

TOGETHER

WE EMPOWER FAMILIES

from Ukraine and Romania with childcare and employment services.



center for
inclusive growth



European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development



Salvați Copiii
Save the Children Romania



JOBS FOR
UKRAINE

SUMMARY

The Russian aggression in Ukraine has caused one of the largest displacement crises in recent history, forcing millions of Ukrainians to flee their homes in search of safety. Since 2022, millions have crossed into Romania, with nearly 200,000 now benefiting from temporary protection, according to UNHCR. Most of these displaced individuals are women and children who face immense challenges in rebuilding their lives. A 2023 UNHCR Multi-Sector Needs Assessment revealed that while 60% of adult displaced Ukrainians in Romania are part of the labor force, only 33% have secured employment. Language barriers are the most significant obstacle, compounded by a lack of accessible childcare, making it difficult for parents to seek and sustain jobs.

At the same time, Romania grapples with its own socio-economic issues. Eurostat reported in 2021 that 41.5% of Romanian children were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Among vulnerable families, persistent challenges such as unemployment, inadequate housing, and limited access to education and healthcare further exacerbate inequalities. This convergence of crises highlighted the urgent need for solutions that address the challenges faced by both displaced and host communities.

In response, Save the Children Romania and Jobs for Ukraine (Project Voyager), supported by the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), launched an integrated program aimed at economic inclusion and social cohesion. This initiative provided integrated services for displaced Ukrainian parents and vulnerable Romanians, focusing on employment, skill-building and childcare.

The project set ambitious goals: to support 500 vulnerable adults from Ukraine and Romania with skills and resources for employment, enable 70 parents to secure jobs, provide age-appropriate childcare services for 100 children, and engage over 100 families in social cohesion activities. The implementation relied on a two-phase methodology that addressed both employment and childcare needs.

In the first phase, adults participated in personalized counseling sessions that covered key job search techniques such as CV writing, interview preparation, and understanding employee rights in Romania. Employment counseling was paired with upskilling and reskilling opportunities, ensuring beneficiaries could meet the demands of the local labor market. Job matching was a crucial component, facilitated through job fairs, express interviews, employer visits, and direct referrals to open positions. The project established partnerships with over 50 employers, maintaining close collaboration with 13 key companies across industries including retail, IT, hospitality, and supply chain. Employers such as H&M, LC Waikiki, and Marriott Hotel played a pivotal role, creating 250 job opportunities for project participants.

In the second phase of the project, a daycare center was established to provide tailored childcare and educational services for children aged 2-11. This initiative implemented three key interventions: daycare services, financial support to facilitate access to education and extracurricular activities, and material aid such as school supplies. The center, operating from 8 AM to 6 PM, Monday through Friday, offers an integrated range of services designed to enhance educational and social outcomes. Children receive homework assistance, Romanian language classes, and engage in recreational activities that foster social interaction, while also benefiting from daily meals and transportation services to and from school. Additionally, outdoor educational activities further support their overall development. These services enable parents, particularly mothers, to confidently enter the workforce, taking a significant step toward independent living. To promote social cohesion and integration, the project also included community-building activities such as speaking clubs and joint events for parents and children, fostering mutual understanding and stronger community ties.

This initiative serves as a powerful example of how coordinated efforts can address complex challenges, bridging gaps between displaced and host communities. By providing opportunities for economic inclusion and fostering social cohesion, the project not only transformed lives but also laid the foundation for a more resilient and inclusive society.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The program has achieved significant outcomes, demonstrating its effectiveness in supporting vulnerable families and promoting socio-economic inclusion.

Below are the key results to date:



514
guided individuals

The program provided comprehensive guidance and assistance to **514 individuals**, helping them prepare for employment through various support services, including job search techniques, CV writing, interview preparation and understanding employee rights. These efforts enhanced beneficiaries' employability and increased their chances of securing stable employment.



81
individuals employed

The program successfully helped **81 individuals** secure employment, providing them with the necessary skills, training and support to integrate into the workforce. These individuals were able to find jobs in various sectors, including fashion retail, technology services, hospitality, supply chain and manufacturing.



240+
job opportunities

The program has closely engaged with **14 employers** (Concentrix, Genpact, Interbrands Orbico, Uncle John, Sphera Franchise Group (KFC, Pizza Hut), HR Intra Interim, Salesianer, Radisson Blu, LC Waikiki, JW Marriott, Prolific FM, and two other major retailers). These partnerships helped match the needs of employers with the skills of beneficiaries, creating opportunities for vulnerable individuals. As a result, **over 240 job opportunities** were created, significantly supporting the employment of displaced Ukrainians and vulnerable Romanians. By fostering these relationships, the program provided stability for beneficiaries and helped employers meet staffing demands, contributing positively to the local workforce and the economy.



307
children received childcare support

The project has successfully supported a total of **307 children**. The daycare center provided care and enrichment for 33 children aged 6 to 11, offering a variety of educational and recreational activities designed to support their cognitive and social growth. Additionally, 74 children aged 2 to 11 received financial assistance for crèche, kindergarten, and extracurricular activities, ensuring that parents could continue working without the financial strain of childcare costs. At the start of the school year, **260 children** received backpacks filled with essential school supplies. Ensuring all children had the necessary resources, we focused on eliminating obstacles to learning and promoting their educational development.



**Social cohesion and
community building**

The program organized several social cohesion events and activities that brought together Ukrainian and Romanian families, fostering a sense of community and mutual understanding. These events helped break down cultural barriers and promoted integration, contributing to a more inclusive society.



Long-term impact

By providing comprehensive support that addresses multiple aspects of beneficiaries' lives, including employment, childcare, education and social integration, the program has achieved sustainable outcomes. Beneficiaries have been empowered to become active, self-sufficient members of society, contributing to the economic and social fabric of Romania.



TESTIMONIALS



"After moving to Romania and losing my remote job with a Ukrainian company, I found myself with no income, a child and a rented apartment. For 4 months I actively searched for a job. I applied to this program through which I received career counseling and help with my resume from the Jobs for Ukraine team. I soon found a position at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Despite my basic Romanian, my banking experience and English skills helped me secure the role. Thanks to Save the Children, my child is safely in daycare, allowing me to focus on my work. I'm now stable and happy in my job at this wonderful European organization."

Eugenia Potomkina,
Receptionist at EBRD



"I really needed a solution for my children and I registered in this project with the Save the Children organization which referred my case to Jobs for Ukraine. During the counselling session Jobs for Ukraine counselor provided me with a comprehensive overview of how to look for job openings, how to submit my applications and legal aspects of employment. I was offered to be matched to several jobs, however I managed to find a job at the Real Estate Agency by myself. Guidance and counselling of Jobs for Ukraine helped me to find the jobs that I enjoy. After I signed the employment contract, I was offered a solution for my child by Save the Children organization, and now my child goes to the hub after school time, which give me possibility to work full-time."

Svitlana Komirenko
Real Estate Agent



"After losing my remote job in a Ukrainian company, I found myself in Romania with no income, a young child, and the challenge of starting over. For months, I searched for work without success. Joining the Jobs for Ukraine project changed everything—I received career counseling, resume support, and invaluable guidance. This assistance helped me secure a position at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), where my banking experience and English skills outweighed my basic Romanian."

Save the Children's daycare service has been a tremendous help, allowing my child to be safely cared for while I focus on my job. Now, I feel stable and fulfilled working in a respectful, professional environment, and I'm grateful for the opportunities that have brought me to this point."

Eugenia Prokusheva
Customer Support
Specialist



PROGRAM JOURNEY

PHASE 1

Job attainment



Job Search Assistance



CV Building



Interview Preparation



Safe Employment Guide & Employee Rights



Job Matching Services



Upskilling & Reskilling Opportunities

PHASE 2

Childcare support



For the Littlest Ones (Ages 2-5):

Parents of toddlers and preschoolers will receive compensation for kindergarten fees.



For the School-Aged Children (Ages 6-11):

Our hub offers a safe, nurturing environment for your children to learn and play, completely free of charge after school hours.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Information sessions

Information sessions were held to introduce the project to potential beneficiaries.



Job placement activities

Individual counseling sessions, interview facilitation, job fair attendances and employer visits were conducted within the project to connect job seekers with sustainable employment opportunities.



Beauty courses

50 women were trained in beauty skills, including makeup, nails, brows, lashes, and basic cosmetology, empowering them with valuable expertise for sustainable livelihoods.



Daycare center opening

In April 2024, a daycare center was opened to provide important childcare services for children of working parents.



Social cohesion event

Speaking clubs provide opportunities for language practice and foster social cohesion, while the social cohesion event on June 28th 2024 brought together parents and their children to engage in various activities, strengthening community bonds.



Visit from Mastercard President of Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East & Africa

The local teams were honored to host Ling Hai, Mastercard's President of Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East & Africa, who visited Bucharest to learn about the project's impact and achievements.



LESSONS LEARNED

Language barriers

One of the main challenges faced by displaced Ukrainians was the language barrier, particularly for those who did not speak Romanian. This hindered their ability to secure employment and integrate into the community. To address this issue, the program offered Romanian language classes and bilingual services, helping people improve their language.

Cultural differences

Integrating people from different cultural backgrounds posed challenges in terms of social cohesion and community acceptance. Cultural differences sometimes led to misunderstandings and hesitancy in interactions between Ukrainian and Romanian families. The program's social cohesion events were crucial in overcoming these barriers by providing opportunities for cultural exchange and fostering mutual respect and understanding.

Employment market dynamics

The fluctuating dynamics of the job market, influenced by economic conditions and employer needs, required the program to be flexible and adaptive in its approach to job matching and employer engagement. By maintaining close relationships with employers and continuously assessing market trends, the program aligned its services with the needs of both beneficiaries and employers.

Balancing employment and childcare

For many people, balancing employment with childcare responsibilities was a significant challenge. The lack of affordable childcare options often forced parents to choose between work and caring for their children. Establishing the daycare center was a critical step in addressing this challenge, providing parents with the support needed to pursue employment while ensuring their children's well-being.

Sustaining engagement and participation

Keeping the community engaged and motivated throughout the program was challenging, especially when setbacks such as unsuccessful job applications or personal difficulties arose. The program addressed this by providing continuous support, encouragement, and opportunities for skill development, ensuring people remained engaged and committed to their goals.

The importance of Mental Health support

Displacement, job insecurity and cultural adaptation impacted beneficiaries' mental health, affecting their motivation and job readiness. Anxiety and uncertainty often hindered participation in training and job programs. Adding counseling and peer support could have improved resilience and engagement. Future initiatives should integrate mental health services to enhance long-term stability.

PARTNERS



The Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth advances equitable and sustainable economic growth and financial inclusion around the world. The Center leverages the company's core assets and competencies, including data insights, expertise, and technology, along with the Mastercard Impact Fund, to produce independent research, scale global programs, and empower a community of thinkers, leaders, and doers on the front lines of inclusive growth.

For more information and to receive its latest insights, follow the Center on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [subscribe to its newsletter](#).



For 35 years, [Save the Children Romania](#) has built social programs, public policies, and practices to benefit children in Romania. The organization's expertise and the complexity of its national projects make it an essential social institution, mediating between society and public authorities to protect children's interests.

Save the Children has been actively involved in society, finding concrete solutions to protect vulnerable children, advocating for viable collaborations with decision-makers, and ensuring that public policies are sustainable and that the causes of child vulnerability are addressed. Over 4.150.000 children have been involved in Save the Children's programs and campaigns.

[EBRD](#) is an international financial institution dedicated to promoting sustainable economic development and private entrepreneurial initiatives. In the context of this program, EBRD played a significant role by providing financial support and backing various initiatives aimed at stimulating job creation and economic inclusion. EBRD's funding was essential in establishing key components of the program, such as employment services and professional training, aimed at increasing economic inclusion for displaced persons and vulnerable citizens. Through investments in these initiatives, EBRD contributed to laying a solid foundation for long-term financial stability and integration into Romania's economy.



Proiect Voiajor Association is a Romanian NGO focused on the socio-economic integration of displaced persons and migrants. Its main initiative, [Jobs for Ukraine](#), focuses on providing employment and professional training opportunities for displaced Ukrainians. Through this project, Proiect Voiajor has been instrumental in promoting financial stability and economic inclusion by connecting beneficiaries with job opportunities and offering tailored training programs. The organization has been essential in building bridges between displaced persons and the local community, supporting integration, and helping