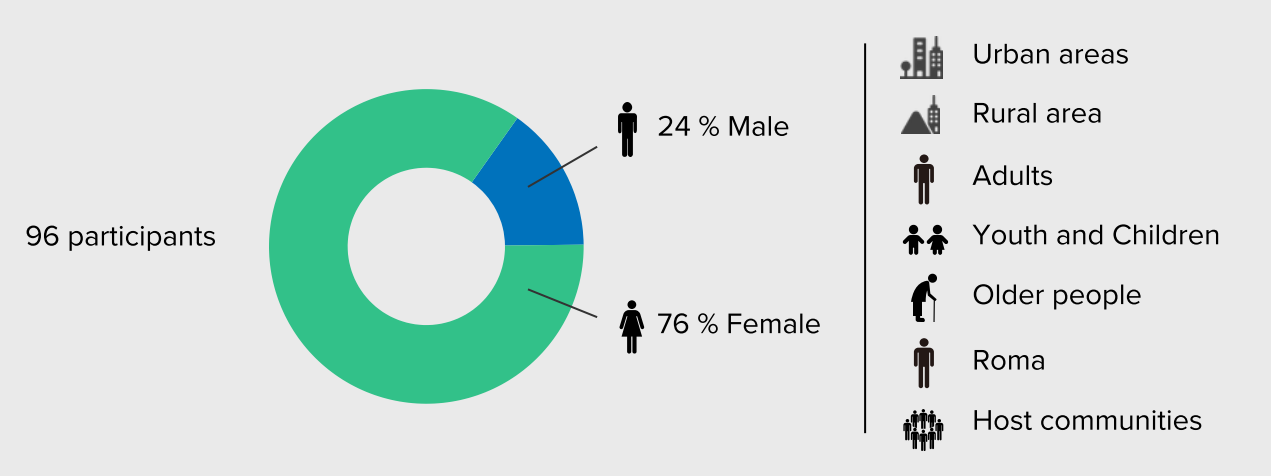
PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT 2025

Factsheet Quarter 4 - MOLDOVA

Background and methodology

In 2025, the Participatory Assessment transitioned from a periodic to an ongoing exercise, conducted in collaboration with UNHCR partners and members of the Accountability to Affected Populations Task Force. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with forcibly displaced persons of diverse gender, age, disability and other backgrounds are being held regularly throughout the country, including on the left bank of the Dniester River. To ensure a timely and data-driven response to the needs and challenges of refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons, quarterly factsheets and an interactive dashboard have been developed and are continuously updated[1].



Key Finding

In Q4 2025, refugees in Moldova continued to face persistent challenges related to housing, healthcare, education, legal status and livelihoods and employment. High rental prices and limited availability of affordable housing remained key barriers to stability, particularly for larger households and low-income families. Access to stable employment remained constrained by legal and administrative limitations, language barriers, and discrimination, leaving many households dependent on humanitarian assistance.

While primary healthcare was generally accessible and perceived as non-discriminatory, refugees reported significant difficulties in accessing specialized and high-cost medical services, including long waiting times and uneven availability of services across the country.

1 Microsoft Power BI – Q4 Findings.

Many participants expressed uncertainty regarding their legal status and concerns about the future of Temporary Protection in 2026[2], citing a lack of clear and consistent information.

Roma refugees continued to report discrimination in housing and access to services, while older persons highlighted social isolation and limited access to age-appropriate community support. Host community members generally welcomed refugees, including those from Gaza, and engaged in local initiatives that fostered interaction and mutual support. At the same time, they faced challenges such as limited housing availability, high rental costs, and the financial burden of communal services. Despite these challenges, refugees consistently reported feeling safe in Moldova, and community-based initiatives, including community centres and joint activities, showed continued potential for strengthening social cohesion and peaceful coexistence with host communities.

Education

Education is generally accessible for refugee children in Moldova, including the Transnistria region, with most attending school or kindergarten without discrimination. Main challenges include limited language skills and adapting to the local education system. Participation in extracurricular activities remains low due to lack of information, financial constraints, and limited local resources. Majority of parents report positive interactions with teachers, and cultural or religious factors have not posed barriers to education.

A temporary protection beneficiary said: **“We are happy that our children has easily integrated into the educational system, there aren't any problems with that. However, living here is expensive.”**

Livelihoods and Employment

Employment opportunities remain limited and unstable. Many refugees work informally or below their qualifications, while access to formal jobs is complicated due to bureaucracy, language barriers, and employers’ reluctance to hire foreigners. Many cannot work in their professional fields due to nationality or discrimination. Roma participants report stigma and lack of skills. Many refugees are interested in entrepreneurship but face hurdles such as limited information, legal procedures, and access to funding. Older persons rely on pensions or humanitarian aid, while younger adults seek vocational training, language courses, and business support to become self-reliant.

As one asylum seeker noted: **“We like Moldova and want to stay here, but we need documents that allow us to work legally, have a bank card, and access health insurance.” "Give us documents so we can work and support ourselves."-** said a refugee from Gaza.

Healthcare and Psychosocial Support

Health care in Moldova is officially available but often difficult for refugees to access due to systemic barriers. Key challenges include long waits, high costs, limited specialist availability, and inconsistent provision of compensatory medicines.

[2] On 28 January 2026, temporary protection was extended through Government Decision No. 26 on the extension of temporary protection for persons displaced from Ukraine, published in the Official Gazette (Monitorul Oficial No. 62–64, Article 31) on 29 January 2026. According to this decision, temporary protection has been extended until 1 March 2027, and current beneficiaries can request the extension by submitting an online application between 1 February and 30 April 2026.

Older refugees face interrupted treatments and unaffordable prescriptions, while Roma participants report limited access to family doctors, scarce services in remote areas, and lack of information on free care. Due to these barriers, many refugees prefer to travel to Ukraine or turn to private clinics in Chișinău for urgent care. Expanding free and accessible services and providing clear, simple information on available care and compensated medicines, as well as increasing the reach of services in isolated communities, remain essential.

Medical care for children is generally provided, but problems arise at school due to differences in vaccination certificates," mentioned a young mother, a beneficiary of Temporary Protection.

Social Services Access

Refugees in Moldova face major barriers in accessing social services, especially those from Gaza, who effectively have no access. Many lack information on available support, eligibility, or application procedures, and practical access is limited by unclear guidance, inconsistent outreach, or discouraging interactions with social workers. Some families have received one-off financial support for children (e.g., 4000 lei per child), and no systemic discrimination was reported. Overall, services exist but do not reach people consistently, leaving significant gaps in outreach and communication.

„My problem was not resolved. I never had to seek assistance from the Government." – a temporary protection beneficiary

"I feel like a stranger in my own home," -said a Moldovan refugee from Gaza.

Housing

Housing remains one of the most worrying aspects for many refugees. In RACs, residents fear closure or relocation and complain about poor maintenance and limited communication with management. Those renting privately face unaffordable prices, informal contracts, and frequent moves, often with children. Older persons prioritize accessible housing and proximity to health services but have few options to choose. Refugees from Gaza face acute housing insecurity, often lacking stable homes or sufficient means for basic living despite having Moldovan citizenship. Host communities note that rents have increased in several areas. Whether in collective centers or private housing, insecurity dominates, with each move breaking social links and access to basic services.

Access to Information

Access to reliable and timely information remained a critical challenge. Most refugees relied on informal peer-to-peer channels such as Viber, Telegram, and Facebook to stay informed. While these platforms offered immediacy, they also facilitated misinformation, particularly around Temporary Protection renewals, assistance criteria, and relocation procedures.

Roma participants, especially those in rural areas, were among the least informed, often relying on oral communication due to limited literacy and digital access. Older persons similarly struggled to access information, citing difficulties with technology and a lack of face-to-face communication. Adults across all profiles called for better outreach through multilingual printed materials, community mediators, and in-person visits by trained staff.

Community Cohesion and Peaceful Coexistence

Social cohesion varied significantly between urban and rural contexts. In cities, where NGOs facilitated cultural and community events, some participants noted positive interaction with host community members, helping to build mutual understanding. However, in rural areas, many refugees felt isolated and unwelcome, with some discussion over shared services and assistance. Adults expressed a desire to participate in community life but lacked structured opportunities to look for. Older persons, particularly those living alone, reported few interactions with neighbors, contributing to feelings of exclusion and invisibility within the communities where they live. Host community members voiced concerns over the perceived burden on local infrastructure and service delivery, indicating the need for more inclusive planning.

"I chose Moldova because of the language and similar culture. I knew it would be easier to adjust here than in other European countries. I have relatives here, so it was easier to move and receive the support I needed. I feel protected here." – temporary protection beneficiary.

Next Steps

- Facilitate school enrollment and access to learning opportunities, including language support and extracurricular activities, to promote inclusion and integration.
- Support refugees to understand and claim their healthcare rights, including information on services and referral pathways, with focus on vulnerable groups.
- Ensure refugees are aware of their rights, legal status, and procedures, and facilitate access to legal guidance and support, including through the ongoing Temporary Protection information campaign
- Expand vocational and skills training linked to local job opportunities.
- Ensure proactive outreach by social workers in all locations, including RACs and rural areas.
- Continue supporting activities that bring refugees and host communities together, particularly for youth.

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