In

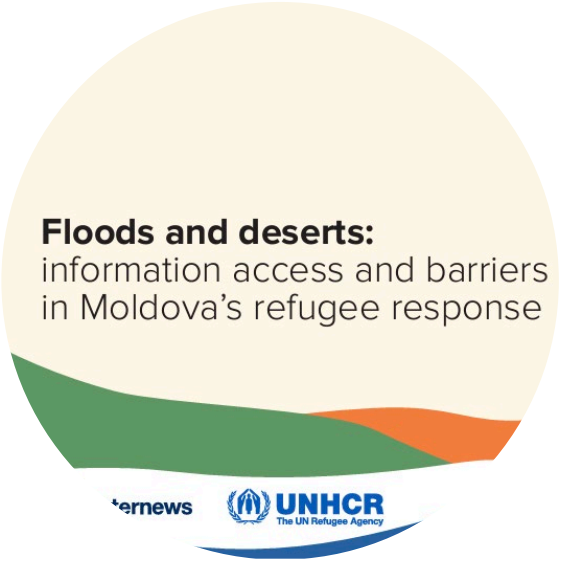
Ukraine refugee response Information Ecosystem Assessment #2

Focused on AAP platforms, trust and social cohesion

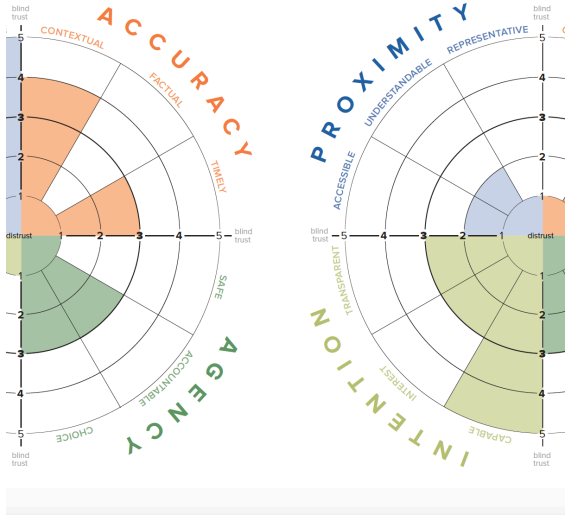
UNHCR / Internews

Assessment objectives

Across 4 locations: Chișinău, Bălţi, Cahul and Comrat



Current information dynamics of refugee and host populations - how this has changed since since 2022.



Trust, access and engagement dynamics of AAP platforms / mechanisms, particularly for vulnerable / at risk groups.

Understand behaviours around seeking / sharing sensitive or complex information.

Perceptions and coverage in Moldovan media of Ukrainian refugees and the response

Methodology – data collection

Across 4 locations: Chișinău, Bălți, Cahul and Comrat

18 Key informant interviews (Internews)

- AAP partners / Information platforms
  - Including Dopomoga, Green Line, Laolalta
- Media editorial teams

Survey (iData)

- Refugees – 388 respondents
- Host communities – 195 respondents

Media analysis (Internews)

- 15 regional and Chisinau based media outlets

Online social listening (Internews)

- Short term ~1 month
- 209 posts or comments from 13 online groups/pages
- Accompanying media analysis / monitoring

25 Focus Group Discussions (iData) – 225 people

- *Refugees*
  - People with disabilities and carers
  - Older people
  - Women with children
  - Young people
  - Roma people
  - Men
  - General
- *Moldovans / host communities*
- *AAP and information actors*
  - Volunteers / staff at information / community centres
  - Volunteers / staff working on hotlines
  - Volunteers / staff moderating online groups

Recommendations + related findings

AAP / CFM related recommendations

1. **Create and build on participatory opportunities for communities to engage in service design, decision making and sharing of complaints and feedback**. Report back to communities on changes made a result of their participation is essential.
2. **Develop or strengthen networks of community members (refugees and host communities) who can share information from trusted sources through community networks in social media.**
    - Provide digital literacy training and support to guide safe practices across online networks of people
    - Special emphasis on including older people
3. **Prioritise sharing of social media cards and multimedia content through community-run social media**
    - Develop content for and **with** those groups in diverse and accessible formats such as short audio and video recordings, in Ukrainian, Russian and Romanian. Include clear links to access more information (online, by phone, face to face).
    - Use these mechanisms for planned information campaigns, but also for surges in information needs, for example when social listening efforts identify circulating misinformation or disinformation narratives.

Related findings:

Feedback ≠ Participation - Humanitarian complaints and feedback mechanisms are accessible and coordinated, but there is low participation of communities. More open, discussion-based opportunities to provide input and participation are needed

Preference for community-run information spaces

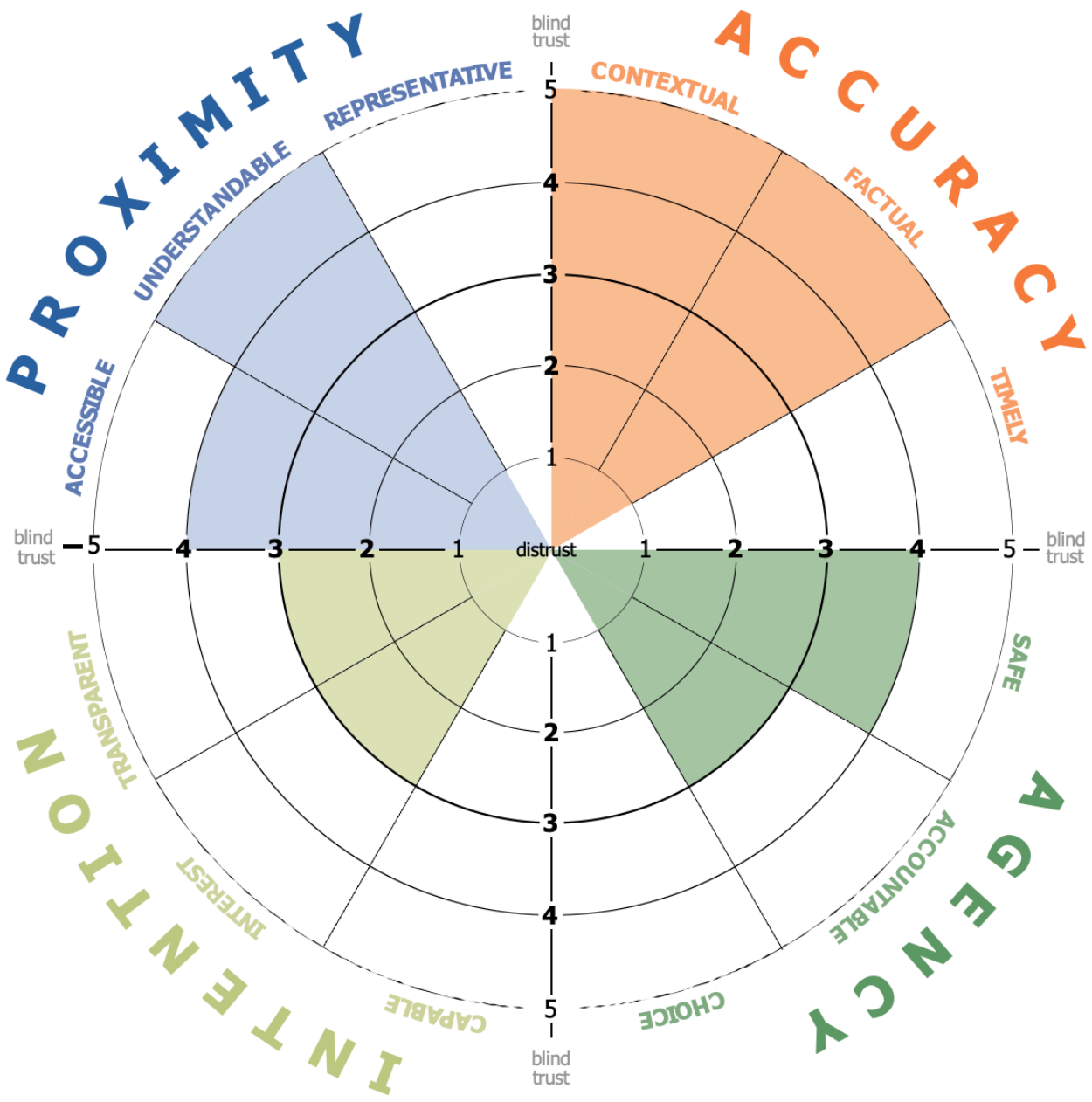
Does my feedback make a difference? Communities feel they have little say in how services are designed and delivered.

There are strong referral practices and responses to *individuals* making complaints or asking questions, but not general feedback loops in response to assessments etc.

Need for inter-agency sharing of feedback and complaints data

AAP in community integration efforts: Government complaints and feedback mechanisms are not accessible or known to communities, local authorities *are* perceived to be well-connected to communities and open to complaints and feedback. The active and visible presence of government - both national and local - within AAP mechanisms will be essential in integration and social cohesion efforts.

The Trust Framework – measuring *why* people trust information



Based on survey data, FDGs, KIIs

White segments = no data

Green Line, Dopomoga, Dopomoha, UNHCR social media and Help website, Refugee Accommodation Centres, Local authorities.

Recommendations + related findings

Trust and transparency related recommendations

4. Continue to increase transparency to reduce misinformation and build trust.

- Provide clear information to refugees and host communities about how decisions are made, funding, eligibility criteria
- Plan and resource sharing of findings back to communities from the inception of assessments or research
- Communicate and be transparent about long term plans (including challenges) for refugees and for host communities
- Ensure information is shared in two-way channels where people can ask questions and clarify information.
- Continue to invest in and build on existing social listening and rumour tracking activities to actively respond to misinformation circulating about the aid response.

7. Conduct an awareness campaign (utilising two-way and discussion forum mechanisms) about data privacy, to inform refugees from Ukraine how and why their personal data is stored and managed by authorities. Address misinformation that causes fear of sharing identity details with government or humanitarians, for example, fear of registering due to concerns about being sent back to Ukraine.

Related findings:

Low transparency = low trust

- Perceived transparency around the response has improved slightly, but communities seek more, especially about to aid decision-making
- High risk misinformation narrative around changing eligibility for services + whether authorities can be trusted with refugee's information
- Confusion or inconsistencies in information between sources is sometimes perceived to be intended as deceptive for communities

Does my feedback make a difference? Communities feel there is a low recognition of their agency in the ways they engage with authorities and humanitarians.

In terms of **perceived accuracy, relevance and accessibility of information**, key information sources (humanitarian and government) have established good levels of trust amongst refugee and host populations.

Evidence of strong coordination at local level between humanitarian organisations, community organisations and local services to do outreach to at-risk groups

Dopomoha seen as an accessible information source for young people in particular

Some engagement of refugees as response staff / volunteers, and evidence of great engagement with **Roma Liaisons**

'Understandable information' is the top performing trust element

UNHCR social media seen as one of the more accessible information sources

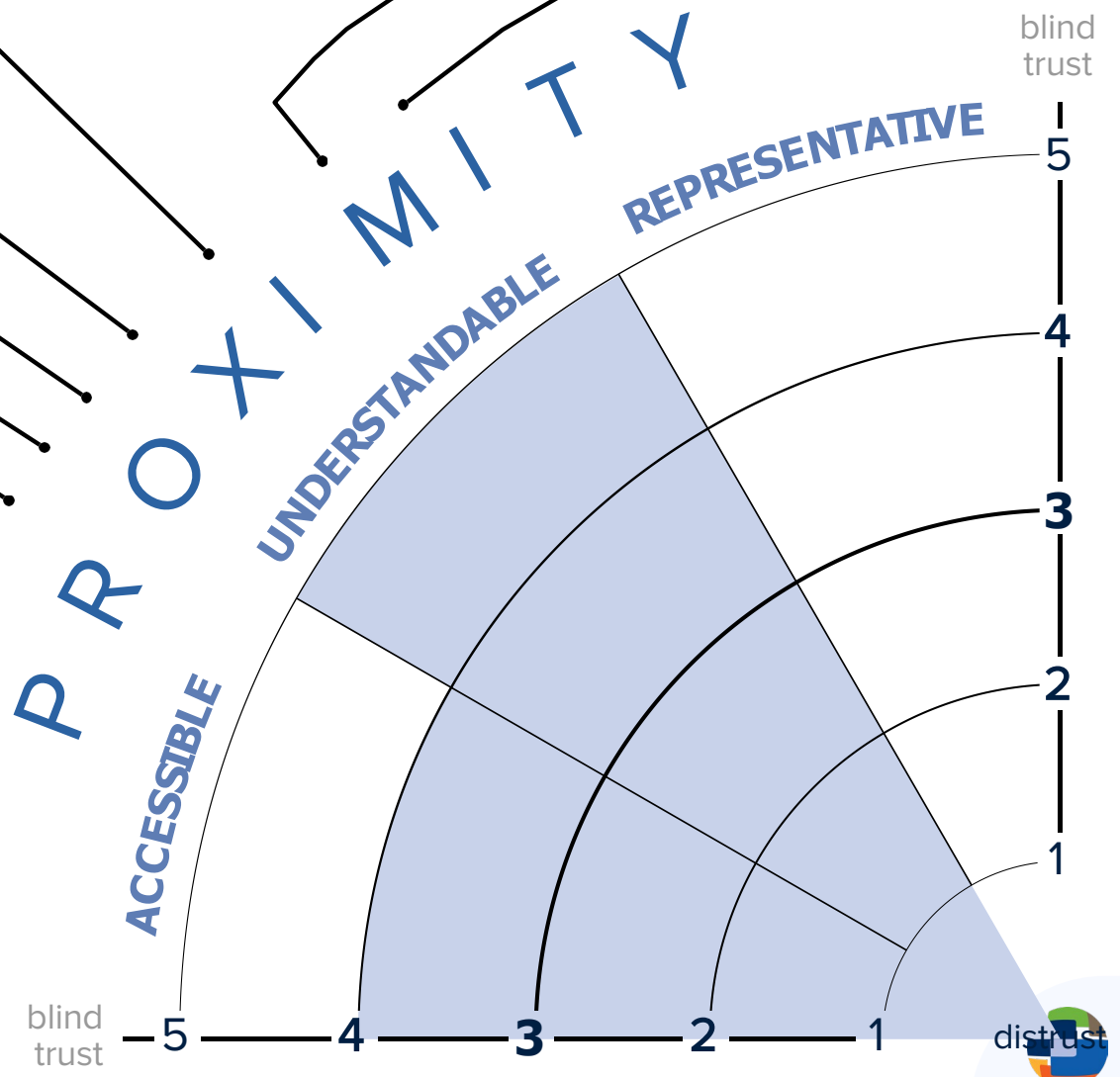
Refugees generally feel **Dopomoga** is well organised and has easy to access information. It is widely used, though 14 percent of refugees aged 60+ said it is not easy to contact the information provider.

RACs are seen as a trusted source in terms of accurate and relevant information for those in accommodations, but were not seen as an accessible service by some women and people with disabilities. Outsiders have the perception that RACs residents receive more accurate and faster info.

Green Line - 72 percent feel this service is easy to contact, with 24 percent saying it is not easy. Online social media listening showed indication of frustration with long call wait times, particularly at points when new information (e.g. regarding cash services eligibility) is released

The Green Line was noted as one of the most trusted sources in terms of accessing information that is easy to understand, and that provides an opportunity to discuss refugee's specific needs

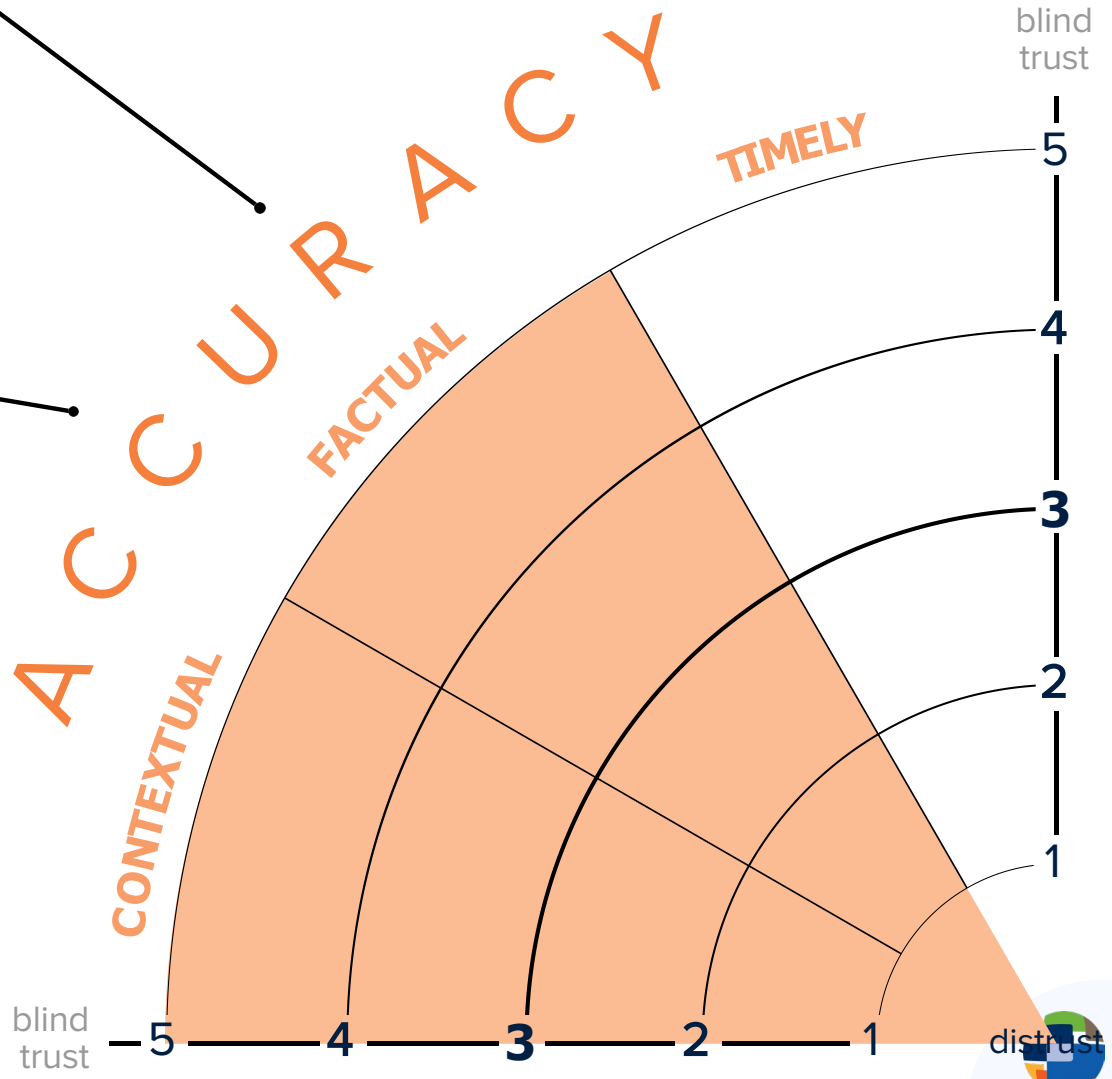
UNHCR Help Website has less recognition as useful and easy to understand information source, and is also less known and accessed than other sources



UNHCR social media is seen as an accurate and relevant source of information, though some refugees see it as a “news” channel, where UNHCR posts stories about the success of their activities, with less actionable information.

Dopomoga rates as one of the highest sources for accuracy and relevance of information, and is, seen to provide particularly valuable information during the first stage of refugees’ arrival in Moldova.

Local authorities are overwhelmingly seen to provide relevant, factually correct, easy to understand and accessible information sources.



At least 13 percent of respondents said they do not feel encouraged to give feedback across all sources. Some sources (such as **UNHCR social media and website, RACs and Local Authorities**) are seen to encourage and facilitate complaints and feedback less that than the average.

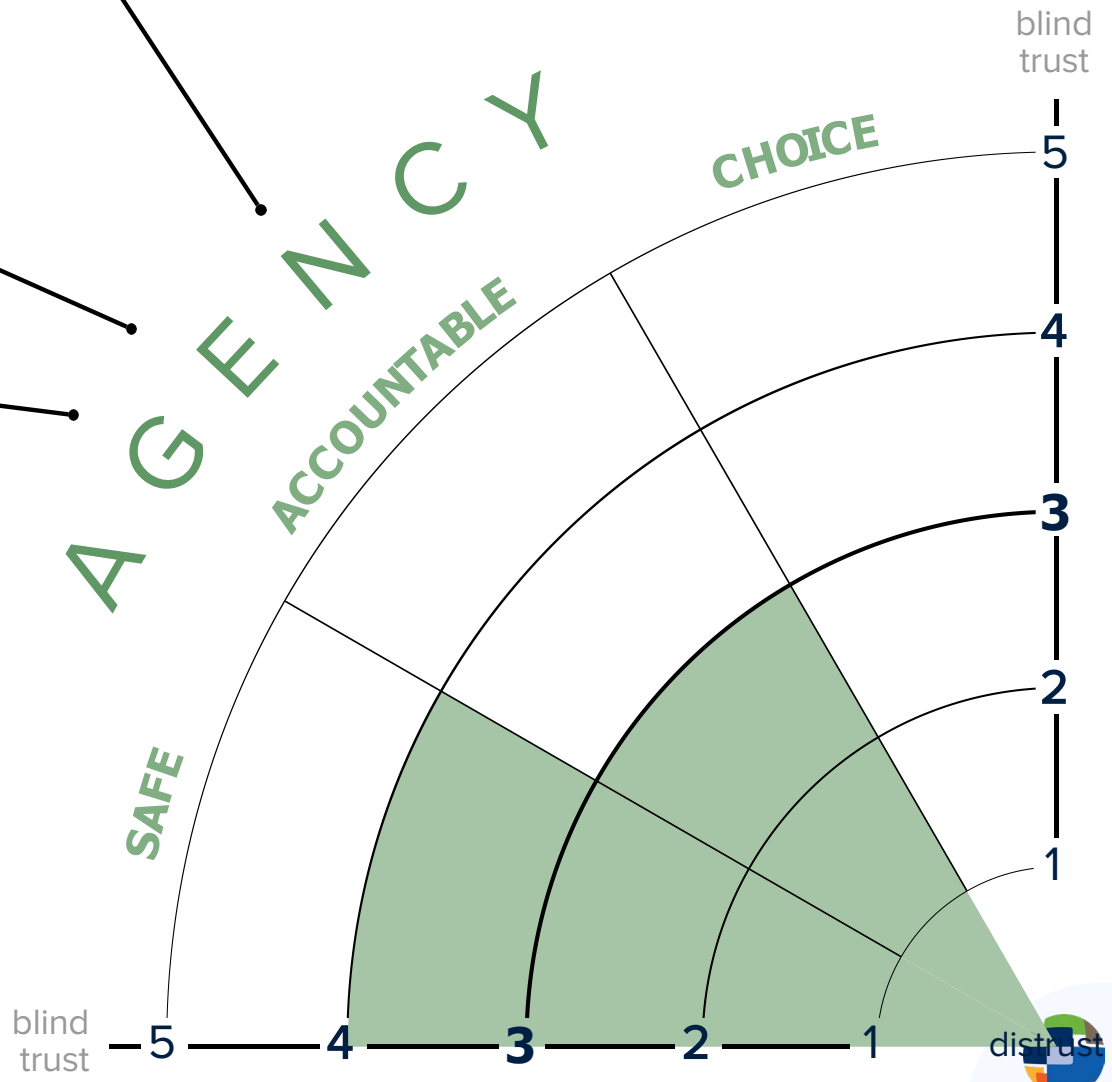
The primary issue with accountability is not perceived encouragement to give feedback or complaints, nor access to do so, but the uptake / use of those mechanisms (see Section 3 of this report).

Many refugees in focus group discussions said they feel there is no point in giving complaints and feedback as it will not make a difference. There is also a general level of exhaustion in participating in surveys and assessments, and poor feedback loop practices by humanitarians and other organisations collecting community data.

Almost 80 percent of respondents feel encouraged to give feedback to **Dopomoga** and **Dopomoha**.

In terms of managing people's privacy and personal data, **Dopomoha, Dopomoga, RACs, UNHCR social media** and **Green Line** as perceived to be safe, but respondents are more unsure about Local Authorities' capacity and intentions in this regard

Roughly 10 percent of respondents consistently do not feel their privacy is protected across each source, which may indicate a small amount of people who do not feel safe in that way, regardless of the source / organisation.

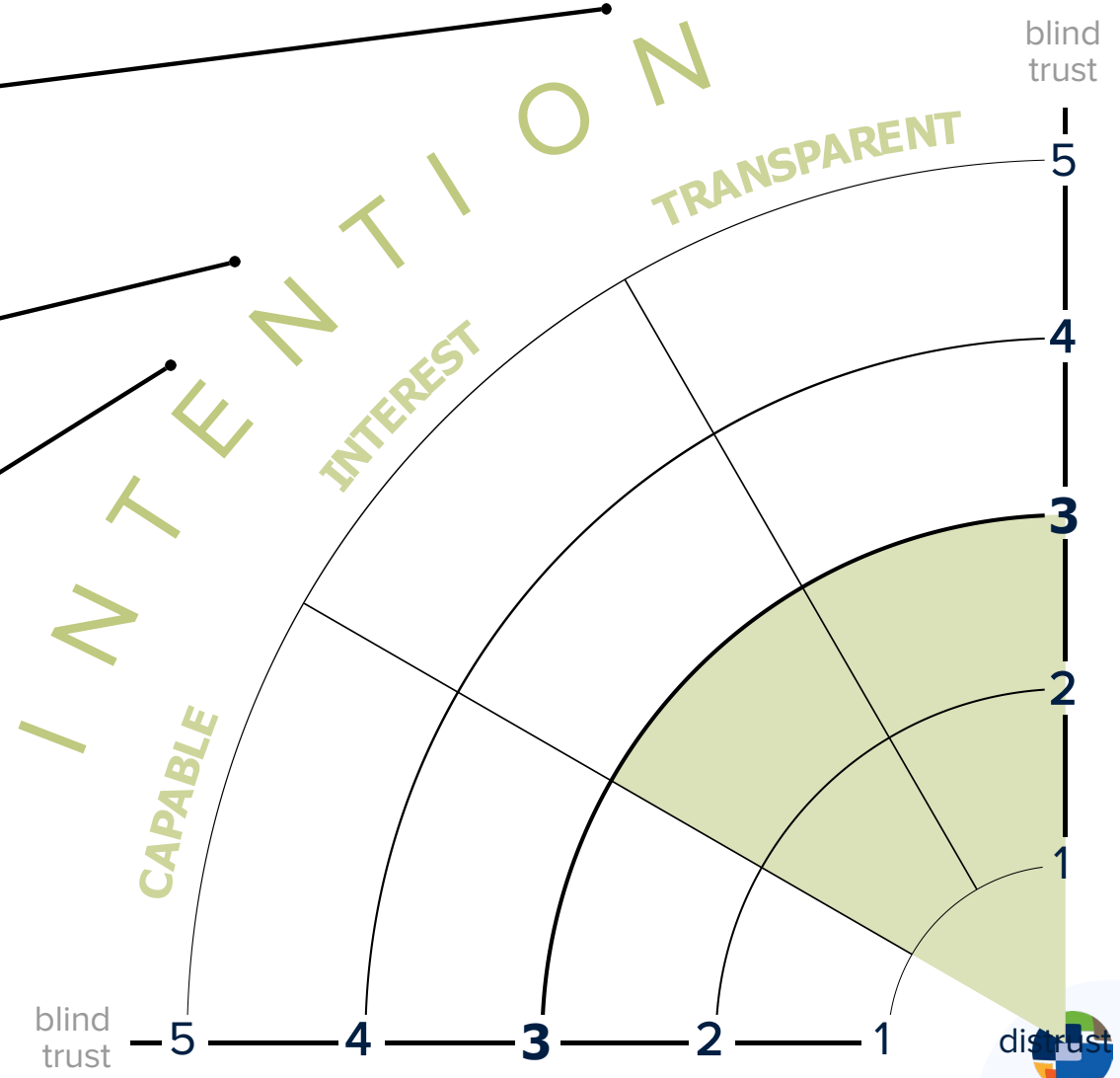


More than half (56 percent) of Moldovan respondents feel transparency levels (which were indicated as unsatisfactory) are the same since the beginning of the refugee influx, or less transparent.

Moldovans in Comrat focus group discussions mentioned that they do not understand why some people are given help and others are not, and generally why people are treated differently in provision of services and aid.

Across all websites and phone lines listed - **Green Line, Domoga, Dopomoha and even UNHCR website and social media**
- people are unsure who is running or controlling the information source. This was generally their lowest score across the framework.

Local authorities source scored one of the highest amongst sources in refugee respondents being clear on who is responsible and accountable for this source (78 percent of refugee respondents).



Recommendations + related findings

Information channels recommendations

5. Prior to the announcement of changes to legislation, eligibility for services, plan for surge capacity of key, two-way information sources (such as phone-lines, and in community centres) and encourage refugees and host communities to use those channels to clarify information. Work with AAP partners to map phone-lines, assess capacity and integrate or further resource hotlines as needed.

Related findings:

More capacity for two-way communication and tailored information

- Perceived accuracy, relevance and accessibility of information is high = good levels of trust in this way
- Two-way information sources such as hotlines that provide individually tailored / 1-1 information - overwhelmed at key times

Information is easier to find, but not for everyone

- Information is more diverse, more specific and helpful, and easier to find now than at the beginning of the response
- Government and humanitarian information campaigns are more coordinated and refined, and have been particularly successful in face-to-face, proactive engagement efforts like Temporary Protection fairs
- Significant challenges in accessing information still exist for certain refugee groups, particularly those who do not or cannot engage online

Recommendations + related findings

Working with media recommendations

6. Create and support efforts to better link media and refugees / refugee services, including around host community concerns.

The media can be a critical tool to support social cohesion efforts and shape perceptions of refugees and the response overall, and should be used to respond to host community questions and concerns about the response, including how response funds are spent and why they are distributed as they are. Efforts could include:

- Conduct roundtable sessions with media outlets and information providers, particularly outside of Chisinau, to increase connections and collaborations between humanitarian, government and media around refugee response issues.
- Collaboratively develop a database of expert sources for media to contact for reports and interviews and allow space for a shared understanding of priorities, processes, and limitations.
- Consider supporting/creating refugee-led media content through dedicated channels that prioritise refugee information priorities and are able to advocate for the needs of the refugee population.

Related findings:

Media coverage benefits from stronger links to humanitarians and civil society

- Information supplied by Government and humanitarian agencies dominates the Moldovan media's reporting on refugee issues
- Quality coverage of refugee issues occurred mostly through support from grants for media and campaigns support
- Journalists are eager for more links with expert sources beyond government, and for workshops to link humanitarians and media (especially in regional areas)

Internews

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

2022-23 STATUS UPDATE Information Ecosystem Assessment Recommendations

Transparency – provide clear information on decisions, priorities, factors for eligibility

2024 - Some examples of this, e.g. live-streaming of the 2024 RRP. However, communication on how decisions are made, is not generally communicated..

Transparency – Ensure information is shared in two-way channels where people can ask questions and clarify information. Hire monitors, host 'live' sessions

2024 - E.g. Laolalta, NCUM, IOM - with 'live' sessions scheduled in response to monitoring social media and CFM.

Transparency – Continue rumour tracking – Use identified rumours as an early warning system for community information gaps, misperceptions

This occurs. Laolalta InfoUnit bilaterally shares analysis with agencies + through the AAP TF. This has resulted in action on early identification of information gaps and needs.

Transparency – ensure adequate data security practices, and clearly explain to refugees how their personal data will be protected

2024 - There continues to be a lack of awareness in communities about how their personal data is protected. This recommendation is still relevant in 2024.

Transparency – training on content moderation, reporting of online risks, information literacy, fact checking + verification techniques for admins engaged on private communication channels.

2024 - This has not happened in a systemised way, though there are strong practices in place and developing amongst humanitarian organisations and CSOs. This recommendation is still relevant..

Accessible communication Offer information in Russian and Ukrainian where possible, particularly for written materials.

2024 - This is happening. Some refugees indicate they do not receive information or engage with services in their preferred language, so this should continue to be monitored alongside integration efforts.

Accessible communication – use different formats and channels, tailor information for at-risk / marginalised groups

2024 - this is happening, but, though there have been specific efforts targeted to undocumented men, anxieties and fears exist that still impact info access and engagement.

Accessible communication Communicate clearly to the Moldovan community about services they are also eligible to access while also highlighting any relevant eligibility criteria.

2024 - Positive feedback from Moldovan communities on this. Efforts should continue alongside integration efforts, especially re eligibility criteria and decisions around allocation of aid money

Accessible communication – Share information relevant for older people in digital spaces, so relatives and friends can help transmit information to them.

2024 - This has occurred, for example, promoting mobile outreach opportunities for temporary protection registration and cash services.

Accessible communication - Identify areas where Ukrainian youth may be eligible but unaware of services, activities and opportunities offered by Moldovan government and NGOs. .

2024 - There are no apparent increased or systematic efforts in this area, so this recommendation is still relevant .

2022-23 STATUS UPDATE CONTINUED

Information Ecosystem Assessment Recommendations

Accessible communication – Ensure up to date information about your services is included in the new Services Advisor map to inform refugees, volunteers and other service providers.

2024 - There is low communication around and public engagement in the Service Advisor Map, so this recommendation is still relevant.

Shift the power – Build processes to regularly listen to community needs and preferences and adapt programmes based on the feedback received.

2024 - There are great examples of online social listening informing adaptation of programmes, however these efforts need to be further embedded and linked to feedback to communities.

Shift the power – Report back to refugees on the result of research conducted with them to allow them to use findings to advocate for their own needs and to address survey fatigue.

2024 - Needs to be strengthened. There is significant evidence of survey fatigue in communities, and refugees and host communities indicated a lack of trust that their inputs into research / assessments make any difference.

Shift the power – Recruit a representative group of refugees to participate in planning processes, such as the RRP, to ensure programming is accessible, trustworthy and effective.

2024 - Local consultations with communities occurred to input into the RRP development. However, this could be further embedded.

Feedback + complaints – information campaigns to explain the purpose of feedback. Address misperceptions that providing negative feedback could impact individual access to services.

2024 - This has occured with support from the AAP TF, however use of feedback and complaint mechanisms by refugees and host communities is limited..

Feedback + complaints - Provide clear evidence of where complaints and feedback have directly contributed to changes in aid responses to foster a culture of feedback.

2024 - As with social listening, there are a few great examples of CFM informing adaptation of services. However, this is not systematic or embedded practice, so this recommendation is still relevant.

Feedback + complaints – Provide regular training to phoneline operators in cultural- + trauma-informed communication techniques to ensure they can be sensitive to requests and feedback.

2024 - Though this took place within specific agencies, there are still some gaps within key phone line services, so this recommendation still applies.

Feedback + complaints - Centralise CFM. Share centralised feedback data with humanitarian coordination mechanisms so more agencies can collaboratively respond to overall community feedback and perceptions.

2024 - Insufficient sharing of CFM data bilaterally between agencies. Considering donor limitations, this rec. can be reframed to emphasise the need for better sharing of CFM data into a centralised system

Temporary protection communication – Use a variety of information formats and two-way communications to inform about TPS, to ensure wide reaching access to this crucial information.

2024 - This has occurred through TP fairs, mobile outreach, online social listening and adapted practices in response to CFM around TPS.

Support media – be ready to answer questions from Moldovan media about the refugee response and create forums where media and humanitarians can regularly interact and build trust.

Some project-funded efforts sucessful, but journalists are still seeking better connections with and access to information from humanitarian services in particular.

Support media – Encourage and support media organisations to hire content creators from the refugee community.

2024 - This has occurred in part via UNESCO project funding, but it is unclear whether this will be sustained long-term.

Questions …

- Assessment report (English) released early next week (week of 18th March)
- Romanian and Russian versions released late next week

Contact:

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