



UKRAINE REFUGEE RESPONSE
Regional Sub-Working Group on Gender-Based Violence (GBV SWG)
Meeting Minutes

Time & location:	19 July 2022, at 15:00-16:15, online
Participating agencies:	HIAS, ICVA, IMC, IOM, IPPF, IRC, Refugees International, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, Center for Reproductive Rights, WHO
Agenda:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction (UNHCR) 2. GBV Programming in Ukraine – presentation (Nina Gora, IMC) 3. Observations from Refugees International’s mission to Romania and Moldova - presentation (Devon Cone, Refugees International) 4. AOB
AGENDA POINT	DISCUSSION
1. Introduction	<p>UNHCR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adoption of the agenda
2. GBV programming in Ukraine – presentation (IMC)	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Regional%20GBV%20Meeting_Ukraine.pptx</p> </div> <p>International Medical Corps (IMC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Over 200 women’s organizations existing in Ukraine, with varying capacities but a lot of experience. ● When IMC started two months ago with the GBV program, the intent was to reach women and girls at risk and survivors of GBV with timely and appropriate support. ● Based on a mapping exercise, IMC concluded that it is best to engage existing organizations, through an existing pool of funds, so that, even after the INGOs have left, the GBV work continues. ● IMC has been able to reach women and girls with trusted local organizations, enabling ethical and safe referrals, and rapid programming, avoided creating parallel structures and extracting women from local organisations to put them in (I)(N)GOs. ● IMC did away with earmarking and cap on operational costs for women’s organisations. The size of required project applications was reduced to two-pagers, and monthly reports are one-pagers, placed on a shared portal and accessible to all project partners for the purpose of monitoring. ● IMC has put together a menu of options from which organizations could select based on what they wanted to do; also launched

	<p>a GB capacity enhancement program, open to all organizations. This should also help to ensure that the programming in Ukraine is aligned with the global GBV interagency standards and guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Language being an important issue, the IMC has also done away with the requests that communication with partners should be in English; emails and reports can be sent in the local languages, and then it is up to IMC to figure out what they mean. ● Challenges: 1) delays in disbursing of grants and 2) due diligence process of organisations issuing funding.
<p>3. Observations from Refugees International' mission to Romania and Moldova – presentation (Refugees International)</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Romania%20and%20Moldova%20GBV%20</p> </div> <p>Refugees International (RI):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Travelled to Romania and Moldova in the last couple of weeks. Putting together the findings at the moment. Travelled to Poland in the first week of March, and now wanted to see how the situation has changed in these different contexts, also to compare the situation in EU MS with the situation in Moldova. ● RI has no country offices, but the staff travel to refugee-hosting countries and provide policy recommendations based on the findings. ● The mission looked at the following issues: the coordination between the host governments and the UN agencies, the effectiveness of assistance from international donors, the risks of GBV/SEA/trafficking risks and mitigation measures, the effectiveness of Blue Dots and the EU's Common Anti-Trafficking Plan, access to SRHS, effectiveness of women-led organisations and the level of support they are receiving, etc. ● Romania and Moldova both share large borders with Ukraine, there is about the same amount of refugees in both locations. Romania participates in the solidarity platform; Moldova is a sending country. ● RI met with the refugees in urban centres where large numbers are concentrated, but also in smaller locations in the two countries. The situation at the borders has calmed down in comparison to March. All the stakeholders shared the impression of needing to shift from emergency humanitarian response to facilitating integration. ● Concerns: fatigue amongst host communities, effectiveness of coordination mechanisms (esp. for GBV disclosure), obstacles to information collection and dissemination, need to empower local actors and engage the displaced communities. ● In both countries, many refugees live in private accommodation, people are moving to and fro; this makes getting information across, and the disclosures, challenging. ● The demographics of the population bring out the specific needs for women and children and separated families, and all organisations take this into account in their programming. ● Asked about their biggest needs/concerns during interviews, refugee women spoke of wanting to return home above all but, in the meantime, securing their finances, care & schooling for their children, more permanent accommodation, etc. They generally described conditions in their current host communities/sites as good and did not specifically mention risks of GBV/SEA/trafficking (though it is important to acknowledge that one-off interviews are not always conducive to disclosures of such sensitive issues). Operational organizations (NGOs, IOs) interviewed gave similar answers when asked about their beneficiaries' needs/requests for assistance. ● GBV: there is a need for accurate data, esp. in terms of needs and for setting up an effective response; there are challenges with

reporting, building trust and prioritization. Ukrainian women that have just fled are trying to figure out what to do/where to go next, and do not necessarily have reporting on GBV on top of their list. High levels of GBV have previously been reported in both Romania and Moldova, as well as in Ukraine, making it likely that current incidents affecting refugees are underreported. Care is needed to support those who suffered GBV before, during, and after displacement.

- RI would like to see more SEA training targeting the local communities, particularly volunteers and staff of organizations that may not have previously worked with refugee populations and/or had experience with PSEA.
- Trafficking: No concrete data; only anecdotal reports from local groups of suspicious behavior that they reported to authorities or UNHCR, suggesting different response mechanisms in place. The US State Department Trafficking in Persons report helped to understand the context of Moldova and Romania before the war, and can be a useful resource to all those working on trafficking.
- Integration challenges: access to education, access to childcare, language training, SRH services, pre- and peri-natal care.
- Recommendations: direct cash assistance, access to healthcare (including MH and reproductive health care), systematic registration, more needs assessments and information campaigns for those in private accommodation, scaling up of PSEA training, “Know Your Rights” trainings for refugees.
- It is important to mitigate protection risks associated with private accommodation schemes (e.g. ensuring that refugees who report harm can be quickly moved into alternative, safe accommodation and that alleged perpetrators cannot re-register as hosts). But the best solution is ensuring stable, independent housing for the refugee women - this would require governments to provide direct cash assistance to refugees to cover rent, rather than just subsidies to host families, as is now the case.
- Organisations involved in PSEA mainly use leaflets and posters for information. UNHCR has implemented good PSEA trainings in Moldova, and there is now a request to expand it to new employees, including in the government, where UNHCR can play a good role.
- Witnessed some ad hoc anti-trafficking work; suggest that IOM and UNHCR work on integrating those structures and formalize them.
- The Blue Dots system is good; people were not totally aware of it when asked, but it is positive practice.
- RI will share the full mission report, including with the authorities in Romania and Moldova, towards the end of August, once ready. In the meantime, we are still gathering information & insights so please contact Devon and Daphne if wishing to contribute any materials or information.
- Contacts: Devon Cone (Senior Advocate for Women & Girls, devon@refugeesinternational.org) and Daphne Panayotatos (Senior Advocate for Europe, daphne@refugeesinternational.org)

UNHCR:

- In Romania, UNHCR is working very closely with the Anti-Trafficking Task Force, established by IOM, with the authorities and the NGO platform called Protect; together, these stakeholders have developed the referral pathways, the SWs etc.
- National referral pathways have been prepared by the national anti-trafficking agency ANITP, who have a network of 35 NGOs providing assistance to the victims.
- UNHCR will soon be sharing the GBV Safety Audit report for Moldova (which was conducted by UNFPA, UNICEF and UNHCR), that can be of support to the RI report.

4. AOB

- **Next Regional GBV SWG meeting will take place on 23 August 2022 at 3 PM.**