Inter-agency operational update

REFUGEE COORDINATION FORUM | MOLDOVA

Arrivals to Moldova

- 100,724 Ukrainian refugees in Moldova (as of March 31)
- 6,281 Third Country Nationals remaining in Moldova
- 795,614 arrivals from Ukraine and 253,981 Ukrainian refugees from elsewhere

Current funding level

- 424.8M total pledged
- 64.1M (15%) funds received

Cash assistance

- Total cash activities (total funding): 13.9M
- Number of refugees receiving MPCA: 80,393
- Number of hosting family members receiving MPCA: 64,649

Support to the Government

- 303 trained government officials
- 8 Government institutions supported

Support to Host Community

- 66,908 people from the host community reached
- 369 support to community infrastructure cases

People Reached by Sector

- Basic Needs (including Accomodation & Transportation): 145,131
- Food Security: 95,942
- Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene - WASH: 82,986
- Education: 7,000
- Health & Nutrition: 15,202
- Livelihoods & Socio-Economic Inclusion: 8,655
- Protection: 34,005
- Child protection: 17,644
- Gender-based violence (GBV): 16,643

Figures reported as of March 31, 2023
National Context

Since February 24, 2022, a total of 795,614 arrivals from Ukraine were recorded in the Republic of Moldova. This number was part of a larger wave of 7.9M refugees fleeing Ukraine to neighboring countries. By the end of March 2023 the number of individual refugees from Ukraine recorded in the Republic of Moldova was 100,724.

Politically, this period saw a shift in the Moldovan government. A new government led by the economist Dorin Recean was sworn in on February 16, 2023, succeeding Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita.

The economic situation in Moldova was characterized by rising prices and inflation due to disruptions in imports from Ukraine and Russia, on which Moldova heavily relies for its food and energy needs. The average consumer price increased by 2.2% in April 2023 compared to March 2023. Inflation decelerated to 22.0% in March, down from 25.9% in February. Amid these economic difficulties, the European Union proposed to increase its Macro-financial Assistance to Moldova by up to €145 million, bringing the total amount of ongoing MFA support to the country to up to €295 million.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova activated temporary protection on March 1, 2023, as an exceptional measure to provide immediate protection, including access to services, to displaced persons from Ukraine who meet the eligibility criteria. Eligible applicants for temporary protection include Ukrainian nationals who were residing in Ukraine or the Republic of Moldova before February 24, 2022, stateless persons recognized by the Ukrainian authorities before this date, non-Ukrainian nationals benefiting from protection granted by the Ukrainian authorities before this date, and family members of these persons. Beneficiaries of temporary protection have the right to remain in Moldova until March 1, 2024, and they have access to work, accommodation, education for children, emergency and primary healthcare, social assistance services and limited access to social protection grants.

According to the Quick Assessment on the Implementation of temporary protection in Moldova conducted by the National Congress of Ukrainians in Moldova in March, Ukrainians are generally interested in applying for temporary protection (78% of respondents). The main challenge for applying to temporary protection identified by Ukrainians were challenges obtaining proof of residency (62% among those planning to apply).
On March 3, a broad coalition of humanitarian partners launched the national chapter of the 2023 Inter-Agency Regional Refugee Response Plan. This plan, produced under the auspices of the Refugee Coordination Forum co-led by the Government and UNHCR together with the UN family and humanitarian partners, appeals for sustained financial support to help refugees and host communities in this country. In 2023, a combination of 73 partners in Moldova will join their efforts to ensure protection, safety, and assistance continue to reach refugees and Moldovans alike.

Also in March, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP) launched a wide-ranging reform of the welfare system known as “RESTART”. This was primarily in response to three major shocks affecting the country: the COVID-19 pandemic, the refugee influx, and the energy crisis. The current welfare system has presented limited efficacy in fighting poverty reducing it by only 5%, and statistics show that every fourth child in the country is in poverty. Through the implementation of the RESTART reform, the Government aims to address four basic problems: proper management and planning of social services, territorial inequalities in access to social services and benefits, the cost of services and their quality, and the development of human resources in the system.

Local Refugee Coordination Forums

The Local Refugee Coordination Forums (LRCF) in Moldova are platforms for discussion that engage local actors, including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and local authorities. These forums are established at key locations hosting refugees. The coordination activities involve both local authorities and representatives from CSOs to ensure that local needs and priorities are integrated into the overall refugee response.

The forums also aim to promote a space where local actors can actively participate in the decision-making process related to the refugee response in Moldova. As of March 2023, LRCFs have been active in the following locations: Palanca, Otaci, Comrat, Cahul, Causeni, Ungheni and Balti.

In March, LRCFs across the country facilitated discussions on Temporary Protection (TP) in coordination with General Inspectorate for Migration (IGM), the Protection Working Group (PWG) and local stakeholders, reaching 273 organizations and 73 refugees. The goal was to raise awareness of refugees and partners on access to TP, including registration procedures and associated rights.

From March 21-23, the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) brought together CSOs active in the Transnistrian Region to strengthen coordination and jointly discuss challenges and opportunities to enhance support to refugees living in the left bank of the Dniester river. A total of 22 organizations participated. Key challenges identified during the workshop included limited levels of information on refugee rights and services, insufficient outreach efforts by service providers, and funding scarcity for local CSOs to sustain current activities beyond six months. More legal support and outreach by humanitarian actors, including mobile teams, are needed in the Transnistrian Region.
Basic Needs

37 RRP Partners
31 Partners who reported activities
853 activities in 37 regions

Leads
Basic needs working group: ACTED and UNHCR
WASH sub-working group: UNICEF
Food security sub-working group: WFP

Partners reporting activities during Q1

- Action Against Hunger (Action Contre la Faim)
- ADRA Moldova
- ACTED
- Alliance of NGOs Active in the field of Child and Family Social Protection
- Amici Dei Bambini Moldova
- AO Green City Lab
- CASMED
- Catholic Relief Services (NRC)
- Charity Centre for Refugees
- Child Community Family
- CONCORDIA Moldova
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- Dorcas
- Gender Center
- HelpAge International
- Helvetas
- Institutum Virtues Civilis
- International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- INTERSOS
- KeyStone Moldova
- Laolalta
- Lumos Foundation
- MOTIVATIE
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
- Peace Winds Japan
- People In Need (PiN)
- Solidarit’s International
- The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)
- UN World Food Programme (WFP)
- WeWorld
- Youth Media Center

Throughout Q1 2023, the Basic Needs Working Group (WG) focused on addressing immediate needs of Ukrainian refugees while simultaneously laying groundwork for sustainable, long-term housing solutions. The group facilitated transportation for 791 individuals from border entry points to designated Refugee Accommodation Centers (RACs) and to Romania.

As part of the Winterization plan, partners distributed over 70,000 non-food items including blankets, winter clothes, and hygiene kits across various locations. Partners also ensured the payment of utility bills for around 49 RACs. WG partners continued to enhance RACs with necessary infrastructure and equipment. The WG also assisted the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection in revising RAC regulations to the provision of adequate and safe temporary accommodations for refugees.
A key milestone was the establishment of a mid-to-long-term accommodation task force. This collaborative platform, consisting of partners implementing rental assistance programs, aimed to harmonize interventions, prioritizing ‘cash for rent’ as a primary modality for rental aid. The task force supervised the development of a Standard Operating Procedure for implementation, safeguarded tenants’ rights, and mediated potential conflicts between tenants and landlords.

WASH Sub-WG partners are consistently providing WASH facilities and services to refugee accommodation centers (RACs) and border crossings. To date, 36,347 refugees have accessed secure sanitation facilities, while 32,352 have received hygiene kits. In addition, 1,820 winter clothing kits have been distributed to refugee children aged 0-12.

Significant enhancements were seen at a Chisinau RAC, with the installation of two rented toilet containers. In a move toward sustainability, procured toilet containers have replaced rented ones at Palanca bus stations. As part of the contingency plan preparedness measures, toilet containers were deployed at Palanca Border Crossing points (2, 3, and 4). Two spare containers are prepositioned with the National Inspectorate for Emergency Situations. Coordination is underway with the Mayor of Sculeni to improve WASH conditions at the border. WASH needs and gaps in the 62 active RACs have been evaluated, with findings set for analysis and subsequent action.

The Food-Security SWG partners continued to meet the food needs of refugees in Moldova. During the reported period, the partners provided approximately 772,700 meals to some 3,000 refugees residing in RACs and carried out food distribution activities on an ad-hoc basis to over 90,000 refugees across the country.

Remaining Gaps and Challenges

The Basic Needs Working Group, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, identified the need of evaluating the cost-effectiveness of RACs, that will feed into the Government’s RACs Consolidation Strategy. Steps are being taken in coordination with the Food Security Sub-Working Group, WASH Sub-Working Group and PwD task force to develop an assessment methodology to also assess the cooking facilities, waste management capacities, WASH conditions and accessibility of existing RACs.
Protection

44 RRP Partners
22 Partners who reported activities
297 activities in 37 regions

Partners reporting activities during Q1
- ADRA Moldova
- Alliance of NGOs Active in the field of Child and Family Social Protection
- AO Centrul de Drept al Avocatilor
- CASMED
- Charity Centre for Refugees
- Child Community Family
- CONCORDIA Moldova
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- Dorcas
- HelpAge International
- Helvetas
- Humanity and Inclusion
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- INTERSOS
- KeyStone Moldova
- La Strada
- Laolalta
- Lumos Foundation
- People In Need (PiN)
- The Ombudsman Office
- The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)
- WeWorld

The Protection Working Group (PWG), following its 2023 work plan, achieved significant milestones in the first quarter of the year. Key accomplishments include successful advocacy and technical support for the implementation of the government’s decision to approve temporary protection (TP) for individuals displaced from Ukraine, which was passed on January 18, 2023. As part of its advocacy and awareness-raising efforts, the PWG informed over 7,700 individuals about their rights and available services, including on TP.

The PWG provided over 1,250 basic counseling consultations and benefited over 1,860 individuals through capacity-building activities, including training on Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). In a bid to promote community engagement and participation, the PWG members supported 19 community-led initiatives. Legal assistance was another critical area of focus, with over 11,000 individuals receiving individual support. Psychosocial support activities engaged over 6,700 participants.

Targeted protection support was extended to over 7,900 persons with specific needs. All these efforts were part of the PWG’s commitment to ensure comprehensive support for refugees, especially those displaced from Ukraine.

The Anti-Trafficking Task Force, co-chaired by the State Chancellery alongside IOM and UNHCR, has focused on coordinating prevention efforts with over 35 partners. The National Committee on Combating Human Trafficking, under the State Chancellery, launched a draft concept for the National Program for the Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings 2024-2028, currently undergoing consultations with Sector Ministries and partners. The program targets trafficking prevention, capacity building, and institutional anti-trafficking response coordination. Yet, challenges persist, including expert turnover, burnout prevention, limited support for identifying potential victims among Ukrainian displaced persons, and the need for localized services. Emerging trends include growing labor exploitation, particularly in agriculture and construction, and the engagement of victims into recruitment roles by traffickers.

Remaining Gaps and Challenges

Monitoring access to temporary protection, addressing registration difficulties, and ensuring access to basic rights, particularly health care, continue to be pressing needs.
Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

22 RRP Partners
35 Partners who reported activities
191 activities in 32 regions

The GBV Sub-Working Group trained 1,551 responders on GBV Core Concepts, MHPSS, PSEA, and GBV mainstreaming. Furthermore, the GBV Sub-Working Group distributed dignity kits to foster awareness of available GBV services reaching 5,508 refugees and host community members with information about specialized GBV services, Sexual and Reproductive Health and PSEA.

In coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the GBV Sub-Working Group carried out a national campaign to increase GBV awareness and promote services. 1,500 persons attended community events, and over 300,000 accessed online information about GBV.

Multi-sectoral services reached 5,307 survivors and persons at-risk of GBV, offering health, legal, psychosocial support, and case management services, integrating cash as a risk mitigation measure. The GBV Sub-Working Group periodically updates six localized GBV referral pathways.

Leads

GBV Sub-Working Group: UNFPA and UNHCR

Remaining Gaps and Challenges

GBV challenges include service reach and accessibility, service providers adherence to GBV standards, and survivors’ fear of stigmatization. Consistent capacity building, investment in the national system and strengthening of services, including GBV case management, as well as GBV information dissemination are needed. Given the changing dynamics due to temporary protection and the risks of the humanitarian context, timely assessments and an integrated response prioritizing coordination across sectors are key. Mainstreaming of GBV risk mitigation measures should remain a life-saving priority. Continued distribution of dignity kits as a risk mitigation measure and support to Safe Spaces are necessary to address ongoing challenges faced by survivors and persons at risk of GBV.

Partners reporting activities during Q1

- ADRA Moldova
- Alliance of NGOs Active in the field of Child and Family Social Protection
- AO Centrul de Drept al Avocatilor/Law Center of Advocates
- CASMED
- Charity Centre for Refugees
- Child Community Family
- CONCORDIA Moldova
- Danish Refugee Council
- Dorcas
- HelpAge International
- Helvetas
- Humanity and Inclusion
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- INTERSOS
- KeyStone Moldova
- La Strada
- Laolalta
- Lumos Foundation
- People In Need
- The Ombudsman Office
- The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)
- WeWorld
- Speranta 87
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Artemida
- Home Care
- The Gender Center
- MilieniuM
- Youth Media Center
- Pro Didactica
- Stimul
- Institutul pentru Familie și Inițiative Sociale (IFIS)
- UNAIDS
- Casa Marioarei
- Platforma Pentru Egalitate de Gen
In the reporting period, the Child Protection Sub Working Group (CPSWG) conducted four meetings with over 25 CSOs, INGOs, UN agencies, ICRC, donors, and government authorities. A case management task force was established, and mobile child-friendly spaces were set up to reach refugees in host communities.

Through the network of 11 Blue Dots and other community-based safe spaces, 3,021 children and caregivers accessed MHPSS services (1,504 women and girls, 116 children with disabilities), and 2,952 benefited from multi-sectoral assistance and protection activities (1,461 women and girls, 93 children with disabilities). Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, 953 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) were identified by child protection actors (827 separated and 126 unaccompanied). 533 of these children have since been reunited with their families. 65 new UASC were identified in the first quarter of 2023.

The CPSWG has focused on strengthening national and local capacity for effective child protection services, training 237 social workers and child protection specialists (193 women) on case management and UASC registration for temporary protection.

Remaining Gaps and Challenges

Early identification of at-risk children needs improvement, school enrollment for refugee children must be ensured, and child protection activities need better coordination with education. Refugee children and adolescents out of school, particularly adolescent girls and children with disabilities, are at increased risk of negative coping mechanisms and exposure to violence, including GBV.
The Education Working Group (EWG), under the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), coordinates monthly meetings to promote the enrollment of Ukrainian refugee children in Moldovan schools and to support their remote learning. Since January 2023, approximately 1,847 children (including 703 in preschools) enrolled in the Moldovan education system, with 65% of them provided with hot meals. Non-formal education activities, such as Romanian language classes and skills training, reached about 7,500 refugee and Moldovan children. Partners continue to support in providing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) interventions in schools and training staff on child-centered methodology.

Tech/Digital labs are being set up in schools to facilitate access to online learning in safe-school settings, engage Ukrainian teachers and provide Romanian language classes, digital skills, catch-up classes and MHPSS activities. In collaboration with MER, the EWG is launching a Back-to-School Campaign to inform Ukrainian parents about school enrollment in Moldovan schools.

Despite efforts, low enrollment of Ukrainian children in Moldovan schools persists due to parental hesitancy, information access difficulties, language barriers, and the use of Ukrainian online learning platforms. The number of Ukrainian students using these online learning platforms in Moldova is currently unknown. An upcoming sector assessment will explore the impact of online learning on social-emotional wellbeing of Ukrainian children and the experiences of Ukrainian children in Moldovan schools.
From January to March 2023, the Health and Nutrition sector made strides in delivering life-saving critical care and essential health services. Health financing and protection mechanisms were revised to address the healthcare needs of refugees and the local population. Key agencies collaborated with NIHC to ensure affordable and accessible health services and medicines for refugees in 2023.

In February, a project was launched that aimed to mainstream a disability-inclusive humanitarian response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. This project sought to enhance inclusivity among service providers for Ukrainian refugees with disabilities.

Capacity-building activities for 600 healthcare professionals were conducted, covering specialized medical care, emergency surgery, immunization, and MHPSS. In three hospitals, SimEX on mass casualty management was conducted to improve the coordination of medical care in case of patient influx. WHO Trauma and Emergency Care kits, along with other medical supplies and equipment, were delivered to improve access to quality pre-hospital (ambulance) and hospitals, including trauma and surgery healthcare service delivery across all administrative territories.

By March, essential healthcare services had been provided to 5,123 individuals, including 7,080 consultations by Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs). Sixteen EMTs stand ready, with three currently deployed. To improve health literacy, key messages and materials were distributed about available health services.

Refugees still encounter significant challenges when it comes to accessing healthcare services. These challenges arise due to various factors, such as the limited capacity of the national health system and the lack of awareness among both refugees and service providers regarding the rights of refugees in Moldova.
Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Inclusion

27 RRP Partners
27 Partners who reported activities
88 activities in 21 regions

Leaders
Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Inclusion working group: State Chancellery and UNDP

Partners reporting activities during Q1

- Alliance of NGOs Active in the field of Child and Family Social Protection
- Biaz Gul
- Casa Marioarei
- CASMED
- Centrul de Drept al Avocatilor/Law Center of Advocates
- Charity Centre for Refugees
- Concordia “Proiecte Sociale”
- “Consens” Singerei
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- Demos
- Gender Center
- Hometown Associations
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- KeyStone Moldova
- Laolalta
- Lumos Foundation
- MOTIVATIE
- National Congress of Ukrainians in Moldova (NCUM)
- National Youth Council of Moldova
- Platforma
- Project HOPE
- Raza Increderei
- Regina Pacis
- UN Women
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)
- World Health Organization (WHO)

In line with the 2023 Work Plan, the Livelihoods and Socio-Economic Inclusion Working Group (LIWG) conducted thematic meetings involving key government institutions and stakeholders. The topics covered included access to decent jobs and employment protection, access to childcare services, and cash for work programs. These meetings aimed to align WG members’ initiatives with relevant national programs, promoting the inclusion of refugees in existing schemes.

During the first three months of 2023, LIWG partners provided refugees with diverse sector-related opportunities. This ranged from job counseling, job placement, and support for self-employment to participation in skill development training and Romanian language courses. Small grants were also given to local businesses to expand production and create job opportunities for both refugees and host community members. LIWG partners supported local public authorities in enhancing the provision of local public services through renovation and energy efficiency improvements at key institutions.

Social cohesion activities were conducted, fostering dialogue and collaboration between refugees and host community members. An overview of the LIWG’s results in 2022 was prepared and published online.

Remaining Gaps and Challenges

Assessments during the reporting period continued to highlight structural barriers to refugee labor market inclusion, such as limited childcare capacities, restricted employment opportunities, and low salaries. Language proficiency in Romanian remained a challenge for refugees seeking employment.
Cash Assistance

Leads
Cash Assistance Working Group: Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and UNHCR

Partners actively participating on coordination activities in Q1

- Action Against Hunger (ACF SPAIN)
- ACTED
- ADRA
- Charity Centre for Refugees (CCR)
- HelpAge
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- IMPACT-INITIATIVES
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Moldova for Peace
- Pestalozzi
- People in Need
- Polish Red Cross
- REACH-INITIATIVE
- UN Women
- United Nations Population Fund
- UNICEF
- UNHCR
- World Food Programme
- World Vision International
- Inspectoratul General pentru Migrație
- Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

The Cash Working Group (CWG) is working with partners to deploy a platform to improve cash activity coordination and avoid duplications. A draft Data Sharing Agreement has been established with partner input, and initial Standard Operating Procedures are being finalized.

To assess market accessibility, availability, and price fluctuations, a market assessment is being carried out with CWG partners and a consulting firm. The process, involving customer, retailer, and key informant interviews, is underway and expected to conclude in early June.

CWG partners also conduct Post-Distribution Monitoring exercises to maintain the quality of service delivery and ensure accountability to refugees and host communities. Findings indicate high needs amongst both populations, with only an average of 20% able to meet all basic needs with the assistance provided. Both refugees and host communities report resorting to negative coping strategies to meet their basic needs, most commonly using savings and reducing health expenses. Cash assistance is predominantly spent on food (85% refugees, 74% host communities), followed by utility bills (61% refugees, 73% host communities), and health costs (45% refugees, 70% host communities).
Accountability to Affected People

In March, AAP partners supported the Government of Moldova in communicating temporary protection (TP). Information Sessions engaged 850 frontliners, FAQs were updated in multiple languages, and 32,500 printed materials were distributed. Digital outreach reached 825,030 beneficiaries through Viber, Telegram, and social media. The Dopomoga site had 41,000 unique users.

A quick assessment addressed low TP applicants and identified barriers. 78% of 500 survey respondents expressed willingness to apply, but obstacles like residency proof and online registration assistance hindered them.

Services Advisor Moldova, a web-based map, was launched, providing information on available services in Ukrainian, Romanian, Russian, and English. It involves 180 organizations and enables continuous information updates on available services in the country.

Digital outreach reached 1.6 million users in Q1 2023, while 28,435 refugees and hosting families were informed via various channels. An Information Ecosystem Assessment showed 95% satisfaction overall, but refugees expressed frustration with limited local-level information. They desired more details on immediate needs, while Moldovans sought transparency regarding fund utilization. Social media monitoring revealed significant disinformation campaigns about Ukrainian refugees in Moldova.

Remaining Gaps and Challenges

Based on the feedback provided it is key to continue ensuring access to information at the local level with a focus on age, gender and diversity, and strength coordination when it comes to information provision to reduce misinformation. There is a need to improve the socialization of the feedback and complaint mechanisms and promote reporting, which entails understanding why refugees are not approaching the mechanisms. Moreover, there is still a need to build capacity on Accountability and Community Engagement across the response.

Gender in Humanitarian Action

The Gender Task Force, in collaboration with the GBV SWG, conducted awareness-raising activities on Gender in Humanitarian Action. Workshops engaged 27 participants, including 23 women and 4 men, and reached 19 members of relevant NGOs, consisting of 16 women and 3 men. Tailored gender sessions were provided to 32 members of the Inclusion and Livelihoods Working Group and 18 members of the MHPSS TRG.
Two one-day trainings on Gender in Humanitarian Action were organized. The introductory training enhanced the understanding of 22 frontliners, with 17 women and 5 men benefiting from the session. The training on “Gender-Informed Analysis, Participation, and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning” saw the participation of 24 individuals, including 20 women and 4 men. Furthermore, three refugee women leaders from Balti, Ungheni, and Cahul were engaged as United Nations Volunteers to support local CSOs and contribute their perspectives.

Remaining Gaps and Challenges

Key challenges identified include limited data disaggregation by sex, age, and disability, inadequate resources allocated to designated Gender Focal Points, insufficient funding for women-led organizations, and the limited involvement of refugee women in policymaking and planning processes.

Disability and Age

In 2023, the Disability & Age Task Force revised its strategy, integrating Age alongside Disability due to overlapping challenges both groups face in accessing services. The revised strategy emphasized involvement of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in activities and decision-making processes.

With Task Force support, the Alliance of OPDs held a high-level meeting to present 2022 work results, including identified service gaps and challenges, which informed 2023 objectives. OPDs also contributed to the development of an accessibility assessment tool for all Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs), to be implemented in Q2 in collaboration with the Accommodations and Transportation Working Group.

The Task Force worked with OPDs on a multi-agency project (PRPD) to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in response efforts. During Q1, the Task Force updated the list of national services available for persons with disabilities, including refugees, ensuring appropriate referrals across humanitarian actors.

Remaining Gaps and Challenges

Keystone and HelpAge assessments highlighted gaps in service access for refugees, particularly regarding labor market and education system access, attributed to a lack of assistive devices and rehabilitation services. A lack of specialized health services and specific medications for refugees was also identified. Although Task Force partners strive to address these gaps, sustainable solutions require governmental institutions’ involvement.
In the first three months of 2023, partners delivered a full range of MHPSS services to refugees and Moldovan-vans, reaching 19,536 individuals with psychosocial support, 1,826 with basic counseling, and 631 with specialized MHPSS. They opened a child-friendly safe space in a school in Balti, and ensured safe shelter with specialized support for seven individuals facing severe mental health challenges.

Workshops on topics like suicide prevention, trauma-informed care, and MHPSS for GBV workers were conducted, along with innovative sessions on MHPSS and sports and psychosocial art. Partners also initiated planning for two scalable training programs: mhGAP suicide prevention - which will benefit 2,000-2,500 Moldovan healthcare workers - and Problem Management Plus (PM+).

Challenges included burnout and staff care concerns, limited recruitment of qualified staff, lack of appropriate space for MHPSS services (particularly in RACs), and the need for localized referral pathways for seamless care and services. A nationwide MHPSS situation analysis is being planned to better understand emerging needs.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

During Q1, PSEA Network partners formalized the appointment of PSEA Focal Points, with 55 organizations having formally appointed PSEA Focal Points. The PSEA Network trained 22 Focal Points on the Inter-Agency PSEA SOP, while partners trained 248 aid workers on PSEA fundamentals, including a Trainer of Trainers program. The Network reviewed its Terms of Reference, integrating the UN PSEA Task Force to strengthen humanitarian and developmental links regarding PSEA. A high-level meeting was held in March with several entities, including the Resident Coordinator Office, Refugee Coordination Forum and the Office of the UN Special Coordinator, to discuss the Secretary-General’s annual report on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and review the 2023 Work Plan’s progress.

In collaboration with the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme, the PSEA Network held an informational session for over 40 partners. Additionally, the Network finalized the Terms of Reference and a Data Collection Tool for the Inter-Agency PSEA Risk Assessment. The Assessment, set to conclude by July, focuses on four aspects including compliance to PSEA minimum operational standards, risk assessment of key facilities - including Refugee Accommodation Centers-, and perception surveys of aid workers and aid recipients.
Remaining Gaps and Challenges

High staff turnover significantly affects the sustainability of PSEA interventions, disrupting continuity. Inconsistent compliance with PSEA MOS across organizations, particularly regarding beneficiary awareness of aid workers’ obligations and reporting channels, is another concern. The absence of a clear and efficient mechanism to address misconduct in Refugee Accommodation Centers is also a substantial challenge, especially given that RAC staff often lack contractual relationships with RCF partners.

Roma

Leads
Roma Task Force: Coalitia Vocea Romilor and Intersos

In the first quarter of 2023 the Roma Task Force defined its strategic framework by identifying seven main strategic priorities: mapping of the Roma refugees on the territory of the Republic of Moldova; guarantee access to Temporary Protection; promoting access to education and integration; adapt to the shifting operational environment, and gender based interventions. To ensure Roma refugees are aware of their rights and support mechanisms, including Temporary Protection, information sessions were organized, with additional training provided to Moldovan Roma community mediators. To promote integration and social cohesion, the Task Force spearheaded “AMARE AMALA”, a week dedicated to celebrating Roma culture, with concerts, panel discussions, exhibitions, and more. Over 300 people from the local and refugee Roma community participated.

Remaining Gaps and Challenges

Access to services and information remains an issue for Ukrainian Roma refugees, especially those in private accommodations. Persistent discrimination, human rights violations, and segregation necessitate ongoing advocacy efforts. Other challenges include lack of qualified Roma community staff to assist with implementation of activities, and insufficient resources for community mediators to meet the needs of both refugees and the local Roma community. While the Task Force continues its efforts to bridge these gaps, sustainable solutions will demand active participation from governmental institutions and improvements in existing legal frameworks.

Information Management

Leads
Information Management Working Group: REACH and UNHCR

Information Management Working Group continued its work in 2023 as a non-output based technical WG that coordinates the assessments and data-related processes. In 2023, the WG presented an updated Assessment Registry tool that now is based on the ActivityInfo platform. The WG has also facilitated several training sessions on the use of ActivityInfo for 2023 RRP reporting, reaching 70 participants from around 50 organizations in those sessions.
Operational Data Portal

The Operational Data Portal is the primary source of information for partners on the refugee response in Moldova. It includes details on population figures, partner activities, meeting schedules, and relevant documents and assessments published by partners.

RCF Meeting Calendar

The RCF Meeting Calendar provides details on the dates and participation information for all working groups, sub-working groups, and task forces. It also includes information on Local Refugee Coordination Forum meetings.

Refugee Funding Tracker

Refugee Funding Tracker: The Refugee Funding Tracker is a comprehensive platform compiling all financial data related to refugee programs. The data available includes funding received by agencies involved in the refugee response, as well as budgets for refugee-related appeals and plans such as Country and Regional Refugee Response Plans (RRPs).
Assessment Registry Tool
The Assessment Registry Tool is a platform where partners and organizations can share and acquire information on completed, planned, and ongoing assessments in Moldova. Its objective is to enhance coordination, minimize duplication, and ensure data is collected, analyzed, and shared in a principled manner.

Daily Population Trends Dashboard
This dashboard allows partners to access up-to-date data on the numbers and profile of refugees in Moldova. The data is updated weekly.

2023 RRP Partners’ Achievements Dashboard
This dashboard provides an overview of partner activities and achievements under the 2023 RRP.

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