

## Notes from Romania Refugee Coordination Forum Health WG

4 May 2022, online 1.30-3 PM (Bucharest time)

### Agenda:

1. Ukrainian refugees' health needs and experiences in Romania (Ukrainian refugees) – 10 minutes
2. Handwashing facilities at border crossing (TBC Oxfam) and Q&A – **To happen next week**
3. Overview of CSO activities recorded in Kobo (<https://enketo.unhcr.org/x/gWRT0qS>) and Q&A – 10 minutes
4. Gender based violence (TBC) and Q&A – 20 minutes
5. PEP, emergency contraception, clinical management of abortion (Irina Mateescu, midwife, president of AMI, Independent Midwives Association in Romania) and Q&A – 20 minutes
6. Study to explore UKR refugees' access to health services (Martha Scherzer, WHO) and Q&A – 10 minutes
7. AOB – 10 minutes

### Next steps:

1. Terms of Reference for WG shared and feedback requested, can be in English or Romanian. Objective to make the WG useful to participants and refugees.
2. Handwashing facilities for children and GBV to be discussed at next meeting.

### Main points:

1. SRH services are provided free of charge in some clinics in Bucharest. Ukrainian refugee shared a positive experience of accessing health and gynecological services at Nativia center in Bucharest.
2. Important to share information from this WG to the partners on referral health facilities and resources.
3. WHO to work with SUUB hospital to make it refugee friendly and with family doctors' professional association \*SNMF\* to identify family doctors interested in providing care and enrolling refugees on their patients' list.
4. There is a significant gap in the contraception and abortion services. CSOs are trying to close this gap as best as they can. List of doctors and facilities providing abortion services should be compiled and shared with refugees. First abortion platform by telemedicine for medical abortion in development.
5. WHO CO to connect AMI to WHO CO Moldova to learn about well-developed website for contraceptive services.
  - WHO conducts a behavioral insights study on Ukrainian refugees' access to health services. Please share the invitation link with your network online and in persons, and encourage refugees to participate; contribute to the recommendations
6. For any comments or suggestions for next topics, contact Cassandra Butu: 0726785380

## Topics discussed:

### SRH

- **Independent Midwives Association (AMI) recently concluded a partnership with an OB-GYN clinic in Bucharest/ <https://www.nativia.ro/> to provide free services for refugees.**
  - ✓ One refugee shared her positive experience on accessing health and gynecological services at Nativia center in Bucharest. She received free medical tests including lab tests and ultrasounds.
  - ✓ AMI is funded by UNICEF to provide services for refugees and Nativia is subcontracted. The clinic will have a call centre for making appointments in UKR language.
  - ✓ Transportation and translators are offered to accompany Ukrainian women, especially needed for women giving birth. Center providers speak Romanian and English.
- **Information of two other health facilities for referral:**
  - ✓ Another provider of free services in Bucharest is the University Emergency Hospital which has an Integrated Outpatient Clinic of Bucharest (SUUB) <http://www.suub.ro/ambulatoriul-suub/>. For appointments for refugees, please call +40 786 687 782 and extension 7130.
  - ✓ Waiting time is longer in the public hospitals which is a problem in ANC (especially antenatal screening) given the tests are time sensitive.
  - ✓ WHO will work with hospital management and staff to make it a refugee friendly healthcare unit.
  - ✓ There is a mobile medical caravan operated by the Regina Maria Foundation (focal point - Cristiana Mateoiu: [cristiana.mateoiu@fundatiainovatiisociale.ro](mailto:cristiana.mateoiu@fundatiainovatiisociale.ro) .
  - ✓ They can further refer the women to partners' recommended clinics/ public ambulatories. 500 patients were consulted in the Bucharest refugees' centers by the mobile team.
  - ✓ The Foundation is working with a family doctor who can be contacted by phone or WhatsApp's to provide care for refugees (details – Dr Vlad Romanescu, address - Policlinica Sociala Baba Novac, Str Dristor 81-88; phone 0735177574).
  - ✓ Financing and costs for healthcare services for refugees detailed by Fundatia Regina Maria:
    - ✓ 1,000 EUR was estimated as the cost for 1 ambulance intervention. By doing outreach with mobile teams and preventing calling 112, the Foundation may have saved 500,000 Eur state funds.
    - ✓ Family doctors are not interested to provide healthcare services as the state payment is not attractive. Also, the terms of the reimbursement of medical providers are unclear (e.g., when the funds will be disbursed?)
    - ✓ WHO will work with family doctors' professional association to identify those who are interested to provide care for refugees and enroll them in their patients' list.
    - ✓ Proposal from Regina Maria: UKR doctors to practice medicine inside the UKR embassy in Bucharest. However, UNHCR already informed the Foundation that

there is a legal issue as services cannot be provided on the embassy's grounds (Geneva convention).

- ✓ WHO discussed with MoH leadership about ways to establish UKR medical staff practice in Romania. Recognizing qualification and/ or waivers needs to be further discussed by MOH with Romanian College of Physicians. Current procedures for recognition of diplomas are here: <https://www.cmr.ro/info-utile/aviz-pentru-medic-din-stat-tert/>

#### GBV

- **Asociația ANAIS provides social, psychological, and legal services for women and children of domestic and sexual violence.**
  - ✓ They do not have shelters, but they work with other partner organizations to provide accommodation service. They also have a network with other CSOs working on human trafficking.
  - ✓ ANAIS has supported two women, but no one has been referred from centers receiving refugees. General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection did not make referrals, despite they know ANAIS and run many refugees' centers. Simple persons wrote to ANAIS Facebook.
  - ✓ A team of paid interpreters are available to help with overcoming the language barriers.
  - ✓ Collaboration established with UNHCR as trauma for refugee women is increased due to war.
  - ✓ ANAIS will go to centers to identify / raise awareness human trafficking and GBV.
  - ✓ Asociația ANAIS telephone number with Russian speaking operator 0733948296.
- **Federația Organizațiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Servicii Sociale (FONSS) has a 250 beds center for humanitarian and social aid providing a range of services.**
  - ✓ A family doctor was delegated by PHA (DSP) Iasi to the centre run by FONSS which is very important for the centre to run smoothly. The Centre has patients with complex/ severe illness (amputations, patients who need dialysis, patients with severe Covid-19).
  - ✓ Barrier - immigration services are slow, there is a backlog of cases as the temporary protection papers are issued with delay. The status of temp protection is needed for optimal access to healthcare and family doctors.
  - ✓ Guests are having issues accessing specialized services. There are problems with registration of people with GPs, referral to specialist doctors, and accessing drugs.
  - ✓ Trauma cases resulting from the war need to be referred to specialized services/hospital.
  - ✓ Mental health issues are many and complicated (pre-existing and PTSD) and interpreters need to have careful training to help refugees. Mental health patients are referred to the Socala psychiatric hospital. There are 7 doctors in Iasi who can speak UKR/ RUS and can treat PTSD and other complex mental illnesses.
  - ✓ Concern that roles of NGOs need to be supported by authorities since the capacity of NGOs will become overwhelmed.

- ✓ FONSS contact details: diana.chiriacescu@fonss.ro (Diana Chiriacescu for Bucharest) and Mihaela Munteanu for Iasi (comunicare@fonss.ro -coordinator of the Nicolina Centre/ Centrul de Asistenta Umanitara si Sociala Nicolina -0740513864).

## MHPSS

- WHO CO will provide PFA trainings (first psychological aid first aid). Ioana Novac will inform partners about the details to invite participants / staff they need to train (frontline workers, health and non-health professionals, including translators).

## RMNCAH services reflection by independent midwife Irina Mateescu

- ✓ There are 25 refugee children on AMI list, waiting to be vaccinated in Bucharest. AMI is looking for family doctors to work with. A mapping on vaccination providers is essential.
- ✓ It is important for UKR women to know that some clinics can do only antenatal care but not birth. For emergencies they should call 112 and be transferred to the closest maternity hospital.
- ✓ Ukrainian women prefer natural births vs. c sections (opposite from Romanian) so should be supported, along with breastfeeding over milk powder for refugees.
- ✓ Access to contraception and abortion is not free in Romania. It should be free of charge to Romanians and Ukrainians both.
- ✓ First abortion platform by telemedicine for medical abortion will be available in Ukrainian, English, and Romanian. Posters will be in Bucharest centers. Access to abortion is generally difficult.
- ✓ Psychological services need identified as well as translators or providers who speak Ukrainian or Russian.
- ✓ WHO Romania to connect AMI with WHO CO Moldova to learn about well-developed website for contraceptive services.
- ✓ Resources on abortion access (e.g., doctors and clinics providing abortion services) should be compiled and shared with refugees. More women are trying to access abortion services with difficulty, especially at border and crossing points. Possibility of helping women access abortion in Romania since illegal in Poland.

## BI study

- WHO will conduct a behavioral and cultural insights study on refugee health service needs, barriers and access, to inform appropriate health services and policies and improve access.
  - ✓ Qualitative study is planned with 25 online interviews with Ukrainian refugees in Romania. The research is implemented with UKR social scientists based in UKR.
  - ✓ Ask to partners: please share the invitation link with your network online and in persons, and encourage refugees to participate; contribute to the recommendations
  - ✓ WHO will share the link to the study with the minute.

- ✓ Contact details - Katrine Bach Habersaat, Regional Advisor for Behavioural and Cultural Insights, EURO: habersaatk@who.int; Martha Scherzer, Senior Consultant, EURO: scherzerm@who.int

#### Participants

1. Adrian Pana, IOM
2. Anca Moldovan, Dana Timotin, Alina Myinia, WHO CO interpreters
3. Andreea Popescu, NPO, WHO Romania
4. Cassandra Butu, officer in charge, WHO Romania
5. Heather Jue Wong, WHO
6. Henry Laurenson-Schafer, WHO EURO
7. Ioana Novac, consultant, WHO Romania
8. Ioana Pop, consultant, WHO Romania
9. Martha Scherzer, WHO
10. Oana Motea, UNICEF Romania
11. Patrick Knapp, US Embassy
12. Sandra Harlass, UNHCR

#### Refugees

13. Marina Kornilova, medical doctor, infectious disease specialist / HIV, Bucharest based
14. Olena Fetisova

#### NGOs

1. Adina Manea, Youth for Youth
2. Alina Comanescu, Asociația Sănătate pentru Comunitate
3. Ana Bugneriu, Fundatia Umanitara Sibiu
4. Andrada Cilibiu, FILIA Centre
5. Andreea Constantin, Asociația MAME
6. Cristiana Mateoiu, Fundatia Regina Maria
7. Diana Chiriacescu, FONSS
8. Dorica Dan, Rare Disease, Prader Willi Association Romania
9. Fabiana Faria, Oxfam
10. Fundatia RAA
11. Giulia Crisan, Asociația ANAIS
12. Hourya Lekehal, Medecins Sans Frontières

13. Irina Mateescu, independent midwife
14. Kis Balázs, Society of Saint Vincent of Saul
15. Lu Knobloch, Sus Inima
16. Magda Munteanu, Hospice Casa Sperantei
17. Marcel?
18. Marina Maslovskya, Médecins du Monde
19. Radu Racareanu, Fundatia PACT
20. Roland Schwanke, Project HOPE