UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | Moldova

AAP TASK FORCE

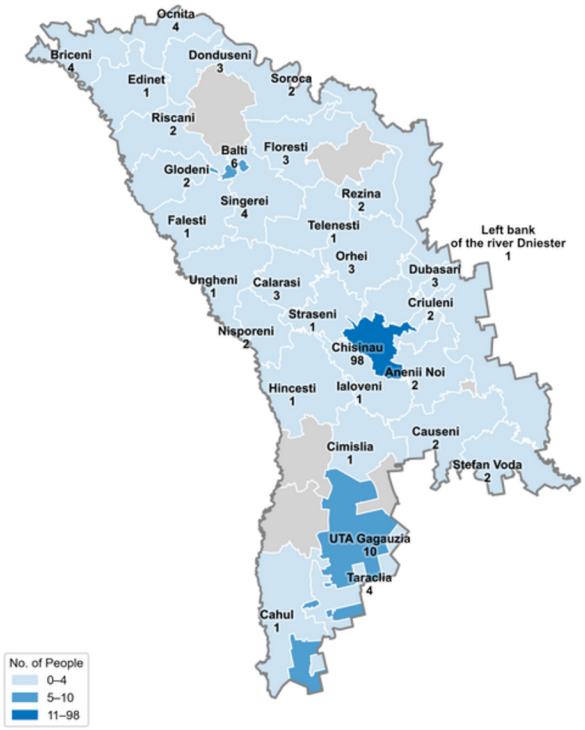
REPORT: PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL COHESION AND INTEGRATION

August 2025

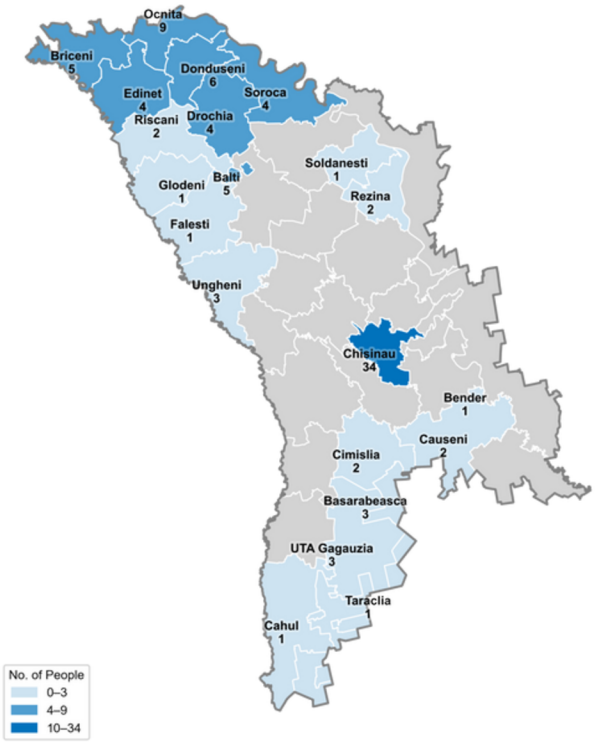
This report presents findings from a survey conducted in June and July 2025 to explore how Ukrainian refugees and Moldovan host community members perceive integration, social cohesion, and discrimination in Moldova. The data were collected through the Green Line, an information and support hotline established to assist refugees across the country. While this channel provided valuable access to diverse voices, it is important to note that participation was voluntary and respondents were self-selected. As a result, these findings reflect the views of individuals who chose to engage with the hotline and may not fully represent the broader populations. The results offer important insights into everyday experiences, the quality of community relations, and the challenges that some groups face.

METHODOLOGY

Respondents from Chisinau, Balti, Gagauzia, and multiple smaller districts of Moldova



Map of refugee respondents



Map of host community respondents

175 Ukrainian refugees
101 Moldovan host community members

The limitations of the study are:

- Self-selected sample
- Results may not fully reflect all perspectives

The interviews are covering **5** core questions:

- Perceptions of integration and belonging
- Experiences of exclusion or discrimination
- Quality of intergroup relations
- Perceived impact of refugee presence
- Awareness and opinions about social cohesion activities

The participation to the survey is completely **voluntary** and **anonymous.**

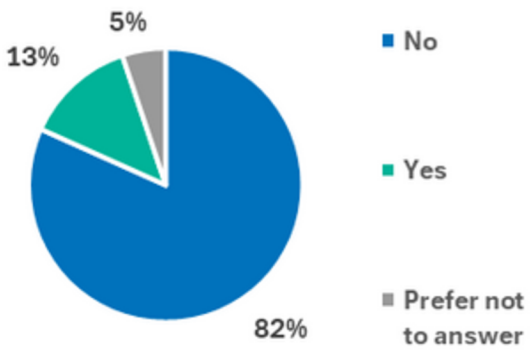
The respondents could skip any question or end the interview at any time.

The survey is conducted through phone-interviews carried out by **Green Line operators**.

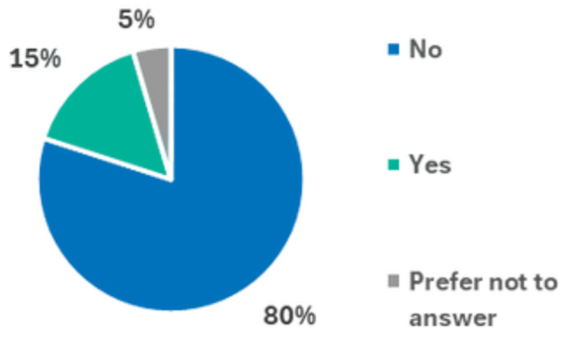
OVERVIEW OF REFUGEE PERCEPTIONS

The answers from Ukrainians responders were generally positive. About 82% said they feel included in their community, while only 13% reported feeling excluded. 5% preferred not to answer. Most respondents also reported not experiencing discrimination, with 15% stating that they had faced hostility or negative treatment from local residents, and 5% preferring not to answer.

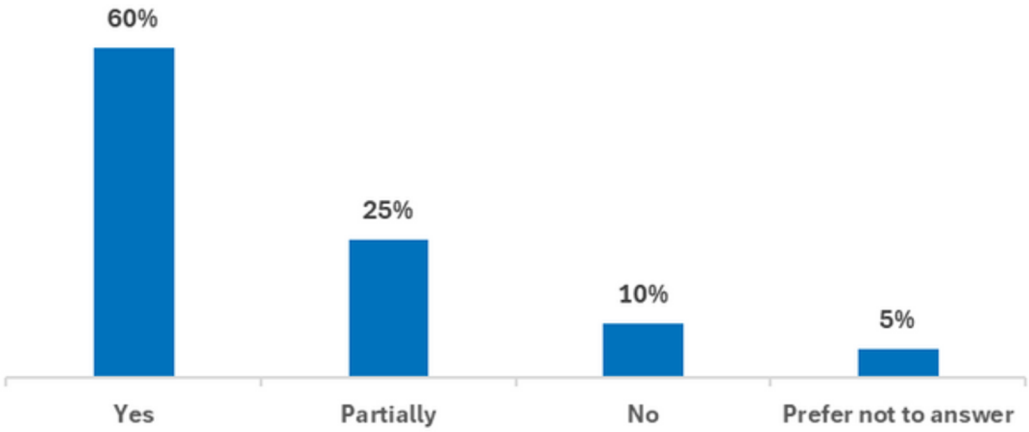
Did you feel excluded from the community where you live in the past month(s)?



Have you or someone in your family experienced discrimination or hostility from Moldovan residents?

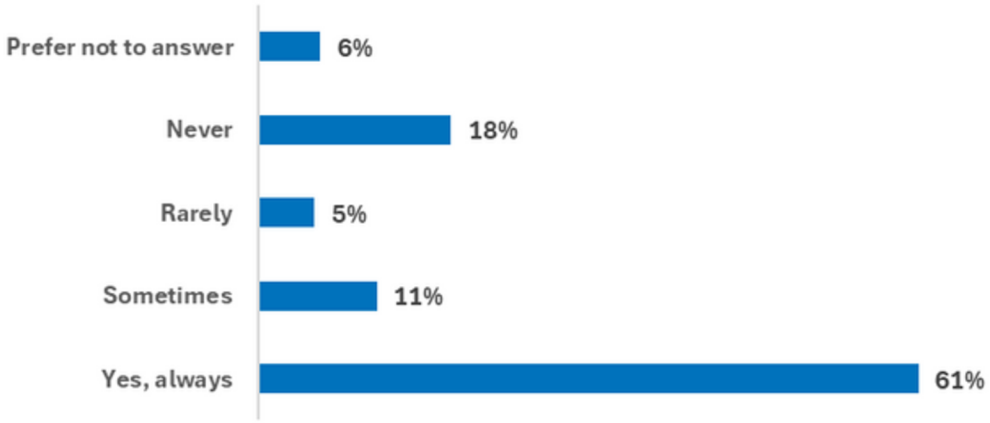


When asked whether they felt part of their local community, 60% of refugees answered positively, while 25% said they felt only partly included. 10% did not feel part of the community at all, and 5% preferred not to answer.



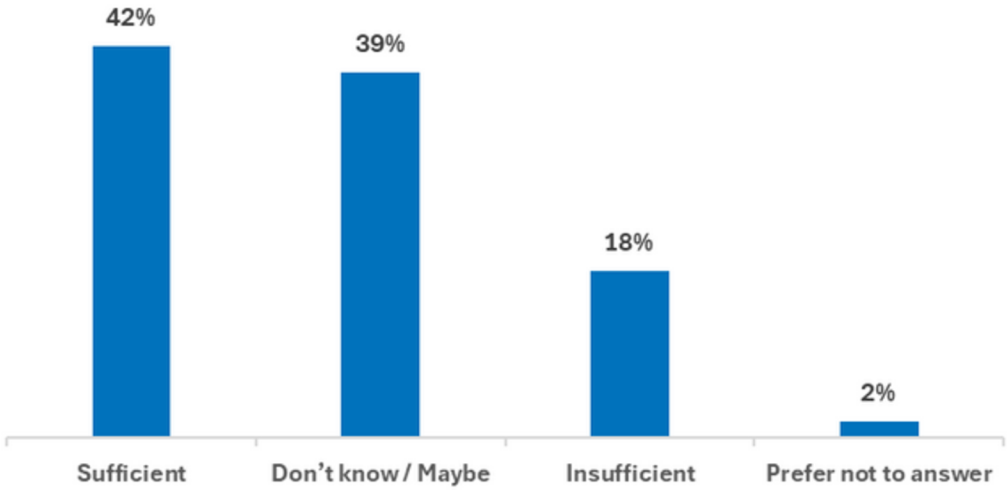
Do you feel part of the local community where you live?

However, the question about feeling safe expressing Ukrainian identity revealed more significant concerns. 61% of refugees said they always felt safe speaking Ukrainian or displaying cultural symbols, while 18% never felt safe doing so. Another 16% said they only sometimes or rarely felt safe, and 6% gave no answer. This highlights a gap between general acceptance and deeper feelings of security.



Do you feel safe expressing your Ukrainian identity in public (e.g., speaking Ukrainian, wearing national symbols)?

As with the host community, perceptions of social cohesion efforts varied: while 39% felt the activities had a meaningful impact on strengthening community ties, 42% were unsure, 18% felt the impact was limited, and 2% provided no response.

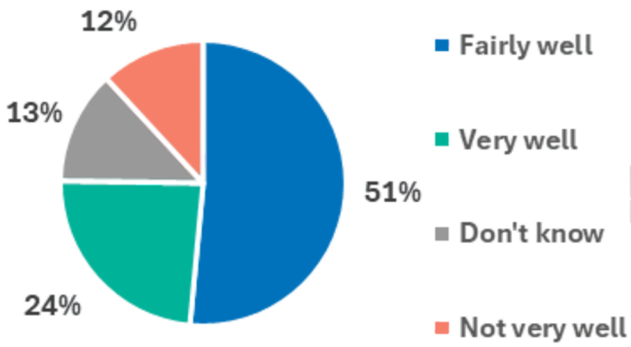


What do you think about the number of social cohesion events in your area (e.g., cultural or informational)?

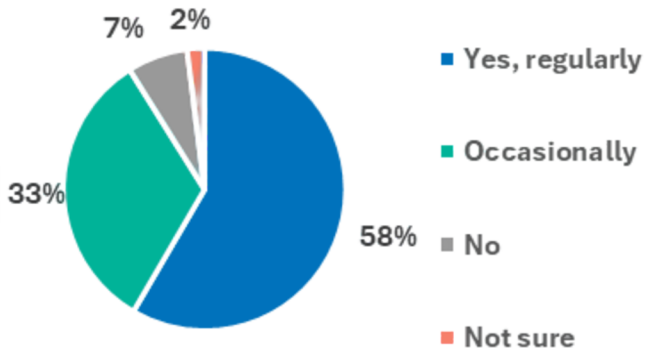
OVERVIEW OF HOST COMMUNITIES PERCEPTIONS

Among Moldovan respondents, overall perceptions of refugees' integration were positive. About 75% believed Ukrainian refugees were integrating either "very well" (24%) or "fairly well" (52%), while 13% expressed uncertainty and 11.9% felt integration was limited. Most respondents, 58%, reported regular personal contact with refugees in their community, and another 33% said they interacted occasionally. Very few (7%) had no contact at all, and 2.0% were not sure, suggesting that Ukrainian refugees are integrated part of everyday life.

How well do you think Ukrainian refugees are integrating into your community?

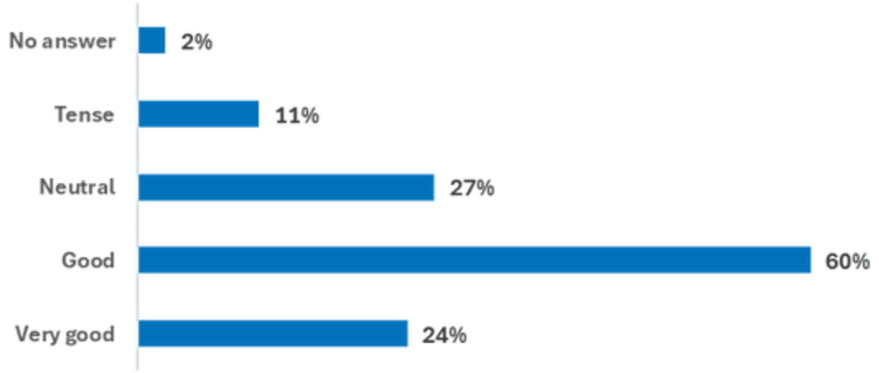


Have you had personal contact with Ukrainian refugees (e.g., as neighbors, in school, at work, in the community)?

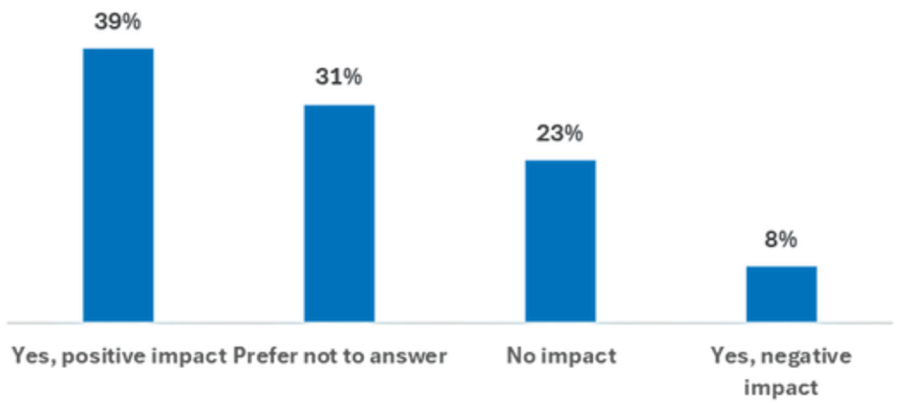


When asked about relations between Moldovans and refugees, 69% described them as good (50%) or very good (20%), while 22% felt relations were neutral. Only 9% reported any challenges in the relationships with refugees.

Perceptions of the impact of refugees on local communities were also broadly positive. 39% said their presence had a positive effect, 23% felt there was no impact, and 8% believed the impact was negative. A notable 31% preferred not to answer this question, which could be due to some underlying sensitivity or uncertainty.

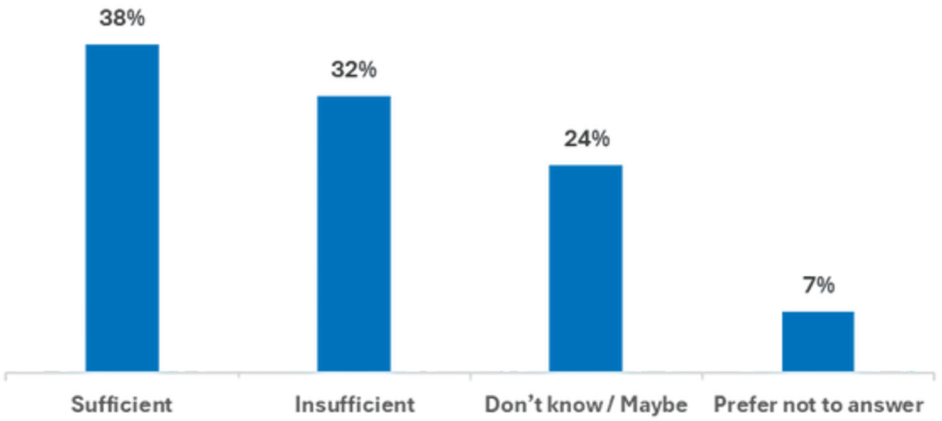


How would you describe the relationship between Moldovans and Ukrainian refugees in your area?



Do you think the presence of Ukrainian refugees has had an impact on host communities (e.g., health, education, employment)?

Opinions about social cohesion activities were more mixed. 24% felt there were enough events to bring communities together, 38% were unsure, and 32% felt activities were insufficient. 7% preferred not to answer.

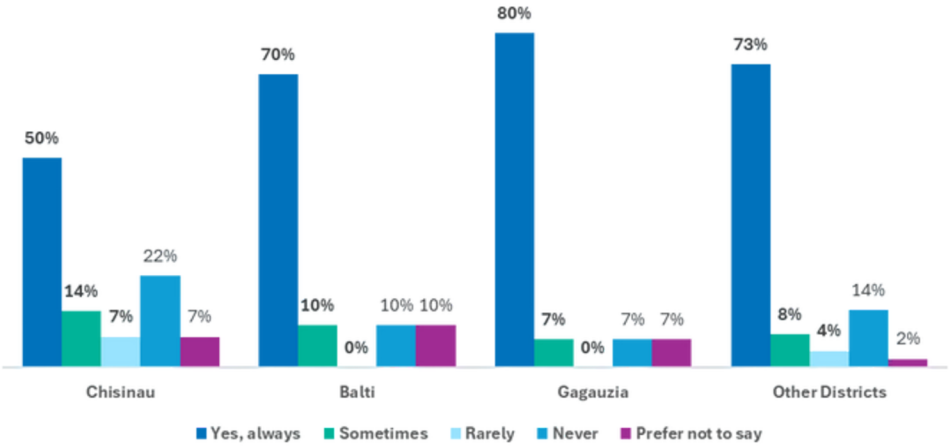


What do you think about the current number of activities to promote social cohesion in your area? (e.g., cultural or informational events)?

DETAILED DISAGGREGATED ANALYSIS BY LOCATION

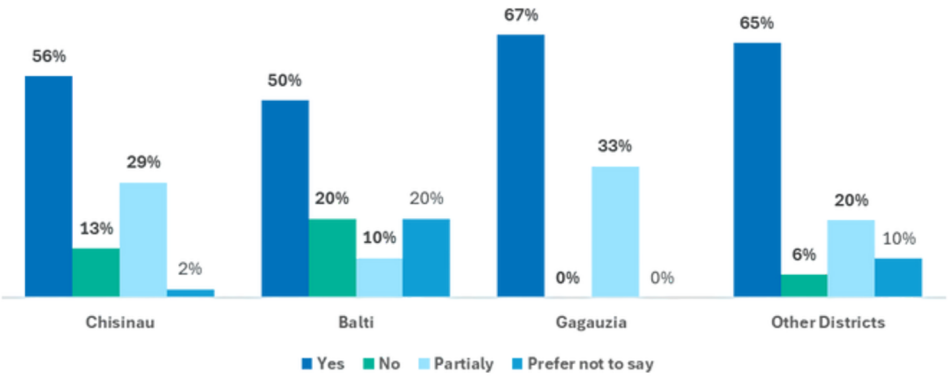
This section provides a comparative analysis of responses across different areas of the country, aiming to highlight possible trends and patterns in how refugees and host communities perceive integration, safety, belonging, and intergroup relations. Given the scope of the study, these findings should be read as indicative rather than definitive.

In **Chișinău**, refugees expressed more concern than in other regions about openly identifying as Ukrainian, with a larger share reporting that they never felt safe to do so. Host community members in Chișinău also tended to view refugees as somewhat less integrated compared to perceptions in other parts of the country. These results suggest that while contact between groups is frequent in the capital, this visibility may not always translate into a stronger sense of safety or inclusion.



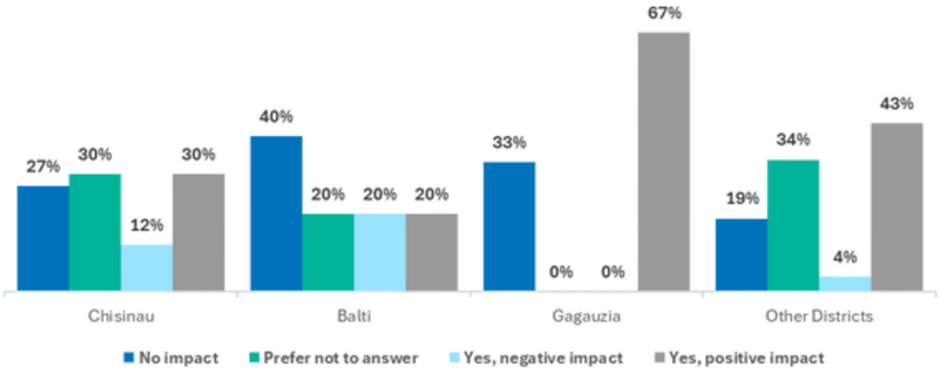
Do you feel safe expressing your Ukrainian identity in public (e.g., speaking Ukrainian, wearing national symbols)?

In **Bălți**, refugees reported higher levels of exclusion compared to other areas, with a notable proportion also choosing "prefer not to say" when asked about belonging. This could indicate discomfort in expressing their views. Host community members in Bălți reported somewhat less regular contact with refugees than in Chișinău, though more occasional interactions than in smaller districts. They were also more likely than respondents elsewhere to describe relations as "challenging." Reports of discrimination were also slightly higher than in other regions, again likely reflecting its urban context.



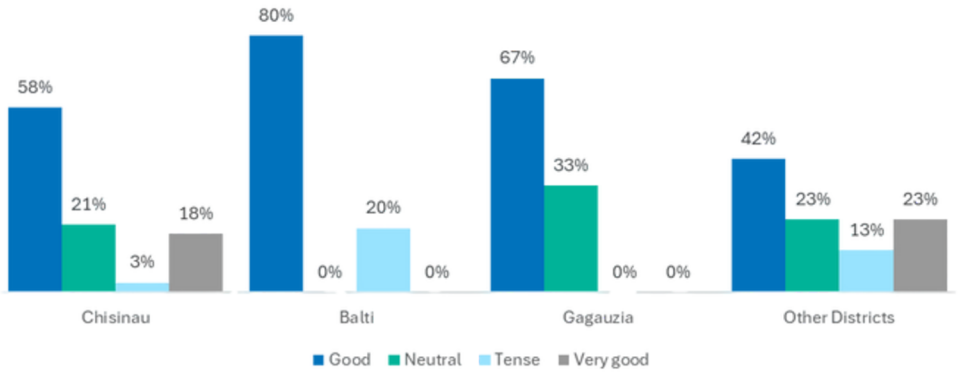
Do you feel part of the local community where you live?

Findings from **Gagauzia** showed a positive picture. Refugees reported some of the highest levels of belonging to local communities, and experiences of discrimination were lower here compared to larger urban areas. Host community members in Gagauzia more often described refugees as having a positive impact on Moldova, which may help explain this stronger sense of belonging. This suggests that positive recognition from hosts can provide an entry point for further strengthening inclusion, even in regions with distinct social and political dynamics.



Do you think the presence of Ukrainian refugees has had an impact on host communities (e.g., health, education, employment)?

In **smaller districts**, results were more varied. Refugees were more likely to say they felt part of the community compared to other areas, while reports of discrimination were among the lowest nationally. At the same time, many respondents preferred not to answer questions on negative experiences, which may reflect reluctance rather than absence of challenges. Host community members in smaller districts were somewhat less likely to see refugees as integrated compared to those in larger cities, but they most often described relationships as "neutral," suggesting limited but generally balanced interaction. A relatively high proportion also highlighted the positive contribution of refugees. This indicates that while experiences are uneven, the lower levels of discrimination and overall neutrality could provide space to gradually build stronger connections.



How would you describe the relationship between Moldovans and Ukrainian refugees in your area?

COMPARATIVE INSIGHTS

Comparing responses from refugees and host community members highlights notable differences. While hosts often considered integration to be successful, refugees more frequently described their inclusion as only partial, reflecting the significant efforts and resources required to rebuild their lives and adapt to a new environment.

This gap is also visible in perceptions of safety when expressing Ukrainian identity. Nationally, 18% of refugees said they never felt safe doing so, 11% sometimes, and 5% rarely, meaning that more than a third experienced some level of discomfort. By contrast, host community members often assumed that refugees felt more comfortable and integrated than the refugees themselves reported.

Despite these differences, both groups broadly agreed that relations between communities were largely positive and that open tensions were uncommon.

Integration and Belonging:

Hosts are more optimistic about integration.

Refugees are more likely to feel still displaced and not at home.

Discrimination and Cultural Safety:

Discrimination is limited overall but still to be monitored in Chisinau and Balti.

Almost 20% of refugees never felt safe expressing Ukrainian identity.

Relations Between Groups:

Broadly are positive in most areas.

Some caution and higher neutrality in Gagauzia and Chisinau.

Perceived Impact:

Hosts largely saw positive or neutral effects.

Some reluctance to discuss impacts openly in during the survey.

Social Cohesion Activities:

Uneven awareness in both groups about these events.

CONTACTS

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