Floods and deserts:
information access and barriers in Moldova's refugee response

Internews

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Information Ecosystem Assessments aim to:

ENVIRONMENT:
Identify available information, sources and preferences

GAPS:
Identify priority information needs

BARRIERS:
Identify the main barriers to information access

DYNAMICS:
Understand dynamics such as trust relationships

Data

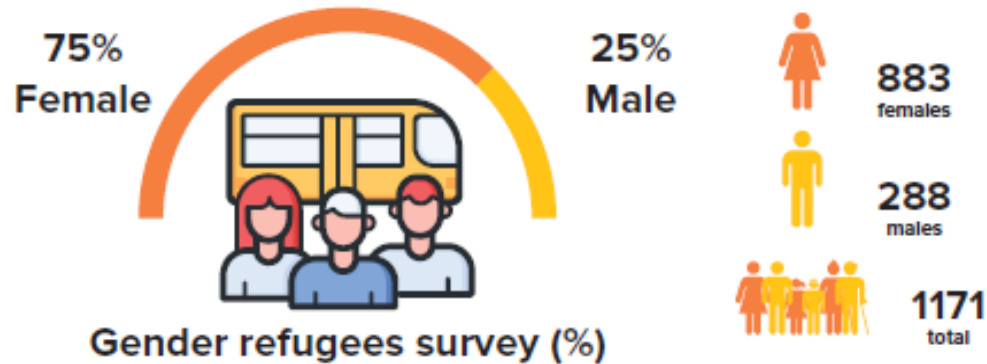Figure 1: Gender breakdown of Ukrainian survey respondents

75% Female

25% Male

883 females

288 males

1171 total

Gender refugees survey (%)

Figure 2: Age distribution of Ukrainian survey respondents

51%
25-49 years old
600 individuals

14%
50-59 years old
166 individuals

7%
18-24 years old
85 individuals

27%
60+ years old
320 individuals

1,000+ Refugees
- Focus Group Discussions
- Face to face survey (1171 refugees,   75% women)

1,000+ Host Community
- Focus Group Discussions
- Face to face survey

Key Informant Interviews
- Government, local and Intl relief agencies, Social media administrators and media
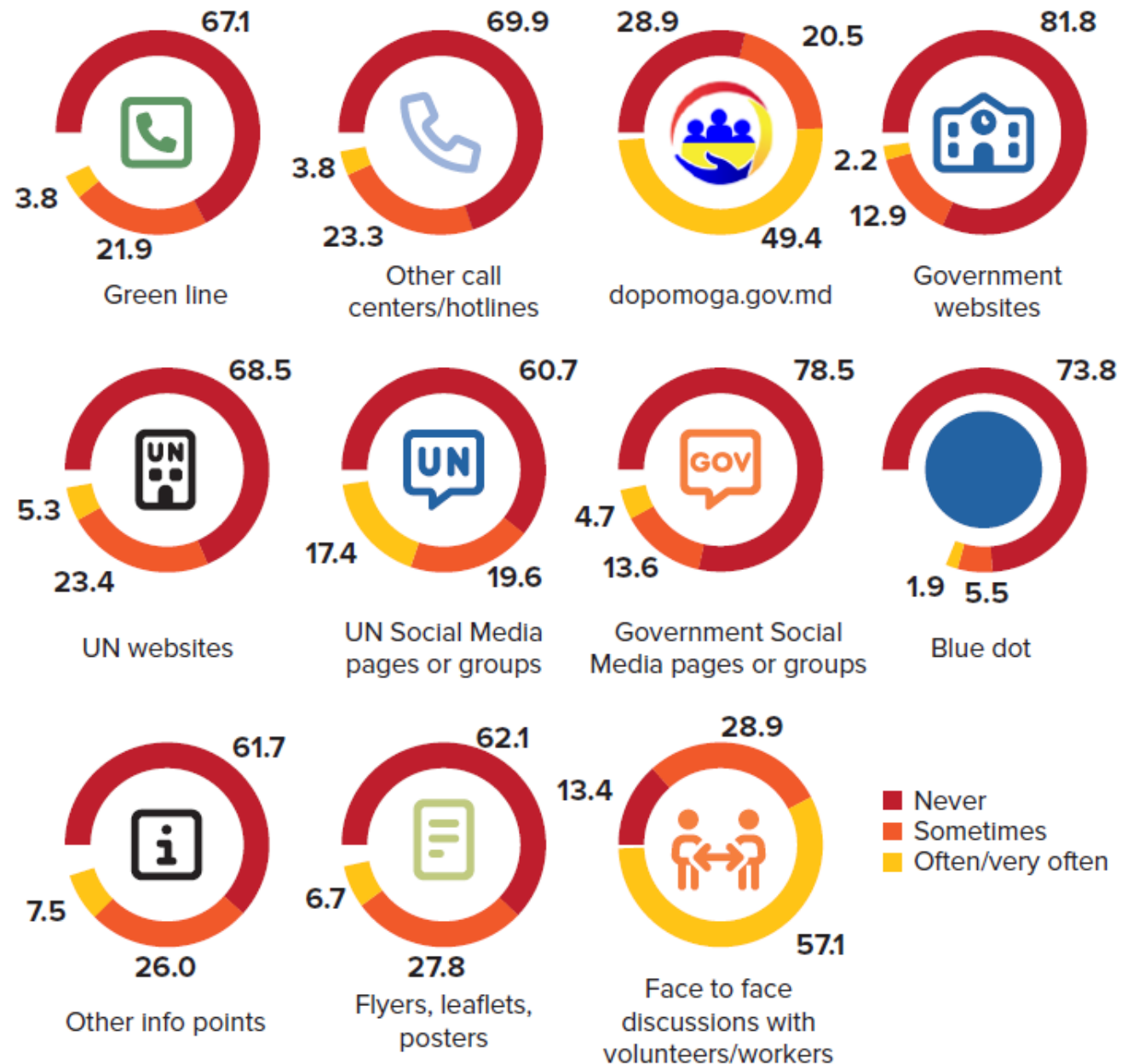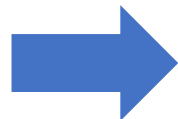
Summary of Key Findings

Key Information Channels are performing well

Green line
67.1
3.8
21.9

Other call centers/hotlines
69.9
3.8
23.3

dopomoga.gov.md
28.9
20.5
49.4

Government websites
81.8
2.2
12.9

UN websites
68.5
5.3
23.4

UN Social Media pages or groups
60.7
17.4
19.6

Government Social Media pages or groups
78.5
4.7
13.6

Blue dot
73.8
1.9
5.5

Other info points
61.7
7.5
26.0

Flyers, leaflets, posters
62.1
6.7
27.8

Face to face discussions with volunteers/workers
28.9
13.4
57.1

Legend:
- Never
- Sometimes
- Often/very often

How often do you use these refugee response information channels? (Ukrainians)

Challenges with some hotlines

"They can't answer [our questions] about [cash] payments. They answer and say, 'call us back' There are no answers... my eye will begin to twitch soon!"

[Ukrainian, Bălți]

"The migration service laughed that we wanted to stay here, and recommended hotels for us to stay in. They also speak aggressively when we call their phoneline."

[Ukranian woman, Bălți]

Figure 25: Preferred methods to learn about refugee services. (Ukrainians)

Method	Value
Phone call	48.7
Via social media and messaging apps	47.5
Face-to-face/in Person	47.1
SMS	35.5
Via their websites	18.4
Via social media platforms	16.0
Via a dedicated services App on your phone	9.0
Via Moldovan media outlets	2.7
Via posters/leaflets/etc.	2.6
Via Ukrainian media outlets	2.0
Other	0.9

Where you live impacts the quality and quantity of information available to you

Rural Vs Urban

- Services concentrated in population centres

- People prefer face-to-face communication, this limits understanding of service eligibility
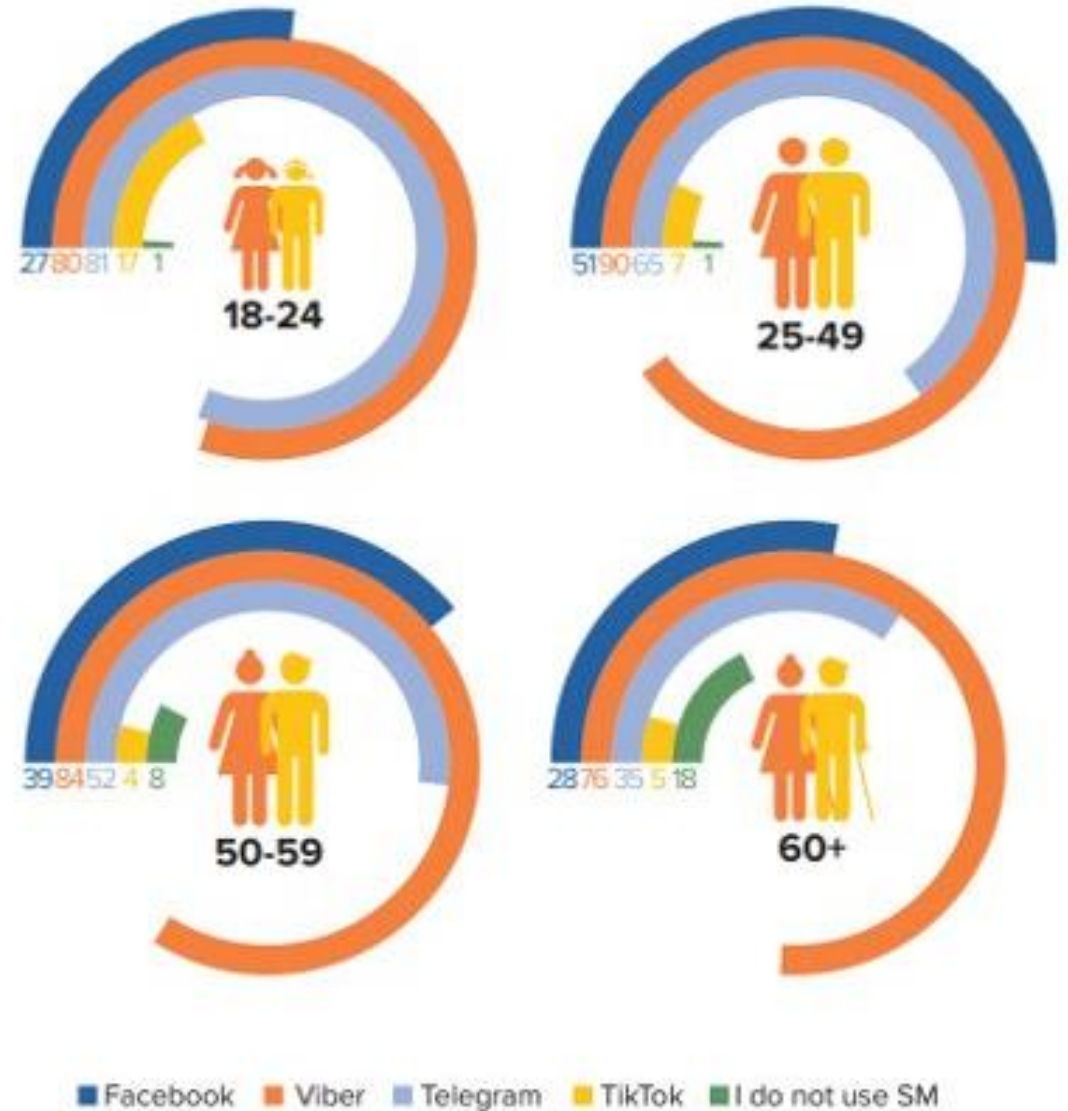
RAC Vs private accommodation

- Some information is distributed only for RAC residents, and this sometimes links with aid access

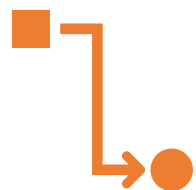- Info not flowing among the community, but within accommodation groups

Age impacts access:

More unique information needs:

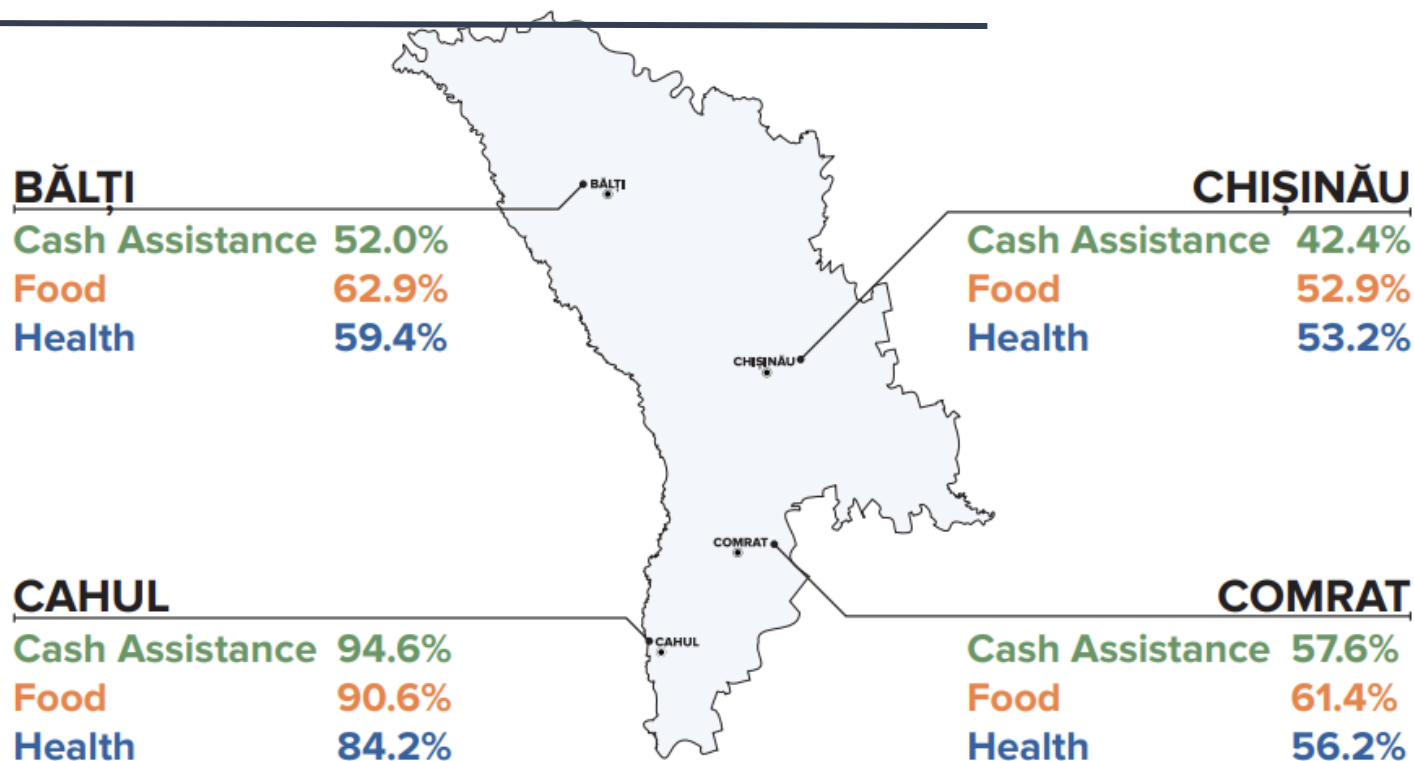information about sexual and reproductive health services (SRH)

care for chronic diseases.

18-24
27 80 81 17 1

25-49
51 90 65 7 1

50-59
39 84 52 4 8

60+
28 76 35 5 18

■ Facebook ■ Viber ■ Telegram ■ TikTok ■ I do not use SM

Information Gaps

Information needs by area (Ukrainians)

BĂLȚI
Cash Assistance	52.0%
Food	62.9%
Health	59.4%

CHIȘINĂU
Cash Assistance	42.4%
Food	52.9%
Health	53.2%

CAHUL
Cash Assistance	94.6%
Food	90.6%
Health	84.2%

COMRAT
Cash Assistance	57.6%
Food	61.4%
Health	56.2%

63% Food and Clothing

60% Health

55% Cash Assistance

16% Legal rights and documentation

Volunteers feel disconnected

Ukrainian Refugees info needs

Community divides are evident despite a common language

- **At home:** 72% Speak Russian at home, but 91.5% would choose Russian to talk to aid workers

- **Written info:** 12% prefer Ukrainian (up from 6% spoken)

- **Language and social cohesion** – Avoidance of public use of Ukrainian

- Language is a barrier for refugees to engage with local media (limited Russian and Ukrainian options)

Host community feels less informed about the response and its priorities

How informed do you feel about the refugee response? (Moldovans)

- 7% Not at all
- 5% I feel very informed
- 49% I know a little
- 38% I have a good amount of info
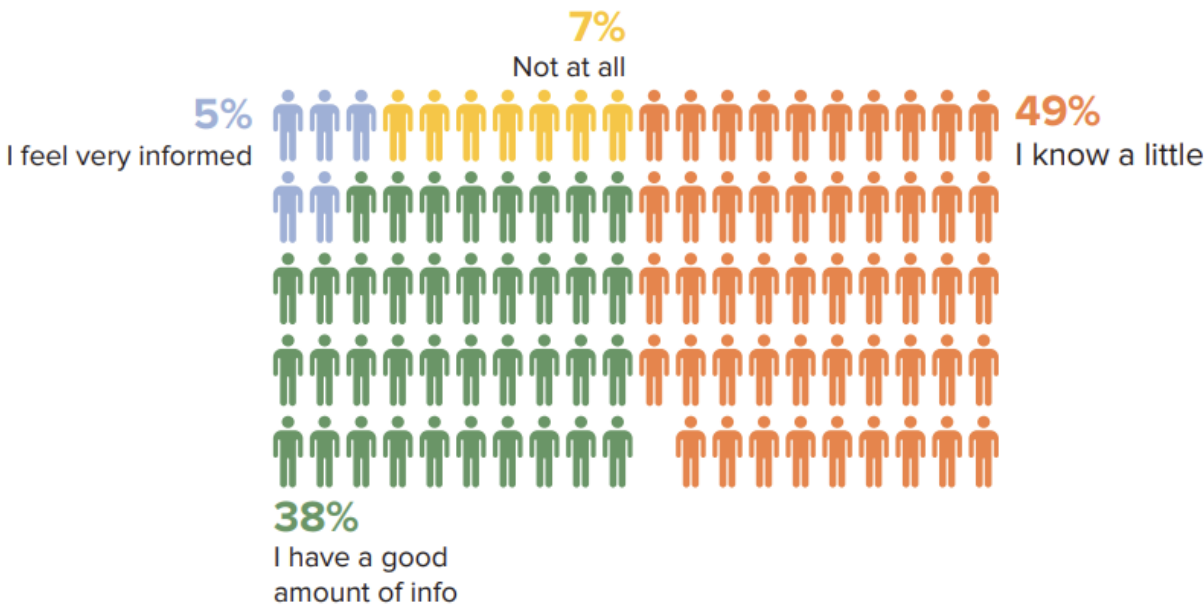
How satisfied are you with the information regarding the refugee support services available to you in Moldova? (Ukrainians)

- 67% I am very satisfied
- 29% I am somewhat satisfied
- 0.4% Not at all
- 1.4% I am little satisfied

Figure 12: Information interests regarding the refugee response (Moldovans)

Category	Value
Transparency - How is the money for refugees being spent	24
I don't want any more information – I am not interested	24
Transparency – Who pays for the refugee services	24
Information – What kind of services are provided to refuges	18
Duration – How long will services be provided to refugees	16
What is the role of Local organizations	16
What is the Government's role in the response	15
Duration – How long will refugees stay / When will they…	15

Misinformation and a lack of transparency about aid processes are contributing to social tensions

> "Why are we helping these people – they don't need it, they are just spending our government dollars that should be helping our poor who REALLY need it"
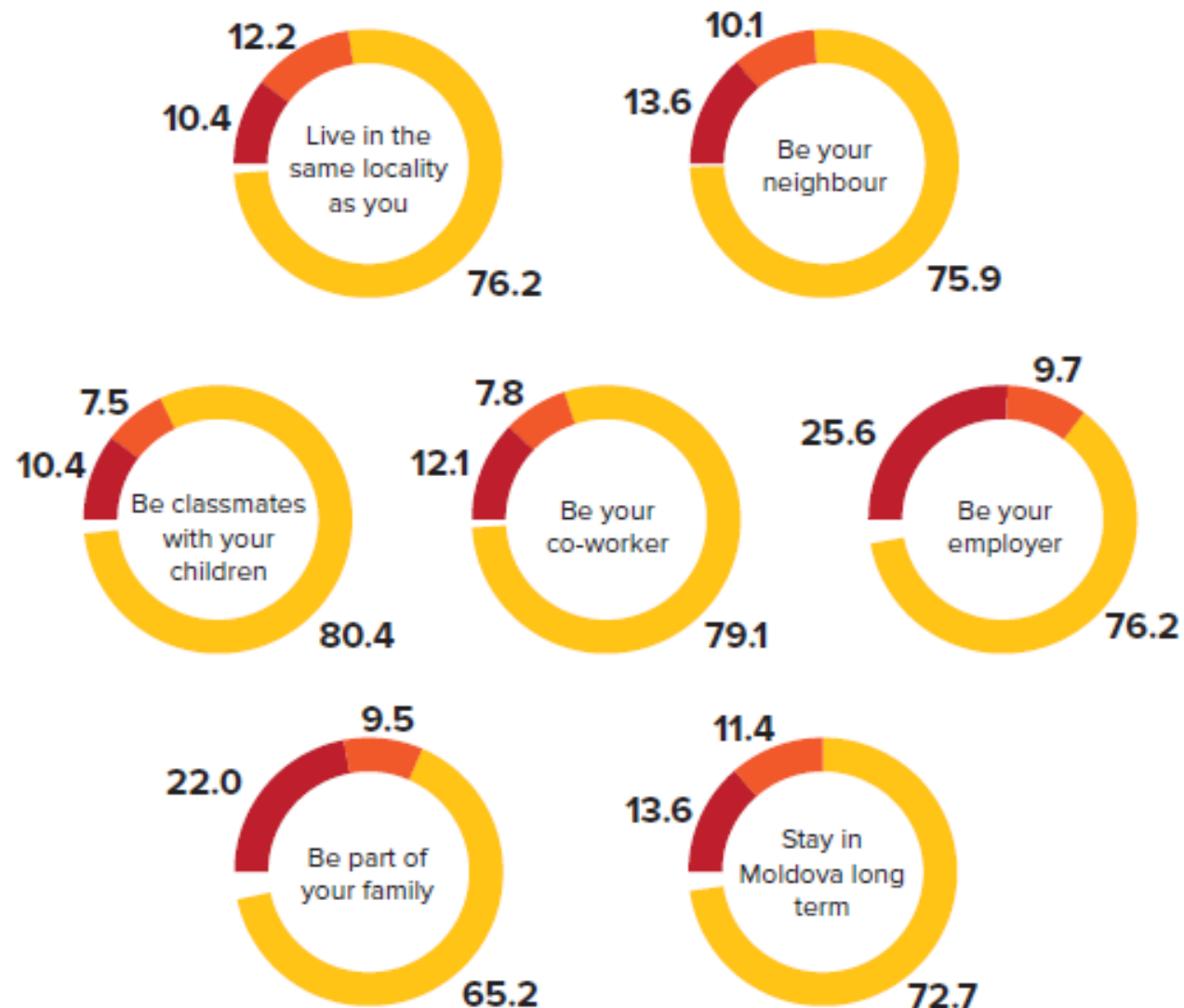>
> *[Moldovan Man, Chisinau]*

> "This is practised: you get aid and are told not to tell others what is being distributed. There is a feeling that aid centres are committing fraud. On what basis do they decide who gets aid and who does not?"
>
> *[Ukrainian woman, Bălți]*

To what extent do you think that Ukrainian refugees should be able to…

Live in the same locality as you
- 12.2
- 10.4
- 76.2

Be your neighbour
- 10.1
- 13.6
- 75.9

Be classmates with your children
- 7.5
- 10.4
- 80.4

Be your co-worker
- 7.8
- 12.1
- 79.1

Be your employer
- 9.7
- 25.6
- 76.2

Be part of your family
- 9.5
- 22.0
- 65.2

Stay in Moldova long term
- 11.4
- 13.6
- 72.7

■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree (neutral) ■ Agreed

Figure 33: Most reliable sources according to respondents. (Ukrainians)

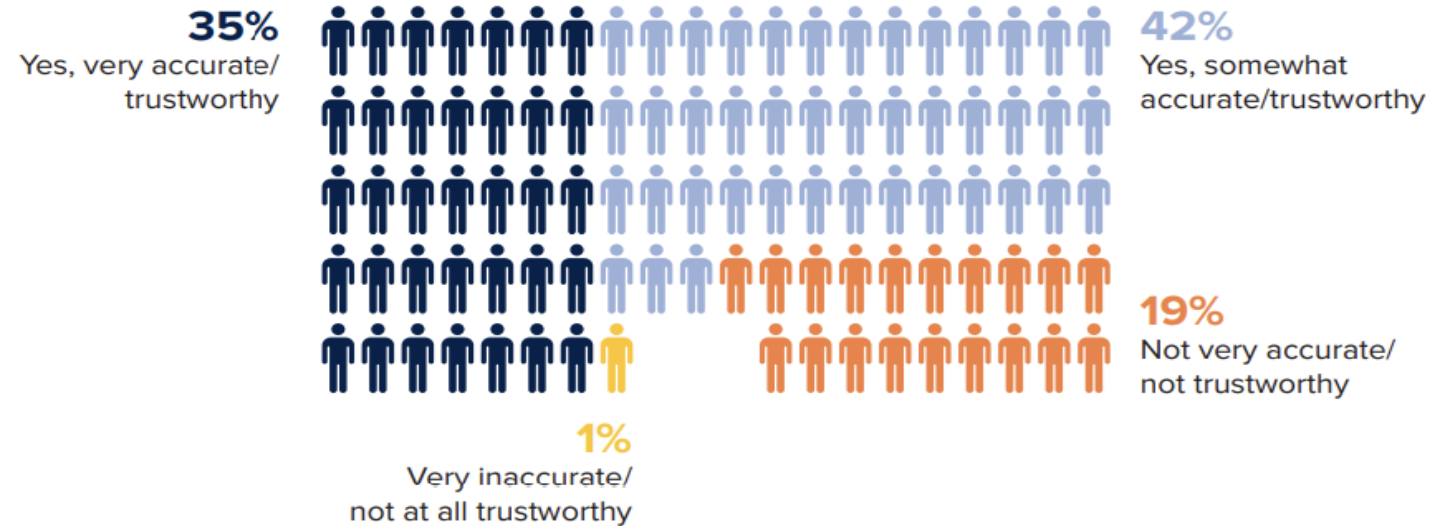| Source	Value
Other refugees from Ukraine in general	50.8
Volunteers/ NGO - UN workers	35.5
Local authorities	34.0
Friends/family (from Ukraine, living in Moldova)	24.2
Civil society organizations - NGOs / UN agencies	23.8
Friends/family (from Moldova)	21.1
Host families (you didn't know before you needed to flee the war)	14.2
Religious community/leaders	6.5
Other service providers	6.1
Moldovan media	5.6
Central government authorities	2.6
Ukrainian media	2.4
Other	6.9

Information risks:

Main risks:

- Scams /Fraud
- Hate speech and prejudice
- Dis & misinformation
- Data privacy

Do you feel refugee-related information on social media is accurate and trustworthy? (Ukrainians)

35%
Yes, very accurate/ trustworthy

42%
Yes, somewhat accurate/trustworthy

19%
Not very accurate/ not trustworthy

1%
Very inaccurate/ not at all trustworthy

"It is treacherous. One girl applied [to renew her documents] after losing her child's vaccination card. It turned out they were fakes. There are many such 'services.'"

[Volunteers, Chișinău]

Use of feedback mechanisms is limited

Reasons

- Low **awareness** about mechanisms

- **Fear** of being perceived as ungrateful

- Do not feel their input would have an **impact** on aid operations

Have you ever made, or wanted to make, a complaint or suggest changes to a service you received in Moldova? (Ukrainians)

91% No

7% Yes

2% Maybe

Recommendations

Recommendations

1 Increase transparency to reduce misinformation and build trust.

2 Communicate in multiple formats to be accessible to different needs and preferences

3 Shift the Power: Incorporate refugees into response decision making

4 Encourage and promote the sharing of feedback and complaints

5 Support the media as a watchdog and key information provider

Thank you

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UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency