

Post Distribution Monitoring | Cash for Protection in 2023

Summary

Since the beginning of the full-scale of the war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, over 2.1 million refugees and third country nationals from Ukraine have crossed into Slovakia, primarily women and children, as well as older persons, including persons with specific needs and disabilities. As of 3 March 2024, a total of [139,775](#)¹ of them had applied for temporary protection (TP) in the country, and 117,226 had been granted status and currently residing in Slovakia. continued to hold Temporary Protection Status in Slovakia.

The UNHCR, UN Refugee Agency and the UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund, have been supporting with cash-based interventions since 2022 Ukrainian refugees, as well as third-country nationals and other persons affected by the ongoing war in Ukraine, and in addition other refugees and asylum seekers in Slovakia who face protection risks or who are in a situation of extreme vulnerability. This UNHCR-UNICEF cash support continues to complement government-led schemes. In particular, in 2023, UNHCR and UNICEF implemented cash programmes with the aim to support households in situations of high vulnerability under Cash for Protection and Cash for Development and Education.

UNHCR's Cash for Protection was provided to vulnerable individuals and families to minimize protection risks, and support with their basic needs. In addition, it aimed to ensure that beneficiaries of cash support could access services in the national social protection system, were also linked to additional services they may need, and included in the national social protection system. The established [eligibility criteria](#)² were the following:

- a) **over 60 years old** without sufficient family support,
- b) family member with a **disability** or **serious medical condition**,
- c) **a single parent** or **a caregiver**,
- d) **parents of a child/children below three years of age**, or
- e) **single pregnant** or **mother with small children**.

Priority was given to individuals and families with vulnerabilities supported by the Slovak Labour Office, as well as newly arrived individuals and families under one or multiple stated criteria. The amount was calculated based on the number of family members and their ages and vulnerabilities. The amount was aligned with the social assistance scheme of the Slovak Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

UNICEF's Cash for Development and Education represented a multi-purpose cash assistance provided to child carers to cover childcare and education-related costs. The provided support amounted to 150 EUR for every registered child (0-17 years old) in a household. That support scheme was provided twice in 2023.

With the aim to monitor quality as part of its commitment to support and ensure accountability to affected population, UNHCR and UNICEF conducted a Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) Survey to assess cash impact on various livelihood domains. The survey findings are organized in 10 sections: (1) Methodology of the report, (2) Demographic composition of the sample, (3) Reception and expenditure of the cash assistance, (4) Risk in accessing cash assistance, (5) Problems during receiving/withdrawing or spending the cash assistance, (6) Markets and Prices, (7) Satisfaction, (8) Outcomes, (9) Coping mechanisms, (10) Accountability to Affected Population.

This PDM report focuses on evaluating the cash distribution implemented in 2023, which was delivered by UNHCR and UNICEF.

1. Methodology

Using a structured survey, UNHCR and UNICEF conducted phone interviews with a total of 148 households between 3 to 10 November 2023. The households were randomly selected from UNHCR and UNICEF cash beneficiary database from all 8 regions in Slovakia where beneficiaries reside. A buffer of 267 contacts was provided to account for potential non-respondents.

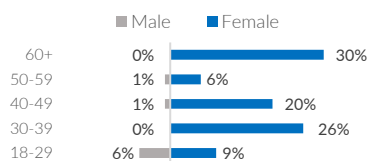
¹ Data source: [Slovakia Ministry of Interior](#)

² [UNHCR-UNICEF 2023 Cash assistance criteria](#)

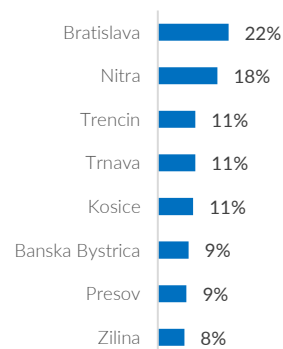
2. Demographics³

The average seen in the graphs, the average household (HH) size in the surveyed sample was 2,4 consisting of 348 individuals in HH assessed. In terms of gender disaggregation, **91% of all respondents were women**. The main group represented are women over 60 (30%), followed by 30-39 (26%) and 40-49 (20%) age groups. Female HH members comprised 65% of all HH members surveyed. The highest share of male HH members is between 5-17y (17% out of 35% male HH members in the total sample). The largest share of respondents is in Bratislava (22%) and Nitra (18%) regions.

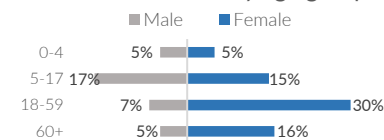
Respondents by age group



Respondents by region



Household members by age group



3. Reception and expenditure of Cash Assistance

Logistics

The third section aims to better understand the reception and expenditure of cash assistance. **The average amount received was 218 EUR per HH**. The share of respondents which were not sure if they received the correct amount of cash assistance was 37%. Regarding timing, 76% of beneficiaries reported receiving cash assistance on time.

Expected amount received



Amount received on time



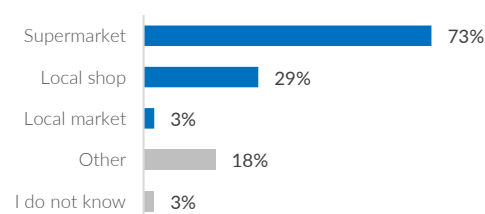
Expenditure

The top options of locations respondents chose to spend cash included supermarkets (73%) or local shops (29%).

More than one-third of respondents (39%) reported having no other source of income except UNICEF-UNHCR cash assistance.

Apart from the CBI assistance other source of income reported by respondents was mainly formal income/salary reported by 20% of respondents, while 29% of the respondents were receiving governmental support or pension, at the time of the survey. Furthermore 11% of respondents reported receiving cash assistance from NGOs/Agencies, 6% having informal income, 3% receiving material support from NGOs/Agencies and 3% receiving support from friends and family members.

Main locations where CASH was spent

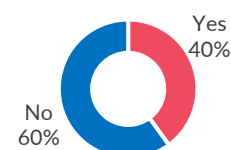


4. Risk & Challenges

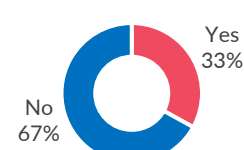
Registration

In this section, the risk perception and safety concerns of respondents during the registration process and access and use of the cash assistance, were evaluated. **The majority of respondents (99%) did not experience a negative behaviour during registration.** In terms of noted challenges, a total of 40% of respondents reported traveling over one hour to register for cash assistance. It is worth to mention that **mobile teams** were deployed as well to facilitate the registration activities in remotely areas.

Travel more than 1 hour



Travel to a different region



³ Source of data processed in this report: [PDM Analysis](#)

Collecting and Spending Cash

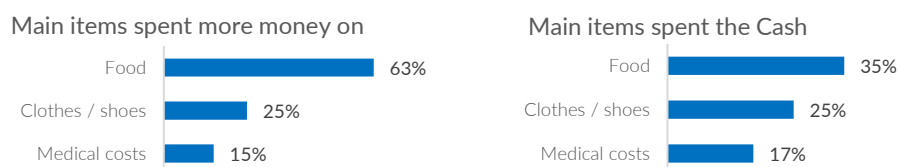
Regarding spending the money, only 1% of respondents experienced poor quality of service and 2% reported a refusal to be served by the service provider. None of respondents indicated risks related to collecting cash, keeping it at home or spending it. In one case, the respondent experienced a challenging situation due to lack of knowledge of the Slovak language. In 6% of cases, respondents reported that the registered person was not available to collect money. All respondents managed to resolve their problem.

All respondents reported NOT experiencing any risk when collecting Cash

5. Markets and Prices

This PDM aimed to receive information about the respondents' experiences purchasing goods in the market. The majority of the respondents (95%) were able to find needed products in the market and shops, and 84% reported finding the right quality of products. A total of **31% of respondents felt that prices increased over 4 weeks** prior to the survey, while 34% did not realize such increase. Regional perception differs widely, from 13% perceiving price increase in Kosice to 41% in Trenčín.

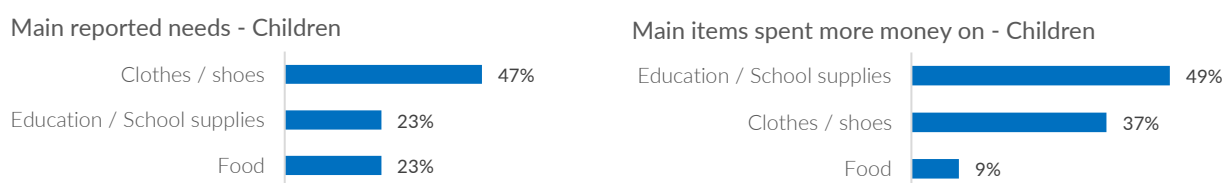
The PDM examined the items households spent more money on (goods/services) in order of importance. Respondents confirmed that the top three items they spent cash assistance on were food, clothes, and medical costs. Similar results were obtained regarding the most common items respondents spent their cash on.



Important to underline that as per the PDM findings the households used also to spend part of the received cash assistance for basic need items: such as diapers but also for kindergartens/ English courses. Finally, 84% of the respondents reported finding the right quality of products in the markets, while 15% found the right quality of products only in most cases or not at all; mainly on food on sale and other items with reduced prices (discount).

Market & Prices – Children

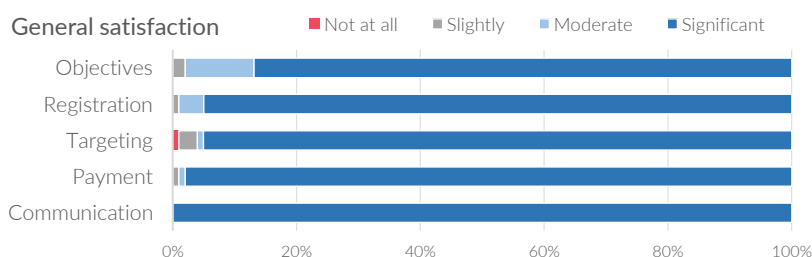
The most common needs of children reported spending more money on included: clothing and shoes (47%), education (23%), and food (23%). Respondents with children reported that the top three expenditures on children were regarding their education and school supplies, clothes/shoes, and then food were ranked as the third option.



Clothes and shoes ranked as the third most important expenditure in the previous PDM. It seems that the increasing priority reflects the arrival of winter in November. Compared to the previous PDM, where the top priority was education, this time, it was scooped by clothes and shoes. Food always remains the top expenditure item for all beneficiary groups, as in all previous PDMs.

6. Satisfaction

The PDM received also feedback on the satisfaction levels under 5 main topics of Cash Assistance provision in Slovakia. **In general, the satisfaction level was very high, as shown by the percentages below.**



It is important to highlight at this point, a few of the main reasons reported dissatisfaction regarding the **payment**. Top three reasons were: not receiving enough funds after giving birth to a child, not being able to cover all expenditures, while being sick and in need of a treatment. Regarding the **registration** the main reason of dissatisfaction was the lack of adequate support by the staff. Lastly, regarding the **targeting** for this cash assistance, a recommendation received by the respondents was to tailor the eligibility criteria so more displaced persons could receive support.

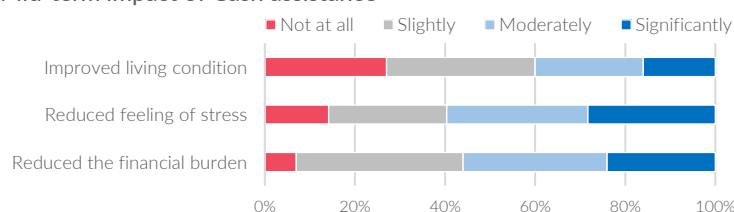
7. Outcomes

Short/Mid-term impact

The survey sought to understand the effect of cash assistance on the respondents in key areas: living conditions, reduced feelings of stress, and reduced financial burden. The responses were categorized by level of impact into: "slightly", "moderately", "significantly", and "not at all".

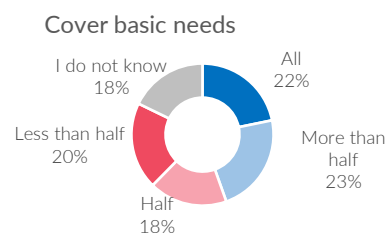
Regarding the **living conditions**: 73% reported improved living conditions due to the cash assistance, against 27% that reported no improvement, "not at all", which was a significant drop from previous PDM (41%). Moving to **reduced feeling of stress** 85% of the respondents reported a positive impact due to the provided cash assistance.

Mid-term impact of Cash assistance



The regularity of income makes people feel secure that they will be able to cover their needs in the following months. Finally, respondents replied on how receiving cash assistance **reduced the financial burden, with 37% feeling a "slight" effect, 32% "moderate," 24% "significant," and 7% "not at all."**

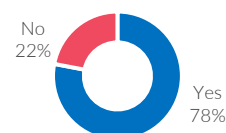
The assessment also focused on understanding to what extent HH were able to cover their basic needs. Over a fifth (22%) of respondents (an increase from 12% in the previous PDM) were able to cover all basic needs; 23% were able to cover more than half of basic needs. 18% of respondents reported that they could cover only half, while 20% of respondents could cover less than half of their basic needs. 18% of respondents did not know.



Long-term impact

The PDM demonstrated very interesting results on respondents' access to different financial means such as bank accounts and/or mobile wallet, with positive response up to 78% of respondents, while 22% did not. That percentage decreased to 61% on respondents over 60 years old, and up to 88% for respondents between 18-59 years old. In addition, 68% reported not having the means needed to earn a living.

Have a bank account/mobile wallet



An additional long-term impact this PDM examined, was alternative means of income with 32% reported having the necessary means. Further analysis shows that out of the remaining 68% of respondents reported not having the means needed such as livelihoods, assets. In addition, 91% mentioned not having access to a loan or micro-credits. Out of those: 38% had a salary, 24% had a job, 14% got help from relatives and 14% were receiving a pension, at the time of the survey.

Have the means needed

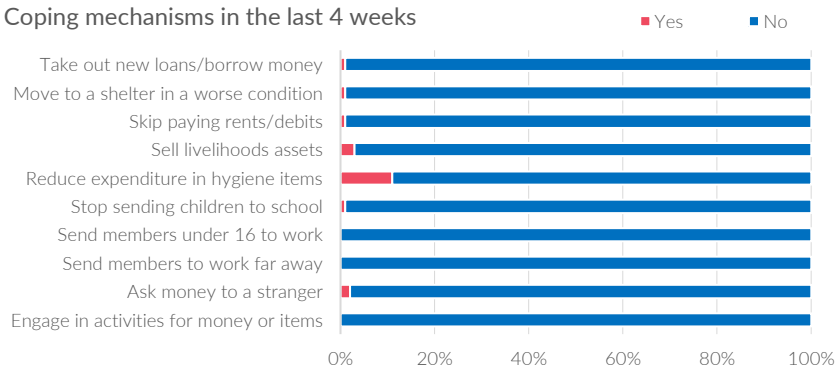


8. Accountability to affected population

Coping mechanisms

During the survey, respondents were asked whether if in the four weeks prior to data collection they had resorted to any coping mechanism in order to meet their basic needs. Approximately 11% of respondents reported reduced expenditure on hygiene items; 3% of respondents reported selling of livelihood assets; 1% stopped sending children to school; 1% stopped sending children to school; 2% asked money from a stranger; 1% skipped paying rent/debts.

Coping mechanisms in the last 4 weeks



Food substitute as a coping mechanism

Respondents provided correspondingly on the questions related to food substitution or saving on food, with 55% of the respondents mentioning that continued to rely on cheaper food for 5 days a week in comparison with 41% of respondents who did not engage this practice. It is important to emphasize that apart of relying on cheaper products most of the respondents (91%) did not use any of coping mechanisms mentioned above.

Complaint Feedback Mechanism (CFM)

There is a consistence on feedback when it comes to awareness about the joint UNHCR-UNICEF Helpline, with 76% of the respondents knowing about it. It is important to highlight that in this sample a 36% of respondents were also 60+ years old, which explains the relevant responses and the acknowledgement of the Helpline. Hence, 44% reported that they obtain relevant information needed about cash assistance from relatives/neighbours or friends; 23% from social media (23%) and 9% reported from UNHCR/NGOs staff.

A total of 83% mentioned they know how to file a complaint, and out of 76% that needed to file one, 92% managed to do so successfully. Very positive feedback is that 100% of the respondents reported that the information provided by the joint UNHCR-UNICEF Helpline was clear.



All respondents reported the information provided was clear

Because of the previous point, the joint UNHCR-UNICEF Helpline indicated from the 100% of the responses as the most preferred channel for CFM, with reception centres and social media sharing a 2% out of the total responses.



All respondents indicated UNHCR-UNICEF Helpline as their preferred channel for CFM

The preferred assistance modality for future cash assistance programs, remains in the significant percentage of 94% the support by cash, followed by 6% on a combination of cash and in-kind assistance.

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