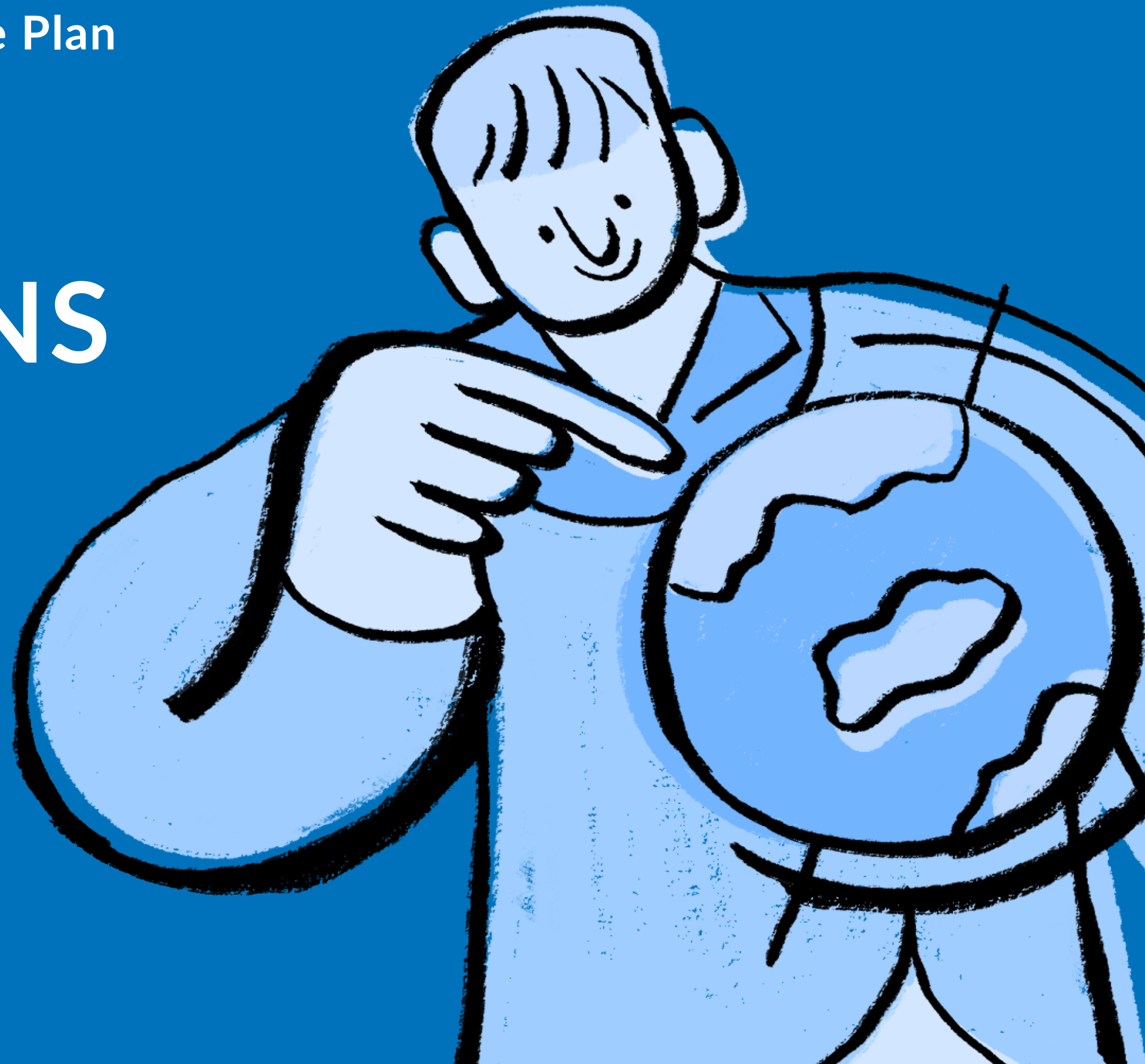


2025-2026 Moldova Refugee Response Plan

LOCAL CONSULTATIONS REPORT



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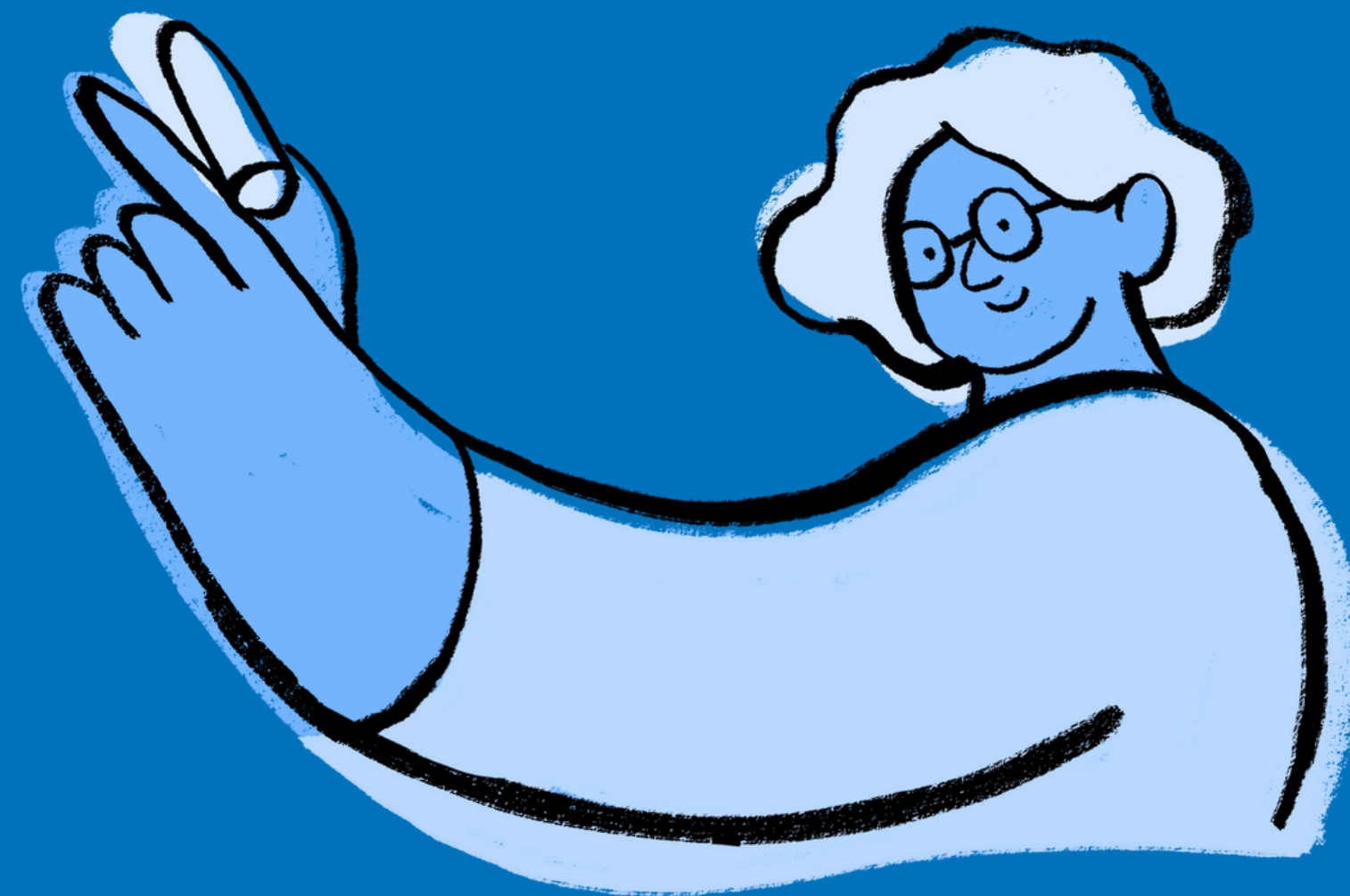
Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	03	CAUSENI.....	10
METHODOLOGY.....	04	OTACI.....	15
PROBLEM TREE ANALYSIS.....	05	BALTI.....	20
PARTICIPATION.....	06	CAHUL.....	25
PARTICIPATION FIGURES.....	07	COMRAT.....	28
FINDINGS FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS.....	08	TIRASPOL.....	32
		UNGHENI.....	37
		FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS.....	41

Introduction

Between July and August 2024, UNHCR and partners conducted local consultations across seven municipalities in Moldova to inform the 2025-2026 Refugee Response Plan (RRP) and the development of local action plans as part of the Cities of Solidarity initiative. These consultations, organized through Local Refugee Coordination Forums (LRCF), brought together over 100 stakeholders representing government authorities, humanitarian and development partners, civil society organizations, and refugee-led organizations to assess challenges and develop solutions across key sectors including social protection, economic inclusion, healthcare, and education.

The consultations revealed important structural challenges affecting both refugee and host communities. Local social protection systems face capacity constraints and resource limitations, particularly as humanitarian assistance decreases. Housing affordability and availability remain critical concerns across all locations. Healthcare services are strained by medical staff shortages and limited infrastructure, while education systems struggle with low refugee enrollment rates due to language barriers, examination requirements, and insufficient support services and infrastructure. Economic inclusion is hampered by skills mismatches, language barriers, legal restrictions on self-employment, and limited childcare options, leading to high rates of informal employment among refugees.



Introduction

To address these challenges, stakeholders identified several priority solutions focusing on strengthening national systems while building local capacity. These include expanding social protection services coverage through stronger collaboration between public institutions and civil society, developing affordable housing infrastructure and programmes, enhancing healthcare facilities, improving educational infrastructure, and creating employment incentives for businesses. Particular emphasis was placed on training social workers, healthcare staff, and teachers to better serve refugee populations and support their inclusion process, while also strengthening municipal service delivery capabilities. The proposed solutions prioritize sustainable, locally-owned solutions that benefit both refugee and host communities. Participants also highlighted the importance of sustained engagement from government at all levels, continued international support during the transition period, and active participation of civil society organizations and refugee-led initiative groups.

The consultations reflect UNHCR's commitment to localization and the progressive transition of coordination responsibilities to national and local structures. By engaging local actors in planning and priority-setting, the process supports the pursuit of sustainable solutions that strengthen national systems and advance Moldova's development goals while promoting the protection and inclusion of refugees.



Methodology

The methodology employed for the 2025-2026 RRP local consultations involved participatory discussions with a diverse range of refugee response actors, including local authorities, social workers, civil society organizations, international and local NGOs, volunteers, and refugees. The participants were divided into four groups –each one discussing a different thematic area– with the objective of identifying challenges and develop solutions collaboratively. The areas addressed through group discussions under this methodology included:

- **Social protection and cohesion**
- **Socio-economic integration**
- **Health and psychosocial support**
- **Education**

These area-focused discussions were guided by the completion of a problem tree analysis per sector. To ensure the analysis was grounded and relevant, participants identified several problems in their local context, from which they chose one to explore further by identifying its root causes and effects. Participants were then asked to propose solutions to address or mitigate the problem, prioritizing three solutions addressing identified root causes and effects.

In this final phase, participants conducted a barrier and enabler analysis, identifying potential obstacles and enablers for each of the three proposed solutions. Group discussions then focused on overcoming key barriers and leveraging enablers, and identifying additional actions needed to support an effective and impactful response.

No	Location	Date
1	Causeni	July 17th Wednesday
2	Otaci	July 23th Tuesday
3	Balti	July 24th Wednesday
4	Cahul	August 1st Tuesday
5	Comrat	6 August Tuesday
6	Tiraspol	8 August Thursday
7	Ungheni	9 August Friday

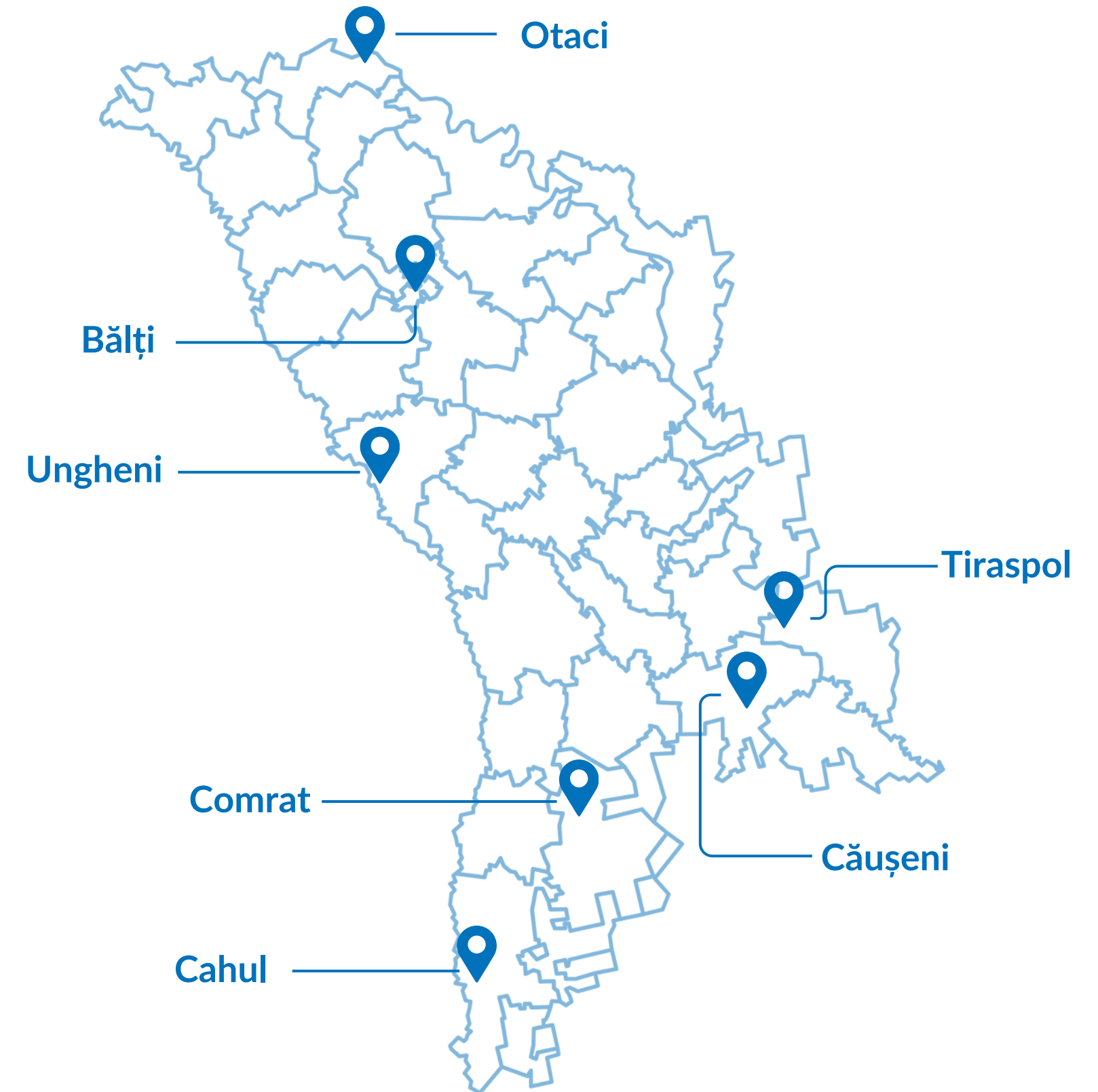
Geographic Scope

Local consultation workshops were held in seven municipalities across Moldova:

- *Bălți*
- *Căușeni*
- *Cahul*
- *Comrat*
- *Otaci*
- *Tiraspol*
- *Ungheni*

These locations were selected based on existing Local Refugee Coordination Forums (LRCF), which were established in areas with significant refugee populations and/or near main border crossing points.

The selection of meeting locations prioritized regional representation and accessibility for participants. To ensure coverage of border regions, the Otaci workshop included participants from other northern areas, while the Căușeni workshop incorporated representatives from Palanca and Ștefan Vodă.



Participation

The local consultations brought together over 100 participants representing diverse stakeholders including refugees, host community members, international organizations, local and national civil society organizations, and public authorities engaged in the refugee response.

To ensure meaningful dialogue and support the RRP transition strategy, participation prioritized local organizations and municipal authorities. Refugee-led organizations, women-led organizations, and faith-based organizations were actively engaged across all locations. Each session was limited to 20 participants to facilitate effective group discussions and ensure all voices could be heard.

Local NGOs with expertise in implementing humanitarian and community-based initiatives.

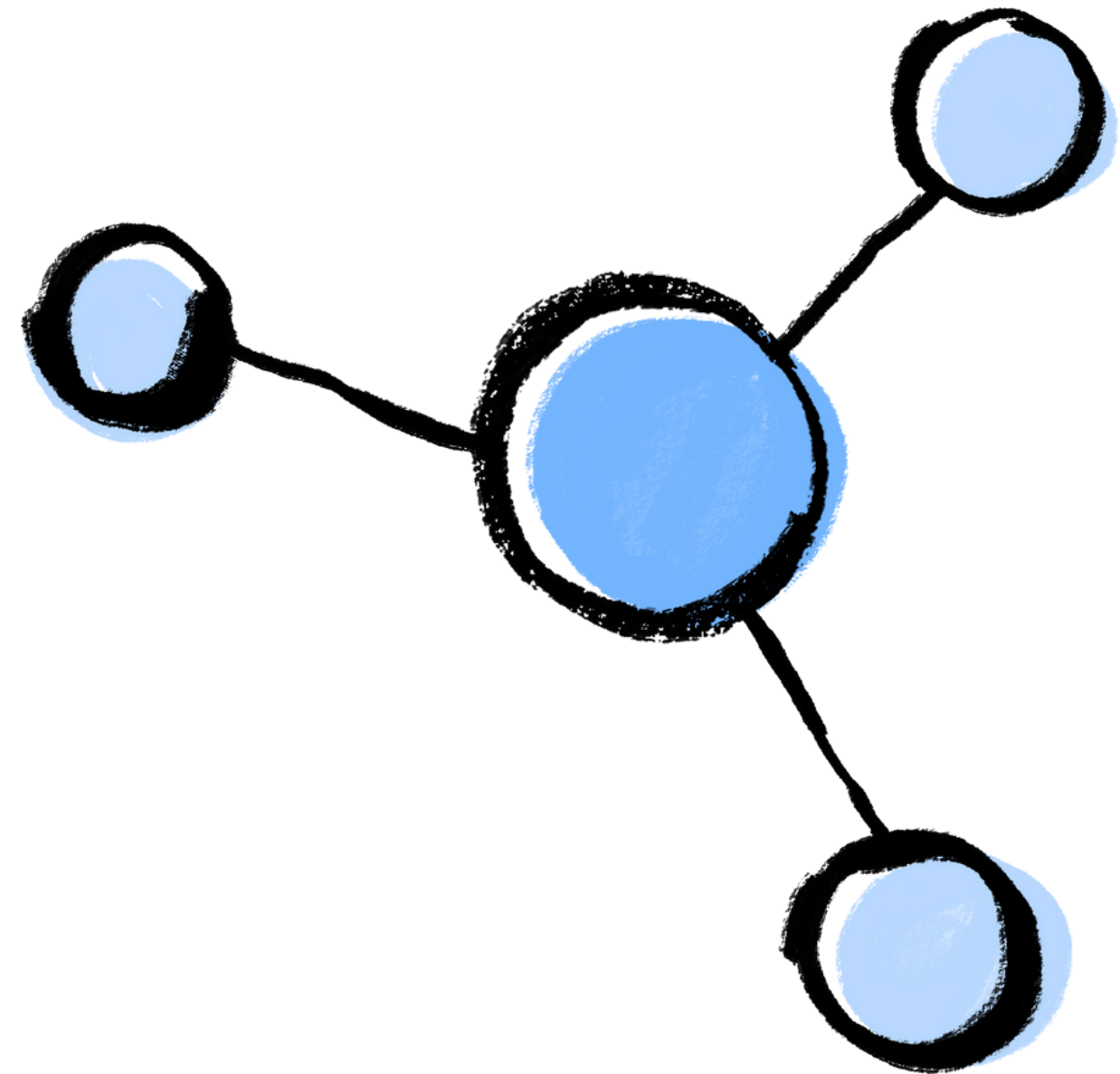
National NGOs engaging in the refugee response activities.

UN Agencies and INGOs engaged in refugee-response activities.

Refugee populations accommodated in various types of settlements.

Host community members who contribute to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

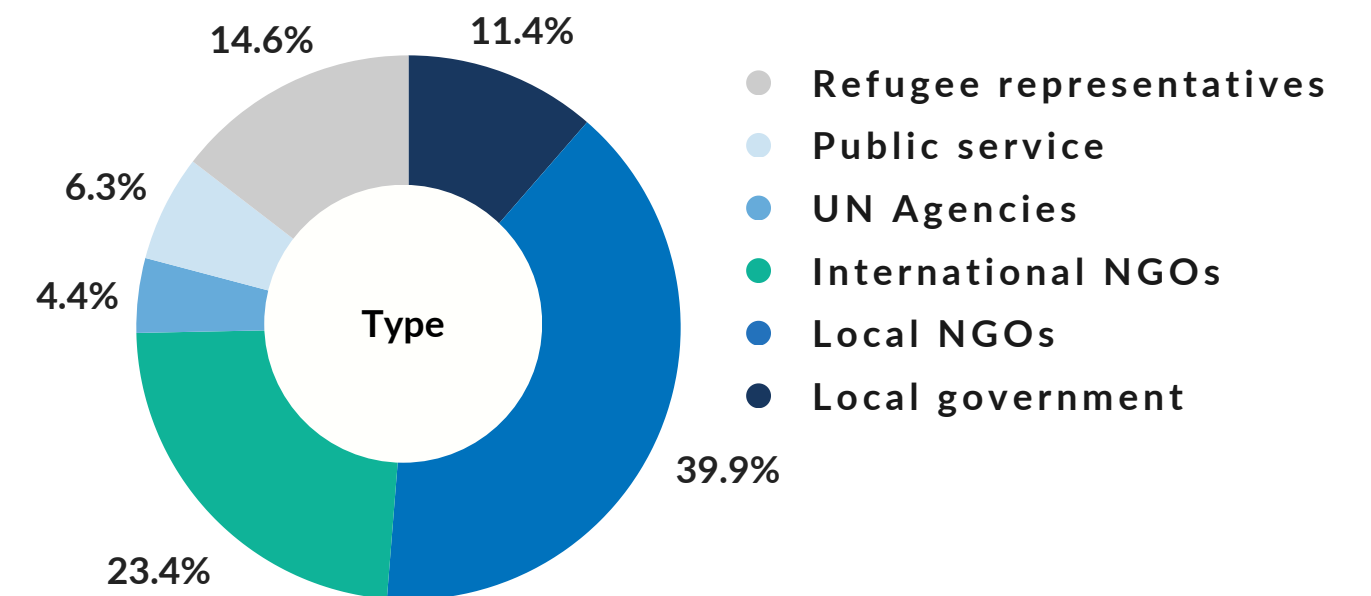
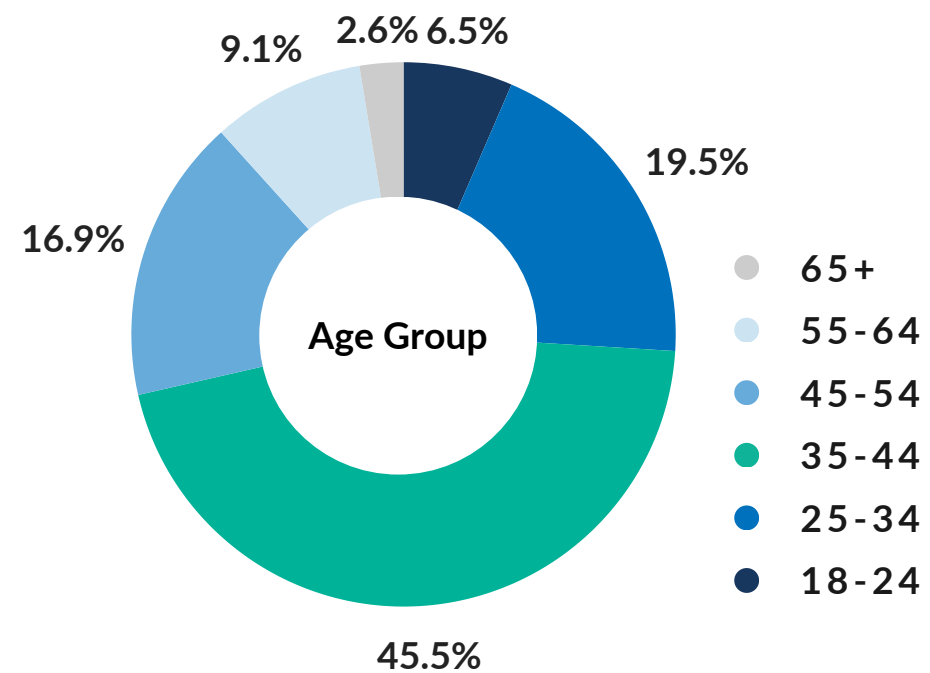
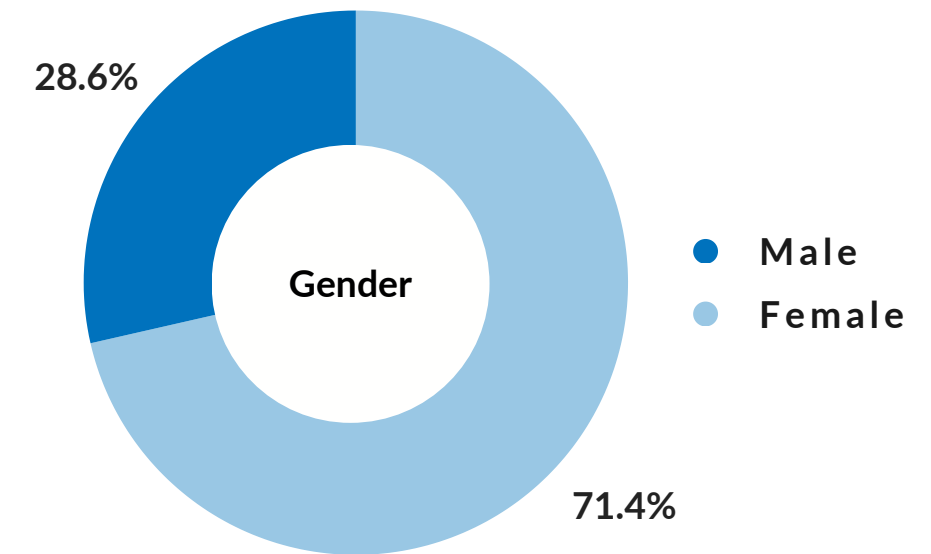
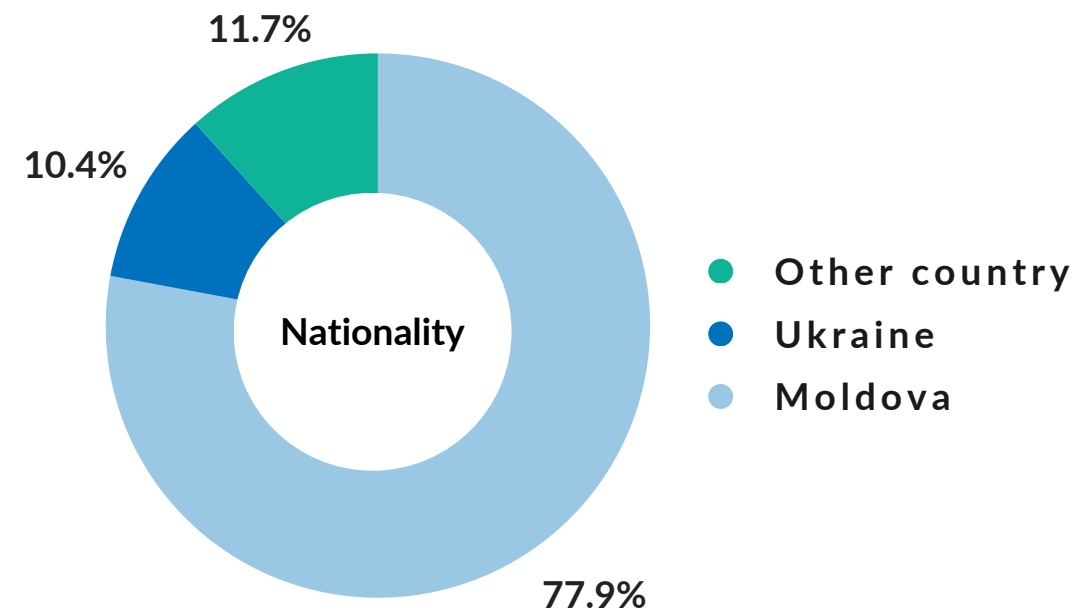
Local public authorities involved in services provision for refugees and host communities.



Participation figures

The consultations were attended by 160+ participants from local municipalities, CSOs, INGOs, public institutions, refugees and members of host community. Participation was limited to 20 people to ensure interactive and meaningful discussions.

In case a locality had a larger number of potential participants, local NGOs and municipalities were prioritized over international actors.



FINDINGS FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The information presented in the following pages, including the identified challenges and proposed solutions, emerged from the consultation process and reflects the opinions and views of the participants. It does not necessarily represent the views of UNHCR nor imply endorsement of any particular challenge or solution. This information is intended to inform planning processes, ensuring an inclusive and consultative approach. It should be complemented with other relevant sources that provide data and insights about the contexts and realities of the different localities.

Causeni



Causeni

Social Protection and Social Cohesion

Participants in Causeni identified two major challenges affecting social protection: limited access to affordable housing and constrained local social protection capacity. The gradual reduction in humanitarian assistance has placed additional pressure on already limited local resources.

The municipality's social services are significantly understaffed, with limited number of social workers and child protection specialists serving nearly 50 villages. This capacity gap affects their ability to adequately support both refugees and vulnerable local populations. Refugees face additional barriers accessing social services due to limited information and guidance.

Participants emphasized the need for transparent communication about social services and aid targeting to address emerging concerns in host communities. They noted that initial empathy toward refugees risks being eroded by misinformation about benefits and social assistance.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Develop social housing infrastructure.
- Expand local social protection capacity through:
 - Training social workers on refugee protection
 - Enhancing awareness of available social services
 - Improving border monitoring and referral systems
 - Strengthening information sharing about refugees' legal status and rights
- Maintain community engagement initiatives to foster dialogue between refugees and host communities and prevent tensions

Causeni

Socioeconomic Integration

The consultations identified unemployment as a critical challenge for refugee integration in Causeni. Access to employment is limited by several interconnected factors. Language barriers remain significant, while many refugees hesitate to invest in long-term integration due to the perceived temporary nature of their stay. Legal restrictions prevent refugees from engaging in self-employment and small business operations, while broader regional economic challenges persist as companies leave the area. Additional barriers include employers' concerns about workforce stability, prevailing low wages, and the ongoing impact of conflict-related trauma. The reduction in Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) combined with these employment barriers increases risks of poverty, hampers self-reliance, and may drive secondary displacement.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Support local entrepreneurs to create employment opportunities for refugees
- Establish a platform linking refugees to job opportunities, including:
 - Personalized employment counseling
 - Targeted skills development
 - Job matching services
- Expand qualification and vocational training programs, building on successful earlier initiatives.
- Support refugee-led entrepreneurship.
- Leverage Causeni's strategic position as a logistics hub to develop regional economic opportunities.

Causeni

Health and MHPSS

Healthcare services in Causeni face strain due to medical staff shortages across hospitals and health facilities. Participants identified unattractive working conditions, low wages, and insufficient incentives as key factors deterring young medical professionals from practicing in the area. These staffing constraints result in delayed disease detection and screening, while limited access to health services for temporary protection status holders affect the quality of medical care available to refugees.

Both refugees and host community members experience extended waiting times and lack access to specialized medical support. The situation is particularly challenging for palliative care patients struggling to access necessary medications. As treatment costs increase, many patients travel to other regions or back to Ukraine for medical care.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Develop healthcare infrastructure to expand service capacity
- Create incentives for healthcare professionals through:
 - Affordable housing provision
 - Transportation support
 - Improved working conditions
 - Integrating refugee doctors into local health system
- Leverage European integration programs to strengthen capacity through international expertise
- Expand healthcare facilities across the district to improve geographic coverage of medical services

Causeni

Education

Refugee inclusion in Causeni's educational system faces multiple interconnected challenges. The absence of academic programs in refugees' native language significantly impacts enrollment, with many hesitating to join Romanian programs due to language barriers and complex examination requirements. In rural areas, insufficient transportation options further restrict school access, discouraging participation in the local education system.

These challenges stem from broader structural issues affecting the region. A shortage of teachers, particularly those trained to support refugees, compounds the difficulties. Rural demographic decline has reduced demand for educational services, while limited financial resources constrain transportation and infrastructure development. Low wages and poor working conditions continue to deter teachers from working in the region.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Introduce Ukrainian language programs alongside Romanian classes to facilitate refugee inclusion in the national education system
- Foster collaboration between local educational authorities and Ukrainian institutions
- Support transportation services between villages and towns to facilitate school access
- Strengthen teacher recruitment and retention through financial incentives, improved working conditions and training in multilingual education and refugee support
- Upgrade and expand school infrastructure to adequately support both host community and refugee students

Otaci



Otaci

Social Protection and Social Cohesion

Otaci's social protection system challenges are related to limited accessible accommodation and insufficient social assistance coverage, affecting its capacity to support vulnerable populations including children and older people. Refugees face particular difficulties in covering basic needs and essential costs, including housing rent and utilities, increasing their risk of marginalization. The reduction in humanitarian assistance threatens to further deteriorate access to services for both refugee and vulnerable host community populations, potentially increasing overall community vulnerability.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Strengthen needs assessment and targeting systems to better inform budget planning for social assistance.
- Expand affordable housing solutions through partnership with local public authorities and the private sector.
- Establish targeted assistance programs for refugees with chronic medical conditions whose needs are not covered by current health package
- Strengthen expertise of social workers through international cooperation and training

Otaci

Socioeconomic Integration

Refugees economic inclusion in Otaci is affected by reduced employment opportunities following enterprise closures, limited market size, and low purchasing power in the area. Small and medium-sized enterprises often avoid offering formal employment to refugees due to high taxation and legal wage requirements above minimum wage. These conditions have led to secondary displacement outside Moldova, returns to Ukraine, and increased reliance on seasonal work and high levels of informality, particularly given the frequent cross-border movement between Otaci and Mohyliv-Podilskyi. The situation underscores the need for targeted interventions that consider both local economic constraints and refugee inclusion needs, ensuring a regional and cross-border perspective.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Strengthen coordination between local municipality and national government for labor market support
- Advocate for incentives for employers hiring refugees
- Support initiatives for job creation and entrepreneurship

Otaci

Health and MHPSS

Health services in Otaci are limited due to inadequate infrastructure and financial constraints, impacting both the refugee and host communities. The city operates with only one clinic and a single ambulance, forcing residents to travel to neighboring towns for basic medical care. This situation places additional pressure on health facilities in surrounding areas, compounding access issues.

The limited healthcare infrastructure in Otaci stems from limited investment and insufficient local resources. With no local laboratories and limited healthcare staff, medical services are frequently delayed or unavailable, leading to late diagnoses and worsening health outcomes. Refugees under TP are particularly affected, as health insurance is only available to those who are employed, leaving older individuals and vulnerable groups without access to necessary care as they cannot qualify for state-sponsored health insurance. The lack of awareness among healthcare professionals regarding refugees' entitlements under temporary protection further exacerbates the issue, resulting in many refugees being charged for services that should be free. Additionally, the need to travel to larger cities like Chisinau for specialized care creates logistical and financial burdens for both refugees and local residents.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Provide training for healthcare staff to improve knowledge of refugees' rights and medical needs.
- Implement fundraising efforts to develop new healthcare infrastructure and upgrade existing facilities.
- Strengthen collaboration between local, regional, and national authorities to secure funding for health services.
- Liaise with international partners and donors to support healthcare development in Otaci.
- Advocate for TP holder to to enjoy, in the mandatory health care insurance system, the same rights as Moldovans.

Otaci

Education

The municipality of Otaci's existing challenges in providing quality education to both host community and refugee children are due to severe shortages of qualified teaching personnel and specialists. This situation particularly impacts refugee children's access to quality education and integration opportunities, while also affecting the overall educational outcomes for the host community. The combination of classes due to staffing shortages has led to overcrowding and declining educational quality, creating additional barriers for refugee children's inclusion in the formal education system. Low salaries, insufficient professional development opportunities, and administrative barriers have contributed to an exodus of teaching professionals, while the lack of programs for refugee inclusion further strains the system.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Provide competitive salaries and financial incentives to attract and retain qualified teachers and specialists
- Organize specialized training programs focused on refugee children inclusion in school setting
- Create a supportive learning environment with gradual adaptation to school curriculum, including language considerations for refugee children
- Implement after-school support and language learning programs
- Raise awareness of the importance and benefit of formal education through parent and child engagement campaigns
- Strengthen coordination between local authorities, educational institutions, and community stakeholders

Balti

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UNHCR, Agenția ONU pentru
Refugiați în Republica Moldova

УВКБ ООН, Агентство ООН
беженцев в Республике



Balti

Social Protection and Social Cohesion

Balti's ability to deliver effective social protection services is hindered by shortages of qualified social workers and barriers to refugee inclusion in local social assistance mechanisms. Growing concerns about decreasing public empathy towards refugees, coupled with disinformation campaigns targeting refugees from Ukraine and the Roma community, risk undermining social cohesion and access to services. The housing situation is particularly acute, with limited accommodation availability and rising rental costs creating additional vulnerabilities for refugees, especially as Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance declines and Refugee Accommodation Centers consolidate. These challenges create heightened risks of poverty and social isolation for both refugee and vulnerable host community populations.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Provide training on refugee protection for public institutions' staff
- Develop guidelines for refugee inclusion in social protection planning and resource allocation
- Promote national-level exchange of experiences and best practices for refugee inclusion
- Strengthen cooperation between CSOs, NGOs, INGOs, international organizations and local authorities on social protection issues
- Strengthen referral systems and involve local CSOs in service delivery to enhance case management
- Organize community integration events to bridge social gaps and reduce tensions
- Refurbish and repurpose unused or underutilized buildings to expand affordable accommodation options

Balti

Socioeconomic Integration

Balti's efforts to promote refugee employment and economic inclusion are impacted by low employment rates, largely due to mismatches between refugee qualifications and local job market demands. The situation is particularly acute for refugee mothers who require flexible working arrangements to balance caregiving responsibilities. High rates of informal employment among refugees make it difficult to accurately assess their economic inclusion, while language barriers, low wages, and the current structure of assistance programs may inadvertently discourage active job-seeking. These factors collectively increase risks of marginalization and prolonged dependency on humanitarian assistance for refugee populations.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Develop incentive programs for businesses employing refugees
- Enable refugees to register as self-employed entrepreneurs
- Strengthen coordination between local organizations, employers and the National Employment Agency to improve job-matching services
- Address budget constraints and bureaucratic obstacles through targeted advocacy efforts

Balti

Health and MHPSS

Healthcare delivery in Balti is impacted by shortages of specialized medical staff, including family doctors, mainly due to the migration of young specialists to private institutions or abroad. Both refugees and healthcare providers lack adequate awareness of healthcare access procedures and service delivery protocols. Infrastructure constraints have resulted in extended waiting times, medication shortages, and delayed diagnoses, particularly impacting vulnerable groups. Refugees face additional barriers, including exclusion from chronic disease treatment programs, leading to health deterioration and increased treatment costs. These systemic challenges affect both the host community and refugee populations' access to essential healthcare services.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Improve economic compensation and professional development opportunities for healthcare staff to retain young specialists
- Develop social media campaigns, informational videos, and educational programs to improve awareness among patients and healthcare providers on rights and obligations
- Enhance coordination between local actors, including local public authorities, and national institutions
- Strengthen data collection on local healthcare needs among refugee population to improve service planning
- Advocate for TP holder to to enjoy, in the mandatory health care insurance system, the same rights as Moldovans.

Balti

Education

Balti and surrounding villages face educational inclusion challenges for refugee children, particularly due to language barriers in Romanian-only schools leading to low attendance rates. The situation is compounded by social isolation from remote schooling, reported bullying incidents in Russian curriculum schools, and misinformation about Ukrainian diploma recognition. Curriculum differences between Moldova and Ukraine create additional barriers to academic performance, while uncertainty about length of stay affects motivation to fully engage in Moldovan education. These challenges are creating risks of lasting psycho-emotional issues and social exclusion for refugee children, while also impacting their future personal and professional development opportunities.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Establish cooperative educational frameworks between Ukraine and Moldova to harmonize curricula and recognize credentials
- Support Ukrainian students with gradual transition to Romanian curriculum
- Support access to higher education through grants
- Enhance social cohesion initiatives throughout the educational process
- Provide vocational training scholarships
- Raise awareness on existing guidelines for integrating Ukrainian children into Moldovan schools
- Support transportation services between villages and towns to facilitate school access

Cahul



Cahul

Socioeconomic Integration

Cahul's predominantly agricultural and service-oriented economy presents distinct challenges for refugee employment and economic inclusion. The limited labor market diversity creates significant barriers in matching refugees' skills with local market needs. Available positions, particularly in agriculture, often feature low wages and poor working conditions, making them unattractive to both refugees and host community job seekers. Language barriers, employer hesitancy due to perceived temporary status of refugees, and lack of dedicated employment support services further complicate access to formal employment. These factors contribute to increased reliance on informal labor arrangements, preventing refugees from achieving financial independence and hindering their broader inclusion in the community.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Provide vocational training programs aligned with local economic sector needs
- Expand Romanian language support services, particularly for service industry roles
- Conduct awareness campaigns for employers on the benefits of hiring refugees
- Develop government incentives for inclusive hiring practices
- Strengthen collaboration between local businesses, vocational training centers and employment agencies
- Improve working conditions in agricultural sector
- Establish comprehensive job search assistance including career counseling and placement services

Cahul

Education

In Cahul, refugee children predominantly continue their education through the Ukrainian online curriculum rather than enrolling in local schools, primarily due to language barriers as Romanian is the main language of instruction. Those attending Russian-curriculum schools face difficulties with examinations due to differences in academic programs. Additional challenges include inadequate school infrastructure, inconsistent implementation of Ministry of Education inclusion policies by school administrators, and parents' uncertainty about their length of stay in Moldova. These factors collectively contribute to low school enrollment rates among refugee children in Cahul, impacting their educational continuity and integration into host communities.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Advocate for review of language examination requirements for refugee children
- Provide free Romanian language courses
- Strengthen cooperation between national and local authorities, schools, and development actors to improve infrastructure
- Engage parents through clear information provision about educational opportunities and available support
- Support school administrators in implementing Ministry of Education refugee inclusion policies

Comrat



Comrat

Socioeconomic Integration

Comrat's economy faces significant structural limitations that impact refugee economic inclusion, characterized by heavy reliance on agriculture, limited industrial diversification, and infrastructure challenges. Employment opportunities are predominantly low-skilled, creating a mismatch with refugees' professional backgrounds and qualifications. Low salaries and displacement-related instability have resulted in minimal formal employment among refugees, leading to increased dependence on social assistance services and potential social tensions between refugee and host communities.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Enhance dissemination of job opportunity information through social services, media and public authorities
- Provide qualification training, courses and seminars to bridge skills gaps
- Develop financial incentives for employers hiring refugees
- Strengthen collaboration between local authorities, NGOs, INGOs and employment agencies

Comrat

Health and MHPSS

Refugees holding TP status in Comrat face significant barriers in accessing healthcare services, compounded by insufficient medical staff and limited knowledge of legal requirements for refugee healthcare provision. The lack of proper registration of assistance provided to refugees and systemic barriers to access result in disease progression, misinformation about health issues, and increased strain on local healthcare systems. These challenges affect both TP holders and refugees with other legal statuses, undermining their integration into the healthcare system and overall wellbeing.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Organize training sessions for medical personnel on refugees' legal status and healthcare rights
- Advocate for TP holder to to enjoy, in the mandatory health care insurance system, the same rights as Moldovans
- Address barriers affecting refugees registration by family doctors

Comrat

Education

Low enrollment rates among refugee children characterize Comrat and the Gagauzia region's challenges in refugee education inclusion. The situation is affected by language examination requirements, limited infrastructure, and complex cultural dynamics. Educational facilities in Comrat are notably under-resourced compared to other regions of Moldova, lacking technical equipment, extracurricular support services, and adequate staffing. These limitations affect both host community and refugee children, leading many refugee children to opt for online Ukrainian education rather than enrolling in local schools. While local authorities have launched initiatives with NGOs and international actors to support refugee children, the heavy reliance on external funding challenges their sustainability.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Expand language support programs
- Advocate for review of language examination requirements for refugee children
- Invest in modernization of school infrastructure and technical equipment
- Expand extracurricular support services for all children
- Develop teacher training programs for managing multicultural classrooms
- Expand MHPSS interventions in school setting
- Strengthen partnerships with development partners to secure sustainable funding
- Create systems to support refugee children transitioning from online to local education

Tiraspol



Tiraspol

Social Protection and Social Cohesion

Refugees in Tiraspol face barriers in accessing social protection services and cash assistance, primarily due to the requirement to travel to the right bank for aid distribution and complications around dual citizenship affecting eligibility. The lack of locally tailored programs and limited coordination between authorities and humanitarian actors creates additional obstacles to service delivery. These barriers result in increased risk of poverty among refugee populations and reduce the effectiveness of existing support programs, highlighting the need for localized solutions that consider the specific context of the region.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Support the establishment of local aid distribution centers to improve accessibility
- Develop programs taking into account issues related to individuals with dual citizenship who despite also having Moldova
- Strengthen coordination between authorities and humanitarian actors regarding the delivery of assistance to affected populations
- Enhance refugee involvement in community activities
- Improve information dissemination about available assistance and rights

Tiraspol

Socioeconomic Integration

Refugees in Tiraspol face significant challenges when accessing the labor market, leading many to seek remote employment opportunities rather than engaging in the local economy. Limited job opportunities, low wages, and restrictive legal regulations have increased dependence on cash and in-kind assistance. This situation contributes to psychological distress and isolation among refugees, sometimes resulting in secondary displacement as individuals leave the region seeking better economic prospects.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Create accessible employment and learning programs throughout the left bank region
- Consider supplementary financial support when salaries fall below assistance levels
- Organize region-wide job fairs to promote business activities
- Promote flexible work arrangements
- Enhance information dissemination about available programs and job vacancies through social media
- Establish refugee mediator positions to facilitate access to employment
- Strengthen coordination between local NGOs and authorities to overcome financial and logistical barriers

Tiraspol

Health and MHPSS

Refugees in Tiraspol face barriers in accessing healthcare services primarily due to administrative barriers. The situation is compounded by insufficient medical staff, outdated equipment, and transportation challenges that prevent access to services on the left bank of the Nistru River, where refugees also lack Temporary Protection status. These systemic barriers not only impact refugees' health and quality of life but also create additional strain on the local medical system, potentially contributing to social tensions over perceived inequalities in assistance delivery.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Strengthen strategic collaboration for advocacy, infrastructure improvement and medical staff training
- Address administrative barriers that impact refugees living on the left bank in accessing health services
- Establish accessible and affordable transportation services to medical facilities
- Conduct awareness-raising campaigns to address information gaps related to access to health care
- Enhance coordination between health authorities and humanitarian/development actors

Tiraspol

Education

Refugee children in Tiraspol encounter educational challenges stemming from differences between the curricula of the left bank, right bank, and Ukrainian educational systems. These disparities create barriers to both academic integration and diploma recognition. Additional challenges include limited transportation options to schools, which raises safety concerns among refugee families and further impacts access to education. These systemic barriers affect refugee children's ability to fully participate in and benefit from educational opportunities.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Develop support programs to help students to integrate in the school system
- Establish accessible transportation services for students
- Provide tutoring resources to support academic performance
- Implement psychosocial support services for children in school setting
- Create mechanisms to address diploma recognition challenges
- Support transition between different educational systems

Ungheni



Ungheni

Social Protection and Social Cohesion

Ungheni's ability to deliver social protection services is constrained by limited local resources, institutional capacity, and limited housing support. The situation is particularly critical for vulnerable refugees who face difficulties accessing social allowances due to legal barriers and budgetary constraints, especially as Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance decreases. The social protection system's limited funding and human resources affect service delivery for both host community and refugee populations, creating risks of increased vulnerability for both groups.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Support housing projects including affordable housing development
- Restore abandoned infrastructure to expand accommodation options
- Strengthen social protection system capacities through increased budget allocation
- Provide training to local staff on inclusive practices that address the diverse needs of refugees and other vulnerable groups, fostering social cohesion in the community
- Streamline administrative processes to improve access to social protection
- Facilitate administrative processes related to access to social protection
- Implement community-based inclusion programs to reinforce local cohesion

Ungheni

Socioeconomic Integration

Ungheni's efforts toward refugee economic inclusion are challenged by its role as a border locality, where many refugees see it more as a transit point than a place for long-term settlement. Low employment rates among refugees are influenced by multiple factors including emotional distress, uncertainty of stay, language barriers, and local market limitations. Employer hesitancy, minimal wage offers, and employment contracts lacking social benefits create additional barriers to stable economic opportunities. These factors collectively increase refugee vulnerability and dependence on social support systems, particularly affecting those who do choose to settle in Ungheni.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Develop tailored training programs aligned with local economic needs in agriculture, manufacturing, and cross-border trade
- Include refugees in manufacturing sector supply chains
- Support refugees entrepreneurship through removing legal and administrative barriers, and promoting business training
- Create flexible job opportunities to accommodate caregiving responsibilities
- Support inclusion in industries benefiting from cross-border dynamics
- Encourage local employers to hire refugees through targeted programs
- Align employment support with the specific characteristics of the border economy

Ungheni

Health and MHPSS

Ungheni's healthcare system faces challenges related to understaffing, lack of specialized medical equipment, and shortages of medical products and devices. These limitations result in substandard treatment quality, forcing both refugee and host community members to seek medical services in cities like Chisinau, incurring additional transportation and accommodation costs. The situation is exacerbated by insufficient funding at local and national levels, nationwide specialist shortages, difficulties accessing remote areas, and limited motivation for medical professionals to remain in the region. These systemic challenges affect the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for both refugee and host populations.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Deploy regular mobile teams of specialized experts to underserved areas
- Develop public-private partnerships for access to specialized treatments
- Enhance specialized training for health professionals
- Promote experience exchanges through coordination with central authorities and NGOs
- Support government and NGO collaboration in healthcare delivery
- Improve access to healthcare in remote areas through targeted interventions

Ungheni

Education

Refugee children in Ungheni face barriers to school enrollment, primarily due to parents' expectations of imminent return to Ukraine and concerns about maintaining cultural connections through language instruction. The absence of school adaptation programs and complex language examination requirements lead many families to opt for online Ukrainian curricula instead of local schools. This situation results in limited social interaction for refugee children and risks of stagnation in their personal and educational development, affecting their long-term integration prospects and overall wellbeing.

Priority Solutions Identified

- Establish cultural and linguistic support/integration programs within schools
- Design flexible integration programs that maintain linkages with Ukrainian education system
- Train teachers in multicultural education approaches
- Implement community engagement initiatives promoting interaction between local and refugee children
- Advocate for clear policies on long-term residency to provide stability for refugee families
- Create welcoming educational environments that support refugee inclusion

Final Recommendations

Social Protection and Social Cohesion

Discussions during local consultations across Moldova highlighted a pressing need to strengthen social protection capacities. To achieve this, strengthened coordination and collaboration is essential between local authorities, civil society organizations, NGOs, international organizations, and relevant stakeholders at both national and local levels. Through joint collaboration, these parties can systematically identify gaps in the social protection system and develop targeted action plans focused on capacity building and resource mobilization to address needs in infrastructure and human capital.

The development of affordable housing initiatives represents a key opportunity to address housing needs across localities. This requires effective collaboration between authorities, humanitarian and development actors, and the private sector to identify common solutions for rehabilitating and developing infrastructure. To ensure sustainability, housing initiatives should be integrated into municipal development plans and linked to longer-term social protection systems, while humanitarian actors can support during the transition phase. Through community mobilization, both host community members and refugees can actively participate in renovation projects of available spaces.

To improve access to social services, information campaigns should be developed to raise awareness about rights, available services, and support mechanisms. These campaigns should utilize diverse communication channels including social media, community meetings, and radio programming to reach different audiences. Rather than creating parallel systems, access to services can be enhanced by strengthening existing government service delivery mechanisms while leveraging expertise within both Ukrainian refugee and host communities through structured support programs that include appropriate compensation or allowances.

Building social cohesion requires maintaining an environment where all community members can participate and interact in shared spaces to understand different perspectives. While humanitarian actors can initially support community engagement initiatives through volunteer-led programs, these should gradually transition to local ownership through municipalities and civil society organizations. Intergenerational community events and cultural exchanges should be integrated into local development plans to ensure sustainability and foster inclusive and participative communities beyond the humanitarian response phase.

Final Recommendations

Socioeconomic Inclusion

Improving the socioeconomic context of localities requires sustained efforts through multi-stakeholder coordination at local, regional and national levels. The following approaches can support sustainable economic inclusion of refugees, while contributing to the socioeconomic development of the communities hosting them:

To bridge skill gaps and enhance employability, vocational training programs should be developed in partnership with the National Employment Agency and local employers to match market needs. These programs should build on existing government systems while being tailored to both refugee and host community needs.

Romanian language courses are essential for labor market access and should be integrated into existing adult education and vocational training systems. Programs need flexible scheduling and accessibility considerations, particularly for vulnerable groups. Where possible, these should link to formal certification through the Ministry of Education to support long-term employability.

The private sector has a key role in supporting economic inclusion. Local businesses, with support from authorities and development actors, can develop mentorship programs and support refugee entrepreneurship by leveraging existing skills and identifying market opportunities. These initiatives should connect to broader local economic development strategies.

Job fairs and employment matching platforms should be coordinated through established government services like the National Employment Agency, while being supported by humanitarian and development actors during the transition phase. Employment incentives for businesses hiring refugees should be developed in consultation with relevant ministries to ensure alignment with national labor policies and sustainability.

Final Recommendations

Health and MHPSS

While addressing systemic healthcare challenges requires sustained advocacy between local and national governments, complementary approaches can support sustainable and inclusive healthcare delivery:

Public-private partnerships should be explored to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and service delivery, integrated within national health system planning. This could include strategic co-funding arrangements and corporate social responsibility initiatives aligned with broader socioeconomic development goals. These partnerships should support rather than substitute national health system capacity.

Local authorities should strengthen preventive healthcare outreach in rural and semi-urban communities by supporting healthcare staff to conduct awareness campaigns on disease prevention, vaccination, and access to essential services. These initiatives should be integrated into existing public health programs while being accessible to both refugee and host communities. It is also important to increase awareness among health service providers about the rights and entitlements of refugees, including TP holders, when accessing healthcare. Additionally, advocacy is needed to ensure TP holders enjoy the same rights as Moldovans and recognized refugees within the mandatory health insurance system.

Partnerships between public authorities and academic institutions can help address healthcare staffing gaps through structured volunteer programs for medical and health science students. These programs should be sustainably funded through government and university resources, with support from development funding, with clear links to national healthcare workforce development strategies.

Local authorities should incorporate healthcare infrastructure improvements and staff retention measures into their development plans, allowing for integrated approaches across sectors. This strategic planning approach can help mobilize development funding while ensuring sustainability. Project proposals should demonstrate how strengthening local health systems will benefit both refugee and host communities over the long term.

Final Recommendations

Education

To address low refugee student enrollment rates, coordinated action is needed between local authorities and the Ministry of Education and Research, building on Moldova's commitment to ensure full enrollment and access to quality, inclusive education for all refugee children by 2026. The following approaches can support this goal:

Inclusion plans should be developed within existing national education frameworks to support the gradual inclusion of refugee children into local schools. Language support through Romanian courses and academic bridging programs should be integrated into formal education systems rather than creating parallel structures, aligning with MER's roadmap for refugee inclusion in education.

Safe and regular transportation is essential for school attendance and should be addressed through sustainable solutions within local education systems. Similarly, adequate infrastructure including heating and ventilation directly impacts participation and learning outcomes. Local authorities should work with MER to incorporate these needs into education system planning while humanitarian and development actors can provide transitional support to meet immediate gaps.

Teacher capacity building is key and should focus on working with displaced children, multicultural education, preventing discrimination, and supporting refugee parent engagement. These trainings should be institutionalized within existing teacher professional development programs rather than as stand-alone initiatives, ensuring sustainability.

Creating safe and welcoming learning environments requires a whole-of-school approach integrated into national education strategies. This supports both immediate enrollment goals and longer-term educational outcomes for refugee and host community children.



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for the Ukraine Situation

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The opinions expressed in this publication reflect the opinions gathered during 2025-2026 Local Consultations and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNHCR.