

STRONGER TOGETHER

* Lessons from The One Proposal
The Jesuit Response to the War
in Ukraine



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* We deeply appreciate the teams of Jesuit Refugee Service for their dedication and professionalism in responding to the crisis in Ukraine. We have witnessed how, through the One Proposal, evangelical hospitality has had a transformative effect on our communities, institutions, and on our hearts. There are thousands of examples that illustrate this transformative power of hospitality, which we have documented over the years, and which humbly make us very proud, because of what it means to stand alongside the most vulnerable. In the midst of the devastation caused by the war, their steadfast presence has been a source of protection and encouragement for displaced families and those who remain under constant uncertainty. We also acknowledge the courage and perseverance of all those who have walked this path together. Their trust, resilience, and commitment to one another have made it possible to build meaningful and lasting responses. This experience reminds us that solidarity is not an abstract ideal but a living force: when we choose to stand together, we become stronger and better prepared to face the challenges that still lie ahead.

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* **THE CRISIS
IN UKRAINE:
CONTEXT AND
RESPONSE**

On February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, triggering the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe's recent history. Between February 2022 and May 2024, the conflict resulted in more than 10,000 civilian deaths and left over 21,000 wounded. According to UNHCR, as of 2025, approximately 12.7 million people—including nearly 2 million children—are in urgent need of humanitarian support.

1. A CONTEXT OF WAR AND DISPLACEMENT

3.7 million people are internally displaced (IDPs) within Ukraine

Current reports indicate that **3.7 million people are internally displaced (IDPs) within Ukraine, while approximately 6.9 million refugees have been recorded globally.** 88% of them are women, elderly and children. These figures underscore the staggering scale of the displacement crisis and the vital need for sustained assistance as people continue to seek protection, safety, and stability.

This crisis has **directly impacted 5.7 million school-aged children.** Furthermore, 1,863 educational institutions and 177 educational facilities have been damaged, representing roughly 30% of the country's total educational infrastructure. Over the past four years, many schools have been converted into shelters, halting formal learning. It is estimated that one in five children has missed between one and two years of schooling due to the war. This massive displacement has also seen 665,000 Ukrainian students and 25,000 teachers forced into neighboring countries.

The **healthcare system** has been severely weakened. The widespread destruction of infrastructure, the displacement of medical personnel, and the scarcity of essential medicines have drastically reduced access to care. This has led to a general deterioration in physical and mental well-being and a decline in life expectancy, particularly affecting the most vulnerable populations.

Significant damage to **critical infrastructure,** including targeted attacks on electricity grids and water supplies, has interrupted basic services. These disruptions have exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, especially during the harsh winter months.

Poland, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia have become primary host countries, receiving vast numbers of forcibly displaced persons. In response to the displacement, the EU launched the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) to provide legal status to Ukrainians fleeing the conflict. In the four countries mentioned above, 1.4 million people are registered with the TPD. This exceptional, pioneering measure



© Marco Giarraccai/RS

Ukrainian refugee

“The war hasn't just taken our homes, it's taken our peace of mind. We worry about our children's education, our health, the rent we can't pay, the family we left behind, and what happens when the support ends. It's the uncertainty that wears you down every day”.

Ukrainian refugee

“The Temporary protection status does not give a sense of stability nor a desire to integrate”.

is a landmark in humanitarian best practices. However, while the TPD has yielded positive results, **long-term solutions must be implemented to guarantee rights and integration** beyond the immediate emergency.

➔ * **LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS MUST BE IMPLEMENTED TO GUARANTEE RIGHTS AND INTEGRATION**

2. OPERATIONAL RESPONSE: THE ONE PROPOSAL

At the international level, the response was coordinated and articulated through the Jesuit global solidarity networks. The intervention and accompaniment strategies for the medium and long term lead us to develop a three-year proposal. All Jesuit Conferences, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) offices, Xavier Network (XN) and mission and development offices aligned on this common response. The increasing coordination of immediate response actions is the foundation for the design of a comprehensive proposal integrating all activities around the four verbs of Pope Francis that summarize our response: **welcome, protect, advocate for and integrate** refugees.



© JRS Romania

This global, coordinated initiative—the **One Proposal**—provided both short- and long-term support across Ukraine and neighboring countries for internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees of all nationalities fleeing Ukraine, and the host communities welcoming them. Since the beginning of the emergency, the One Proposal has served 150,405 people overall, providing a total of 822,948 services with a budget of 11,649,184 million EUR.

Jesuit Informant

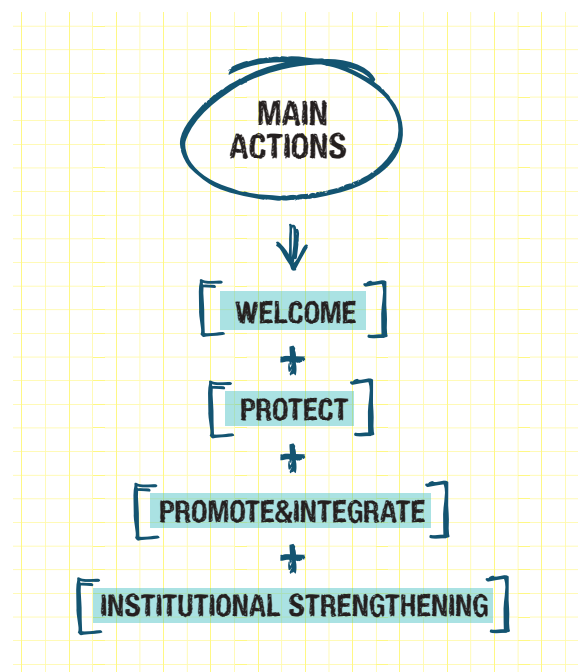
“ At the beginning it was clear that what people most needed was a roof over their heads, clothes and food. People were coming for one night, sometimes for a few days, weeks... We opened Jesuit and retreat houses, all the places we could to host people who were fleeing from Ukraine”.

The project's primary goal is to welcome, protect, and promote the rights of IDPs and refugees, facilitating their smooth integration into local communities. The **main actions** under each pillar include:

✓ **Welcome:** Dedicated to providing short-term shelter, emergency aid, and basic needs assistance. **75,450 services** were provided under this axis.

✓ **Protect (medium-term):** Focused on providing long-term shelter, non-food items (NFIs) for vulnerable groups, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), health services, and legal assistance totalling **91,503 services**.

✓ **Promote & Integrate (long-term):** Focused on access to education (for both adults and minors), livelihood opportunities, advocacy, and peacebuilding activities designed to raise awareness about the





refugee experience. These activities have involved a total of **653,217 activities**.

✓ **Institutional Strengthening:** Aimed at strengthening country office expertise and skills through strategic hiring and responding to the training requests from the country offices. During the implementation period, **2,778 activities** were carried out to strengthen our response.

The rationale behind these activities reflects the evolving needs of displaced populations. While 2022 focused on immediate “Welcome” measures, the efforts in 2024 and 2025 have shifted toward long-term “Promotion and Integration”. This aligns with recent IOM data that shows that the intention to return among displaced Ukrainians dropped significantly—from 57% in 2023 to just 10% in 2024—highlighting the critical need for medium- to long-term integration solutions.

While the One Proposal intervention extended to 23 countries, including “secondary movement” countries—such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Croatia, Serbia, North Macedonia, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Ireland—this evaluation booklet focuses on **Ukraine** and the neighboring countries:

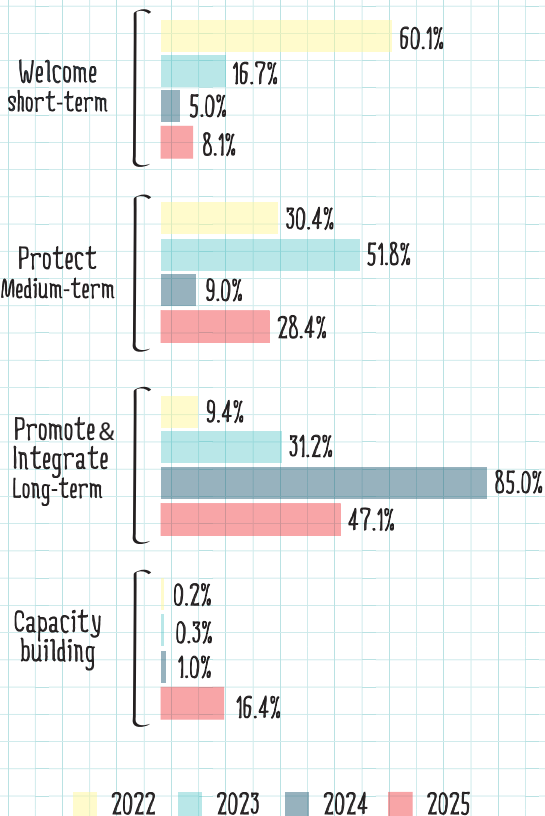
Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, and does not include Moldova, where activities were also carried out.

✳ **JRS Ukraine** operates primarily in the Lviv region, which sees a high influx of IDPs from eastern Ukraine. Only in 2025, more than 12,120 people have received emergency aid, hygiene kits, psychosocial support, and legal counseling. JRS Ukraine manages two shelters for highly vulnerable families and supports several schools, where they provide integration and psychosocial services, which remain vital.

✳ **JRS Hungary** supported 1,030 people in 2025 through a multifaceted program including legal aid, housing, and education. The project specifically focuses on children with disabilities. MHPSS services—including yoga, music therapy, and art workshops—are offered at JRS premises. To ensure integration, Hungarian language classes and school support target both adults and children, while mobile teams reach underserved rural regions.

✳ **JRS Poland** reached 1,712 beneficiaries in 2025, prioritizing integration, language learning, legal advice, and psychosocial support. One of the most successful activities has been the Polish language courses, a gate to inclusion in schools and the jobmarket. The MAGIS House, a Jesuit shelter, provides long-term residency,

Activities overview



where residents are supported to transition towards independence.

* **JRS Romania** served more than 6,913 people in 2025, with education and psychosocial activities at the heart of the intervention. JRS fills critical service gaps in coordination with WHO, UNHCR, and UNICEF. JRS in Romania covers a major gap in the access to education, providing Romanian classes but also kindergarten services which are not accessible and are vital for integration of families, as allow parents to integrate in the local work markets and children to transition into local education systems.

* **Jesuits in Slovakia:** In Trnava, the Family Help Centre supported 890 refugees in 2025, primarily women and children, through long-term shelter, the “Eco-Social Wardrobe”, and language training. The OPORA Centre, opened in 2024, provides a centralized space for integration and legal services. Volunteers are essential to educational support, while cultural events and clubs (teen clubs, women’s conferences, and family days) foster social inclusion. Targeted mental health and housing support are also provided for the elderly.



© JRS Romania

* **This global, coordinated initiative –the One Proposal–provided both short- and long-term support across Ukraine and neighboring countries for internally displaced persons, refugees of all nationalities fleeing Ukraine, and the host communities welcoming them.**

3. A UNIFIED VISION: **ARCHITECTURE OF COORDINATION**

In response to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Society of Jesus activated its global networks to move beyond fragmented aid toward a **single, coordinated response** known as the **One Proposal**. The global solidarity that has been articulated in this crisis constitutes a paramount example of the collaboration that we want to move towards when responding to a sudden crisis. The evaluation that we are sharing here, also includes an evaluation of our coordination, together with the lessons learned and the opportunities to scale it in the future.

From the outset, JRS Europe and the Xavier Network led the response. In order to maintain unity not only in implementation but also in the common response strategy and management, a **Leadership Team** was created, comprising the aforementioned partners, with a strong presence of the Society of Jesus, ranging from the Curia in Rome, the Conference of European Provincials, the President and the European Social Delegate, and all Jesuit leaders delegated by their provincials.



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From the very beginning, there were weekly meetings where, jointly, updates were provided from the field on the context and implementation in each of the countries, a report on security in the conflict was shared, and the commissions created reported and closely monitored the situation. Several teams (security, programs, fundraising, communications and advocacy) were created to coordinate specific activities and they reported to the leadership team. JRS played a very important role in all these teams and in the Leadership Team, with JRS Europe (as the implementing office), but also the JRS international office, which oversaw the overall strategy, and the JRS USA office, as a major donor.

The strength of this response lies in the shared technical and operational frameworks developed to serve displaced populations with a single standard of care.

✳ **Joint Needs Assessment:** At the onset of the crisis, XN and JRS conducted a comprehensive, unified assessment of the situation within Ukraine and neighboring countries. By pooling expertise, the network identified critical gaps in protection and education. This needs assessment, ensured that the One Proposal was rooted in reality and needs directly identified from the ground.

✳ **A Single Voice:** In a complex geopolitical environment, the partners speak with one voice. This unified advocacy ensures that our call for the protection of rights and the inclusion of refugees reaches international policy-makers with greater clarity and moral weight.

✳ **Global Tracking Tool for Flexible Funding:** To ensure transparency and efficiency, a centralized global tracking system was implemented. This allowed for the real-time monitoring of funding, ensuring that resources could be allocated instantly to where they were most needed.

✳ **Technical Support and Capacity Sharing:** Rather than working in silos, technical expertise in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), legal aid, and safeguarding was shared across the partners. This cross-border technical support continues to strengthen local offices and ensures a high quality of service regardless of the country of intervention.

The support provided by the entire Ignatian family in Europe was significant for an initiative that has become global over the years: **Paths of Hospitality**, which after the first year of the conflict became Paths for

➤ **THE ONE PROPOSAL HAS SERVED 150,405 PEOPLE OVERALL, PROVIDING A TOTAL OF 822,948 SERVICES WITH A BUDGET OF 11,649,184 MILLION EUR.**

Peace. A significant effort was made alongside Catholic partners to co-create the Catholic Response for Ukraine Working Group. A coordinated Catholic response for displaced people in Ukraine and its neighbouring countries, that carried out a coordinated and collaborative response that met needs, prevented duplication of efforts, and left no one behind.

The One Proposal is more than a pool of funds: it is a collaborative methodology. By synchronizing global donors with local expertise through a single operational lens, the network has demonstrated that a coordinated response is more resilient than the sum of its parts. It was an important milestone as the Ignatian family globally focused not only on financial support but also on **welcoming and providing humanitarian care**, especially in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Jesuit communities, families, schools, retreat houses, social centres, and universities opened their doors to refugee families, especially the most vulnerable. Each week, the number of Jesuit communities welcoming refugees was reported. The One Proposal has truly revolutionised “Welcome” and “Hospitality” within our Jesuit communities and the Ignatian family.

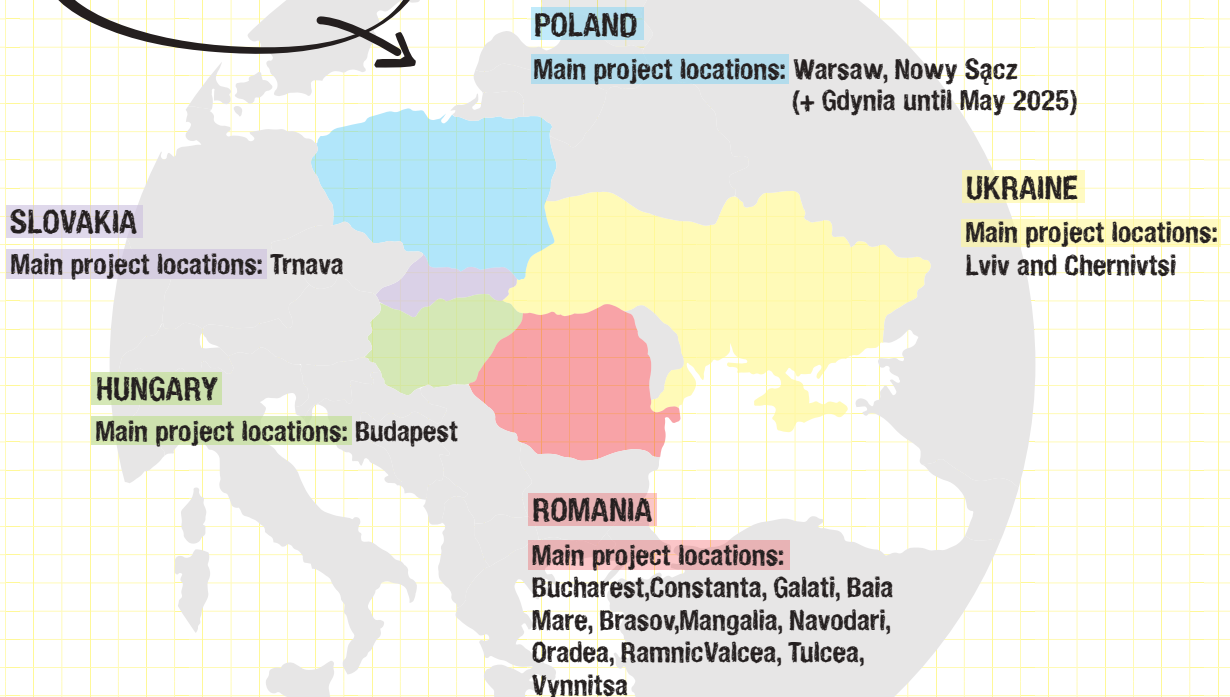


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Jesuit Informant

“ In the first days, several dozens of thousands of people crossed the border... among them, there were students attending Odessa University, migrants from other places who lived in Ukraine, coming from at least 10 other countries... We also welcomed them in our shelters. JRS is called to open its gates to people in need, whatever their flag or passport”.

COUNTRIES ASSESSED





EVIDENCE OF OUR IMPACT:



EVALUATION
RESULTS



© L'Arche, Ukraine



© JRS Ukraine

Ukrainian woman

“ JRS became like a rescue straw. Finally we found somewhere where it wasn't bombing. We found some help. We even wanted to cry. They helped in everything. Where to go to get services, how to get there”.

JRS Ukraine Management Staff

“ Every 3 months we have a talk with residents to identify whether they are capable of leaving the shelter, but our shelter work is a long-term project. Around 50 people who lived in the shelters out of a total of 140 remained in Ukraine and began autonomous lives thanks to JRS”.

Between October and December 2025, an external evaluation was conducted to assess **the impact of the One Proposal on the individuals and families we have accompanied over the past four years.**

This evaluation provides critical insights into our achievements while identifying areas to strengthen and sustain as we continue to provide a meaningful and transformative response to the needs of displaced Ukrainians.

The following highlights summarize **key technical lessons** learned from this journey:

UKRAINE

In Ukraine, the Jesuit response was coordinated through JRS Ukraine, operating in Lviv and Chernivtsi. The findings reflect a specialized focus on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), transitioning from basic survival in 2022 to a model centered on psychological rehabilitation and social cohesion.

The evaluation confirms that JRS Ukraine's "Welcome" and "Protection" interventions provided a vital sense of security amidst ongoing instability. 98% of participants reported being treated with dignity and respect, a critical metric in a context of mass displacement.

90% of beneficiaries stated that JRS helped them navigate access to essential services and local resources.

The provision of safe shelter and basic needs was fundamental: 91% of respondents felt that JRS support helped them feel physically safer. This stability directly impacted mental health, in fact the proportion of IDPs reporting "very low" mental well-being saw a significant decrease, dropping from 24% to 11% over the evaluation period.

In the areas of "Promotion" and "Integration", the evaluation highlights the center's role in fostering resilience and community bonds. Educational and child-friendly spaces were highly valued, with **96% of parents noting improvements in their children's emotional state and social skills.** With regards to the inclusion of IDPs into host communities, the metrics show a positive trend: the percentage of IDPs who felt integrated into their new local community rose from 23% in 2023 to 46% by 2025.

The center also served as a primary engine for social capital, with 66% of participants building meaningful new relationships, effectively transforming JRS spaces into routes for social participation and mutual aid during the war.

SLOVAKIA

In Slovakia, the response was channeled through the Jesuit Family Help Center (FHC) in Trnava. The findings reflect the transition from emergency response in 2022 to the current structured accompaniment model. **79% of participants stress that the FHC constitutes a gateway to social participation** that supports family routines, and encourages refugees to engage in semi-public spaces and accessible and affordable programs, such as the Ecosocial Wardrobe that acts as a center for dialogue, mutual assistance, volunteering, and shared activities.

The evaluation confirms a high level of effectiveness in the center's "Welcome" and "Protection" phases. Survey data indicates that **93% of the people served felt treated with dignity**, while 90% reported that the center's orientation services were essential during their initial arrival. Material support through the Eco-social Wardrobe met the basic requirements of 98% of recipients, and 100% of participants expressed satisfaction with the respect shown during aid distribution. This stable environment contributed to measurable psychological improvements: the proportion of respondents reporting "very low" mental well-being decreased from 17% in 2024 to 8% by 2025.

In the areas of "Promotion" and "Integration," the evaluation identifies significant progress in skill acquisition and social stability. According to parental feedback, 98% of children showed improved academic performance following FHC support, especially in areas affected by language barriers, which were reduced as 88% of parents noted improvements in their child's Slovak skills. Moreover, **96% of adult beneficiaries reported increased linguistic competence** in Slovak which facilitated the integration process.



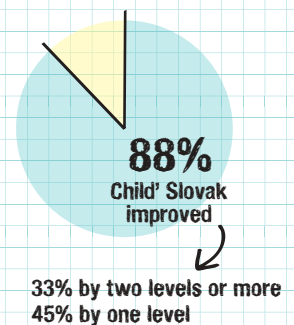
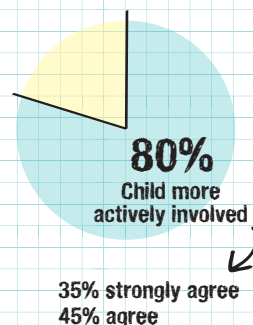
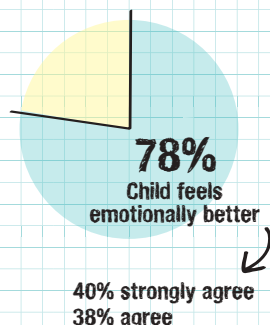
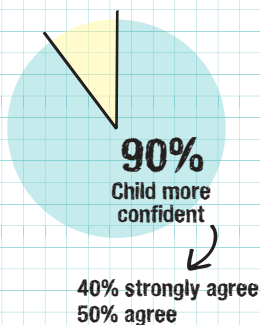
© JRS Slovakia

Ukrainian woman

“She (FHC staff member) helped me step by step, with every document, one by one. She followed up with authorities several times, and then they (authorities) finally called me back. Without this support, I believe the process would not have moved forward”.

96% of adult beneficiaries reported increased linguistic competence in Slovak which facilitated the integration process

POSITIVE CHANGES IN CHILDREN REPORTED BY PARENTS SINCE PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING HELP ASSISTANCE (FHC)





Ukrainian refugee woman

“ The begging was awful. I arrived with two children. I remember it was very wet. I felt lonely, I didn’t know how to communicate. I didn’t know anyone. Then I got to know him (JRS staff). Everything changed there. He told us they could help us pay the rent. I got a level of help that I couldn’t imagine before. It was indescribable, we were very thankful”.



Impact of assistance on administrative processes

- **Easier navigation**
89% found administrative and legal processes simpler.
- **Increase confidence**
78% felt more capable of managing matters independently.
- **Timely and clear support**
100% received prompt and understandable help.
- **Language accessibility**
89% received support in a language they understood.
- **Sufficient resolution**
89% felt the support adequately addressed their issues.

Long-term integration metrics show a clear upward trajectory; the percentage of refugees who perceived themselves as integrated into Slovak society rose from 15% in 2023 to 38% in 2025. Notably, 96% of surveyed individuals directly attributed their social and administrative progress to the specific support frameworks provided by the FHC, validating the efficacy of the response model.

HUNGARY

In Hungary, the Jesuit response was implemented by JRS Hungary. The evaluation confirms high effectiveness in the “Welcome” and “Protection” pillars. Orientation services were vital in a chaotic environment, with **86% of beneficiaries stating JRS helped them locate essential services** and 71% reporting that the organization’s presence helped them feel emotionally settled during their first weeks in the country. Housing support served as a lifesaving bridge for families; 100% of those receiving this aid reported it made them feel physically safe and personally protected.

These interventions led to a significant reduction in extreme psychological distress, with the percentage of beneficiaries reporting very low mental well-being dropping from 34% to 16%. Furthermore, 89% of participants found that JRS’s legal and administrative accompaniment made complex institutional processes significantly easier to navigate.

In “Promotion” and “Integration”, JRS support addressed foundational barriers to long-term stability. Among caregivers, 90% observed improvements in their children’s school engagement. JRS Hungary also responded to the growing need for specialized support for refugee children with disabilities and developmental delays by providing Special Educational Needs (SEN). Language acquisition showed strong results for youth, as **92% of parents reported improvements in their children’s Hungarian proficiency** following JRS classes. While adult language learners showed more moderate confidence gains (57%), these courses functioned as social tools, with nearly 80% of participants maintaining contact with their classmates.

Overall social integration remains a work in progress due to structural barriers, yet **82% of beneficiaries stated that JRS has helped them feel more integrated into society**. Additionally, 62% reported developing meaningful personal relationships through JRS, which acts as a key gateway to social participation and public life in Hungary.

ROMANIA

In Romania, the response was anchored by JRS Romania, which leveraged its extensive pre-existing presence across more than 10 cities to provide a comprehensive multidisciplinary support model with three centers in Bucharest, Galati and Constanta. The evaluation confirms a high level of effectiveness in the “Welcome” and “Protection” phases, that served over 9,000 unique beneficiaries in 2022 alone.

According to survey data, **93% of respondents affirmed that JRS support was essential for their orientation** and coping during the early weeks of arrival. JRS provided direct rental support to 148 families and temporary shelter to over 1,000 individuals. This together with health and psychosocial services, led to a measurable improvement in mental well-being, with 91% of beneficiaries reporting that JRS helped them feel better emotionally.

In the areas of “Promotion” and “Integration”, the evaluation identifies significant progress in bridging refugees into the Romanian social fabric. Educational support was a cornerstone, with **85% of parents reporting that JRS kindergarten improved their work-life balance**. In schools where JRS provided mediators and preparatory classes, transition rates from “auditor” to “enrolled student” reached over 50%. Furthermore, 72% of parents agreed that JRS support facilitated their child's integration into the formal school system. Adult education and personal development programs led to strong improvements in self-confidence and future orientation: 96% felt more confident in themselves and 77% took concrete steps to improve their future.



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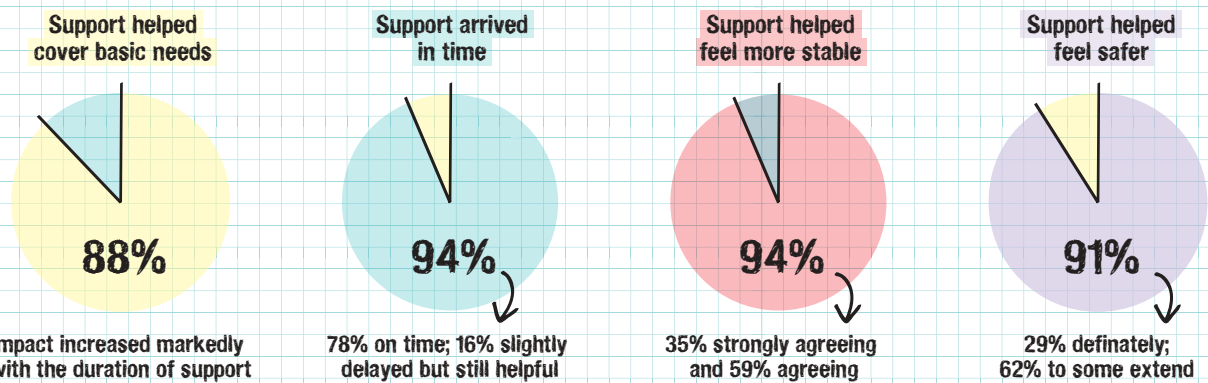


© JRS Romania

Ukrainian refugee

“ In the Romanian Kindergarten he was like an alien. No one wanted to be friends with him. When he first came to the kindergarten here in JRS... children stopped him and said: hey! We are speaking your language. It made a huge difference”.

BENEFICIARIES' FEEDBACK OF JRS ROMANIA'S SUPPORT FOR BASIC NEEDS





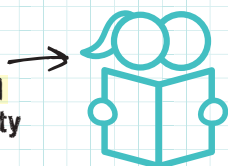
Jesuit informant

“ We didn’t have any kind of training. We were just going with open hearts and willing to help people. It was not JRS yet... everything was from scratch. Thanks that it was a church-based help, there was a huge trust in the organization”.

EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES REACHED OVER

400 CHILDREN IN THE FIRST YEAR ALONE

focusing on adaptation and school continuity



Moreover, language skills remained the primary driver of autonomy: 72% of adult beneficiaries reported increased confidence in using Romanian for daily life, and **91% stated that JRS activities helped them feel more integrated overall.** While 66% formed meaningful personal relationships through the center, the findings highlight an ongoing shift from intra-community bonding to active social bridging with the host community. Engaging in activities strengthened their sense of community and identity, providing access to social spaces and reducing isolation, while the professionalism and human warmth of JRS staff offered dignity and reassurance.

POLAND

In Poland, the Jesuit response utilized long-standing parish and community networks prior to the formal establishment of JRS Poland in late 2022. The evaluation confirms that the “Welcome” and “Protection” phases were deeply humanizing, with 96% of respondents reporting they were treated with dignity and respect by staff and volunteers. Orientation was highly effective once contact was established; 80% of beneficiaries stated that JRS helped them understand how to access essential services after their arrival. **Housing support through Magis House and Jesuit residences acted as a critical protective anchor,** with 80% of recipients reporting a restored sense of physical safety and personal security. This stable environment drove significant improvements in mental health, as the proportion of respondents reporting very low well-being dropped from 27% to 12% between 2024 and 2025. Additionally, 100% of those receiving legal or administrative support reported increased confidence in handling complex procedures.

In the areas of “Promotion” and “Integration”, JRS Poland successfully moved beyond material aid toward building autonomy. **Educational initiatives reached over 400 children in the first year alone, focusing on adaptation and school continuity.** Language courses became a core pillar of the response, evolving into a multi-location program that reached several hundred refugees annually. While social integration remains challenged by structural factors, 92% of beneficiaries reported that JRS helped them feel welcome in Poland. The center has also become a vital engine for social capital; qualitative evidence shows that JRS was highly effective in rebuilding social bonds, with participants frequently describing the organization as “family” and a safe space for rebuilding trust and mutual care.

COORDINATION

Based on the evaluation findings, the collaboration between JRS Europe and the Xavier Network was a cornerstone of the response's success, moving far beyond mere financial administration to create a **deeply integrated institutional framework**. Key to this success was the rapid activation of a mature coordination architecture; within weeks of the invasion, informal solidarity was converted into a structured governance system featuring weekly meetings, thematic working groups, and defined reporting channels. This prevented the fragmentation common in first-phase emergencies and established a "rhythm of coordination" that provided shared oversight and predictability across all partners.

A decisive factor in what worked well was the functional role clarity and complementarity established among the actors. Rather than competing for mandates, the network evolved into a specialized system where JRS Europe led operational coordination, the JRS International Office provided technical standards, and the Xavier Network members activated national solidarity channels and high-level technical expertise. This was underpinned by the Xavier Network's accumulated experience in emergencies and established protocols, which provided a pre-existing operational backbone that reduced improvisation and mitigated the institutional tensions that often arise during rapid scaling.

The collaboration was also marked by relational **trust and collaborative leadership**. Coordination advanced through mutual confidence rather than the imposition of vertical authority, which helped preserve the autonomy of individual provinces while maintaining a unified direction. This culture of trust facilitated conversations about operational dilemmas and allowed for a shared analytical reading of the crisis ensuring that, even as the crisis evolved, all organizations spoke with a "single voice" and operated under a unified strategic identity.

Finally, **the collaboration proved to be institutionally transformative for local JRS offices**. The coordination didn't just provide funds; it purposely invested in structural growth, leading to the formalization of JRS Poland and the professionalization of offices in Ukraine, Hungary, and Romania.

This internal synergy fostered a sense of belonging and horizontal cooperation, where country



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Ukrainian refugee living in Magis House JRS Shelter in Warsaw

“ This house was my salvation, became my safe place... my comfort place”.

representatives began to bypass formal hierarchies to contact one another directly for peer support. The partnership between JRS Europe and the XN demonstrated that the One Proposal was more than a fundraising tool: it was a collaborative methodology that strengthened the entire Jesuit humanitarian ecosystem.



STRATEGIC
INSIGHTS AND
LESSONS
 **LEARNED**

1. TECHNICAL LESSONS FROM PROGRAMMATIC IMPLEMENTATION

* THE FOLLOWING TEN LESSONS REPRESENT A SYNTHESIS OF THE PRACTICAL AND STRATEGIC INSIGHTS GAINED FROM THE EVALUATION OF THE ONE PROPOSAL. THESE FINDINGS REFLECT THE COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE OF TEAMS ACROSS UKRAINE, HUNGARY, ROMANIA, SLOVAKIA, AND POLAND. THEY HIGHLIGHT BOTH THE INNOVATIVE TECHNICAL STRENGTHS THAT DROVE THE PROJECT'S SUCCESS AND THE REALISTIC IMPLEMENTATION HURDLES ENCOUNTERED DURING THE TRANSITION FROM EMERGENCY RELIEF TO LONG-TERM STABILIZATION.



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Ukrainian refugee

“ JRS employees combine wonderful human, professional and spiritual qualities. Personnel are the main advantage of the organization. It is wonderful when people know the Word of God, but even better when they practice it”.

1. The Strategic Value of Integrated Protection and Material Aid

One of the most successful technical achievements was the integration of material aid with social orientation. Whether through “Eco-social Wardrobes”, housing assistance programs, or the distribution of basic necessities, the project proved that aid is most effective when it is not merely a transaction but a gateway to protection. Technically, this meant that meeting basic needs for 98% of recipients simultaneously functioned as an intake point for legal guidance and psychosocial support. This multi-layered approach turned the simple provision of goods and shelter into a comprehensive protection strategy that restored a sense of agency and simplified complex bureaucratic hurdles for almost all participants.

2. The Critical Role of Early Legal and Administrative Orientation

A key technical lesson was that providing high-quality legal and administrative guidance in the earliest stages of displacement is as essential as providing physical shelter. The evaluation showed that 90% of beneficiaries viewed orientation services as essential for their initial survival. Technically, establishing clear information hubs allowed refugees to navigate complex social security systems and legal residencies immediately. This early administrative clarity prevented families from falling into institutional limbo, ensuring they could access health, education, and labor markets without the delays that often lead to long-term dependency.

3. Language Courses as Engines of Social Capital

A significant technical lesson is that language instruction is most effective when designed as a social

intervention rather than a purely pedagogical one. The data shows that while linguistic progress was vital, the most valuable output was the creation of social networks; for example, 80% of participants built meaningful peer relationships that directly reduced isolation. This teaches us that future language programs should be intentionally structured to foster mutual aid and community-building, as the relational network often provides more long-term stability than the technical skill alone.



80% of participants built meaningful peer relationships that directly reduced isolation

4. The Success of High-Dignity Reception Models

The project demonstrated that a high-quality “Welcome” phase is a functional stabilizer. With 93% of beneficiaries reporting they were treated with profound dignity, the technical lesson is that professionalized reception services reduce the cognitive load on refugees. When orientation is clear and respectful from Day 1, individuals are better equipped to navigate legal systems and engage with long-term integration programs. This “Dignity-First” model proved to be a highly effective non-clinical mental health intervention that set the stage for all subsequent successes.

5. The Integration of Education and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Technically, we learned that academic “Promotion” cannot be separated from emotional well-being. The evaluation confirmed that educational interventions reached their peak effectiveness—evidenced by 98% of parents reporting academic improvements—only when paired with psychosocial support. In a crisis context, a child’s ability to learn is entirely dependent on their feeling of safety. The successful implementation of learning centers with integrated mediators proves that multidisciplinary teams are essential for overcoming language barriers and trauma-related learning gaps.

6. The Structural Challenge of Social Bridging

The evaluation acknowledges that while bonding within the refugee community is a natural and strong outcome, bridging with the host community remains a significant technical and social challenge. In a high-pressure emergency context, it is difficult to move beyond creating safe havens for the displaced.



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Ukrainian refugee

“ This course helped me very much... I understood that I am not on the run... I need to live here. It helped to believe in yourself, that life is not over. I want to try something new for myself. My dream to be a web designer”.



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© JRS Hungary

Ukrainian student of FHC

“ Before, it was really stressful. Every visit, every document, every conversation was stressful, because you don’t understand, and you are afraid to make a mistake. Now it is much more comfortable, and I don’t feel that stress inside anymore”.

Ukrainian refugee

“ From the first moment, the attitude was warm and caring. They knew our names, they remembered us, they asked how we were doing. Even when they could not help, they listened and treated us with respect. It felt safe, human, like people who genuinely care, like a family”.

While the centers successfully built internal trust, moving activities into public spaces to foster interaction with local citizens requires a more complex, long-term strategy. This lesson highlights that bridging is not an automatic by-product of assistance but requires dedicated resources to overcome the structural and psychological barriers between host and refugee populations.

7. Predictability as a Technical Protective Factor

In the distribution of cash, vouchers, or housing support, we found that the predictability of the aid was often more impactful than the total amount given. When support was guaranteed for a set duration, families were able to avoid harmful coping strategies—such as debt or food reduction—and begin planning for the future. This teaches us that implementation should focus on long-term reliability, as a stable and predictable support cycle provides the psychological safety necessary for a family to regain their autonomy.

8. Strategic Use of Pre-existing Local Infrastructure

A vital implementation lesson was the technical advantage of utilizing embedded infrastructure—such as pre-existing Jesuit houses, community centers, and parish networks. Because these spaces already possessed legal standing and local credibility, they could be converted into accommodation and service hubs almost instantly. This bypassed the typical months-long delays associated with setting up new humanitarian facilities. The lesson for future crises is that a distributed model of assistance, anchored in existing community assets, allows for a faster and more culturally integrated response than building isolated camps or centers.

9. The Necessity of Dual-Pathway Support (Stay vs. Return)

Technically, the project had to learn how to manage the liminality of refugees who are caught between staying in a host country and intending to return to Ukraine. The implementation proved that a successful model must support both: investing in local integration (schools, language, jobs) while simultaneously providing the information and psychosocial support needed for those considering a return. Balancing these dual pathways requires a flexible programmatic design

that respects the beneficiary's evolving life project without forcing a premature choice between inclusion or repatriation.

10. Vulnerability-Based Targeting for Greater Equity

Finally, we learned that moving toward a vulnerability-based approach—rather than one based strictly on legal status or nationality—is both more ethical and technically effective. By focusing resources on those with the greatest need (such as those with disabilities or single-parent households), the project was able to provide a more equitable safety net. This shift ensures that the Jesuit mission of serving the most marginalized is maintained, allowing for a more inclusive response that leaves no one behind during a complex regional crisis.



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By focusing resources on those with the greatest need, the project was able to provide a more equitable safety net

2. LESSONS FROM INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION AND TRANSFORMATION

* **THE COORDINATION OF THE ONE PROPOSAL REPRESENTS A MILESTONE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE JESUIT ECOSYSTEM'S HUMANITARIAN CAPACITY. THIS EXPERIENCE, DRIVEN BY THE SYNERGY BETWEEN THE XAVIER NETWORK AND JRS EUROPE, DEMONSTRATES HOW A DECENTRALIZED NETWORK OF NETWORKS CAN TRANSFORM INTO A UNIFIED FORCE. BELOW ARE TEN PEDAGOGICAL LESSONS THAT REFLECT HOW THIS COLLABORATION WAS ACHIEVED AND HOW IT SHOULD SHAPE OUR FUTURE RESPONSES TO GLOBAL EMERGENCIES.**

1. The “Architecture of Rhythm”: Rapid Institutionalization

A primary takeaway is that early transition from spontaneous solidarity to formal structure is what prevents emergency chaos. The XN and JRS played a pivotal role here, moving quickly to help establish a multi-level governance architecture that was organised and involved all relevant actors. In future crises, this architecture of rhythm should be triggered immediately, as it provides the predictability and shared oversight necessary to align diverse actors under a single strategic objective, avoiding duplications and dispersion of aid.

2. Coordinated Differentiation: Clarity over Competition

Coordination transformed when it moved from overlapping mandates to functional role clarity. By allowing JRS Europe and the Country Offices to lead on frontline operations, and Xavier Network, the



© JRS Poland

Xavier Network representative

“The One Proposal is the best example of the last few years on how we are learning to work better together. In the face of such a strong challenge (Ukraine invasion), we have been able to look for an open, transparent collaboration”.



JRS Europe staff

“ **The leadership team meetings... fostered the sense of belonging among country offices representatives. They started to know one another... to trust one another. It became normal for colleagues to simply pick up the phone and call each other directly, this happened many times”.**

International Office and JRS USA to set technical standards and drive global fundraising and national advocacy, the system reduced institutional rivalry. This teaches us that future responses should be designed around the comparative advantage of each partner, ensuring that specialized roles reinforce rather than compete with one another.

3. Relational Capital as a Functional Asset

A transformative lesson from this coordination is the shift away from a traditional donor-implementer hierarchy toward a true partnership model. The Xavier Network and JRS offices did not operate through a lens of compliance and reporting alone; instead, they built a relational infrastructure where solutions to complex problems were sought jointly. This high level of mutual trust allowed partners to bring dilemmas—such as sustainability gaps or operational failures—to the table openly, knowing that they would be solved together. In future emergencies, we must prioritize this partnership-first approach, where the success of the Mission is a shared responsibility rather than a contractual obligation.

4. Symbolic Unity through Shared Branding

The One Proposal brand, co-developed by JRS and XN, acted as a unifying governance device that transcended mere communication. It projected a professional, large-scale narrative to global donors while respecting the subsidiarity of local offices. Over time, this evolved into a recognized Jesuit brand, signaling a shift in how the Society of Jesus presents its social mission. By moving beyond individual organizational logos to a collective identity, the network achieved the psychological and political glue needed to keep a decentralized network aligned. This proves that a unified brand can amplify our global voice without erasing the specific local identity of national offices, creating a powerful precedent for future Jesuit collective action.

5. Strategic Convergence via Joint Analysis

The joint needs assessment conducted in March 2022 by JRS and XN was a turning point. By converging around the four verbs framework, the network ensured that offices with varying capacities

operated with a single strategic identity. This teaches us that early, collaborative analysis is a prerequisite for coherent implementation; it ensures that everyone is solving the same problem from the same conceptual framework. This experience proves that narrow and intentional collaboration among partners is crucial; without this early, joint analysis, resources risk being misallocated and messaging becomes fragmented. It teaches us that collaborative analysis is a prerequisite for coherent implementation.

6. The Vitality of Pre-Established Emergency Protocols

The Xavier Network's emergency protocol proved to be an indispensable asset, providing a pre-validated playbook for the first 30 days of the crisis. Having clear, pre-negotiated protocols for decision-making and participation meant that the consortium did not have to improvise its governance under fire.

This lesson transforms our future readiness: we must ensure that all relevant actors are aware of these XN protocols long before a crisis hits, as they serve as the operational backbone that prevents fragmentation during the critical first weeks of the response.

7. The power of alignment

The visible alignment of the Jesuit General Curia, Provinces and actors with JRS and XN provided the moral authority necessary to unlock structural bottlenecks. This experience proves that when all levels of the hierarchy are involved and engaged the path to implementation is dramatically simplified. Internal endorsement acts as a strategic catalyst to resolve hesitations and accelerate the formalization of partnerships. While our networks are complex, striving for institutional alignment is a necessity to ensure that internal friction never slows the delivery of life-saving aid.

The One Proposal proves that institutional alignment and strategic unity strengthen our collective capacity to respond to crises with greater speed, professional quality, and regional coherence, ensuring that aid reaches the most vulnerable in a timely and dignified manner. Moreover, having one recognised interlocutor with technical and political capacity reduced fragmentation, simplified communication channels and offered a clear reference point for country offices and external partners.



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Xavier Network representative

“The emergency protocol is key during the first month to have the first steps clear. It avoids tensions misunderstandings, equivocal positionings, improvisation”.

Curia representative

“After the emergency we saw in the provinces a good will, there was an energy, an enthusiasm to respond to the crisis, to support the refugees. But in the first weeks the answers were spontaneous, not coordinated. We asked the Father General for us [the Curia] to be more involved in the coordinated global response”.

Ukrainian refugee

“This (JRS) is one of the places where you can come and feel at home. You can talk, help, bring things back, and be part of something”.



Ukrainian Jesuit Informant

“ We did not wait for any mandate. It was evident that we should help our people. At the province level we agreed to support with the possible means. It was not structured. It was a very confusing time, because we didn't know if we would survive next month”.

8. Capacity Building as a Foundation, Not a Side-Project

The experience contributed to the transformation of JRS country offices: from small-scale initiatives into mature humanitarian actors through intentional capacity building. This lesson teaches us that coordination must prioritize institutional growth from the outset. We should not just fund activities; we must also fund the systems—SOPs, HR protocols, and M&E frameworks—that allow local offices to scale safely, as they contribute to smooth exit strategies and the sustainability of the response.

9. Financial Subsidiarity and the Hybrid Fundraising Model

The coordination successfully balanced centralized fund management with national fundraising mandates. Financial coordination represents one of the most tangible improvements compared to previous emergencies. The centralisation of funds into a common account, the consolidation of donor information, and shared reporting tools significantly enhanced transparency and accountability. By allowing XN and JRS to maintain their own donor links while contributing to a common narrative, the project avoided the territorial tensions typical of multi-country responses. Future coordination should replicate this hybrid model, which protects institutional and local needs while achieving the scale of a global appeal through a clear, transparent and unified response.

10. Universal Presence and Local Proximity: The Ignatian Body in Motion

A profound lesson of the One Proposal is the necessity of fully leveraging the unique potential of the Society of Jesus—a body that is, by its very nature, both universal and deeply local. The Society is close to the people, existing in the heart of communities long before a crisis begins and remaining long after the cameras leave. This proximity is not merely a geographic advantage; it is part of our charism—a commitment to accompaniment that places us at the frontiers of human suffering. We must strive for a seamless and narrow articulation between our international structures and the local Jesuit works.



WE HAVE LEARNED THAT OUR GREATEST IMPACT OCCURS WHEN WE BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN OUR GLOBAL RESOURCES AND OUR LOCAL PRESENCE, ENSURING THAT THE UNIVERSAL BODY OF THE SOCIETY IS EFFECTIVELY COORDINATED.

Evaluation methodology

The final external evaluation of the **One Proposal** was conducted through a mixed-methods design; qualitative inquiry constituted the backbone of the assessment and systematically complemented by primary and secondary quantitative data, to ensure triangulation and analytical robustness which strengthened the credibility and internal validity of the findings despite the limitations.

The evaluation combined



Documentary analysis, Theory of Change validation

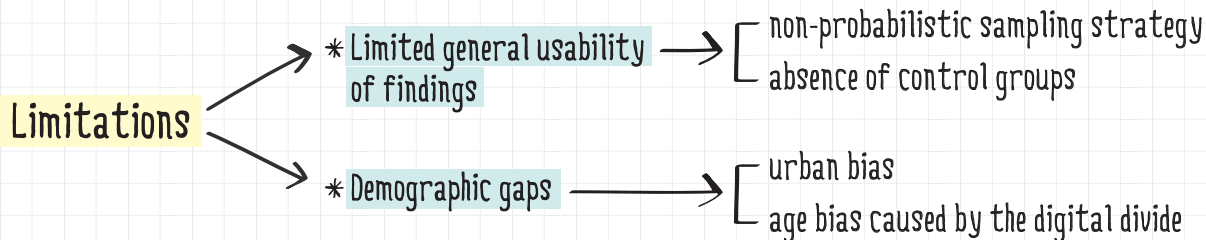
Primary data collection in Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary

Transversal approaches

- * Theory of Change-Based
- * Stakeholder-Oriented
- * Utilization-Focused
- * Gender and Intersectional Perspective
- * Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)

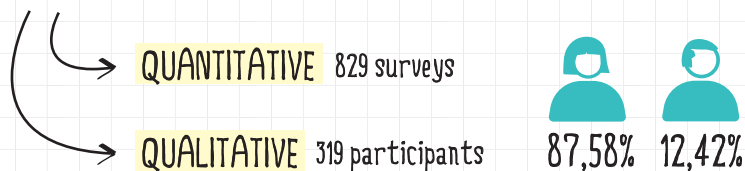
- ✓ focus groups with **227** beneficiaries
- ✓ **27** impact stories of beneficiaries
- ✓ **77** key interviews with Xavier Network and JRS members, educational staff and other stakeholders
- ✓ **820** surveys

⇒ In total **1,151** individuals participated



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DATA COLLECTION & PARTICIPATION



“ **The Xavier Network (XN)**, constituted as a foundation in 2004, is an international mission and development partnership where 14 Jesuit Organizations worldwide work in faith to promote social justice and bring transformation.

We are the first such network in the Jesuit world, set up with the simple principle that by joining together we can achieve more. Our 14 members are the mission offices and NGOs of various Jesuit Provinces across Europe, North America and Australia. Members are present in over 87 countries, carrying out development and humanitarian action projects in close cooperation with local partners.

“ **The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)**, founded in November 1980 by Pedro Arrupe SJ, is a Jesuit organization dedicated to responding to the needs of refugees and forcibly displaced persons.

At the heart of its mission is a sustained commitment to accompany people throughout their journey of displacement. While its work includes education, livelihoods, reconciliation, and emergency assistance, it is grounded in a commitment to uphold the dignity of every person. Established as a global humanitarian mission and present in more than 50 countries across Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America, JRS is committed to accompanying

*Booklets Xavier Network Collection

N° 1. *Community resilience in emergencies. Lessons learned from our experience in the Philippines. 2024.*

N° 2. *From relief to resilience. Rebuilding through education in Nepal. 2025.*



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