RefAid BaltHUB

Digital and Peer-Led Support for the Integration and Reintegration of Ukrainian Refugees in the Baltic States

Implementation period: 1 December 2025 – 30 July 2027
Region: Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia (with online outreach beyond)
Partners: Estonian Network of People Living with HIV (EHPV), Association "Demetra" (Lithuania), Association "AGIHAS" (Latvia).
Donor: State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Swiss Confederation under Rapid Response Fund of the Swiss Contribution (#SwissEuropeContribution)

Project Overview
RefAid BaltHUB is a regional initiative implemented in Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia to strengthen inclusive refugee support systems and migration management in response to the ongoing displacement caused by the war in Ukraine.

The project focuses on Ukrainian refugees residing in the Baltic States, with particular attention to vulnerable groups, particularly people living with HIV (PLHIV), LGBTQ+ individuals, women with children, and other vulnerable communities who may face additional barriers in accessing services.

Building on the established **BaltHUB** regional cooperation framework, the project combines digital tools, peer-led community support, reintegration assistance, and structured cooperation with public institutions to improve both immediate support and long-term system capacity.

Overall Objective: To strengthen migration management and inclusive refugee support services for vulnerable Ukrainian refugees in the Baltic States.

Specific Objectives
1. **Improve access to essential services**
   Ensure safe, stigma-free and multilingual access to information, referrals, and psychosocial support for vulnerable Ukrainian refugees.
2. **Support voluntary return and reintegration**
   Facilitate dignified, voluntary return to Ukraine for those who choose it, through structured counselling and reintegration assistance.
3. **Enhance capacity and coordination**
   Strengthen the ability of service providers and partners to deliver inclusive, HIV-sensitive, and well-coordinated support across the three Baltic countries.

Expected Contribution
RefAid BaltHUB will contribute to improved access to multilingual and stigma-free services, strengthened cooperation between civil society and public authorities, more structured voluntary return pathways, and enhanced capacity of service providers to respond to the needs of vulnerable Ukrainian refugee populations in host countries.

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Key Areas of Intervention

1. Digital Information and Referral Support

The project will develop and operate a multilingual digital platform, including an AI-supported chatbot, designed to provide reliable, up-to-date information on: Legal status and rights; Access to health and social services; Integration opportunities; Available referral pathways in each country.

The digital tool will serve as a low-threshold entry point for refugees seeking assistance and will complement existing national systems by improving accessibility and clarity of information.

2. Peer-Led Community Support

In each country, trained peer counsellors will provide direct, community-based support to Ukrainian refugees. This includes: Individual counselling and psychosocial support; Guidance on navigating national systems; HIV care and prevention-related counselling and referrals; Referral to health, legal, and social services; Facilitation of support groups and safe community spaces.

The peer-led approach ensures trust, cultural sensitivity, and responsiveness to the specific needs of key populations who may otherwise face stigma or reluctance in accessing mainstream services.

3. Voluntary Return and Reintegration Assistance

For refugees who express the wish to return to Ukraine, the project will provide structured, voluntary and individualized support. This includes: Return counselling and informed decision-making support; Assistance with travel logistics and documentation; Temporary accommodation where necessary; Basic reintegration support and follow-up.

All activities are guided by principles of voluntariness, safety, dignity, and coordination with relevant stakeholders and partners.

4. Capacity Building and System Strengthening

To ensure sustainability and systemic impact, the RefAid BaltHUB project will invest in strengthening local capacities through:

- Training workshops for service providers and frontline professionals
- Awareness-raising and stigma-reduction initiatives
- Development of practical guidance materials for inclusive service provision
- Promotion of HIV-sensitive and trauma-informed approaches

These efforts aim to enhance institutional responsiveness to the needs of vulnerable refugee populations.

5. Coordination, Dialogue and Policy Engagement

RefAid BaltHUB will facilitate structured cooperation among civil society organizations, municipalities, national authorities, Ukrainian CSOs and relevant international actors.

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Key actions include:
- Establishment or strengthening of national coordination platforms
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue and roundtables
- Development of policy briefs based on implementation experience
- Cross-country knowledge exchange and study visits

This component aims to improve referral systems, reduce fragmentation, and contribute to evidence-informed policy discussions at national and regional levels.

Implementing Partners

Lead implementer (Estonia): Estonian Network of People Living with HIV (**EHPV**) – overall coordination and regional oversight. https://ehpv.ee

Lithuania: Association "**Demetra**" – national implementation and stakeholder engagement. https://www.demetra.lt

Latvia: Association "**AGIHAS**" – national implementation and coordination with local services. https://agihas.lv

Contacts

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