

TOGETHER FORWARD



The Together Forward project brought communities together to support Ukrainian refugees and vulnerable groups affected by displacement. By providing education, emotional support, and inclusive activities, the project supported 3,195 beneficiaries, including 2,774 children and youth, 150 mothers, 253 seniors, and 18 coaches, helping them regain stability, confidence, and a sense of



The **Together Forward** project has supported

3.195 beneficiaries

to date, advancing empowerment, integration, and resilience across all four pillars:

- Empowerment for children & youth
- Support for Mothers
- Support for Seniors
- Capacity building

By combining education, psychological support, sport, and capacity building, the project succeeds in creating safe spaces for healing, learning, and community belonging.

Overall results

2.774

children and youth

6

large scale events

150

mothers

20

partners

253

seniors

18

coaches

3

counties





PILLAR 1

Empowerment for children & youth

Access to Education and Resources

915 fully equipped schoolbags distributed

Reaching **10** schools across **3** counties: Vaslui, Iași, and Bacău

Digital Access

22 laptops distributed to Ukrainian youth (ages 19-23)

Language Support

60 Ukrainian children (ages 12-16) participated in English language lessons

Sport and Inclusion

74 children received sports equipment

1 Ukrainian football team supported in Suceava County

200 participants joined a Mini Rugby Tournament

350 children participated in the Sports Summer Festival (International Children's Day - June 1, 2025)

Creative and Psychosocial Support

125 youth participated in 10 creative and therapeutic workshops, including: art, cooking, glass painting, photography (photo sessions), occupational therapy, non-violent communication

Educational and Development Activities

161 children engaged in World Refugee Day 2025 activities

713 youth participated in dedicated educational workshops

Material Support and Donations

155 Ukrainian children (ages 6-12) supported with: tangram puzzles, teddy bears and toys, STEM robot kits



IMPACT

Through access to education, sports, and psychosocial activities, children and youth were supported in regaining a sense of normality and stability in their daily lives. These interventions not only strengthened their learning and social skills but also created safe spaces where they could express themselves, rebuild confidence, and develop a sense of belonging within their new communities.

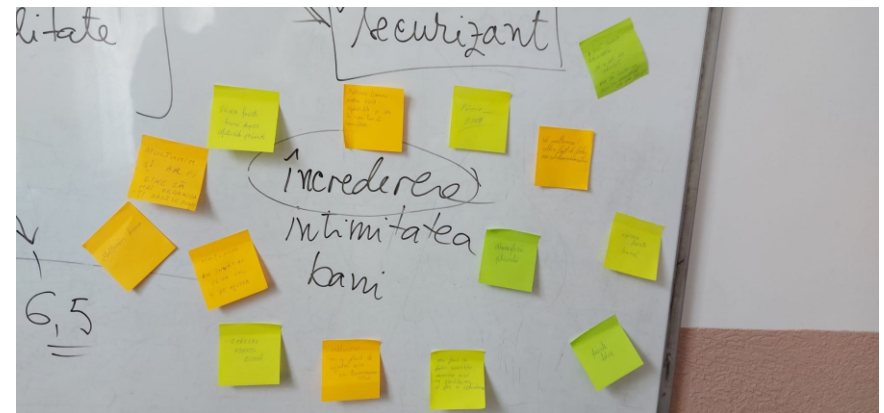
Psychosocial Support and Community Activities

- **150** mothers supported with materials for Romanian language learning
- Mothers engaged in creative and therapeutic workshops, including glass painting, basket crafting, film sessions, and bag-making (occupational therapy)



IMPACT

The project provided mothers with essential emotional support and opportunities for connection, helping them cope with stress, uncertainty, and the pressures of displacement. By participating in community and therapeutic activities, mothers were able to reduce isolation, strengthen resilience, and better support their children's adaptation and well-being.





Olena's Story

(Mother, 42 years old)

Before the war, Olena was a homemaker who took care of her entire family.

After the outbreak of the war, Olena arrived in Romania from Kharkiv together with her son, Pavlo. The transition was difficult for both of them. Pavlo was a teenager carrying the burden of trauma experienced during the conflict. He became withdrawn, avoided communication, and found it difficult to connect with those around him.

Through the activities organized by EDNAE, Olena participated in occupational therapy sessions, culinary therapy, and non-formal education activities. At the same time, Pavlo was involved in programs dedicated to children and young people, which

included non-formal education, occupational therapy, and culinary therapy.

Their consistent participation in these activities helped them regain confidence and build a new routine. Pavlo gradually began to socialize, adapt to his new environment, and look toward the future with more confidence. Today, he is a university student and continues his educational journey.

For Olena, the support she received meant more than just attending activities. It gave her the chance to regain her balance, rebuild her strength, and move forward alongside her son. Their story shows how important timely support can be, and how it can transform the course of a family's life.

253 Ukrainian senior refugees supported through:

- International Day of Older Persons celebration
- Occupational therapy workshops: glass painting, basket crafting, film sessions, culinary based occupational therapy sessions



IMPACT:

By engaging seniors in social and therapeutic activities, the project helped reduce feelings of loneliness and exclusion, which are particularly acute for elderly refugees. These interventions fostered meaningful connections, improved emotional well-being, and supported seniors in maintaining a sense of dignity, purpose, and active participation in community life.



Olga's Story

(Senior, 67 years old)

Before the war, Olga worked as an architect in Ukraine.

When the war broke out, she was forced to leave her home and come to Romania. She arrived with many fears and the feeling that she had to start her life from scratch. She did not speak Romanian, which made it difficult for her to adapt to a new environment.

At EDNAE, she found a safe space and a supportive community that encouraged her to take part in recreational, educational, and social activities. Each meeting gave her the opportunity to meet new people, regain her confidence, and find her place within the community.

Over time, Olga learned Romanian and became increasingly involved in the organization's activities. Today, she is an

active volunteer within EDNAE. She dedicates her time and experience to supporting other Ukrainian refugees, welcoming new beneficiaries, and helping them adapt more easily to life in Romania.

Olga's story shows that timely support can restore confidence and transform a beneficiary into someone who, in turn, supports others.

18 teachers and coaches trained in sports psychology to better support children's emotional well-being

Support for EDNAE Association

- Rent covered for a period of 6 months
- One-on-one capacity-building sessions provided for staff

IMPACT:

Investments in training, organizational support, and local capacity strengthened the ability of educators, coaches, and partner organizations to respond effectively to the evolving needs of the community. This not only improved the quality of services delivered, but also ensured the continuity and sustainability of support for vulnerable groups beyond the duration of the project.





Aliona

1. How many Ukrainian refugees are currently living in Romania and, of these, how many are in Suceava county?

Currently, approximately 180,000 – 200,000 Ukrainian refugees are in Romania, benefiting from various forms of protection or temporary stay. However, the real number of people transiting or temporarily staying in Romania is higher, as many are not officially registered or remain only for short periods while traveling to other European countries.

In Suceava County, located on the border with Ukraine and serving as one of the main entry points into Romania, it is difficult to estimate an exact number of refugees currently present in the community. The flow is dynamic: some

stay only a few days or weeks, while others settle temporarily.

Based on our organization's experience and collaboration with the local community, we estimate that at least around 700 Ukrainian refugees are constantly living or transiting through Suceava County, although the number frequently varies. Not all individuals require direct support, but most families — especially women, children, and vulnerable individuals — continue to need psychosocial support, integration activities, and community assistance.

2. Among the Ukrainian refugees in Suceava, how many does EDNAE Association interact with directly and how many participate regularly in your programs?

EDNAE Association interacts directly with approximately 200 families of Ukrainian refugees in Suceava County. Most of these families actively participate in our activities, particularly those dedicated to children, women, and psychosocial support.

At present, there are very few initiatives in the local community that consistently support Ukrainian refugees, and EDNAE Association is the only Ukrainian organization continuing to offer regular activities and services to this community. As a result, many Ukrainian families in the area turn to our organization for support.

Through our programs — including art therapy, occupational therapy,

educational activities for children, and community meetings for women and families — we provide a safe space where refugees can find emotional support, opportunities for socialization, and a sense of belonging during an extremely difficult time in their lives.

Regular participation shows that these activities meet real and ongoing needs, especially as the war in Ukraine continues and many people receive difficult news from home.



3. How have the needs of the Ukrainian community evolved recently? Are there differences compared to 2022 – 2023?

Recently, EDNAE updated its database to better reflect the current situation of refugee families.

We observe that needs have changed significantly compared to 2022 – 2023. In the early stages of the war, most needs were emergency-based: housing, basic goods, community orientation, and initial relocation support.

Now, for families present since 2022, the focus has shifted toward integration and long-term survival: adapting to life in Romania, supporting children in education, socialization opportunities, and

activities that contribute to emotional and community stability.

However, psychosocial and mental health support remains a constant need. The war continues, families are often separated, and uncertainty creates stress and anxiety.

For newly arrived refugees, needs remain urgent and similar to those in the early months of the war — but services are now fewer, which makes support from organizations even more important.

4. How are Ukrainian refugees affected by rising costs and inflation in Romania?

Refugees feel the impact of rising prices similarly to locals, but often



more intensely due to lower financial stability and weaker support networks.

Common challenges include:

- High housing and utility costs taking up most income
- Increased food and basic goods prices affecting daily budgets
- Additional expenses for children (school supplies, activities, transport)

Many refugees say they feel the impact “twice as strongly,” as they

rebuild their lives from scratch while facing rising costs.

5. What are the most pressing systemic needs right now?

Key needs include:

- Direct financial assistance
- Support for housing and utilities
- Educational and recreational activities for children and youth
- Occupational therapy and art therapy
- Romanian language courses
- Community integration activities
- Support for elderly refugees

While the emergency phase has passed, integration, stability, and mental health support remain critical.



6. How well have refugees integrated after over two years?

Integration has generally progressed positively, with many families achieving a degree of stability and adapting to life in Romania.

However, challenges remain:

- Bureaucracy and legislation
- Access to healthcare and education
- Difficulties in the labor market
- Occasional discrimination

Language is still a major barrier, and access to advanced language courses is limited.

Children often attend Romanian schools while also continuing Ukrainian online education, which is demanding. Elderly refugees face the greatest difficulties due to isolation.

Women often carry the main responsibility for family adaptation, increasing their need for emotional support.

Overall, refugees are not in an emergency phase anymore, but neither fully integrated — many live in an “in-between” state.

7. What are the main barriers to financial independence?

- Language barrier
- Limited childcare and activities for children
- Lack of programs for women
- High cost of living
- Discrimination
- Administrative and bureaucratic challenges

These factors are interconnected and significantly affect stability.

8. Which types of support have the strongest impact?

The most impactful are:

- Educational activities (formal & non-formal)
- Psychosocial activities and therapy

- Support for mothers
- Activities for children and adolescents
- Support for elderly people
- Material/logistical support

Safe spaces are especially important for emotional recovery and rebuilding stability.

9. What happens if international support decreases?

Risks include:

- Increased isolation and vulnerability
- Rising poverty
- Social marginalization
- Worsening mental health

- Fragmentation of the community

Support is essential to maintain stability and prevent deterioration of the situation.



10. Message to donors and partners

The message is simple: **the war continues, and so do people's needs.**

Even though public attention has

decreased, refugees still face major challenges. Rebuilding life in a new country is a long process.

Strong civil society is essential for a strong economy, and local organizations play a crucial long-term role.

Consistency in support:

- Maintains essential programs
- Protects progress already achieved
- Enables real integration opportunities

Investing in this community means building a more stable, inclusive, and resilient society for everyone.



VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Why Support Must Continue

Behind every number is a personal story. The experience of Ukrainian refugees in Romania shows that while the emergency phase has passed, the need for support remains constant.

"Even though the emergency phase has passed, families are not yet fully integrated — many live in an 'in-between' state, trying to rebuild stability while facing ongoing uncertainty. The war continues, and so do people's needs.

In the beginning, support focused on basic needs — housing, food, and immediate safety. Now, the challenges are different: integration, emotional stability, and helping children adapt and grow in a new environment. Psychosocial support remains essential. Families are separated, many receive difficult news from home, and anxiety is constant — especially for mothers and children.

Refugees feel the impact of rising costs even more strongly, as they rebuild their lives from scratch while trying to cover housing, food, and expenses for their children. What makes the biggest difference are safe spaces — places where people feel supported, where children can learn, and where families can reconnect with a sense of normality. If support decreases, we risk increased isolation, poverty, and worsening mental health for already vulnerable families."

Consistency in support is essential — it protects the progress already achieved and allows people to rebuild their lives truly."



Workshops for mothers



Back to school items



Sport summer festival



Painting workshops

THANK YOU!



Workshops for children



Football equipment



Therapeutic workshops