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SFM Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies

Evaluation Report

Evaluation of four projects from the Rapid Response Fund (RRF) call in 2023

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Abbreviations

CBA	Cost-Benefit Analysis
CEA	Cost-Effectiveness Analysis
CEA	Community Engagement and Accountability
CHF	Swiss Franc
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICAM	Including Children Affected by Migration
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Services
MSNA	Multi-Sector Needs Assessment
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PM+	Problem Management Plus
RIF	Resilience Innovation Facility
RRP	Regional Refugee Response Plan
RRF	Rapid Response Fund
SEM	State Secretariat for Migration
SEVAL	Swiss Evaluation Society
SOP	Standing Operating Procedures
Tdh	Terre des hommes
ToC	Theory of Change
TPD	Temporary Protection Directive

ToR	Terms of Reference
UASC	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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Summary

1. Background

The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) commissioned an evaluation of four projects funded under the Rapid Response Fund (RRF), a funding instrument within Switzerland's second contribution to selected European Union member states.

The RRF is designed as a flexible mechanism with a budget of a minimum of CHF 25 million to respond rapidly to emerging migration challenges. It aims to strengthen migration management structures in EU member states in situations of crisis and large-scale migratory movements; support urgent, short-term measures responding to unforeseen migration-related needs; reinforce the capacity of non-state actors to intervene rapidly with targeted actions in urgent situations; and prevent irregular secondary migration by improving conditions and management in first-arrival or transit countries.

The four projects evaluated were funded under the 2023 RRF call, the second of four calls launched so far by SEM under the second Swiss contribution. They were implemented by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Terres des hommes (Tdh), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia. The projects addressed migration issues related in particular to displacement caused by Russia's war against Ukraine. Across the portfolio, the projects focused on strengthening protection systems, improving access to services and supporting the socio-economic integration of refugees and displaced persons.

Project overview

Project	Countries	Start date	Duration	Budget
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)				
Support the integration of asylum seekers, refugees, and displaced persons.	HU, RO, LV, LT	Dec 2023	24 months	CHF 1.30m
Terres des hommes (Tdh)				
Building bridges, enhancing rights and opportunities for Ukrainian refugees.	HR, RO	Nov 2023	18 months	CHF 2.55m
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)				
Strengthen asylum procedures and promote the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees.	BG, HU, RO, SK	Dec 2023	12 months	CHF 2.86m
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)				
Supporting protection and integration of children and families in migration in Croatia.	HR	Dec 2023	24 months	CHF 0.86m

Source: Project documents.

2. Evaluation Objective

The evaluation of the four RRF 2023 projects has two main objectives:

- to assess how far each project has achieved its objectives in terms of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, and
- to generate cross-cutting findings to inform further development of the RRF, strengthen project monitoring, and guide future migration policy funding.

The evaluation is foremost accountability-oriented (summative) but also aims to generate findings and insights that are learning-oriented (formative) for future projects. The evaluation approach therefore combines individual project assessments with a synthesis that highlights similarities and differences, leading to recommendations for future mandates.

The evaluation responds to the 15 evaluation questions defined during the inception phase. They were drawn from the Terms of Reference and adjusted to support a consistent assessment across the four projects. Furthermore, the evaluation identifies lessons learned and good practices and provides recommendations for future RRF-funded projects.

3. Methodology

The evaluation followed a theory-oriented approach that considered both the overarching framework of the RRF and the specific characteristics and results of the four funded projects. The normative framework draws on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria, OECD DAC Standards and the evaluation standards of the Swiss Evaluation Society. A mixed-methods approach was used, with a focus on qualitative methods and triangulation of evidence from document review, interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys.

Document review: The document review included project proposals and design documents, progress reports, final reports, SEM monitoring reports, internal project documentation provided by implementers and the process evaluation of the RRF contribution.

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews with key informants, including project staff, representatives of the implementing partners, and other relevant stakeholders selected based on their involvement in and knowledge of the projects, were a core source of qualitative information for the evaluation. In total, 75 interviews were conducted involving close to 90 interviewees. The interviews were conducted both remotely and during the country visits in Croatia, Hungary, and Romania.

Focus group discussions: Seven focus group discussions (FGDs) were held to capture experiences and perceptions of the participants. Two FGDs took place in Hungary, with beneficiaries of the UNHCR and Tdh projects, and two in Romania with beneficiaries of the IFRC and Tdh projects; these groups consisted of refugees. In Croatia, given the project's more limited direct engagement with refugees, the three FGDs for the UNICEF project were instead conducted with institutional stakeholders.

Surveys: Two online surveys were conducted to capture the perspectives of key institutional stakeholders and refugees across the project portfolio. The institutional survey was distributed to 359 stakeholders, of whom 185 responded. The refugee survey targeted individuals aged 16 and above who had participated in at least one project activity among the IFRC, Tdh or UNHCR projects.

It was widely distributed by the implementing organisations through a range of channels and reached approximately 5'650 individuals, of whom 714 responded.

The evaluation was implemented largely as outlined in the inception report, with only minor adjustments. We gathered data and insights from various sources and perspectives, making efficient use of available time and resources to provide a solid basis for the evaluation. While the process was thorough, it is important to acknowledge a few challenges and limitations including that the sampling approach for the refugee survey relied on contact lists held by the implementing organisations and their partners, which may have introduced selection bias. Furthermore, the sample composition of the institutional survey had imbalances, including an overrepresentation of the implementing organisations and their partners.

4. Findings

Relevance

The four projects were relevant and useful, especially in helping to address urgent and practical needs of refugees and in strengthening the capacities of organisations involved in implementation. The migration context across the project countries justified the support provided. The large-scale arrival of people fleeing Ukraine placed pressure on accommodation, protection systems, education, livelihoods, health and social services. These pressures affected both refugees and host communities and justified the type of urgent, flexible support the RRF was designed to finance. While the emergency phase during 2022-2023 evolved, the case for support remained strong, shifting towards longer-term issues related to integration, education, psychosocial wellbeing, employment and accommodation.

Needs were identified through structured assessments, administrative and monitoring data, including the UNHCR-led Multi-Sector Needs Assessment Surveys, partner consultations and reported operational experience from the initial emergency response. The projects' objectives, approaches and instruments were aligned with the needs identified during design. Institutional stakeholders considered the projects highly relevant: around 90% agreed that the projects addressed refugees' most important needs, while 95% found that the approach was appropriate to the local context. The refugee survey also confirmed the relevance. It showed that needs continue to exist, especially in legal or administrative issues, job search and housing. Refugee participation in the design phase appears to have been limited in most cases; involvement during implementation was more direct, including as volunteers and contributors to activities.

Coherence

The projects were coherent with the wider policy and response frameworks. They supported the implementation of the EU Temporary Protection Directive by helping translate formal rights into practical access to services. They were also coherent with priorities set out in the Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plans, particularly in protection, inclusion and access to essential services. The portfolio was geographically broad and combined national or country-wide coverage with local interventions. In locations where several projects were active at the same time, overlap appears to have been limited.

The project-internal coordination was generally seen as effective for information exchange, problem-solving, and alignment. The strongest examples of effective coordination came from projects that brought public institutions, NGOs and specialised service providers into regular contact, including the

RomExpo model and the KATYA Hub in Romania, COMPASS Centres in Bulgaria, the UNICEF programme board in Croatia and the Protection and Inclusion Group in Slovakia. These mechanisms supported information-sharing, referrals and day-to-day problem-solving. Cooperation with public institutions was mixed, depending on the countries, and often based on existing relationships rather than formal arrangements.

At the same time, there were no specific or dedicated exchanges across the four RRF projects. Where interactions occurred, they resulted from previous collaborations or appeared incidental and ad hoc. This reflects the project designs, which did not envisage such collaboration, and the absence of incentives or mechanisms for structured exchange between the four projects. The portfolio can therefore be seen as a set of individual yet coherent interventions.

Effectiveness

The four projects contributed to the RRF objectives, particularly the objective of implementing urgent, short-term measures that can facilitate inclusion. The implementing partners reported that they achieved their intended results, with only minor exceptions, and reached target beneficiaries. The monitoring data suggest that the projects were effective, but it is less clear how far they contributed to higher-level outcomes and change – partly due to issues in the projects' monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

For refugees, the projects improved access to information, services and rights, and provided practical support in several areas. Legal and administrative assistance emerged as one of the most helpful services. Support related to health care and mental health care was also assessed positively by those who received it. Community events were appreciated, although seen as less directly useful than more practical forms of support. Educational, psychosocial and recreational activities for children and youth were generally considered helpful, as were language learning and employment-related support, although refugees' views on employment-related support were more reserved.

Institutional effects were more mixed. The implementing organisations and their partners appear to have strengthened their own capacities more clearly than public institutions. Respondents most often mentioned capacity building and staff development, improved skills, technical knowledge, hands-on experience, improved internal procedures and stronger partnerships. Respondents from public institutions reported more limited effects. For the implementers, the multi-country approach contributed to effectiveness mainly by enabling cross-country learning and adaptation.

Efficiency

The use of resources was generally appropriate. Across the projects, resources have been sufficient to deliver core activities and, in many cases, to reach or exceed planned targets. The available data did not allow for a detailed assessment of cost-benefit ratios or cost-effectiveness in the narrower economic sense, as costs were not systematically linked to monetised benefits or clearly defined service units.

Flexibility in the use of resources was seen as a benefit. The implementers adjusted resources or activities in response to policy shifts, delays, operational bottlenecks and emerging needs. Operational efficiency was strengthened through coordination hubs and one-stop shops, in-kind contributions, refugee involvement, regional expertise, common tools and monitoring systems.

Most institutional survey respondents considered project resources and management arrangements adequate and efficient. The multi-country design brought efficiency gains as it allowed to share

knowledge and tools, while it also introduced the need for coordination. Its efficiency benefits remain largely perception-based rather than measured. The cost-benefit analysis of IFRC job support services suggested that, under the assumptions used, the intervention is likely to be economically justified across a range of plausible scenarios.

Impact

The projects mainly helped refugees manage everyday life and reduced practical barriers to inclusion. The results of the refugee survey show that the majority of the respondents consider the support they received across different dimensions as helpful and beneficial; this was also confirmed in the focus group discussions with refugees.

Across the interviews, the institutional stakeholders often referred to better access to services, better ability to deal with administrative requirements, more stable housing, enrolment of children in school, and, in some cases, access to employment. They also described increased confidence and more social connections, especially for young people. The link between these observed changes and the projects was often plausible and, in many cases, direct.

Respondents in the institutional survey viewed the projects as particularly effective in providing refugees with clear information on how to navigate local services and in improving access to those services. More complex effects, such as social cohesion, acceptance and improved conditions for refugees to build up their lives, were also assessed positively, although somewhat less strongly. Public institutions were more cautious than implementing organisations and partners regarding these broader integration outcomes.

The projects were assessed positively in terms of reinforcing the capacity of non-state actors to respond rapidly and with targeted action in situations of urgent need. They also produced standards, tools and procedures that can strengthen institutional readiness for future migration-related crises, although the extent varies across countries and the extent of broader institutional and migration-management effects remains less clear.

While it seems plausible that the projects eased some of the immediate pressures and concerns influencing refugees' decisions to move elsewhere, the available evidence is insufficient to draw firm conclusions about their effect on irregular secondary migration. Decisions to remain in a country or move elsewhere are influenced mainly by factors outside the control of the projects, and Ukrainian refugees benefiting from the Temporary Protection Directive have, under certain conditions extended possibilities for mobility within the EU. The refugee survey suggests only limited onward movement among respondents.

Sustainability

The projects achieved a certain degree of sustainability, although not in the same way or to the same extent across all activities. Some activities can continue after the end of RRF funding, either in their original or in an adapted form. This is the case where products, tools, roles or approaches were taken up by public institutions or integrated into the routines of implementing organisations and partners. Examples include language support, child-friendly spaces and community-based activities, although these might only continue on a smaller scale.

There is evidence of institutional sustainability in several projects. In Croatia, UNICEF-supported tools and functions were embedded into national systems, including a standardised Croatian language test for migrant schoolchildren, an online course on inclusive education and the intercultural mediator role

in the Zagreb-Dugave reception centre. Other examples were reported in Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Slovakia. There is also evidence of organisational sustainability, as implementing organisations and partners retained knowledge, tools and experience acquired during the delivery of the projects.

Financial sustainability appears to be the most immediate risk across the portfolio. Many interviewees stated that services such as language classes, psychosocial support, interpretation or legal assistance will have to be continued at a reduced scale, if at all, due to budget constraints. Other factors influencing sustainability include the political and policy environment, the future of temporary protection status, and the willingness and capacity of public institutions to take over functions and continue activities.

5. Recommendations

Based on the evaluation's findings, the following recommendations were co-developed by SEM and the evaluation team, taking into account SEM's priorities and scope for action.

1. Encourage refugee participation throughout the project cycle.

Projects should involve refugees, refugee-led or refugee-oriented organisations more systematically throughout the project cycle, and local civil society actors can play an important role in facilitating such participation. Participation can help ensure that interventions remain relevant, responsive, and reflective of practical realities.

2. Encourage coordination capacity between institutions, NGOs and IOs in the wider response ecosystem.

Future projects should strengthen structured coordination with public authorities, NGOs, international organisations, civil society actors, and refugee communities to improve information sharing, clarify roles, and support whole-of-society approaches. Joint proposals of local authorities and NGOs could be encouraged.

3. Introduce light, structured collaboration by design between RRF projects.

Future RRF programming should encourage practical collaboration and knowledge exchange across projects through light-touch mechanisms such as inception and reflection workshops. Stronger links between projects could enhance mutual learning, identify synergies, and improve service delivery without creating unnecessary administrative burdens.

4. Encourage early reflection on what may last beyond RRF support.

While recognising the short-term nature of emergency funding, projects should consider from the outset which services, partnerships, capacities, or tools may realistically continue beyond the funding period. Early reflection and coordination with relevant stakeholders can help reduce avoidable disruptions and support continuity where feasible.

5. Refine M&E systems to better support results orientation.

M&E systems could be refined through clearer guidance on logical frameworks, indicators, baselines, targets, and data collection methods. While monitoring efforts need to remain proportionate in cost and focused on generating information that is actually used, more robust results frameworks can enhance accountability, learning, and evidence-based decision-making.

6. Improve the basis for economic and financial analysis in future projects.

Depending on expectations regarding future economic and financial analysis, collecting a small number of targeted data points could make assessments easier and more informative, without creating disproportionate data collection and reporting requirements. A pragmatic approach could involve piloting cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analyses for selected interventions.

Résumé

1. Contexte

Le Secrétariat d'État aux migrations (SEM) a mandaté une évaluation de quatre projets financés par le Rapid Response Fund (RRF), un instrument de financement relevant de la deuxième contribution de la Suisse à certains États membres de l'Union européenne.

Le RRF est conçu comme un mécanisme flexible doté d'un budget minimum de 25 millions de francs suisses (CHF), permettant de répondre rapidement aux défis migratoires émergents. Il vise à renforcer les structures de gestion des migrations dans les États membres de l'UE en situation de crise et de mouvements migratoires de grande ampleur, à soutenir des mesures urgentes et à court terme répondant à des besoins imprévus liés à la migration, à renforcer la capacité des acteurs non étatiques à intervenir rapidement au moyen d'actions ciblées dans des situations d'urgence et à prévenir la migration secondaire irrégulière en améliorant les conditions et la gestion dans les pays de première arrivée ou de transit.

Les quatre projets évalués ont été financés dans le cadre de l'appel à projets RRF 2023, le deuxième des quatre appels lancés par le SEM jusqu'à présent au titre de la deuxième contribution suisse. Ils ont été mis en œuvre par la Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge (FICR), Terres des hommes (Tdh), le Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés (HCR) et le Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance (UNICEF) en Bulgarie, en Croatie, en Hongrie, en Lettonie, en Lituanie, en Roumanie et en Slovaquie. Les projets ont traité des enjeux migratoires liés notamment aux déplacements de population provoqués par la guerre menée par la Russie contre l'Ukraine. Dans l'ensemble du portefeuille, les projets visaient à renforcer les systèmes de protection, à améliorer l'accès aux services et à soutenir l'inclusion socio-économique des réfugié-e-s et des personnes déplacées.

Aperçu des projets

Projet	Pays	Début	Durée	Budget
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge (FICR)				
Soutenir l'intégration des demandeur-euse-s d'asile, des réfugié-e-s et des personnes déplacées.	HU, RO, LV, LT	Déc 2023	24 mois	CHF 1.30m
Terres des hommes (Tdh)				
Créer des passerelles, renforcer les droits et les opportunités des réfugié-e-s ukrainien-ne-s.	HR, RO	Nov 2023	18 mois	CHF 2.55m
Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés (HCR)				
Renforcer les procédures d'asile et promouvoir l'inclusion socio-économique des réfugié-e-s.	BG, HU, RO, SK	Déc 2023	12 mois	CHF 2.86m
Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'enfance (UNICEF)				
Soutenir la protection et l'intégration des enfants et des familles migrantes en Croatie.	HR	Déc 2023	24 mois	CHF 0.86m

Source : Documentation des projets.

2. Objectifs de l'évaluation

L'évaluation des quatre projets RRF 2023 poursuit deux objectifs principaux :

- évaluer dans quelle mesure chaque projet a atteint ses objectifs en termes de pertinence, de cohérence, d'efficacité, d'efficience, d'impact et de durabilité ; et
- dégager des constatations transversales afin d'éclairer le développement futur du RRF, de renforcer le suivi des projets et d'orienter les futurs financements de la politique migratoire.

L'évaluation est avant tout axée sur la redevabilité (aspect sommatif), mais vise également à produire des constats et des enseignements à tirer (aspect formatif) pour les projets futurs. L'approche d'évaluation combine donc des appréciations individuelles des projets avec une synthèse mettant en évidence les similitudes et les différences, conduisant à des recommandations pour les futurs mandats.

L'évaluation répond aux 15 questions d'évaluation définies durant la phase de lancement. Celles-ci ont été tirées des Cahiers des charges et ajustées afin de soutenir une appréciation cohérente des quatre projets. En outre, l'évaluation identifie les enseignements tirés et les bonnes pratiques, et fournit des recommandations pour les futurs projets financés par le RRF

3. Méthodologie

L'évaluation a suivi une approche axée sur la théorie, qui a pris en compte à la fois le cadre d'ensemble du RRF ainsi que les caractéristiques et les résultats propres aux quatre projets financés. Le cadre normatif s'appuie sur les critères d'évaluation du Comité d'aide au développement de l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques (OCDE-CAD), sur les normes de l'OCDE-CAD ainsi que sur les normes d'évaluation de la Société suisse d'évaluation. Une approche méthodologique mixte a été utilisée, avec un accent sur les méthodes qualitatives et la triangulation des éléments probants issus de l'analyse documentaire, des entretiens, des discussions de groupe et des enquêtes.

Analyse documentaire : L'analyse documentaire a porté sur les propositions de projets et les documents de conception, les rapports d'avancement, les rapports finaux, les rapports de suivi du SEM, la documentation interne des projets fournie par les organisations de mise en œuvre ainsi que l'évaluation du processus de la contribution du RRF.

Entretiens : Des entretiens semi-directifs avec des informateur-rice-s clés, notamment des membres du personnel des projets, des partenaires de mise en œuvre et d'autres parties prenantes pertinentes sélectionnées en fonction de leur implication dans les projets et de leur connaissance de ceux-ci, ont constitué une source essentielle d'informations qualitatives pour l'évaluation. Au total, 75 entretiens ont été réalisés avec près de 90 personnes interrogées. Les entretiens ont été menés à distance ainsi que lors des visites de terrain en Croatie, en Hongrie et en Roumanie.

Discussions de groupe : Sept discussions de groupe (focus group discussions, FGD) ont été organisées afin de recueillir les expériences et perceptions des participant-e-s. Deux FGD ont eu lieu en Hongrie avec des bénéficiaires des projets du HCR et de Tdh, et deux en Roumanie avec des bénéficiaires des projets de la FICR et de Tdh ; ces groupes étaient composés de réfugié-e-s. En Croatie, compte tenu de l'engagement direct plus limité du projet auprès des réfugié-e-s, les trois FGD du projet UNICEF ont été menées avec des acteurs institutionnels.

Enquêtes : Deux enquêtes en ligne ont été réalisées afin de recueillir les points de vue des principaux acteurs institutionnels et des réfugié-e-s de l'ensemble du portefeuille de projets. L'enquête institutionnelle a été diffusée auprès de 359 parties prenantes, dont 185 ont répondu. L'enquête auprès des réfugié-e-s s'adressait aux personnes âgées de 16 ans et plus ayant participé à au moins une activité de projet dans le cadre des projets de la FICR, de Tdh ou du HCR. Elle a été largement diffusée par les organisations de mise en œuvre via différents canaux et a atteint environ 5 650 personnes, dont 714 ont répondu.

L'évaluation a été mise en œuvre dans une large mesure conformément à ce qui était prévu dans le rapport de lancement, avec seulement des ajustements mineurs. Nous avons recueilli des données et des enseignements provenant de diverses sources et perspectives, en utilisant efficacement le temps et les ressources disponibles afin de fournir une base solide pour l'évaluation. Bien que le processus ait été approfondi, il convient de reconnaître certains défis et limites, notamment le fait que l'approche d'échantillonnage utilisée pour l'enquête auprès des réfugié-e-s reposait sur des listes de contacts détenues par les organisations de mise en œuvre et leurs partenaires, ce qui a pu introduire un biais de sélection. En outre, la composition de l'échantillon de l'enquête institutionnelle présentait certains déséquilibres, notamment une surreprésentation des organisations de mise en œuvre et de leurs partenaires.

4. Constatation

Pertinence

Les quatre projets étaient pertinents et utiles, en particulier pour répondre aux besoins urgents et concrets des réfugié-e-s et pour renforcer les capacités des organisations impliquées dans leur mise en œuvre. Le contexte migratoire dans les pays concernés justifiait le soutien apporté. L'arrivée massive de personnes fuyant l'Ukraine a exercé une pression sur les dispositifs d'hébergement, les systèmes de protection, l'éducation, les moyens de subsistance, les services de santé et les services sociaux. Ces pressions ont touché à la fois les réfugié-e-s et les communautés d'accueil et justifiaient le type de soutien urgent et flexible que le RRF a été conçu pour financer. Si la phase d'urgence de 2022-2023 a évolué, la nécessité du soutien est restée forte, en se déplaçant vers des enjeux de plus long terme liés à l'intégration, à l'éducation, au bien-être psychosocial, à l'emploi et au logement.

Les besoins ont été identifiés au moyen d'évaluations structurées, de données administratives et de suivi, notamment les enquêtes d'évaluation multisectorielle des besoins (Multi-Sector Needs Assessment Surveys) dirigées par le HCR, de consultations avec les partenaires et de l'expérience opérationnelle acquise lors de la réponse d'urgence initiale. Les objectifs, les approches et les instruments des projets étaient alignés sur les besoins identifiés lors de leur conception. Les acteurs institutionnels ont jugé les projets très pertinents : environ 90 % ont estimé qu'ils répondaient aux besoins les plus importants des réfugié-e-s, tandis que 95 % ont considéré que l'approche était adaptée au contexte local. L'enquête auprès des réfugié-e-s a également confirmé cette pertinence. Elle a montré que des besoins subsistent, notamment en matière de questions juridiques ou administratives, de recherche d'emploi et de logement. La participation des réfugié-e-s à la phase de conception semble avoir été limitée dans la plupart des cas ; leur implication pendant la mise en œuvre a été plus directe, notamment en tant que bénévoles et contributeur-trice-s aux activités.

Cohérence

Les projets étaient cohérents avec les cadres plus larges de politiques et de réponse. Ils ont soutenu la mise en œuvre de la Directive européenne sur la protection temporaire en contribuant à transformer

des droits formels en un accès effectif aux services. Ils étaient également cohérents avec les priorités définies dans les Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plans, en particulier dans les domaines de la protection, de l'inclusion et de l'accès aux services essentiels. Le portefeuille couvrait une vaste zone géographique et combinait une couverture nationale ou à l'échelle du pays avec des interventions locales. Dans les lieux où plusieurs projets étaient actifs simultanément, les redondances semblent avoir été limités.

La coordination interne aux projets a généralement été considérée comme efficace pour l'échange d'informations, la résolution de problèmes et l'alignement des interventions. Les exemples les plus probants de coordination efficace provenaient de projets réunissant régulièrement institutions publiques, ONG et prestataires de services spécialisés, notamment le modèle RomExpo et le Hub KATYA en Roumanie, les centres COMPASS en Bulgarie, le comité de pilotage du programme UNICEF en Croatie et le Protection and Inclusion Group en Slovaquie. Ces mécanismes ont favorisé le partage d'informations, les orientations vers les services appropriés et la résolution des problèmes opérationnels quotidiens. La coopération avec les institutions publiques était plus variable selon les pays et reposait souvent sur des relations préexistantes plutôt que sur des dispositifs formels.

Dans le même temps, aucun échange spécifique ou dédié n'a eu lieu entre les quatre projets RRF. Lorsque des interactions ont existé, elles résultaient de collaborations antérieures ou semblaient ponctuelles et ad hoc. Cela reflète la conception des projets, qui ne prévoyait pas une telle collaboration, ainsi que l'absence d'incitations ou de mécanismes permettant des échanges structurés entre les quatre projets. Le portefeuille peut ainsi être considéré comme un ensemble d'interventions individuelles mais cohérentes.

Efficacité

Les quatre projets ont contribué aux objectifs du RRF, en particulier à l'objectif consistant à mettre en œuvre des mesures urgentes et à court terme susceptibles de favoriser l'inclusion. Les partenaires de mise en œuvre ont indiqué avoir atteint les résultats attendus, à quelques exceptions mineures près, et avoir atteint les bénéficiaires ciblés. Les données de suivi suggèrent que les projets ont été efficaces, mais il est moins évident dans quelle mesure ils ont contribué à des résultats et changements de niveau supérieur, notamment en raison de certaines limites des cadres de suivi et d'évaluation.

Pour les réfugié-e-s, les projets ont amélioré l'accès à l'information, aux services et aux droits, tout en fournissant un soutien pratique dans plusieurs domaines. L'assistance juridique et administrative s'est révélée être l'un des services les plus utiles. Le soutien en matière de soins de santé et de santé mentale a également été évalué positivement par les bénéficiaires. Les événements communautaires ont été appréciés, bien qu'ils aient été jugés moins directement utiles que les formes de soutien plus concrètes. Les activités éducatives, psychosociales et récréatives destinées aux enfants et aux jeunes ont généralement été considérées comme utiles, de même que les cours de langue et l'accompagnement lié à l'emploi, même si les réfugié-e-s se sont montré-e-s plus réservé-e-s concernant ce dernier aspect.

Les effets institutionnels ont été plus nuancés. Les organisations de mise en œuvre et leurs partenaires semblent avoir renforcé leurs propres capacités plus clairement que les institutions publiques. Les répondants ont le plus souvent mentionné le renforcement des capacités et le développement du personnel, l'amélioration des compétences, des connaissances techniques, de l'expérience pratique, des procédures internes et des partenariats. Les répondants issus des institutions publiques ont signalé des effets plus limités. Pour les organisations de mise en œuvre,

l'approche multi-pays a contribué à l'efficacité principalement en facilitant l'apprentissage et l'adaptation entre pays.

Efficience

L'utilisation des ressources a généralement été appropriée. Dans l'ensemble des projets, les ressources ont été suffisantes pour réaliser les activités principales et, dans de nombreux cas, pour atteindre ou dépasser les objectifs prévus. Les données disponibles ne permettaient pas une évaluation détaillée des rapports coûts-bénéfices ou du rapport coût-efficacité au sens économique strict, les coûts n'étant pas systématiquement reliés à des bénéfices monétarisés ou à des unités de service clairement définies.

La flexibilité dans l'utilisation des ressources a été perçue comme un avantage. Les organisations de mise en œuvre ont adapté les ressources ou les activités en réponse aux évolutions des politiques, aux retards, aux contraintes opérationnelles et aux besoins émergents. L'efficience opérationnelle a été renforcée grâce à des centres de coordination et des guichets uniques, à des contributions en nature, à l'implication des réfugié-e-s, à l'expertise régionale ainsi qu'à des outils et systèmes de suivi communs.

La majorité des répondant-e-s à l'enquête institutionnelle a considéré les ressources et les modalités de gestion des projets comme adéquates et efficientes. La conception multi-pays a généré des gains d'efficience en permettant le partage des connaissances et des outils, tout en introduisant des besoins de coordination supplémentaires. Les bénéfices en matière d'efficience reposent toutefois davantage sur des perceptions que sur des mesures objectives. L'analyse coûts-bénéfices des services de soutien à l'emploi de la FICR suggère que, selon les hypothèses retenues, l'intervention est probablement justifiée sur le plan économique dans différents scénarios plausibles.

Impact

Les projets ont principalement aidé les réfugié-e-s à gérer leur vie quotidienne et à réduire les obstacles pratiques à leur inclusion. Les résultats de l'enquête auprès des réfugié-e-s montrent que la majorité des répondant-e-s considèrent que le soutien reçu dans différents domaines a été utile et bénéfique ; cette constatation a également été confirmée lors des discussions de groupe avec les réfugié-e-s.

Au cours des entretiens, les acteurs institutionnels ont fréquemment mentionné un meilleur accès aux services, une meilleure capacité à répondre aux exigences administratives, une plus grande stabilité du logement, la scolarisation des enfants et, dans certains cas, l'accès à l'emploi. Ils ont également relevé une confiance accrue et un renforcement des liens sociaux, en particulier chez les jeunes. Le lien entre ces changements observés et les projets était souvent plausible et, dans de nombreux cas, direct.

Les répondant-e-s à l'enquête institutionnelle ont considéré les projets comme particulièrement efficaces pour fournir aux réfugié-e-s des informations claires sur la manière d'accéder aux services locaux et pour améliorer l'accès à ces services. Des effets plus complexes, tels que la cohésion sociale, l'acceptation et l'amélioration des conditions permettant aux réfugié-e-s de reconstruire leur vie, ont également été évalués positivement, bien que de manière un peu moins marquée. Les institutions publiques se sont montrées plus prudentes que les organisations de mise en œuvre et leurs partenaires quant à ces résultats plus larges en matière d'intégration.

Les projets ont été évalués positivement en ce qui concerne le renforcement de la capacité des acteurs non étatiques à répondre rapidement et de manière ciblée à des situations d'urgence. Ils ont également produit des normes, des outils et des procédures susceptibles de renforcer la préparation institutionnelle face à de futures crises migratoires, même si l'ampleur de ces effets varie selon les pays et que les effets institutionnels plus larges sur la gestion des migrations demeurent moins clairs.

Bien qu'il soit plausible que les projets aient atténué certaines pressions immédiates et préoccupations influençant les décisions des réfugié-e-s de partir ailleurs, les éléments de preuve disponibles sont insuffisants pour tirer des conclusions fermes quant à leur effet sur la migration secondaire irrégulière. Les décisions de rester dans un pays ou de partir ailleurs sont principalement influencées par des facteurs échappant au contrôle des projets, et les réfugié-e-s ukrainien-ne-s bénéficiant de la Directive sur la protection temporaire disposent, sous certaines conditions, de possibilités étendues de mobilité au sein de l'Union européenne. L'enquête auprès des réfugié-e-s indique par ailleurs une mobilité ultérieure limitée parmi les répondant-e-s.

Durabilité

Les projets ont atteint un certain degré de durabilité, même si celle-ci ne s'est pas manifestée de la même manière ni dans la même mesure pour toutes les activités. Certaines activités peuvent se poursuivre après la fin du financement du RRF, soit sous leur forme initiale, soit sous une forme adaptée. C'est le cas lorsque des produits, outils, fonctions ou approches ont été repris par les institutions publiques ou intégrés dans les pratiques habituelles des organisations de mise en œuvre et de leurs partenaires. Parmi les exemples figurent le soutien linguistique, les espaces adaptés aux enfants et les activités communautaires, même si leur poursuite pourrait se faire à plus petite échelle.

Des éléments attestant d'une durabilité institutionnelle ont été observés dans plusieurs projets. En Croatie, les outils et fonctions soutenus par l'UNICEF ont été ancrés dans les systèmes nationaux, notamment un test standardisé de langue croate destiné aux enfants migrants scolarisés, un cours en ligne sur l'éducation inclusive et la fonction de médiateur-trice interculturel-le au centre d'accueil de Zagreb-Dugave. D'autres exemples ont été signalés en Bulgarie, en Lituanie et en Slovaquie. Des éléments de durabilité organisationnelle ont également été constatés, les organisations de mise en œuvre et leurs partenaires ayant conservé les connaissances, les outils et l'expérience acquis lors de la réalisation des projets.

La durabilité financière apparaît comme le risque le plus immédiat à l'échelle du portefeuille. De nombreuses personnes interrogées ont indiqué que des services tels que les cours de langue, le soutien psychosocial, l'interprétation ou l'assistance juridique devront être maintenus à une échelle réduite, voire interrompus, en raison de contraintes budgétaires. Parmi les autres facteurs influençant la durabilité figurent l'environnement politique et réglementaire, l'avenir du statut de protection temporaire ainsi que la volonté et la capacité des institutions publiques à reprendre certaines fonctions et à poursuivre les activités.

5. Recommandations

Sur la base des constatations de l'évaluation, les recommandations suivantes ont été élaborées conjointement par le SEM et l'équipe d'évaluation, en tenant compte des priorités du SEM et de sa marge d'action.

1. Encourager la participation des réfugié-e-s tout au long du cycle de projet.

Les projets devraient associer de manière plus systématique les réfugié-e-s ainsi que les organisations dirigées par des réfugié-e-s ou proches des réfugié-e-s tout au long du cycle de projet. Les acteurs locaux de la société civile peuvent jouer un rôle important pour faciliter cette participation. Celle-ci peut contribuer à garantir que les interventions restent pertinentes, adaptées aux besoins et ancrées dans les réalités pratiques.

2. Encourager les capacités de coordination entre les institutions, les ONG et les organisations internationales dans l'écosystème global d'intervention.

Les futurs projets devraient renforcer la coordination structurée avec les autorités publiques, les ONG, les organisations internationales, les acteurs de la société civile et les communautés de réfugié-e-s afin d'améliorer le partage d'informations, de clarifier les rôles et de soutenir des approches mobilisant l'ensemble de la société. Les propositions conjointes émanant d'autorités locales et d'ONG pourraient être encouragées.

3. Prévoir dès la conception une collaboration légère et structurée entre les projets RRF.

Les futurs programmes RRF devraient encourager la collaboration pratique et les échanges de connaissances entre les projets au moyen de mécanismes légers, tels que des ateliers de lancement et de réflexion. Des liens plus étroits entre les projets pourraient renforcer l'apprentissage mutuel, identifier des synergies et améliorer la prestation des services sans créer de charges administratives inutiles.

4. Encourager une réflexion précoce sur ce qui pourrait perdurer au-delà du soutien du RRF.

Tout en reconnaissant la nature à court terme du financement d'urgence, les projets devraient examiner dès le départ quels services, partenariats, capacités ou outils pourraient raisonnablement être maintenus au-delà de la période de financement. Une réflexion précoce et une coordination avec les acteurs concernés peuvent contribuer à réduire les interruptions évitables et à soutenir la continuité lorsque cela est possible.

5. Affiner les systèmes de suivi et d'évaluation afin de mieux soutenir l'orientation vers les résultats.

Les systèmes de suivi et d'évaluation pourraient être améliorés grâce à des orientations plus claires concernant les cadres logiques, les indicateurs, les valeurs de référence, les cibles et les méthodes de collecte des données. Bien que les efforts de suivi doivent rester proportionnés en termes de coûts et axés sur la production d'informations réellement utilisées, des cadres de résultats plus robustes peuvent renforcer la redevabilité, l'apprentissage et la prise de décision fondée sur des données probantes.

6. Améliorer la base des analyses économiques et financières dans les projets futurs.

Selon les attentes relatives aux futures analyses économiques et financières, la collecte d'un nombre limité de données ciblées pourrait faciliter les évaluations et les rendre plus instructives, sans créer d'exigences disproportionnées en matière de collecte et de reporting. Une approche pragmatique pourrait consister à tester des analyses coûts-bénéfices ou coût-efficacité pour certaines interventions sélectionnées.

Zusammenfassung

1. Hintergrund

Das Staatssekretariat für Migration (SEM) beauftragte eine Evaluation von vier Projekten, die über den Rapid Response Fund (RRF) finanziert wurden. Der RRF ist ein Finanzierungsinstrument im Rahmen des zweiten Schweizer Beitrags an ausgewählte Mitgliedstaaten der Europäischen Union.

Der RRF ist als flexibler Mechanismus mit einem Mindestbudget von CHF 25 Millionen konzipiert, um rasch auf neu entstehende migrationsbezogene Herausforderungen reagieren zu können. Er zielt darauf ab, die Strukturen des Migrationsmanagements in EU-Mitgliedstaaten in Krisensituationen und bei grossen Migrationsbewegungen zu stärken; dringende kurzfristige Massnahmen zur Bewältigung unvorhergesehener migrationsbezogener Bedürfnisse zu unterstützen; die Kapazitäten nichtstaatlicher Akteurinnen und Akteure für rasche und gezielte Interventionen in Notsituationen zu stärken; sowie irreguläre Sekundärmigration durch die Verbesserung der Bedingungen und des Managements in Erstankunfts- oder Transitländern zu verhindern.

Die vier evaluierten Projekte wurden im Rahmen des RRF-Aufrufs 2023 finanziert, dem zweiten von bislang vier Aufrufen, die das SEM im Rahmen des zweiten Schweizer Beitrags lanciert hat. Sie wurden von der Internationalen Föderation der Rotkreuz- und Rothalbmondgesellschaften (IFRC), Terres des hommes (Tdh), dem Hohen Flüchtlingskommissar der Vereinten Nationen (UNHCR) und dem Kinderhilfswerk der Vereinten Nationen (UNICEF) in Bulgarien, Kroatien, Lettland, Litauen, Rumänien, der Slowakei und Ungarn umgesetzt. Die Projekte befassten sich mit migrationsbezogenen Herausforderungen, insbesondere mit Fluchtbewegungen infolge des russischen Krieges gegen die Ukraine. Über das gesamte Portfolio hinweg konzentrierten sich die Projekte auf die Stärkung von Schutzsystemen, die Verbesserung des Zugangs zu Dienstleistungen sowie die Förderung der sozioökonomischen Integration von Geflüchteten und vertriebenen Personen.

Projektübersicht

Projekt	Länder	Startdatum	Dauer	Budget
Internationale Föderation der Rotkreuz- und Rothalbmondgesellschaften (IFRC)				
Unterstützung der Integration von Asylsuchenden, Geflüchteten und vertriebenen Personen.	HU, RO, LV, LT	Dez 2023	24 Monate	CHF 1.30m
Terres des hommes (Tdh)				
Brücken bauen, Rechte und Chancen für ukrainische Geflüchtete stärken.	HR, RO	Nov 2023	18 Monate	CHF 2.55m
Hoher Flüchtlingskommissar der Vereinten Nationen (UNHCR)				
Stärkung der Asylverfahren und Förderung der sozioökonomischen Integration von Geflüchteten.	BG, HU, RO, SK	Dez 2023	12 Monate	CHF 2.86m
Kinderhilfswerk der Vereinten Nationen (UNICEF)				
Unterstützung des Schutzes und der Integration von Kindern und Familien mit Migrationserfahrung in Kroatien.	HR	Dez 2023	24 Monate	CHF 0.86m

Quelle: Projektdokumente.

2. Evaluationsziel

Die Evaluation der vier RRF-2023-Projekte verfolgt zwei Hauptziele:

- zu beurteilen, inwieweit jedes Projekt seine Ziele hinsichtlich Relevanz, Kohärenz, Wirksamkeit, Effizienz, Wirkung und Nachhaltigkeit erreicht hat; und
- projektübergreifende Erkenntnisse zu gewinnen, als Beitrag zur Weiterentwicklung des RRF, das Projektmonitoring zu stärken und künftige Finanzierung im Bereich der Migrationspolitik zu steuern.

Die Evaluation ist in erster Linie rechenschaftsorientiert (summativ), soll jedoch auch lernorientierte Erkenntnisse und Einsichten für künftige Projekte liefern (formativ). Der Evaluationsansatz kombiniert daher Einzelbewertungen der Projekte mit einer Synthese, die Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede hervorhebt und zu Empfehlungen für künftige Mandate führt.

Die Evaluation beantwortet 15 Evaluationsfragen, die während der Konzeptionsphase definiert wurden. Sie wurden aus dem Pflichtenheft abgeleitet und angepasst, um eine konsistente Beurteilung über die vier Projekte hinweg zu ermöglichen. Darüber hinaus arbeitet die Evaluation Lernerfahrungen und bewährte Praktiken heraus und formuliert Empfehlungen für künftige RRF-finanzierte Projekte.

3. Methodik

Die Evaluation folgte einem theoriebasierten Ansatz, der sowohl den übergeordneten Rahmen des RRF als auch die spezifischen Merkmale und Ergebnisse der vier finanzierten Projekte berücksichtigte. Der normative Bezugsrahmen stützt sich auf die Evaluationskriterien des Entwicklungsausschusses der Organisation für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (OECD-DAC), die OECD-DAC-Standards sowie die Evaluationsstandards der Schweizerischen Evaluationsgesellschaft. Es wurde ein Mixed-Methods-Ansatz angewendet, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf qualitativen Methoden und der Triangulation von Erkenntnissen aus Dokumentenanalysen, Interviews, Fokusgruppendiskussionen und Befragungen lag.

Dokumentenanalyse: Die Dokumentenanalyse umfasste Projektanträge und Projektdesign-Dokumente, Fortschrittsberichte, Abschlussberichte, Monitoringberichte des SEM, von den Umsetzungsorganisationen bereitgestellte interne Projektdokumentationen sowie die Prozessevaluation des RRF-Beitrags.

Interviews: Halbstrukturierte Interviews mit Schlüsselpersonen, darunter Projektmitarbeitende, Vertreterinnen und Vertreter der Umsetzungsorganisationen sowie weitere relevante Anspruchsgruppen, die aufgrund ihrer Beteiligung an den Projekten und ihrer Kenntnisse über diese ausgewählt wurden, bildeten eine zentrale Quelle qualitativer Informationen für die Evaluation. Insgesamt wurden 75 Interviews mit nahezu 90 Interviewpartnerinnen und Interviewpartnern durchgeführt. Die Interviews fanden sowohl virtuell als auch während der Länderbesuche in Kroatien, Rumänien sowie Ungarn statt.

Fokusgruppendiskussionen: Sieben Fokusgruppendiskussionen (FGD) wurden durchgeführt, um Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen der Teilnehmenden zu erfassen. Zwei FGD fanden in Ungarn mit Begünstigten der UNHCR- und Tdh-Projekte statt, und zwei weitere in Rumänien mit Begünstigten der IFRC- und Tdh-Projekte; diese Gruppen bestanden aus Geflüchteten. Aufgrund der begrenzteren direkten Einbindung von Geflüchteten im UNICEF-Projekt wurden die drei FGD in Kroatien demgegenüber mit Vertreterinnen und Vertretern diverser Institutionen umgesetzt.

Befragungen: Um die Perspektiven wichtiger institutioneller Anspruchsgruppen sowie von Geflüchteten im gesamten Projektportfolio zu erfassen, wurden zwei Online-Befragungen durchgeführt. Die institutionelle Befragung wurde an 359 Personen versandt, von denen 185 antworteten. Die Befragung unter Geflüchteten richtete sich an Personen ab 16 Jahren, die an mindestens einer Projektaktivität im Rahmen der IFRC-, Tdh- oder UNHCR-Projekte teilgenommen hatten. Sie wurde von den Umsetzungsorganisationen über verschiedene Kanäle breit verteilt und erreichte rund 5'650 Personen, von denen 714 an der Befragung teilnahmen.

Die Evaluation wurde mit Ausnahme nur geringfügiger Anpassungen wie im Inception Report vorgesehen umgesetzt. Daten und Erkenntnisse wurden aus unterschiedlichen Quellen und Perspektiven gesammelt, wobei die verfügbaren Zeit- und Ressourcenmittel effizient genutzt wurden. So wurde eine solide Grundlage für die Evaluation geschaffen. Dennoch ist auf einige Herausforderungen und Einschränkungen hinzuweisen. So stützte sich die Stichprobenziehung für die Befragung von Geflüchteten auf Kontaktlisten der Umsetzungsorganisationen und ihrer Partnerorganisationen, was zu einer Selektionsverzerrung geführt haben könnte. Darüber hinaus wies die Zusammensetzung der Stichprobe der institutionellen Befragung Ungleichgewichte auf, darunter eine Überrepräsentation der Umsetzungs- und Partnerorganisationen.

4. Ergebnisse

Relevanz

Die vier Projekte waren relevant und nützlich, insbesondere zur Deckung dringender und praktischer Bedürfnisse von Geflüchteten sowie zur Stärkung der Kapazitäten der an der Umsetzung beteiligten Organisationen. Der Migrationskontext in den Projektländern rechtfertigte die bereitgestellte Unterstützung. Die grosse Zahl von Menschen, die vor dem Krieg Russlands gegen die Ukraine flohen, setzte Unterbringungskapazitäten, Schutzsysteme, Bildung, Existenzsicherung sowie Gesundheits- und Sozialdienste unter Druck. Diese Belastungen betrafen sowohl Geflüchtete als auch Aufnahmegemeinschaften und rechtfertigten die Art der dringenden und flexiblen Unterstützung, für deren Finanzierung der RRF geschaffen wurde. Während sich die Notfallphase in den Jahren 2022-2023 weiterentwickelte, blieb der Unterstützungsbedarf hoch und verlagerte sich zunehmend auf längerfristige Themen wie Integration, Bildung, psychosoziales Wohlbefinden, Beschäftigung und Wohnen.

Die Bedürfnisse wurden durch strukturierte Bedarfsanalysen, Verwaltungs- und Monitoringdaten, einschliesslich der von UNHCR geleiteten Multi-Sector Needs Assessment Surveys, Konsultationen mit Partnerorganisationen sowie operative Erfahrungen aus der ersten Nothilfephase ermittelt. Die Ziele, Ansätze und Instrumente der Projekte waren auf die bei der Projektkonzeption identifizierten Bedürfnisse abgestimmt. Die institutionellen Anspruchsgruppen bewerteten die Projekte als sehr relevant: Rund 90 % stimmten zu, dass die Projekte die wichtigsten Bedürfnisse der Geflüchteten adressierten, während 95 % den Ansatz als dem lokalen Kontext angemessen betrachteten. Auch die Befragung von Geflüchteten bestätigte die Relevanz. Sie zeigte, dass weiterhin Bedürfnisse bestehen, insbesondere in Bezug auf rechtliche oder administrative Fragen, Arbeitssuche und Wohnraum. Die Beteiligung von Geflüchteten während der Konzeptionsphase scheint in den meisten Fällen begrenzt gewesen zu sein; während der Umsetzung waren sie direkter eingebunden, unter anderem als Freiwillige und Mitwirkende an Aktivitäten.

Kohärenz

Die Projekte standen im Einklang mit den übergeordneten Politik- und Handlungsrahmen. Sie unterstützten die Umsetzung der EU-Richtlinie über den vorübergehenden Schutz, indem sie dazu beitrugen, formale Rechte in einen tatsächlichen Zugang zu Dienstleistungen zu übersetzen. Sie entsprachen zudem den Prioritäten der Regional Refugee Response Plans für die Ukraine, insbesondere in den Bereichen Schutz, Inklusion und Zugang zu grundlegenden Dienstleistungen. Das Portfolio deckte ein breites geografisches Gebiet ab und kombinierte nationale beziehungsweise landesweite Reichweite mit lokalen Interventionen. Dort, wo mehrere Projekte gleichzeitig aktiv waren, scheinen Überschneidungen begrenzt gewesen zu sein.

Die projektinterne Koordination wurde allgemein als wirksam für den Informationsaustausch, die Problemlösung und die Abstimmung der Aktivitäten angesehen. Besonders starke Beispiele wirksamer Koordination fanden sich in Projekten, die öffentliche Institutionen, NGOs und spezialisierte Dienstleistungserbringende regelmässig zusammenbrachten, darunter das RomExpo-Modell und der KATYA Hub in Rumänien, die COMPASS-Zentren in Bulgarien, das UNICEF-Programme Board in Kroatien sowie die Protection and Inclusion Group in der Slowakei. Diese Mechanismen unterstützten den Informationsaustausch, Überweisungen und die tägliche Problemlösung. Die Zusammenarbeit mit öffentlichen Institutionen war je nach Land unterschiedlich ausgeprägt und beruhte häufig auf bestehenden Beziehungen statt auf formellen Vereinbarungen.

Gleichzeitig gab es keinen spezifischen oder eigens eingerichteten Austausch zwischen den vier RRF-Projekten. Wo Interaktionen stattfanden, ergaben sie sich aus früheren Kooperationen oder wirkten zufällig und ad hoc. Dies spiegelt die Projektkonzepte wider, die eine solche Zusammenarbeit nicht vorsahen, sowie das Fehlen von Anreizen oder Mechanismen für einen strukturierten Austausch zwischen den vier Projekten. Das Portfolio kann daher als eine Reihe einzelner, jedoch kohärenter Interventionen betrachtet werden.

Effektivität

Die vier Projekte trugen zu den Zielen des RRF bei, insbesondere zum Ziel, dringende kurzfristige Massnahmen umzusetzen, die Inklusion fördern können. Die Umsetzungsorganisationen und ihre Partnerorganisationen berichteten, dass sie ihre angestrebten Ergebnisse mit nur wenigen geringfügigen Ausnahmen erreicht und die vorgesehenen Zielgruppen erreicht hätten. Die Monitoringdaten deuten darauf hin, dass die Projekte wirksam waren. Weniger klar ist jedoch, in welchem Umfang sie zu übergeordneten Ergebnissen und Veränderungen beigetragen haben, was teilweise auf Schwächen in den Monitoring- und Wirkungsrahmen zurückzuführen ist.

Die Projekte verbesserten für Geflüchtete den Zugang zu Informationen, Dienstleistungen und Rechten und boten praktische Unterstützung in mehreren Bereichen. Rechtliche und administrative Beratung erwies sich als eine der hilfreichsten Dienstleistungen. Unterstützung im Bereich Gesundheitsversorgung und psychische Gesundheit wurde von den Nutzenden ebenfalls positiv bewertet. Gemeinschaftsveranstaltungen wurden geschätzt, galten jedoch als weniger unmittelbar nützlich als praktischere Unterstützungsformen. Bildungs-, psychosoziale und Freizeitaktivitäten für Kinder und Jugendliche wurden allgemein als hilfreich angesehen. Dies galt auch für die Sprachförderung und die arbeitsmarktbezogene Unterstützung, wobei die Einschätzungen der Geflüchteten zur arbeitsmarktbezogenen Unterstützung zurückhaltender ausfielen.

Die institutionellen Wirkungen waren gemischter. Die Umsetzungsorganisationen und ihre Partnerorganisationen scheinen ihre eigenen Kapazitäten stärker ausgebaut zu haben als öffentliche Institutionen. Am häufigsten genannt wurden Kapazitätsaufbau und Personalentwicklung,

verbesserte Kompetenzen, technisches Wissen, praktische Erfahrungen, optimierte interne Verfahren und stärkere Partnerschaften. Die Befragten aus öffentlichen Institutionen berichteten von begrenzteren Wirkungen. Aus Sicht der Umsetzungsorganisationen trug der Mehrländeransatz zur Wirksamkeit vor allem dadurch bei, dass er länderübergreifendes Lernen und Anpassungen ermöglichte.

Effizienz

Der Ressourceneinsatz war insgesamt angemessen. Über alle Projekte hinweg waren die Ressourcen ausreichend, um die Kernaktivitäten durchzuführen und in vielen Fällen die geplanten Zielwerte zu erreichen oder sogar zu übertreffen. Die verfügbaren Daten erlaubten keine detaillierte Bewertung des Kosten- und Nutzenverhältnisses oder der Kosteneffizienz im engeren ökonomischen Sinn, da die Kosten nicht systematisch mit monetarisierten Nutzen oder klar definierten Leistungseinheiten verknüpft waren.

Die Flexibilität bei der Nutzung der Ressourcen wurde als Vorteil angesehen. Die Umsetzungsorganisationen passten Ressourcen oder Aktivitäten als Reaktion auf politische Veränderungen, Verzögerungen, operative Engpässe und neue Bedürfnisse an. Die operative Effizienz wurde durch Koordinationszentren und One-Stop-Shops, Sachleistungen, die Einbindung von Geflüchteten, regionale Expertise sowie gemeinsame Instrumente und Monitoringsysteme gestärkt.

Die Mehrheit der Befragten der institutionellen Befragung betrachtete die Projektressourcen und Managementstrukturen als angemessen und effizient. Das länderübergreifende Design brachte Effizienzgewinne durch die gemeinsame Nutzung von Wissen und Instrumenten, erforderte jedoch gleichzeitig zusätzliche Koordination. Die Effizienzvorteile beruhen weitgehend auf Wahrnehmungen und wurden nicht systematisch gemessen. Eine Kosten-Nutzen-Analyse der Unterstützung bei der Arbeitsmarktintegration des IFRC deutet darauf hin, dass die Intervention unter den zugrunde gelegten Annahmen in einer Reihe plausibler Szenarien wirtschaftlich gerechtfertigt ist.

Wirkung

Die Projekte halfen den Geflüchteten vor allem dabei, den Alltag zu bewältigen und praktische Hindernisse für ihre Inklusion abzubauen. Die Ergebnisse der Befragung unter Geflüchteten zeigen, dass die Mehrheit der befragten Personen die erhaltene Unterstützung in verschiedenen Bereichen als hilfreich und nützlich betrachtete; dies wurde auch in den Fokusgruppendiskussionen bestätigt.

In den Interviews verwiesen institutionelle Anspruchsgruppen häufig auf einen verbesserten Zugang zu Dienstleistungen, eine bessere Fähigkeit, administrative Anforderungen zu bewältigen, stabilere Wohnverhältnisse, die Einschulung von Kindern und in einigen Fällen den Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt. Sie berichteten zudem von gestärktem Selbstvertrauen und mehr sozialen Kontakten, insbesondere bei jungen Menschen. Der Zusammenhang zwischen diesen beobachteten Veränderungen und den Projekten war häufig plausibel und in vielen Fällen direkt.

Die Teilnehmenden der institutionellen Befragung bewerteten die Projekte als besonders wirksam bei der Bereitstellung klarer Informationen darüber, wie lokale Dienstleistungen genutzt werden können, sowie bei der Verbesserung des Zugangs zu diesen Dienstleistungen. Komplexere Wirkungen wie sozialer Zusammenhalt, Akzeptanz und bessere Voraussetzungen für Geflüchteten, ihr Leben neu aufzubauen, wurden ebenfalls positiv beurteilt, wenn auch etwas weniger deutlich. Öffentliche Institutionen äusserten sich vorsichtiger als Umsetzungsorganisationen und deren Partnerinnen und Partner hinsichtlich dieser breiteren Integrationswirkungen.

Die Projekte wurden positiv bewertet hinsichtlich ihrer Fähigkeit, die Kapazitäten nichtstaatlicher Akteurinnen und Akteure zu stärken, um in Notsituationen rasch und gezielt handeln zu können. Sie entwickelten zudem Standards, Instrumente und Verfahren, die die institutionelle Bereitschaft für künftige migrationsbezogene Krisen stärken können. Das Ausmass variiert jedoch nach Land, und umfassendere institutionelle sowie migrationspolitische Wirkungen sind weniger evident.

Obwohl es plausibel erscheint, dass die Projekte einige der unmittelbaren Belastungen und Sorgen verringerten, die Geflüchtete dazu veranlassen können, in andere Länder weiterzuziehen, reichen die verfügbaren Belege nicht aus, um belastbare Schlussfolgerungen über ihre Wirkung auf die irreguläre Sekundärmigration zu ziehen. Entscheidungen, in einem Land zu bleiben oder anderswohin zu ziehen, werden hauptsächlich durch Faktoren beeinflusst, die dem Einfluss der Projekte entzogen sind, und ukrainische Geflüchtete, die vorübergehenden Schutz nach der EU-Richtlinie geniessen, verfügen unter bestimmten Voraussetzungen über erweiterte Möglichkeiten der Mobilität innerhalb der EU. Die Befragung unter Geflüchteten deutet lediglich auf eine begrenzte Weitermigration unter den Teilnehmenden hin.

Nachhaltigkeit

Die Projekte erreichten ein gewisses Mass an Nachhaltigkeit, wenn auch nicht in gleicher Weise oder im gleichen Umfang für alle Aktivitäten. Einige Aktivitäten können nach dem Ende der RRF-Finanzierung fortgeführt werden, entweder in ihrer ursprünglichen oder in einer angepassten Form. Dies gilt dort, wo Produkte, Instrumente, Funktionen oder Ansätze von öffentlichen Institutionen übernommen oder in die Routinen der Umsetzungsorganisationen und ihrer Partnerorganisationen integriert wurden. Beispiele hierfür sind Sprachförderung, kinderfreundliche Räume und gemeinschaftsbasierte Aktivitäten, auch wenn diese möglicherweise nur in kleinerem Umfang fortgeführt werden können.

Es gibt Hinweise auf institutionelle Nachhaltigkeit in mehreren Projekten. In Kroatien wurden von UNICEF unterstützte Instrumente und Funktionen in nationale Systeme integriert, darunter ein standardisierter Kroatisch-Sprachtest für Schulkinder mit Migrationshintergrund, ein Online-Kurs zur inklusiven Bildung sowie die Funktion der interkulturellen Mediationsfachperson im Aufnahmezentrum Zagreb-Dugave. Weitere Beispiele wurden aus Bulgarien, Litauen und der Slowakei berichtet. Zudem gibt es Hinweise auf organisatorische Nachhaltigkeit, da die Umsetzungsorganisationen und ihre Partnerorganisationen Wissen, Instrumente und Erfahrungen, die sie während der Umsetzung sammelten, bewahrt haben.

Die finanzielle Nachhaltigkeit scheint im gesamten Portfolio das unmittelbarste Risiko darzustellen. Viele Interviewpersonen erklärten, dass Dienstleistungen wie Sprachkurse, psychosoziale Unterstützung, Dolmetschleistungen oder Rechtsberatung aufgrund von Budgetbeschränkungen nur in reduziertem Umfang oder gar nicht weitergeführt werden können. Weitere Faktoren, die die Nachhaltigkeit beeinflussen, sind das politische und regulatorische Umfeld, die Zukunft des vorübergehenden Schutzes sowie die Bereitschaft und Fähigkeit öffentlicher Institutionen, Funktionen zu übernehmen und Aktivitäten fortzuführen.

5. Empfehlungen

Auf Grundlage der Ergebnisse der Evaluation wurden die folgenden Empfehlungen gemeinsam vom SEM und dem Evaluationsteam erarbeitet. Dabei wurden die Prioritäten des SEM sowie dessen Handlungsspielraum berücksichtigt.

1. Die Beteiligung von Geflüchteten während des gesamten Projektzyklus fördern.

Projekte sollten Geflüchtete sowie von Geflüchteten geführte oder auf Geflüchtete ausgerichtete Organisationen systematischer während des gesamten Projektzyklus einbeziehen. Lokale zivilgesellschaftliche Akteurinnen und Akteure können eine wichtige Rolle bei der Förderung einer solchen Beteiligung spielen. Die Beteiligung kann dazu beitragen, sicherzustellen, dass Interventionen relevant, bedarfsgerecht und an den praktischen Gegebenheiten orientiert bleiben.

2. Koordinationskapazitäten zwischen Institutionen, NGOs und internationalen Organisationen im breiteren Unterstützungsökosystem fördern.

Künftige Projekte sollten die strukturierte Zusammenarbeit mit öffentlichen Behörden, NGOs, internationalen Organisationen, zivilgesellschaftlichen Akteurinnen und Akteuren und Organisationen von bzw. für Geflüchtete stärken, um den Informationsaustausch zu verbessern, Rollen zu klären und gesamtgesellschaftliche Ansätze zu unterstützen. Gemeinsame Projektvorschläge von lokalen Behörden und NGOs könnten gezielt gefördert werden.

3. Eine leichte, strukturierte Zusammenarbeit zwischen RRF-Projekten bereits in der Projektkonzeption vorsehen.

Künftige RRF-Programme sollten die praktische Zusammenarbeit und den Wissensaustausch zwischen Projekten durch niederschwellige Mechanismen wie Auftakt- und Reflexionsworkshops fördern. Engere Verbindungen zwischen Projekten könnten das gegenseitige Lernen stärken, Synergien identifizieren und die Leistungserbringung verbessern, ohne unnötige administrative Belastungen zu schaffen.

4. Frühzeitig prüfen, welche Elemente über die RRF-Unterstützung hinaus nachhaltig fortgeführt werden können.

Auch bei kurzfristig angelegten Nothilfefinanzierungen sollten Projekte frühzeitig reflektieren, welche Dienstleistungen, Partnerschaften, Kapazitäten oder Instrumente realistischerweise über die Finanzierungsperiode hinaus fortgeführt werden könnten. Eine frühzeitige Reflexion und Abstimmung mit relevanten Stakeholdern können dazu beitragen, vermeidbare Unterbrechungen zu reduzieren und Kontinuität dort zu unterstützen, wo dies möglich ist.

5. Monitoring- und Evaluationssysteme weiterentwickeln, um die Ergebnisorientierung zu stärken.

Monitoring- und Evaluationssysteme könnten durch klarere Vorgaben zu Wirkungslogiken, Indikatoren, Ausgangs- und Zielwerten und Datenerhebungsmethoden verbessert werden. Auch wenn der Monitoringaufwand verhältnismässig bleiben und sich auf tatsächlich genutzte Informationen konzentrieren sollte, können robustere Ergebnisrahmen (results frameworks) Rechenschaftslegung, Lernen und evidenzbasierte Entscheidungsfindung stärken.

6. Die Grundlage für wirtschaftliche und finanzielle Analysen in künftigen Projekten verbessern.

Abhängig von den Erwartungen an zukünftige wirtschaftliche und finanzielle Analysen könnte die Erhebung einer begrenzten Anzahl gezielter Datenpunkte Bewertungen erleichtern und aussagekräftiger machen, ohne unverhältnismässige Anforderungen an Datenerhebung und Berichterstattung zu schaffen. Ein pragmatischer Ansatz könnte darin bestehen, Kosten-Nutzen- oder Kostenwirksamkeitsanalysen für ausgewählte Interventionen pilotweise durchzuführen.

Riassunto

1. Contesto

La Segreteria di Stato della migrazione (SEM) ha commissionato una valutazione di quattro progetti finanziati attraverso il Rapid Response Fund (RRF), uno strumento di finanziamento nell'ambito del secondo contributo della Svizzera a determinati Stati membri dell'Unione europea.

Il RRF è concepito come un meccanismo flessibile con un budget minimo di CHF 25 milioni, volto a rispondere rapidamente alle nuove sfide migratorie. Esso mira a rafforzare le strutture di gestione della migrazione negli Stati membri dell'UE in situazioni di crisi e di movimenti migratori su larga scala; a sostenere misure urgenti e a breve termine per rispondere a esigenze migratorie impreviste; a rafforzare la capacità degli attori non statali di intervenire rapidamente mediante azioni mirate in situazioni di emergenza; e a prevenire la migrazione secondaria irregolare migliorando le condizioni e la gestione nei Paesi di primo arrivo o di transito.

I quattro progetti valutati sono stati finanziati nell'ambito del bando RRF 2023, il secondo dei quattro bandi lanciati finora dal SEM nel quadro del secondo contributo svizzero. Sono stati implementati dalla Federazione Internazionale delle Società della Croce Rossa e della Mezzaluna Rossa (IFRC), da Terres des hommes (Tdh), dall'Alto Commissariato delle Nazioni Unite per i Rifugiati (UNHCR) e dal Fondo delle Nazioni Unite per l'Infanzia (UNICEF) in Bulgaria, Croazia, Lettonia, Lituania, Romania, Slovacchia e Ungheria. I progetti hanno affrontato questioni migratorie, in particolare quelle connesse agli sfollamenti causati dalla guerra della Russia contro l'Ucraina. Nell'insieme del portafoglio, i progetti si sono concentrati sul rafforzamento dei sistemi di protezione, sul miglioramento dell'accesso ai servizi e sul sostegno all'integrazione socioeconomica delle persone rifugiate e sfollate.

Panoramica dei progetti

Progetto	Paesi	Data di avvio	Durata	Budget
Federazione Internazionale delle Società della Croce Rossa e della Mezzaluna Rossa (IFRC)				
Sostenere l'integrazione dei richiedenti asilo, dei rifugiati e delle persone sfollate.	HU, RO, LV, LT	Dic 2023	24 mesi	CHF 1.30m
Terres des hommes (Tdh)				
Costruire ponti, rafforzare i diritti e le opportunità dei rifugiati ucraini.	HR, RO	Nov 2023	18 mesi	CHF 2.55m
Alto Commissariato delle Nazioni Unite per i Rifugiati (UNHCR)				
Rafforzare le procedure di asilo e promuovere l'inclusione socioeconomica dei rifugiati.	BG, HU, RO, SK	Dic 2023	12 mesi	CHF 2.86m
Fondo delle Nazioni Unite per l'Infanzia (UNICEF)				
Sostenere la protezione e l'integrazione dei bambini e delle famiglie migranti in Croazia.	HR	Dic 2023	24 mesi	CHF 0.86m

Fonte: Documentazione di progetto.

2. Obiettivo della valutazione

La valutazione dei quattro progetti RRF 2023 persegue due obiettivi principali:

- valutare in che misura ciascun progetto abbia raggiunto i propri obiettivi in termini di rilevanza, coerenza, efficacia, efficienza, impatto e sostenibilità; e
- generare evidenze e conclusioni trasversali per orientare l'ulteriore sviluppo del RRF, rafforzare il monitoraggio dei progetti e guidare i futuri finanziamenti della politica migratoria.

La valutazione è principalmente orientata alla rendicontazione (sommativa), ma mira anche a generare risultati e approfondimenti orientati all'apprendimento (formativi) per i progetti futuri. L'approccio valutativo combina quindi le valutazioni dei singoli progetti con una sintesi trasversale che evidenzia analogie e differenze, al fine di formulare raccomandazioni per i mandati futuri.

La valutazione risponde alle 15 domande di valutazione definite durante la fase di avvio. Esse sono state ricavate dai Termini di riferimento e adattate per sostenere una valutazione coerente dei quattro progetti. Inoltre, la valutazione individua le lezioni apprese e le buone pratiche e formula raccomandazioni per i futuri progetti finanziati dal RRF.

3. Metodologia

La valutazione ha seguito un approccio orientato dalla teoria, che ha preso in considerazione sia l'assetto generale del RRF sia le caratteristiche e i risultati specifici dei quattro progetti finanziati. Il quadro normativo si basa sui criteri di valutazione del Comitato di assistenza allo sviluppo dell'Organizzazione per la cooperazione e lo sviluppo economico (OCSE-DAC), sugli standard dell'OCSE-DAC e sugli standard di valutazione della Società svizzera di valutazione. È stato adottato un approccio a metodi misti, con particolare attenzione ai metodi qualitativi e alla triangolazione delle evidenze raccolte mediante l'analisi documentale, le interviste, i focus group e i questionari.

Analisi documentale: L'analisi documentale ha incluso le proposte di progetto e i documenti di progettazione, i rapporti sullo stato di avanzamento, i rapporti finali, i rapporti di monitoraggio forniti al SEM, la documentazione interna dei progetti fornita dalle organizzazioni attuatrici e il rapporto di valutazione di processo del contributo del RRF.

Interviste: Le interviste con gli informatori chiave, tra cui personale di progetto, partner di attuazione e altri stakeholder rilevanti selezionati in base al loro coinvolgimento e alla loro conoscenza dei progetti, hanno costituito una fonte fondamentale di informazioni qualitative per la valutazione. In totale sono state condotte 75 interviste semi-strutturate che hanno coinvolto quasi 90 intervistati. Le interviste sono state svolte sia da remoto che in presenza, durante le missioni effettuate in Croazia, Ungheria e Romania.

Focus group: Sono stati condotti sette focus group (FG) per raccogliere le esperienze e le percezioni delle persone partecipanti. Due FG si sono svolti in Ungheria con persone beneficiarie dei progetti dell'UNHCR e di Tdh e due in Romania con persone beneficiarie dei progetti dell'IFRC e di Tdh; questi gruppi erano composti da persone rifugiate. In Croazia, dato il coinvolgimento diretto più limitato del progetto con persone beneficiarie rifugiate, i tre FG del progetto UNICEF sono stati invece condotti con stakeholder istituzionali.

Questionari: Sono stati realizzati due questionari online per raccogliere i punti di vista dei principali stakeholder istituzionali e delle persone rifugiate nell'ambito dell'intero portafoglio di progetti. Il

questionario rivolto agli stakeholder istituzionali è stato distribuito a 359 persone, delle quali 185 hanno risposto. L'indagine rivolta alle persone rifugiate era destinata a persone di età pari o superiore a 16 anni in su che avessero partecipato ad almeno un'attività di progetto nell'ambito dei progetti IFRC, Tdh o UNHCR. Questo secondo questionario, è stato distribuito su larga scala dalle organizzazioni attuatrici attraverso diversi canali e ha raggiunto circa 5.650 persone, delle quali 714 hanno risposto.

La valutazione è stata realizzata sostanzialmente come previsto nel rapporto iniziale, con soltanto lievi modifiche. Sono stati raccolti dati e approfondimenti qualitativi provenienti da diverse fonti e prospettive, facendo un uso efficiente del tempo e delle risorse disponibili per fornire una solida base alla valutazione. Sebbene il processo sia stato approfondito, è importante riconoscere alcune sfide e limitazioni, tra cui il fatto che l'approccio di campionamento utilizzato per la somministrazione del questionario per le persone rifugiate si è basato su liste di contatti detenute dalle organizzazioni attuatrici e dai loro partner, il che potrebbe aver introdotto una distorsione nella selezione del campione. Inoltre, la composizione del campione del questionario per gli stakeholder istituzionali è risultata parzialmente sbilanciata, presentando una sovrarappresentazione delle organizzazioni attuatrici e dei loro partner.

4. Risultati

Rilevanza

I quattro progetti sono risultati rilevanti e utili, in particolare nel contribuire a rispondere ai bisogni urgenti e concreti delle persone rifugiate e nel rafforzare le capacità delle organizzazioni coinvolte nell'attuazione. Il contesto migratorio nei Paesi interessati ha giustificato il sostegno fornito. L'arrivo su larga scala di persone in fuga dalla guerra della Russia contro l'Ucraina ha esercitato pressioni sull'accoglienza, sui sistemi di protezione, sull'istruzione, sui mezzi di sussistenza, sulla sanità e sui servizi sociali. In tali pressioni, che hanno interessato sia le persone rifugiate che le comunità ospitanti, si trova la giustificazione del tipo di sostegno urgente e flessibile, proprio del RRF. Sebbene la fase di emergenza del 2022-2023 si sia evoluta, la necessità di supporto è rimasta forte, spostandosi verso questioni di più lungo periodo legate all'integrazione, all'istruzione, al benessere psicosociale, all'occupazione e all'alloggio.

I bisogni sono stati identificati attraverso valutazioni strutturate, dati amministrativi e di monitoraggio, comprese alcune Multi-Sector Needs Assessment Surveys condotte dall'UNHCR, consultazioni con le organizzazioni partner ed esperienze operative, delle organizzazioni stesse, rilevate nella risposta iniziale all'emergenza. Gli obiettivi, gli approcci e gli strumenti dei progetti erano allineati con i bisogni identificati durante la fase di progettazione. Gli stakeholder istituzionali hanno considerato i progetti altamente rilevanti: circa il 90% ha concordato sul fatto che i progetti rispondessero ai bisogni più importanti delle persone rifugiate, mentre il 95% ha ritenuto che l'approccio fosse adeguato al contesto locale. Anche la survey rivolta alle persone rifugiate ha confermato la rilevanza dei progetti oggetto di indagine. Ha mostrato che i bisogni continuano a esistere, soprattutto in relazione a questioni legali o amministrative, alla ricerca di lavoro e all'alloggio. La partecipazione delle persone rifugiate alla fase di progettazione, nella maggior parte dei casi, sembra essere stata limitata; durante l'implementazione, il loro coinvolgimento è stato più diretto, anche in qualità di volontari e collaboratori alle attività.

Coerenza

I progetti sono stati coerenti con il più ampio quadro delle politiche e degli interventi di risposta. Hanno sostenuto l'attuazione della Direttiva europea sulla protezione temporanea, contribuendo a tradurre i diritti formali in accesso concreto ai servizi. I progetti erano inoltre allineati con le priorità individuate nei Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plans, in particolare nei settori della protezione, dell'inclusione e dell'accesso ai servizi essenziali. Il portafoglio aveva un'ampia copertura geografica e ha combinato interventi su scala nazionale con interventi locali. Nei luoghi in cui più progetti erano attivi contemporaneamente, le sovrapposizioni sembrano essere state limitate.

Il coordinamento interno ai progetti è stato generalmente considerato efficace per come sono stati gestiti lo scambio di informazioni, la risoluzione dei problemi e l'allineamento tra i partner. Gli esempi più solidi di coordinamento efficace provenivano da progetti che mettevano regolarmente in contatto istituzioni pubbliche, ONG e fornitori di servizi specializzati, tra cui il modello RomExpo e il KATYA Hub in Romania, i centri COMPASS in Bulgaria, il comitato di progetto UNICEF in Croazia e il Protection and Inclusion Group in Slovacchia. Questi meccanismi hanno sostenuto la condivisione delle informazioni, la presa in carico e l'invio ai servizi competenti e la risoluzione quotidiana dei problemi. La cooperazione con le istituzioni pubbliche è stata variabile, a seconda dei Paesi, e spesso basata su relazioni esistenti piuttosto che su accordi formali.

Allo stesso tempo, non vi sono stati scambi specifici o dedicati tra i quattro progetti RRF. Quando si sono verificate interazioni, esse sono derivate da collaborazioni precedenti oppure sono apparse occasionali e ad hoc. Ciò riflette la progettazione degli interventi, che non prevedeva forme di collaborazione di questo tipo, nonché l'assenza di incentivi o meccanismi che favorissero uno scambio strutturato tra i quattro progetti. Il portafoglio può quindi essere considerato come un insieme di interventi distinti ma coerenti tra loro.

Efficacia

I quattro progetti hanno contribuito agli obiettivi del RRF, in particolare all'obiettivo di attuare misure urgenti e a breve termine in grado di facilitare l'inclusione delle persone rifugiate I partner attuatori hanno riferito di aver raggiunto i risultati previsti, con solo lievi eccezioni, e di aver raggiunto i beneficiari destinatari. I dati di monitoraggio suggeriscono che i progetti sono stati efficaci, ma è meno chiaro in che misura abbiano contribuito a risultati e cambiamenti di livello superiore, in parte a causa di criticità nei quadri di monitoraggio e valutazione dei progetti.

Secondo le persone rifugiate, i progetti hanno migliorato l'accesso alle informazioni, ai servizi e ai diritti e hanno fornito un sostegno pratico in diversi ambiti. L'assistenza legale e amministrativa è emersa come uno dei servizi più utili. Anche il sostegno all'accesso all'assistenza sanitaria e alla salute mentale è stato valutato positivamente da coloro che ne hanno beneficiato. Gli eventi comunitari sono stati apprezzati, sebbene considerati meno utili nell'immediato rispetto a forme di sostegno più pratiche. Le attività educative, psicosociali e ricreative per bambini e giovani sono state generalmente considerate utili, così come i corsi di lingua e il sostegno all'occupazione, sebbene le opinioni dei rifugiati su quest'ultimo siano state più caute.

Gli effetti a livello istituzionale sono stati più eterogenei. Le organizzazioni attuatrici e i loro partner sembrano aver rafforzato le proprie capacità in modo più evidente rispetto alle istituzioni pubbliche. Gli intervistati e le intervistate hanno citato più spesso il rafforzamento delle capacità e lo sviluppo del personale, il miglioramento delle competenze, delle conoscenze tecniche, dell'esperienza pratica, delle procedure interne e dei partenariati. I rispondenti delle istituzioni pubbliche hanno riferito effetti

più limitati. Per gli organismi attuatori, l'approccio multi-paese ha contribuito all'efficacia soprattutto rendendo possibile l'apprendimento e l'adattamento tra Paesi.

Efficienza

L'utilizzo delle risorse è stato generalmente appropriato. In tutti i progetti, le risorse sono state sufficienti per realizzare le attività principali e, in molti casi, per raggiungere o superare i target pianificati. I dati disponibili non hanno tuttavia consentito una valutazione approfondita del rapporto costi-benefici o costo-efficacia in senso economico più stretto, poiché i costi non erano sistematicamente collegati a benefici monetizzabili né a unità di servizio chiaramente definite.

La flessibilità nell'uso delle risorse è stata considerata un elemento positivo. Gli enti attuatori hanno adattato le risorse e le attività in risposta a cambiamenti nelle politiche, ritardi, colli di bottiglia operativi ed esigenze emergenti. L'efficienza operativa è stata rafforzata attraverso hub di coordinamento e sportelli unici (one-stop-shops), contributi in natura, coinvolgimento delle persone rifugiate, competenze regionali, strumenti condivisi e sistemi di monitoraggio comuni.

La maggior parte dei rispondenti all'indagine rivolta alle istituzioni ha ritenuto adeguate ed efficienti le risorse e le modalità di gestione dei progetti. La configurazione multi-paese ha generato guadagni di efficienza, consentendo la condivisione di conoscenze e strumenti, pur comportando la necessità di un maggior coordinamento. Tuttavia, i suoi benefici in termini di efficienza restano in larga misura basati su percezioni piuttosto che su evidenze misurate. L'analisi costi-benefici dei servizi di sostegno all'occupazione dell'IFRC ha suggerito che, sulla base delle ipotesi adottate, l'intervento risulta verosimilmente giustificato sul piano economico in una gamma di scenari plausibili.

Impatto

I progetti hanno contribuito principalmente a facilitare la gestione della vita quotidiana delle persone rifugiate e a ridurre gli ostacoli pratici all'inclusione. I risultati dell'indagine tra i rifugiati indicano che la maggior parte dei rispondenti considera utile e benefico il sostegno ricevuto nei diversi ambiti di intervento; ciò è stato confermato anche dai focus group con le persone rifugiate.

Nel corso delle interviste, gli stakeholder istituzionali hanno spesso fatto riferimento a un migliore accesso ai servizi, a una maggiore capacità di affrontare gli adempimenti amministrativi, a una maggiore stabilità abitativa, all'iscrizione dei bambini a scuola e, in alcuni casi, all'accesso all'occupazione. Hanno inoltre descritto una maggiore fiducia e un aumento dei legami sociali, soprattutto per i giovani. Il nesso tra questi cambiamenti osservati e i progetti è stato spesso plausibile e, in molti casi, diretto.

I rispondenti all'indagine istituzionale hanno considerato i progetti particolarmente efficaci nel fornire ai rifugiati informazioni chiare su come orientarsi nei servizi locali e nel migliorare l'accesso a tali servizi. Effetti più complessi, quali la coesione sociale, l'accettazione e il miglioramento delle condizioni che consentono ai rifugiati di costruire la propria vita, sono stati valutati anch'essi positivamente, sebbene in modo leggermente meno marcato. Le istituzioni pubbliche sono state più caute rispetto alle organizzazioni attuatrici e ai partner riguardo a questi risultati più ampi in termini di integrazione.

I progetti sono stati valutati positivamente per il loro contributo al rafforzamento della capacità degli attori non statali di rispondere rapidamente e con interventi mirati in situazioni di urgente necessità. Hanno inoltre prodotto standard, strumenti e procedure che possono rafforzare la preparazione

istituzionale a future crisi legate alla migrazione, sebbene la portata di tali risultati vari da un paese all'altro e gli effetti sulle istituzioni e sulla gestione della migrazione restino meno chiari.

Sebbene sembri plausibile che i progetti abbiano contribuito ad attenuare alcune delle pressioni e delle preoccupazioni immediate che influenzano le decisioni dei rifugiati di trasferirsi altrove, le evidenze disponibili non sono sufficienti per trarre conclusioni solide sul loro effetto sulla migrazione secondaria irregolare. Le decisioni di rimanere in un paese o di trasferirsi altrove dipendono principalmente da fattori che esulano dal controllo dei progetti, e i rifugiati ucraini che beneficiano della Direttiva sulla protezione temporanea dispongono, a determinate condizioni, di maggiori possibilità di mobilità all'interno dell'Unione europea. I risultati della survey per le persone rifugiate suggeriscono una limitata mobilità verso altri paesi.

Sostenibilità

I progetti hanno raggiunto un certo grado di sostenibilità, sebbene non nello stesso modo né nella stessa misura per tutte le attività. Alcune attività potranno proseguire anche dopo la conclusione del finanziamento RRF, nella loro forma originaria o in una versione adattata. Ciò si verifica nei casi in cui prodotti, strumenti, ruoli o approcci sono stati adottati dalle istituzioni pubbliche o integrati nelle prassi operative delle organizzazioni attuatrici e dei partner. Tra gli esempi figurano il supporto linguistico, gli spazi a misura di bambine e bambini e le attività basate sulla comunità, sebbene queste possano proseguire solo su scala ridotta.

Diversi progetti mostrano evidenze di sostenibilità istituzionale. In Croazia, strumenti e funzioni sostenuti dall'UNICEF sono stati integrati nei sistemi nazionali, tra cui un test standardizzato di lingua croata per bambini e bambine migranti in età scolare, un corso online sull'educazione inclusiva e la figura del mediatore interculturale nel centro di accoglienza Zagreb-Dugave. Altri esempi sono stati segnalati in Bulgaria, Lituania e Slovacchia. Vi sono inoltre evidenze di sostenibilità organizzativa, poiché le organizzazioni attuatrici e i partner hanno conservato conoscenze, strumenti ed esperienze acquisiti nel corso dei relativi progetti.

La sostenibilità finanziaria sembra rappresentare il rischio più immediato per l'intero portafoglio. Molti intervistati e intervistate hanno dichiarato che servizi quali corsi di lingua, sostegno psicosociale, interpretariato o assistenza legale dovranno essere mantenuti su scala ridotta, se non addirittura interrotti, a causa di vincoli di bilancio. Altri fattori che influenzano la sostenibilità includono il contesto politico e normativo, il futuro dello status di protezione temporanea e la volontà e capacità delle istituzioni pubbliche di assumere le funzioni attualmente svolte dai progetti e proseguirne le attività.

5. Raccomandazioni

Sulla base dei risultati della valutazione, le seguenti raccomandazioni sono state sviluppate congiuntamente dal SEM e dal team di valutazione, tenendo conto delle priorità del SEM e del suo margine di azione.

1. Promuovere la partecipazione dei rifugiati durante l'intero ciclo di progetto.

I progetti dovrebbero coinvolgere in modo più sistematico le persone rifugiate e le organizzazioni guidate da rifugiati o che operano a favore dei rifugiati durante tutto il ciclo di progetto. Gli attori della società civile a livello locale possono svolgere un ruolo importante nel facilitare tale partecipazione. La partecipazione può contribuire a garantire che gli interventi rimangano rilevanti, rispondano efficacemente ai bisogni e riflettano le realtà e le esigenze concrete delle persone beneficiarie

2. Rafforzare le capacità di coordinamento tra istituzioni, ONG e organizzazioni internazionali nell'ecosistema complessivo della risposta.

I futuri progetti dovrebbero rafforzare il coordinamento strutturato con autorità pubbliche, ONG, organizzazioni internazionali, attori della società civile e comunità di rifugiati al fine di migliorare la condivisione delle informazioni, chiarire i ruoli e sostenere approcci che coinvolgano l'intera società. Potrebbero essere incoraggiate proposte congiunte presentate da autorità locali e ONG.

3. Introdurre forme leggere e strutturate di collaborazione tra i progetti RRF fin dalla fase di progettazione.

La futura programmazione del RRF dovrebbe incoraggiare la collaborazione pratica e lo scambio di conoscenze tra i progetti attraverso meccanismi semplici e poco onerosi, quali workshop di avvio e momenti periodici di riflessione e apprendimento. Un rafforzamento dei collegamenti tra i progetti potrebbe favorire l'apprendimento reciproco, individuare sinergie e migliorare l'erogazione dei servizi, senza generare inutili oneri amministrativi.

4. Promuovere una riflessione tempestiva su ciò che potrebbe durare oltre il sostegno del RRF.

Pur riconoscendo la natura a breve termine dei finanziamenti di emergenza, i progetti dovrebbero considerare fin dalle fasi iniziali quali servizi, partenariati, capacità o strumenti possano realisticamente proseguire oltre il periodo di finanziamento. Una riflessione tempestiva e il coordinamento con gli stakeholder pertinenti possono contribuire a ridurre interruzioni evitabili e a sostenere la continuità laddove possibile.

5. Raffinare i sistemi di monitoraggio e valutazione per sostenere maggiormente l'orientamento ai risultati.

I sistemi di monitoraggio e valutazione potrebbero essere migliorati attraverso indicazioni più chiare in merito a quadri logici, indicatori, baseline, obiettivi e metodi di raccolta dati. Sebbene gli sforzi di monitoraggio debbano rimanere proporzionati in termini di costi e focalizzati sulla produzione di informazioni effettivamente utilizzate, sistemi di misurazione dei risultati più solidi possono rafforzare la rendicontabilità, l'apprendimento e i processi decisionali basati sulle evidenze.

6. Migliorare la base per le analisi economiche e finanziarie nei futuri progetti.

In funzione delle aspettative relative alle future analisi economiche e finanziarie, la raccolta di un numero limitato di dati mirati potrebbe rendere le valutazioni più semplici e informative, senza creare oneri sproporzionati in termini di raccolta dati e rendicontazione. Un approccio pragmatico potrebbe consistere nella sperimentazione di analisi costi-benefici o costo-efficacia per interventi selezionati.

1. Introduction

The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) commissioned an evaluation of four projects funded under the Rapid Response Fund (RRF) financed through the 2023 call for proposals. These projects focus on strengthening protection systems, improving access to services and supporting the integration of refugees and displaced persons affected by recent migration movements in seven countries in Europe.

In line with SEM internal guidelines, projects receiving a Swiss contribution of CHF 1 million or more are subject to external evaluation, while projects below this threshold may also be evaluated where relevant. The evaluation examines the extent to which the selected projects achieved their intended objectives and contributed to strengthening migration management structures in the participating countries. It also identifies lessons learned and examples of good practice that may inform future programming under the fund.

This report presents the evaluation's findings, conclusions and recommendations, responding to the evaluation questions defined during the inception phase. In line with the requirements of the Terms of Reference (ToR) and the Inception Report, the report is structured into the following chapters: Introduction, Methodology, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations. Additional information and supporting material are provided in the annexes.

1.1. Background

The Rapid Response Fund (RRF) is a funding instrument within Switzerland's second contribution to selected European Union (EU) member states. This broader financial commitment, adopted by the Swiss Parliament in 2019, amounts to approximately CHF 1.3 billion and is implemented over a ten-year period (2019-2029). It aims to strengthen cohesion within the European Union and address shared challenges between Switzerland and EU partner countries. The contribution is structured around two framework credits: one dedicated to cohesion[1] and another focusing on migration cooperation.

The migration framework credit amounts to CHF 200 million and supports measures aimed at improving migration management in EU member states facing particular pressures. Within this framework, Switzerland finances bilateral migration programmes with partner countries, the Swiss Expertise and Partnership Fund (which enables the deployment of Swiss experts), and the RRF. The RRF is designed as a flexible mechanism to respond quickly to emerging migration challenges. According to the programme structure of the second Swiss contribution, a minimum of CHF 25 million of the migration credit is earmarked for the RRF, while the remainder primarily supports bilateral cooperation programmes and programme implementation.

The RRF targets situations in which EU member states face sudden or large-scale migration movements that place strain on national asylum systems, reception capacities or integration services. It has four objectives:

[1] Cohesion covers interventions in areas such as vocational education and training, research and innovation, welfare and healthcare systems, public safety, civic engagement and transparency, environmental and climate protection and SME financing.

- Strengthen migration management structures in EU member states in situations of crisis and large migratory movements.
- Support urgent, short-term measures responding to unforeseen migration-related needs, in particular in the areas of asylum, infrastructure, voluntary return and reintegration, and integration.
- Reinforce the capacity of non-state actors (e.g., international organisations and NGOs) to intervene rapidly with focused actions in urgent situations.
- Prevent irregular secondary migration by improving conditions and management in first-arrival or transit countries.

By providing financial support, the instrument shall enable Switzerland to contribute to stabilising migration systems and addressing protection and integration challenges faced by refugees and displaced persons on the ground. The focus is primarily on refugees under the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), asylum seekers, and recognised refugees. Special attention is paid to vulnerable groups.

Projects supported under the RRF address several thematic areas central to migration management. These include strengthening, supporting, or promoting:

- asylum procedures and protection systems,
- infrastructures for migrants (e.g., accommodation, reception facilities),
- integration measures with the aim of preventing irregular secondary movements,
- assisted voluntary return and reintegration.

The projects, which can last up to two years, are expected not only to respond to immediate operational needs but also to reinforce the capacities of national institutions and service providers.

Operationally, the RRF is managed by the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), which is responsible for launching calls for proposals, selecting projects and overseeing their implementation. Projects are typically implemented by organisations with specialised expertise in migration and humanitarian response, including international organisations and non-governmental organisations. The implementers are required to provide co-funding of at least 15%. This implementation model shall allow to mobilise operational partners that are capable of responding quickly and effectively in crisis situations.

1.2. Projects

The RRF operates through periodic calls for proposals that identify priority needs and thematic areas. The projects evaluated in this report were funded under the 2023 call for proposal, the second of four calls launched by the SEM under the second Swiss contribution so far. An overview of these selected projects is provided in Table 1. They address migration issues related in particular to displacement caused by Russia's war against Ukraine and other pressures linked to migration movements affecting several countries – namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia. The projects are implemented by international organisations and non-governmental organisations and focus on strengthening protection systems, improving access to services, and supporting the socio-economic integration of refugees and displaced persons. Under SEM's internal guidelines, an external evaluation is required for any RRF project that receives a Swiss contribution of CHF 1 million or more. In certain cases, an external evaluation may also be conducted for projects with a lower contribution.

Table 1: Project overview

Project	Countries	Start date	Duration	Budget
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)				
Support the integration of asylum seekers, refugees, and displaced persons.	HU, RO, LV, LT	Dec 2023	24 months	CHF 1.30m
Terres des hommes (Tdh)				
Building bridges, enhancing rights and opportunities for Ukrainian refugees.	HR, RO	Nov 2023	18 months	CHF 2.55m
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)				
Strengthen asylum procedures and promote the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees.	BG, HU, RO, SK	Dec 2023	12 months	CHF 2.86m
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)				
Supporting protection and integration of children and families in migration in Croatia.	HR	Dec 2023	24 months	CHF 0.86m

Source: Project documents.

IFRC - Support the integration of asylum seekers, refugees, and displaced persons. This project, coordinated by the IFRC and implemented with National Red Cross Societies with involvement of local municipalities and civil society organisations, aimed at strengthening the integration of asylum seekers, refugees, and displaced persons in Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania by improving access to social, economic, cultural, and protection services as well as fostering their meaningful participation in host communities. It focused on four key outcomes: promoting socio-economic integration through skills training, education, and housing initiatives; advancing socio-cultural integration via language classes, cultural orientation, and community networking; ensuring well-being and protection through specialised support, including mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS); and enhancing community participation by involving refugees and asylum seekers in local and Red Cross activities.

Tdh - Building bridges, enhancing rights and opportunities for Ukrainian refugees. The "Building Bridges" project, implemented in Romania (Bucharest, Constanța, Brașov) and Hungary (Budapest, Debrecen, Győr), aimed to support the integration of displaced children and youth from Ukraine (up to 25 years old) by improving access to existing services and creating opportunities for personal and professional development. The project operated in capital cities, regional hubs, and refugee-hosting communities in both countries. The project focused on two main components: improving access to services through service mapping and capacity-building for local stakeholders, and promoting socio-professional opportunities by operating five Resilience Innovation Facilities (RIFs) – youth-friendly hubs offering digital and technical tools, workshops on mental well-being, social cohesion, and vocational skills, and mobile units to reach underserved or isolated communities, including Roma families.

UNHCR - Strengthen asylum procedures and promote the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees. This project, implemented in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia – including Budapest, Bucharest, Sofia, Košice – aimed to strengthen protection and integration for refugees from Ukraine and other conflict-affected countries. On protection, the project focused on improving access to temporary protection, legal counselling, and civil documentation. For integration, it supported language acquisition, employment pathways, vocational training, and access to social services, with particular attention to vulnerable groups such as women, children, older persons, people with disabilities, and those with medical needs. The project was implemented through a network of partners, including the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Devai Inn, Menedék, and Mandák.

UNICEF - Supporting protection and integration of children and families in migration. The project aimed to improve access to protection, education, and child- and gender-sensitive services for refugee and migrant children and families in Croatia, with a strong focus on national systems strengthening. It was implemented in partnership with Croatian ministries and institutions across multiple sites hosting displaced persons, including Kutina, Osijek, Rijeka, Zadar and Zagreb. The project worked through three interlinked pillars: the protection and gender based violence response systems for women and children on the move, the access to inclusive early childhood education (ECE), and the social and behavioural change to reduce discrimination and increase inclusion. Activities included the training of frontline professionals, procurement of early learning materials, development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for ECE enrolment, and capacity building of municipal and civil society actors.

The projects engage a range of stakeholder groups, while the evaluation focuses in particular on refugees from Ukraine. Each project involves multiple actors, as summarised in Table 2, which provides a broad overview rather than an exhaustive mapping of stakeholders. A common feature across all projects is their focus on supporting refugees from Ukraine, although this emphasis was somewhat less pronounced in the UNICEF project in Croatia.

Table 2: Stakeholder groups

Stakeholder groups per project	**IFRC** (HU, LV, LT, RO)	**Tdh** (RO, HU)	**UNHCR** (BG, HU, RO, SK)	**UNICEF** (HR)
Refugees & families	●	●	●	●
Children & young people (including unaccompanied minors)	○	●	○	●
Specialist staff (social services, education, psychosocial support)	●	●	●	●
Employers & vocational training	●		●	
Public institutions (local & national)	○	○	●	●
Implementing organisations	●	●	●	●
Host society	○	○		
Swiss embassy / other institutions active in the project areas	○	○	○	○

Note: ● marks groups particularly relevant in terms of the evaluation questions; ○ marks groups considered with secondary importance.

Following this background and project related information, the following chapter presents the methodology, before presenting the evaluation findings.

2. Methodology

The chapter outlines the evaluation objectives and process, including data collection methods and information sources, that we used to address the evaluation questions.

2.1. Evaluation objectives

The evaluation of the four RRF 2023 projects has two main objectives:

- to assess how far each project has achieved its objectives in terms of relevance, coherence, impact, and sustainability, and
- to generate cross-cutting findings to inform further development of the RRF, strengthen project monitoring, and guide future migration policy funding.

The evaluation is foremost accountability-oriented (summative) but also aims to generate findings and insights that are learning-oriented (formative) for future projects.[2] The evaluation approach therefore combines individual project assessments with a synthesis that highlights similarities and differences, leading to strategic recommendations for future mandates.

2.2. Evaluation questions

The 15 evaluation questions in Table 3 are aligned with the evaluation's objectives, and guide the evaluation. They were drawn from the original Terms of Reference (ToR)[3] and were streamlined and adjusted – including by harmonising the formulations in the original ToR – for a consistent assessment across all four projects. In addition, we introduced three new evaluation questions (EQ) to strengthen the summative dimension of the evaluation (EQ 2, 4, and 5). These adjustments aimed to ensure that the evaluation addresses its objectives, maximising the utility of the evaluation, while staying within the scope of available resources.

The evaluation matrix including question probes and sources of information is available in Annex 1.

Table 3: Evaluation questions

EQ	Relevance
1	Did the migration situation in the partner countries justify the support provided through the projects?
2	Was the project design aligned with the identified needs of the target groups and partner institutions?
	Coherence
3	Did the projects complement each other in terms of content and geographic coverage?
4	How well was coordination ensured with other relevant actors, programmes, and policies?
	Effectiveness
5	Were the project objectives achieved as planned? If not, what were the reasons?

[2] Here, "accountability-oriented" means assessing the extent to which the projects achieved their objectives and results. "Learning-oriented" refers to drawing lessons to improve future project design, monitoring, and funding decisions. In this sense, the first objective is mainly summative, the second mainly formative.

[3] Pflichtenheft, in German.

6	What outcomes did the measures have for the beneficiaries?
7	Did the measures strengthen the competencies and capacities of national, regional, or local authorities in the field of migration?
8	Did the multi-country approach influence effectiveness or efficiency?
	Efficiency
9	How appropriate was the use of resources?
	Impact
10	To what extent has the project improved the integration of refugees?
11	What effect did the project have on (irregular) secondary migration to other EU countries and to Switzerland?
	Sustainability
12	Can the activities be continued after the end of Swiss funding, either in their current form or in another adapted format?
13	Did the projects lead to sustainable changes?
	Lessons Learned / Good Practice
14	What overarching lessons learned can be derived from the projects?
15	Were (innovative) approaches developed that could serve as good practices for future RRF projects or other funding programmes?

2.3. Evaluation Design

The evaluation followed a theory-driven approach that considered both the overarching framework of the RRF and the specific characteristics and results of the four funded projects. It tested the programme's theory of change (ToC), using contribution analysis, a method that assesses whether and how an intervention plausibly contributed to observed outcomes while recognising that other factors may also have played a role. Three levels of analysis can be distinguished:

- Refugee (beneficiary) level: implementation, effects of the projects' own offerings
- Institutional level (system actors): institutional changes for improved inclusion of refugees
- Meta level: coherence, efficiency, scalability and transfer potential of the project approaches

The approach was designed to ensure that the evaluation questions posed by the SEM are answered comprehensively and transparently.

The normative framing draws on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria. The approach is thus informed by the OECD DAC Standards, including the Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully, and Protection of People Involved in Evaluation guidelines[4] as well as the evaluation standards of the Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL).

Participatory elements included validation workshops with SEM to enhance ownership and uptake. Additionally, the implementers were consulted at different stages of the evaluation to help assess whether the approach was practical and appropriate for the context, while maintaining the independence of the evaluation. They were involved at the beginning to agree on timelines, to explore

[4] Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully, and Protection of People Involved in Evaluation guidelines (OECD DAC); Evaluation Standards of the Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL).

whether and how refugees could be directly involved, to help identify relevant stakeholders to interview, and to provide input into the development of data collection tools.

2.4. Data Collection Methods

To answer the evaluation questions, we used a mixed-methods approach, with a strong focus on qualitative methods. They were designed to triangulate evidence from different sources and perspectives, thereby strengthening the robustness and credibility of the findings.

Document review

A comprehensive review of relevant project documentation was conducted at the outset of the evaluation and continued throughout the evaluation process. The document review aimed to establish a factual basis for the analysis, understand project design and implementation, and identify initial findings related to the evaluation questions. The document review was conducted based on a predefined guide outlining the process and key terms, which derived from the evaluation matrix (Annex 1).

The documents reviewed included, among other:

- project proposals and design documents
- progress reports, final reports, and SEM monitoring reports
- internal reporting and project documentation provided by implementers
- process evaluation of the RRF contribution[5]

The document review also included selected contextual data, such as migration statistics and publicly available information on refugee flows and reception systems in the relevant countries. These sources were primarily used to provide contextual background rather than for causal analysis.

Key informant interviews

Semi-structured interviews with key informants, including project staff, implementing partners, and other relevant stakeholders selected based on their involvement in and knowledge of the projects, were a core source of qualitative information for the evaluation.

The interviewees were identified with the support of the implementers. Each project team was asked to compile a list of relevant institutional stakeholders. These included authorities, service providers, and consultants, project teams, and other informants. With the exception of UNICEF, the implementers also designated an internal focal point to support coordination across countries.

To guide this process, we used a thematic analysis to link the projects with relevant stakeholder categories. These included, for example, legal protection and policymakers, employment and livelihoods, housing, education, child protection, youth services, and health and psychosocial support. Where gaps in stakeholder coverage were identified, the implementers were asked to propose additional

[5] Prestel et al. 2024.

contacts or provide justification for their absence. This approach helped ensure adequate coverage and supported the overall comprehensiveness of the evaluation.

The interviews were conducted both remotely and during the country visits. Overall, we carried out 75 semi-structured interviews with a range of stakeholders, summarised in Table 4 below. As several interviews involved more than one participant, the total number of interviewees was close to 90.

Table 4: Number of interviews (country and project)

Country/implementer	IFRC	Tdh	UNHCR	UNICEF	TOTAL
Bulgaria	-	-	3	-	**3**
Croatia	-	-	-	18	**18**
Hungary	5	1	7	-	**13**
Latvia	2	-	-	-	**2**
Lithuania	3	-	-	-	**3**
Romania	8	7	12	-	**27**
Slovakia	-	-	4	-	**4**
Multicounty	1	1	2	-	**4**
Other					**1**
Total	**19**	**9**	**28**	**18**	**75**

The interviews were conducted to gather insights on local contexts, project implementation, perceived outcomes, coordination with other actors, efficiency, institutional capacity strengthening, and lessons learned. An interview guide was developed based on the evaluation matrix and included a set of core questions alongside project-specific probes (Annex 3). It was then tailored to each interview based on information drawn from the desk reviews.

The semi-structured format provided a consistent framework that also allowed to explore topics in more depth where needed. The interviews typically lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Where possible, they were recorded with the consent of participants. The interview notes and transcripts were then analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Focus group discussions

Seven focus group discussions (FGDs) were held to capture experiences and perceptions of the participants. Two FGDs took place in Hungary, with beneficiaries of the UNHCR and Tdh projects, and two in Romania with beneficiaries of the IFRC and Tdh projects; these groups consisted of refugees. In Croatia, given the project's more limited direct engagement with refugees, the three FGDs for the UNICEF project were instead conducted with institutional stakeholders. The focus groups explored themes such as:

- access to services and documentation support
- education, language, employment, health, and housing
- social participation and community relations
- perceived changes resulting from project interventions

The participants were recruited with the support of implementing partners. The discussions were facilitated by a moderator (in Croatian, Ukrainian and Russian) and an evaluation team member with passive language skills (Croatian and Ukrainian, respectively) acted as co-moderator. The moderators in Hungary and Romania were identified with the support of the implementing partners, and priority was given to individuals with a migrant background and familiarity with the topics discussed.

We selected and trained the moderators to help create a welcoming, respectful, and non-judgemental environment. A FGD guide (Annex 4) was developed to support a common understanding of the process among the facilitators and to ensure methodological consistency and comparability across groups. Notes and audio recordings were used to support the subsequent analysis.

While the focus group discussions were not designed to produce statistically representative findings, efforts were made to include participants with diverse backgrounds and experiences. The results of the FGDs, besides providing insights for the evaluation findings, informed the survey design, particularly in defining relevant themes and identifying areas to be explored quantitatively through the administration of the survey to a larger sample of respondents.

Online surveys

Two online surveys were conducted to capture the perspectives of key stakeholders and beneficiaries across the project portfolio.

The institutional survey targeted organisations involved in the implementation and delivery of project activities, including implementing organisations and their partners, service providers, and policy and coordination institutions. It consisted of 31 questions and was distributed to 359 stakeholders, of whom 185 responded (52% response rate). Details on respondent institutions by country and project are presented in Table 5. The survey covered all evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability).

The refugee survey targeted individuals aged 16 and above who had participated in at least one project activity, among the three projects with a strong focus on the direct involvement of refugees, namely IFRC, Tdh, and UNHCR. It consisted of 77 (shorter) questions (with conditional logic) and was distributed through implementing partners due to data protection concerns. A total of 714 responses were collected, corresponding to an estimated response rate of approximately 19%. The survey focused on relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability collected through indirect questions. The breakdown by country is presented in Table 5. The breakdown by project is not reported, as this information was not collected in the survey for several reasons.[6]

Table 5: Number of survey responses (country and project)

Survey responses (number of institutions/persons)					
	Institutional survey				**Refugee survey**
Country/project	**IFRC**	**Tdh**	**UNHCR**	**UNICEF**	**Total**
Hungary	16	14	17		120

[6] These include confidentiality concerns and the aim of minimising the collection of data that could potentially identify individuals; the possibility that refugees participated in multiple activities delivered under different projects; and the fact that support was sometimes provided through implementing partners, meaning that beneficiaries were not necessarily aware of the broader project under which the activities were delivered.

Latvia	8				58
Lithuania	15				136
Romania	21	10	7		283
Bulgaria			14		60
Slovakia			12		57
Croatia				51	
Total	**60**	**24**	**50**	**51**	**714**

Both surveys included a combination of closed and open-ended questions that addressed the main evaluation criteria, especially effectiveness and impact, covering different activities, and provided both a contextual understanding and insights.

Both surveys were implemented using mixed sampling approaches, which relied on contact lists held by the implementing organisations and their partners. Participation in the survey was voluntary. Since essential data are not available,[7] it is not possible to assess the statistical representativeness of the surveys.

Limitations of the institutional survey data are imbalances in the sample composition (e.g., overrepresentation of NGOs) and the partial completion (49%), which also affects the number of responses available for some questions. Despite these limitations, the survey data provide a robust indicative evidence on patterns, perceptions, and trends across the project portfolio and are triangulated with qualitative and documentary sources.

A detailed description of survey design, sampling approach, response rates, and sample characteristics is provided in Annex 5.

Quantitative efficiency analysis

A cost-benefit analysis was conducted to assess the return on investment of job support services. The analysis examined the relationship between the costs of the intervention and the potential earnings of beneficiaries. Its aim was to estimate the employment rate needed for the intervention to reach a break-even point. To support this, several scenarios were developed based on different assumptions. The analysis relied on output data from the IFRC monitoring and evaluation system related to employment support activities. Where project-specific data were not available, additional parameters for the simulations were drawn from desk research.

Data analysis and synthesis

The data collected through the document review, interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, and project M&E systems were analysed separately and then considered together. Qualitative material was reviewed using thematic content analysis while survey and monitoring data were analysed descriptively to identify patterns and differences across projects and countries. This process was guided by the evaluation matrix. The findings were then synthesised at project and portfolio level to inform the

[7] This includes the total number of refugees reached by the projects, the number of refugees contacted for the surveys (the sample), the number persons actually reached, and information about the population and sample structure.

responses to the evaluation questions and to compare evidence from the different sources. Emerging findings were reviewed, discussed, and validated within the evaluation team.

We adhered to **ethical guidelines and data security** in the following ways:

- Interview participants were provided information on the purpose of the evaluation, their involvement, and their rights, to ensure receiving informed consent.
- Information we obtained was anonymised, and we generally allowed for interviewees to decline to answer questions if they so preferred.
- Recordings, transcripts, memos, and contact information will be deleted six months after completion of the evaluation; recordings were only done based on prior consent.

2.5. Limitations and challenges

The evaluation was implemented largely as outlined in the inception report, with only minor adjustments. We gathered data and insights from various sources and perspectives, making efficient use of available time and resources to provide a solid basis for the evaluation. While the process was thorough, it is important to acknowledge a few challenges and limitations.

- The stakeholder interviews mainly involved individuals who have been closely involved in the project's implementation over several years. As a result, there is a risk that the findings reflect common knowledge or well-established views. We have addressed this by adding light touch research (e.g., on refugee survey results in Switzerland) to broaden the evidence base.
- The sampling approach for the refugee survey relied on contact lists held by the implementing organisations and their partners. This may have introduced selection bias. To mitigate this risk, we engaged directly with the implementers through individual calls to define clear selection criteria. These included ensuring that respondents had participated in at least one project activity and aiming for a sufficiently broad and representative sample of beneficiaries.
- It was not always clear whether refugees were aware of how the services they received related to specific projects. In the absence of a comprehensive case management database, the survey relied on respondents' self-reporting to identify the types of support received. This increased the complexity of the survey and introduced a risk of misinterpretation. To mitigate this limitation, the analysis did not focus on comparing different areas of support between projects. Instead, the findings were interpreted from an overall perspective, acknowledging that respondents may have received multiple types of support.
- Stakeholder lists were often incomplete. To ensure the comprehensiveness of the evaluation, these were complemented through additional analysis of organisations and thematic areas covered, cross-checked against project documentation (e.g., logframes), as well as continued coordination with implementers.
- The selection of stakeholders interviewed during on-site visits was influenced by logistical and organisational constraints, in order to ensure an efficient evaluation process.
- The evaluation planned cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis under the efficiency criterion, but this was only possible to a limited extent. This was due to data gaps, particularly regarding the level of detail of cost and service usage data (output data were generally present in the project documents but in an aggregated form) or comparable outcome measures.

Notwithstanding, comprehensive evidence was collected to provide grounded answers to the evaluation questions. The findings are presented in the following chapter, structured according to the OECD DAC evaluation criteria.

3. Findings

This chapter contains the findings of the evaluation questions (EQ) as presented in the evaluation matrix in Annex 1.

3.1. Relevance

This section addresses two evaluation questions on relevance (EQ1-2, Table 3): it focuses on the migration context in the partner countries and the needs identified at the design stage. With regard to the migration context, it assesses whether the situation of refugees and host communities justified the support provided, including the main challenges they faced and the broader reception context. In relation to the needs identified at the design stage, it examines the extent to which target groups and partner institutions were involved in the project's design and implementation.

The migration context across the project countries justified the support provided, given the scale of displacement and the sustained pressure on services and systems. Across all countries, the sustained arrival of people fleeing Ukraine created challenges related to access to accommodation, services, livelihoods, and social integration that affected both refugees and host communities.[8] At the time, this situation fell directly within the scope of the RRF's objectives, which include providing urgent, short-term support and enabling non-state actors to respond rapidly in contexts of acute need. Apart from adjustments to specific country contexts and thematic focus areas, the messaging across the project documents we reviewed was similar. For illustrative purposes, the following lists just some of the arguments the implementing organisations put forth in their project application documents, which were submitted in May 2023:

- UNHCR described large-scale arrivals following the outbreak of the war, with millions crossing borders and nearly 400 000 people hosted in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. While it noted that the initial reception systems functioned relatively well, UNHCR argued that the continued inflows placed increasing strain on the national capacities. Similarly, IFRC noted that reception and integration systems struggled to keep pace with the growing demand.
- In Romania and Hungary, Tdh highlighted that rising arrivals further stretched already limited national systems. In its project application document, Tdh explained that refugees faced difficulties finding accommodation, accessing information and enrolling children in school – particularly in Romania – as well as limited availability of psychosocial support.
- In Croatia, UNICEF reported over 22500 displaced people at the time, including a high proportion of children and unaccompanied minors. Most of them were accommodated in private housing

[8] At the same time, there were notable differences in the absolute and relative numbers of Ukrainian refugees across the countries.

rather than reception centres.[9] Key challenges that UNICEF noted included gaps in child protection, barriers to education due to language and documentation requirements, and significant mental health and psychosocial needs, all within a context of constrained national capacities.

Across the portfolio, refugees' needs were identified through a mix of structured assessments, administrative and monitoring data, partner consultations, and operational experience from the initial emergency response to the refugee influx. UNHCR mainly used its 2022 Multi-Sector Needs Assessment[10] (MSNA) surveys, conducted in several countries, to inform the project's design. Tdh also reported to have relied on the MSNAs as well as its prior experiences. UNICEF drew on own administrative data, sector reports and monitoring of the changing migration context to identify pressure points in child protection, education, mental health and early childhood support. IFRC drew more on operational knowledge from the first phase of the emergence and the on-ground experience of its National Red Cross Societies in supporting displaced populations, as well as its established contacts with national and local authorities.

The projects' objectives, chosen approaches and instruments were closely aligned with the needs identified during the design phase. In all projects, the respective intervention logic showed a link between the assessed gaps and the corresponding activities. For UNHCR, needs related to access to services and employment and were addressed through legal assistance as well as coordination with national authorities, for instance. Tdh focused on access to accommodation, education, psychosocial support and social services to address gaps that were highlighted in the MNSA. It used a combination of direct support to refugees and capacity building of local service providers, giving particular attention to children and youth (as per their organisation's core focus). For UNICEF, gaps in protection, service capacity and integration for children, particularly unaccompanied and separated children, were directly addressed through system-strengthening measures including technical assistance to and capacity building of – mostly – public institutions ("key actors in social welfare, health, child protection and education sector"). Similarly, IFRC's emphasis on integration, employment and well-being corresponded to identified gaps in accommodation, services and social inclusion. Its activities thus covered language support, psychosocial activities and community engagement. The latter were guided by IFRC's Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), an organisation-wide way of working with community members as equal partners.

The interviews confirmed these findings. A notable theme that several interviewees described was the shift away from immediate emergency needs and toward longer-term challenges related to integration, education, psychosocial wellbeing, employment, and accommodation. Across all countries, refugees' needs were largely similar, mostly covering essential human needs for safety, shelter, and access to basic services. The interviewees consistently felt that the case for support remained strong even after the emergency phase had passed, because needs had evolved rather than disappeared. The needs

[9] To accommodate children and families, the Croatian Government operated three reception centres with admissions up to 48 hours and 43 collective centres; 7% of the displaced persons resided there, while the remaining ones resided in private accommodation (source: UNICEF RRF Project application form, undated).

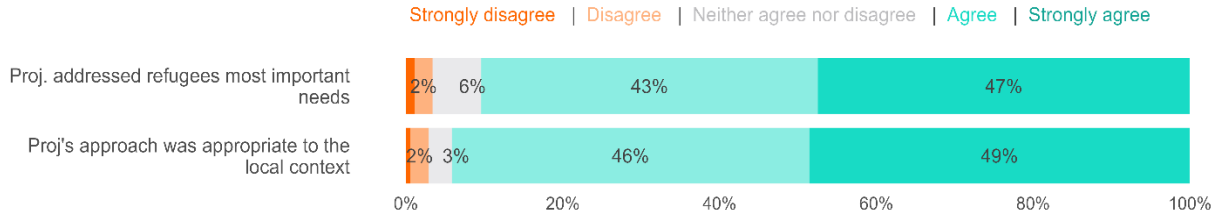
[10] In 2022, household surveys were carried out in major European host countries after Russia's invasion of Ukraine as part of the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) for Ukrainian refugees. The surveys gathered evidence on refugees' profiles, needs, vulnerabilities, and coping strategies to support humanitarian planning. They covered households both inside and outside collective centres and covered topics such as food security, health, WASH, cash assistance, livelihoods, education, child protection, mental health, psychosocial support, and gender-based violence. In Hungary, for instance, the MNSA highlighted "accommodation, education, employment opportunities, and access to mental health care appeared as the overriding concerns for the population displaced to Hungary from Ukraine." UNHCR's focus on employment and Tdh's focus on accommodation, education, and psychosocial support and social services directly reflect these concerns. The MSNA also provided baseline data for the UNHCR project under the Rapid Response Fund.

evolved along two main dimensions: First, as refugees have remained in the host countries, their needs naturally developed over time. Second, there was an increasing need for more tailored, individualised support. Some interviewees had the view that in contexts where government support for refugees was limited or declined over time, the RRF projects became more relevant because they helped fill important gaps and also strengthened the position of NGOs in contexts that were not supportive of them.

Most institutional stakeholders considered the projects to be highly relevant, according to the survey's results. Around 90% agreed that the projects addressed refugees' most important needs, while 95% found that the approach was appropriate to the local context (Figure 1). These high levels of agreement are consistent across all four implementers, since positive responses remain above 85-90% in each case.

Figure 1: Relevance: response to needs and appropriateness (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: The project addressed the most important needs of refugees. The project's approach was appropriate for our context."



Note: Based on responses from 177 and 171 participants, respectively.

The refugee survey results also confirm the projects' relevance, albeit with varying degrees across the respective types of support. The refugee survey covered the following dimensions of relevance:[11] needs that were not addressed during the projects' implementation, and needs that remain unaddressed until today (i.e., at the time of the survey).[12] The results of the survey are shown in Table 6 and Table 7.

Around one fourth of the survey respondents stated that they would have needed help accessing the labour market (26%) and the health care system (25%). One fourth of the parents reported need for language or catch-up classes for their children. Almost one fifth of the survey participants would have needed help in obtaining housing, while 17% reported they needed legal or administrative support and language classes for adults. Mental health support for adults and psychological support for youth were less often identified as unaddressed needs by 16% and 12% of respondents, respectively. However, this might be because some people are hesitant to talk about mental health needs (see Section 3.3.1).

Among all respondents, 32% said they still needed help with legal or administrative issues and with job search, and 19% with housing. These findings indicate that, although needs have been addressed, they continue to exist and require ongoing attention.

[11] The survey did not ask refugees to "rate how relevant the support from the project was". Instead, the following approach was chosen: First, respondents who did not receive support were asked if they would have needed it. Second, all respondents were asked if they still needed support in certain areas at the time of the survey. These questions show two things: the unaddressed needs of those who did not get support and the current needs of respondents, regardless of whether they had received support.

[12] Data were analysed for respondents who reported not having received support in a given area while indicating that they would have needed it. These figures were then compared against the total number of survey respondents (714) and to the total number of respondents with children (493) for the areas concerning youth.

Table 6: Relevance: Unaddressed needs, refugee perspective (refugee survey)

Area of support	Unaddressed needs ("did not receive support and would have needed it")	Number of respondents
Legal or administrative support	17%	288
Housing	19%	275
Job support	26%	329
Access to health care	25%	353
Mental health related support	16%	473
Language classes for adults	17%	186
Community events for adults	n/a	n/a
Language and catch-up lessons for youth	25%	184
Psychological support for youth	12%	189

Source: Refugee survey

Table 7: Relevance: Needs still unmet at the time of the survey, refugee perspective (refugee survey)

Area of support	Needs still unmet at the time of the survey ("did not receive support and would have needed it")	Number of respondents
Legal or administrative support	35%	668
Housing	20%	666
Job support	40%	572

Source: Refugee survey

The degree to which target groups were involved in project design and implementation varied. Based on the sources we reviewed, partner institutions of the implementers were more often involved in the initial design phase,[13] while refugee participation at this stage was usually indirect, mainly through needs assessments, surveys, casework, focus groups, and feedback mechanisms. During implementation, however, shifted. Refugees became more directly involved, not only as participants but also as volunteers providing services and contributing to activities such as language classes. [14] Partner institutions were involved to different extents depending on the context, through coordination, data sharing, service delivery, and capacity building. In Croatia, the programme board, which brought together ministries, NGOs, reception-centre staff, ombudsperson institutions, and specialised partners, emerged

[13] Notwithstanding, there have also been critical views, calling for more collaborative project design (as illustrated by the quote "when awarding funding, make sure that the opinions and insights of local non-governmental field organisations, which will implement the project's activities, have been gathered and taken into account, in order to avoid projects that do not properly address the national context and challenges."

[14] An example that illustrates the involvement stems from RODA, a non-governmental organisation in Croatia, that collaborated under the UNICEF project. RODA used focus group discussions with migrant women to define language choices, content, and format of their information platform for migrants in Croatia. Similarly, in Romania, Tdh collected feedback from youth through interviews, focus groups, and direct observation to refine their activities and initiatives in the Resilience Innovation Facilities (RIF). through consultations, focus groups, direct observation, and youth participation in project activities.

as an important mechanism for refining the project's implementation, apart discussing its progress, aligning approaches, and addressing bottlenecks.[15]

Summary assessment: Overall, the evidence indicates that the projects were relevant and that both evaluation questions can be answered positively, with some qualifications.

Regarding **EQ1**, the migration situation in the partner countries clearly justified the support provided. The large-scale arrival of people fleeing Ukraine placed pressure on accommodation, protection systems, education, livelihoods, health and social services across the countries covered. These pressures affected both refugees and host communities and were fully consistent with the type of urgent, flexible support the RRF was designed to finance. Across the portfolio, project documents and stakeholder perceptions show that while specific needs varied by country, the scale and persistence of displacement created substantial support needs that demanded intervention.

Regarding **EQ2**, the project design was aligned with the identified needs of target groups and institutions. The interventions were generally based on needs assessments, operational experience that the implementers gained during their long-term presence in the respective countries, administrative data and consultation with relevant partners. There was a clear link between identified gaps and the selected activities. This is also reflected in the strong validation from institutional stakeholders and, to a somewhat more mixed extent, from refugees themselves. At the same time, the findings suggest an important limitation: although projects were responsive to refugees' needs, refugees' direct participation in project design appears to have been limited in most cases. The engagement occurred more often indirectly than through documented "co-design" processes.

In sum, the projects addressed a highly relevant crisis context, and their designs were appropriate to the needs identified at the outset – not all of which could be addressed in full, as evidenced by the continued presence of unmet needs. While it is understandable that more direct refugee involvement was less feasible during the initial design phase, future interventions could be strengthened through more participatory design.

3.2. Coherence

This section addresses two evaluation questions on coherence (EQ3-4, Table 3). It examines different aspects of coherence, complementarity, and coordination, and also considers the extent to which design, implementation, and learning processes were aligned to support coherence.

The projects under evaluation were coherent with and supported implementation of the TPD. Activated in March 2022 for persons fleeing Ukraine, the TPD establishes a legal framework for immediate protection, including residence rights and access to employment, housing, medical assistance, education, and basic social support. In this sense, the projects supported the TPD's operational application by supporting national and local capacities to deliver services to temporary protection beneficiaries. Activities funded under the RRF therefore helped to translate formal entitlements under

[15] The programme board was also seen as "the only platform for regular and meaningful exchange of information, especially since the National Commission for Unaccompanied Children [note by authors: a formal coordination body] has not met for two years".

the TPD into access in practice. Employment-related measures implemented by organisations such as UNHCR and IFRC, for example, were consistent with the Directive's objectives regarding labour market access and social inclusion. More generally, the RRF-supported projects helped address practical support and service gaps at country level.

The projects were coherent with the priorities set out in the Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plans (RRP), which have provided the main inter-agency coordination framework for the refugee response since 2022. Led by UNHCR and implemented together with a wide range of organisations, these plans identify common priorities across host countries,[16] particularly in the areas of protection, inclusion, and access to essential services. In that respect, three projects funded through the RRF can be understood as contributing to the wider response reflected in the RRP, even where they were not themselves core coordination instruments. Organisations such as UNICEF, IFRC, and Tdh have been part of the RRP. The RRF funding contributed to response activities in sectors also prioritised under the RRP.[17]

The projects covered countries that were significantly affected by displacement from Ukraine, and the portfolio was geographically broad. Several of the countries were part of the wider regional refugee response. One notable aspect, however, is the concentration in Hungary: three of the four projects were implemented there, even though Hungary appears to have hosted fewer refugees from Ukraine than some of the other countries in the portfolio. In Hungary and Romania, where three projects were active, Budapest and Bucharest were the main centres of activity, partly due to greater and more varied needs there.[18] Beyond the capital cities, the projects were more differentiated, covering urban and more rural locations.[19, 20] Geographically, the portfolio combined broad national or country-wide coverage as well as more local interventions. Across all projects, activities were mentioned in more than 40 cities, regions, and countries across the seven countries. In addition, we learned in the interviews that some locations were chosen because they enabled more targeted reach to specific underserved groups, including Romani communities, for example through Tdh's work in Győr.

Project-internal coordination was generally seen as effective for information exchange, alignment, and practical problem-solving. Across the projects, the interviewees described different types of internal coordination mechanisms, including monthly meetings among project staff and coordinators within and across countries, as well as between country offices and headquarters teams. The meetings were not only used to share information, but also to find solutions when difficulties arose.[21] This finding is consistent with the results of the monitoring visits conducted by SEM. In practice, several persons explained, coordination went well beyond these formal meetings, as there had been additional contacts and exchanges that took place as part of routine organisational processes.

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[16] The countries covered by the RRP include Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia; Croatia is not included.

[17] The funding can also be understood as contributing to the RRP funding targets. In 2024, for instance, the funding appeal amounted to more than USD 1billion (https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/364).

[18] The Terms of Reference for the evaluation also noted that, although Romania and Hungary did not host the largest numbers of people fleeing Ukraine, needs remained high because of underlying structural weaknesses. Similarly, a SEM monitoring visit to Romania and a visit of the state secretary to Hungary in 2023 found that available financial resources were insufficient to meet existing needs.

[19] For example, Tdh focused on Debrecen and Győr in Hungary and on Brașov and Constanța in Romania, while UNHCR Romania had activities in Cluj, Galați, Iași and Suceava, and UNHCR Slovakia in Bratislava, Košice, Nitra, Trnava, Žilina and Prešov. IFRC was active on across Hungary and Romania through its respective national societies' branch offices.

[20] A 2024 study found that Ukrainian refugees are generally more likely to stay in (dense) urban areas. According to the authors, Romania is an exception because some refugee concentrations appear in (less-dense) rural regions. González-Leonardo, M. et al. 2024.

[21] This point is also discussed in the effectiveness and efficiency sections, including as part of the assessment of the multi-country approach.

While several coordination mechanisms were in place, there were no specific or dedicated exchanges across the four RRF projects. With regard to the question of whether joint learning mechanisms or exchanges between the projects had been established, we found no supporting information that there have been deliberate coordination efforts.[22] Where interactions did take place, they resulted from previous collaborations or appeared to be more incidental and ad hoc. At the same time, the project designs neither envisaged such collaboration nor were there any incentives/mechanisms foreseen for it. Against this background, it is noteworthy that the survey results presented below in Figure 2 show that a large majority of respondents (84%) believe that the projects created synergies among the participating organisations, although the respondents may refer to synergies that emerged by collaborating with their partners (rather than across projects).

The strongest examples of effective coordination across organisations came from projects that brought public institutions, NGOs and specialised service providers into regular contact. In Romania, for instance, the RomExpo model was repeatedly described as an effective coordination mechanism because it brought different actors together in one place, making it possible in practice to provide, refer and connect legal, administrative, medical and social support. The COMPASS Centres in Bulgaria and or the KATYA Hub in Romania functioned similarly, as one-stop-shop structures where different service providers work in the same location. Beyond improving access for refugees, these examples were also said to make day-to-day coordination between organisations easier and to reduce duplication of effort. It is a working group including the Border Police and the Migration Office, municipalities, and international and domestic NGOs. The Human Rights League, UNHCR's partner organisation, was among its participants. In Croatia, several interviewees described the UNICEF programme board as a useful and practical forum that went beyond the function of a standard project steering committee ("the meetings were dynamic, with many discussion and working groups – not only passive presentations", as one interviewee noted). It brought together ministries, NGOs, reception-centre staff, ombudsperson institutions and other specialised actors, and was seen as helping participants exchange information, identify bottlenecks and coordinate responses across child protection, education and reception. In Slovakia, the Protection and Inclusion Group was mentioned. However, and despite these positive examples, it became also evident from the interviews that cooperation and coordination with public institutions was difficult in several contexts, often dependent on local relationships or individuals, rather than more systematic and formal arrangements.

Coordination also took place through regular NGO meetings, which interviewees referred to with different names, such as Protection and Inclusion Group (Slovakia), multisectoral coordination forum (Hungary), and inter-agency working groups (Romania). Many of these mechanisms seem to have been part of, or linked to, the UNHCR-led RRP. They often included thematic groups, for example on basic needs, that met regularly to discuss challenges and coordinate activities. These coordination mechanisms were not resulting from the RRF per se, but organisations funded through the RRF participated in them and used them as part of the "wider response architecture". In several interviews, stakeholders also described more practical forms of coordination, including referrals between organisations and ad hoc cooperation in urgent cases (e.g., families facing eviction and needing housing solutions). The information we collected does not allow a clear conclusion on how far these various forms of coordination reduced duplication or created synergies. However, it is reasonable to

[22] In this context we recall that in the early stages of the evaluation, when we coordinated with representatives of the four implementing organisations, most did not know each other, except in cases where they had collaborated before or met each other through other coordination mechanisms, such as the mentioned country-level working groups or coordination platforms.

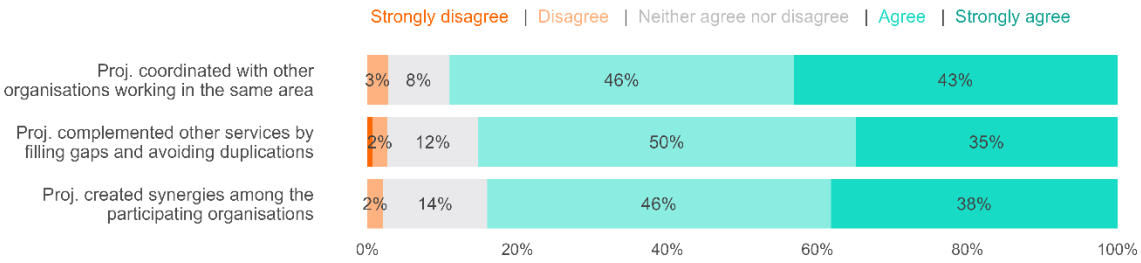
assume that they brought some benefits, particularly for information-sharing, case management, and clarifying who could respond to what.

Conversely, we also learned that in the initial phase, projects were set up quickly, often with overlapping efforts, and limited coordination between actors. Some interviewees confirmed that during 2022 there had also been competition among NGOs for beneficiaries in order to meet targets. Although coordination improved over time, gaps remained, especially in the division of responsibilities between public institutions and non-governmental actors. Moreover, a few interviewees noted that coordination in contexts that are fast changing and where there are many actors remain challenging.

Complementarity and coherence were assessed positively in the survey: between 80% and 90% agree that the projects coordinated well, complemented each other, and generated synergies among participating organisations (Figure 2). Only few rated the second item on filling gaps and holding duplications low, which was confirmed widely in the qualitative data: interviewees rarely reported overlaps or duplication. On the contrary, they more frequently highlighted internal coordination efforts as well as other organisations, often referring to coordination platforms under country-level Regional Refugee Response Plans.

Figure 2: Coordination (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: The project coordinated with other organisations working in the same area (e.g., through meetings, information-sharing, joint planning). The project complemented other services or initiatives (filled gaps and avoided duplication). The project created synergies among the participating organisations."



Note: Based on responses from 146, 149, and 144 participants, respectively.

Where coordination challenges were identified, they tended to centre around three main themes. First, several respondents mentioned limited engagement of government authorities and gaps in institutional coordination, particularly at the central level. Difficulties in involving ministries were mentioned in some countries – both in the survey as well as in interviews. Institutional changes and staff fluctuations were also mentioned as factors that disrupted coordination. Second, operational challenges, especially in the early stages of implementation, such as issues related to communication, scheduling, information flow, and administrative procedures. Third, some respondents stated fragmentation and duplication, such as overlapping services, parallel case management, and competition among organisations attending to refugees. This was occasionally linked to project-specific targets, as illustrated in one respondent's comment who stated that "each organisation working on refugee projects does not want to cooperate because they must reach the number of refugees foreseen in their own project" (Latvia).

Summary assessment: Overall, the findings suggest that the projects were broadly coherent, both in how they complemented one another and in how they were coordinated with other actors, programmes and policy frameworks.

For **EQ3**, we conclude that the projects were generally complementary in terms of content and geographic coverage. Across the seven countries, the portfolio combined national and local-level interventions. In locations where several projects were active at the same time, overlap appears to have been limited.

For **EQ4**, the projects were aligned with the Regional Refugee Response Plans and supported the implementation of the EU Temporary Protection Directive by helping translate formal rights into practical access to services. Coordination seems to have worked best where there were concrete mechanisms that brought actors together on a regular basis, such as one-stop-shops, programme boards and inter-agency working groups. Although their effect on reducing duplication or creating synergies cannot be assessed, these arrangements appear to have supported information-sharing, referrals and day-to-day problem-solving.

Collaboration and coordination appear to have been stronger in relation to the broader refugee response than between the four RRF projects themselves. While coordination within projects was generally effective, there is no evidence of structured exchange or joint learning across the projects under evaluation.

Finally, collaboration and coordination with public institutions was not equally strong in all countries and contexts and often depended on existing relationships rather than formal arrangements.

3.3. Effectiveness

The effectiveness section (EQ5-8, Table 3) examines the extent to which the projects achieved their intended objectives at output and outcome level, and identifies factors that enabled or hindered achieving them. It assesses the changes experienced by refugees and institutions, including variations across different groups and contexts. The chapter also explores the added value and challenges associated with the multi-country implementation of the projects led by IFRC, Tdh, and UNHCR. To assess effectiveness, we rely on the projects' monitoring data which we complement with the findings from the interviews, the focus group discussions, and the surveys.

Before turning to the detailed M&E findings, Table 8 provides contextual background by presenting results (outputs, outcomes) that were repeatedly mentioned during the interviews and focus groups. For this reason, it should not be seen as a systematic or exhaustive list, including with regard to the mentioned quantitative data. At the same time, the fact that these results were mentioned particularly often may suggest that they were of special significance to the people interviewed. More detailed information is provided in the implementing organisations' final reports.

Table 8: Selected project results (output and outcome-level)

Implementer	Selected results
UNHCR	**Legal assistance** • Individual legal assistance, counselling, and information across countries for 16000 persons (through Helsinki Committee Offices, Romanian National Council for Refugees, others) • Housing-related legal assistance in Hungary in 2024 contributed to preventing homelessness of families following eviction • Strategic litigation of Bulgarian Helsinki Committee resulting in a Supreme Administrative Court decision (May 2024) that granted refugee status to a draft evader from Russia

	• Training for lawyers appointed by the National Bureau for Legal Aid, court monitoring, border monitoring visits etc. • Capacity building for Border Police officers in Slovakia **Socio-economic support** • Provision of various support services (counselling, courses) through UNHCR partners Caritas, Dévai Inn Community Centre, Mandák, Menedék, CNRR • Job coaching, job counselling, skills-recognition, skills courses, self-/employment support through grants, cash vouchers to attend job-related courses (Romania) • Development of a Guide for job seekers in collaboration with the National Employment Agency in Romania • Development of the Refugee Employment Platform, an online platform aimed at refugees job search • Language classes (for 1000+ persons) and integration counselling: delivered through partner organisations Dévai Inn Community Centre, Mandák, Menedék
Tdh	**Children and youth education and well-being** • Resilience Innovation Facilities (RIFs) in five locations providing 2500+ workshops (e.g., FabLab) to children and youth and 18 youth-led initiatives in Hungary and Romania • Provision of PM+ (for around 70 refugees) and I Support My Friends low-intensity psychological intervention (peer to peer support) • Provision of trainings and methodologies on Supervision and Coaching, Quality of Services, PM+, ICAM to 11 schools, NGO, public institutions (200+ professionals trained) • Summer camps for children and youth in Romania and Hungary (200+ children attending) • Collaboration with shelter homes in Győr, Hungary, mostly hosting Hungarian speaking Roma families from Transcarpathia • Case management of individuals (housing, cash, psychological support, doctor accompaniment, administrative support) • Service mapping in three locations in each Hungary and Romania focused on education and MHPSS services
IFRC	**Socio-economic and socio-cultural inclusion** • Mental health and psychosocial support: community-based MHPSS activities such as counselling, support groups, workshops (Hungary, Romania) • Employment: including job counselling, case management, vocational skills training, internship placements involving 2000+ persons (Latvia, Lithuania, Romania) • Language classes: language courses at various levels provided to 2800+ persons (Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, and Romania) • Community events: cultural orientation, activities incl. celebrations, excursions, festivals, cooking events (Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania) • Housing: rental assistance for around 540 households of Ukrainian refugees in Lithuania
UNICEF	**Child protection** • Establishment of intercultural mediator positions in the Centre for Provision of Community Services Zagreb-Dugave (centre that accommodates UASC) • Infrastructure improvements of three reception centres (Rijeka, Osijek and Ivanec) to improve protection and care • Training programmes to 650+ professionals in reception centres, social service providers, and others (e.g., intercultural practice, MHPSS for refugees and migrant children) • Expansion of the “Brave Phone” – a youth support hotline – with a multi-language chat services (focused on refugee and migrant children and their families) on WhatsApp • Expansion of the “Parenting in Croatia” online platform (40000+ accesses reported) in five languages with information aimed at migrants, refugees, asylum seekers • Networking and learning opportunity during an exchange of child protection specialists from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia **Education** • Development of a standardised Croatian language tests for adequate and consistent language support to migrant students; around 560 children completed testing • Development of evidence-based PREMISE programme for Early Childhood Education and Care educators • Development of school self-evaluation framework, e-learning modules etc.) on inclusion in schools and inclusion action plans in five schools across Croatia

	• Teacher training course on the inclusion and special pedagogical approaches (added to the official course catalogue, recognised by the Ministry of Education)

Sources: Tdh Final Report (2025), UNHCR Final Report RRF (2025), IFRC Final Report (2026), UNICEF Final Report (2026)

The projects reported that they achieved their intended results, with only minor exceptions, and reached the target beneficiaries. Across the portfolio, most targets were met or exceeded, with the exception of output indicators in IFRC's monitoring system.

- UNHCR exceeded all of its reported targets for socio-economic inclusion and legal assistance. It reported to have reached close to 40% more refugees than planned.
- IFRC's M&E data show positive trends (e.g., reduced feelings of exclusion in certain contexts) but overall the results are reported to be below the targets.
- Tdh met or exceeded all of its reported targets, including those related to access to services, well-being, skills, and provider capacity.
- UNICEF largely achieved its planned targets, particularly in relation to case management, education, and social transfers, with only two indicators slightly below target.

Table 9 summarises the M&E data of the four projects at outcome level. Annex 6 provides more details on the specific indicators.

Table 9: Overview of M&E data

Implementing organisation	Main areas of change	Key quantitative results	Key qualitative result	Comments
UNHCR	Socio-economic inclusion; legal assistance	All reported targets were exceeded. Total beneficiaries reached: 21884 against a target of 15720 • Socio-economic inclusion: 5552 against 3280 • Legal assistance: 16332 against 12440	Activities were delivered and reached more people than initially planned	Indicators used at outcome level are largely counts of people reached, which say more about delivery than change
Tdh	Children and youth education and well-being	All reported targets were exceeded. • Improved access to protection services: 90% of respondents (refugees, adults) • Emotional and/or social well-being: 82% of resp. (refugees, youth) • Improved technical skills: 85% of resp. (refugees, youth) • Improved ability to respond to needs: 93% of targeted providers	Surveys conducted by Tdh point to positive perceived changes for both refugee children and youth and for service providers	No clear reference to baselines or to standardised measurement tools for the self-reported data (perceptions); sample sizes are small in some cases

		• Improvement plan: 100% of targeted services		
IFRC	Socio-economic and socio-cultural inclusion	Targets not met, however, mainly due to issues in data monitoring system and target setting. Output targets were met.	Some positive trends are reported, including reduced feelings of exclusion in certain contexts	Limitations in data collection and measurement methods. Surveys used for perception-based indicators had insufficient sample size/low response rates, and no evidence of standardised measurement tools for the self-reported data indicators
UNICEF	Child protection; education	Most targets were met or exceeded. • Children benefiting from support and services: 8105 against 8200 • UASC identified: 1820 against 1000 • Children receiving case management: 1820 against 1000 • Children accessing formal education: 1984 against 1850 • ECD-related access: 298 against 300 • Households benefiting from social transfers: 8959 against 8000	Key services reached the intended groups, support through national systems was functioning in practice	One indicator, on MHPSS accessibility, is measured in a binary way and is closer to outputs relies primarily on evidence of implementation

Sources: Tdh Final Report (2025), UNHCR Final Report RRF (2025), IFRC Final Report (2026), UNICEF Final Report (2026)

While the monitoring data suggests that the projects were effective, it is less clear how far they contributed to higher-level outcomes and change. This is in part due to the way the M&E systems were set up, lack of clarity of some indicators, and limitations in data collection. Weaknesses in the M&E systems that make it difficult to assess the results include:

- Some outcomes were measured using output-level indicators, such as the number of beneficiaries receiving socio-economic support or legal assistance, which says little about the quality or depth of the changes achieved. (UNHCR, UNICEF)

- Some indicators were poorly designed, for instance, absolute targets were set at levels that exceeded the achievable sample size; for others, ambitious targets were set that typically require more time to be achieved or were not well aligned with the project's activities (IFRC)
- Some outcomes relied on self-reported data and focus group results, without clear baselines or the use of standardised measurements, while others relied on small sample sizes. (Tdh)

For these reasons it is useful to completement the M&E findings with those from interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys in the following chapters – focusing first on the outcomes for refugees and then for institutions.

3.3.1. Outcomes for refugees

This section outlines outcomes for refugees, building primarily on the refugee survey findings,[23] which present the effects that refugees themselves associated with projects funded under the RRF. The refugee survey findings are complemented by evidence from the focus group discussions and the interviews with representatives of the implementing organisations, their partners, and public institutions (the latter group is only represented by a small number of interviews). It should be noted that the interviews were not evenly distributed across projects and countries and that interviewees were also often unsure about outcomes beyond general observations or individual examples. The findings should therefore be seen as indicative rather than conclusive, since they reflect both the perspectives of the stakeholders we interviewed and the specific focus of each project. In addition, we present selected findings from the institutional survey.

Across the interviews, better information for day-to-day functioning, improved access to services and rights were repeatedly mentioned. The types of outcomes the interviewees emphasised often reflected their position. Implementers and partner organisations often mentioned concrete changes that improve refugees' situations and lives. The representatives of public institutions – of which we interviewed only very few, which limits the robustness of the findings – more often talked about improved access to services.

Spotlight: Stories from the focus group discussions

Two focus group discussions were held in Hungary and Romania respectively. The purpose was to collect experiences from refugees who were supported by the projects. The following are individual stories shared by participants that are illustrative of many others.

- Elderly women in Romania: The person arrived with her husband and first stayed in a Baptist church shelter. She explained that at the beginning, they did not know what support was available or how to access it, suggesting "it would have been good to have short courses where Ukrainians (especially newcomers) could learn about transportation, banks, health care, and municipal institutions." Eventually, she was connected to IFRC, where she took part in the language classes and also received help with interpretation. This helped them develop basic skills, which later enabled the woman to volunteer with the church in administrative work and to provide interpretation for IFRC. When accommodation support ended, the church helped them find housing. The couple also took part in group psychological support sessions, which were helpful after living in the occupied area of Kherson, which was under heavy bombardment. They took part in activities such as picnics and cooking events for both Ukrainians and Romanians. These events helped them build friendships and create a sense of community. She now wants to stay in Romania.
- Teenager in Hungary: The boy arrived in the country with his family in 2022. After an initial stay in temporary accommodation, the family started renting a flat. He continued to attend Ukrainian school online, while also

[23] The survey covers the projects led by IFRC, Tdh, and UNHCR.

being enrolled in a Hungarian school. This was challenging, as there were no individual support to learn the language. His situation improved after changing to a bilingual school, where he received greater support from teachers. He participated in the Tdh "I Support My Friend" workshop and Resilience Innovation Facility programme. The "Forest Camp" stood out as a particularly positive experience. Group activities helped to get to know other young people and contributed to building friendships, including with Hungarian peers. Looking ahead, his family would like to return to Ukraine. However, if he is able to build a stable life in Hungary, he would prefer to stay or relocating to Romania, where he previously travelled through a Tdh programme and met with other Ukrainians.

- Woman in Romania: She was granted temporary status within a day after arriving in Romania. She rented an accommodation which she found through social media, like many other refugees. Being a logopaedist and was temporarily employed by an NGO but, after the end of her one-year contract, funding ended, and the organisation was no longer able to maintain her position. She is now working as a part-time babysitter without a formal contract. She reports that Ukrainians are often offered jobs with lower pay than Romanians, despite having identical duties and responsibilities. She would like to work as a facilitator between Ukrainians and Romanian service providers: "it would be good to create a database of specialists from Ukraine and share it with organisations like the Red Cross, Tdh, and Save the Children. Information about their specialties and employment preferences could be collected during the process of obtaining temporary protection."

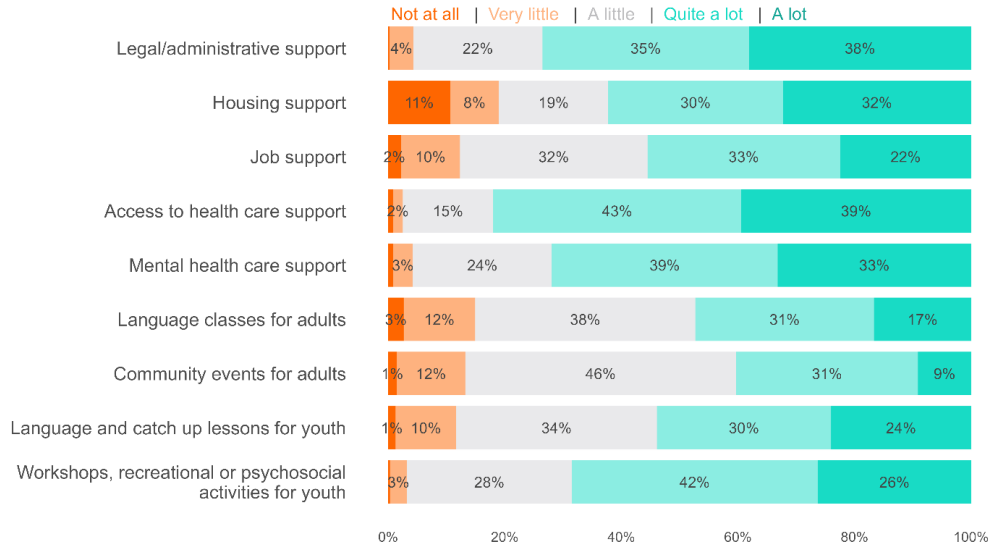
Source: FGD in Hungary and Romania

Most respondents in the survey report that the support they received provided practical value, particularly legal and health-related services; results of integration- and community-oriented activities were more mixed. Survey respondents were asked to assess the extent to which the different types of support they received in the host country helped them – that is, the extent to which the support provided practical value or led to concrete outcomes. While the survey distinguishes between support received through projects funded under the 2023 RRF call and support from other sources,[24] the results presented here aggregate responses across all respondents. As such, the following results reflect the overall perceived usefulness of each service, irrespective of the source of support (Figure 3).

[24] For each area of intervention, respondents were first asked whether they had received support in that specific area. Those who had were then asked whether the support had been provided through one of the three projects covered by the refugee survey (IFRC, Tdh, UNHCR). Those who had not received support were asked whether they would have needed it. In the report, the term "those who did not participate" refers to individuals who were involved in some project activities, but not in the specific area concerned.

Figure 3: Usefulness of support received (refugee survey)

"How much did the legal assistance or administrative support you received help you? How much did the housing support you received help you? How useful was the job support you received? How much did the support you received help you or your family members access health care? How much did the support you received help you or your family members access mental health care? How much did the language classes you attended help you? How much did taking part in these events help you feel part of the local community? How much did the language or catch-up lessons help them succeed in school? How much did the workshops, recreational or psychosocial activities, help their well-being?"



Note: Based on responses from 370, 384, 227, 355, 235, 522, 340, 154, and 308 participants, respectively.

Legal and administrative support

Legal and administrative support emerged as one of the most helpful services (Figure 3). Almost none of the respondents (only one individual) stated that the support had not been helpful, while 73% indicated that it helped them "quite a lot" or "a lot".

When asked to provide general feedback on legal and administrative support, many respondents expressed appreciation for the professionalism, timeliness and practical assistance that the projects provided. Several referred to integration centres or specific organisations and highlighted support in filing administrative applications or assistance in accessing and navigating school and health systems.

Alongside this positive feedback, a smaller group described practical challenges. A few respondents mentioned delays in making appointments, particularly for ID cards or residence documentation. Others referred to the need for translation or interpretation support, including certified translations. A statement, from a respondent in Romania, exemplifying these issues, is "some services are not very willing to help understand issues. They say: 'I don't understand what you want' and leave without helping, so I had to involve a translator". Some also linked administrative processes to financial matters, such as accessing disability-related benefits or rent assistance. While remarks related to translation needs or legal documentation related to temporary protection varied, the overall experience that the respondents reported was broadly similar across the surveyed countries.

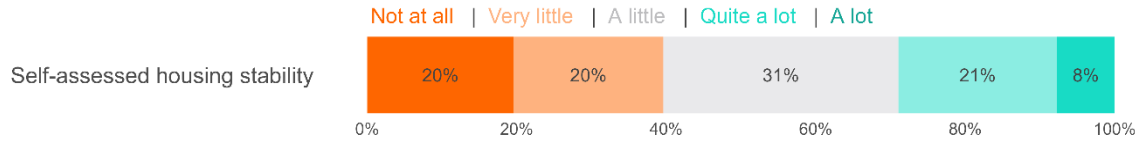
Housing

Housing support was perceived as helpful by the majority of respondents who received it – 62% reported that it helped them "quite a lot" or "a lot". At the same time, around one fifth indicated that it helped them only to a limited extent (Figure 3).

Most refugees do not consider their housing situation to be stable. The survey explored respondents' housing situation more broadly, including the perceived stability of their accommodation, regardless of whether they received housing support or not. Figure 4 shows that 71% of respondents worried about having to move in the near future.

Figure 4: Self-assessed housing stability, whole sample (refugee survey)

"How much does this statement describe your situation? "I have stable housing and do not worry about having to move in the near future"



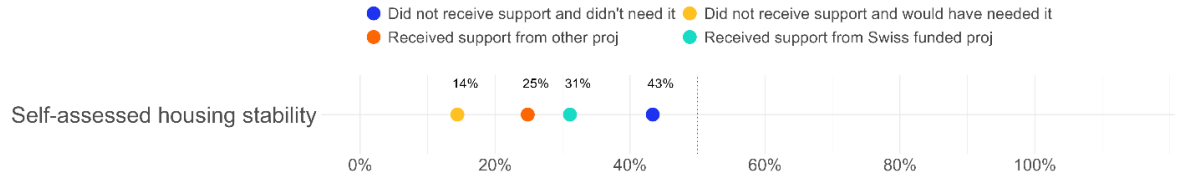
Note: Based on the responses of 674 participants.

Less than a third of the respondents reported high housing stability, but there are notable variations across the respondent groups.[25] Given that these services were delivered to different populations across different countries and contexts, the sample is too heterogeneous to conduct statistical tests on differences in means. Nevertheless, descriptive differences can be observed, as shown in Figure 5.

Among respondents who did not receive housing support and did not need it, 43% consider their housing situation to be stable or very stable. Findings from interviews and focus group discussions suggest that these respondents are more likely to be relatively affluent, live in single-person households, or have stable household incomes. This share decreases to 31% among those who received support through one of the three projects covered by the refugee survey, 25% among those supported by other projects, and 14% among those who did not receive support but reported they would have needed it.

Figure 5: Housing stability, whole sample, breakdown by support received (refugee survey)

"How much does this statement describe your situation? "I have stable housing and do not worry about having to move in the near future."



Note: For Did not receive support and didn't need it, based on responses from 113 participants. For Did not receive support and would have needed it, based on responses from 118 participants. For Received support from Swiss funded proj, based on responses from 238 participants. For Received support from other proj, based on responses from 149 participants.

Affordability emerged as the main concern across all seven countries. The respondents frequently cited high rents, rising living costs, and difficulties in covering housing expenses. This issue was often linked to fears about the reduction or loss of rental subsidies and temporary housing support, as well as broader financial concerns – captured by one respondent's remark: "the rent amount is

[25] The survey analysis compares results across four groups: i) respondents who received housing support through one of the three SEM-funded projects covered by the refugee survey , ii) those who received support from other projects, iii) those who did not receive housing support but indicated that they would have needed it, iv) and those who did not receive support and reported that they did not need it.

disproportionately high compared to salary." Other difficulties mentioned included finding accommodation because of limited availability and reluctance of landlords to rent to refugees, illustrated by a respondent in Romania: "Not everyone is ready to rent to Ukrainians." References to overcrowding or substandard housing conditions were less common.

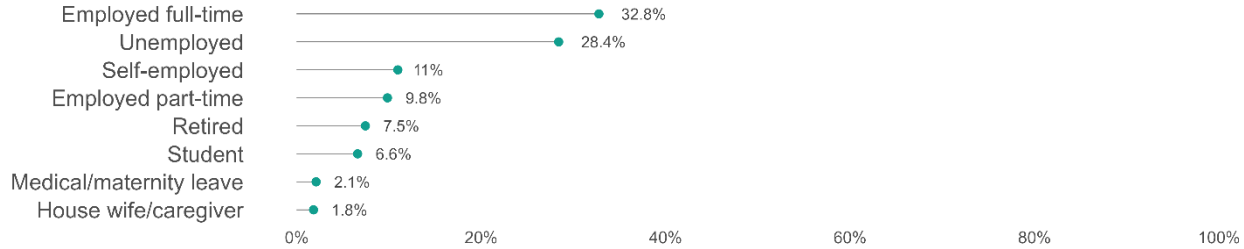
Job support

The employment situation of all respondents (regardless of whether they received support or not) provides useful context for interpreting survey results (Figure 6).

More than half of respondents reported being (self-) employed: nearly 33% were employed full-time, 11% were self-employed and slightly below 10% were employed part-time. At the same time, a considerable share of respondents (around 30%) reported being unemployed. These results mirror a recent UNHCR/partners analysis of more than 6'000 Ukrainian refugees (age 20-64) across Europe where 57% reported being employed (including self-employment and informal work), 22 percentage points below the comparable rate for host-country nationals.[26]

Figure 6: Employment situation, whole sample (refugee survey)

"What is your current job situation?"



Note: Based on the responses of 711 participants.

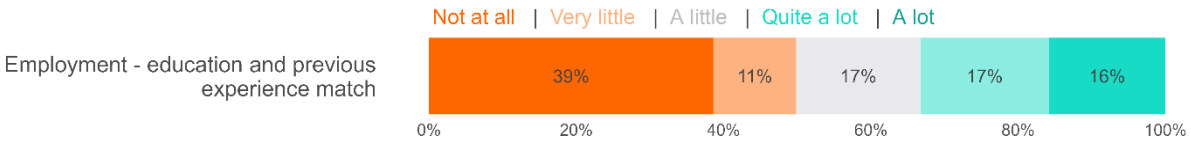
Half of the refugees in employment reported that their current job did not match their previous professional experience or studies (Figure 7). They indicated a low (11%) or no match (39%), whereas 33% reported a high or very high level of match. These results are similar to the ones reported in the UNHCR (2026) analysis, which found that nearly 60% of those who are employed say they work below their skill level, and they are almost twice as likely as nationals to be in low-skilled jobs.[27]

Figure 7: Employment/education match (refugee survey)

"How does your current employment match your education or professional experience obtained in Ukraine?"

[26] The report further states that "countries bordering Ukraine tend to record the highest employment rates, while Western European and Nordic countries show markedly lower levels—even after accounting for differences in refugees' profiles. Local-language proficiency is one of the strongest predictors of employment, and longer duration in the host country is also associated with improved labor-market entry." Source: UNHCR (2026).

[27] Ibid.



Note: Based on the responses of 373 participants.

Job support was perceived as useful by most of those who received it. As shown in Figure 3, the results are mixed as 55% of respondents reported that the support they received was "quite a lot" or "a lot" useful, while 32% found it "a little useful" and 13% "very little and not at all" useful. Those respondents who stated to be unemployed were asked whether they had ever searched for a job in the host country. Almost half (42%) reported that they had never searched for employment. The main reasons cited (multiple answers were allowed) include:

- childcare responsibilities (37%),
- lack of language skills (36%),
- and disability (15%).

A further 8% reported caring for other family members and another 5% that they plan to return to their job in Ukraine. Only a few respondents mentioned waiting for temporary protection status or the recognition of their diplomas.

Language proficiency stood out as the most frequently cited challenge to employment, particularly for more stable jobs or qualified roles. Asked for general feedback on employment, the respondents repeatedly described limited knowledge of the local language as a barrier to securing a job, particularly stable or qualified roles.[28] In addition, the respondents mentioned a range of other obstacles, including limited job availability, low wages, perceived discrimination, and bureaucratic barriers such as diploma recognition. Men were somewhat more likely to emphasise hiring practices, perceived discrimination or limited vacancies.

Depending on the country in which they currently live, respondents highlighted different barriers to employment. In some countries, they more often mentioned the limited support and accessibility of public employment services. In others, comments focused more on employers' reluctance to hire Ukrainians, reliance on private recruitment agencies, and language or diploma requirements that restrict the access to jobs. Elsewhere, respondents emphasised job shortages, low pay, and the need for free, practical training that leads to employment more often. Education also shaped priorities: those with higher education were more likely to raise concerns about diploma recognition, while respondents with vocational or secondary education mentioned the need for hands-on support more often – help with job searches, interview preparation, translation assistance, or one-on-one guidance. Across all groups, demands for accessible language courses and professional training or requalification opportunities stood out.

Language classes for adults

Adult language classes appear moderately helpful overall. Less than half of the respondents (48%) indicated that they helped "a lot" or "quite a lot" (Figure 3). The distribution of such respondents is not

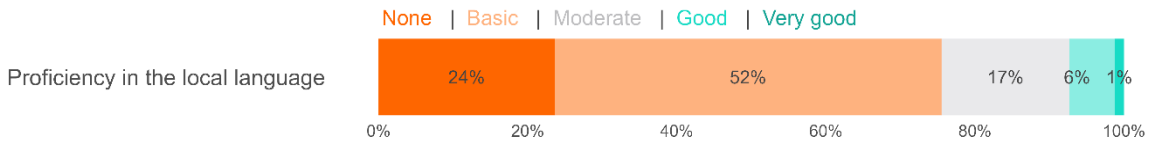
[28] The aforementioned UNHCR/partners study similarly concluded that: "Language proficiency emerges as a strong predictor of employment. Respondents reporting at least some knowledge of the local language are 13 percentage points more likely to be employed than those with none or only minimal knowledge." (UNHCR 2026)

equally distributed among languages. Slovakian (59%), Bulgarian (57%), and Romanian (51%) classes are above average, Latvian (48%) on average, while Lithuanian (44%) and Hungarian (27%) below average.

Respondents were also asked to assess their level of proficiency in the local language. The results are presented in Figure 8 for the overall sample and in Figure 9 for the breakdown by whether respondents received the intervention. Overall, language proficiency remains limited. A majority of the respondents (76%) report having either no knowledge or only basic knowledge of the language, while only 7% consider their level to be good or very good.

Figure 8: Self-assessed language proficiency, whole sample (refugee survey)

"What is your current level of proficiency in the local language in [the host country]?"



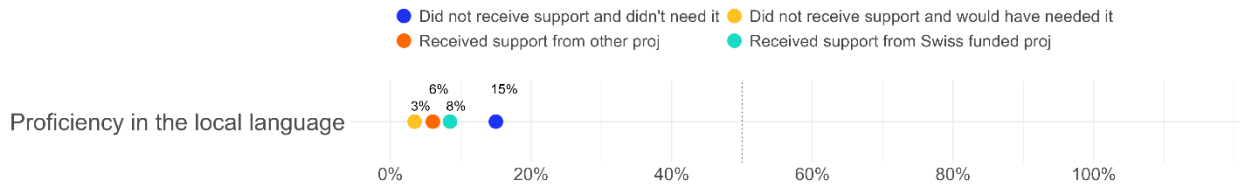
Note: Based on the responses of 711 participants.

Looking at self-assessed language proficiency breakdown by country, we find that, in this case as well, the distribution of those who consider their level "good" and "very good" is not uniform. Slovakian and Bulgarian appear to be highly above average (25%), while all other languages score below the average, but with relatively small deviations.

High self-assessed language proficiency ('a lot/quite a lot') is most common among those who did not participate in language classes and reported not needing them (15%). This is followed by respondents who received support from one of the three projects covered by the refugees survey (8%) and those who received support from other sources (6%). The lowest level of proficiency is reported among respondents who did not receive support despite indicating that they would have needed it (3%).

Figure 9: Self-assessed language proficiency, whole sample, breakdown by support received (refugee survey)

"What is your current level of proficiency in the local language in [the host country]?"



Note: For Did not receive support and didn't need it, based on responses from 60 participants. For Did not receive support and would have needed it, based on responses from 116 participants. For Received support from Swiss funded proj, based on responses from 224 participants. For Received support from other proj, based on responses from 298 participants.

Respondents also identified several challenges to learning the language. The most frequently cited barriers are listed below. The last three are closely interlinked, since lessons at advanced levels are more expensive and less available, but essential for securing skilled jobs:

- limited opportunity to practise the language (43%),
- followed by the cost of lessons (27%),

- the availability of language courses (20%),
- and the availability of courses at an appropriate level (9%).

In addition to selecting pre-identified barriers, respondents could also explain their views in an open text field. Many said that their work schedules or family responsibilities prevented them from attending classes and stated having too little free time or feeling too tired after long working hours. Some respondents also mentioned their age or health conditions as additional challenges. Others described difficulties related to their refugee situation, such as a respondent in Hungary who explained: "When a person is under constant stress, it is impossible to properly learn the language because brain capacity decreases sharply." Some respondents proposed ways to improve how courses are organised. Their suggestions included offering more flexible class schedules, adjusting the pace or materials to better meet learners' needs, having greater continuity among teachers, and avoiding lessons conducted in English.

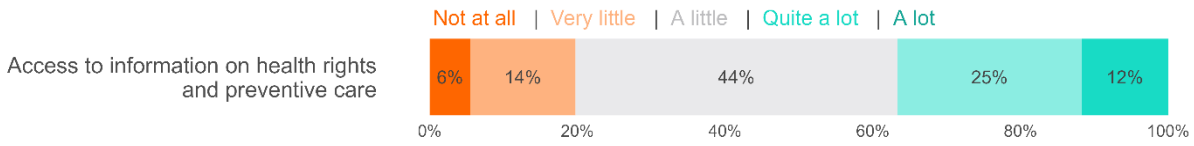
Access to health care and mental health care

Support related to access to the health care system was rated as the most helpful service among those who received it. Eighty-two percent of respondents reported that it helped them "quite a lot" or "a lot". Mental health care, which may also have included mental health provision itself, for which 72% indicated that it helped them "a lot" or "quite a lot", was also rated very positively among respondents who received the support (Figure 3).

At the same time, the survey explored respondents' access to information about the health system in the host country more broadly. The responses, shown in Figure 10, suggest that access to information on health rights, available services and preventive care is generally moderate. Most respondents stated having at least some information, 44% indicated "a little" and 37% reported "quite a lot" or "a lot", while about one fifth (20%) reported having very little or no information. In fact, information about the health system is usually not a priority for refugees as long as they do not need health care for themselves or their children.

Figure 10: Access to information on the health care system, whole sample (refugee survey)

"To what extent do you feel you have information on your health rights, available services, and preventive care in [the host country]?"

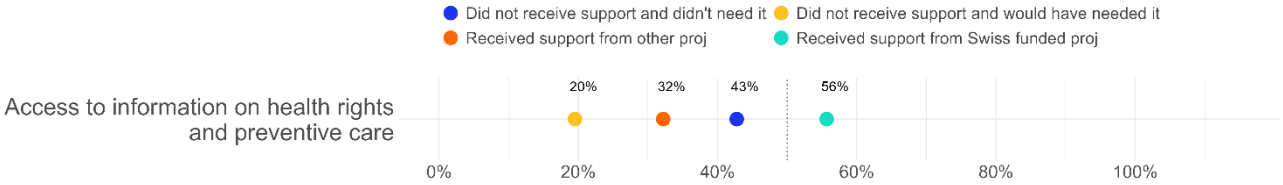


Note: Based on the responses of 709 participants.

Findings from the survey suggest that the projects implemented by IFRC, UNHCR, and Tdh were effective in disseminating information related to health services. Indeed, respondents who received support through one of the three projects covered by the refugee survey reported having a high level of information: 56% indicated that they have "a lot" or "quite a lot" of information on their health rights and available services (Figure 11). This share decreases to 43% among respondents who did not receive support and did not need it, to 32% among those who received support from another project, and to 20% among those who did not receive support but reported they would have needed it.

Figure 11: Information on the health care system, whole sample, breakdown by support received (refugee survey)

"To what extent do you feel you have information on your health rights, available services, and preventive care in [the host country]?"



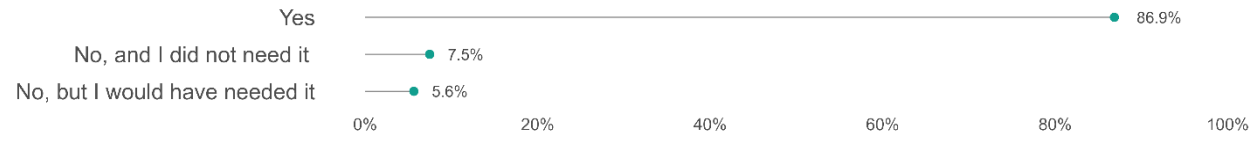
Note: For Did not receive support and didn't need it, based on responses from 152 participants. For Did not receive support and would have needed it, based on responses from 169 participants. For Received support from Swiss funded proj, based on responses from 176 participants. For Received support from other proj, based on responses from 177 participants.

The most frequently mentioned structural and practical barriers to health care were long waiting times and difficulties understanding, finding or accessing the right services. These issues are exemplified by a respondent who mentioned "very long waiting times for family doctors, specialists, rehabilitation doctors", "for a psychiatrist, we waited for 3 months", and "even if they [doctors] understand it, they categorically do not speak [Russian]". Several respondents also mentioned the need for services tailored to children and adolescents. A few mentioned doctors' reluctance to treat Ukrainians because they were not fully aware of the refugees' entitlements under the Temporary Protection Directive. At the same time, a reassuring finding emerges: 87% of the respondents reported being able to access the health care they needed when required, while only 5.6% reported that they were unable to do so (Figure 12).

A clear theme across countries was the importance of psychological support. Many respondents described sessions with psychologists as helpful, particularly in coping with stress, displacement and uncertainty.[29] One respondent in Latvia, for instance, wrote, "The sessions with a psychologist helped, but would be needed more often." Respondents with higher educational attainment mentioned psychological and mental health support more frequently than those with lower levels of education.[30] This correlation is confirmed by studies showing that barriers to mental health care are strongly related to health literacy, language proficiency, and factors closely associated with a lower socio-economic situation – and therefore higher vulnerability.[31]

Figure 12: Access to a doctor (for oneself or family members), whole sample (refugee survey)

"Have you or your family members been able to see a doctor or go to a hospital (for physical health) in [the host country]?"



Note: Based on the responses of 708 participants.

[29] Among the most frequently cited interventions by refugees to improve mental health were: Free/affordable psychological services in native languages to address financial and linguistic barriers; Ukrainian-speaking psychologists and translators in healthcare; Stability in legal status, employment, and housing to reduce stress; Clear pathways to residency/citizenship to overcome uncertainty; Community centres and integration activities (e.g., language courses, cultural events) to address isolation.

[30] The share of respondents who received mental health support is 33% in both the entire sample and among those with higher education.

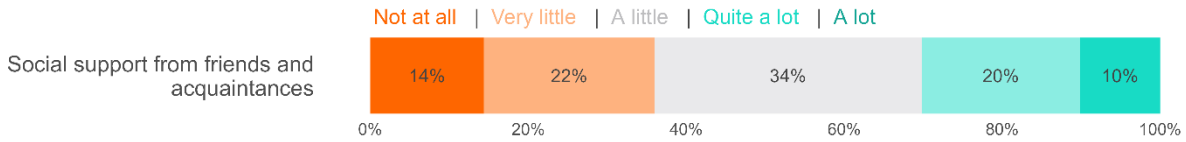
[31] Probst et al. 2022; Ager, A. and Strang, A. (2008).

Community events

Respondents were asked whether they felt they had a support network in the host country. The results presented in Figure 13 show that 30% of the respondents agreed “quite a lot” or “a lot” that they had friends or acquaintances they could turn to for help or support in their host country.

Figure 13: Social support network, whole sample (refugee survey)

“How much does this statement describe your situation: "I have friends or acquaintances I can turn to for help or support in [the host country?"

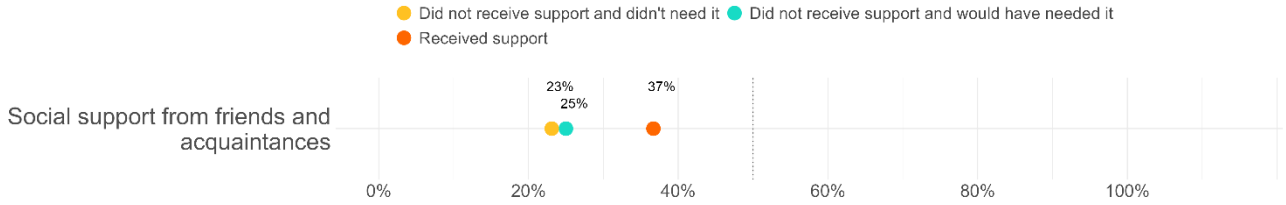


Note: Based on the responses of 709 participants.

The breakdown (Figure 14) shows that respondents who received support are also the group most likely to report feeling that they have a support network in the host country (37%).

Figure 14: Social support network, whole sample, breakdown by support received (refugee survey)

“How much does this statement describe your situation: "I have friends or acquaintances I can turn to for help or support in [the host country]?”



Note: For Did not receive support and didn't need it, based on responses from 225 participants. For Did not receive support and would have needed it, based on responses from 140 participants. For Received support , based on responses from 338 participants.

General feedback on social participation shows community events are appreciated. That said, taking part in local, cultural, or religious events was rated as one of the least helpful services compared with other forms of support respondents received. When it comes to the direct benefits of such events, only 40% of respondents reported that these activities were “quite a lot” or “a lot” helpful, while nearly half (46%) said they helped only a little. This makes it the category with the lowest level of positive feedback among the services assessed, but it should be considered that such events are not necessarily meant to generate a direct benefit in the same way as language courses, legal advice, or health-related support (Figure 3).

Overall, 48% of respondents reported having participated in at least one local, cultural, religious, or community event in the respective host country. In addition, 218 respondents reported volunteering with an organisation, most commonly the Red Cross Societies (26%) and Caritas (11%).

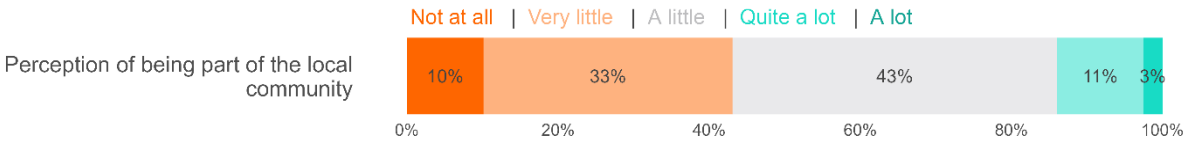
Respondents were also asked to what extent they felt part of the local community. The overall results are presented in Figure 15, while Figure 16 shows the breakdown by support received.

Only 14% of respondents report feeling part of the local community “a lot” or “quite a lot”, while 43% fall into the two lower categories (“not at all” or “very little”). This may indicate that respondents have either

deliberately chosen not to settle in the long term, still focusing on their life in Ukraine, or are realising how demanding a relocation in the local context may be. This is also reflected in several interviews, which indicate that the willingness to integrate is lower among displaced populations who hope to return to their country relatively soon. Moreover, the temporary protection status has officially been associated with a dual-intent approach,[32] aimed to prepare for both indefinite stay as well as for possible return of refugees, which proves sometimes to be quite challenging.[33]

Figure 15: Perception of being part of the local community, whole sample (refugee survey)

"How much do you feel part of the local community in [the host country]?"

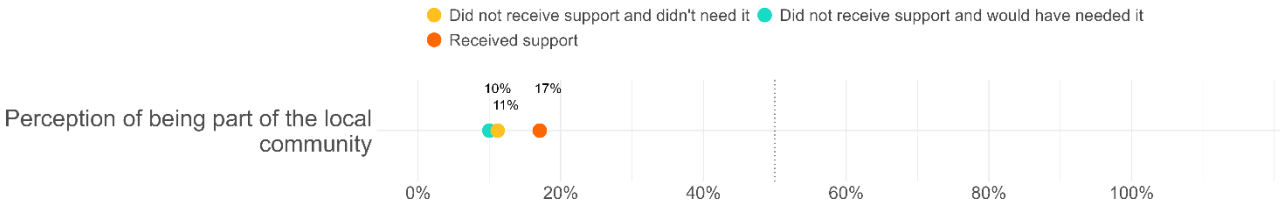


Note: Based on the responses of 710 participants.

The responses suggest that people who took part in community events tend to feel more belonging to the local community (Figure 16). Among respondents, those who participated in community events for adults reported the strongest sense of belonging to the local community (17%). This was followed by those who did not participate and said they did not need such activities (11%), and those who did not participate despite saying they would have needed them (10%). Research in various contexts consistently shows that a sense of local belonging functions not only as an outcome but as a key driver of participation (in local events). By fostering trust, recognition and social anchoring, belonging enables communities to engage in activities and develop bridging social ties, which in turn facilitate broader forms of social participation.[34]

Figure 16: Perception of being part of the local community, whole sample, breakdown by support received (refugee survey)

"How much do you feel part of the local community in [the host country]?"



Note: For Did not receive support and didn't need it, based on responses from 224 participants. For Did not receive support and would have needed it, based on responses from 140 participants. For Received support , based on responses from 340 participants.

When asked how these events help them feel more connected to the local community, respondents most often highlighted the opportunity to talk to people, noted that such events help reduce isolation,

[32] In this context, the Ukraine RRP can also be seen to reflect a dual intent approach: it supports refugees' social and economic inclusion and their access to national systems, but in a situation marked by cross-border mobility, uncertainty about how long refugees' will stay, and many refugees' hope of eventually returning to Ukraine. OECD 2023.

[33] Efionayi-Mäder et al., 2025: The authors note that the dual intent approach leads to an ambivalent situation: one the one hand, refugees are expected to invest in language, training and labour market integration, while their stay is officially framed as temporary; employers and institutions, on the other hand, remain cautious with longer-term employment or upskilling commitments.

[34] Mendy, A. and Efionayi-Mäder, D. (2019). Spaaj, R. (2015).

and provide emotional comfort. Others value learning about local traditions, culture, religion, or history. One respondent shared that they were "able to understand that we are not so different from the Romanian community as I initially thought. It was very interesting, since many national minorities live in Constanța, and I saw how well each community integrates and how everyone treats each other with respect. I felt warmth and understood that I could stay in this city to raise my children here."

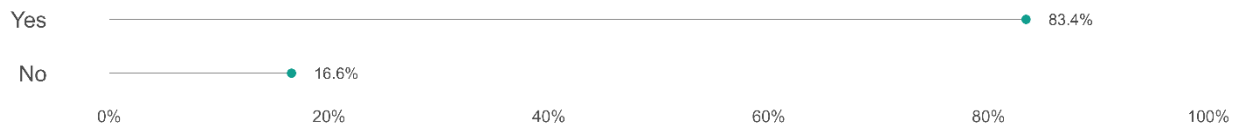
Overall, respondents particularly value cultural and sightseeing activities (excursions, visiting to museums, national holidays celebrations, and cultural festivals) as well as creative activities (e.g., cooking classes, candle-making). Many also called for more language and skill-development programmes, stating that "until you know the language, you will always feel like a 'foreigner', and you won't be able to fully understand the culture and traditions of the people". Finally, many highlighted the importance of organising joint activities with locals.

Education

Sixty-nine percent of respondents have children living with them in the host country. Among children of school age (56% of the total sample), 83% are enrolled in school (Figure 17). Among those who are not enrolled in school in the host country, the main reason is that the child attends online classes in Ukraine (66%). Other reasons include administrative difficulties (11%) and language barriers (8%). Across countries, the need to learn the host-country language was a key concern. Survey respondents frequently described language acquisition as essential both for academic progress and for children's self-confidence and social integration.

Figure 17: School enrolment of children (refugee survey)

"Is your school-aged child enrolled in school in [the host country]?"

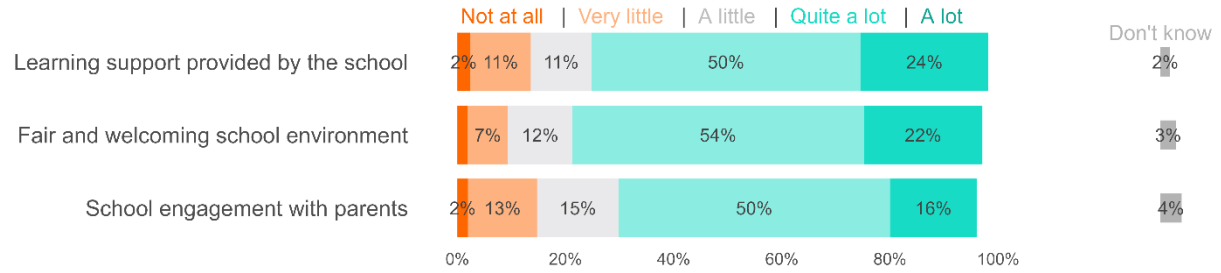


Note: Based on the responses of 404 participants.

Among respondents whose children received some form of educational support, 54% reported that it helped their children "a lot" or "quite a lot" (Figure 3). Respondents with children enrolled in school were also asked to assess several aspects of the school experience: the learning support provided by the school (including language support, differentiated instruction, and adapted learning materials), the welcoming and inclusive nature of the school environment, and the involvement of parents in their children's education. The results are presented in Figure 18 and show similar patterns across the three areas: 66-76% strongly agreed or agreed that the school creates a supportive learning environment in all three areas mentioned above.

Figure 18: School learning support, school inclusiveness and school engagement with parents, whole sample (refugee survey)

"How much do you agree with the following statements? The school gives my child the learning support it needs. The school is a welcoming place where my child is treated fairly. The school tries to involve parents."



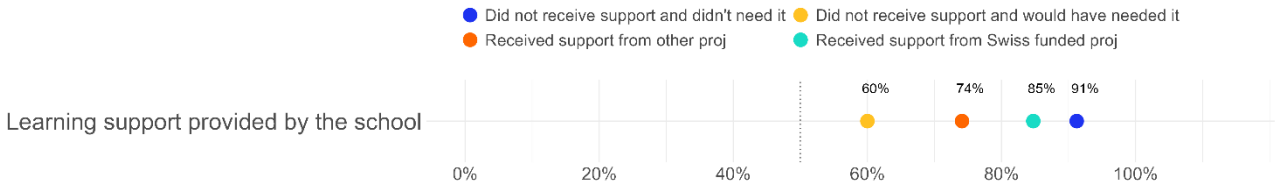
Note: Based on responses from 331, 310, and 305 participants, respectively.

The four subgroups of respondents were compared (Figure 19, 20, 21). Across all three items, the largest share of high positive responses ('a lot' or 'quite a lot') comes from those who did not receive the intervention and reported not needing it (91%, 92%, and 85%).

For the first two aspects — learning support provided by the school and the fairness and welcoming nature of the learning environment — the pattern observed in previous analyses appears again. The second-highest share of positive responses is reported by those who received support through one of the projects under evaluation (85% and 80%), followed by respondents who received support from another project or organisation (74% and 80%), and finally by those who did not receive support but would have needed it (60% and 67%). For the third aspect, parental engagement with the school, the pattern differs slightly. Respondents who did not receive support but would have needed it report higher levels of satisfaction (67%) compared with those who received support through the evaluated projects or other initiatives.

Figure 19: School learning support, whole sample, breakdown by support received (refugee survey)

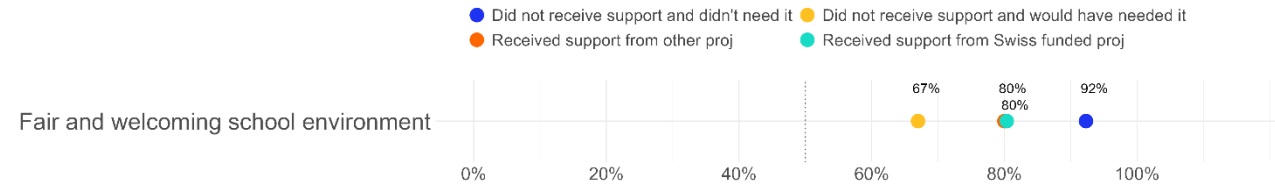
"How much do you agree with the following statements? The school gives my child the learning support it needs."



Note: For Did not receive support and didn't need it, based on responses from 57 participants. For Did not receive support and would have needed it, based on responses from 115 participants. For Received support from Swiss funded proj, based on responses from 59 participants. For Received support from other proj, based on responses from 85 participants.

Figure 20: School inclusiveness, whole sample, breakdown by support received (refugee survey)

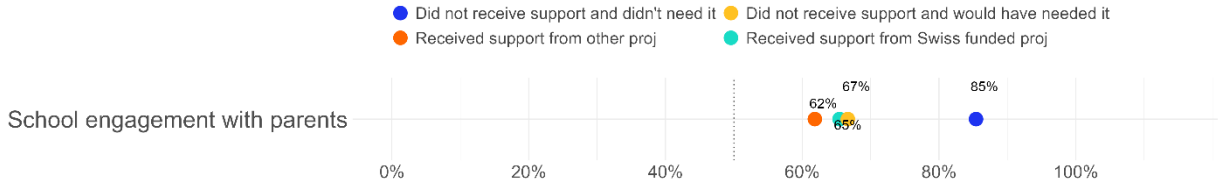
"How much do you agree with the following statements? The school is a welcoming place where my child is treated fairly."



Note: For Did not receive support and didn't need it, based on responses from 52 participants. For Did not receive support and would have needed it, based on responses from 106 participants. For Received support from Swiss funded proj, based on responses from 56 participants. For Received support from other proj, based on responses from 80 participants.

Figure 21: School engagement with parents, whole sample breakdown by support received (refugee survey)

"How much do you agree with the following statements? The school tries to involve parents."



Note: For Did not receive support and didn't need it, based on responses from 48 participants. For Did not receive support and would have needed it, based on responses from 105 participants. For Received support from Swiss funded proj, based on responses from 55 participants. For Received support from other proj, based on responses from 76 participants.

Workshops, recreational, or psychosocial activities for youth

Among the respondents whose children participated in psychosocial or recreational activities, some were unable to recall the exact name of the facility or project involved, which is understandable. However, the most frequently mentioned initiatives were the Tdh Resilience Innovation Facilities (RIFs) (59%), FabLabs (25%), and Problem Management Plus (PM+) (16%).

Psychosocial support activities for youth were generally perceived as useful by respondents whose children participated in them. Sixty-eight percent considered them helpful "a lot" or "quite a lot" (Figure 3).

Parents were also asked to describe the psychosocial needs of their children and how existing activities and services could better address them. Many respondents emphasised the importance of social interaction. Children's lives have been significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and then by the war. One parent in Romania noted, "Resume projects for ages 15-18; they lack communication." Similarly, a parent in Lithuania highlighted the need for "opportunities for informal communication with Lithuanian children." Many respondents described existing activities — including group workshops and psychological support sessions — as positive and helpful. At the same time, they called for such activities to be offered more frequently and to be more widely available.

Spotlight: Ukrainians' Experiences under the Temporary Protection System: Comparison with Switzerland

At first glance, the profiles of Ukrainians under TPS in Eastern European countries covered by this evaluation (Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia) and in Switzerland appear broadly comparable in terms of key demographic characteristics, including gender, length of stay, age distribution, family composition, and educational attainment.[35]

Nevertheless, differences between these populations cannot be excluded. Refugees in Eastern Europe may, for example, remain closer to families in Ukraine or have fewer resources that would allow onward mobility. Survey evidence from Western Europe further suggests that intentions to return tend to decrease with longer stays, particularly when children are involved (Ruedin et al. 2019). Women are overrepresented among respondents in the Eastern European sample (80%) compared with persons under TPS in Switzerland (60%; SEM 2026). More notably, employment rates are higher in the Eastern European sample (53%) than in Switzerland (36%, or 44% among those present for more than three years). This difference may partly be explained by the greater flexibility of labour markets in three Eastern European (Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland) countries compared with Western Europe (Thränhardt 2024).

[35] Most of the data in question comes from this ongoing evaluation (refugee survey) and from a regular monitoring of individuals with protection status S in Switzerland (cf. Ruedin 2026). In the first case (Eastern Europe) findings are based on a self-administered partial survey (N=714); in the second on a regularly updated data collection (id.; SEM statistics) and collective interviews with women (Efionayi-Mäder et al. 2025).

From the perspective of refugees, however, important similarities emerge across both contexts.[36] In both cases, access to clear information on administrative and legal matters is a major concern. While it is identified as the top priority only in Switzerland, it remains essential for navigating TPS regimes and for securing access to public services such as accommodation (support) or healthcare.[37] This need persists beyond the initial post-arrival period. As expected, yet still surprising in its scale, language represents the primary challenge to overcome in both cases: particularly, there is a strong need for affordable and needs-based courses that lead to higher proficiency levels, as well as opportunities to practise the language in everyday life.

The situation is similar when it comes to labour market integration: support is appreciated by refugees but sometimes fails to meet specific needs. Especially for women seeking to work in their trained professions, such as in education, healthcare, social services or customer-facing occupations, advanced language proficiency is particularly inevitable. In addition, the recognition of qualifications obtained outside the European Union is often lengthy and difficult. Finally, combining employment or training with childcare remains a major challenge especially for adults in the aftermath of traumatic experiences (loss and family separation), especially where childcare provision is lacking or poorly adapted and where children attend two different school systems. It is precisely in this context that the tension between local inclusion and a focus on return (so called dual intent approach) becomes particularly apparent. This applies not only to the refugees themselves, but also to host societies and employers (the latter were only surveyed in Switzerland).

Finally, it became clear that civil society actors have played - and continue to play - a significant role in the reception and inclusion of refugees. This holds true in Eastern European countries as well as in Switzerland, albeit under different circumstances, since reception structures in the asylum sector or beyond have reached their limits – and still do so to some extent – without the support of (inter)national NGOs and migrant self-help organisations that are very active in Switzerland among Ukrainians.

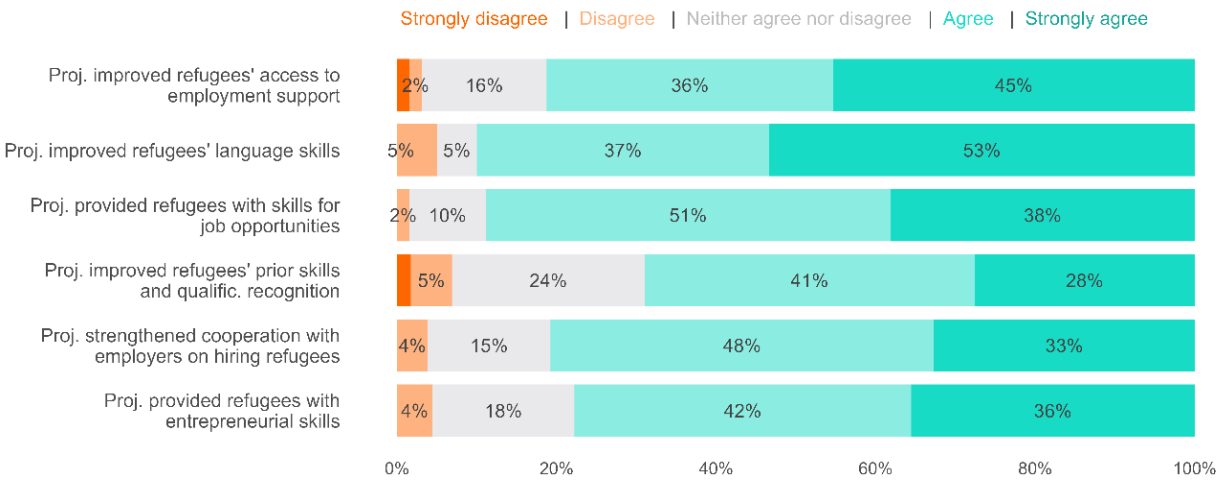
While the results cannot be compared directly because the questions differed between the two surveys, the institutional survey often produced more positive findings than the refugee survey (Figure 22). This is illustrated by the results on the projects' employment support, where institutional respondents had a more positive view of the support provided than the refugees themselves (Figure 3).

Figure 22: Job support (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements. The project improved refugees' access to employment-related support. The project improved refugees' language skills. Through the project, refugees acquired skills relevant to job opportunities. The project improved recognition of refugees' prior skills and qualifications in job matching. The project strengthened cooperation with employers on hiring refugees. Through the project, refugees acquired skills to start or grow their own businesses."

[36] The authors are aware of the diversity of Eastern European contexts, which are set aside here for analytical reasons of simplification.

[37] Especially differences between cantons in terms to asylum and labour market policies came as a particular surprise to Ukrainians accustomed to a centralised (unitarian) State.



Note: Based on responses from 64, 60, 63, 58, 52, and 45 participants, respectively.

3.3.2. Outcomes for institutions

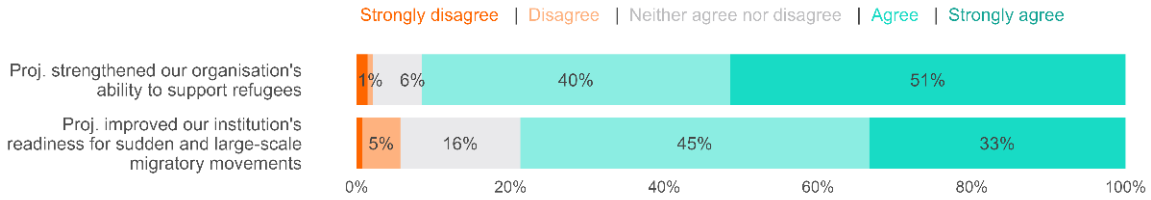
This section outlines outcomes for institutions, drawing mainly on the survey findings, which present the effects that the institutions themselves associated with projects funded under the RRF.

The findings are mixed regarding the extent to which institutions were strengthened through the projects. The interviews and reports provide a number of examples of institutional strengthening, many of which mirror those presented in Table 8. However, it is less clear to what extent these changes have been (firmly) embedded in national systems or have led to changes in institutional practices and processes. The interviews also mentioned that political context, as well as the opportunities for (formal) cooperation and training with public institutions, influenced what could be achieved and often limited the potential for broader results and systemic change. It is also important to note that not all projects aimed to bring about institutional change or followed what might be referred to as systems-change approach to the same extent. By design, many were more directly focused on supporting refugees through protection, assistance, and integration activities. What emerges more clearly from the interviews (and also the survey results) is that the implementing organisations and their partners strengthened their own capacities to a greater extent than those of public institutions (referred to as "policy makers and coordination institutions" in the survey), as shown in Figure 24.

A large majority of the respondents report that the projects strengthened their organisation's ability to support refugees and, to a minor extent, improved readiness to respond to large-scale migration movements. Figure 23 shows that 91% agree with the improvement of organisation's ability in refugee support, while 78% of capacity to respond to large scale migration flows.

Figure 23: Institutional / capacity strengthen (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: The project strengthened our organisation's ability to support refugees. The project improved our institution's readiness in the event of sudden and large-scale migratory movements."

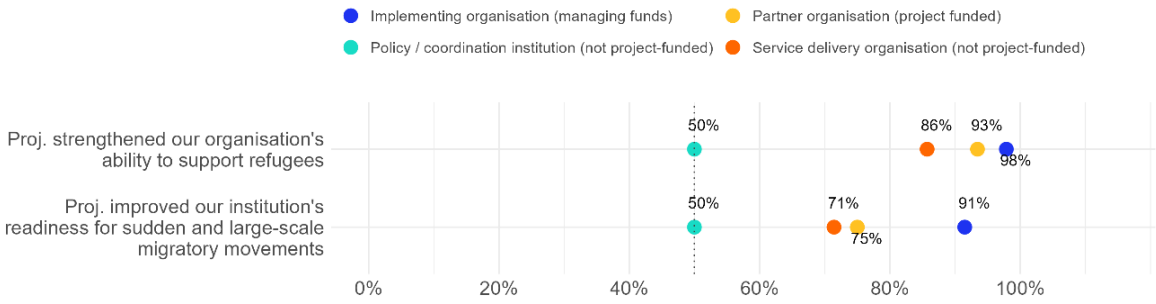


Note: Based on responses from 142 and 141 participants, respectively.

Looking at the breakdown by stakeholder type in Figure 24, policy makers and coordination institutions report more limited effects, both in terms of their organisations' ability to support refugees and their readiness for large-scale migratory movements.

Figure 24: Institutional / capacity strengthen, breakdown by stakeholder type (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: The project strengthened our organisation's ability to support refugees. The project improved our institution's readiness in the event of sudden and large-scale migratory movements."



Note: For Implementing organisation (managing funds), based on responses from 47 participants. For Partner organisation (project funded), based on responses from 61 and 60 participants, respectively. For Policy / coordination institution (not project-funded), based on responses from 6 participants. For Service delivery organisation (not project-funded), based on responses from 28 participants.

When asked what changes in their organisation could be linked to the project, respondents most often mentioned capacity building and staff development. They described improved skills, technical knowledge and more hands-on experience in working with refugees and migrants. Several organisations also mentioned improvements in their internal procedures and systems, including more structured ways of working, clearer internal policies, and better coordination across teams. One respondent explained that "A greater number of Croatian Institute for Social Work (HZSR) professional staff have become more aware and sensitized regarding providing support to children and families in migration. Practical tools developed for professionals during preparedness enable more effective responses" (Croatia). In addition, several respondents referred to stronger partnerships and coordination networks, such as closer cooperation with non-governmental and civil society organisations and public institutions involved in refugee support, especially institutions at the municipality-level. Finally, a small number of respondents recalled that during the time of the project, it gave them the opportunity to increase their operational capacity by, for instance "making it possible to hire more experts so we could act to the Ukrainian situation" (Hungary). A limited number of respondents reported no notable organisational changes.

Spotlight: Focus group discussion with child protection and education specialists

Three focus group discussions were held in Croatia – two in presence, one online. They brought together 16 people, including social workers, teachers, institutional representatives who were involved in the delivery of the UNICEF project in Croatia. Some of the key messages from the discussion are presented below.

The participants confirmed that the project responded to specific gaps in the education and child protection systems in how they supported refugee and migrant children. These gaps in terms of guidance, tools, and training meant that teachers and child protection practitioners were largely left to manage cases on their own, based on their experience or examples from other colleagues.

There was consensus that UNICEF's coordinating role and technical support was essential, as it brought policy makers, experts and practitioners together, bridging policy and practice.

- **Education**: In education, the project supported the development of Croatian language assessment tools, online teacher training through PREMISE, and more inclusive school practices such as peer support and stronger engagement with families. Together, these measures improved teachers approaches. One teacher shared that "for the first time, we had a structured tool that helped us understand where to start with a child." There was also the view that it made school inclusion more effective.
- **Child protection**: The project supported the development of procedures, training and practical tools for professionals, including those working with unaccompanied children. A social worker shared that "the guidelines [developed through the project] now serve as a compass." Intercultural mediators, improved facilities, and multilingual information materials helped improve the quality of support. The project also encouraged foster care and greater community engagement, although challenges remain, including persistent stereotypes and the fact that many unaccompanied children are in transit. Feedback on the child protection data improvement activities of the project were more mixed, because data fragmentation is still high.

Source: FGD in Croatia

The multi-country approach appears to have contributed to effectiveness mainly by enabling cross-country learning and adaptation. Across the projects (IFRC, Tdh, IFRC), the interviewees mentioned the value of working across several countries as a way to exchange experience and adjust activities based on what had worked elsewhere. In practice, this meant that approaches, methodologies, and activities could be tested in one context and refined in another, for example, in areas like vocational training or school inclusion. Such exchanges were widely perceived as one of the key benefits of implementing similar interventions across several countries. At the same time, the approach helped maintain a degree of alignment across countries with broadly similar framework conditions, particularly under the temporary protection regime for refugees from Ukraine.

Spotlight: Factors that have facilitated or hindered implementation and outcomes for refugees.

While a systematic assessment goes beyond the remit of the evaluation, [38] some of the more frequently mentioned factors can nevertheless be summarised here (unless marked as direct quotations, these are paraphrases of various statements of interviewees and survey respondents).

Facilitating factors

- Strong partnerships and the importance of close collaboration, cooperation, and coordination with public institutions, private sector actors, and civil society organisations.
- "Flexibility in project design and budgeting is essential to adapt to rapidly evolving refugee needs and contextual changes."
- Ability to adapt to changing contexts and the need for flexibility to respond to changes in the context as well as evolving refugee needs.
- Integrated, comprehensive approaches that combine e.g., legal, social, educational, and psychosocial support, individual and group based approaches, incl. provision of such services in 'hubs' or 'one-stop-shops'.

[38] A more structured analysis is challenging for several reasons, including the use of different terms in interviews, surveys, and reports, which makes it difficult to cluster and count them, and that many of them are country, project, or activity specific.

- Approaches that strengthen institutional capacities and support the development and implementation of policies, laws, frameworks etc.

Hindering factors

- Limited project duration and resource constraints.
- Limited inclusion of and engagement with refugee-led organisations; limited engagement of local NGO at design stage to better ensure project feasibility.
- Reduced (humanitarian) funding, weak public systems and limited institutional capacity, as well as limited cooperation with, and support from, public institutions.
- Policy and legislative changes that negatively affected refugees' entitlements that destabilised, and undermined the ability to plan longer term.
- Legal-status issues, language and information barriers, non-recognition of qualifications etc. – all of which limited access to social protection and assistance, employment, housing and other forms of support.
- Lack of opportunity, ability, interest of refugees in participating in project activities regularly, consistently.

Summary assessment: Overall, the findings suggest that the projects delivered their planned activities and achieved their intended outputs and outcomes; the extent varied across groups and contexts.

Related to **EQ5** and **EQ6**, most projects met or exceeded their planned outputs and reported progress at outcome level. The measurement of outcomes in the project's M&E system is less robust than that of outputs. Refugees reported better access to information, services and rights, and many perceived support such as legal assistance, health-related support and psychosocial services as clearly helpful. There are also indications of positive effects with regard to housing, school participation, employment, language learning and social connections. Outcomes were generally more positive where support addressed concrete day-to-day needs directly.

Regarding **EQ7**, the projects also led to changes for organisations and people working directly with refugees. Survey respondents, especially implementing organisations and their partners, reported that their own capacity to support refugees had improved. The evidence for institutional change within public institutions is more mixed. In several cases, the projects contributed to improved practice, but the extent these led to wider changes is unclear – dependent on the national context and on the scope of cooperation with public institutions.

Regarding **EQ8**, the multi-country approach in the projects of IFRC, Tdh, and UNHCR was supportive as it helped exchange of experience and cross-country learning, which has helped on the one hand to maintain a degree of alignment across countries, and on the other to adapt them to the specific contexts.

3.4. Efficiency

In this section we discuss how efficiently project resources were used to achieve the intended outputs and outcomes (EQ9, Table 3). It considers whether financial, human, and material resources were adequate and appropriately allocated. In addition, the chapter looks at whether resource use was flexible enough to respond to changing needs and contextual developments during implementation, as well as the added value and challenges associated with its multi-country implementation (EQ8, Table 3).

Before presenting the findings in more detail, it must be noted that neither documents, financial data, nor interviews provided a sufficient basis for a detailed assessment of cost-benefit ratios or cost-effectiveness in the narrower economic sense. While information is available on overall budget execution, some broad expenditure categories, and substantial output data, it does not systematically link costs to monetised benefits or to clearly defined service units in a way that would allow robust calculation of cost-benefit ratios or unit costs. Likewise, in the interviews, stakeholders could often describe resource use as practical, efficient, or worthwhile, but the financial and quantitative data required for formal economic analysis could not be provided.

However, despite these limitations, we conducted a cost-effectiveness analysis for the employment-related activities of one project, presented in a separate spotlight at the end of the section.

Across the projects, the resources appear to have been sufficient to deliver core activities and, in many cases, to reach or exceed planned targets. All implementers have utilised the respective project resources and, as discussed in the effectiveness section, they consistently reported substantial reach across the countries and that the projects met or exceed several of their output and outcome targets – despite or because of increased demand for their respective support. That said, there are also examples where resource sufficiency was dependent on changes in how activities were delivered. One of them in Romania, where housing support became more difficult to implement than expected due to market constraints, requirements of landlords, and rising prices. Tdh had to deliver the housing support through a different approach and still provided three months of rental support to selected vulnerable families.

The clearest and strongest finding concerns flexibility in the use of resources to respond to emerging needs and contextual change. The implementers shared several examples in which they adjusted resources or brought selected activities in-house, in response to policy shifts, delays and operational bottlenecks. This adaptive capacity seems to have been a factor for continuing implementation of the projects and, at least partially, for improving the appropriateness of resource use. The following lists examples:

- In the UNHCR project, the demand for legal and socio-economic support rose sharply in some countries following legislative changes, an example being Hungary, where the introduction of a government decree in mid-2024 resulted in a difficult housing situation. It required flexibility in the use of funds for partners involved in both housing provision and legal assistance. In Bulgaria the budget for vocational training was increased in the second half of 2024 as there had been a growing number of refugees asking for job-related support. UNHCR also noted that additional flexible funding from other donors was mobilised to support activities relevant to the RRF-funded project.
- Tdh combined a no-cost extension with reallocations between budget lines; some activities were brought in house where this proved more feasible or efficient; the planned PM+ methodology in Hungary was replaced by the “I Support My Friends” approach (a peer-to-peer psychosocial support methodology designed for children and youth) as it fitted better with dispersed refugee communities; and in Romania the emergency fund was expanded, with donor approval, to cover a broader package of individual protection assistance, including access to services, translation, medicines and essential items.
- UNICEF had to adapt the timeplan: the planning phase lasted longer than expected due to political developments, while still completing the project and spending the full budget. On the other hand, some stakeholders expressed concern that the time available to design, pilot, implement, and refine project activities — including the newly adopted curriculum for school inclusion — was too compressed. In their view, efficiency suffered as a result, because there was insufficient time to learn from the pilots and adjust the activities accordingly.

- IFRC had to reconsider its activities for child friendly spaces in response to considerably lower-than-expected participation of children and their parents, reaching only a third of the intended target. The unspent funds were then used to set-up a pilot activity and set-up a child friendly space dedicated to vulnerable children with disabilities or special educational needs, including Ukrainian refugee children.

Another finding concerns the ways in which resource use was made more efficient in operational terms. The implementers in Romania used the RomExpo – a facility that brings state institutions, NGOs, lawyers, interpreters etc. together – which helped to reduce duplication, simplified access to services and referrals, and as a result lessened the effort required to "navigate fragmented systems". This hub-approach enabled faster processing of administrative procedures (e.g., obtaining a document on temporary protection status could take as little as half an hour) which benefitted refugees, institutions, and implementers. The mobilisation of in-kind contributions from local authorities, private companies, civil society organisations, and the local population (e.g., free rental space, free health screenings, donations) contributed to operational efficiency. The value of involving refugees – who were trained by the projects to provide accompaniment or psychosocial support, who offered their English language skills for speaking clubs, or who engaged in community-based events such as cooking classes, or who provided peer support after having received training (e.g., Streets to Home in Hungary) – was also highlighted. Former participants of project activities later became volunteers and passed on the skills they had acquired to other refugees (e.g., RIF activities in Hungary and Romania). These approaches were seen as good practices because they contributed to reach and increased usefulness without the need to increase the financial inputs.

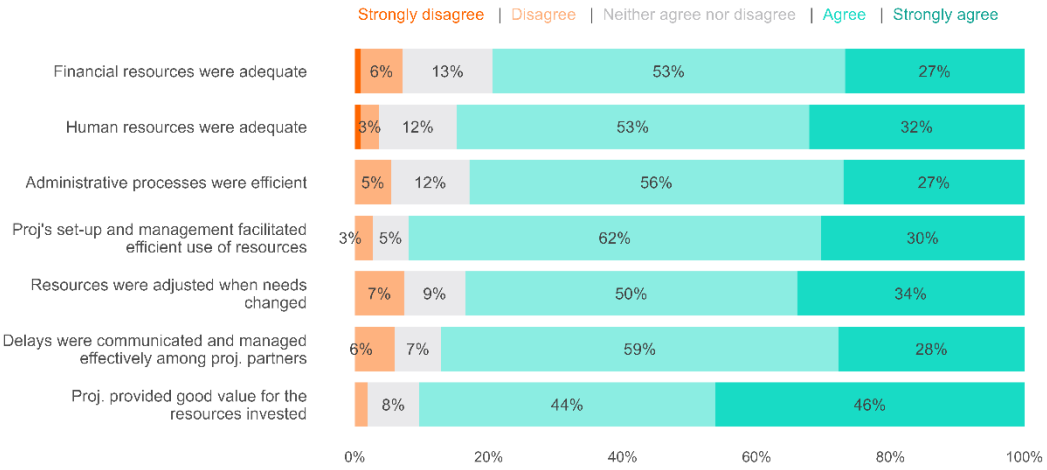
A recurring theme was that projects worked best when resources could be redirected quickly to where they were most needed. In Croatia, the organisation Brave Phone shifted resources for the dissemination of their chat-service since the ones it used did likely not reach the target group well enough. In Romania, UNHCR increased resources for translation once this emerged as a practical bottleneck. Interviewees from Tdh and IFRC also described there as flexibility to change staffing, activities and delivery when needed rather than applying them rigidly. Interviewees repeatedly mentioned that the SEM was open for such adjustments.[39] More broadly, this operational flexibility is also reflected in the overall design of the RRF, which enables a quick and flexible response to crisis situations through a comparatively lean application and procurement process.

Most respondents who took part in the institutional survey consider project resources and management arrangements to have been adequate and efficient (Figure 25). Between roughly 70% and 90% agree that financial and human resources were sufficient, administrative processes worked well, and project management enabled effective resource use. Financial resources are the aspect with the lowest level of satisfaction in terms of adequacy, although overall satisfaction remains high. The highest ratings were given for project set-up and management, as well as for the perceived value for money of the resources invested.

[39] Examples included budget-neutral adjustments in the UNICEF-led project in Croatia, which requested approval to reallocate funds so it could recruit experts with the required knowledge, expertise, and capacity that was unavailable in Croatia. These experts provided technical advice on child rights and inclusive education for migrant students.

Figure 25: Efficiency (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: Financial resources were adequate to carry out the planned activities. Human resources (skills and staff time) were adequate to carry out the activities. Administrative processes were efficient and did not hinder implementation. The project's set-up and management structure facilitated efficient use of resources. Resources were adjusted in a timely manner when needs or circumstances changed. Delays in activities were communicated and managed effectively among project partners. The project provided good value for the resources invested."

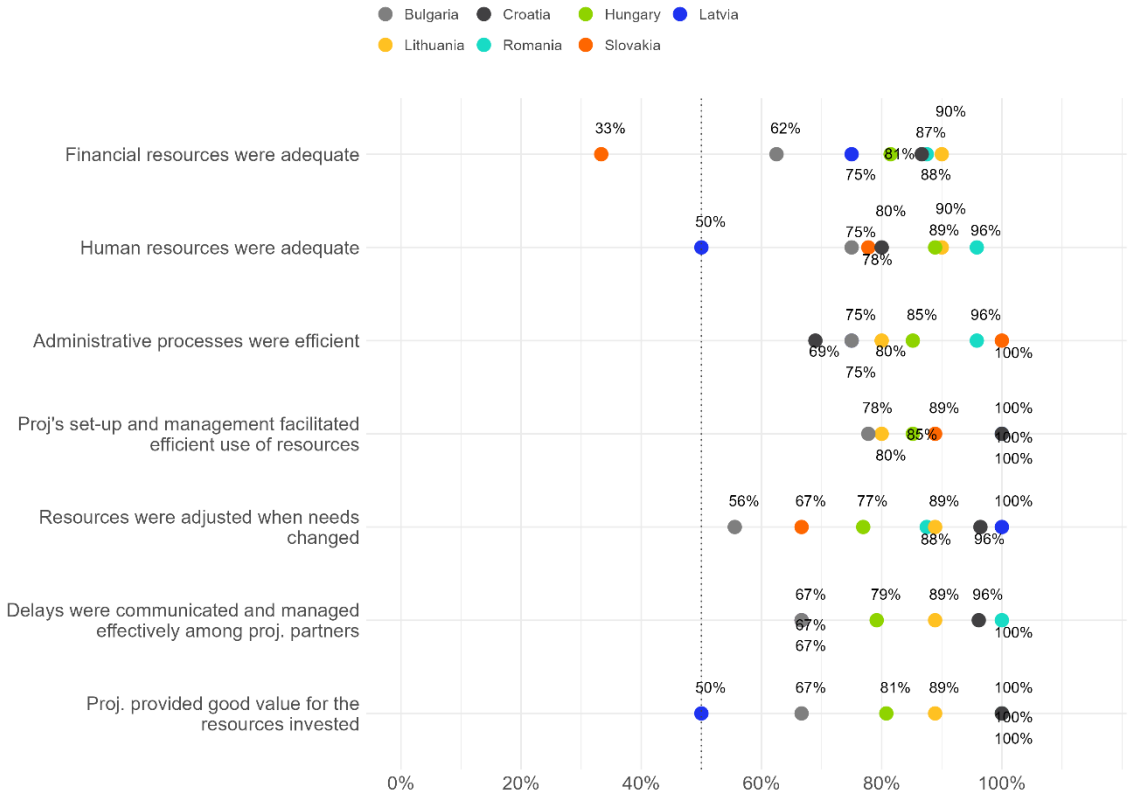


Note: Based on responses from 112, 112, 111, 112, 109, 101, and 104 participants, respectively.

Looking at the breakdown by country, a few outliers emerge. Only 33% of the respondents in Slovakia consider financial resources to have been adequate, whereas 50% of the respondents involved in the projects in Latvia believe that human resources were sufficient and that the project provided good value for the resources invested. A possible explanation might be that among others, Slovakia is among the countries with the highest number of Ukrainian refugees per capita. Relatively lower satisfaction rates (agree and strongly agree) were given by respondents in Croatia (69%) and Bulgaria (75%) regarding the efficiency of administrative processes, and among respondents in Bulgaria (56%) and Slovakia (67%) regarding the ability to adapt resources to changing needs.

Figure 26: Efficiency (institutional survey results, breakdown by country)

"Please rate the following statements: Financial resources were adequate to carry out the planned activities. Human resources (skills and staff time) were adequate to carry out the activities. Administrative processes were efficient and did not hinder implementation. The project's set-up and management structure facilitated efficient use of resources. Resources were adjusted in a timely manner when needs or circumstances changed. Delays in activities were communicated and managed effectively among project partners. The project provided good value for the resources invested."



Note: For Bulgaria, based on responses from 8, 8, 8, 9, 9, 6, and 6 participants, respectively. For Croatia, based on responses from 30, 30, 29, 29, 28, 26, and 26 participants, respectively. For Hungary, based on responses from 27, 27, 27, 27, 26, 24, and 26 participants, respectively. For Latvia, based on responses from 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 3, and 4 participants, respectively. For Lithuania, based on responses from 10, 10, 10, 10, 9, 9, and 9 participants, respectively. For Romania , based on responses from 24 participants. For Slovakia, based on responses from 9 participants.

Across countries, perceptions of efficiency are generally positive, though more mixed than in the overall results. For most indicators, the agreement levels fall between 70% and 80% as shown in Figure 27. A few lower scores suggest that views on resources and management arrangements vary depending on the national context. Tdh stands out for the consistently high ratings across all factors. By contrast, the UNHCR project is rated less positively on efficiency. Respondents who were involved in the UNICEF project also view administrative processes as less efficient.

Figure 27: Efficiency, breakdown by project (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: Financial resources were adequate to carry out the planned activities. Human resources (skills and staff time) were adequate to carry out the activities. Administrative processes were efficient and did not hinder implementation. The project's set-up and management structure facilitated efficient use of resources. Resources were adjusted in a timely manner when needs or circumstances changed. Delays in activities were communicated and managed effectively among project partners. The project provided good value for the resources invested."



Note: For IFRC, based on responses from 40, 40, 40, 40, 39, 38, and 39 participants, respectively. For TdH, based on responses from 12, 12, 12, 12, 12, 11, and 11 participants, respectively. For UNHCR, based on responses from 30, 30, 30, 31, 30, 26, and 28 participants, respectively. For UNICEF, based on responses from 30, 30, 29, 29, 28, 26, and 26 participants, respectively.

The multi-country design also brought some efficiency gains by allowing expertise, tools and systems to be shared. Several interviewees explained that their regional or HQ-based teams could provide support to several country teams, reducing the need to duplicate specialised functions at the country level. Also, monitoring systems and methodologies that were shared helped to limit duplication of work. IFRC noted that managing one multi-country project simplified planning and reporting compared with coordinating several separate national projects. UNHCR also highlighted that regional analytical work, including surveys and comparative data analysis, could be conducted once and then used across several countries. To summarise, the interviewees identified the following efficiency advantages:

- shared regional expertise supporting several country operations
- common monitoring and reporting systems applied across countries
- reuse of tools and methodologies developed at regional level
- financial flexibility to shift resources between countries where needed

Together, these elements suggest that the multi-country structure helped reduce duplication and allowed organisations to make use of economies of scale.

At the same time, the multi-country approach introduced coordination requirements, and its efficiency benefits remain largely perception-based rather than measured. Coordinating activities across several countries required additional communication, alignment of methodologies and consolidation of reporting inputs. The interviewees acknowledged that such coordination sometimes introduced delays, for example when reporting depended on information from multiple country teams. There was also one implementer whose country offices initially designed their interventions, which then had to be consolidated at the implementer's headquarters to ensure consistency. Moreover, monitoring challenges were also mentioned: from one implementers' perspective, it was more difficult to consolidate data across projects, while from the SEM's perspective, it was more challenging to maintain an overview and a precise understanding of project activities across countries.

In addition, some of the benefits described appeared to stem from pre-existing regional coordination mechanisms rather than from the project design itself. Also, although the interviewees consistently called the multi-country approach as efficient, none of the implementers has data allowing to compare multi-country and single-country programming. In practice, the added value of the multi-country approach appears to depend on several conditions:

- participating countries addressing similar policy and operational challenges
- functioning regional coordination structures already in place
- organisational capacity to facilitate knowledge exchange

Where these conditions exist, interviewees indicated that the additional coordination effort is generally outweighed by gains in learning, alignment and programme quality.

Finally, in countries where public service provision was limited, it increased the burden on the projects and made delivery more resource-intensive than originally envisaged. Examples provided by stakeholders included the repeated accompaniment of refugees after multiple refusals of services. In such cases, the resources were considered sufficient to carry out activities and achieve the intended immediate results, but insufficient to produce broader or longer-term outcomes. At the same time, the decline in spontaneous solidarity and in-kind support, such as free housing offers, required a shift to more resource-intensive approaches. Finally, moving from broad, rapid support to more targeted interventions (e.g., individual legal counselling, mental health support, or employment support) also became increasingly resource-intensive over time. Efficiency therefore depended not only on project design and implementers' ability to learn and adapt, but also on the (institutional) context.

Spotlight: Assessing the return on investment of job support: a break-even perspective

A cost-benefit analysis was conducted to assess the return on investment of job support services. The analysis compares the cost of the intervention with the expected earnings of participating refugees to estimate the minimum employment rate required to reach break-even – the point at which the intervention becomes economically justified. Multiple scenarios were simulated under a range of assumptions to identify this threshold.

The analysis focuses on job support services as these benefits can be readily monetised. Data on the number of beneficiaries and associated costs were available for IFRC's job support services. However, no data were available on employment outcomes, such as job placement rates or wages, and the analysis therefore relies on estimates.

To carry out this calculation, a number of assumptions were required and subsequently varied to construct alternative scenarios. As such, the analysis should not be interpreted as an estimate of the actual effect, but rather as an analytical lens through which to assess job support interventions. In the first simulation, we use a one-year attribution period, meaning that employment effects are counted for one year only. In the sensitivity

analysis, we vary this parameter by simulating a two-year attribution period.[40]The analysis relies on standard assumptions commonly used in the evaluation of employment programmes, namely a 30% counterfactual (deadweight) rate and a 30% substitution rate. The counterfactual rate reflects the share of beneficiaries who would have found employment irrespective of the intervention, while the substitution rate captures the extent to which programme participants may displace other workers. Together, they help avoid overestimating net employment effects. Finally, due to the absence of data on actual wages earned by beneficiaries, the national minimum wage is used as a proxy for post-intervention earnings. This is a conservative assumption and likely underestimates the actual benefits. The results are presented in the following table.

Minimum employment rate for intervention's breakeven, IFRC job support activities. Conterfactual rate=30%, Substitution rate=30%, Attribution period=1 year.

	Latvia	Lithuania	Romania
Beneficiaries [number of]	202	1018	694
Actual expenditure [€]	22'839	170'245	41'464
Minimum wage[41] [gross, €/month]	780	1'153	795
Breakeven employment rate	**2.5%**	**2.5%**	**1.3%**

As shown in the table above, the estimated break-even employment rate is relatively low across all three countries, particularly in Romania: if 1.3% of the 694 beneficiaries, that is 9 persons) found a job after the intervention, the services would pay for themselves (based on the assumptions used). This is primarily driven by the relatively low cost per beneficiary. In Latvia and Lithuania, a slightly higher employment rate is needed to break even with the higher unit cost of these interventions.

The key parameters of wage levels and attribution period were varied within plausible ranges (wages: minimum wage to +30%; attribution period: 1 to 2 years); the resulting scenarios are presented below.

Minimum employment rate for intervention's breakeven, IFRC job support activities, Scenarios under varying wage and attribution period assumptions. Counterfactual rate=30%, Substitution rate=30%.

			Attribution period [months]	
			Low	High
			12	24
			Breakeven employment rate	
	Latvia			
Wage [€/month]	Low	780	2.5%	1.2%
	High	1'014	1.9%	0.9%
	Lithuania			
	Low	1'153	2.5%	1.2%
	High	1'499	1.9%	0.9%
	Romania			
	Low	795	1.3%	0.6%

[40] Based on the suggestion in SDC's Working Aid on CBA in Vocational Skills Development projects – namely "1 year for a very short training (duration of 1-4 weeks), around 3 years for a training of several months and up to a maximum of 10 years for a multi-year apprenticeship."

[41] Minimum wages as per Eurostat (source); EURES (source); last accessed 4 April 2026. Note: While not related to the countries analysed in the break-even-analysis, UNHCR reported on Hungary that "the reported average net per capita monthly salary positions refugees' wages just above the minimum wage for unskilled workers, but below that of skilled workers (-15%) and significantly below the national average wage (-35%)." (UNHCR, RRF Final Report, 2025) It could thus well be that the analysis overstates refugees' incomes.

	High	1'034	1.0%	0.5%

The estimated break-even employment rate is highly sensitive to assumptions regarding both employment duration and wage levels. Increasing the attribution period from 12 to 24 months substantially decreases the required employment rate across all countries, effectively halving the threshold in each case. This underlines the importance of job retention for the intervention's economic viability. Similarly, higher wage assumptions reduce the break-even threshold, as increased earnings per beneficiary generate higher total benefits. Despite these variations, the overall pattern remains consistent: Romania shows the lowest thresholds, followed by Latvia and Lithuania, which reflects differences in cost structures and wage levels. Even under more conservative assumptions – lower wages with shorter employment duration – the required employment rates remain relatively modest, suggesting that the intervention is likely to be economically justified across a range of plausible scenarios.

Summary assessment: Overall, the evidence suggests that the use of resources was appropriate, although this conclusion comes with some qualifications. A detailed assessment of efficiency with a more quantitative approach was not possible, as the available data did not allow for robust cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analysis. Still, the findings suggest that resources were generally sufficient to deliver the main activities and, in many cases, to meet or exceed planned targets.

The strongest finding relates to flexibility. Across the projects, implementers were able to reallocate budgets and adapt activities to respond to changing needs and other developments in a volatile context. The survey results and interviews also suggests that project management and administrative arrangements were generally seen as helpful for efficient implementation.

Efficiency was also strengthened through coordination hubs and one-stop-shops, in-kind contributions, refugee involvement, and the use of regional expertise, common tools and monitoring systems in the multi-country projects. These approaches helped reduce duplication and increase reach without proportionate increases in cost. At the same time, the multi-country model also required additional coordination. Its advantages in terms of efficiency remain based mainly on perceptions rather than more solid evidence.

Looking ahead, early signs of either transferring service provision from the implementing organisations to national and municipal authorities or signs of increased institutional involvement in several countries indicate potential for greater efficiency in the future. Involvement of refugees in the project delivery proved to be efficient.

In sum, **EQ9** can be answered as follows: the resources were used in an appropriate and generally efficient way, particularly because implementers applied them flexibly and pragmatically. Efficiency depended not only on project design and management, but also on national context, the strength of public systems, and the increasing complexity of needs over time.

3.5. Impact

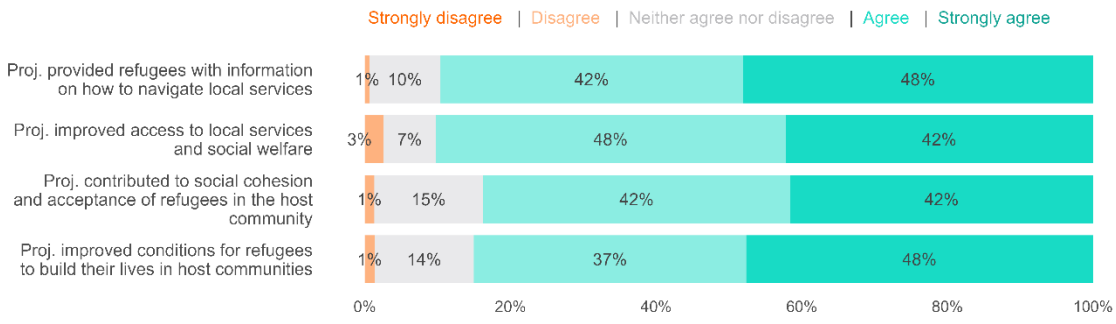
This section examines the broader effects of the projects, focusing on two evaluation questions (EQ10-11, Table 3). It assesses the extent to which the projects improved the inclusion of refugees and strengthened institutional preparedness to respond to future migration-related crises. It also considers whether the projects had an effect on reducing irregular secondary migration to other EU countries and to Switzerland.

The projects mainly helped refugees manage everyday life and by reducing practical barriers to inclusion. Across the interviews, the stakeholders often referred to better access to services, better ability to deal with administrative requirements, more stable housing, enrolment of children in school, and, in some cases, access to employment. They also described that the activities had beneficial effects such as increased confidence or more social connections, especially for young people. These views mirror the results of the refugee survey (see 3.3.1), which show that the majority of the respondents consider the support they received across different dimensions as helpful and beneficial. The link between these observed changes and the projects was often plausible and, in many cases, fairly direct: courses helped refugees learn the local languages, legal and administrative support helped to obtain documents or other entitlements; information helped individuals to understand and access services; medical and psychosocial and community-based activities reduced medical issues, stress, and isolation; and school-based measures supported children's participation in education. The views about whether improved participation and integration also led to being more accepted in the host countries is more mixed, however. The interviewees – irrespective of where they worked or the roles they had – were typically more cautious in this regard, not least because in some contexts public support for refugee integration has somewhat subsided after the initial wave of solidarity.

Respondents in the institutional survey viewed the projects as particularly effective in providing refugees with clear information on how to navigate local services and in improving access to those services, as these two items received the highest levels of agreement (90%). The more complex dimensions of acceptance, social inclusion, and improved conditions for refugees to build up their lives were also assessed positively (84% and 85% respectively), although somewhat less strongly. While the differences are small, this may signal that these dimensions require additional attention or are influenced to a larger extent by external factors beyond the projects' control.

Figure 28: Impact: integration of refugees (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: The project provided refugees with clear information on how to navigate local services. The project improved access to local services (e.g., social welfare, community centres, youth activities). The project contributed to better social cohesion or acceptance of refugees in the host community. The project improved conditions that support refugees in building their lives here."

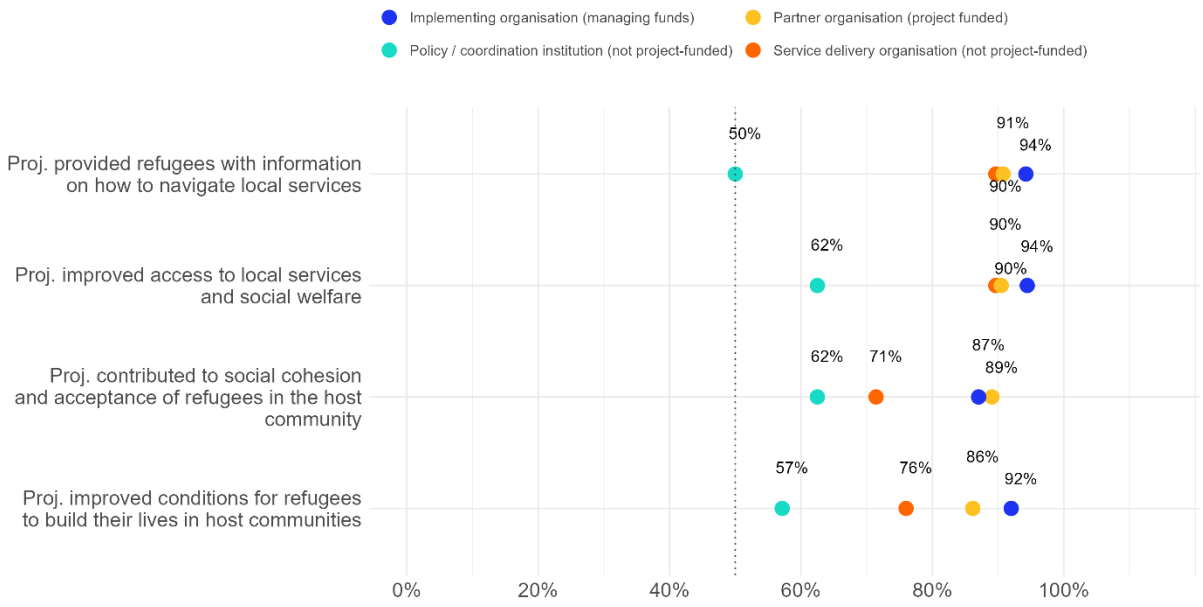


Note: Based on responses from 154, 154, 154, and 147 participants, respectively.

While the views are positive overall, there are differences in perceptions across the respondent groups. The results in Figure 29 show that implementing organisations and partners provided the most positive assessments across all four dimensions. The agreement levels ranged from 86% to 94%. Service delivery organisations that were not project-funded were somewhat less positive. Although they rated both information provision and access to services high (both 90%), their ratings were lower for the projects' contributions to improved conditions for refugees to build their lives (76%) and social cohesion (71%). With agreement levels between 50% and 62%, policy and coordination institutions that were not project-funded were the least positive across all dimensions. While these differences should be interpreted with caution, as the number of respondents in the policy and coordination institution group was relatively small, the findings signal that the projects are viewed more favourably by the organisations directly involved in implementation and funding, while more external stakeholders took a more cautious view, especially regarding broader integration outcomes such as social cohesion and improved living conditions.

Figure 29: Impact: integration of refugees, breakdown by stakeholder type (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: The project provided refugees with clear information on how to navigate local services. The project improved access to local services (e.g., social welfare, community centres, youth activities). The project contributed to better social cohesion or acceptance of refugees in the host community. The project improved conditions that support refugees in building their lives here."

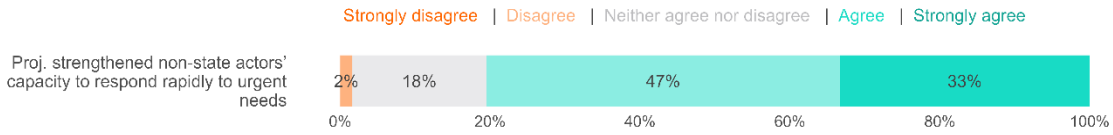


Note: For Implementing organisation (managing funds), based on responses from 52, 54, 54, and 50 participants, respectively. For Partner organisation (project funded), based on responses from 65, 63, 64, and 65 participants, respectively. For Policy / coordination institution (not project-funded), based on responses from 8, 8, 8, and 7 participants, respectively. For Service delivery organisation (not project-funded), based on responses from 29, 29, 28, and 25 participants, respectively.

Respondents in the institutional survey also assessed the projects positively in terms of reinforcing the capacity of non-state actors to respond rapidly and with targeted action in situations of urgent need. Overall, as shown in Figure 30, 80% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, although this item received the lowest level of agreement when compared with those of the outcomes for refugees.

Figure 30: Impact: non-state actors' capacities (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: The project reinforced the capacity of non-state actors to intervene rapidly with focused actions in case of an urgent need."

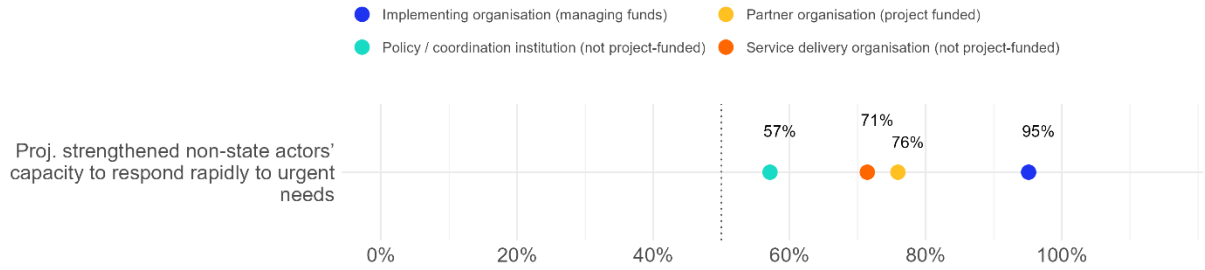


Note: Based on the responses of 123 participants.

Perceptions on whether the projects strengthened non-state actors' capacity to respond rapidly to urgent needs varied by respondent group, and policy and coordination institutions again provided the most cautious assessments. The respondents from the implementing and partner organisations assessed the organisational benefits more positively: 95% and 76%, respectively, agreed that the projects had strengthened non-state actors' capacity to respond to urgent refugee situations. These results draw a somewhat more positive picture than the interviews, in which many interviewees were a bit more reserved and stated that their capacities are at least partly affected by funding cuts and staff reductions, which lead to a loss of knowledge, capacity, networks, and assets. This difference could be interpreted in a way that the survey respondents were mainly referring to capacities built or maintained *during* the period of RRF funding, rather than to capacities in the future.

Figure 31: Impact: state actors' capacities, breakdown by stakeholder type (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: The project reinforced the capacity of non-state actors to intervene rapidly with focused actions in case of an urgent need."



Note: For Implementing organisation (managing funds), based on responses from 41 participants. For Partner organisation (project funded), based on responses from 54 participants. For Policy / coordination institution (not project-funded), based on responses from 7 participants. For Service delivery organisation (not project-funded), based on responses from 21 participants.

The projects have produced standards, tools, and procedures that can strengthen institutional readiness for future migration-related crises, although the extent of this is less clear and varies across countries. Several examples, many of them discussed in the chapters on effectiveness and sustainability, point in this direction. In Croatia, the UNICEF project appears to have improved professional practice and coordination in child protection and education. In Lithuania, the growing role of municipalities and of the Reception and Integration Agency was also described as a step toward a more structured and institutionalised response. However, overall the evidence to what extent public institutions' mandates, processes, resources etc. have changed as a result of the project remains too limited for a conclusive assessment.

One of the RRF's objectives is to prevent irregular secondary migration. Whether, and to what extent, projects such as those covered by this evaluation have effects on secondary migration (irregular or regular) is a complex question that cannot be answered conclusively in an evaluation of this kind. We

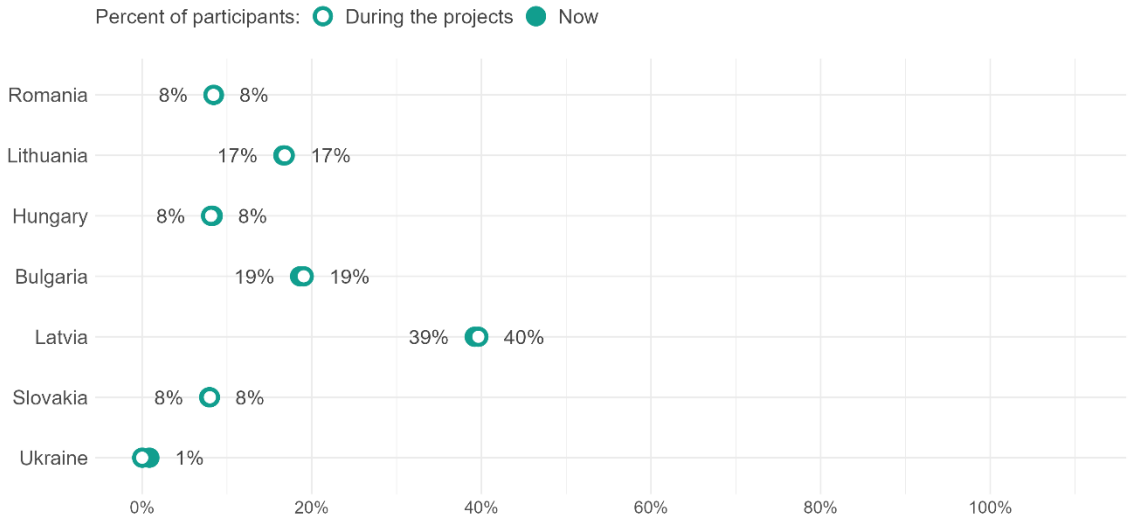
nevertheless aim to address the evaluation question (EQ11) by drawing mainly on the results of the refugee survey, in particular if they provide indications of secondary migration.[42]

The information collected in interviews is too limited to support strong conclusions, yet the projects may have contributed to reducing some of the immediate reasons for onward movement. This topic was discussed less often and when it was, interviewees were usually somewhat more reserved, noting that it is a complex issue. A common argument was that the projects made an indirect, albeit at times limited, contribution in the sense that the support and assistance provided may have led to greater stability and thus made staying in the host country more feasible, which reduced refugees' need to move elsewhere. At the same time, interviewees often explained that the reasons and factors influencing decisions to leave a country were mainly beyond the projects' control, including housing and labour market conditions, family networks in other countries, legislative changes, and uncertainty about the future.

Overall, the findings suggest low levels of mobility among the refugees over the past three years. In the refugee survey, respondents were asked where they lived during 2024-2025 – the period when the evaluated projects were implemented – and where they were living at the time they completed the survey. Comparing these responses shows that the distribution is almost unchanged (Figure 32). The only notable difference is that 0.8% of respondents had returned to Ukraine.

Figure 32: Residency: 2024/2025 vs at the time of survey completion (refugee survey)

"Where have you been living in 2024 and 2025? If you lived in more than one country, please select the one in which you lived the longest, outside Ukraine." "Where do you live at the moment?"



Note: For During the projects, based on responses from 714 participants. For Now, based on responses from 709 participants.

In addition to the aggregated analysis, we also examined the data at the individual level to track respondents' movements. The results, shown in Table 10 below, indicate that most respondents did not change their place of residence compared with the 2024-2025 period. Six households returned to Ukraine, while two others moved from Lithuania to Latvia and Romania, respectively. Among those who

[42] That said, for Ukrainians the legal situation is important. The EU TPD provides them with comparatively more options for lawful mobility within the EU, meaning that such movements are often regular rather than irregular. This makes the aspects of "prevention" and "irregularity" less straightforward.

returned to Ukraine, three had previously been living in Romania, two in Lithuania, and one in Hungary. Five respondents did not report their current country of residence.[43]

Table 10: Residency 2024/2025 vs time of survey completion, individual tracking (refugee survey)

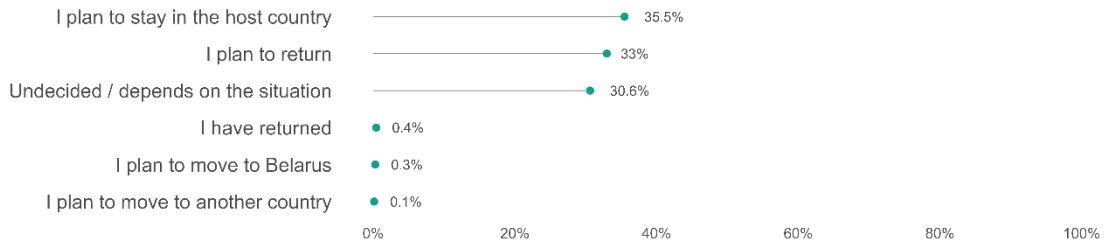
"Where have you been living in 2024 and 2025? If you lived in more than one country, please select the one in which you lived the longest, outside Ukraine." "Where do you live at the moment?"

Category	Number	%
Stayed where they were in 24-25	701	98.2%
Went back to Ukraine	6	0.8%
Not Available	5	0.7%
Lithuania to Latvia	1	0.1%
Lithuania to Romania	1	0.1%

Future plans are split between staying in the current host countries and returning to Ukraine. The respondents were asked whether they plan to return, stay where they are, or move elsewhere. The results in Figure 33 show that the largest share (35.5%) indicate plans to remain in their host country, closely followed by 33% who plan to return. At the same time, 30.6% are undecided or say their decision depends on future developments.[44] In their comments, many respondents stated that their plans depend on whether the conditions in Ukraine will allow for a viable return. Only very small proportions report having already returned (0.4%) or plan onward movement to another country (0.1%) or to Belarus (0.3%). These results indicate that secondary migration remains limited. However, among the reasons given for possible further migration, responses most frequently referred to economic factors, such as high cost of housing and uncertainty about the refugees' status, but also the desire for family reunification or return home.

Figure 33: Future plans (refugee survey)

"Do you plan to return to Ukraine?"



Note: Based on the responses of 679 participants.

[43] An aspect that was not covered in the survey but came up repeatedly during the interviews, and is also confirmed in different studies, is that there had been back-and-forth movements, meaning that refugees went back to Ukraine to visit family members and friends or checked their houses and apartments, and then returned to the host country after a certain time.

[44] The findings are similar with a 2024 survey by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), which found that between 35-40% intended to return, around 30% did not intend to return, while about one third were undecided (EUAA 2024). Comparable proportions were reported in Switzerland (Eser-Davolio et al. 2024; Ruedin 2025). Various surveys show that Ukrainians have consistently higher return intentions than exiles from more distant, protracted situations as in Afghanistan, Eritrea, or Syria, which is also due to increased mobility facilities under TPD (Sohst et al. 2024). Generally speaking, the determinants of return intentions are always context-specific (origin and destination country), depend on the profile of the refugees and evolve with duration of stay as an important motive against return (MPI-IOM 2024; Ruedin et al. 2019).

Summary assessment: Overall, the findings suggest that the projects made a positive contribution to refugees' inclusion in host countries and provided some support to preparedness for future migration-related crises.

In relation to **EQ10**, the projects appear to have reduced practical barriers to inclusion by improving access to information and services, facilitating administrative procedures, and supporting greater stability in areas such as housing, school participation and access to health. The evidence is more mixed, however, with regard to social cohesion and acceptance in host communities, since these depend largely on factors beyond the projects' control.

The findings also indicate stronger capacity to respond among non-state actors. Participating organisations report that they are now better prepared to respond to future migration-related crises. For public institutions, by contrast, the evidence of improved preparedness remains more limited.

Regarding the question on secondary migration (**EQ11**), it seems plausible that the projects have eased some of the immediate pressures and concerns of refugees, which made it more viable for them to stay in the host countries. The refugee survey results suggest that there has been limited onward movement during the implementation period among the persons who took part in the survey. The information and evidence collected does, however, not allow for more conclusive assessment.

3.6. Sustainability

This section addresses two evaluation questions on sustainability (EQ12-13, Table 3) and assesses the extent to which project activities can continue after the end of Swiss funding, and whether the projects have led to changes that are likely to last beyond the projects' duration. The section includes an assessment of the main technical, political, institutional, and financial factors that may enable or hinder sustainability.

Before presenting the findings regarding the sustainability of the projects' results, it is important to clarify the standard against which sustainability is assessed – a recurrent theme not only in interviews conducted for the evaluation but also the discussions with the evaluation reference group. The RRF combines short-term and longer-term objectives, including strengthening migration-management structures and building capacities to respond in situations requiring urgent intervention. The projects financed under the RRF are typically shorter in duration and more limited in resources than other international development programmes, which often have longer implementation periods and larger budgets. For this reason, some stakeholders argued that the projects should not be assessed against the same sustainability expectations.

This understanding is also reflected in the application process. Organisations applying for RRF funding are required to explain their sustainability strategies and approaches in their project proposals, but they can also justify a lower degree of sustainability for emergency projects. Despite this option, the four project applications we reviewed all contained sustainability objectives. These included strengthening local systems and institutions, building stakeholder capacity and resilience, and embedding activities in existing national frameworks as well as in other organisational structures and processes. However, taking the view on lower sustainability expectations into consideration, the relevant question is then whether the projects created a basis for continuity, institutional uptake, or follow-up beyond the projects' duration.

The evaluated projects show a number of sustainability features. In the documents we reviewed and the interviews we conducted with implementing organisations, their partners, and national institutions several examples of the continuation of activities were mentioned, in some cases at a reduced scale, as well as signs of reform and structural change. Taken together, they suggest there are different types and degrees of continuity, institutionalisation, and longer-term effects across the portfolio. For an assessment across the projects, it is helpful to distinguish between three dimensions of sustainability: institutional, organisational, and financial sustainability.

Institutional sustainability[45]

There is evidence of institutional sustainability in several projects. UNICEF Croatia provided several examples of institutional embedding into national systems. More specifically, these examples include a standardised Croatian language test for migrant schoolchildren that was developed with the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education; an online course on intercultural education that has been included in the catalogue of the Education and Teacher Training Agency as an elective for continuous teacher education; and the intercultural mediator role in the Zagreb-Dugave reception centre, now financed with government resources. These cases show that project-supported tools and functions have been taken up by public institutions and are no longer dependent on the project.

Other examples were mentioned in Lithuania, for instance, where interviewees explained that the Reception and Integration Agency[46] has taken on a stronger coordinating role and that municipalities are becoming more involved in integration support. Also in Slovakia there are examples that municipalities have taken on a stronger role through so-called 'points of safety' that provide services and support in relation to accommodation, school enrolment, or employment. These support is embedded in Slovakia's National Programme for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals. In Bulgaria, strategic litigation that resulted in a Supreme Administrative Court decision granting refugee status in a case previously rejected by the authorities was also seen as influencing future administrative practice in ways that may lead to broader changes in the system.

Organisational sustainability[47]

There is evidence of organisational sustainability in several projects. IFRC, for example, reported that "catch-up" and language classes, child-friendly spaces, and social-cohesion activities have been integrated into the work of several National Society branches.[48] In the interviews, it was also repeatedly mentioned that implementing partners and their staff strengthened their capacities, gained new knowledge, and learned by testing and adapting activities to different contexts and situations. One example is Tdh, which adjusted its peer-to-peer programme for youth in Hungary and Romania. Similarly, the IFRC reported that "education programming was largely uncharted territory"[49] for the organisation and that it had to build up its approaches and capacities in the context of the RRF project. Finally, in Croatia, Brave Phone became a point of contact for migrants, and feels now better positioned to serve migrants, where it had not previously been recognised.

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[45] Institutional sustainability refers here to the extent to which project results – approaches, tools, standards, etc. – are embedded in formal systems, such as policy frameworks, administrative procedures, and public-service structures.

[46] The agency was established in 2025, resulting from a merger of the previous Refugee Reception Centre, under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, and the Foreigners' Registration Centre, under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

[47] Organisational sustainability refers to the extent to which project results are integrated into the capacities, knowledge, and routines of the implementing organisations and their partners.

[48] IFRC 2025.

[49] Ibid.

At the same time, there have been recent funding cuts, and in several cases experienced staff had to be laid off. This means that their capacity, practical know-how, institutional memory, and networks were lost, all of which are difficult to rebuild quickly. In some cases, staff were able to find other positions in the migration and integration sector, including positions in municipal administrations. This way, some knowledge will remain in the wider system.[50] In other cases, tools and assets developed by the projects, such as databases with information on refugees and their needs, are at risk of being discontinued, and there are also examples in which project activities had to be stopped altogether, such as the RIF that Tdh operated in Győr.

Financial sustainability[51]

Across the four projects, financial sustainability appears to be the most immediate risk, even if not always the only or decisive one. The situation is mixed and ranges from funding risks for community centres and NGOs to cases in which the implementing organisations or their partners were able to secure follow-up funding because the projects strengthened their competencies and increased their visibility through the cooperation with implementing organisations. Many interviewees stated that services such as language classes, psychosocial support, interpretation, or legal assistance will have to be continued at a reduced scale, if at all, due to budget constraints. A recurrent theme was that public institutions and actors often lack the resources, mandate, or willingness to continue project activities. Another potential risk concerns the most vulnerable groups, including members of the Roma minority, who have been supported by the implementing organisations and their partners. Funding cuts might affect these groups particularly severely.

The role of RRF funding varied across the portfolio: for some organisations it provided an additional funding stream, while for others it was essential for specific activities. It appears that IFRC, UNICEF, and UNHCR are somewhat better positioned to continue selected activities through other sources, organisational budgets, other ongoing programmes, or their institutional mandates. There are examples that illustrate the advantage of such organisational positioning: IFRC reported that the Latvian National Society is already continuing integration activities through a project funded by the European Social Fund. In Lithuania, the IFRC also reported having received funding from different sources, which allowed to integrate activities that started with RRF funding into their organisational activities and annual plans. Likewise, although they also face funding cuts, UNICEF and UNHCR both reported that they plan to continue supporting activities where additional effort is needed to sustain results as part of their ongoing policy and advocacy work. UNICEF Croatia, for example, reported that it would continue discussions with the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy to integrate guidance documents and support materials that were developed under the project into a national information system for social welfare staff as a means of supporting institutional uptake and sustainability.

Sustained outcomes for refugees

The interviewees also identified several outcomes for refugees at the individual level that will last beyond the projects. These include improved language skills, more secure housing, employment and income, and a better understanding of the host country's administrative systems and culture. Many interviewees also felt that the projects helped refugees manage their lives more independently and supported them to build skills, confidence, and social networks that may last over time. Examples

[50] We also learned that some persons kept supporting refugees as volunteers. They stayed involved because of their personal commitment and because refugees still needed and sought their help.

[51] Financial sustainability refers to the extent to which project results can be continued with adequate funding.

mentioned included young people who took part in the RIF, FabLab, summer camps, and similar activities and who remained connected outside the formal project framework.

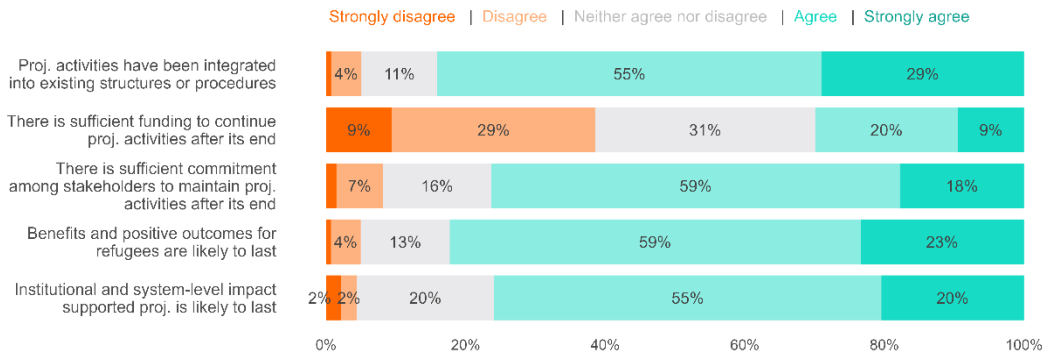
At the same time, these results also depend on external conditions that are outside the control of the refugees. Changes in their legal status or their entitlements, public attitudes and perceptions, and the uncertainty regarding the situation in Ukraine might all influence whether individual-level effects sustain or not.

To strengthen and triangulate the sustainability assessment, it is useful to consider the survey results presented below in addition to the evidence from project reports and interviews.

Respondents in the institutional survey generally believe that project activities and results are likely to continue beyond the project period (84%) (Figure 34). 70-80% agree that benefits and institutional impacts are likely to last and that activities have been integrated into existing structures. However, perceptions regarding the availability of funding after project completion are more mixed. Only 29% believe that sufficient funding will be available to continue the projects' activities after they end, while 38% disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. This suggests that financial resources are perceived as one of the main challenges among the stakeholders.

Figure 34: Sustainability of project activities and outcomes (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: Project activities have been integrated into existing structures or procedures. There is sufficient funding to continue the activities after the project ends. There is sufficient commitment among stakeholders to maintain the activities after the project ends. Benefits and positive outcomes for refugees are likely to last. Institutional and system-level impact supported by the project is likely to last."

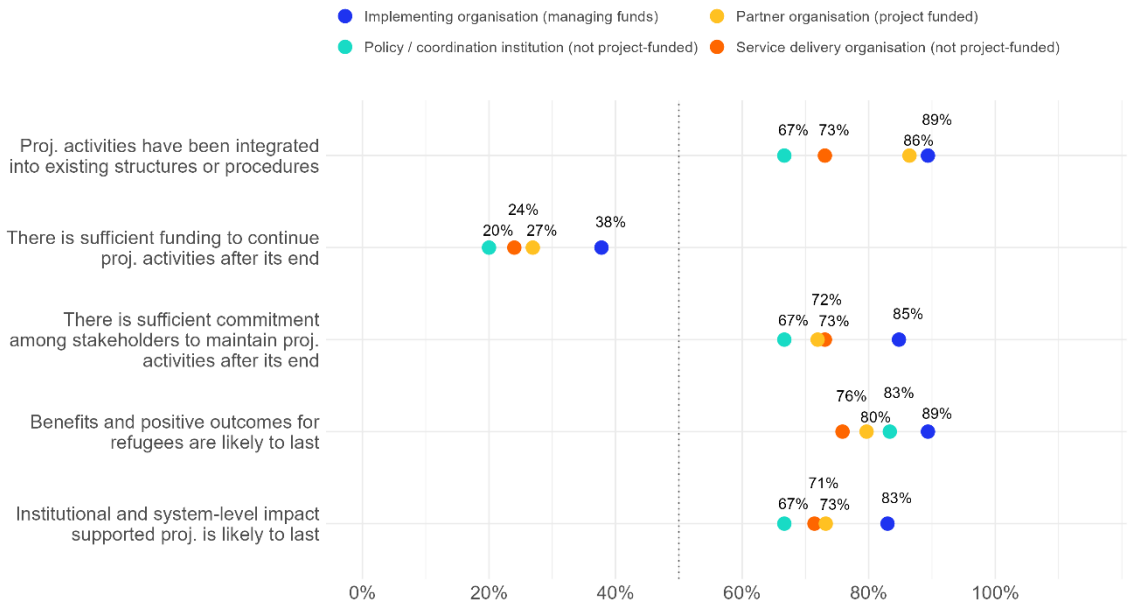


Note: Based on responses from 138, 127, 135, 141, and 137 participants, respectively.

Looking at the breakdown by stakeholder type, public institutions again stand out as the group with the least positive views on most aspects regarding project sustainability (Figure 35). The main exception is the sustainability of outcomes for refugees: here, 83% of policy makers believe these results will be sustained over time. On this question, the least positive assessment comes from service delivery organisations that were not funded by the project — organisations that provide services to refugees or work with the implementing organisation but did not receive project funding. Among this group, only 67% believe the outcomes will be sustained.

Figure 35: Sustainability of project activities and outcomes, breakdown by stakeholder type (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: Project activities have been integrated into existing structures or procedures. There is sufficient funding to continue the activities after the project ends. There is sufficient commitment among stakeholders to maintain the activities after the project ends. Benefits and positive outcomes for refugees are likely to last. Institutional and system-level impact supported by the project is likely to last."

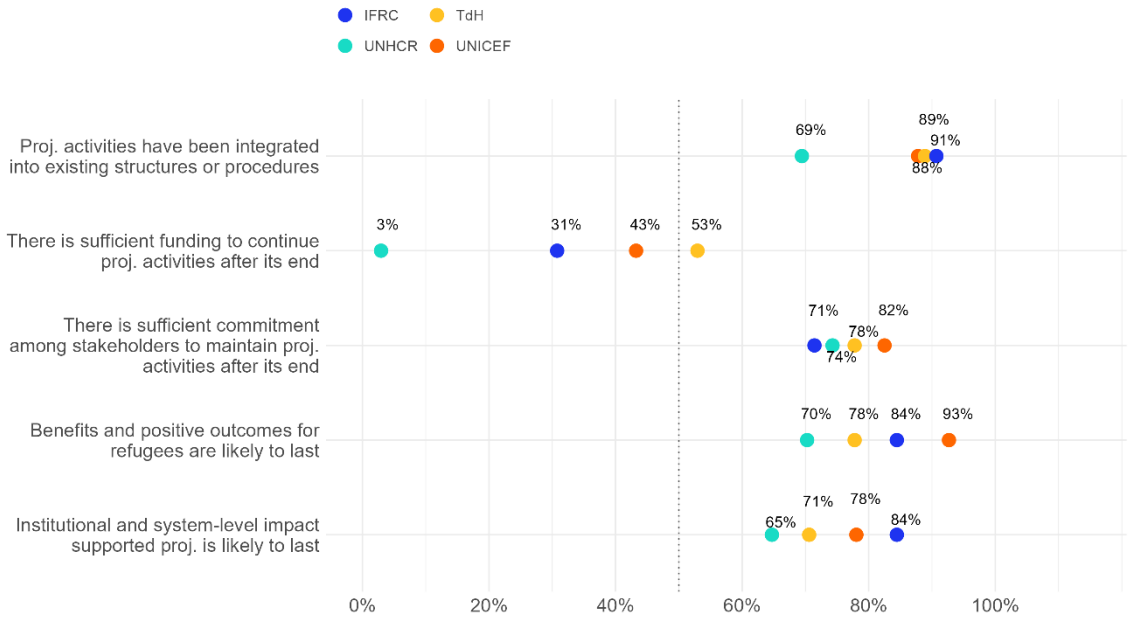


Note: For Implementing organisation (managing funds), based on responses from 47, 45, 46, 47, and 47 participants, respectively. For Partner organisation (project funded), based on responses from 59, 52, 57, 59, and 56 participants, respectively. For Policy / coordination institution (not project-funded), based on responses from 6, 5, 6, 6, and 6 participants, respectively. For Service delivery organisation (not project-funded), based on responses from 26, 25, 26, 29, and 28 participants, respectively.

Looking at differences across projects in Figure 36, stakeholders involved in the UNHCR project appear to be the most concerned about the sustainability of the intervention. This pattern is observed across all response items, and with 3% especially strong regarding the availability of future funding.

Figure 36: Sustainability of project activities and outcomes, breakdown by project (institutional survey)

"Please rate the following statements: Project activities have been integrated into existing structures or procedures. There is sufficient funding to continue the activities after the project ends. There is sufficient commitment among stakeholders to maintain the activities after the project ends. Benefits and positive outcomes for refugees are likely to last. Institutional and system-level impact supported by the project is likely to last."



Note: For IFRC, based on responses from 43, 39, 42, 45, and 45 participants, respectively. For TdH, based on responses from 18, 17, 18, 18, and 17 participants, respectively. For UNHCR, based on responses from 36, 34, 35, 37, and 34 participants, respectively. For UNICEF, based on responses from 41, 37, 40, 41, and 41 participants, respectively.

Several factors were described as supporting the continuation of activities. Institutionalisation of activities within national systems and the continued cooperation and partnerships between organisations were most frequently mentioned. As one respondent in Croatia noted: "Many activities have become part of national systems. For example, the PREMISE program developed for teachers in schools was taken over by the national Agency for Education, which continues to implement training in the education system; the intercultural mediator position continues to be financed through the state budget and advocacy continues for establishing this role in the social welfare system. Support from key ministries and public institutions in implementing project activities was crucial for achieving sustainability". Staff and organisational capacity were also mentioned as factors that contribute to sustainability, including the availability of trained staff, organisational readiness to continue activities, volunteer engagement, and established networks with employers and partners.

At the same time, the respondents identified several factors that undermine sustainability. The most frequently mentioned one was the availability of funding, since many activities depend on project-based or external donor funding and are difficult to sustain once funding ends. In addition, a number of responses referred to contextual constraints linked to the wider policy and economic environment, including national migration policies, changing government priorities, and "the catastrophic global geopolitical situation and, locally, the rigid EU policy on migration and asylum" (Croatia).

External factors influencing sustainability

- One important factor is the broader policy environment: favourable or unfavourable legal conditions can significantly affect the work of organisations and individuals, and these conditions are often linked to the political context of the respective country.
- Another important risk is the temporary protection status – which has already been extended four times (currently valid until March 2027) – and how it may change. The uncertainty not only affects institutions and organisations, but also the refugees' own plans and decisions. As a result, it can be seen as an additional risk for sustained results for the refugees.[52]
- Sustainability must also be understood in a broader context. A few interviewees (from implementing organisations and their partners) confirmed that when donors, on which they have relied for more than a decade, withdraw funding, the consequences go well beyond the mere reduction in financial resources. It often requires substantial restructuring that make it hard to integrate and continue activities.[53]

Summary assessment: Overall, the findings suggest that the projects achieved a certain degree of sustainability, although not in the same way or to the same extent across all activities.

Regarding **EQ12**, some activities can continue after the end of RRF funding, either in their original or in an adapted form. This is the case when products, tools, roles or approaches were taken up by public institutions or integrated into the routines of the implementing organisations and partners.

[52] In all of the countries in which the four projects were implemented, there are, in principle, pathways for Ukrainian refugees to move from temporary protection (or residence status) to other, more "regular" residence permits, although these take different forms and are subject to different requirements. Also in other EU countries, such as Austria and Germany, there is the possibility of converting temporary protection status, under certain conditions, into a status offering a long-term residence perspective. In Austria, this has been possible since October 2024 through the "Red-White-Red Card plus", while in Germany the option had already existed earlier under the Opportunity Residence Act. Both models are subject to strict requirements. (Efionayi-Mäder et al. 2025)

[53] Moreover, some interviewees noted that donors are shifting their focus towards actors in Ukraine. Although this may result in a discontinuation of support for organisations in the countries under evaluation, it should not automatically be interpreted as a lack of sustainability but rather as an adaptation to new contexts.

Examples include language support, child-friendly spaces and community-based activities, although these might only continue on a smaller scale.

Regarding **EQ13**, there are examples that the projects led to changes that are likely to last over time, resulting from institutional uptake and improved organisational capacity. The implementing organisations and partners retained knowledge, tools and experience that can continue to inform their work. Individual-level outcomes for refugees themselves in areas such as education, employment, housing and health (see refugee survey results) can also be mentioned here.

While the projects created a basis for more lasting reform and change in some areas, several risks remain. The main one is funding: both interviews and survey results show that stakeholders were much less confident that sufficient resources will be available in the future. Other factors that influence sustainability include the political and policy environment, the future of the temporary protection status, and the willingness and capacity of public institutions to take over functions and continue activities.

The following conclusions draw together the main findings of the evaluation, highlight their implications for the assessment of the four projects, and consider what they suggest for the RRF more broadly.

4. Conclusions

Based on the findings described above, including those at the level of refugees and institutions, both public institutions and non-governmental organisations, several conclusions can be drawn in relation to the RRF.[54]

Relevance and Coherence

Together, the four projects covered countries that were significantly affected by displacement from Ukraine. The portfolio was geographically broad and combined national or country-wide coverage as well as more local interventions. The projects were adequately adapted to their respective contexts, and there is sufficient evidence that they adjusted their approaches and activities flexibly, whether the need for changes came from the projects themselves, for example through learning about what worked and what did not, or from external developments such as policy or legislative changes in the countries concerned.

The projects were generally complementary and aligned with wider refugee response frameworks, including the EU Temporary Protection Directive and the Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plans. The evaluation also provides several examples that the implementing organisations used, or participated in, a range of coordination mechanisms bringing various actors together, both formally and informally. At the same time, there was no specific structured exchange, joint learning, or deliberate effort to generate

[54] These conclusions are drawn primarily with regard to the Ukrainian refugees who were the focus of the evaluation and should therefore not automatically be applied to other groups, such as asylum seekers.

synergies across the four "RRF projects" themselves – and this was neither explicitly required nor incentivised. Even so, the portfolio can be seen as a set of individual yet coherent interventions.

Effectiveness and Efficiency

The four projects were able to contribute to the RRF objectives, particularly the objective of implementing urgent, short-term measures that can facilitate inclusion. The approaches and activities used by the implementing organisations were often centred on practical support and improving access to services, consistent with the need from more emergency-related assistance towards more complex integration-related support.

The sources of information used for the evaluation — ranging from quantitative data to interviews and discussions with affected persons — suggest that the activities and various forms of support provided through the projects contributed to meeting urgent needs and addressing existing problems. As the survey of refugees shows, legal and administrative advice and information regarding access to public and other low-threshold services relating to accommodation and healthcare were generally seen as helpful. This also applies to support for language learning in schools and through informal channels, as well as assistance with job-seeking and taking up employment, even though refugees' views on these latter are more reserved, as wage discrimination and other forms of discrimination (such as underqualification) cannot be ruled out in such situations. Nevertheless, according to the survey, the relatively high employment rate among (mostly) refugee women (54%, refugee survey), who often live alone with children, is considerable, bearing in mind that many were not, at least initially, prepared for or expecting a longer stay.

In this context it is also interesting to note that the findings suggest that support provided through the IFRC, Tdh and UNHCR and their partners was often perceived as more helpful than support from other projects or organisations, namely in access to health information, housing stability, and school-related support. While these differences should not be overstated, as the survey did not allow for project-specific comparisons and results were not more positive across all dimensions, they nevertheless indicate a comparatively strong perceived contribution of these projects to facilitating refugees' inclusion in the respective countries.

At the same time, these findings regarding the results of the projects should be viewed realistically. The extent to which they brought about change in the lives of refugees cannot be conclusively assessed on the basis of the data and information collected by the projects. The evaluation itself also has limits, partly because of these data gaps and partly because the various approaches, activities, target groups, and contexts are so diverse. A deeper understanding of outcomes and pathways of change would require additional research.

Three of the four projects adopted a multi-country approach, meaning that they covered several countries. The implementing organisations used this to share tools, expertise, and adapt activities across the countries they covered. The main added value of this approach appears to lie in cross-country learning and alignment, rather than in demonstrable economies of scale.

Impact and Sustainability

The projects produced results at the level of implementing organisations, their partners, and service providers. The findings suggest that capacities were strengthened above all among implementing organisations – ranging from staff development, improved technical knowledge, more hands-on experience, better internal processes, to new partnerships. Some of the service providers involved also confirmed that their own capacities had increased. Local NGOs also appear to have benefited in terms

of competencies, experience and visibility; however, these results are particularly at risk due to funding constraints.

The projects' contribution to the RRF objective of strengthening broader migration-management structures is less clear than their contribution to direct support for refugees. The evaluation shows that there have been concrete institutional effects: in several cases, the projects helped improve procedures, tools, and professional practices, and some of these were taken up by public institutions or integrated into existing national systems. This is the case, for example, in Croatia, where project-supported roles and tools were embedded in national structures, and in Lithuania, where the Reception and Integration Agency and municipalities appear to have taken on a stronger role. The findings also suggest that public institutions' capacities were strengthened to some extent, both at central level and, more often, at municipal level, where cooperation was usually more direct and operational. However, despite these many positive examples, the evidence is less clear on the extent to which, and the areas in which, the projects contributed to broader or lasting changes in mandates, processes, or resources for migration-management structures.

The conclusions regarding the RRF objective of reducing secondary migration are necessarily cautious. This is due, primarily, to the fact that decisions to remain in a country or move elsewhere are influenced mainly by factors outside the control of the projects. Also, Ukrainian refugees who were the focus of the evaluation have, under the EU Temporary Protection Directive, comparatively more options for mobility within the EU, subject to certain conditions. That said, the survey data suggest only very limited onward movement among the respondents. It is plausible that the projects – through the combined efforts involving UN agencies, international NGOs, local NGOs and civil society actors as well as strengthened local structures – were able to reduce some of the pressures and uncertainties that can trigger move elsewhere.

When looking at the results, it is important to recognise that national contexts differ. Legal and institutional frameworks, labour market conditions, administrative practices, all shape both refugees' access to support and the results that projects can achieve. With regard to the EU Temporary Protection Directive, for instance, it is reasonable to assume that its transposition has produced both similarities and differences across countries, and in some areas possibly more differences than similarities, as countries have used the room for discretion available to them, shaped by their existing systems and practices. Implemented in different national contexts and by different actors, different outcomes are likely, even if the projects focused on Ukrainians, a group of people relatively similar across countries. Any general comparisons of countries' or projects' "performance" should thus be treated with caution.

Furthermore, the reception worked quite well,[55] considering the relatively high number of people in need of protection. Given that it was the first time the EU TPD had been applied and that procedures for granting protection were therefore still largely untested, the countries were able to respond flexibly to the influx caused by the Russian war against Ukraine. As elsewhere in the EU, the level of mobilisation within the host society proved to be an advantage. It can also be assumed that the significant presence of Ukrainian migrant workers and acquaintances (prior to 2022) – particularly in Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania and, to some extent, Latvia – played a key role in the rapid provision of support. These individuals acted in a complementary capacity to the efforts of international, national and local NGOs promoted by RRF. The fact that the international organisations (UNHCR, UNICEF) were able to rely on

[55] Reception in Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia worked relatively well in the emergency phase, as these countries managed high inflows without a broader breakdown in legal admission and initial access to protection. That said, the evidence is more mixed beyond first reception, with medium-term constraints persisting especially around housing, language acquisition and stable labour-market integration. (OECD 2024)

established and accessible local actors was undoubtedly beneficial for the timely and needs-based provision of care and support. Furthermore, IFRC and Tdh already had extensive experience in crisis situations and were aware of how crucial this was.

In this context, a further conclusion is that sustainability will depend less on whether activities were effective and more on whether they were institutionalised, financed, and supported politically. There are several examples of institutional and organisational uptake, but it also shows that financial sustainability is the main risk across the portfolio.

Lessons and Practices for future RRF projects

The projects also offer additional lessons and practices that can inform future RRF projects. Although these lessons may not be entirely new, they are factors that were cited as important in development and humanitarian contexts. These include coordination and collaboration, both within and across public authorities, private sector actors, international organisations, and civil society organisations; flexible programming and the reprioritisation of activities; and the importance of integrated, comprehensive services that address various aspects (such as education, labour market access, health and psychosocial wellbeing, and accommodation). Also “one-stop-shops” emerged as a particularly useful practice, as they brought services and actors together in one place and thereby facilitated access, referrals, and day-to-day coordination.

Another learning and practice to consider is that projects that were implemented across several countries provided value by way of exchanging experiences and adjust activities based on what had worked elsewhere. Finally, another consideration is the fit between the RRF objective the project aims to achieve, and the profile of the implementing organisation. In particular, projects focused on direct support to refugees and those aimed at strengthening institutional preparedness, coordination, or national systems tend to require different capacities and types of access. In this respect, the four projects covered in this evaluation were implemented by a diverse group of organisations — IFRC, Tdh, UNICEF, and UNHCR — with complementary capacities and strengths.

The approaches implemented through these projects, some of which have already been pursued for several years, may also be relevant in other contexts. In fact, many of these approaches have been in use for quite some time, not least because the implementing organisations have been active for years in the countries where the projects were carried out. Formats such as the RIF models implemented by Tdh in Romania and Hungary appear, based on the information available to us, to have worked also in these countries. The projects have also used proven interventions such as PM+ of the World Health Organisation or the Including Children Affected by Migration (ICAM) programme, an Erasmus+ funded initiative, that are transferable to a range of contexts. Similarly, the IFRC applied its Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) commitments, an organisation-wide way of working that puts communities at the centre, for the socio-cultural activities.

Overall Conclusion

Taken together, the conclusions show that the four projects were relevant and useful, especially in helping to address urgent and practical needs of refugees and in strengthening the capacities of the organisations involved in implementation. At the same time, they also highlight some limits and open questions, such as regarding broader system change and how far positive results can be maintained beyond the period of the RRF funding. The recommendations that follow build on these findings.

5. Recommendations

The concluding chapter summarises the key areas where the evaluation identified a need for action. The recommendations were co-developed by SEM and the evaluation team. Priority and indicative timeframe for implementation were defined by SEM, taking into account its priorities and scope for action. This process ensured that feasibility, political expediency, institutional fit, practical constraints, and cost implications were considered in formulating actionable recommendations. [56] Apart from these recommendations, the survey participants also provided ideas, suggestions, and recommendations, which are summarised in Annex 7.

1. Recommendation: Encourage refugee participation throughout the project cycle.

Type	Addressee	Priority	Indicative timeframe
Strategic	SEM and project partners	High	Q1 2027

Type: Strategic (e.g., broader priorities, future direction, resource allocation, institutional decisions, Operational (e.g., practical steps to improve implementation, processes, coordination, or day-to-day management). Addressee: SEM, Applicant, Implementer, Other (who). Priority (from SEM perspective): High, Medium, Low. Indicative timeframe: Quarter Year.

Justification: The projects were generally seen as responsive to refugees' needs. However, the findings on relevance suggest that direct refugee participation remained limited. Where participation took place, it was often indirect or happened in later stages of implementation, e.g., through feedback mechanisms, focus group discussions, or volunteering in project activities. During the design phase, refugee participation was more limited, although some projects did involve refugees through needs assessments, including those conducted by Tdh and UNHCR. The EU's integration framework treats participation as integral to relevant and effective refugee responses that contribute to ownership and the practical fit of interventions.[57] Local civil society actors, including refugee-led or refugee-oriented (civil society) organisations, can play an important role in facilitating this participation. Their knowledge can help ensure that planning and implementation is reflective of practical realities.

Possible actions: SEM could introduce minimum expectations, depending on the project scope and size, for the project application stage that require applicants to explain how refugees, refugee-led or refugee-oriented organisations will be involved at different stages of the project cycle (e.g., problem definition, design, testing, iteration). These expectations could be amplified through the selection and award criteria. Future projects could be encouraged to establish light, continuous arrangements for participation, which clarify the roles of professionals, volunteers and other stakeholders and allow for repeated refugee involvement not only at the beginning but also throughout implementation. Where appropriate, they could also include a modest budget line to support such refugee participation. These arrangements should remain flexible and implementer-led, so they do not slow down emergency response and they remain proportionate with the project's scope.[58]

[56] The recommendations were presented and discussed in the closure meeting with the members of the evaluation reference group on 12.05.2026 that wrapped up the evaluation process.

[57] The EU's 2021-2027 Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion defines integration as a two-way process and adopts an approach that involves migrants, host communities, civil society and the private sector.

[58] Where refugees or volunteers contribute time, knowledge, or facilitation support, their involvement should be appropriately recognised. This could include reimbursement of expenses or benefits in kind (e.g. information, training, supervision). Dedicated budget lines may be needed to make this possible.

2. **Recommendation: Encourage coordination capacity between institutions, NGOs and IOs in the wider response ecosystem.**

Type	Addressee	Priority	Indicative timeframe
Strategic	SEM and project partners	Medium - High	Q1 2027

Justification: The findings show that coordination between public institutions, NGOs, IOs, civil society actors, and refugees was taking place, but was not always systematic. In several cases, it remained informal and based on personal relationships (see also below). Coordination with central authorities was described by some stakeholders as challenging. This is not unusual in a new multi-actor emergency situation, where some gaps, duplications or even competitions can be expected.[59] At the same time, the evaluation identified examples where coordination was more structured and worked well. These included one-stop-shop models such as RomExpo and Katya Hubs as well as programme boards or similar regular coordination formats. These examples suggest that arrangements that bring actors together, clarify roles, support trust-building, and improve the flow of information can be successful. Over time, coordination can lead to a broader whole-of-society approach. This can help reduce reliance on external or even parallel structures and support the gradual anchoring of services in public – migration or mainstream – systems where feasible.

Possible actions: Apart from light collaboration mechanisms within the RRF portfolio, coordination with the wider local and national response ecosystem should be strengthened. This would also be consistent with the RRF's overall objectives. Future RRF programming could ask implementers to define, test, and implement coordination arrangements. This could be considered already at the project application stage, for example by encouraging joint proposals from local authorities and NGO, or by asking applicants to outline how coordination with the broader response ecosystem will be ensured.

3. **Recommendation: Introduce light, structured collaboration by design between RRF projects.**

Type	Addressee	Priority	Indicative timeframe
Strategic	SEM	Medium	Q1 2027

Justification: The findings indicate that interaction and joint learning between the four RRF projects remained largely incidental, or was based on pre-existing relationships between organisations. This is understandable, as closer collaboration across projects was not explicitly planned for. Although institutional survey respondents reported a high level of coordination, this appears to refer mainly to coordination within the projects or with partners in the wider context. However, in the interviews, several stakeholders expressed that stronger collaboration across the RRF portfolio could be beneficial – precisely because existing cooperation was often ad hoc. As a result, opportunities for mutual learning and practical synergies between the projects were only partly used. Such exchange might have been particularly relevant given the multi-country approach of three of the four projects and the considerable complementarity within the portfolio. A more flexible common approach for cooperation might have been possible, without reducing the focus and flexibility of individual projects.

Possible actions: SEM could encourage light, implementer-driven collaboration mechanisms through modest incentives, resources, and expectations built into the project design. It would be a more

[59] The initial reception and inclusion of Ukrainian refugees in Swiss cantons illustrates this point, even though in a context where no international actors are involved, but the support of civil society NGO and individuals proved indispensable according to converging (Efionayi-Mäder et al. 2025).

deliberate system for exchange, especially where thematic overlaps or complementarities exist. The aim would be to foster mutual learning, identify practical synergies across interventions and countries, with the potential of further improving service delivery to refugees. At the same time, collaboration should not introduce unnecessary layers of bureaucracy, especially in emergency contexts. A practical model could thus include: an online inception workshop bringing together newly selected projects to exchange on planned approaches, share methods such as participatory design, and build connections early; and a mid-term workshop focused on reflection, successes and challenges, and renewed opportunities for collaboration (including referral pathways for refugee related services). The intent and process to encourage and facilitate such collaboration could already be signalled during the application stage.

4. Recommendation: Encourage early reflection on what may last beyond RRF support.

Type	Addressee	Priority	Indicative timeframe
Operational	SEM and project partners	Medium	Q1 2027

Justification: The findings point to a recurring structural tension: the RRF is designed as a short-term and flexible emergency instrument, while many of the activities it supports respond to needs that continue beyond the funding period. This can create challenges for continuity and sustainability (e.g., through loss of expertise, interruptions in services and referral mechanisms, and weakened partnerships), particularly for smaller NGO that are dependent on external funding. At the same time, the expectations regarding (financial) sustainability should remain realistic. Even longer-term development assistance projects often struggle to secure sustained funding or institutional take-up. For short emergency projects, the objective should therefore not be to demonstrate full sustainability, but to avoid preventable disruption and to identify a limited number of elements that may realistically be preserved, linked to existing structures, or taken forward by others.

Possible actions: There are no simple solutions to this challenge, especially in emergency contexts, and future RRF projects should not be expected to prepare elaborate exit strategies or transition plans. However, at the design stage, projects could identify a small number of services, referral pathways, partnerships, tools, capacities, or expertise that may have a realistic chance of being maintained, adapted, or linked to other actors after the project ends. This should apply to projects focusing on the integration of refugees into host societies, rather than to those centred on the distribution of basic necessities or emergency shelter provision. It should remain a light-touch reflection rather than an additional planning requirement, and should avoid generating unnecessary documentation or generic sustainability commitments. Early coordination with public services, local authorities, community structures, and other relevant stakeholders may help identify practical linkages and reduce avoidable disruption, although it cannot guarantee continuity after RRF funding ends.

5. Recommendation: Refine M&E systems to better support results orientation.

Type	Addressee	Priority	Indicative timeframe
Operational	SEM	Medium	Q1 2027

Justification: The evaluation identified weaknesses in projects' M&E systems, including the use of output-level indicators to measure outcomes, limited sample sizes, and reliance on self-reported data without robust baselines or standardised metrics. In addition, there was some misalignment between indicators, targets and achievable results that reduce the validity and interpretability of the findings. Together, these issues limit projects' ability to assess and document their results and learn from them.

Possible actions: The appropriate actions depend largely on the expectations regarding the scope and depth of results measurement. Given the type and setting of a project, it may be reasonable to focus expectations on outputs, since outcomes are usually more complex to measure and often take longer to emerge. Outcome measurement also typically requires more resources, so the added value of collecting such data should be weighed against the associated costs. Depending on these expectations, possible actions could include providing clearer guidance on how to use the standard logical framework and M&E templates used at the project application stage. If resources allow, support could also be provided to refine monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems where needed, either during the application stage or during implementation. This could include providing feedback on indicators, baseline and target values, ensuring that indicators are well designed to capture the expected changes, and promoting the use of standardised and validated measurement tools and methods where feasible.

6. Recommendation: Improve the basis for economic and financial analysis in future projects.

Type	Addressee	Priority	Indicative timeframe
Operational	SEM	Low	Q4 2027

Justification: The evaluation planned cost-benefit analysis (CBA) or cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) under the efficiency criterion, as requested in the Terms of Reference, but this was only possible to a limited extent. This was due to data gaps, particularly regarding the level of detail of cost and service usage data (output data were generally present in the project documents but in an aggregated form) or comparable outcome measures. For future RRF projects, a more deliberate approach to collecting a small number of data points could make efficiency assessments easier and more informative, without creating disproportionate data collection and reporting requirements.

Possible actions: The appropriate actions depend largely on the SEM's expectations regarding the scope and depth of cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analysis. The options to consider the recommendation are manifold – ranging from integrating basic CBA/CEA considerations into project design guidelines up to aiming for full economic and financial analysis of a project or even across the entire portfolio.[60] A potentially pragmatic approach could be to pilot CBA/CEA approaches by identifying a small number of interventions / activities for which a more structured analysis would be realistic and useful. For example, in a project with a job placement or employment support component, a CBA/CEA could be applied specifically to this component to assess costs in relation to employment outcomes achieved. For these interventions, minimum requirements for financial and output/outcome data collection that allow linking costs to results could be introduced and a small set of standardised indicators across projects could be defined.[61]

[60] This action could be informed by guidance on economic and financial analysis that is available from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

[61] Minimum data requirements for a CBA are: (i) measurable changes in outcomes (for example, employment rate and wage levels in job support programmes), (ii) the number of beneficiaries, and (iii) the associated costs. Minimum requirements for a CEA – used when outcomes or outputs can be measured but not easily expressed in monetary terms – are: (i) a measurable outcome or output (for example, the number of legal counselling sessions or hours of language training provided), (ii) the number of beneficiaries, and (iii) the associated costs.

Table 11: Summary table of recommendations

No	Recommendation	Type	Addressee	Priority	Indicative timeframe
1	Encourage refugee participation throughout the project cycle.	Strategic	SEM and project partners	High	Q1 2027
2	Encourage coordination capacity between institutions, NGOs and IOs in the wider response ecosystem.	Strategic	SEM and project partners	Medium – High	Q1 2027
3	Introduce light, structured collaboration by design between RRF projects.	Strategic	SEM	Medium	Q1 2027
4	Encourage early reflection on what may last beyond RRF support.	Operational	SEM	Medium	Q1 2027
5	Refine M&E systems to better support results orientation.	Operational	SEM	Medium	Q1 2027
6	Improve the basis for economic efficiency analysis in future projects.	Operational	SEM	Low	Q4 2027

Finally, the results of the evaluation, especially the refugee survey, identify areas of unmet needs including in the case of language acquisition[62] or employment. They also show some of the barriers refugees face in these areas and provides several actions to consider in project design. At this stage, however, it would not be effective to recommend more specific approaches or activities, as these depend on the individual projects, their objectives, target groups, and contexts. Future projects should continue make use of the growing body of evidence from both practice, evaluations, and research in order to apply proven approaches and activities in the relevant contexts.

[62] With regard to language learning this includes, for instance, providing more flexible course formats, advanced-level language courses, or informal learning opportunities.

Annex 1: Evaluation matrix

Evaluation Matrix

The following matrix presents the evaluation questions, and the methods or sources of information applied to answer them:

- Docs / Data: Document review and data assessment.
- KII: Key informant interview
- FGD: Focus group discussion
- Survey Inst.: Online survey of institutions
- Survey Ref.: Online survey of (Ukrainian) refugees

The probes are follow-up questions or prompts that were used to explore questions in more depth, clarify responses, or encourage more detailed reflections from interviewees and focus group participants. The probes will be adjusted as we learn more about the project, and adapted to the situation. They are intended for internal use to support data collection and analysis; the report will be structured along the evaluation questions.

Table 12: Evaluation matrix

EQ	Relevance	Docs / Data	KII	FGD	Survey Instit.	Survey Ref.
1	Did the migration situation in the partner countries justify the support provided through the projects? • How can the situation for the refugees / host communities be briefly characterised? (incl. number of arrivals and reception situation) • What were the main challenges for the refugees and host community?	●	●		○	○
2	Was the project design aligned with the identified needs of the target groups and partner institutions? • What needs were identified during project design, how? • To what extent were the objectives, and the approach / instruments aligned with these needs?	●	●	●	●	●

	• How were target groups and partner institutions involved in the design process, and during implementation?					
	Coherence					
3	Did the projects complement each other in terms of content and geographic coverage? • What were the focus and geographic coverage of each project? • Were efforts made to coordinate the design or implementation of projects to ensure complementarity? • Were joint learning mechanisms or exchanges established between the projects?	●	●		●	
4	How well was coordination ensured with other relevant actors, programmes, and policies? • What were the other main actors / programmes / initiatives in the thematic space? • Were efforts made to coordinate the design or implementation of projects to ensure complementarity? • Were there any missed opportunities to collaborate with key actors or align with relevant policies? • What challenges (institutional, political, logistical) hindered coordination?		●		○	
	Effectiveness					
5	Were the project objectives achieved as planned? If not, what were the reasons? • What evidence exists to demonstrate the achievement of each objective (outcome level)? • To what extent were the planned outputs delivered? • Were there any significant deviations from the original objectives? If so, what caused them?	●	●			
6	What changes did beneficiaries experience as a result of the project?	●	●	●	●	●

	• How do beneficiaries perceive the benefits or effects of the measures? What do they consider the most significant changes? • Were there any unexpected positive or negative effects for the beneficiaries? • Did outcomes vary across different groups of beneficiaries (e.g., by gender, age, location, migration status)? If so, why?					
7	What changes did authorities and people who work directly with refugees experience as a result of the project? • Were there any unexpected positive or negative effects for authorities and people who work directly with refugees? • To what extent did the projects contribute to systemic institutional or legal changes in migration governance? • What long-term changes in migration system performance or service delivery resulted from improved procedures, infrastructure, or staff capacity? • Did outcomes vary across different authorities / services? If so, why?	●	●		●	
8	What specific benefits (e.g., synergies, learning, scale, influence) did the multi-country approach bring for projects which were active in more than one country? • Did operating across multiple countries create coordination, communication, or management challenges that affected efficiency? • Did the national Red Cross Societies introduce proven approaches to managing the reception and integration of migrants from Ukraine as a result of the project?		●			
	Efficiency					
9	How appropriate was the use of resources? • What is the cost-benefit ratio for services where benefits can be quantified/monetised? • What is the unit-cost for services or benefits that can be quantified? • What is the ratio of personnel costs to activity-related costs? • Were the allocated financial, human, and material resources adequate to achieve the intended outputs and outcomes?	●	●		●	

	• Was there flexibility to adapt resource use based on emerging needs or contextual changes?					
	Impact					
10	To what extent has the project improved the integration of refugees into society? • What evidence exists to demonstrate improved participation, integration, and acceptance? • To what extend can observed changes in participation, integration, and acceptance be linked to the project's intervention? • To what extent did the projects enhance institutional resilience or readiness to manage future migration-related crises.	●	●	○	●	●
11	What effect did the project have on irregular secondary migration to other EU countries and to Switzerland? • How have patterns of irregular secondary migration changed during the project period — in terms of scale, routes, or destinations? • To what extent can observed changes in irregular secondary migration be linked to the project's interventions? • What role did the project play among the various factors influencing individuals' decisions to stay, or attempt secondary migration? • Did beneficiaries feel that the support they received reduced their motivation or need to undertake irregular secondary migration?	●	●		●	●
	Sustainability					
12	Can the activities be continued after the end of Swiss funding, either in their current form or in another adapted format? • Have the activities been integrated into the local institutions, authorities, or implementing partners (e.g., their mandates, strategies, processes, budgets)? • Are there alternative funding sources (public, private, donor, community-based) available or foreseen to maintain or adapt the activities?	○	●		●	○

	• What factors (technical, political, institutional, financial) are likely to enable continuation the continuation of activities post-Swiss support? What are risks or barriers to it?					
13	Did the projects lead to sustainable changes? • To what extent are the positive outcomes experienced by beneficiaries likely to be sustained after the end of the project? • To what extent will changes on the side of the authorities and service providers be sustained after the end of the project? • What factors (technical, political, institutional, financial) are likely to enable beneficiaries / authorities and service providers from continuing to benefit from project results? What are the risks or barriers to it?	○	●		●	○
	Lessons Learned / Good Practice					
14	What overarching lessons learned can be derived from the projects? • What lessons do implementing partners, beneficiaries, and government counterparts identify as most important? • How did the projects adapt to contextual changes or unforeseen issues? • What factors contributed most significantly to the successful aspects of the project(s), which ones undermined them?	●	●		○	
15	Were (innovative) approaches developed that could serve as good practices for future RRF projects or other funding programmes? • What approaches or solutions introduced during the project can be considered innovative — either in content, delivery, partnerships, or target groups? • Which approaches or practices appear replicable in other contexts, and which were highly context-dependent? • What conditions would need to be in place for successful replication?	●	●		○	

Annex 2: Document Review Guide

Table 13: Document review guide

EQ	Evaluation questions	Probes	Sources	Keywords
1	Did the migration situation in the partner countries justify the support provided through the projects?	How can the situation for the refugees/host communities be briefly characterised? (incl. number of arrivals and reception situation)	Project document Literature	situation, status, need, arrivals, influx, reception, host, accommodation
		What were the main challenges for the refugees and host community?	Project document Literature	need, difficulty, barrier, challenge, discrimination, integration, vulnerability
2	Was the project design aligned with the identified needs of the target groups and partner institutions?	What needs were identified during project design, how?	Project document	assessment, analysis, baseline, situational, gap
		To what extent were the objectives, and the approach/instruments aligned with these needs?	Project document	objective, goal, outcome, result, project design, intervention logic
		How were target groups and partner institutions involved in the design process, and during implementation?	Project document	participation, involvement, consultation, engagement, partner institutions
3	Did the projects complement each other in terms of content and geographic coverage?	What were the focus and geographic coverage of each project?	Project document Progress report Final report	thematic focus, intervention area, geographic, region
		Were efforts made to coordinate the design or implementation of projects to ensure complementarity?	Project document Progress report Final report	coordination, alignment, synergy, complementarities, overlap
		Were joint learning mechanisms or exchanges established between the projects?	Project document Progress report Final report	learning, exchange, knowledge sharing, workshop, meeting
5	Were the project objectives achieved as planned? If not, what were the reasons?	What evidence exists to demonstrate the achievement of each objective (outcome level)?	Progress report Final report	logframe, objectives, outcomes
		To what extent were the planned outputs delivered?	Progress report Final report	outputs, results, delivery

EQ	Evaluation questions	Probes	Sources	Keywords
		Were there any significant deviations from the original objectives? If so, what caused them?	Progress report Final report	deviation, change, modification, adjustment
6	What outcomes did the measures have for the beneficiaries?	What changes did beneficiaries experience as a result of the project?	Progress report Final report Literature	benefit, change, behaviour
		How do beneficiaries perceive the benefits or effects of the measures? What do they consider the most significant changes?	Progress report Final report Literature	perception, significant change
		Were there any unexpected positive or negative effects for the beneficiaries?	Progress report Final report	unexpected, unintended
		Did outcomes vary across different groups of beneficiaries (e.g., by gender, age, location, migration status)? If so, why?	Progress report Final report	logframe, outcomes
7	Did the measures strengthen the competencies and capacities of authorities in the field of migration?	What changes did authorities and people who work directly with refugees experience as a result of the project?	Progress report Final report	benefit, change, behaviour
		Were there any unexpected positive or negative effects for authorities and people who work directly with refugees?	Progress report Final report	unexpected, unintended, unforeseen
		To what extent did the projects contribute to systemic institutional or legal changes in migration governance?	Progress report Final report	system, institution, process, law, regulation, capacity, process, procedure
		What long-term changes in migration system performance or service delivery resulted from improved procedures, infrastructure, or staff capacity?	Progress report Final report	logframe, capacity, process, procedure, infrastructure
		Did outcomes vary across different authorities/services? If so, why?	Progress report Final report	logframe, outcomes
9	How appropriate was the use of resources?	What is the cost-benefit ratio for services where benefits can be quantified/monetised?	Progress report Final report Financial report	benefit, efficiency

EQ	Evaluation questions	Probes	Sources	Keywords
		What is the unit-cost for services or benefits that can be quantified?	Progress report Final report Financial report	unit-cost
		What is the ratio of personnel costs to activity-related costs?	Progress report Final report Financial report	personnel costs, activity costs
		Were the allocated financial, human, and material resources adequate to achieve intended outputs and outcomes?	Progress report Final report Financial report Literature	adequacy, resources
		Was there flexibility to adapt resource use based on emerging needs or contextual changes?	Progress report Final report	change, adjustment, flexibility
10	To what extent has the project improved the integration of refugees into society?	What evidence exists to demonstrate improved participation, integration, and acceptance?	Progress report Final report	logframe, integration, participation, acceptance
		To what extent can observed changes in participation, integration, and acceptance be linked to the project's intervention?	Progress report Final report Literature	theory of change, logframe
		To what extent did the projects enhance institutional resilience or readiness to manage future migration-related crises?	Progress report Final report	logframe, resilience, crisis readiness
11	What effect did the project have on irregular secondary migration to other EU countries and to Switzerland?	How have patterns of irregular secondary migration changed during the project period — in terms of scale, routes, or destinations?	Progress report Final report	irregular, secondary, fluctuation, dynamics
		To what extent can observed changes in irregular secondary migration be linked to the project's interventions?	Progress report Final report Literature	theory of change, logframe
		What role did the project play among the various factors influencing individuals' decisions to stay, or attempt secondary migration?	Progress report Final report	decision, secondary migration
		Did beneficiaries feel that the support they received reduced their motivation or need to undertake irregular secondary migration?	Progress report Final report	decision, migration motivation

EQ	Evaluation questions	Probes	Sources	Keywords
14	What overarching lessons learned can be derived from the projects?	What lessons do implementing partners, beneficiaries, and government counterparts identify as most important?	Progress report Final report	lesson, learning, good practice
		How did the projects adapt to contextual changes or unforeseen issues?	Progress report Final report	change, adjustment, flexibility
		What factors contributed most significantly to the successful aspects of the project(s), which ones undermined them?	Progress report Final report	factor
15	Were (innovative) approaches developed that could serve as good practices for future RRF projects or other funding programmes?	What approaches or solutions introduced during the project can be considered innovative — either in content, delivery, partnerships, or target groups?	Progress report Final report	solution, innovation, novel, approach, scale
		Which approaches or practices appear replicable in other contexts, and which were highly context-dependent?	Progress report Final report	replication, innovation, best practice
		What conditions would need to be in place for successful replication?	Progress report Final report	factor, condition

Annex 3: Interview Guides

The interview questions and probes presented below are derived from the evaluation matrix (Annex 1) and are designed to collect information and data across the four projects. While the core questions remain consistent, they will be adapted to the specific roles, experiences, and perspectives of different stakeholder groups. This shall ensure that the interviewees can relate and respond to the questions.

Interview questions

Context & needs (EQ1)

- How, and from when onward, were you involved in the project implementation?
- How would you describe the situation of refugees and host communities when this project started?
- What were the main challenges?

- Probes IFRC: challenges regarding access to housing, jobs, education, social acceptance.
- Probes UNHCR: lack of documentation, legal protection needs, vulnerable groups.
- Probes Tdh: access to school, safe spaces, psychosocial well-being for Ukrainian youth.
- Probes UNICEF: protection gaps for children, UASC, access to education/health.

Relevance of the project (EQ2)

- In your view, how well did the project respond to these needs?
- Which activities matched needs best?
- How were the needs identified – and who participated?

- Probes IFRC: housing support, language classes, vocational training, social participation.
- Probes UNHCR: legal counselling, access to temporary protection support, civil documents.
- Probes Tdh: RIF hubs, mobile outreach, youth-led initiatives, psychosocial activities.
- Probes UNICEF: child protection, MHPSS, early childhood, inclusive education.

Coherence & coordination (EQ3-4)

- How did this project relate to other migration projects in terms of coverage and focus?

- Probes, all implementers: overlaps or differences, coordination in design or implementation, exchanges or joint learning, missed opportunities for coordination.

Outcomes for refugees (EQ5-6, EQ10-11)

- What changes have you observed as a result of the project?
- What are the most important differences you see – where, for which group?
- What might explain differences in result achievement – across locations, groups?

- Probes IFRC: improved housing, better jobs, language ability, social participation, migration patterns – effect on secondary migration.
- Probes UNCHR: access to documents, work opportunities, social services, migration patterns – effect on secondary migration.
- Probes Tdh: skills gained, improved well-being, youth participation, school integration, migration patterns – effect on secondary migration.
- Probes UNICEF: guardianship for UASC, school enrolment, psychosocial well-being, family support, migration patterns – effect on secondary migration.

Institutional capacity (EQ7)

- How did the project affect the ability of organisations and authorities to support refugees?
- What capacities improved?
- How did capacity / knowledge transfer happen?

- Probes IFRC: Red Cross societies, municipal services, volunteer mobilisation.
- Probes UNHCR: asylum-related legal reforms, new asylum procedures, lawyers' skills.
- Probes Tdh: teachers, social workers, service mapping, ICAM methodology.
- Probes UNICEF: case managers, social workers, schools, ministries.

Efficiency & approach (EQ8-9)

- What worked efficiently, what didn't?
- How well were resources used?
- Did your project approach contribute to efficiency – how?
- Do you think the benefits justify the costs?

- Probes IFRC, UNHCR, Tdh: benefits of multi-country approach, coordination, admin/legal delays, cost-benefit, unit cost, cost structure, resource adequacy, flexibility.
- Probes UNICEF: system-based approach, alignment with government strategies, use of national institutions, admin/legal delays, cost-benefit, unit cost, cost structure, resource adequacy, flexibility.

Sustainability (EQ12-13)

- Which project results or activities are most likely to last beyond the current funding?
- What will continue, what is at risk?
- What factors contribute to sustain results?

- Probes IFRC: volunteer networks, community engagement, housing/education models, integration into policy/budgets.
- Probes UNHCR: stronger asylum systems, institutionalised legal aid, authorities' capacity, partner capacity, integration into policy/budgets.
- Probes Tdh: youth hubs (RIFs), trained staff, youth-led initiatives.
- Probes UNICEF: SOPs for UASC, teacher training, integration into policy/budgets.

Lessons & good practices (EQ14-15)

- Looking back, what are the most important lessons or good practices from this project?
- What worked well, what was difficult, what should be scaled up or avoided?
- IFRC: What proven approaches to managing the reception and integration of migrants from Ukraine were introduced?

- Probes IFRC: volunteer mobilisation, localisation, gender/diversity inclusion.
- Probes UNHCR: legal aid models, employment platforms, advocacy strategies.
- Probes Tdh: youth participation, mobile outreach, psychosocial tools, integration into policy/budgets.
- Probes UNICEF: child-sensitive services, system integration, national ownership.

Closing question

- Is there anything we haven't asked that you think is important to add?

Annex 4: FGD Guide

FGD with refugees: Session plan

The focus group discussion will begin with a tour de table, during which the moderator, co-moderator, and interpreter (if present) will introduce themselves, followed by short introductions from each participant. This opening serves to get acquainted and to create a welcoming, respectful, and non-judgmental atmosphere where participants feel safe to share their thoughts.

The next step will be to identify the topics to which the participants can relate and share their experiences, selecting among eight topical dimensions. Once the specific topics to be discussed are selected, the discussion will then move to a set of questions covering different aspects of the implemented projects.

These questions aim to gather insights into the participants' needs, challenges, and experiences with services related to legal support, health care, housing, integration, employment, education, youth programmes, and social cohesion. When working with minors (ages 16 to 18), the wording of the questions may be adjusted to ensure clarity and appropriateness. The sequence of topics may also be adapted depending on the flow of the discussion.

Each discussion block will be followed by a short break. The focus group discussion will conclude with a reflective section, in which the findings are summarised and consolidated.

Table 14: Focus group discussion session outline

Item	Duration	Purpose	Method	Output
Introduction	15 min	Welcome, get acquainted	Geet participants, explain purpose of the FGD (learn from experiences and challenges, improve support services). Clarify confidentiality, anonymity, and safe space principles. Introduce moderator and co-moderator roles. Brief explanation of discussion flow and time. Icebreaker question to group.	
Identify key dimensions	15 min	Ensure participants can contribute to discussion with own experiences	Present the main topics relevant for the project (on a flipchart). Ask participants to choose four topics they feel to have most experience with. Quick group discussion and vote to finalise the four priority topics.	Four topics, visibly noted for the group on the board.

Discussion topic 1	30 min	Collect experiences, insights, suggestions, ideas from focus group participants	Introduce the topic. Ask the guiding questions (from list). Encourage storytelling, probe for specific examples (see operationalisation prompts). Ensure all participants contributed - redirect if needed. Co-moderator notes key points, emotional tone, and non-verbal cues, and contributes actively as needed. Use techniques such as cards, flipchart, boards to vary the format of data collection.	Discussion notes and notes on flipcharts and boards.
Discussion topic 2	30 min	See above	See above	See above
Break	10 min			
Discussion topic 3	30 min	See above	See above	See above
Discussion topic 4	30 min	See above	See above	See above
Break	10 min			
Reflection and wrap up	20 min	Consolidate and validate findings, direct the focus forward	Summarise key topics that were discussed. Invite participants to share one final thought. Ask what could be improved in a future focus group.	
Closing	05 min	Closure of the focus group discussion	Explain what will happen with the information (e.g., report, service improvement). Clarify and open questions by participants. Reassure confidentiality and anonymity, thank for participation.	
Administration	10 min	Provide and receive confirmation for compensation	Document and hand-out compensation payment (EUR 20 per participants). Ensure consent is document (signed form).	Duly documented expenses and consent.

Questions guide

Dimension 1. Legal assistance, documentation, and status acquisition

1. Can you describe your experience in obtaining legal documentation or refugee status in this country?

2. Were you able to access any legal assistance or counselling? If so, what has been your experience with legal assistance or counselling?

3. What experiences have you made have you faced in navigating the legal system or obtaining important documents?

4. Do you feel you have enough information about your rights and responsibilities here?

5. What kind of legal or administrative support would make things easier for you?

Operationalisation:

Was it easy or hard to understand what you needed to do? Did anyone explain your rights and options clearly? What kind of legal help would make things easier for you?

Dimension 2. Access to health care and mental health support

1. Have you been able to access health care services (e.g., general check-ups, emergency care)? How would you describe the usefulness or quality of health care services?

2. How easy or difficult was it to find information about health care services?

3. Have you or your family members needed mental health or psychosocial support? Were those services available and helpful?

4. What are the main barriers you have encountered in accessing health or mental health care?

5. What would improve your access to health services?

Operationalisation:

Have you been able to see a doctor when needed? Do you know where to go if you feel sick or unwell? Have you or your family needed support for stress or mental health? Was it easy to get help when you needed it? What could improve your access to health or mental health care?

Dimension 3. Housing and shelter

1. What kind of housing are you currently living in (e.g., shelter, private apartment)?

2. How was the process of moving from shelter to private housing, if applicable?

3. What experiences have you made with landlords, housing contracts, or administrative procedures?

4. Did you receive any financial or organisational support in finding housing?

5. What additional support would help you feel more stable in your living situation?

Operationalisation:

Where are you living now? (Shelter, rented place, with others)? Was it hard to find a place to live? Did you get help with finding housing or dealing with landlords? Did anyone help you with paperwork or costs for housing? What kind of housing support would help you most?

Dimension 4. Language classes and integration courses

1. Have you had the opportunity to participate in language classes? If yes, how would you describe them (e.g., quality, usefulness)?

2. Did you receive help understanding how things work in this country (e.g., public transport, healthcare, cultural norms)?

3. Have you been able to attend integration courses or cultural orientation? If yes, how would you describe them (e.g., quality, usefulness)?

4. What are the biggest challenges in learning the local language?

5. How could language and integration programmes be improved?

Operationalisation:

Have you taken any language classes? Were they helpful? Do you understand how things work in this country (transport, health care, schools)? What was hard about learning the language? What other support would help you feel more included here?

Dimension 5. Employment, vocational training, and entrepreneurship

1. Have you been able to find work / internship here? If not, what are the main challenges?

2. What kinds of support have you received for finding a job (e.g., job coaching, career orientation, on-the-job training)?

3. Have you been able to take part in any vocational education or training (VET) programmes? If yes, how would you describe them (e.g., quality, usefulness)?

4. Are you interested in starting your own business? If yes, what kind of support do you need (e.g., financial, legal, mentorship)?

5. What would help you feel more prepared or confident to work in your profession or start a new one?

Operationalisation:

Have you found a job/internship here? Was it easy or difficult? Did anyone help you look for work or prepare for a job? Have you taken any job training or skill courses? Are you interested in starting your own small business? What kind of help would you need to work or start a business?

Dimension 6. Education for children and youth

1. Are your children currently enrolled in school or educational programs?

2. How do you describe their experiences in adjusting to the new school system?

3. Have they had access to language classes or catch-up lessons? If yes, how would you describe them (e.g., quality, usefulness)?

4. Have they been able to take part in outdoor or extracurricular activities? If yes, how would you describe them (e.g., quality, usefulness)?

5. What kind of additional support would help your children thrive in school?

Operationalisation:

Are your children going to school? Was it hard for them to start or adjust? Did they get help with language or catching up? Are there activities for them outside of school? What would help your children more in school?

Dimension 7. Skills building and psychosocial support for children and youth

1. Have your children been able to participate in workshops or activities related to mental well-being or social skills? If yes, how would you describe them (e.g., quality, usefulness)?

2. Have there been any programmes that helped them build confidence or develop new skills?

3. Are there safe spaces or events where they can connect with other youth?

4. What else do you think should be offered for children and teenagers to support their development and emotional well-being?

Operationalisation:

Have your children joined workshops, games, or outdoor activities? Is there a safe place where they can meet other kids or teens? Have they gotten support for stress or emotions? What kind of programs or support would be good for them?

Dimension 8. Social cohesion, community engagement, and information access

1. Do you feel connected to the local community? Why or why not?

2. Have you been able to take part in any community events or cultural orientation sessions? If yes, how would you describe them (e.g., quality, usefulness)?

3. Do you know where to find reliable information about services and opportunities?

4. Are or were you engaged as a volunteer (e.g., Red Cross, refugee support group)? How helpful is / was that?

5. What kinds of social activities or community events would you like to see more of?

Operationalisation:

Do you feel connected to your local community? Have you joined any events or community activities? Is it easy to find clear information about services? Were you a volunteer? Was it useful? What kind of information or events would help you feel more at home?

Annex 5: Survey description

Institutional survey

This survey was conducted to capture the perspectives of organisations involved in the implementation and delivery of the projects on the evaluation criteria relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

The survey consisted of 31 questions and was sent to 359 institutional stakeholders, of whom 185 responded (52%).[63] Respondents included implementing organisations, service providers (both project-funded and non-funded), as well as policy and coordination institutions. The average response time was 33 minutes; the completion rate 49%.

The survey was distributed through the implementing organisations based on their contacts of known stakeholders. The respondents were not tracked to ensure anonymity, and participation was voluntary. The respondents could choose among eight languages (Bulgarian, Croatian, English, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Romanian, Slovak).

The response rates varied across organisations and countries, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Institutional survey: distribution vs responses (by organisation and country)

Institutional survey								
	Distribution (number of persons)				Responses (number of persons)			
	IFRC	Tdh	UNHCR	UNICEF	IFRC	Tdh	UNHCR	UNICEF
Hungary	30	24	15		16	14	17	
Latvia	32				8			
Lithuania	50				15			
Romania	30	50	22		21	10	7	
Bulgaria			13				14	
Slovakia			9				12	
Croatia				84				51
Tot	**142**	**74**	**59**	**84**	**42%**	**32%**	**85%**	**61%**

Institutional survey sample characteristics

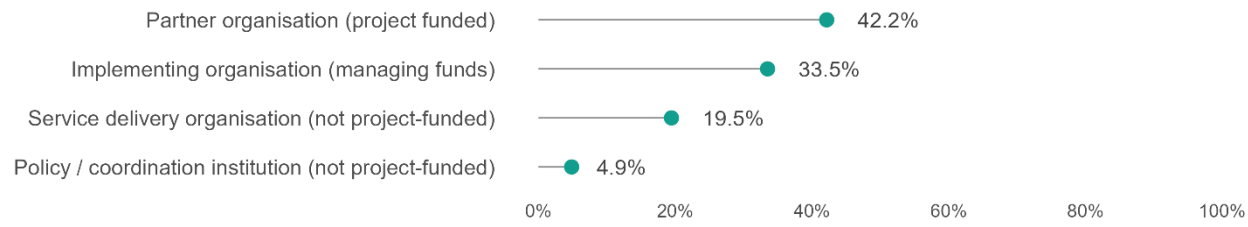
Most respondents (42%) are partner organisations that implemented project-funded activities (Figure 1). About one third are implementers (IFRC, Tdh, UNHCR, and UNICEF), represented by their staff at

[63] The survey was open for more than 5 weeks and a reminder was sent to engage respondents and achieve a higher response rate.

different operational and management levels. Just under one fifth are service providers in the migration field that did not receive project funding, and less than 5% are policy or coordination institutions.

Figure 1: Institutional survey sample composition: organisation role

"Which statement best describes your organisation's role in the project? - Implementing organisation: UNHCR, IFRC, Tdh, or UNICEF. We manage project funds and deliver activities either directly or through partner organisations. Partner organisation or institution. We implement activities on behalf of the implementing organisation, funded through the project. Service delivery organisation (not project-funded). We provide services to refugees or collaborate with the implementing organisation, but we did not receive project funds. Policy / coordination institution (not project-funded). We work mainly on policy, planning, regulation, or coordination, we don't provide services to refugees, and we did not receive project funds."



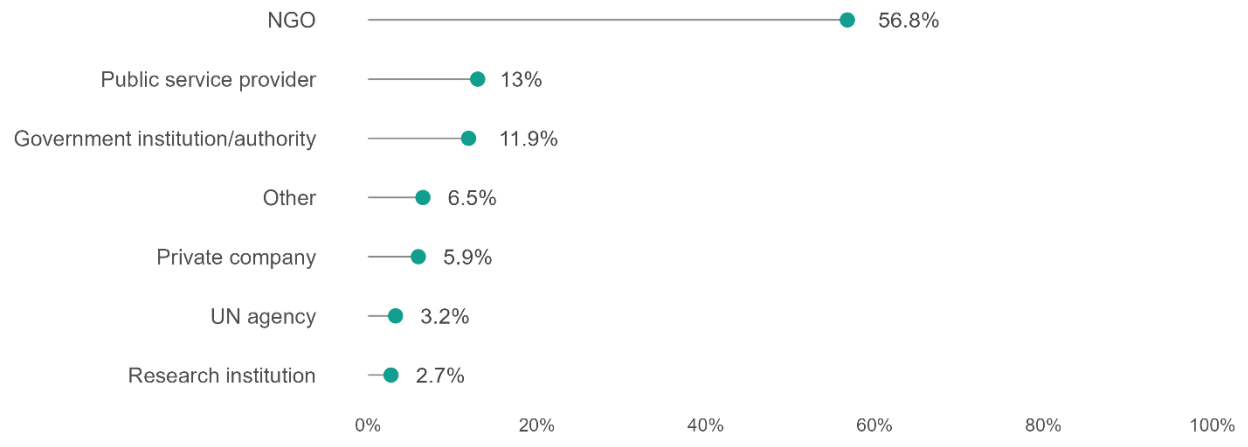
Note: Based on the responses of 185 participants.

In terms of organisation type, the sample is predominantly composed of NGOs (56.8%), followed by public service providers (13%) and government institutions (11.9%), while other stakeholder groups are represented to a lesser extent (Figure 2).

This distribution suggests a potential overrepresentation of civil society actors relative to other stakeholder groups. In addition, two of the four surveyed stakeholder groups received financial support as part of the project. This should be considered when interpreting findings, to account for possible influences such as social desirability bias.

Figure 2: Institutional survey sample: organisation type

"What type of organisation do you work for?"

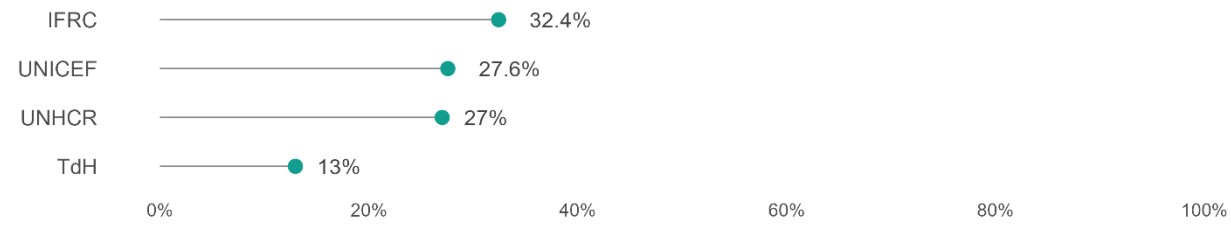


Note: Based on the responses of 185 participants.

When interpreting the results, it is also important to consider the sample's composition by project in Figure 3: IFRC, UNICEF and UNHCR each account for roughly one third, while Tdh represents just over 10%. This distribution broadly reflects the relative size of the projects in terms of partnerships and geographic coverage

Figure 3: Institutional survey sample: project

"Which of the following projects were you mainly involved in?"

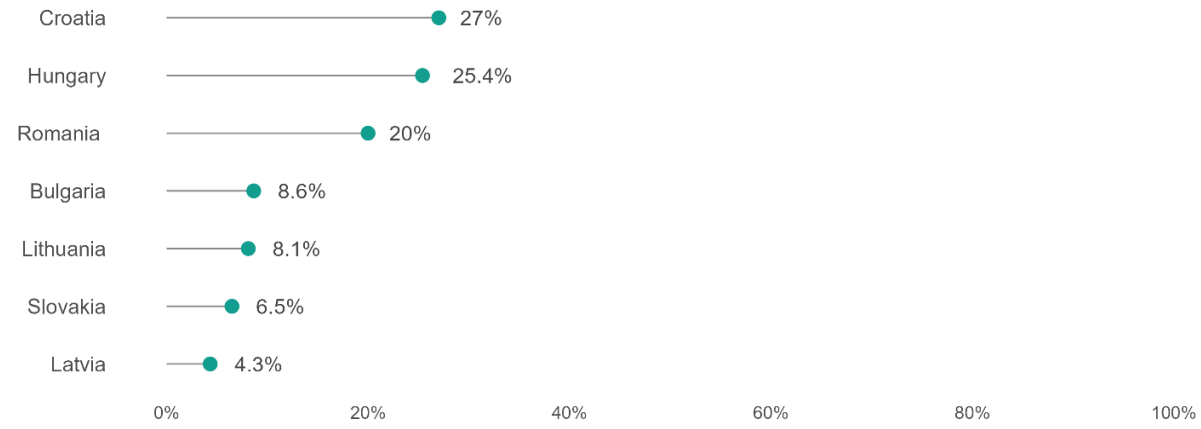


Note: Based on the responses of 185 participants.

Geographically, responses were concentrated in Croatia (27%), Hungary (25.4%), and Romania (20%), which together account for over 70% of the sample (Figure 4). Since no benchmark data are available on the full population of stakeholders by country or organisation type, the representativeness of the sample cannot be fully assessed.

Figure 4: Institutional survey sample: country

"In which country did you conduct most of your work related to this project? (Your answers in the next section will refer to this country.)"



Note: Based on the responses of 185 participants.

Refugee survey

This survey was conducted to capture the perspectives of refugees who had received services provided by the projects. The survey design was informed by the document review, interviews with partners, and the results of the FGDs; it covered the evaluation criteria relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The purpose was to collect data on the overall results generated by the projects of IFRC, Tdh, and UNHCR, not to compare the three projects. The UNICEF project was not included in this data collection, as it primarily focused on capacity building of institutional partners and systemic improvements in the reception of unaccompanied minors and separated children.

The target population consisted of individuals aged 16 and above who had participated in at least one project activity. Due to data protection concerns, the evaluation team did not have direct access to contact details; the survey was distributed by the implementing organisations or their partners.

The questionnaire included 77 (shorter) questions, many of which were conditional depending on respondents' characteristics, such as whether they had received a specific service or had school-aged children. The survey was provided in three languages (English, Russian, Ukrainian).

Table 2 provides details of the survey distribution. It was sent to approximately 5'650 individuals, and 714 responses were collected, resulting in a response rate of 19%. The exact number of recipients is not available, since not all implementing organisations provided the requisite data. This response rate is therefore an estimation. The average response time was 15 minutes; the completion rate 100%.

Table 2: Refugee survey distribution, responses, and response rate.

Country[64]	Distribution (number of persons, estimates)	Respondents (number of persons)	Response rate (estimates)
Hungary	1'288	120	9%
Latvia	200	58	29%
Lithuania	2'000	136	7%
Romania	1'670	283	17%
Bulgaria	190	60	32%
Slovakia	304	57	19%
Total	**5'652**	**714**	**19%**

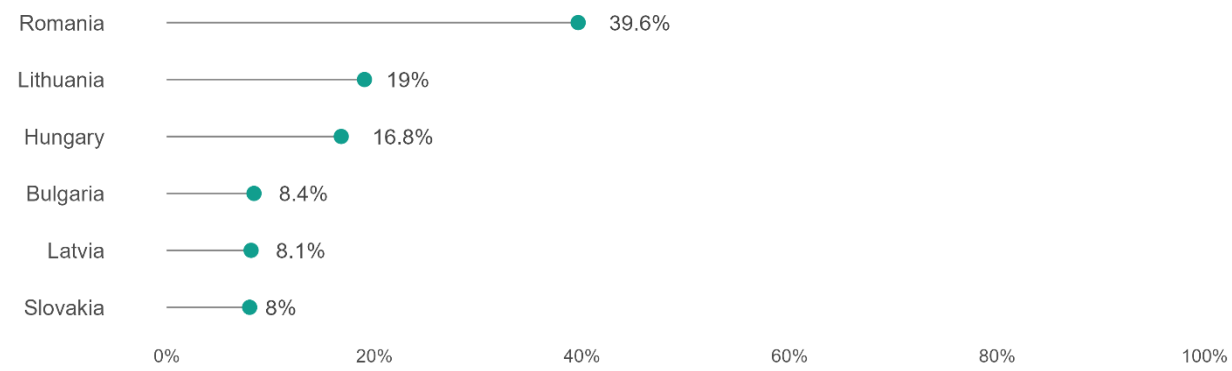
The survey was open for three weeks, and a reminder was sent at the beginning of the third week, as response rates typically increase following reminders.

[64] Refugees benefiting from temporary protection status are free to move across EU countries; therefore, the breakdown of data by country presented in the table should be considered indicative. The number of respondents per country was determined based on the question: "Where have you been living in 2024 and 2025? If you lived in more than one country, please select the one in which you lived the longest, outside Ukraine." This approach was used to identify as accurately as possible the country in which the respondent took part in project activities.

The country distribution is presented in Figure 5 below. Nearly 40% of the responses came from individuals who, in 2024 and 2025, were living in Romania, followed by Lithuania (19%) and Hungary (16.8%). Overall, the distribution of respondents broadly mirrors that of the recipients to whom the survey was distributed. The relatively high shares observed in Romania and Hungary are consistent with the fact that all three projects were active in these countries.

Figure 5: Refugee survey sample: country.

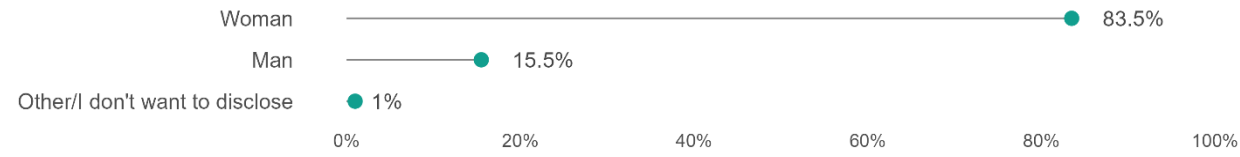
"Where have you been living in 2024 and 2025?"



Note: Based on the responses of 714 participants.

As shown in Figure 6, the sample is highly skewed toward women (83.5%). This reflects the fact that, since 2022, martial law in Ukraine has restricted men from leaving the country, with only limited exceptions. The measure was partially eased in 2025, when a provision was introduced allowing men aged 18 to 22 to leave the country. The survey primarily captured the perspectives of female Ukrainian refugees.

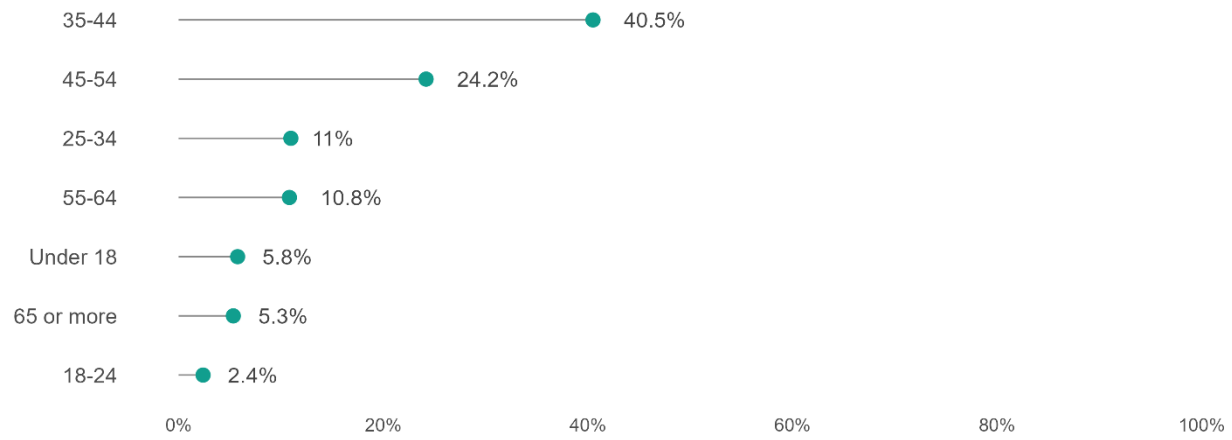
Figure 6: Refugee survey sample: gender



Note: Based on the responses of 709 participants.

The age distribution is concentrated among middle-aged groups (Figure 7). The largest share is represented by individuals aged 35-44 (40.5%), followed by those aged 45-54 (24.2%). Together, these two groups account for nearly two thirds of the sample. Individuals under 18 account for 5.8% of responses, those aged 65 or more for 5.3%, and respondents aged 18-24 represent the smallest group (2.4%).

Figure 7: Refugee survey sample: age

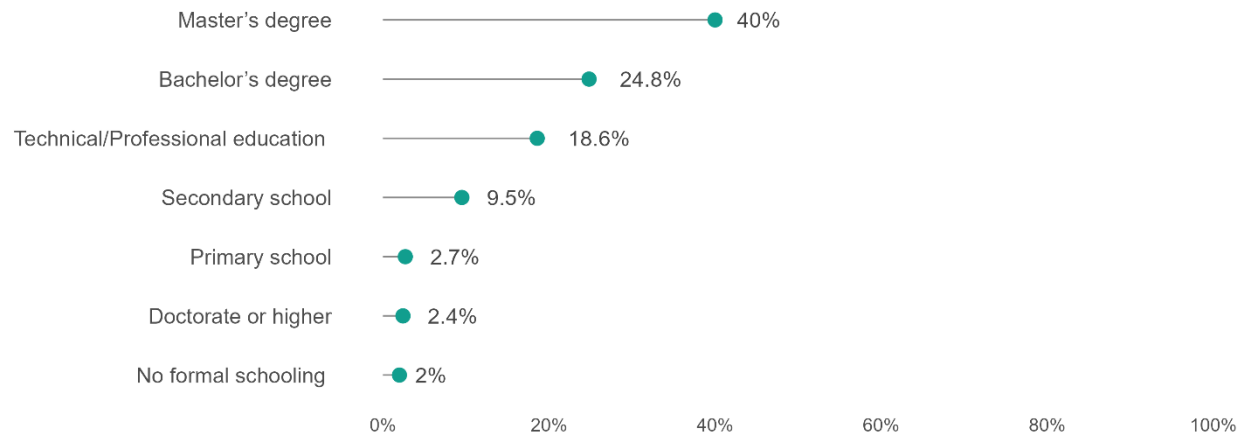


Note: Based on the responses of 711 participants.

The distribution shows a concentration of respondents with higher levels of education: individuals holding a Master's degree represent the largest share (40%), followed by those with a Bachelor's degree (24.8%). At the same time, 18.6% report having a technical or professional background.

Figure 8: Refugee survey sample: education

"What is your highest level of education completed?"

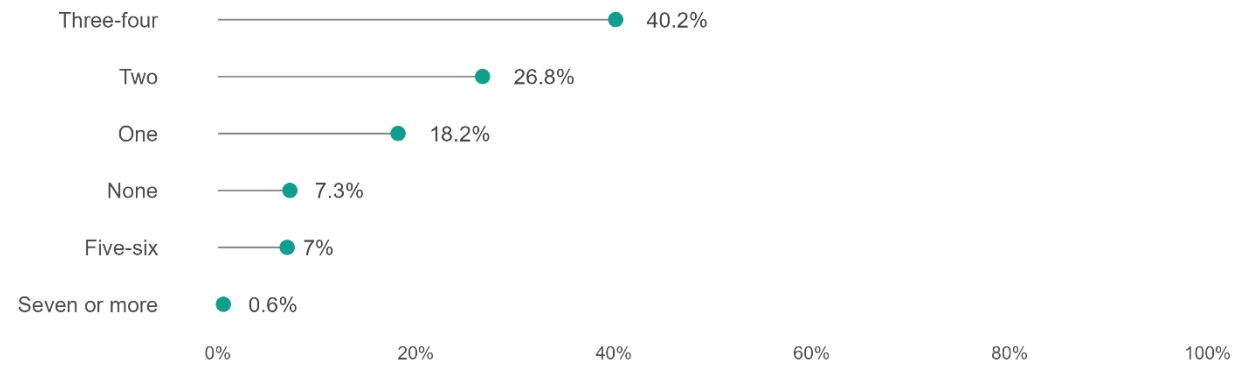


Note: Based on the responses of 705 participants.

Household composition is shown in Figure 9. Most respondents live in medium-sized households with two to four other individuals (40.2%), and fewer cases at both ends of the distribution. Households with seven or more members are rare, accounting for only 0.6% of responses.

Figure 9: Refugee survey sample: household dimension

"How many people are you living with in a household right now (excluding yourself)?"



Note: Based on the responses of 714 participants.

Data quality and ethical considerations

Both surveys were pre-tested by three individuals, including two Ukrainian refugees, prior to distribution. The translations were done using DeepL, and the Russian and Ukrainian versions were reviewed by a native speaker.

The questions in both surveys were generally optional, and respondents could skip items. As a result, the dataset contains item-level missing data, which are non-responses to specific questions rather than data loss or processing issues.

In the institutional survey, the completion rate was 49%, meaning that not all respondents completed the questionnaire in full. This also helps explain the relatively higher average completion time, as some respondents partially completed the survey without submitting all sections.

The skipped questions and incomplete responses in the institutional survey mean that some results are based on fewer answers. This can make comparisons across questions less consistent and should be taken into account when interpreting the findings, especially where only a limited number of responses is available.

Both surveys rely on mixed sampling approaches and are subject to self-selection and distribution constraints. Since essential data are not available[65], it is not possible to assess the statistical representativeness of the surveys. In addition, imbalances in the sample composition – such as the overrepresentation of NGOs in the institutional survey – should be considered when interpreting the findings.

[65] This includes the total number of refugees reached by the projects, the number of refugees contacted for the surveys (the sample), the number persons actually reached, and information about the population and sample structure.

Participation in the survey was voluntary and based on informed consent, and responses were collected anonymously. The evaluation team did not have access to personal contact data, unless voluntarily provided in open-text responses. Data were stored in the SurveySparrow application.

Overall, the results provide robust indicative evidence on patterns, perceptions, and trends across the project portfolio. However, they should not be used to support precise quantitative generalisations.

Annex 6: Project M&E data

IFRC

Result level	Country	Indicator	Target	Endline	Achievement
Overall Objective: Contribute to the integration of asylum seekers, refugees and displaced people in their host societies with a special emphasis on creating more inclusive communities	Hungary	% of asylum seekers, refugees and displaced people that express feeling less excluded	70% increase	81% (N=123)	●
	Latvia			40% (N=167)	●
	Lithuania			39% (N=276)	●
	Romania			39% (N=831)	●
Outcome 1.Enhanced socio-economic integration measures of asylum seekers, refugees and displaced people to enable equal participation in cultural and social aspects of the host community	Hungary	# of people that indicate the socio-economic support they have received helped them meet needs	3120	101	●
	Latvia			135	
	Lithuania			89	
	Romania			659	
Outcome 2. Enhanced socio-cultural integration measures of asylum seekers, refugees and displaced people to enable equal participation in cultural and social aspects of the host community	Hungary	# of people that indicate the socio-cultural support they have received has helped meet their needs	4300	101 (N=129)	●
	Latvia			37 (N=41)	
	Lithuania			84 (N=104)	
	Romania			538 (N=709)	
Outcome 3. Enhanced well-being and protection measures to enable asylum seekers, refugees and people displaced to integrate in the host community	Hungary	% of people that indicate the well-being and protection support they have received has helped meet their needs	3200	101	●
	Latvia				
	Lithuania				
	Romania				
Outcome 4. The meaningful participation of asylum seekers, refugees and displaced people in the host community is ensured	Hungary	% of people who feel they have a voice in the host community	60% increase	N/A	●
	Latvia				
	Lithuania				
	Romania				

Source: Final Project Report, 2026

Tdh

Result level	Activity	Indicator	Target	Result	Achievement
Specific objective/Outcome 1	Strengthen quality, access, and adaptation of multi-sectoral services for most vulnerable refugees with a focus on children and youth.	% of refugees that express an improvement in access to key protection services (better informed, more aware on rights and entitlements, etc.)	at least 75%	**90 % of respondents** Number of respondents: HU 44 RO 309	●
		% of targeted providers of formal and non-formal services reporting improved ability to respond to the needs of vulnerable refugees, including increased knowledge, capacity and well-being	at least 75%	**93.6 % of targeted providers**	●
		% of targeted services with a quality improvement plan based on the self-assessment process outlined in the QoS toolkit, leading to enhanced service provision	at least 80%	**100% targeted services**	●
Specific objective/Outcome 2	Develop and/or scale-up tailored educational and socio-economic opportunities for refugee children and youth.	% of refugee children and youth who report increased emotional and/or social well-being after participating in project activities	80%	**82 %** of respondents report increase of emotional and/or social well-being. No of respondents: HU 67 RO 238	●
		% of children reporting enhanced technical skills and knowledge in design and use of Fablab production tools	85%	**85 % of children** No of respondents: HU 62 RO 139	●

Source: Final Project Report, 2025

UNHCR

Result level	Activity	Indicator	Target	Result	Achievement
Overall Objective	Protection and Inclusion measures enhanced for refugees and asylum-seekers in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia	Total number of persons benefitting from socio-economic inclusion measures and from the provision of legal assistance measures through this project	**15720**	**21884**	●
Specific objective / Outcome 1	Refugees and asylum-seekers in Bulgaria, Hungary Romania, Slovakia experience enhanced socio-economic inclusion	Total number of persons benefitting from socio-economic inclusion measures through this project	3280	5552	●
Specific objective / Outcome 2	Refugees and asylum-seekers in Bulgaria, Hungary Romania, Slovakia have access to legal assistance	Total number of persons benefitting from the provision of legal assistance measures through this project	12440	16332	●

Source: Final Project Report, 2025

UNICEF

Result level	Indicator	Target	Endline	Achievement
Overall objective: Children and families in migration, including refugees from Ukraine in Croatia and unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), are integrated into the Croatian national systems, have their needs timely assessed and met through effective access to integrated and high-quality protection, mental health and psychosocial support, integration measures in the school-based environment and local communities as well as access to key ECD community- based services and social transfers	# of migrant children in Croatia, including children from Ukraine, benefiting from enhanced and timely received support and services	8200	8105	●
Outcome 1: Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), have access to high-quality guardianship (identification, appointment and monitoring), best interest assessment, case management, provision of family- and community-based services and monitoring	# UASC identified	1000	1820	●
	# of children who have received individual case management	1000	1820	●
	An alternative care policy in line with the 2009 Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children is available in the country.	Score 4	Score 4	●

Outcome 2: The most vulnerable children, adolescents and parents/caregivers/guardians refugees in migration, including those from Ukraine and unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), have access to Integrated provision of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).	Accessibility of integrative mental health and psychosocial support to the most vulnerable children, adolescents and parents/caregivers/guardians refugees in migrations, including those from Ukraine and unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).	Yes	Yes	●
Outcome 3: Migrant children in Croatia, including children from Ukraine, have access to integration measures in school environments and in local communities.	# of children accessing formal education, including early learning, through UNICEF-supported system-strengthening and programmes.	1850	1984	●
Outcome 4: The most vulnerable young children and their caregivers in migrations, including those from Ukraine, are identified and have adequate support in accessing inclusive and quality community-based ECD services, especially early childhood education and care (ECEC) and early childhood intervention (ECI) services.	# of children accessing formal education, including early learning, through UNICEF-supported system-strengthening and programmes	300	298	●
Outcome 5: The most vulnerable children and families in migrations, especially those at risk of poverty and social exclusion, have access to adequate social transfers and services.	# households benefitting from new or additional social transfers from governments with UNICEF technical assistance support	8000	8959	●

Source: Final Project Report, 2026

Annex 7: Respondent feedback

The following summarises feedback provided by survey participants in response to open-ended questions inviting them to share their views and suggestions on the projects. It groups together 388 responses from the refugee survey, and 47 responses from the survey of institutional stakeholders.

As noted earlier, it was difficult to group these statements into clear clusters, and the order in which they are presented does not imply any weighting or prioritisation. The points below are paraphrases of comments made by survey respondents and do not necessarily represent the views of the evaluators.

Suggestions from refugees included:

- Renew or expand financial assistance, including for housing and basic needs, especially for vulnerable groups such as single parents.
- Support pathways to residence permits or permanent status in host countries. Provide legal assistance to help individuals with immigration procedures.
- Expand offer of language courses, accessible and flexible (in evenings or weekend, online as well as offline, provide material translated into Russian).
- Provide support for recognition of prior qualifications and for accessing local labour markets.
- Maintain support for children and youth, including extracurricular activities, educational opportunities, and childcare services.
- Expand access to psychological support services and community programmes that reduce isolation.

Suggestions from institutional stakeholders included:

- Plan early transition from humanitarian assistance to long-term integration programmes.
- Increase target group/refugee-led organisation participation in design, implementation, evaluation.
- Strengthen community involvement to support integration and reduce negative perceptions.
- Integrate (informal) psychosocial support into activities.
- Expand the use of digital solutions to reduce administrative burden.
- Ensure continuity and predictability of activities.
- Maintain and strengthen inter-institutional communication and cooperation.
- Establish national integration frameworks or strategies, including with the support from the private sector, labour associations, and chambers of commerce.
- Ensure that good practices aligned with international standards are used in national systems.

Annex 8: Literature

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