Housing and Employment: Interconnected Challenges for Ukrainian Refugees in Hungary

Key Findings and Policy Implications from the SMART UA Research

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Housing

Research approach & scope



How did we approach housing research in Hungary?

- **Mixed-method research**
- **Mapping** of housing actors (NGOs, churches, municipalities); N=21
- **Focus group** with service providers
- **Collection of good practices** (stakeholder interviews)
- **Online survey** among refugees – needs assessment; N=167
- **Validation** workshop

Research focus

- Housing barriers
- Cooperation between actors
- Housing support needs
- Sustainable support models
- Policy recommendations

> Combining refugee experiences with organisational perspectives provided a **comprehensive picture of housing integration.**

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Structural barriers

Challenge

Affordable housing is difficult to access.

Evidence

Our research identified several interconnected barriers:

High rental prices	93% of respondents
Shortage of affordable housing	70% of respondents
Discrimination	49% of respondents
Project-based support	~100% of civil support is project-based
Limited public housing options	Only a few hundred places available
Language barriers	49% of respondents
Restrictive eligibility rules	Narrowed since 2024

These barriers are interconnected and reinforce each other.



These barriers are interconnected and reinforce each other – addressing one in isolation is not enough.

Practical implication

Housing affordability is primarily a **structural challenge** rather than an individual one.



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What enables housing stability?

Challenge
Financial support alone is insufficient.

Evidence
Both refugees and organisations highlighted that successful housing depends on:

- Personalised social work
- Mentoring
- Landlord mediation
- Legal and administrative support
- Integrated services

The majority of refugees (over 90%) identify financial support as a key need, but social support is critical for long-term housing stability.



Both refugees and organisations emphasised that personal support and coordination make the difference between temporary solutions and stable homes.

Practical implication

Housing support should combine financial assistance with integrated social support.

Financial assistance + Integrated social support → Stable housing

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Key takeaways

What stood out in Hungary?

Civil organisations drive innovation

Independent housing models are mainly developed by NGOs and faith-based organisations.

Public support remains limited

State support is still centred on collective accommodation rather than independent housing.

Housing and employment are interconnected

Stable housing supports labour market integration, while employment helps sustain housing.

Project funding limits sustainability

Effective models exist but remain dependent on short-term funding.

Policy implications

Broaden public housing support

Extend support beyond collective accommodation.

Strengthen public–civil partnerships

Scale up successful NGO-led housing models.

Support integrated services

Combine housing assistance with employment and social support.

Effective housing support requires **flexible partnerships, integrated services** and **stronger public commitment.**

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Labour market

Research approach & scope

How did we approach labour market research in Hungary?

- **Mixed-method research**
- **Mapping of labour market actors** (NGOs, employers, municipalities, employment services); N=30
- **Focus group** with service providers
- **Collection of good practices** (stakeholder interviews)
- **Online survey** among refugees – needs assessment; N=156
- **Validation workshop**

Research focus

- Labour market barriers
- Cooperation between actors
- Employment support needs
- Sustainable support models
- Policy recommendations



> Combining refugee and organisational perspectives helped identify the main **barriers** and **enabling factors** of labour market integration.

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Structural barriers

Main structural barriers

Language barriers	59%
Low wages / poor working conditions	56%
Limited job-search support	53%
Qualifications not recognised	44%
Health problems	42%
Transport & childcare	41% / 34%



Practical implication

Labour market integration is primarily a **structural challenge** that requires systemic and coordinated responses.

Barriers are interconnected → Reinforce each other → Limit long-term job stability

> These barriers are interconnected and reinforce each other – **addressing one in isolation is not enough.**

Base: N=156 – labour market survey (November–December 2025)

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What enables access to labour market?

Key enablers

- Language courses
- Job search assistance
- Recognition of qualifications
- Training programmes
- Career guidance
- Support with transport and childcare
- Childcare provision

Over **80%** of respondents identified **language courses** and **job search assistance** as top enablers.





Practical implication

Access to the labour market is strengthened when **practical assistance** is combined with **personalised support** and strong cooperation.

Practical assistance + Personalised support → Access to employment

> Both refugees and organisations agree: the strongest enablers of access to the labour market are **language courses** and **job search assistance**.

Base: N=156 – labour market survey (November–December 2025)

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Key takeaways

What stood out in Hungary?

- **Civil organisations fill systemic gaps**
  Employment support beyond basic job placement is mainly provided by NGOs.
- **Employment requires integrated support**
  Successful labour market integration depends on language, social support and practical services together.
- **Employment and housing are interconnected**
  Stable employment is a prerequisite for stable housing.
- **Project funding limits long-term impact**
  Effective employment models exist but remain dependent on temporary funding.

Policy implications

- **Invest in integrated employment support**
  Prioritise language learning, job search assistance and recognition of qualifications.
- **Strengthen public–civil partnerships**
  Scale up successful NGO-led employment support models.
- **Provide sustainable funding**
  Enable long-term employment services beyond project cycles.

Effective labour market integration requires **integrated support**, **sustainable funding** and **stronger public commitment.**

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