitization and teleworking: **Access to global platforms allows Ukrainian specialists to work remotely for international companies in Romania.**

Threats

- Temporary nature of protection granted: Temporary protection status may make employers reluctant to invest in training and retaining refugee staff in the long term.
- Risk of precariousness and underemployment: Accepting jobs below one's skill level can lead to professional discouragement and high labor turnover.
- Unstable socio-economic conditions and pressure on public services: Rising living costs and pressure on local public services can affect the sustainability of labor market integration.
- Possible negative perceptions or risks of discrimination: Refugee integration can be influenced by negative social attitudes or perceived competition in the labor market, especially in areas with high unemployment.
- Depletion of financial resources: Declining direct government support forces people to accept jobs below their skill level (de-skilling).
- Labor exploitation: Risk of working "off the books" or in precarious conditions due to the immediate need for income.
- Geopolitical instability: Uncertainty about the duration of the conflict makes long-term career planning in Romania difficult.

9. Analysis of policy framework and regulation

This section analyzes the legislative and public policy framework relevant to the access to the labor market of beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine in Romania. The analysis is based on national legislative documents, as well as recent operational reports and updates from UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and partner organizations, including JRS Romania.

7.1 Legislation regarding employment

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The applicable legislation includes:

- Government Decision No. 367/2022 on temporary protection (official/consolidated text)
- GEO No. 20/2022 (support measures; employment exemptions)
- GEO No. 194/2002 (foreigners' regime - single work/residence permit)
- OG No. 25/2014 (registration of foreigners) — mentioned by IGI in correlation with GEO 20/2022 [igi.mai.gov.ro]
- Law No. 76/2002 (active measures and subsidies), ANOFM – consolidated form
- Government Decree No. 174/2002 (Methodological Norms of Law 76/2002) — ANOFM procedural references (e.g. art. 52)
- GEO No. 100/2022 (National Plan of Measures – chapter "Occupation")
- Law No. 200/2004 (regulated professions/recognition of qualifications)
- MMSS Order No. 301/2022 (procedure and declaration model)

7.2 Framework regarding migration

In the case of displaced persons from Ukraine, most of them are legally classified as **beneficiaries of temporary protection**, in accordance with **Directive 2001/55/EC of the Council of the European Union** and the implementing decisions adopted at the European Union level since March 2022. Temporary protection provides a legal residence regime and access to fundamental rights, without going through the individual asylum procedure (UNHCR, 2025).

7.3 Incentives for engagement of Ukrainian refugees / migrants

Incentives and facilities for the employment of Ukrainian refugees/ migrants in Romania

1. Access to active employment measures

Ukrainian citizens from the armed conflict zone, registered with the territorial employment agencies, can benefit from employment stimulation measures under the same conditions as Romanian citizens, in compliance with the legal provisions in force.

These measures apply to employers who employ people in this category.

2. Employment without a work permit

A major administrative incentive is the elimination of the obligation to obtain an employment permit, which significantly reduces bureaucracy for employers.

Ukrainian citizens:

- they can be employed without an employment permit;
- they can work on the basis of an individual employment contract concluded in accordance with Romanian legislation;
- they can carry out salaried or independent activities, under the terms of the law.

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3. Access to general subsidies granted to employers (Law no. 76/2002)

Employers who employ Ukrainian citizens may benefit, as appropriate, from the subsidies provided for by Law No. 76/2002, if the legal conditions are met (registration of the person with the AJOFM, maintenance of the employment relationship, etc.).

These subsidies may include:

- subsidies for employing the unemployed;
- incentives for employing people from vulnerable categories;
- facilities for employing people over 45 years of age or single parents (if the situation specifically applies to the employed person).

There is no subsidy scheme exclusively dedicated to Ukrainian refugees, but they are eligible for existing general schemes.

4. Possibility of employment based on a sworn statement

For Ukrainian citizens who do not have professional qualification documents, employment is possible on the basis of:

- a sworn statement regarding the fulfillment of the necessary competencies;
- for a period of 12 months, with the possibility of extension, except for regulated professions.

This measure facilitates rapid access to employment and reduces risks for employers.

5. Covering/refunding of professional training services

Registered Ukrainian citizens can benefit from:

- qualification/requalification courses;
- assessment and recognition of skills acquired in non- formal or informal contexts.

Employers benefit indirectly through:

- adapting workers' skills to job requirements;
- reducing initial training costs.

6. Free access to mediation and recruitment services through ANOFM

Employers can use ANOFM services for free, including:

- mediation on job vacancies;
- personnel selection;
- organizing scholarships dedicated to refugees.

This facility reduces recruitment costs and time to fill vacancies.

7. Social protection and insurance

Employed Ukrainian citizens benefit from:

- protection within the social security system;
- health and unemployment insurance;
- salary rights and working conditions equal to those of Romanian citizens.

10. Conclusions - Part I

The integration of refugees from Ukraine into the Romanian labor market is supported by a favorable legal framework and the structural need for labor, but the effectiveness of this integration depends on the adaptation of skills, overcoming the language barrier, and the development of active employment policies geared toward sustainable integration. Incentives for the employment of Ukrainian refugees/migrants in Romania consist mainly of administrative facilities, equal access to active employment measures, and integration into existing systems, without the establishment of a separate subsidy scheme. The focus is on simplifying access to work, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and supporting sustainable integration into the labor market. While NGOs manage to partially cover the need for communication (Romanian language) and counseling, there is a gap in support in the area of official certification of skills and in the direct involvement of the state and private companies in facilitating access to employment.

An analysis of the labor market for Ukrainian refugees in Romania shows that their access to employment is limited by individual and structural factors.

The labor market for Ukrainian refugees in Romania in 2026 reflects a transition from emergency assistance to long-term economic integration.

PART II - GOOD PRACTICES

11. Introduction

The second part of the report aims to identify and document **good practices in supporting access to the labour market** among Ukrainian refugees in Romania, in accordance with the requirements of WP3 – Labour Market Analysis and Identification of Good Practices. The analysis focuses on examples where the support received contributed to access to the labour market, as well as to improving the living standards of the beneficiaries.

The data sources for this section are **three in-depth qualitative interviews**, conducted by JRS Romania in Romanian or English, with representatives of organizations that have implemented projects aimed at employing refugees from Ukraine .

The interviews are with representative you have:

- Jobs4Ukraine, made on 08/10/2025
- JRS Romania, carried out on 09/10/2025
- Romanian Red Cross, made on 10/10/2025

11.1 Limitations of the analysis of good practices

The analysis of good practices presented in this section is based on a limited number of three in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with representatives of three non-governmental organizations that agreed to be interviewed. These are not representative of all public or private interventions aimed at employing Ukrainian refugees in Romania. The good practices should not be interpreted as universally applicable solutions, but as illustrative examples of mechanisms that have worked in specific contexts.

The analysis does not seek to comparatively evaluate the effectiveness of different programs or interventions and does not include cost-benefit analyses or the perspectives of beneficiaries.

Despite these limitations, the analysis provides relevant exploratory information, complementing the quantitative data and institutional analysis in Part I of the report and contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of access to the labor market for Ukrainian refugees in Romania.

12. Good practice 1 – integrated community model of activation and professional insertion, Jobs4Ukraine, Voyager Project association

Profile

The Voyager Project Association is a non-governmental organization established in 2022, immediately after the outbreak of the armed conflict in Ukraine. The organization's **main mission** is to provide **integrated social services in the field of employment and education** for people from vulnerable groups, with an initial focus on Ukrainian refugees and, subsequently, on other categories with limited access to the labor market.

Currently, the Voyager Project Association has a **team of 13 employees with employment contracts**, who ensure the implementation of programs and the delivery of specialized services. The organization's main project, launched in 2022, is "**Jobs for Ukraine**", a program dedicated *Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Social Fund Agency. Neither the European Union nor the Granting Authority can be held responsible for them.*



to supporting Ukrainian refugees in accessing the Romanian labor market. This year, the organization expanded its area of intervention by launching the **"Jobs for All" project** , implemented in partnership with **the Association for Fair Employment** , addressed to people with disabilities.

groups -and ways of involvement

The identification and involvement of -target groups is based on a **participatory approach** , with the organization integrating **counselors from the Ukrainian refugee community** , who have professional expertise and good connections to the community, into the team. These counselors provide the first point of contact with beneficiaries, contribute to the collection and updating of data (age, gender, disability) and facilitate communication through channels frequently used by the community, such as **Telegram groups** .

Services offered

The association offers an extensive range of services for professional integration:

- **Digital recruitment platform** (made with the support of Jobful), free for employers and candidates, with employer verification process and ongoing support in use;
- **Individual counseling** for writing a CV -, cover letter, preparing for interviews and support for recognition of studies;
- **match -making** between candidates and employers;
- **Employment events** : thematic webinars, workshops -(including for entrepreneurship), annual job fair, "speed dating" sessions with employers;
- **Participation in job fairs** organized by institutions and partners (ANOFM, Hipo), with on-site counseling and translation;
- **Foreign language courses** (English and Romanian) and access to approximately **80 online courses** in fields such as IT, communication or interview preparation;
- **Digital resource center** with guides for candidates and employers regarding labor rights and the social system in Romania.

Description of good practice

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The good practice consists of an **integrated community model of activation and professional insertion**, based on the direct involvement of refugee community members, personalized counseling, digital recruitment tools and active mediation with employers.

Key elements of the model:

- **Peer-to-peer approach** : Counselors from the Ukrainian refugee community are directly involved in identifying and supporting beneficiaries, ensuring trust, cultural accessibility, and effective communication.
- **Individualized counseling**: Each beneficiary receives support tailored to their needs – CV writing, interview preparation, career guidance, recognition of studies or clarification of their professional path.
- **Digital recruitment platform**: A free online platform for candidates and employers, with employer verification and constant support, facilitates job application in a safe and accessible environment.
- **Active mediation and matchmaking** : Personalized job recommendations, constant communication with employers, and support for candidates throughout the selection process.
- **Direct connection to the labor market**: Organizing job fairs, speed dating sessions and participating in recruitment events, with translation and on-site training.
- **Skills development**: Foreign language courses (Romanian and English), access to online qualification courses and -thematic workshops (job search, use of digital platforms, entrepreneurship).
- **Informational support**: Resource center with practical guides for candidates and employers on labor rights and access to social services.

Result and effectiveness

- Over 8,000 people supported annual by counseling services , training and mediation ;
- Accession improved to the market LABOR for refugee and other people vulnerable ;
- Growth the degree of employability and autonomy professional ;
- Strengthening the relationship between beneficiaries and employers by interplay direct .

The interview with the organization's representative revealed that approximately 50% of those who participated in the counseling programs found a job. Integrating the platform with individual counseling interventions allows for the inclusion of a larger number of beneficiaries and the adaptation of the intervention to the needs of refugees from Ukraine.

Partnerships

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Services are provided predominantly independently, depending on available funding, but the organization actively collaborates with UNHCR, AIOM, ANOFM, private employers and training providers, both in implementing projects and organizing events and courses.

Strategic partners / funders

- **UNHCR** – financial support and co-organization of events (e.g.: World Refugee Day); collaboration for workshops and community activities. **Status** : *formal* (funding + co-implementation).
- **IOM** – funding for courses (e.g. English) and support for organizing educational programs. **Status** : *formal* (contract/budget line).

Public employment institutions

- **ANOFM** and **AJOFM** – co-organization /participation in job fairs; mediation, information, access to employers. **Status** : *institutional collaboration* (usually formal at the level of specific events/partnerships).

Private sector / platforms

- **Hippo** – co-organization/participation in job fairs; access to employer database. **Status** : *collaboration* (usually formal at events).
- **"Top employers"** - direct recruitment/match-making relationship, including at events (job fair, speed dating/on-site interviews). **Status** : *operational* , mostly *informal* at a generic level (formal on each event/position).

NGOs -and non-governmental organizations (mostly informal collaborations)

- **JRS Romania** – mutual recommendations for complementary services (e.g. counselling, integration). **Status** : *informal* .
- **Red Cross** – referral of cases for **psychological counseling** (internal non-covered service). **Status** : *informal* .
- **World Vision** – directing beneficiaries to **grants for Ukrainian start-ups** ; information and case referrals. **Status** : *informal* .
- **AIDRom (Bucharest)** – exchange of candidates and jobs, presentations and mutual support in placement. **Status** : *informal* (current active collaboration).

Sustainability and Replicability

Good practice is sustainable due to its long-term effects on the autonomy of beneficiaries and replicable due to its modular structure, digital tools, and standardizable procedures. The model can be easily adapted to other regions or target groups, depending on the local context and available resources. Dependence on funding and projects creates risks in terms of continuity of activities, staff retention, and maintaining links with community members. The fact that the organization employs refugees from Ukraine who are in contact with community members allows services/activities to be tailored to their needs and involvement. In addition, communication in Ukrainian facilitates the intervention process.

A similar model is used to develop programs for the employment of people with disabilities (Jobs4All).

This good practice demonstrates that effective professional integration is achieved by combining community expertise with modern employment tools and strong partnerships, providing a coherent and tailored response to the current challenges of the labor market.

13. Good practice 2 – Holistic case management model - JRS Romania

Profile

- Type & coverage : NGO active at the national level national , with team multidisciplinary (>30 employees + volunteers), specialized in services for refugees / migrants .
- Areas : social assistance, integration, legal counseling, education, cultural activities & advocacy , support psychosocial – complete portfolio for integration.
- Target groups : focus on vulnerabilities (women, children, elderly, people with disabilities), essential aspect for sustainable employment.
- Approach: orientation HOLISTIC and case management, with feedback mechanisms (focus groups, questionnaires) and continuous adaptation of services.

Description of good practice

Model elements

1. Identification & outreach: social media (Facebook/Instagram/Telegram) + community leaders → increased access to services for hard-to-reach segments.
2. Assessment & individual plan: case management + needs assessment + continuous feedback.
3. Human capital development:
 - o Career counseling; mentoring; thematic clubs.
 - o Training: accredited courses (manicure, makeup, basic IT, foreign languages).
 - o Support for diploma recognition.
 - o Support services: legal/social counseling; accredited psychologists for children and adults.
4. Integration into the labor market: job fairs with direct employer-candidate matchmaking; links with training centers and employers.
5. Facilitating measures: dedicated activities for children/elderly people (freeing up time for the caring parent), language training.
6. Follow-up: post-placement follow-up (job retention, beneficiary satisfaction, further support).

Model differentiators

- Family integration (services for children & parents) – increases parents' employability.
- Holistic + MHPSS (psychological support) – reduces "soft" barriers (anxiety, adaptation).

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- Job fair events + mentoring – closes the information gap between candidates and employers more quickly.
 - Iterative adaptation (focus groups & feedback) – aligns with changing needs.
- "Constant counseling, organizing job fairs that facilitate direct matchmaking between employers and refugees, plus mentoring programs. Over 15,000 refugees have benefited from these practices in the last 3 years."

Results and effectiveness

Reported data

- > **8,000** people supported in the last 12 months; ~**2%** job placement (≈ 160 people).
- **Top 3 sectors** : HoReCa, beauty, construction; **contracts** : temporary / permanent / part -time.
- Scale practices: >**15,000** refugees supported through counseling, job fairs, mentoring (last 3 years).

Interpretation

- **Broad social impact** (large volume of beneficiaries) and **good framework of activation services** .
- **conversion to employment** (2%) compared to total beneficiaries; probably explained by:
 - **Structural barriers** (language, documents, childcare, transportation).
 - **Target segment** with multiple vulnerabilities (prioritizing social stabilization and mental health, before employment).
 - **Local offer** dominated by entry- -level jobs, unsuitable for the profile of some of the beneficiaries.

"Efficiency is assessed through: monitoring placements, job retention, beneficiary satisfaction, post-service follow-up, collaborations with authorities and NGOs, and establishing constant relationships with those supported. We collaborate constantly to monitor and evaluate results."

"... created the opportunity for employers to meet the right candidates directly and provided holistic support, increasing the chances of market integration."

Partnerships

The activities are carried out in collaboration with numerous actors. Thus, partnerships with local authorities, employers, multinational institutions and other NGOs are included; collaboration through case referrals and joint actions; employment events (job fairs). Through these, the chances of achieving better results in the employment of beneficiaries are increased.

" Collaboration is achieved through official partnerships, professional relationships developed through projects, direct contact with employers and training centers, and the development of



specific actions or referral of cases to partners. Active cooperation and constant exchange of good practices ensure the success of professional integration."

Sustainability

Strengths

- The model has **cumulative effects** (language + skills + family support + placement) and can generate **financial independence**.
- **procedures and routines** (job fairs, mentoring, counseling) – can be standardized.

Identified risks

- **Decrease in funding** for basic / social / cultural services & advocacy.
- **Volatility** of needs (migration waves, legislative changes) and **dependence** on grants.

"It is highly sustainable, helping refugees become financially independent and facilitating long-term integration, but requires continuous adjustments due to reduced funding."

Replicability

Why the model is replicable

- Modular components (outreach, assessment, language, short training, job fairs, mentoring, follow -up).
- Transferable tools: Counseling SOPs, job fair guide, case file templates, protocols with employers.

Conditions for replication

- Local mapping (job demand + transportation + social services).
- Co-design with employers before launching courses.

Key resources: counselors (RO/UKR/RU/EN), psychologist, lawyer, M&E manager, budget for access support (childcare , transportation), training partners.

6–9 month pilot with clear scaling criteria (placement, retention, cost/employment).

During the interview, the organization's representative also gave a suggestion for other organizations to be more successful: *"To be open to the needs of the community, to act proactively, to diversify funding sources, to be serious and to build lasting partnerships."*

holistic intervention model , it needs a mix of:

"Solid funding and partnerships, support for long-term counseling and the implementation of mentoring and integration programs."

14. Good practice 3 – psychosocial assistance - Romanian Red Cross

Profile

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The Romanian Red Cross is an organization with extensive experience in assisting vulnerable groups, with hundreds of branches throughout Romania.

The expert interviewed is a recent hire and is of Ukrainian origin.

Description of the model

Activities involving refugees from Ukraine are integrated with those for other vulnerable groups and are not specific. The activities rely on the involvement of a large number of volunteers. Romanian language courses are offered, as well as courses on culture and customs, and some psycho-social support services.

Results and effectiveness

The results are evaluated through beneficiary satisfaction surveys, and the needs assessment surveys are used to establish intervention priorities. Services and activities are adapted according to the specific characteristics of the community. Annual activity reports are presented by the organization.

Partnerships

The organization collaborates with public, international and non-governmental institutions. Also, various companies are involved both through direct financing (e.g. CSR, sponsorships) and through involvement in direct activities (e.g. employee volunteers). In emergency assistance activities, it collaborates with the Department for Emergency Situations.

Sustainability

Sustainability is ensured by the quality of interventions (e.g., access to employment as a result of participation in Romanian language or culture and lifestyle courses in Romania). Against the backdrop of reduced funding for programs targeting refugees from Ukraine, the continuity of programs and activities is also affected. The interview highlights the impact of refugees on the Romanian labor market and the importance of developing public programs for refugees to learn Romanian, which would make it easier for them to find a job and then contribute to the country's economy by paying taxes.

Replicability

Această bună practică evidențiază rolul abordării refugiaților din perspectiva nevoilor generale și importanța includerii acestora în activități împreună cu persoane din diferite medii pentru a facilita

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astfel integrarea și adaptarea culturală mai ușoară. De asemenea, în cadrul interviului a fost subliniată importanța serviciilor de asistență psiho-socială în creșterea calității vieții și a integrării profesionale.

15. Cross-cutting lessons

A comparative analysis of the three good practices highlights several key lessons:

- Integrated support for refugees alongside other vulnerable groups plays an important role in facilitating their social integration.
- Romanian/English language courses are the basis for social and professional integration interventions for refugees.
- A holistic approach allows for lasting results and personalized intervention.
- NGOs play a central role in overcoming language, administrative, and informational barriers, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Community programs integrated with electronic platforms increase employment opportunities.
- Partnerships with other actors, including refugees, increase the chances of success of employment programs.
- Modular structures, digital tools, and standardizable procedures are elements of success in the replicability of intervention models for employment.
- The active involvement of refugees in the decision-making process contributes to more tailored and sustainable solutions.

16. Policy recommendations

A. Short-term recommendations (0–6 months)

1. Generalization of the "counseling + digital platform" model at the territorial level

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It is recommended to promote and expand, through public-NGO partnerships, intervention models that combine individual counseling with digital recruitment platforms, in order to increase the capacity to support a larger number of refugees with limited human resources.

2. Centralization of job offers for refugees

Public authorities in the field of employment are encouraged to support the centralization of job offers accessible to refugees in a single or interoperable digital space, reducing the fragmentation of job searches and the intervention time of counselors.

3. Funding low - cost counseling services and high impact

It is recommended that dedicated funding be allocated quickly for:

- counselors' salaries,
- digital programming and communication tools,
- the provision of online services as an effective and rapid solution to support professional integration.

4. Developing flexible interventions, adapted to market demand

Employment policies must allow for rapid adjustment of interventions according to **sectoral needs** (e.g. IT, services, construction), including by actively attracting employers from areas with personnel shortages.

5. Supporting refugees' autonomous access to jobs

Measures are recommended to stimulate **self- application** to jobs (through digital platforms and clear guides), reducing exclusive dependence on intermediation and increasing the autonomy of beneficiaries.

B. Medium-term recommendations (6–24 months)

1. Integrating the hybrid model into national employment policies

The combined counseling-digital model should **be institutionalized** as a good practice in national and county employment strategies for refugees and other migrants, through structural collaborations with specialized NGOs.

2. Digitalization of public employment services

It is recommended development and considering as standard:

- online counseling appointments,
- remote advisors,
- digital career tracking tools to increase the efficiency and scalability of public services.

3. Strengthening the role of NGOs as providers of activation services

Public policies should recognize NGOs as **actors complementary** in the provision of employment services, with multi-annual funding mechanisms for services proven to be effective and sustainable.

4. Extending the model to other vulnerable groups

It is also recommended to replicate the model for:

- people with disabilities,
- migrants from other third countries,
- long-term unemployed, adapting the interventions but maintaining the basic structure (counseling + digital platform).

5. Building an efficiency-oriented monitoring framework

Employment policies must integrate indicators such as:

- number of beneficiaries supported per counselor,
- average duration of counseling,
- cost per beneficiary,
- transitions to employment, to base funding decisions on efficiency and impact.

In the short term, policies need to focus on **the rapid expansion of efficient and low-cost models**, and in the medium term on **the institutionalization and digitalization of these solutions**, so that supporting Ukrainian refugees' access to the labor market becomes sustainable, scalable, and replicable at the national level.

17. General conclusions

This report analyzed how the Romanian labor market responds to the needs of Ukrainian refugees, what factors facilitate or restrict their access to employment, and what their needs are. The policy framework analysis showed that the integration of Ukrainian refugees into the Romanian labor market has favorable conditions, supported by the legal framework that simplifies access to work and by structural labor shortages in several sectors. In practice, however, the effectiveness of integration remains conditional on three key factors: (1) adapting skills to actual market demand (including through short training courses and recognition of studies), (2) overcoming the language barrier (work-oriented Romanian/English language courses), and (3) active employment policies geared towards measurable results (placement and retention).

Part II of the report complements the analysis of the labor market and barriers by documenting concrete good practices that illustrate how Ukrainian refugees have been supported in the process of professional integration. The analysis of the three good practices presented in this section highlights that coordinated, integrated intervention from a holistic perspective increases the chances of integration into the labor market, with the involvement of representatives of the

Ukrainian refugee community in the design and delivery of programs being essential factors in this regard. All three respondents highlighted the significant budget cuts of the last two years, which create additional vulnerabilities in the provision of services and in supporting the professional integration of beneficiaries.

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