

Solidarity with the displaced people from Ukraine: Attitudes and practices examined through a population survey

Summary of the research report

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The research examines voluntary (and to a lesser extent paid) solidarity practices among the adult population in Hungary in support of displaced people from Ukraine. It explores solidarity acts and attitudes, and the broader understandings of the plight of those displaced by the war of Russia against Ukraine. Findings are based on a quantitative survey of a sample of 1000 people representative of the population in Hungary by gender, age, settlement type, region, and education level. The data collection was carried out by Medián Market Research in June 2022.

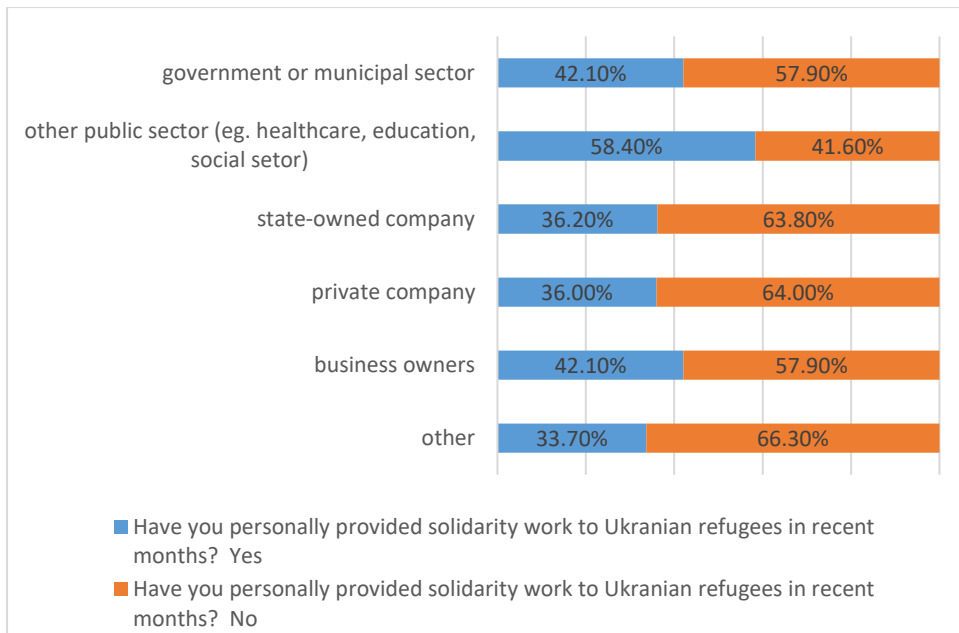
Solidarity acts

Results indicate that at the time of the survey, **approximately 40% of the population was involved in solidarity acts** (36%-44%, considering the margins of error). Involvement was mostly through material or monetary donations (23%-23%). Voluntary work was carried out by 7% of the adult population, with less than 5% of respondents involved in the provision of accommodation, job search and other forms of support. At the time of the survey, in June 2022, only 4% of respondents reported doing some or all of the support as part of they paid work.

More than half of those helping, (54%) got involved through an organisation or institution. Within those helping in an organisational framework, 41% indicated that they were involved in providing support through an aid organisation. **Municipal** and **governmental institutions** (including schools, social and other institutions) mobilised 24% of the helpers tied to some organizations. Many solidarians were associated with **religious communities** and church institutions (17.5%), various market actors, mainly banks, supermarket chains (9%) and civil society organisations (CSOs) (8%).

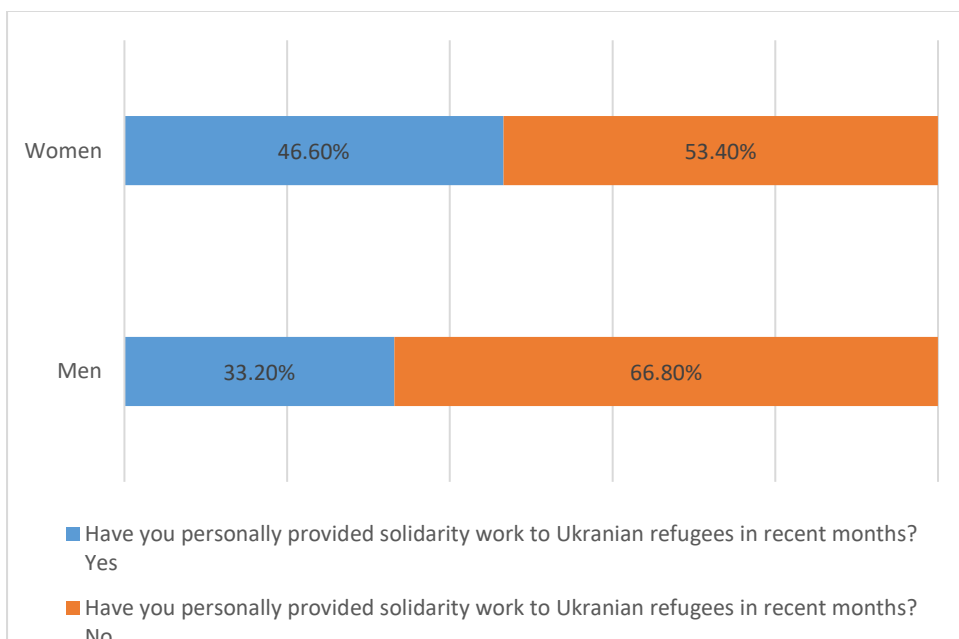
Our survey confirms that supporting the refugees is a huge burden on the already overstretched **care sector**, extensively discussed in the media and revealed by practice. The proportion of helpers is by far the highest (58%) among the health, education, and social service employees in the public sector. In addition, there is a slight overrepresentation of the helpers in governmental and municipal sectors and among business owners, with 42% in both groups, compared to the sample average of 40%.

Figure 1: Distribution of solidarity acts according to the sector of the respondents' occupation



The figure below highlights a significant gender imbalance in solidarity acts. **Roughly one and a half times as many women** as men were involved in providing support.

Figure 2: Distribution of solidarity acts according to the respondents' sex



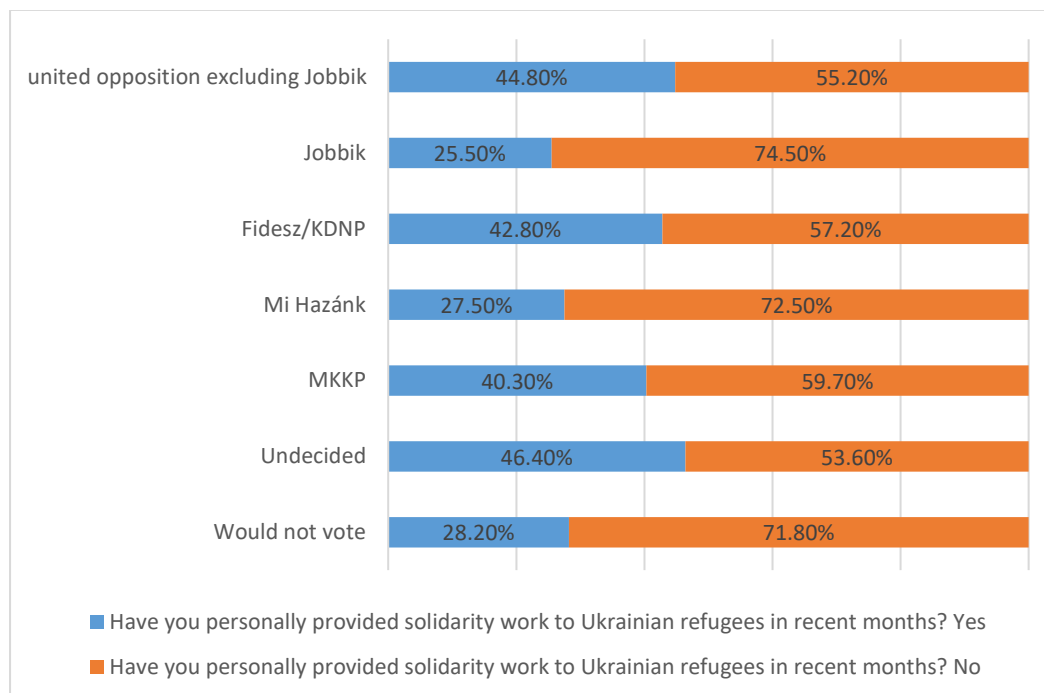
Solidarity acts were strongly **correlated with the education level of respondents**. 46% of those with a high school diploma and 53% of those with a university degree provided support. This proportion was 24% for those who had completed vocational training and 31% for those who had completed up to 8 years of primary school education.

Meanwhile, **no difference in participation was found along financial background**. Respondents with lower socioeconomic backgrounds participated at similar rates to those

with higher socioeconomic backgrounds. One possible explanation for this could be the low entry threshold for volunteering. Donation points, volunteer initiatives by various segments of Hungarian society, and the diverse channels of micro-donations have enabled even the least well-off to get involved.

Involvement in solidarity acts is **correlated with party preference** but does not reflect the dichotomous pattern of governing party-opposition. Opposition voters excluding Jobbik, the supporters of the Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party (Magyar Kétfarkú Kutypárt, MKKP) and Fidesz/KDNP were more active than average, whereas supporters of Jobbik and Mi Hazánk were significantly less involved than average.

Figure 3: Distribution of solidarity acts by party preference



People’s CSO involvement also correlated with their solidarity acts. Those with a previous CSO connection or those who were actively involved in helping refugees in 2015 were more likely to help. There is also a higher-than-average level of support among religious respondents associated to a church.

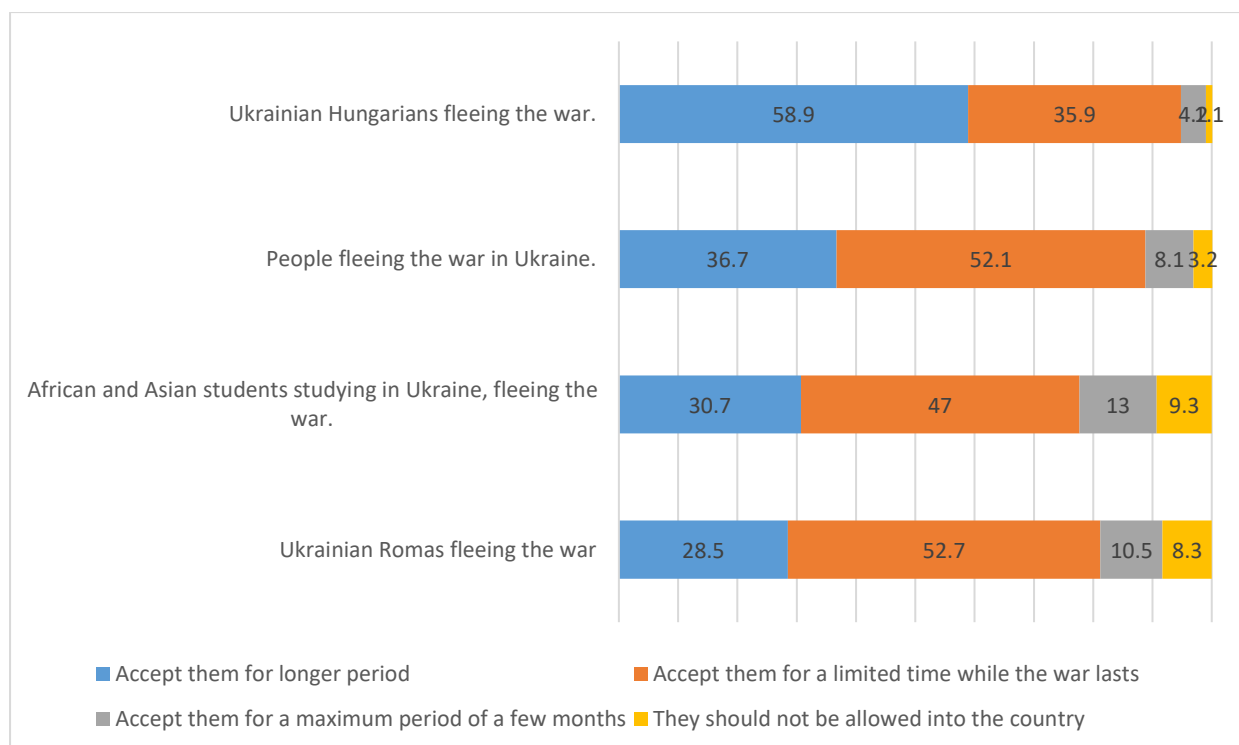
The willingness of Hungarians to accept refugees, the length of admission and the “deserving” refugees

In addition to the solidarity acts, we also examined the **general willingness to help**, and more specifically the **openness to accept refugees to Hungary in principle**. **69% of our respondents, stated that they would take in anyone** fleeing Ukraine, **regardless of their ethnic background**, for at least the duration of the war. The remaining 31% would either take in refugees for a shorter term or selectively, i.e., only certain groups of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.

Whether we asked about displaced people fleeing the war in Ukraine in general, or more specifically about certain groups such as Ukrainian Roma, Ukrainian Hungarians (from Transcarpathia), or African or Asian students fleeing Ukraine, at least three quarters of respondents would welcome these groups of refugees for the duration of the war or even longer.

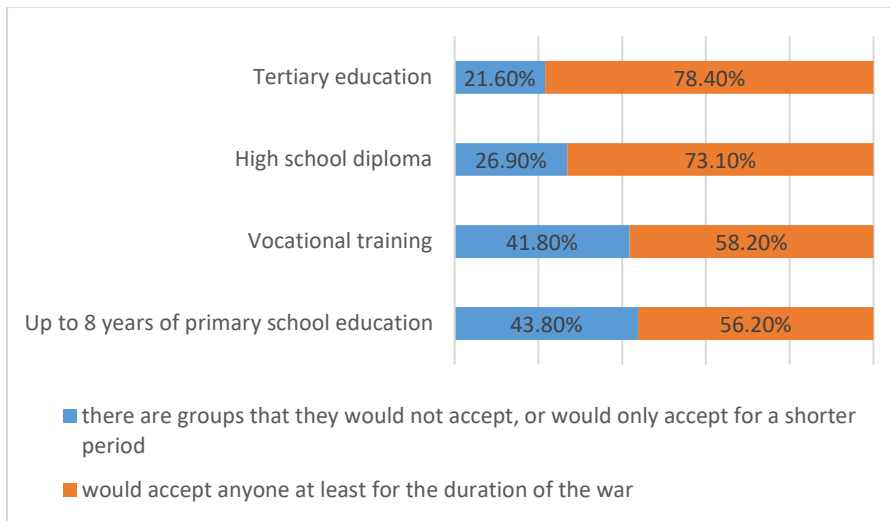
Despite this consensus, there are also striking differences in the way each group is perceived. Ukrainian Hungarians are the only group that the majority of respondents (59%) would admit beyond the war. In the case of the Ukrainian refugees in general, Ukrainian Roma and those from African and Asian countries, the proportion is around 30-40%. 8%-9% of respondents would not admit Ukrainian Roma fleeing the war and those from African and Asian countries at all.

Figure 4: Different opinions on the acceptance of refugees from Ukraine



Differences in educational attainment influence not only participation in different forms of solidarity, but also the overall willingness to accept refugees. Respondents **with a high school diploma or tertiary education are more welcoming** and less selective. This suggests that solidarity attitudes and different forms of solidarity acts heavily rely on education, on the cultural capital acquired through schooling or higher education qualifications, through which young people learn and adopt specific ideas, feelings and practices of solidarity, empathy, and responsibility.

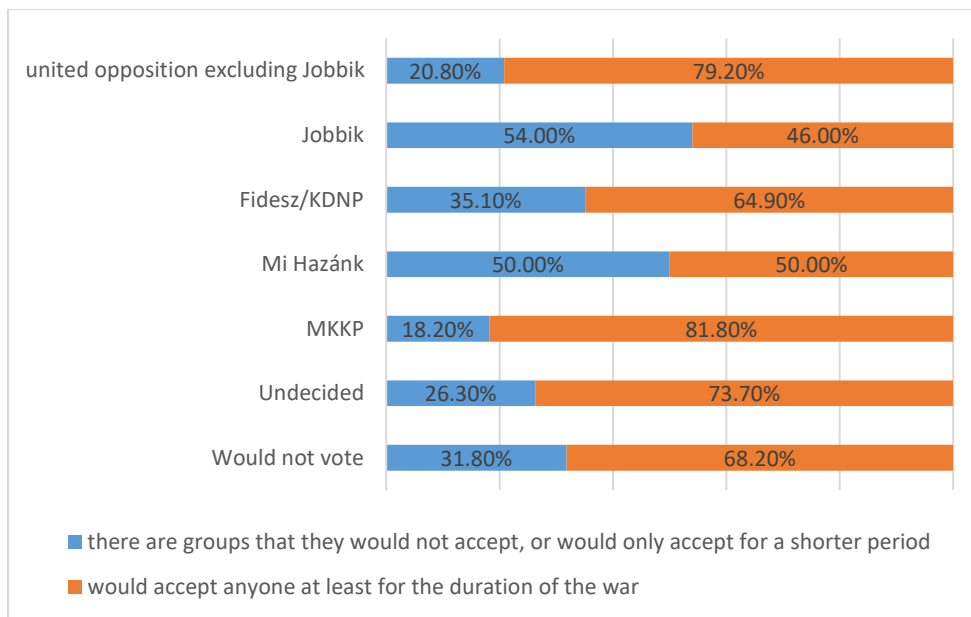
Figure 5: Willingness to accept refugees according to educational attainment



While differences in socio-economic background were not reflected in involvement in solidarity acts, they were in the overall willingness to accept refugees. **Among respondents with no savings, the percentage of those who would accept all groups of people fleeing the war was much lower than average (58%),** while among those with more than a year of savings, it was slightly lower than average (68%). Those in the middle categories, meaning they had at least a month of savings but less than a year, had a higher-than-average percentage of accepting refugees unconditionally.

Regarding differences according to party preferences, supporters of the opposition without Jobbik and of the Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party (MKKP) are much more accepting than average (79% and 82% accepts displaced people independently of their ethnic origin). Fidesz/KDNP supporters are slightly less accepting than average (65%), while the willingness to accept refugees in a non-selective way is significantly lower than average among supporters of Jobbik and of the party Mi Hazánk (46% and 50%, respectively).

Figure 6: Willingness to accept refugees according to party preference



While patterns of acceptance differed both by **civic participation** before the Ukrainian war and by **refugee support in 2015**, it is interesting to note that no two-dimensional patterns of acceptance were found along religiousness. The proportion of those who accept refugees was very similar among the non-religious, those who are religious in their own way, and those who act based on a religious faith associated to a church.

The degree of the acceptance of refugees differs according to the respondents' views on the war, more closely the opinion on whose responsibility the breakout of the open war had been. The findings show that **those who do not hold Vladimir Putin responsible**, but hold Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian government, or the US and NATO largely responsible have significantly lower rates of accepting all groups of refugees compared to the overall sample.

Perceptions of the displaced people and frameworks of interpretation: humanitarianism, economic benefit, threat, political criticism

Although hundreds of thousands of people were involved in helping refugees fleeing the wars in the Middle East in 2015 (the recorded turnout was 3%), the current mobilisation is much larger in magnitude. This is influenced by **a widely held majority opinion, representing 70% of the population**, that Hungary has a duty to help refugees from Ukraine as long as the war lasts.

However, humanitarianism is only one set of the concepts and meanings assigned to the displaced people from Ukraine. Seeing refugees as assets to the **labour market** has also become significant. Parallel to this, the arrival of refugees is seen as a threat to job availability for Hungarian people, to the provision of care for "our own" people in need, or to political relations with Russia.

This perception of threat is more strongly associated with attitudes, more specifically with a general willingness to accept refugees, and less so with active participation in providing help. This may be because solidarity work is not necessarily driven by a conscious intention to help, but may be triggered involuntarily by other factors, such as personal experience of meeting refugees, or the norm of helping..

The **xenophobic, anti-refugee images** that appear in everyday interpretations may be partly the remnants of earlier anti-refugee discourses. The current political and media coverages **hardly address** the topic of threats of accepting refugees from Ukraine, instead these coverages favour humanitarian solidarity and economic benefit centred interpretations. At the same time, the perception of threat and a weaker willingness to accept refugees are both linked to embracing the narratives and perspectives of the Russian government on the war, responsabilising the Ukrainian government and Western political actors for the breakout of the war. The current political messages of the Hungarian government, blaming the Ukrainian government and Western political actors thus may directly and negatively affect the general willingness to accept refugees.

All of this reveals an ambivalent picture. On the one hand, it highlights the **exceptional vibrancy and mobilising power of civic solidarity in Hungary** in the context of open warfare in the neighbourhood. On the other hand, the results also shed light on the **limits and fragilities of civic solidarity**, including the **limitations of personal resources** (e.g., the lack of regularity of helping) and the **inequalities in the distribution of burdens** (the differences in the amount of paid and unpaid participation, or the overburdening of the various caring sectors). Finally, the research has highlighted an additional weakness of civil solidarity: past and present political discourses have a significant impact on the intensity of solidarity at the intersections of relations of power.

The research leaves several questions unanswered. It analyses the perceptions of the Hungarian population, while the perspectives and experiences of the recipients of civic solidarity are not examined. Furthermore, this research is only of limited use in examining the changes of solidarity attitudes and practices over time. The results reflect the situation in June 2022. Since then both the war situation and the broader socio-political context have been constantly changing, which has certainly reshaped solidarity towards the displaced people from Ukraine. Future research should provide insights in the experiences of refugees, their relationships with the active solidarians, and changes in solidarity practices over time.