



Regional Refugee Response  
for the Ukraine Situation



**Basic Needs Working Group Meeting -30th October 2023**

**Meeting Details**

<b>Date</b>	30. 10. 2023
<b>Time</b>	15.00 pm
<b>Chair and Co-chair</b>	Andrea Cuisana, UNHCR – Athina Nalmpanti, ACTED
<b>Reporting</b>	
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:mdachacctr@unhcr.org">mdachacctr@unhcr.org</a> - <a href="mailto:cuisana@unhcr.org">cuisana@unhcr.org</a> – <a href="mailto:athina.nalmpanti@acted.org">athina.nalmpanti@acted.org</a>

**Agenda**

- 1. Update**
  - RACs consolidation process
  - Unaccredited RACs
  - Winter NFIs
- 2. RRP 2024 Consultation (PIN)**
- 3. Rental assistance partners update**
- 4. Partners updates**
  - Community Infrastructure Winter upgrades (IOM and UNHCR/ACTED)
- 5. AoB**
  - RRP 2024 submission and review of activities

**Information collection and relevant links**



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### Participants

<i>Andrea Cuisana, UNHCR</i>	<i>Natasa Omerovic, IOM</i>	<i>Shihab Alkairawan,</i>
<i>Emmanuel Ottika, UNHCR</i>	<i>Orfan Shahahda, Action Against Hunger</i>	<i>Valentina Ghenciu, Lumos Moldova</i>
<i>Natalia Stelea, UNHCR</i>	<i>Senedu Negasu, IOM</i>	<i>Michel Gerges,</i>
<i>Teodor Vicol, MLSP</i>	<i>Cristina Berdos, CRS</i>	<i>Anton Muntean, Intersos</i>
<i>Rotaru Mihai, MLSP</i>	<i>Svetlana Cires, CRS</i>	<i>Dilnoza Niculescu, Caritas</i>
<i>Ecaterina Silvestru, MLSP</i>	<i>Noor Bakhsh, UNICEF</i>	<i>Veronica Stetco, CDA</i>
<i>Cucuta Valentin, MLSP</i>	<i>Evghenii Cutia, DRC</i>	<i>Mariana Tibuleac,</i>
<i>Athina Nalmpanti Acted</i>	<i>Tesu Corina, REACH</i>	<i>Alina Alexei, WFP</i>
<i>Annejulie ESPARCEIL, ACTED</i>	<i>Pascal Tram, REACH</i>	<i>Grigore Guzun, WFP</i>
<i>Daniele Perdetti, Help Age</i>		

### Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
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<p><b>Agenda point 1</b></p> <p><b>Update</b></p> <p><b>- RACs consolidation process</b></p>	<p>1. Basic needs WG chairperson welcomed participants and thanked them for their participation and presented the agenda.</p> <p><b>UNHCR:</b> gave a brief overview of the closure process for the RACs Consolidation Strategy.</p> <p>From groups A, B, and C:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 centers have been closed.</li> <li>• two centers are scheduled for closure on November 1st. From these two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 9HH (more than 30 individuals) have applied for rental assistance program,</li> <li>○ 13HH (36 individuals) would like to be relocated to another RAC.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Two centers remain open, MFT visits are scheduled for this week.</li> </ul> <p>The RCM and Rental assistance partners are conducting visits as frequently as required to ensure all the necessary support is provided to the beneficiaries.</p> <p>The challenges faced by the residents include difficulties in finding suitable apartments and dealing with landlords who do not accept short-term contracts as is the period of the rental assistance program is covering. During the MFT visits the residents again stated they don't want to be relocated or apply for rental assistance program, they want to continue to live there, due to the unclarity if the notification of closure is determined as official.</p> <p>The closure process for group D will start following a reevaluation of the strategy, and all partners will receive advance notification. Some changes may be made, and certain centers may be decided to remain open.</p> <p><b>MLSP:</b> Zarea, beneficiaries who have declined the offered centers to relocate can choose to apply for the rental assistance program. The center will return to its previous activity and operate as hotel. If any of the beneficiaries choose to remain there, their status will be different, and they will pay for their services.</p> <p>Dumbrava Alba, 15 beneficiaries have been relocated, and additional available spaces will be provided to support the RCM. Transportation is provided to the beneficiaries to facilitate their relocation. Residents who choose not to be relocated will be asked to submit a letter of responsibility stating their decision. These two centers will no longer be operational, and food will be provided as an exemption for a day or two after the closure day. The center will return to its previous activity.</p>	<p>Letter of responsibility stating their intention, issued by the manager.</p>
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	<p>Regarding the center where there were rumors that the managers received money from beneficiaries the money has been returned. As long as the center is officially open, all services are covered and funded by the government and partners, payment by the beneficiaries is prohibited.</p> <p>During our recent meeting with the minister and the state secretary, these issues were discussed. A joint meeting with UNHCR will be scheduled to further discuss the next steps to proceed regarding the strategy.</p> <p><b>WFP</b> requested precise information when food provisions should be discontinued in the case center is in the process of closure.</p> <p><b>Help Age:</b> The RTG monitoring tool was developed under the AAP task force with the support of the National Congress of Ukrainians (NCUM) and assistance from the Help page.</p> <p>The analysis is ongoing. So far, 15 people from different centers were contacted by phone, resulting in 13 responses recorded in the Kobo system. An additional selection of approximately 20 or more refugees from various centers is currently ongoing.</p> <p>By the end of next week, they will have completed approximately 80% to 90% of the analysis, and will share preliminary data.</p> <p><b>WFP</b> is requesting to be involved in the RAC Consolidation process, as they are providing food to 46 RACs, to be informed about any future closure.</p> <p>UNHCR notes that WFP was previously involved. The RTG primarily consists of the BNWG, rental assistance partners, and the protection working group, which includes counseling partners like relocation case managers and MHPSS partners.</p> <p>We are open to discussing specific points in upcoming meetings and will invite WFP to the next meeting.</p> <p><b>IOM</b> suggests that managers of the RACs work more closely with service-provider partners. A planning of at least 7 days in advance of the MFT visits</p> <p><b>CRS</b> has mentioned that the rental assistance program is ending for this year. <b>MLSP</b> suggests focusing all efforts on the centers that are in the closure process and other regions for the remaining period. The next steps in the RAC Consolidation Strategy will be discussed at the ministry jointly with UNHCR, and necessary adjustments will be made if decided.</p>	<p>To notify WFP when to discontinue food provision in the RAC scheduled to be closed.</p> <p>To invite WFP to the next RTG meeting</p>
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<p>- Winter NFIs</p>	<p><b>UNHCR</b> agrees these are relevant concerns. It is a complex process, RTG was established, and the SoPs developed to facilitate the process and communication among partners, the structure is already in place. The RCM and MHPSS partners are working closely with families and RAC managers to provide the necessary support and information.</p> <p>It's important to initiate the learning process based on the experiences gained. Additional constrains and challenges will occur throughout the implementation of this complex process. This will require a good understanding of what changes and adjustments are necessary, both for basic needs working partners and protection working partners as well.</p> <p><b>An overview of winter NFI distribution modalities and locations.</b></p> <p><b>Firewood and briquettes:</b> 2 organizations to cover 1311 local vulnerable HHs. Locations: 11 in South,7 in Center, 4 in North and 1 in Chisinau municipality.</p> <p><b>Clothes distribution for men, women, children:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All formal RACs will be covered,</li> <li>• refugees in private accommodation in 6 raions in the north. <b>Total target 4336 people.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Kitchen/household items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All RACs will be covered,</li> <li>• refugees in private accommodation in 6 raions in the north. <b>Total target 3500.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Hygiene items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female hygiene items countrywide to 1400 individuals</li> <li>• Male and female hygiene kits to 1150 refugees in private accommodation in 6 raions.</li> <li>• 3 different kinds of hygiene kits (households, infants, elderly) to refugees in RACs, private accommodation and hosting families countrywide. <b>Total target 14000</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Vouchers:</b> Vouchers for clothes/shoes to refugee and vulnerable locals in 6 raions to 2500 individuals</p> <p>The effort to standardize kits for better coordination and to avoid duplications was highlighted. More specific details will be provided at the upcoming Winter NFI distribution meeting, about the locations to be</p>	
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	<p>covered, the distribution modalities, roles and responsibilities of various actors, and assess whether specific targets are met or if there are any gaps.</p> <p><b>MLSP:</b> requested detailed information about the wood distribution and NFI, as there is a program put in place by the ministry – this is to avoid duplications. Also, hygiene items, detergents were requested to be distributed to the RAC 1092.</p> <p><b>IOM</b> enquired what would be the most effective method for coordinating the distribution of firewood for the winter, given that last winter mix of various donors and the high demand from the refugees. Will the state be involved, the local social assistance offices?</p> <p><b>MLSP:</b> as mentioned a good coordination is needed to avoid duplication. Social workers can identify the most vulnerable beneficiaries: refugees, local vulnerable families. There is a government program in place to help most vulnerable population.</p> <p><b>ACTED</b> – emphasized the importance of good coordination, also mentioned that UNHCR has already raised the need for hygienic items in RACs.</p> <p><b>UNICEF</b> – noted that communication has already been initiated with one of the WASH SG partners that agreed to address this in Testemiteanu, and later extend to other locations where gaps exist.</p> <p>It was advised to distribute the detergent to the manager, who will provide to the beneficiaries as needed.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Ministry participate in the coordination meeting on NFIs next week and provide this request to all partners and a more comprehensive discussion can be facilitated with everyone.</p> <p>A need for medication, sphygmomanometers, eyeglasses, canes, and other walking devises are requested by the refugees. Help Age suggests bringing this into discussion with the Disability and Health TF and refer all cases.</p> <p>World Vision confirmed the distribution on a monthly basis of NFI detergent items for 20 RACs since June 2023. The items are distributed to the RAC manager.</p>	<p><b>DRC</b> confirmed that the hygiene items were already delivered in RAC 1092</p> <p><b>World Vision</b> to provide the list where they have distributed.</p>
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<p><b>Rental assistance partners update</b></p>	<p><b>IOM:</b> About 20 calls per day are received from the individual in the RACs. Certain factors influence their decision not to enroll in the program.</p> <p><b>Coverage areas:</b> Primarily location covered are Balti, Cahul, Gagauzia and Chisinau.</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> Data available from February onwards.</p> <p><b>Currently assisted households:</b> 246 households.</p> <p><b>Total households under assistance:</b> 779 households.</p> <p><b>Total households assisted since February 2023:</b> 557 households, equivalent to 1,859 individuals.</p> <p><b>Additional data:</b> 64 individuals with disabilities, 400 females and 464 males.</p> <p><b>UNHCR</b> - bilateral meetings will be conducted to discuss the programs/plans for the upcoming year. Rental assistance partners will have a meeting to discuss next year's strategy and program enhancements.</p> <p><b>ACTED</b> -The data is disaggregated by location, gender, age, and the number of people with disabilities. ACTED program has closed, a significant percentage of females that applied is observed. The number of Ukrainian and vulnerable Moldovan head of households, 10% of which are Moldovan vulnerable households out of the total individuals supported.</p> <p><b>DRC</b>- recently completed WASH interventions in the Asylum Center with UNICEF's co-funding. Ready to provide support for the RAC in Criuleni changing the pipes for the heating system. This activity to coordinate with ACTED to avoid duplication. A RAC in Chisinau to provide AC equipment.</p> <p><b>IOM</b>- the result of the assessment in the location where the community information centers are established - three categories are on high demand: non-food items, food, and cash. This raises questions about whether we should reconsider our approach. Specifically, we need to assess whether our current assistance methods, such as MPCA or vouchers, are adequate to meet these needs effectively. Cahul, Balti, Chisinau and Comrat the survey was conducted.</p> <p><b>ACTED</b> - as implementing partners of UNHCR is currently focused on the rehabilitation on WASH and accessibility in 12 RACs: improvements to shower areas for people with disabilities, enhancing WASH facilities, installing ramps, improving pavements outside these facilities.</p>	<p>To coordinate the support with ACTED, as some of these activities are already covered -to avoid duplication.</p>
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<p><b>2.Update on Informal RACs</b></p> <p><b>4.RRP 2024</b></p>	<p>Winterization in RACs: replacing doors, windows, fixing the heating system, boilers, repairs of the rooftop, maintenance activities ongoing in 46 RACs: electricity upgrades, water filters, locks, wall painting etc.</p> <p>Three community centers regarding winterization in Otaci, Stefan Voda and Palanca, thermal insulation, replacing heating system, replacing doors and windows.</p> <p>Full renovation of: 1. Community Center in Ungheni and 24 room in the RAC 12 (an entire floor), following EU standards for PwD. Included WASH and outside area, 2. Two childcare facilities, providing full renovation to increase the capacity, 3. Peaceful coexistence project in Palanca, Cahul and Cimislia with improvement of a football yard, renovate a stage in a public park, construction of an open cinema area. These initiatives are part of our commitment to create better living conditions and opportunities for the beneficiaries.</p> <p><b>IOM</b> – is actively engaged in community infrastructure winterization efforts in collaboration with UNHCR. Winterizing of the public library in Donduseni, working on the rehabilitation of a primary school in Comrat. Initial assessments and preparatory work have been completed, the renovations will start soon.</p> <p><b>Housing and Community-Based Interventions unit</b>, we are currently conducting a housing ecosystem assessment. The goal of this assessment is to identify more durable shelter solutions for the affected population. The preliminary assessments are completed, and stakeholder analysis are now moving on to the data analysis stage. IOM plans to conduct a workshop, tentatively scheduled for the end of November or beginning of December, invitations will be sent to the WG and other partners to attend.</p> <p><b>MLSP</b> – requested that all plan to improve infrastructure of certain facility to coordinate the works with the ministry.</p> <p><b>UNHCR</b> supports MLSP request and emphasizes that BNWG is a platform for sharing information among partners and coordinating the activities and will ensure all relevant information is conveyed within the working group and further will be communicated to the ministry.</p> <p>The RRP 2024 consultation workshop was conducted, involving participants from different sectors. The outcome of the workshop provided a general overview of activities and indicators for 2024. While not all details were included, this information will be provided for developing the work plan for the Basic Needs Working Group in 2024.</p>	<p>MLSP – request to share all plans regarding infrastructure in RACs</p>
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<p><b>5.Training in RACs</b></p>	<p><b>Project submissions for 2024 have been received</b>, and a thorough review is ongoing. Bilateral meetings will be scheduled to discuss targets, budgets, and coordination among partners participating in the same activities. This aims to ensure a clear and coordinated approach for 2024.</p> <p>DRC, ACTED, and IOM in joint efforts are involved in the development of training materials for RAC managers, including handbooks, manuals, and toolbox resources. This work within the WG will continue into the next year, providing valuable support to those involved.</p>	
<p><b>Next meeting</b></p>	<p><b>27<sup>th</sup> November 2023</b></p>	