SMART UA project

Country report on mapping stakeholders providing housing services

Hungary

August 2025

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Acknowledgements / Authors

This country report was prepared by Judit Zatykó and Róbert Schumann, researchers at Szociometrum, based on a mapping of organisations providing housing services in Hungary.

We would like to express our gratitude to all the organisations that contributed to the mapping, as well as to the Hungarian partners of the SMART UA project,[1] who supported the implementation of the research.

1. Summary

The aim of the research was to map the housing services available to Ukrainian refugees living in Hungary, the main obstacles and good practices.

Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022, hundreds of thousands of refugees have arrived in Hungary, tens of thousands of whom have remained in the country for a longer period of time. The Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) activated by the EU provided them with residence permits, the right to work, and access to education and housing. Although the civil and public sectors responded quickly in the first few months, the long-term maintenance of housing solutions remains a serious challenge. The structural problems of the Hungarian housing market – primarily the lack of affordable rental housing and the sharp rise in prices – put refugees in a particularly vulnerable position, as they often face discrimination and vulnerability.

Our research shows that the housing support system is based on the cooperation of many different actors, but due to structural obstacles, it mostly offers temporary and isolated solutions. More stable financing, effective action against discrimination and stronger coordination would be essential for the long-term housing security of refugees.

<u>Research methodology and sample</u>

The mapping exercise carried out as part of the SMART UA project took place in July–August 2025. We collected data from 21 organisations actively involved in housing support for refugees using an online questionnaire (CAWI). Half of the sample consisted of civil society organisations, with a significant

proportion of religious organisations and local authorities, as well as a few international organisations and businesses. Although the research is not representative, it is sufficiently diverse to provide a

[1] Jesuit Refugee Service, The Evangelical Lutheran Church - Diakonia

comprehensive picture of the main trends, challenges and innovative solutions in housing practice in Hungary.

Characteristics and target groups of services

Two-thirds of the responding organisations provide general housing services, while one-third focus specifically on women and mothers with young children. Other target groups include the elderly (29%), people with disabilities and Roma communities (24–24%), and, to a lesser extent, LGBTQ+ people (10%). This distribution partly corresponds to the demographic profile of refugees (UNHCR/TÁRKI 2023: 70–80% of refugees are women, 35–40% are children, 5–10% are elderly), but certain groups – such as Roma from Transcarpathia or dual citizens – often remain invisible to official support systems.

The services are predominantly indirect and supportive in nature: 90% provide information, 76% provide social work or mentoring, 71% provide interpretation, and 67% provide assistance in finding accommodation. In contrast, only a few organisations provide actual, longer-term housing: only 3 provide temporary accommodation, and 5–5 can guarantee housing for more than 3 months in private or collective accommodation. This clearly shows that refugees mainly try to find accommodation in the private rental sector, where subsidies often only partially cover the costs.

Funding and capacity

Support activities are mainly based on international funding: two-thirds of organisations receive such support, 57% from EU sources (e.g. AMIF), 52% from state/municipal funds, and 48% from community or public donations. Two organisations have no access to any resources and operate on a voluntary basis. The AMIF is the most important EU funding instrument, providing HUF 3.8 billion for housing programmes in the 2024/2025 cycle, primarily involving large charitable organisations.

The capacities of the organisations vary greatly: half of the respondents assist with the housing of up to 50 people, while 25% assist with more than 200 people. This distribution underlines the decentralised and fragmented nature of the system.

Challenges and obstacles

According to the research, the biggest problems are the lack of affordable housing (90%) and limited funding (86%). In addition, social rejection (57%), bureaucratic and legal obstacles (48%) and limited cooperation from landlords (38%) are significant barriers. Language difficulties are a more moderate but still present challenge.

Based on field experience, Roma refugees are in a particularly difficult situation, as market discrimination often forces them to live in informal or undignified conditions. Furthermore, the August 2024 amendment to the regulation excluded Hungarian-Ukrainian dual citizens (among whom the proportion of Roma refugees from Transcarpathia is significant) from state-funded community accommodation.

Partnerships and innovation

It is a positive development that a significant number of civil society, church and international organisations implement their programmes in partnership, often complementing each other's competencies. Calls for proposals (e.g. AMIF) called for complex solutions, leading to cooperation between housing, social and labour market actors in several places. These partnerships have resulted in flexible responses, but their sustainability depends on funding cycles.

Innovation is mainly evident in the fact that housing is treated as part of social integration. Good practices include peer mentoring, the incorporation of pre-savings elements, and flexible support models where the level of support decreases over time, encouraging independence. In terms of digital tools, there are mainly internal records and informal data sharing, but there is no common system at national level.

Inclusion and access

Although most organisations make their services available to everyone in principle, actual access varies due to legal, financial and programme conditions. Eligibility linked to TP status excludes many dual nationals, while civil society organisations often provide assistance to them in their own programmes. As it is not known exactly how many Ukrainian refugees currently live in Hungary and what their socio-demographic composition is, it is difficult to assess how inclusive the current system is. Vulnerable groups, such as Roma refugees with low levels of education, people with disabilities or illiterate people, are at particular risk of being excluded from support opportunities.

2. Introduction

The purpose of the mapping exercise within SMART UA

The following report aims to identify the roles, challenges and best practices of organisational and non-organisational actors currently providing services to ensure or facilitate access to housing for refugees from Ukraine in Hungary.

Brief reference to the EU context

In March 2022, the EU activated the Temporary Protection Directive 1/55/EC, which enabled the temporary protection of refugees from Ukraine by providing them with residence permits, the right to work, housing and education. The directive requires Member States to provide adequate housing, either in the form of direct state accommodation or housing support.

However, particularly during 2023–2024, austerity measures were introduced in most EU Member States, which had a negative impact on the level or duration of housing benefits. In addition to declining support, the housing crisis affecting large cities has also contributed to the increasing housing difficulties of Ukrainian refugees.

In addition to the responses of Member States to housing challenges, European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) projects play a key role in innovatively adapting social services to the needs of Ukrainian refugees. This report summarises the findings of the first research phase carried out as part of the SMART UA project.

3. Methodology

The methodology and key points of the exploratory research were as follows:

- Data collection tool: We used an online self-administered questionnaire (CAWI), which respondents accessed via the LimeSurvey platform. Data collection was conducted in Hungarian.
- Target group: The target group consisted of organisational and non-organisational parties currently providing services to ensure or facilitate access to housing in Hungary for refugees from Ukraine. This included local governments, civil society organisations, religious and community organisations, and housing providers (landlords, agencies).
- Sampling: Targeted sampling based on current participation in providing housing support to Ukrainian refugees.
- Planned sample size: N=minimum 20 organisations, companies, institutions; actual sample size: N=21 organisations.

The sample size exceeded the planned minimum, but due to the nature of the results presented in the research, they are not suitable for drawing broad statistical conclusions. The aim of the analysis was to map the services and experiences of organisations involved in ensuring or facilitating access to housing in Hungary for Ukrainian refugees; the results thus present prevailing trends and typical practices, but cannot be automatically extended to all actors in Hungary. At the same time, the composition of the sample is sufficiently diverse to provide a relevant picture of the main challenges, shortcomings and innovative solutions that are currently prevalent in Hungarian practice.

- Data collection period: July-August 2025.
- Ethical and data protection framework: The research was conducted in a GDPR-compliant manner with transparent data management. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents could give their consent to the use of their contact details (in a public stakeholder list or a confidential contact database).

Factors influencing the implementation of fieldwork

During the research, several practical and contextual difficulties arose that significantly affected the efficiency of data collection.

The most notable of these were timing and capacity constraints: many organisations operate at reduced capacity during the summer period, while several parallel research projects targeted the same actors, resulting in low respondent willingness. Organisations operating in the civil sector are busy regardless of the summer period, and in many cases were unable to devote time to completing the questionnaire.

Further difficulties were caused by overlaps in content and methodology. Several ongoing projects (including other initiatives funded by the ESF+) target similar target groups, which dampened the willingness to cooperate, especially when perceived as competing data collection.

The limitations of online surveys – similar to those of corporate or organisational research – also applied to the current target group, and the efficiency of fieldwork had to be supported by more time-consuming personal and telephone contact.

In several cases, data collection was also hampered by mistrust and the politicisation of the research topic. We experienced mistrust towards publicity and data sharing particularly in the case of UA-related community organisations and Ukrainian local governments. This may be partly related to the political context in Hungary and the government's anti-Ukrainian narratives, which may influence the willingness to cooperate.

Another factor affecting the implementation of the fieldwork (achieving a minimum of 20 completed questionnaires) was the narrowing of the range of service providers. Several smaller civil society organisations that were previously active in providing housing support to UA refugees have recently stopped providing this type of service due to a lack of resources. As we learned, they have transferred their former UA clientele to large charitable organisations. However, these organisations, which are close to the state, typically operate under strict internal protocols that often do not allow for the provision of information.

Institutional mediation and the involvement of relevant coordinating actors (international and state actors) in facilitating data collection did not bring about any significant breakthrough either.

Finally, the limited availability of background information also contributed to the difficulties, as the organisational service map compiled and made available to us by an international organisation was outdated, limiting its practical usefulness.

Given the circumstances, the fieldwork required more time and methodological experimentation to achieve the planned number of elements. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the organisations that completed the questionnaire, as well as the Hungarian partners of the SMART UA project who supported us in contacting the organisations concerned.

Use of the term "refugees" in the report

In our report, we use the term "refugees" in a broad sense: we refer to all persons who fled Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion, including those with temporary protection (TP) status and dual (Ukrainian-Hungarian) citizens.

However, in the sections dealing with legal provisions, we consistently refer to official temporary protection (refugee) status. In these chapters, we also include dual citizens in our analysis and refer to the legally different regulations governing "refugee" and "temporary protection" status.

4. Stakeholder profiles

As mentioned earlier in the methodology subchapter, the target group included organisational and non-organisational parties that currently provide services to ensure or facilitate access to housing in Hungary for refugees from Ukraine. This included local governments, civil society organisations, religious and community organisations, and housing providers (landlords, agencies).

Among those currently providing housing services who participated in the research, civil society organisations are in the majority. Half of the respondents represented civil society organisations active in the field. The other half of the respondents were mainly represented by religious organisations/organisations with religious affiliations and local governments. In addition, a few international organisations and businesses were also included in our sample.

1. táblázat *Distribution of organisations in the sample by type*

	Number of cases	%
Civil society organisation (NGO)	10	48
Religious organisation/religious organisation	4	19
Local government	3	14
Business	2	10
Other (municipal social institution; international organisation)	2	10

To our knowledge, there are currently no agencies/real estate agents in Hungary that provide market-based assistance to Ukrainian refugees in finding accommodation, such as subletting.[2]

In the spring of 2022, several digital accommodation platforms (e.g. Airbnb.org, Szallas.hu) responded quickly to the Ukrainian crisis in cooperation with civil society and the market. These actions were typically temporary, humanitarian interventions and only operated intensively during the first months of the war.

During our research, we found only a few informal examples of Roma property owners renting rooms to disadvantaged UA refugees and Roma families from Transcarpathia. This highlights the fact that it is particularly difficult for refugees of Roma origin to find rental accommodation on the Hungarian housing market, where they also face discrimination on ethnic grounds.

The lack of real estate agents/agencies specialising in UA refugees may also be due to the fact that the Hungarian legal environment increasingly links the provision of housing for persons who have fled Ukraine and are receiving temporary protection to their participation in employment. According to Government Decree 114/2022. (III. 10.), state accommodation and care may be terminated if the person concerned does not cooperate in order to be integrated into employment (§ 7 (1)). The decree also stipulates that support for subletting can only be claimed if the applicant is receiving temporary protection, has a valid employment relationship, and the employer attaches the rental agreement concluded with the private individual to the application for support (§ 7 (2)–((3)). This regulation not only encourages employment, but also links access to housing to the employer. Accordingly, it can be observed that certain recruitment companies – especially those specialising in the placement of Ukrainian guest workers – offer housing arrangements in parallel with employment.

Reflecting on this, we sought to involve employers who also provide housing assistance to their UA refugee employees in the research.

Civil society organisations are currently the most active providers of housing services, which was also reflected in the willingness of respondents to participate (half of the respondents completed the questionnaire on behalf of a civil society organisation).

[2] Unfortunately, it was not possible within the scope of the current research to conduct targeted interviews with larger real estate agencies (e.g. Duna House, Otthon Centrum) regarding their experiences with Ukrainian refugees.

Geographical distribution

Although the national distribution of Ukrainian refugees is unknown, and their exact number can only be estimated,[3] it is clear that most of them live in Budapest, the capital, and its immediate vicinity.

According to a non-representative survey conducted by UNHCR and TÁRKI in 2023, which covered 682 households, one-third of the Ukrainian refugees surveyed lived in Budapest, which corresponds to the national distribution. The other significant groups are located in the counties of eastern Hungary, with Hajdú-Bihar, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Komárom-Esztergom and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén having particularly high proportions.

As for the organisations providing housing services included in our survey, they also show a tendency to be concentrated in the capital. The vast majority of those involved operate from a base in Budapest. In the case of religious organisations/organisations with religious affiliations, however, their presence in the capital is complemented by some degree of national activity. In the case of charitable organisations, this may indeed mean national coverage, while in the case of smaller religious organisations, it may mean certain activities or specific partnerships with a given rural settlement.

A fraction of the civil organisations in the sample provides housing support in rural areas. These organisations are located in Hajdú-Bihar, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Győr-Moson-Sopron counties.

As mentioned earlier, many smaller civil society organisations have recently been left without funding and have been forced to hand over their clientele of Ukrainian refugees to other, larger organisations (charities) that are also active locally. During our fieldwork for this study, we encountered this phenomenon on several occasions, primarily in relation to civil society organisations operating in Hajdú-Bihar and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties.

Funding sources and organisational capacity

Among the organisations in our sample that support the housing of Ukrainian refugees in some way, the most common source of funding comes from international organisations and donors. In addition to international organisations (e.g. UNHCR), foreign church organisations and church aid organisations are likely to play a significant role in this regard, primarily in the case of religious and religiously affiliated organisations.

In terms of the significance of funding sources, EU funds and state/municipal subsidies follow those from international organisations and donors.

[3] On 31 December 2024, the number of persons enjoying temporary protection in Hungary was 39,168. However, a significant proportion of refugees in Hungary are not eligible for temporary protection due to their dual citizenship (Hungarian-Ukrainian), so their numbers can only be partially tracked in the records, e.g. in the case of residence permits. Including them, the broader estimate is around 65,000 people at the beginning of 2024. https://lakmusz.hu/2025/02/24/valoban-magyarorszag-

tortenetenek-legnagyobb-humanitarius-akcioja-lenne-az-ukrajnai-menekultek-segitese

2. táblázat *Funding sources*

	Number of cases	%
Support from international organisations and donors	14	67
European Union funds	12	57
State and/or municipal funds	11	52
Public and/or community support	10	48
Corporate support	7	33
US and German church funds	1	5
They receive no support from either	2	10

Currently, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) is the only major EU source in Hungary that can be used in a targeted and structured manner to support the housing of refugees arriving from Ukraine – including subletting, accommodation maintenance and related services – provided they are granted temporary protection. In the 2024/2025 period, a total of HUF 3.8 billion will be available for programmes targeting housing, such as support for those receiving temporary protection, and typically 1-6 projects will be eligible for support under this framework. Most projects involving housing are implemented by large charitable organisations.

The role of the private sector (corporate support: 33%) is moderate in the sample. Forty-eight per cent of the responding organisations indicated that they also receive support from the public and/or community. This proportion far exceeds the support based on 1% personal income tax donations and suggests that civil society mobilises resources in many different ways to support refugees. Such support includes online and local fundraising, donations in kind (e.g. clothing, furniture, food), community actions and voluntary work. Direct contributions from church communities or local residents, such as temporary accommodation or administrative assistance, are common. These resources are important tools for flexible response and social solidarity, especially where state or institutional support is scarce.

Two organisations do not receive support from any of the sources listed, which suggests that they operate with limited resources or on a completely voluntary basis.

<u>Social groups requiring special attention in the work of organisations</u>

The majority of the responding organisations provide general services to refugee clients in Ukraine (two-thirds), but a significant proportion (one-third) pay special attention to women and mothers with young children, as well as adults of working age. Particularly vulnerable groups, such as the elderly (29%), people with disabilities and Roma communities (24-24%), are also present among the target groups supported, albeit to a lesser extent. Support for LGBTQ+ refugees is marginal (two organisations).

3. táblázat *Target group of housing services*

	Number of cases	%
Providing general services, no specific target group	14	67
Women (including mothers with young children)	7	33
Adults in general (working age population)	7	33
Elderly persons (aged 65 and over)	6	29
Persons with disabilities	5	24
Roma or other ethnic minorities	5	24
LGBTQ+ persons	2	10
Other groups	2	10

It is worth examining the target group focus of the respondent organisations in comparison with the socio-demographic background of Ukrainian refugees living in Hungary. The demographic composition of refugees (especially those receiving temporary protection) in Hungary differs significantly from that of the total population, which partly explains why certain groups receive more attention. According to the aforementioned 2023–2024 UNHCR and TÁRKI data, 70–80 per cent of refugees receiving temporary protection are women, typically arriving with their children. The proportion of men (especially those aged 18–60) is low. Children represent a significant proportion of refugees (approximately 35–40%), while the proportion of elderly people is lower (5–10%). There is a noticeable Roma minority presence among those arriving from Transcarpathia, but this group often remains hidden from official data collection. Members of the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities are also underrepresented and often invisible to support systems.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the target group orientation of the organisations participating in the research is only partially consistent with the demographic composition of Ukrainian refugees residing in Hungary. At the same time, the nature of the data and the limitations of the sample do not allow for general conclusions to be drawn. Furthermore, it is also worth taking into account the different activity profiles of the organisations, their funding opportunities and the limitations of their available capacities.

5. Forms of housing support

Among the responding organisations, the vast majority of housing support is not provided in the form of direct accommodation, but in the form of additional services and related support. The most common forms of assistance are information services (90%) and social work or mentoring (76%), followed by interpreting/translation (71%) and assistance in finding sublet accommodation (67%).

4. táblázat *Forms of housing support*

	Number of cases	%
Provision of information	19	90
Social work/mentoring	16	76
Translation/interpreting	15	71
Finding accommodation	14	67%
Providing/purchasing furnishings	13	62%
Monthly housing allowance	9	43%
Tenant-landlord liaison	8	38
Ad hoc financial support	7	33
Mediation with landlords	7	33%
At least 3 months' accommodation in private accommodation	5	24
At least 3 months' accommodation in collective accommodation	5	24
Legal assistance	4	19
Temporary accommodation	3	14
Other	6	29

In contrast, relatively few organisations provide actual housing (e.g. temporary accommodation, longer-term accommodation): only three organisations provide temporary accommodation, and five organisations can provide housing for at least three months, in the form of private or collective accommodation.

Financial contributions towards housing costs are somewhat more common: four-tenths of organisations provide monthly housing contributions, and one-third also provide ad hoc financial support. Intermediary activities that facilitate integration into the housing market, such as connecting tenants and landlords and mediation, are typical of about one-third of respondents.

Based on the data, it can be said that the housing activities of the organisations concerned in Hungary are primarily indirect and supportive in nature, rather than linked to their own maintained or managed accommodation. This operating model reflects the resource constraints, decentralised support structure and dominance of the market-based rental system in the Hungarian housing market. In the decentralised, fragmented support structure, civil and church organisations, local governments and state actors participate on an ad hoc basis and with varying capacities, resulting in regional inequalities and limited access. The actual forms of housing are predominantly based on the private rental sector, as there is no extensive state or local government rental housing programme in Hungary, and collective

accommodation capacity is also limited.[4] Employment-related state rental subsidies encourage labour market integration, but can also lead to vulnerability to employers.[5]

Although information provision, social work, rent search and translation/interpretation are the most common forms of housing support, the responses of organisations in the 'other' category (5) clearly indicate a more complex, integrated approach. Although these organisations are in the minority in terms of numbers, they often do not just provide one specific type of support, but combine housing with other dimensions, such as social, mental, educational and financial support.

This approach may be related to the professional experience and operational capacity of certain organisations, but another important factor is that the current AMIF calls for proposals increasingly encourage the implementation of complex housing and integration programmes. Thus, actors with access to resources and human capacity often develop comprehensive housing programmes that, in addition to providing housing, also offer mentoring support, developmental education or legal assistance, and community integration.

Number of refugees supported

A significant proportion of the responding organisations – roughly half – currently provide some form of housing assistance to a maximum of 50 Ukrainian refugees. Based on this, it can be said that a significant part of the support activities is small-scale, probably linked to local initiatives or organisations with limited capacity. At the same time, a quarter of the sample consists of organisations that support the accommodation of more than 200 refugees, with one of them working with 500-750 people.

5. táblázat *Number of refugees supported by housing services*

	Number of cases	%
1-25	3	14
26	7	33
51	1	5
101 – 150	1	5
151	4	19
201	2	10
401	2	10
501 – 750	1	5

[4] These typically focus on the most vulnerable groups (e.g. mothers with young children, the elderly or people with disabilities), but they operate with fairly narrow eligibility criteria and exclude refugees from non-war zones (e.g. Transcarpathia), who are therefore not eligible for housing support from the state, even if they are in need. Furthermore, these state-run collective accommodation facilities are not suitable for providing long-term housing for integration purposes.

[5] As the support is linked to employment, housing also reinforces direct dependence on the employer. Only the employer can submit and administer the application, and the employee must have a valid rental contract, which must be submitted to the

employer.

This ratio indicates that the support system based on housing assistance includes both small organisations providing targeted assistance and larger actors operating structured programmes. Organisations with a higher number of beneficiaries are typically linked to grant-funded projects (e.g. AMIF) and offer complex housing programmes. This distribution therefore confirms the picture observed earlier: housing support practices in Hungary are decentralised, and the volume of support depends heavily on available resources and capacities.

Support for vulnerable groups

As mentioned earlier, most organisations provide general services, but one-third focus specifically on women and mothers with young children, as well as adults of working age. More vulnerable groups – the elderly (29%), people with disabilities and Roma communities (24-24%) – receive less support, while assistance to LGBTQ+ refugees is marginal (2 organisations).

This partly reflects the demographic composition of Ukrainian refugees living in Hungary: according to UNHCR and TÁRKI data for 2023–2024, 70–80 per cent of those receiving temporary protection are women, often arriving with their children, with children accounting for approximately 35–40 per cent and the elderly for 5–10 per cent. The presence of Roma communities in Transcarpathia is noticeable but often remains hidden.

The responses of organisations marked as "other" show that some of them serve a broader target group, while paying special attention to those in particularly vulnerable situations – such as the elderly, the chronically ill, people with disabilities, single parents and Roma families – while others are primarily involved in providing care for the homeless, but also provide housing support and aftercare social work for people living in refugee shelters through special teams.

Services tailored to the needs of specific groups

Forty-three per cent of the responding organisations modified their previous services in order to better meet the specific needs of vulnerable or marginalised refugee groups. However, the majority (57%) did not introduce such changes, which may indicate that they either already covered these needs extensively or that capacity and resource constraints did not allow for a restructuring of services.

Based on the reports of organisations that modified their services, the changes ranged widely: some expanded their physical infrastructure (e.g. by installing kitchens equipped with stoves), while others introduced new professional elements, such as developmental education services, complex mental health and psychosocial support, or a dedicated team to coordinate moves from refugee accommodation and housing support.

Social work and deepening client relationships, organising community programmes and relevant events, and supporting administration and family contact were common. Most of the changes reflect a continuous adaptation to changes in the life situation of refugees.

Several organisations indicated that the available support framework and the current government decree determine the scope of beneficiaries, giving priority to groups defined as vulnerable by the

government. However, this categorisation does not always reflect the actual vulnerability experienced in

the field. One need only think of the situation of dual (Hungarian-Ukrainian) citizens in Transcarpathia, who, although initially – in the first phase of the war – were provided with the same (collective) accommodation as Ukrainian citizens receiving temporary protection, a provision that came into force on 21 August 2024 withdrew this entitlement from them. Following the abolition of community housing subsidies, dual citizens can now only access state-subsidised housing through their employment, provided that their employer applies for the subsidy on their behalf. In addition to employment, the scheme requires a valid rental contract, so if the owner of the flat is unwilling to sign a contract, the subsidy cannot be claimed. A significant proportion of refugees in Transcarpathia are Roma communities, who face particularly high levels of discrimination in the Hungarian rental market, further limiting their housing options.

Registration systems and data use in refugee support

The vast majority of organisations (all but two) register beneficiaries in their own internal databases, while only two organisations use a shared database with other organisations and only one organisation uses a national database. This is partly due to the local or regional scope of most of the organisations in the sample, where registration requirements are typically limited to internal administration and rarely justify national-level data sharing.

6. táblázat *Forms of registration of supported clients*

	Number of cases	%
Internal database	19	90
Database shared with other organisations	2	10
National database	1	5
Does not register them	1	5

Without exception, all organisations use the data collected on beneficiaries to support case management, and nearly half of them also use it to monitor progress, which in many cases may involve data sharing with the authorities (30%), presumably primarily in connection with mandatory reporting for EU projects (e.g. AMIF), where data on beneficiaries must also be shared with the Managing Authority (Ministry of the Interior) as part of project progress reports. Use for the purpose of informing donors is rare (2 organisations).

7. táblázat *Use of records*

	Number of cases	%
Case management	20	100
Progress monitoring	9	45
Sharing with authorities	6	30
Informing donors	2	10
Other purposes	1	5

All this suggests that the register primarily serves operational client work and mandatory data sharing related to the application system, while systematic, coordinated forms of data sharing are limited.

6. Barriers and challenges

Most frequently mentioned obstacles

In the area of housing support, the vast majority of organisations consider the lack of affordable housing (90%) and the limited availability of support funds (86%) to be the most significant challenges. The negative attitudes of the majority society (57%) and the limited cooperation of landlords (38%) also pose serious obstacles. Bureaucratic and legal obstacles are a significant problem for half of the organisations, while language difficulties are considered a serious challenge by a quarter of respondents and a moderate challenge by the majority.

8. táblázat *Challenges in supporting the housing of refugees in Ukraine*

	Not a significant challenge	Moderately significant challenge	Significant challenge
Lack of affordable housing		10	90
Limited funding sources		14	86
Rejection by the majority society	14	29	57
Bureaucratic/legal barriers	9	43	48
Limited cooperation from landlords	5	57	38
Language difficulties in the case of refugees	24	52	24

The lack of affordable housing and limited resources are mutually reinforcing, structural problems in the Hungarian housing market, which make it particularly difficult to ensure long-term housing stability for refugees. This is further exacerbated by the sharp rise in rental prices nationwide in recent years, which has had a particularly negative impact on the most vulnerable tenants, including refugees.

The following "other" problems were mentioned by nine (43%) of the organisations, but the vast majority of these are not new types of challenges, but rather qualitative explanations of the main problems mentioned earlier, based on field experience. For example, the inability of multi-generational Roma families from Transcarpathia to find housing is a combination of a lack of affordable housing and discrimination by landlords. Poor-quality, expensive housing, unfair contract terms, and exclusions related to having children or pets also illustrate the limitations of the housing market and the lack of cooperation from landlords. Inaccurate and incomplete sublease contracts can be classified as bureaucratic and legal obstacles, while the lack of a stable income – especially in the case of the chronically ill, disabled or elderly – highlights the reasons behind the lack of resources. Finally, the August 2024 government decree, which effectively eliminated most of the state-provided accommodation available to refugees in Ukraine, provides the legal basis for the reduction in support options and housing supply.

Differences by type of actor or region

Based on the research, no significant differences can be identified either by type of organisation or by region of operation. One reason for this is that the most important obstacles identified by the respondent organisations – the lack of affordable housing, limited funding, landlord refusal and legal and bureaucratic difficulties – are systemic problems affecting the whole country, regardless of the profile or geographical location of the organisations.

The characteristics of the sample also limit the possibility of comparison: the majority of respondents are based in Budapest, and only four rural organisations were represented. Thus, the research does not allow for a comprehensive assessment of the differences between rural areas and the capital. At the same time, it can be assumed that the capital is more severely affected by the sharp rise in subletting prices and increased competition in the housing market, while in the provinces, the more limited range of services and the restricted housing stock may pose a greater challenge.

Overall, the research suggests that the obstacles identified are predominantly structural and systemic in nature, appearing in a similar form across different types of organisations, but local characteristics may give different weight to the problems.

Systemic and structural barriers

Refugees' access to housing support in Hungary is determined by several mutually reinforcing structural problems. The starting point is the nationwide shortage of affordable housing and the continuous, steep rise in rental prices, which limits opportunities from the outset. This is further exacerbated by the fact that some of the available housing is in poor condition or unrealistically expensive, so in many cases it does not represent a real solution even with support.

The situation is further exacerbated by discrimination by landlords, which particularly affects Roma communities, families with children and people with pets.

The legal environment does not always serve the interests of those in need. Access to subsidies (e.g. state collective accommodation or employment-related rent subsidies) is governed by strict eligibility criteria, such as refugee status or employment, which often do not reflect the actual vulnerability experienced on the ground. Inaccurate or incomplete rental contracts and excessive administrative burdens add further uncertainty to the system.

The private accommodation-based housing programme is funded exclusively from EU sources (AMIF) and is typically limited to short, 1–2-year cycles, which is difficult to reconcile with the goal of long-term housing stability. It is common for participants to only have a secure home for the duration of the project, and then find themselves in an uncertain situation again when the support ends. This is particularly true for programmes where little emphasis is placed on establishing long-term independent housing, for example through gradually decreasing support or incorporating savings elements.

This is exacerbated by the fragmentation of the care system. There is poor coordination between state, EU and civil society programmes, resulting in duplication, regional inequalities and a lack of information. Information about services does not necessarily reach everyone in need, especially those with low digital literacy or language barriers.

This system of interlocking barriers means that current forms of support often remain temporary, isolated solutions. Without addressing systemic shortcomings, it is impossible to ensure that refugees will find stable, secure homes in Hungary in the long term.

Services tailored to the needs of specific refugee groups

Several organisations have indicated that the available support framework and the government decree in force determine the circle of beneficiaries, giving priority to groups defined as "vulnerable" by the government. However, this does not always reflect the vulnerability experienced on the ground. This is illustrated by the situation of dual (Hungarian-Ukrainian) citizens in Transcarpathia: although they were automatically entitled to state-subsidised collective accommodation in the first phase of the war, the amendment to the decree of 21 August 2024 excluded them from state-funded community accommodation.

This exclusion also applies to complex housing programmes financed by the AMIF, which have been available exclusively to persons with refugee status from the outset.

AMIF programmes operate on a project-based funding basis, typically for a period of 1-2 years, which raises the question of how much they can contribute to the creation of independent housing in the long term. As there is no systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the programmes, there is no reliable picture of whether the housing situation of participants is sustainable. Some organisations operate professionally based, complex programmes, while others only provide secure housing for the duration of the project, with no guarantee that the situation will be resolved after the project ends.

Forty-three per cent of the responding organisations have modified their previous services in order to better meet the specific needs of vulnerable or marginalised refugee groups. The majority (57%) did not introduce such changes, partly because their capacity and resource constraints did not allow it, and

partly because their client base was already limited due to strict eligibility criteria.

The changes varied widely: some expanded their physical infrastructure (e.g. by installing kitchens equipped with stoves), while others introduced new professional elements such as developmental education services, complex mental health and psychosocial support, or dedicated teams to coordinate moves out of refugee accommodation and housing support. Social work and deepening client relationships, organising community programmes and relevant events, and supporting administration and family contact were common. While these changes are flexible responses to changes in the life situation of refugees, their effectiveness and long-term sustainability depend largely on funding cycles and the legal framework.

7. Cooperation and best practices

Level of cooperation with other actors

The cooperation network of the organisations participating in the research is diverse, but clearly dominated by Hungarian civil society organisations (90%), closely followed by religious partners (86%). A significant proportion also cooperate with international civil society organisations (62%) and local authorities (52%), including local family and child welfare centres (57% in total). In addition, cooperation with legal defence organisations (43%) and regional or state authorities is also significant. The involvement of businesses and grassroots groups is more moderate (33-33%), but they can play an important complementary role in supporting the housing of refugees in Ukraine.

9. táblázat *Cooperation with other organisations and actors*

	Number of cases	%
Hungarian civil society organisations (NGOs)	19	90
Religious organisations/religious organisations	18	86
International non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	13	62%
Local government(s)	11	52
Regional or national authorities	10	48
Legal defence organisations	9	43
Businesses	7	33
Grassroots groups	7	33
Local family and child welfare centres	1	5

Examples of effective partnerships

The network of organisations participating in the research is diverse, but relationships with Hungarian civil society organisations (90%) and religious partners (85%) clearly dominate. A good example of this is the coordination of rent support programmes, in which an organisation typically provides support to a household for 3-6 months and then refers the client to another partner organisation offering similar assistance in order to ensure continuity. This practice of "passing on" compensates for the lack of state involvement and makes it possible to maintain independent housing despite the lack of resources.

As the AMIF's housing tenders called for complex solutions, applicant organisations often entered into partnerships, which resulted in effective cooperation. This was the case, for example, when an organisation experienced in social work with refugees joined forces with an organisation dealing with housing poverty, or when organisations experienced in housing and labour market integration jointly developed a programme.[6]

Among the organisations in our sample, there were also those that provide accommodation for refugees in cooperation with local authorities. In this housing model, the local authority provides apartments free of charge, drawing on state normative support and involving civil society partners.

Based on the research, partnerships are fundamentally effective in alleviating the lack of resources and state involvement. The "chain-like" operation of rent support programmes – where one organisation provides support for a few months and then refers the client to another – clearly shows that cooperation between civil society and religious organisations can create continuity even with limited resources. The partnerships formed in connection with AMIF applications have also proven effective: combining experience in the areas of housing, labour market and social services has resulted in more complex, client-centred programmes. The same applies to local models where local authorities, state normative support and the civil sphere work together to provide housing for refugees. However, these partnerships are typically project-based and short-term, so their effectiveness is largely linked to the available funding cycles. In other words, although they work well in the short term and provide real help to refugees, they can only be sustained in the longer term if they are complemented by stable and systematic state support.

Good practices in access to housing

Slightly more than one-third of the organisations surveyed reported that they had a housing service that they considered to be a good practice and that could be useful to other organisations. However, the majority (62%) did not identify such a programme, which may indicate that in many cases the services are highly resource- and context-dependent, or that no established model has yet been developed that could be adapted more widely.

A common feature of organisations with good practices is that they treat housing not in isolation but as part of social integration. Solutions range from municipal cooperation-based housing models to secure collective accommodation and long-term programmes to flexible, needs-based support, often supplemented by peer mentoring. Several programmes combine financial assistance, social work,

[6] These projects are currently being implemented with the support of the AMIF.

community support and legal advice, thereby helping to secure housing and long-term independence at the same time.

The good practices presented clearly show that organisations working in the field of housing support often use solutions that combine several elements, treating housing not as an isolated problem but as a key component of social integration.

In some places, a housing model based on municipal cooperation ensures the accommodation of refugees, for example, the local government provides apartments free of charge, drawing on state normative support and involving civil partners. [7]

At the same time, there are secure collective accommodation facilities and shelters that provide 24-hour supervision and social, psychological and legal assistance, especially for victims of domestic violence or human trafficking. [8]

A number of organisations offer long-term housing programmes, typically lasting 3-6 months, accompanied by social work, partial coverage of living costs, and educational and mental well-being support services.

Others provide flexible, needs-based support, tailoring the duration of accommodation and the intensity of social work to individual needs, often involving peer mentors.

In addition, there are complex community and private accommodation services that provide comprehensive administrative, health and social integration support.

In parallel, there are crisis and integration programmes that provide immediate accommodation for people living on the streets, financial support based on need and fairness, with a focus on saving and close case management.

Finally, several organisations are not only focusing on supporting those who already have a rental contract, but are also seeking to facilitate access to first-time rentals with complex integration support.

Innovation in housing models

The good practices presented contain innovative elements in several respects, although these are often not entirely new types of models, but creative combinations of existing solutions. Innovation is primarily evident in the fact that housing is treated as an integral part of social integration, and multi-pillar, flexibly adaptable programmes are created for this purpose.

Housing models based on municipal cooperation, for example, combine the resources of local government, the state support system and the civil sphere: some municipalities provide municipal housing free of charge, the cost of which is covered by state subsidies, while civil society partners provide care for refugees.[9]

[7] With the approval of the Defence Committee, the local government draws down the state normative support and then enters into an agreement with a civil society organisation, entrusting it with the care of refugees. However, due to a regulatory amendment in August 2024, new entrants no longer have the opportunity to set up such a system.

[8] The organisation has created safe collective accommodation and protected houses by converting its own facilities.

[9] It is important to note that state normative support can basically be used for collective accommodation, so private accommodation-based arrangements are likely to be rare exceptions. According to the relevant regulations, subsidies can only

be claimed for private accommodation if at least 20 people can be accommodated at the given location, and this also requires the approval of the Defence Committee. Although the examples presented in the research confirm that this model is workable

Flexible, needs-based programmes tailor the intensity of social work and the duration of housing to each individual, often involving peer mentors who use their own experiences to help participants integrate. For example, in some cases, the programme includes a gradual reduction in housing support, while increasing employment support and preparation for independent financial planning.

Models that combine short-term accommodation with longer-term integration elements (e.g. savings, vocational training) that respond quickly to crisis situations are considered innovative, as they simultaneously solve the immediate housing crisis and prepare for a lasting solution.

Complex housing programmes (funded by AMIF) provide comprehensive administrative, health and integration services; for example, families moving out of collective accommodation not only receive rent support, but also participate in community programmes, Hungarian language courses and labour market training.

Innovation in digital tools

There are few specifics in the field of digital tools, but organisations operate internal registration systems, and some of them also operate cooperation platforms that facilitate the monitoring of support and the coordination of services. However, there is no common database, which hinders coordination and contributes to the phenomenon of "duplication of care", but stakeholders are convinced that only a solution that complies with GDPR requirements can be considered.

8. Capacity and needs

Support priorities in housing services

Based on the assessment of the organisations in our sample, the type of support that best assists their work, specifically in relation to their housing services, is direct funding for housing support, which 86 per cent of respondents considered "very important" and a further 10 per cent considered "important". This clearly reflects the fact that in a resource-constrained, project-based operating environment, financial backing is a basic requirement. Overall, 62 per cent consider policy and legal support to be important or very important.

and helps to make optimal use of local resources, since the amendment to the regulation in August 2024, it is no longer

possible for new entrants to set up such a system.

Demand for training, coordination and needs assessment tools

Three-quarters (76%) of organisations emphasised the vital role of coordination and cooperation platforms. Seven-tenths (71%) of respondents also consider the creation of shared databases to be important or very important, which is a particularly high proportion given the current data management practices typically found within organisations. At the same time, one in five organisations (19%) do not consider this necessary at all, which may indicate differing organisational needs and priorities, including data protection or autonomy considerations.

Experience in the field shows that the lack of a common database has long been a serious problem: as a result, clients are often "passed around", meaning that the same refugees receive parallel support from several organisations, while others – mainly those who are less well informed – miss out on certain opportunities. To address this problem, informal consultation forums have been set up in several places, which are used not only for information sharing but also for joint case management. The background to this situation is the fragmentation of the care system: especially in the early stages of the war, there were many independent services, benefits and programmes operating in parallel, which clients understandably sought to take full advantage of.

Staff training is a priority for a significant proportion of organisations: nearly two-thirds (62%) of respondents consider it important or very important. At the same time, more than a third (38%) see it as only slightly necessary, suggesting that capacity-building needs in this area vary from organisation to organisation.

The least important type of support was considered to be the provision of tools for assessing the housing needs of the target group – half of the respondents considered this to be only slightly necessary, and a quarter did not consider it necessary at all.

10. táblázat *Importance of factors supporting housing services*

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Financing of housing support	4%		10	86
Coordination/cooperation platforms		23	48	29
Shared database of clients	19	10	57	14
Policy/legal support	14	24	33	29
Staff training		38	33	29
Some means of assessing the housing needs of the target group	24	52	10	14

The results suggest that direct financial housing support and forms of cooperation that directly assist operations (e.g. platforms) are prioritised by organisations. Furthermore, capacity building – such as staff training – also enjoys significant support and cannot be classified as a less important element. The relatively low level of support for tools to assess the housing needs of the target group may be due, on the one hand, to the fact that they do not directly support operations. On the other hand, it may also be

due to the fact that such developments, although often featured in EU or other international projects,

do not always fit in with local operational realities. In an environment with limited resources and often struggling with a shortage of human resources, the introduction and maintenance of new tools can place an additional burden on organisations, while in practice it is not always certain that the results of the assessments can actually be translated into accessible, sustainable housing solutions.

Among the requests for "other forms of support", the respondent organisations highlighted elements that, on the one hand, aim to cover basic needs that complement the direct maintenance of housing (e.g. non-perishable food, hygiene products, medicines, vitamins, basic household appliances) and, on the other hand, the strengthening of operational capacities (e.g. ensuring the wages of social workers, covering transport and organisational costs).

Several respondents emphasised that the availability of freely usable resources and affordable housing in any form (market-rate rentals, municipal housing) would be of paramount importance. Some organisations also pointed out that the relevance of certain forms of support is highly dependent on the organisation: in some cases, for example, policy support is provided in-house or coordination platforms are already in place, while in others, the lack of such support poses a serious obstacle.

The quantitative data is thus supplemented by details provided by qualitative responses: behind the numbers, in addition to housing support, there is a strong emphasis on the need to maintain human and operational capacity and to provide flexible resources that directly support everyday life. These priorities are particularly important in an environment where resources are scarce and human resources are often lacking, as it is vital for organisations that the support available provides immediate and tangible assistance.

Identified gaps in the financing and human resources of organisations

Although we did not ask about this directly in the survey, the responses clearly reveal the shortcomings that determine the functioning of organisations in the field of housing support, which are also related to those presented in the previous chapter.

The most striking is the funding gap: securing the resources necessary to operate services proved to be by far the most important issue for organisations. Due to project-based, short-term funding, the sustainability of programmes is often questionable, creating uncertainty for both service providers and clients.

There are also challenges in terms of human resource capacity. Several organisations try to fill the gaps with volunteer work, and existing staff are often overworked. The emphasis on training needs suggests that reinforcement is needed not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of skills.

Finally, there are also shortcomings in terms of tools and infrastructure. Although most organisations operate their own internal registration systems, there are hardly any shared databases or standardised measurement tools available. This leads to a lack of coordination, duplication of effort and clients being "passed around". The lukewarm enthusiasm for competency assessment or needs assessment tools clearly shows that, for the under-resourced and overburdened civil sector, new tools are only valuable if they are truly usable and do not impose an additional administrative burden.

Overall, therefore, the lack of funding, human capacity and tools is a systemic weakness in refugee support services, which, together with the fragmentation of services, further hinders long-term,

sustainable integration.

Interest in future cooperation/testing SMART UA tools

Among the respondent organisations, the importance of tools for assessing the housing needs of the target group received more moderate support in previous questions, However, the majority of respondent organisations (71%) were open to the assessment tool developed within the SMART UA project specifically for refugees in Ukraine, provided that timing and capacity allowed for testing. A further quarter (24%) explicitly indicated that they would be happy to participate in testing. This suggests that, although the practical usefulness of developing such tools is questionable in a resource-constrained environment, there is interest in their application in the sector, given their targeted, relevant content and low administrative burden.

9. Inclusion

Groups receiving support

As mentioned earlier, the majority of respondent organisations (67%) provide general services to refugees in Ukraine, meaning that their activities are not limited to a smaller, specific group. However, some of them pay special attention to certain groups, most often women and mothers with young children, as well as adults of working age (33-33%). Particularly vulnerable groups, such as the elderly (29%), people with disabilities and Roma communities (5-5 organisations) are represented to a lesser extent among the target groups, while support for LGBTQ+ refugees is marginal (2 organisations).

Although most organisations make their services available to everyone in principle, actual access may vary due to legal, financial or programme conditions. For example, dual citizens are not eligible for certain housing programmes (e.g. those funded by the AMIF). In addition, capacity constraints and inequalities in geographical coverage may also influence who actually receives support.

This distribution partly reflects the demographic composition of Ukrainian refugees living in Hungary: 70-80% of refugees are women, most of whom arrived with their children, with children accounting for 35-40% and the elderly for 5-10%. There is a significant presence of Roma communities among those arriving from Transcarpathia, although this often remains hidden from official data collection. People with disabilities and LGBTQ+ refugees are often invisible in support systems.

The research revealed few targeted programmes for refugees with disabilities, although there are initiatives, such as Strázsa Tanya, which provide complex services combined with housing for this group (within the framework of the AMIF project), but they are not included in our research sample (they did not complete the questionnaire).

Evidence of targeted or adapted services

Overall, the study confirms that targeted or adapted services are present in housing support practices, but their availability and long-term impact are limited by certain eligibility criteria (e.g. refugee status), short-term, project-based funding and a lack of systemic coordination. Although nearly half of the organisations were able to adapt their services to the needs of vulnerable groups, these modifications were mostly aligned with the available support frameworks and legal requirements. Interventions respond flexibly to the changing circumstances of refugees, but their sustainability and real effectiveness are largely uncertain due to the unpredictability of funding cycles and the volatility of the legal environment. Due to the current fragmentation of the supply side, targeted services are unable to cover all real needs, creating the risk that certain groups, especially those without formal eligibility, will remain permanently excluded from the support system.

Gaps in inclusion or neglected needs

Although the majority of respondent organisations (67%) provide general services and do not limit their activities to a smaller target group, the eligibility criteria for official state and EU programmes (e.g. AMIF) exclude many refugee groups. For example, dual (Hungarian-Ukrainian) citizens in Transcarpathia are not eligible for either state-subsidised collective accommodation or AMIF-funded complex housing programmes based on private accommodation. At the same time, even with the implementation of the AMIF project, the majority of civil society organisations have dual citizens among their clients, for whom they provide a wide range of housing support (e.g. rent subsidies, mentoring).

As the exact number and socio-demographic background of Ukrainian refugees living in Hungary is unknown, we cannot be sure how inclusive housing support is or to what extent it is able to cover actual needs. Furthermore, this is not a systematic housing provision, but rather fragmented, parallel services, the geographical and programmatic accessibility of which can vary significantly. We can only hope that since the start of the war, the majority of those in need – even those with limited digital skills or who are illiterate – have been informed about these opportunities and have been able to access the services relevant to them.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

Key lessons learned from mapping housing services

The research showed that civil society and church organisations operating in Hungary provide a wide range of housing support services for Ukrainian refugees, from rent subsidies to comprehensive care in collective accommodation. A common feature of these services is that they are primarily project-based, funded mainly by the EU (AMIF), and therefore limited in both time and resources. As a result, housing security is often limited to the project period, which does not provide a sustainable solution for the households concerned in the long term.

The programmes examined also highlighted that models supporting independent housing mainly take the form of civil innovation, often in the form of partnerships, while the state's involvement continues to focus on the operation of collective accommodation. At the same time, the normative support provided by the state is exclusively linked to collective accommodation, thus neither encouraging innovative solutions that support independent housing nor providing scope for expanding eligibility. In fact, since the amendment to the regulation in August 2024, the conditions for access to state accommodation have been further restricted: while dual citizens have lost their right to accommodation, a more restrictive accommodation system has also been introduced for those with TP status (vulnerable groups – families with children, the elderly, the sick, people with disabilities).

At the same time, employment-related housing support has become one of the main entry points, but this model is highly selective, as it is only available to those who are in certified employment with an employer who agrees to submit the application for support. In addition to a verified employment relationship, a valid rental contract is a further condition for housing support, which can be a barrier for many families living informally. In the not uncommon case where the employer is also the landlord, the employment and housing relationships become intertwined, which can create a double dependency for the employee: losing their job can also mean losing their home. One advantage of this form of support is that it is not time-limited, i.e. it can last for as long as the employment relationship exists, so in an ideal case, if both parties are satisfied, it can contribute to the creation of independent housing.

The availability of services is significantly affected by a lack of capacity and resources, as well as the general crisis in the housing market: the lack of affordable housing and the drastic increase in sublet prices are systemic obstacles perceived by all stakeholders. This is exacerbated by landlords' negative attitudes, discrimination, legal and bureaucratic difficulties, and language barriers, which together further limit refugees' housing options.

However, the research also identified a number of good practices that treat housing not in isolation but as part of social integration, for example through social work, mentoring, psychosocial support or cooperation with local authorities. These complex models demonstrate that flexible, needs-based approaches can respond effectively to the diverse needs of refugees, but their sustainability is highly dependent on funding cycles and the regulatory environment.

Strategic measures for stakeholders and decision-makers

The mapping of housing services clearly indicated that the housing security of Ukrainian refugees living in Hungary is primarily hampered by systemic obstacles. Addressing these obstacles would primarily require government measures such as reforming state normative support to make it more flexible and extend it to private accommodation-based, community-based and innovative housing models; and broadening the scope of eligibility so that it is not limited solely to labour market status, but also takes into account real social needs. Furthermore, state and local government measures are needed to expand the supply of affordable housing, such as affordable rental programmes and the development of municipal housing stock, as the housing problems of refugees are closely linked to the structural crisis in the Hungarian housing market.

Beyond the above-mentioned issues, which are of particular importance, it may be more realistic in the Hungarian context to focus on areas where civil society and international actors have some room for manoeuvre to improve the system.

Realistic strategic recommendations in the Hungarian context:

1. Strengthening partnership models and cooperation

   The research has shown that cooperation between civil society, church, local government and international organisations results in effective and flexible responses. Strengthening these and involving the state more actively is essential for developing a coordinated and sustainable housing support system (for example, it is recommended to consciously develop the "chained" rent support solution, which was born out of a lack of resources among civil society organisations, with shared databases and referral mechanisms, and the involvement of local governments (e.g. mediation of vacant properties, assistance with maintenance).

2. Promoting longer-term financing cycles among international donors

   Due to the limited nature of state subsidies (collective accommodation) and the narrowing scope of eligibility, the need for longer financing periods can be justified to international sources (EU, UNHCR, private foundations), which provide a stable background for civil programmes.

3. Impact assessment and feedback

   A recommendation closely related to point 2 is the regular impact assessment of housing programmes and services (it would be important for impact assessment to be a mandatory element of AMIF projects, ensuring that not only the provision of services but also their long-term effectiveness can be measured and demonstrated).

4. Capacity building and knowledge sharing among organisations working in the field

   Joint training, workshops and experience sharing would strengthen the flexibility of the care system and reduce the losses associated with "restarting" from project to project. This includes documenting and disseminating good practices so that well-functioning models such as peer mentoring, complex support, or flexible rental support (e.g. needs-based, gradually decreasing support, pre-savings) become more widely available.

5. Data collection, sharing of state records

The biggest strategic shortcoming is the lack of accurate data: it is not known how many Ukrainian refugees currently live in Hungary, what their socio-demographic composition is, and what their housing needs are. This particularly jeopardises groups living in hidden, undignified conditions. It is the responsibility of the state to share the registered data with civil society and international partners.

6. Development of digital and community-based tools

   Access to information is key, especially for refugees with lower digital literacy. Accordingly, it is recommended to ensure access to services through multiple channels.

Recommendations for monitoring SMART UA (e.g. pilot sites, tool design)

Based on the results of the research, the following aspects should be considered in the development and monitoring of the SMART UA housing tool.

Among the test sites, the capital city should be given priority, in line with the higher proportion of refugees in the capital compared to the countryside. Furthermore, it is recommended to involve organisations with significant experience in operating housing programmes and services in the testing. As mentioned earlier, the organisations with housing experience in our sample were receptive to testing the SMART UA tool.

With regard to the content of the tool, it is worth emphasising that, in addition to exploring the current housing situation, it is also important to focus on identifying barriers to long-term housing independence (e.g. landlord discrimination, lack of stable income, bureaucratic obstacles) as well as the specific needs of vulnerable groups (e.g. the elderly, people with disabilities, Roma families, LGBTQ+ refugees). It may also be useful for the tool to map the level of access to services and the barriers to such access, including access to information (digital skills, language barriers).

Furthermore, during the pilot phase, it is recommended to collect feedback not only from organisations but also directly from refugees in order to strengthen the relevance of the tool.

The data collected by the tool can help to fill in the gaps in the data on Ukrainian refugees living in Hungary and even reveal hidden needs.

The sustainability of the SMART UA tool will be ensured if close cooperation between civil society organisations, local authorities and international partners is established during its development. Active use of the tool will be guaranteed if it provides genuine, targeted and effective assistance to the actors concerned in providing housing services.

11. Appendices

No.	Name of organisation	City/county	Contact person	Email	Type of organisation	Services	Target groups	Collaborations
1	Jesuit Refugee Service	Budapest	Emőke Takács, Emese Kővágó	info@jmsz.hu	Religious organisation/Religious organisation	Accommodation in private housing for at least 3 months, Legal assistance, Ad hoc financial support, Monthly housing allowance (covering a certain percentage of housing costs), Information services, Social work/mentoring, Finding accommodation, Translation/interpreting, Provision/purchase of furnishings	Elderly people (over 65), General services, Other groups	Hungarian civil society organisations (NGOs), international civil society organisations (NGOs), religious organisations, grassroots groups, legal defence organisations, regional or state authorities, other types of organisations
2	Evangelical Diaconia	Budapest	Attila Mészáros	mesata@gmail.com	Religious organisation/Religious organisation	Temporary accommodation, Private accommodation for at least 3 months, Occasional financial support, Monthly housing allowance (covering a certain percentage of housing costs), Mediation with landlords, Information provision, Social work/mentoring, Translation/interpretation, Provision/purchase of furnishings	Women (including mothers with young children), Adults (of general working age), Elderly people (over 65), People with disabilities, Members of Roma or other ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ people, They provide general services	Local government(s), Hungarian civil society organisations (NGOs), International civil society organisations (NGOs), Faith-based organisations/religious organisations, Businesses, Grassroots groups, Advocacy organisations, Regional or state authorities

3	Carpathian Basin Foundation	Eger	Eszter Égető	eszter.egeto@cfoundation.org	(NGO)	Mediation with landlords, Information services, Social work/mentoring,	General services	Local government(s), Hungarian civil society organisations (NGOs),

No.	Name of organisation	City/county	Contact person	Email	Type of organisation	Services	Target groups	Collaborations
						Finding sublets, Connecting tenants and landlords, Translation/interpretation, Providing/purchasing furnishings, Other		International civil society organisations (NGOs), Religious organisations/religious organisations, Businesses, Grassroots groups, Advocacy organisations, Regional or state authorities
4	From the Street to a Home! Association	Budapest	Balázs Krivácsy	info@utcarollakasba.hu	Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	Monthly housing allowance (covering a certain percentage of housing costs), Mediation with landlords, Information services, Social work/mentoring, Translation/interpreting, Provision/purchase of furnishings, Other	Women (including mothers with young children), Adults (of general working age), Members of Roma or other ethnic minorities	Hungarian civil society organisations (NGOs), International civil society organisations (NGOs), Religious organisations/religious organisations
5	Hungarian Ecumenical Aid Organisation	Budapest	Lili Lupsán	segelyszervezet@segelyszervezet.hu	Religious organisation/Religious organisation	At least 3 months' accommodation in collective housing, Legal assistance, Monthly housing allowance (covering a certain percentage of housing costs), Mediation with landlords, Information services, Social work/mentoring, Finding sublets, Connecting tenants and landlords, Translation/interpretation	Women (including mothers with young children), Adults (of general working age), Elderly people (over 65), People with disabilities	Local government(s), Hungarian civil society organisations (NGOs), International civil society organisations (NGOs), Religious organisations/religious organisations, Grassroots groups
6	Migration Aid	Esztergályhorváti	Ágnes Pakot	board@migaid.org, agnes.pakot@migaid.org	Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	Accommodation for at least 3 months in collective accommodation, Information service	Women (including mothers with young children), Elderly people (over 65), People with disabilities	Hungarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Regional or state authorities

7	Dévai Fogadó	Budapest	Márta Bolba	devaifogado@devaifogado.hu	Religious organisation/Religio	Ad hoc financial support, Monthly housing	Providing general services	Hungarian civil society organisations (NGOs),

No.	Name of organisation	City/county	Contact person	Email	Type of organisation	Services	Target groups	Collaborations
					us organisation	allowance (covering a certain percentage of housing costs), Information services, Social work/mentoring, Translation/interpreting		International civil society organisations (NGOs), Religious organisations
8	Catholic Caritas	Budapest	Balázs Szalma	office@caritas.org.hu	Religious organisation/Religious organisation	Monthly housing allowance (covering a certain percentage of housing costs), social work/mentoring, translation/interpreting	They provide general services	Hungarian civil society organisations (NGOs), Religious organisations/religious organisations
9	Menedék – Association for Migrants	Budapest	Kata Bognár	menedek@menedek.hu	Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	Legal assistance, Information services, Social work/mentoring, Finding accommodation, Connecting tenants and landlords, Translation/interpreting	They provide general services	Local government(s), Hungarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs), International non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Religious organisations, Businesses, Grassroots groups, Legal defence organisations, Regional or state authorities
10	Budapest Metropolitan Municipality	Budapest	Tamás Virág	virag.tamas@budapest.hu	Municipal Government	Mediation with landlords, Information services, Social work/mentoring, Finding sublets, Connecting tenants and landlords, Translation/interpretation, Providing/purchasing furnishings	Women (including mothers with young children), Adults (of general working age), Members of Roma or other ethnic minorities	Local government(s), Hungarian civil society organisations (NGOs), International civil society organisations (NGOs), Religious organisations/religious organisations, Legal defence organisations, Regional or state authorities

11	Fess Napfényt Association	Nagygeresd	Viktória Galambos	fessnapfenyt@gmail.com	Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	Accommodation in private lodgings for at least 3 months, Accommodation in collective lodgings for at least 3 months,	They provide general services	Local government(s), Hungarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs), International non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Religious

No.	Name of organisation	City/county	Contact person	Email	Type of organisation	Services	Target groups	Collaborations
						Information services, Social work/mentoring, Finding lodgings, Translation/interpreting, Provision/purchase of furnishings		organisations/religious organisations, Legal defence organisations
12	Bachtalo Drom Association	Budapest	Magdolna Szécsi	szecsi.magdolna0403@gmail.com	Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	Information services, social work/mentoring, finding accommodation, providing/purchasing furnishings	Women (including mothers with young children), Adults (of general working age), Elderly people (over 65), People with disabilities, Members of Roma or other ethnic minorities	Hungarian civil society organisations (NGOs), International civil society organisations (NGOs), Religious organisations/religious organisations, Businesses, Legal defence organisations