



Basic Needs Working Group Meeting – 10 of February 2025		
<b>Meeting Details</b>		
Date	10.02.2025	
Time	15:00 pm	
Lead and Co-lead	Andrea Cuisana, UNHCR	
Reporting	Natalia Stelea	
Email	<a href="mailto:mdachacctr@unhcr.org">mdachacctr@unhcr.org</a> - <a href="mailto:cuisana@unhcr.org">cuisana@unhcr.org</a>	
<b>Agenda</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RACs Update</li> <li>2. RACs Consolidation Update</li> <li>3. Rapid Impact Assessment – Rental Assistance Program – Acted</li> <li>4. NFIs update – Left Bank</li> <li>5. Update from Partners</li> <li>6. AoB</li> </ol>		
<b>Information collection and relevant links</b>		
<b>Participants</b>		
Andrea Cuisana, UNHCR	Hannah Ursol, PiN	Daniele Perdeti, Helpage
Emmanuel Otika, UNHCR	Tarra Mccoy, IMPACT	Stelea Natalia, UNHCR
Almothana Hasan, Acted	Gorceac Mihaela, Acted	Berdos Cristina, CRS Moldova
Tudor Vicol, MLSP	Suzanne Virecolan, ACTED	Svetlana Cires, CRS Moldova
Emmanuel Otika, UNHCR	Diego Nardi, UNHCR	Marco McAllister, IFRC
Athina Nalmpanti, Acted	Ibrahim Marte, IOM	Laura Sesenna, ICRC
Dimitrie Nacu, ACTED	Fadel Daoud, WFP	Corina Andronic, UNICEF
	Maria Dragan, IOM	Cristina.Boldescu, NRC



<i>Carr Chelsey, CWS</i>	<i>Aliona Babachișvili, CNPAC</i>	<i>Muntean Serghei, Acted</i>
<i>Dumitru Burdeinii, IFRC</i>	<i>Alina Alexei, WFP</i>	<i>Catarev Cristina, IGM</i>
<i>Anton Balan, ACTED</i>	<i>Domnica Ginu, Lumos Foundation</i>	<i>Mihai Rotaru, MLSP</i>
<i>Grațela Parlui, IGM</i>	<i>Andrey Artemenko</i>	

### Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
<p><b>1. RACs Update</b></p> <p><b>2. RACs Consolidation Update</b></p>	<p>The <b>BNWG co-chair</b> welcomed participants, thanked them for their participation and presented the agenda. UNHCR started by presenting first point of the agenda:</p> <p><b>Active RACs</b></p> <p>There are 26 active RACs and 1346 beneficiaries accommodated. From which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 106 PwD</li> <li>• 286 Beneficiaries 60+</li> <li>• 47 children 0-2 y.o</li> <li>• 492 children 2-18 y.o</li> </ul> <p>Two RACs part of the group G for closure: RAC ID 100 (Congaz) and RAC ID 5 (South). MLSP and partners conducted MFT visits to discuss closure processes with beneficiaries and provide support in the relocation process.</p> <p><b>UID 100 (Chisinau) - 7th February:</b> All beneficiaries expressed interest in the Rental Assistance Program.</p> <p><b>UID 5 (Congaz) - 5th February:</b> Requests were made by beneficiaries, child protection representatives, and the Roma mediator to delay the closure until the end of the school year. Social Assistance will coordinate with local authorities to identify rental housing options in Congaz village.</p> <p><b>MLSP:</b> The exit procedures will continue this year, and for each of the selected centers, each family will be analysed individually. As we have done in the past with the closure of centers, families will continue to receive support even if they transition into the community. This support will assist them in enrolling their children in educational institutions such as schools and kindergartens, ensuring they continue attending.</p> <p>Our goal is for the beneficiaries to successfully integrate into the community and make use of available support programs, which will enable them to lead independent lives and fully integrate into society.</p>	



The center in Congaz was scheduled for closure due to the deficient management. We have encountered problems, and we have not received the financial reports. As a result, we faced difficulties in providing information to the Ministry's partners who directly support the funding of the centers. To avoid jeopardizing this collaboration, we decided to close the center. We have continuously discussed with the center's manager to provide these reports, but unfortunately, without success.

We anticipate that the center will close sooner than initially estimated. In this case, we propose selecting another center to proceed with the closure process.

**CRS:** The main difficulty in Congaz is finding accommodation in the local area, as there are unfortunately no available options. In Chisinau, we have 6 families who have submitted applications, but one family has withdrawn, citing the inability to afford rent once the rental support program concludes.

The main point of this situation is to assess whether the center can be closed at the end of May, considering the concerns raised by the Child Protection partners and other partners who participated in the MFT, to allow children to finish the school year.

**MLSP:** The Ministry is not indifferent to the children in the Congaz center. It is important to us that they continue their studies. Ministry colleagues have visited the center and spoken with each family individually, discussing how many children have exams. Each family will be analysed on a case-by-case basis. We will ensure that the children and their families receive the necessary support to complete their schooling.

**RACs Consolidation Report 2023-2024: Overview and Rental Assistance Verification**

As part of the **RACs Consolidation Process** between 2023 and 2024, **399 households (955 individuals)** have been relocated to various accommodation options. Among them, **90 households (241 individuals), representing 22.6% of the total, were enrolled in the rental assistance program.**

To ensure an evidence-based approach in monitoring this transition, rental assistance partners **ACTED, IOM, and CRS** are conducting a **verification process** to collect key information from the enrolled households. This process aims to assess the effectiveness of rental assistance in supporting the transition from RACs to independent living arrangements.

The verification focuses on **four key parameters:**

1. **Demographics** – Household composition, number of children, number of adults, gender, and age of respondents.
2. **Vulnerability** – Presence of difficulties related to seeing, hearing, mobility, or other conditions affecting daily life.
3. **Current Living Conditions** – Whether the household remains in the same accommodation, plans to stay longer, potential future relocation, and financial sources used for rent.



<p><b>3. Rapid Impact Assessment – Rental Assistance Program – Acted</b></p>	<p><b>4. Employment / Current Income Sources</b> – Household employment status, frequency of work, and the number of employed family members.</p> <p>The verification process is <b>ongoing</b>, and we anticipate preliminary findings from each organization by the <b>end of February or early March</b>. Once consolidated, these findings will be shared with all partners. Additionally, we are finalizing the <b>Annual RACs Consolidation Report (2023-2024)</b>, which will incorporate recommendations made to the <b>MLSP</b>. This report will be presented in the next <b>RTG meeting</b>, and partners will have the opportunity to provide feedback.</p> <p><b>Assessment Process:</b></p> <p>The rapid impact assessment was carried out to measure the effectiveness and sustainability of the rental assistance program in transitioning displaced families from RACs to independent living arrangements. The assessment was conducted using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including household surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews.</p> <p>The process involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Household Surveys:</b> A structured questionnaire was administered to 399 households that participated in the rental assistance program. The survey focused on demographic characteristics, household income, housing stability, and access to basic services.</li> <li>• <b>Key Informant Interviews:</b> Discussions were held with program implementers, local government representatives, and social workers to gain insights into the broader impact of the rental assistance program and its alignment with national housing policies.</li> <li>• <b>Focus Group Discussions:</b> Participants provided qualitative feedback on their experiences, challenges, and recommendations for improving rental assistance interventions.</li> </ul> <p>One of the most significant findings of the assessment is that the vast majority of respondents—80%—were still residing in the same accommodation they had rented during the CFR program. This indicates that for most beneficiaries, the assistance played a crucial role in securing stable housing, with positive long-term effects.</p> <p>Among the 20% who had changed accommodation, the primary reasons cited were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High rental costs that exceeded their financial means after assistance ended.</li> <li>• The desire to relocate closer to work or school.</li> <li>• A small number moved in with family members.</li> <li>• A limited number of individuals either returned to their country of origin—Ukraine or Iraq—or acquired housing through alternative means.</li> </ul>	
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91% of those who remained in their current housing expressed a strong desire to continue living there, for those who did not wish to remain, their primary reason was the aspiration to return to Ukraine.

**Employment and Income Stability**

Understanding the income and employment status of beneficiaries was essential in assessing the sustainability of housing support. Given that employment was a key eligibility criterion for CFR participation, it was important to evaluate whether the program contributed to increased economic stability.

The assessment revealed that:

- 35% of respondents had only one source of income, while 41% had two sources, and 24.3% had three or more.
- Households with precarious income sources tended to diversify their income streams by engaging in multiple jobs or informal employment.
- 60% of respondents reported having salaried employment—a significant increase from the 38% recorded during the midline assessment, reflecting a 22-percentage-point increase in formal employment.
- Apart from salaried work, additional income sources included:
  - UNHCR and PCA financial aid (for refugees only).
  - Self-employment, which was not classified as salaried work but contributed to household earnings.
  - Pensions, savings, and humanitarian cash transfers.

The average monthly salary reported was 9,109 MDL, which provided a baseline for evaluating financial stability.

**Barriers to Employment** despite improvements in employment rates, several barriers persisted:

- **Care responsibilities** (especially for young children or elderly family members).
- **Language barriers**, which made it difficult for some refugees to access better job opportunities.
- **Health issues**, preventing some individuals from securing or maintaining employment.

A notable finding was that **32 respondents gained employment during the period in which they were receiving CFR assistance**, suggesting that financial stability provided them with the opportunity to seek and secure better jobs.

Beneficiaries highlighted the role of CFR in **improving access to basic services**, particularly in sectors such as: healthcare, childcare, education

Although financial challenges persisted, particularly after CFR assistance ended, the findings indicate that the support played a crucial role in **allowing families to allocate financial resources to essential needs beyond**



**rent.** Many beneficiaries reported that, without CFR, they would have been unable to afford basic necessities or would have had to compromise on their living conditions.

**Recommendations:**

Based on the assessment findings, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen future cash assistance programs:

**1. Continue implementing CFR assistance:** The findings confirm that CFR is a sustainable and effective form of support in Moldova, with long-term benefits for housing security. Given that 80% of beneficiaries remained in their accommodations post-assistance, the program demonstrates a lasting impact.

**2. Extend assistance for vulnerable groups** while the standard CFR cycle effectively supported most participants, certain groups—such as those with health issues, elderly individuals, and caregivers who cannot engage in salaried work—struggled to maintain stable housing. Therefore, future CFR programs should:

- Introduce **longer-term rental support** for vulnerable individuals who cannot secure employment.
- Adopt **flexible eligibility criteria** that account for the needs of RAC decommissioned populations, who may face unique barriers to employment.

**3. Integrate employment support into cash assistance programs** to enhance sustainability, CFR should be paired with employment support services, including:

- **Language courses** for non-Romanian speakers to improve job access.
- **Job placement assistance** to help refugees and host community members secure stable employment.

**MLSP:** A request to revise the criteria for providing rental support to families. There are families who wish to apply but have been rejected. Families with PwD also want to apply but have been denied. Please review these criteria. If they are unable to manage, they could be relocated back to the centers as an option. Let's ensure this opportunity is available to everyone. The Ministry is monitoring how many families move into rental housing. The rate of people returning to the centers is very low, as they want to integrate into the community.

**ACTED:** We are not following only donor's requirements, individuals eligible for rental assistance should receive the necessary support to facilitate their transition, provided they meet the established criteria. This approach, implemented in collaboration with partners, has successfully supported beneficiaries. While participation in rental assistance remains voluntary, the eligibility criteria are designed to ensure long-term sustainability, preventing vulnerable individuals from experiencing inability to pay for rent or returning to



<p><b>4. NFIs update – Left Bank</b></p>	<p>RACs. Balancing flexibility with strict eligibility safeguards is essential to maintaining stability and effectiveness in the transition process.</p> <p><b>UNHCR:</b> This is an important discussion for the Rental Assistance Technical Group. The current criteria, developed through extensive discussions, have been effective for both host community families applying for rent. The support is extended for an additional three to six months for a small percentage of the most vulnerable cases, but this remains an exception. The six-month assistance period is a mid-term response, not a long-term solution, as funding relies on partners.</p> <p>Given that only one partner has secured funding for this year, it’s important to discuss the sustainability of rental assistance within the RTG. The Ministry should also be aware that we may not have as many partners as last year.</p> <p>Joint meetings with the PWG and BNWG were held to consolidate information on planned and ongoing <b>NFI distributions</b> in the Left Bank in response to the energy crisis. A <b>matrix</b> was developed to track activities, and partners were asked to fill in gaps in their submissions, ensuring better <b>coordination, alignment of humanitarian efforts, and prevention of duplication</b> in assistance. Many partners submitted their information, and a preliminary analysis revealed gaps and ambiguities in the submissions.</p>	
	<p><b>Hope4: Distributed blankets and winter clothing in Varnita for both host communities and refugees.</b></p> <p><b>ICRC-IFRC-MRCS: Providing various items through MRCS branches, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Blankets (2,000 for the host community, TBC for refugees)</li> <li>○ Bedding items (1,000 for host community, TBC for refugees)</li> <li>○ Hygiene kits (Family: 300; Individual: 700 for host community, TBC for refugees)</li> <li>○ Winter clothing (2,000 for host community, TBC for refugees)</li> <li>○ Generators (positioned in Bender, Grigoriopol, Râbnîța, Dnestrovsk)</li> </ul> <p><b>IOM:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hygiene kits for PWD (57 host community, 58 refugees)</li> <li>○ Bedding items (1,465 host community, 1,465 refugees)</li> <li>○ Family hygiene kits (525 host community, 525 refugees)</li> <li>○ Winter clothes (430 host community, 433 refugees)</li> <li>○ Generators and solar panels (Tiraspol, communal level, planned)</li> </ul>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hygiene kits and diapers for kids (430 host community, 433 refugees)</li> </ul> <p><b>NRC:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cash distribution for energy crisis support (1,265 host community, 1,265 refugees)</li> </ul> <p><b>UNHCR:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Blanket distributions in Rezina (84 host community, 494 refugees)</li> <li>○ Blanket distributions in Varnița (2,780 host community, 2,504 refugees)</li> <li>○ Solar lamps distribution in Tiraspol (500 host community, 500 refugees, planned)</li> </ul> <p><b>Caritas Moldova:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Winter clothes (1,000 vouchers for specific needs, planned)</li> <li>○ Individual hygiene kits (500 kits for women/girls, planned)</li> <li>○ Individual hygiene kits (Adult diapers, based on needs, planned)</li> <li>○ Family hygiene kits (800 kits, planned)</li> <li>○ Household items (TBD, planned)</li> <li>○ Household items (Up to 300 cooking equipment items, planned)</li> </ul>	
	<p>The meeting concluded with a few key updates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Housing Technical Group Formation</b> – In response to ongoing concerns about housing for refugees, a <b>Housing Technical Group</b> has been established with key partners who plan to work on this issue throughout the year. The Terms of Reference (TORs) have been finalized and will be shared with the Basic Needs Working Group (BNWG) partners to clarify the group's core functions.</li> <li>2. <b>Finalization of the 2024 RRP Year-End Report</b> – The year-end report for the <b>Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) 2024</b> has been completed, with input from partners, including spotlight stories. The report is expected to be finalized by <b>February 21st</b>.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Next meeting: TBC</b></p>		