Moldova

Monitoring Fact Sheet

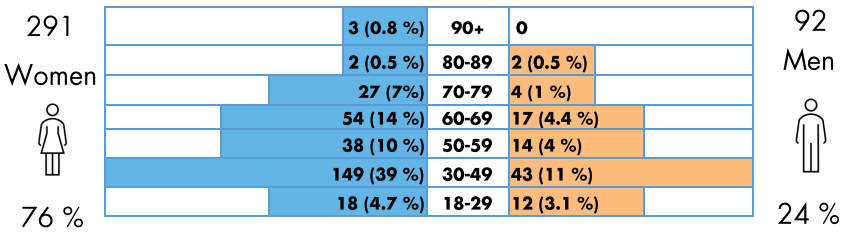
March—May 2024

Background and methodology: In July 2023, UN Human Rights in Moldova (OHCHR) started protection monitoring as part of a project funded by the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid. OHCHR focuses on the systematic identification of those who are more at risk of protection concerns and human rights violations. OHCHR's methodology consists of individual interviews with refugees from Ukraine and host community members. Respondents are reached through the facilitation of international and national NGOs and local CSOs that work with the refugees from Ukraine, including the most vulnerable groups, in both banks of Dniester/Nistru River. In order to ensure a wide geographical coverage, each month interviews are done in the northern, centre, and southern regions of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region. Since the distribution of localities changes from month to month, it may not always be possible to compare data between different rounds of data collection. The analysis presented in the Factsheet refers to the respondents of the month for which it is published. Therefore, data may not always be representative of the refugee population as a whole. In addition, data reflects the self-reporting by respondents. OHCHR analyses the data, taking into account the existing legal framework and contextual information.

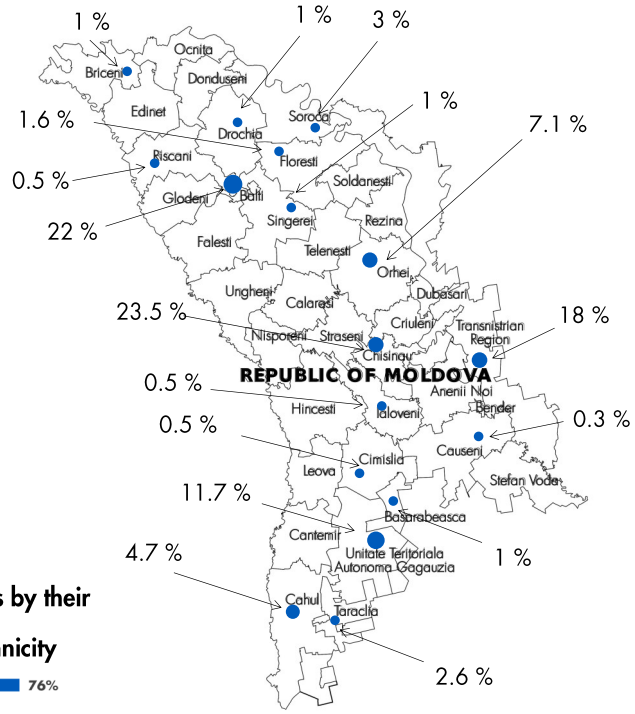
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Between March and May 2024, **OHCHR interviewed 383 refugees from Ukraine** (76% women and 24% men). Among them, 378 were Ukrainian nationals, 4 were third-country nationals (all Russians), and 1 held dual citizenship along with Ukrainian nationality (Israeli). Respondents resided across northern, southern, and central regions of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region, as indicated in the map below, with 72% residing on the right bank of Dniester/Nistru river and 18% residing on the Left Bank. Half of the respondents were aged 30-49, followed by the 60-69 age group, majority of whom were women. Every second interviewed refugee arrived in Moldova with children, while 28% came alone, with 45% of this group being individuals aged 60+, mostly women. Refugees interviewed on both banks of the Dniester/ Nistru River mainly rented housing at their own cost, with a higher percentage on the Left Bank being hosted for free by locals than on the Right Bank. Most respondents (65%) arrived in Moldova in 2022, while others have more recently chosen Moldova as their host country, with 9% new arrivals in 2024, showing a higher percentage of younger individuals (under 30), indicating a potential shift in the demographic seeking refuge in Moldova. The findings indicate that 89% of respondents speak more than one language, with a significant majority being bilingual in Russian and Ukrainian. Only 6% of respondents speak Romanian.

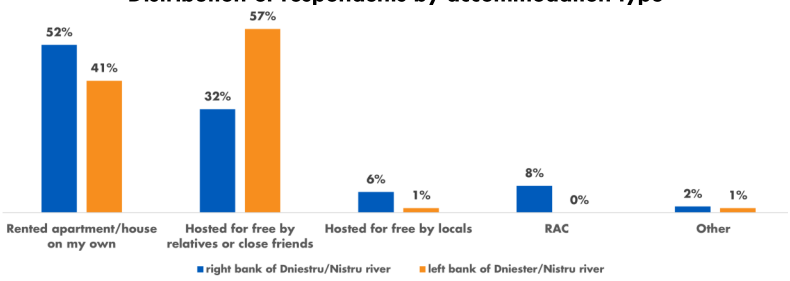
Distribution of respondents by age group and gender



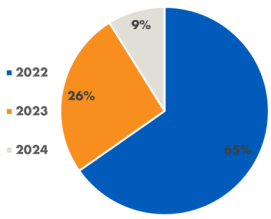
Distribution of respondents by region



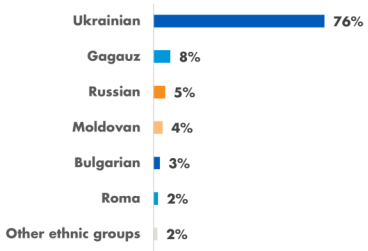
Distribution of respondents by accommodation type



Distribution of respondents by their arrival to Moldova



Distribution of respondents by their self-identification of ethnicity



IDENTIFICATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

OHCHR protection monitoring tool includes the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning, which obtains information on difficulties a person may have in undertaking basic functioning activities. The tool consists of one question per functional domain: seeing, hearing, mobility, cognition, self-care, and communication (expressive and receptive) impairments. The analysis applies the criterion that a person is considered to have a disability if they respond having 'a lot of difficulty' or 'cannot do at all' for any of the functional domains.

10 % (= 38 persons) of all interviewed refugees reported a lot of difficulties or impossibility to perform actions under one (34 persons) **or several** (4 persons) **functional domains.**

Overall, 8 % of the interviewed women and 2 % of the men were identified as having a disability, indicating a higher prevalence among women. The 60-69 age group was the most affected, representing 12 individuals with both genders equally represented. Mobility and vision impairments were the most commonly reported issues across all age groups and genders. The prevalence of interviewed persons with disabilities was relatively balanced geographically, with 9 % on the Right Bank and 13 % on the left bank of the Dniester/Nistru River, indicating no significant difference by location. Regarding their living situations, half of the interviewed persons with disabilities arrived in Moldova alone, highlighting their vulnerability. Among those with disabilities, 24 % pay for their accommodation, while 53 % rely on the generosity of friends or relatives for free housing. Additionally, 10 % are hosted by community members, and 13 % reside in RACs.

Percentage of respondents with difficulties per functional domain*

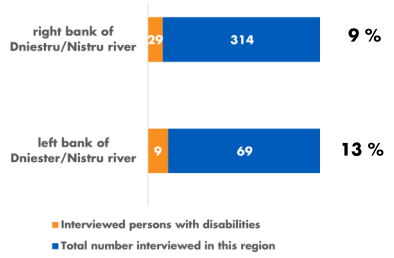
Seeing	Hearing	Mobility	Cognition**	Self-care	Communication
5 persons (1 %)	3 persons (1 %)	28 persons (7%)	5 persons (1%)	2 persons (0.5%)	No one (0 %)

Distribution of respondents with disabilities by age group

WITHOUT DISABILITY
WITH DISABILITY

	Women	Men			
	31	7			
	8 %	2 %			
90+	2 (67 %)	1 (33 %)	0		
80-89	1 (50%)	1 (50 %)	1 (50 %)	1 (50 %)	
70-79	19 (70 %)	8 (30 %)	2 (50 %)	2 (50 %)	
60-69	45 (83 %)	9 (17%)	3 (18 %)	14 (82 %)	
50-59	33 (87 %)	5 (13 %)	14 (100%)		
30-49	143 (96 %)	6 (4 %)	1 (2 %)	42 (98 %)	
18-29	17 (94 %)	1 (6 %)	12 (100 %)		

Distribution of respondents with disabilities by region



EXPERIENCE OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

The protection monitoring tool used includes enhanced questions from the Washington Group, focusing on **affect domain** of functioning, which involves emotional functions such as feelings of depression and anxiety. Data reveals that **51 % of respondents experienced anxiety,** with 39 % reporting it at high intensity, and **24 % felt depressed** regularly, with 48 % experiencing high-intensity depression. Interviewed **refugees with disabilities** reported significantly **higher emotional distress**, with **76 % experiencing anxiety and 37 % feeling depressed**.

Women were more likely to experience anxiety (56 %) and depression (27 %) than men (34 % and 13 %, respectively). Anxiety levels on the right bank of the Dniester/Nistru River were 51 %, compared to 9 % on the Left Bank, while depression rates were 24 % and 22 %, respectively. **Interviewed older persons, especially women, showed higher levels of anxiety and depression.** Anxiety peaked at 81 % for those aged 70-79, with depression highest at 32% for the same age group. Unemployed respondents had higher anxiety (57 %) compared to those employed (50 %) or seeking work (44 %). Depression was also higher among the unemployed at 25 %. Ethnicity influenced emotional well-being, with Moldovans reporting the highest anxiety (81 %) and depression (31 %), followed by Russians with 60 % for anxiety and 30 % for depression. Ukrainians and Roma had significant anxiety levels at 47 % and 50 %, but lower depression rates at 21% and 13%.

Distribution of respondents with anxiety and depression by age group

	18-29	30-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
% of total respondents by age group who reported **ANXIETY**	30%	43%	58%	62%	81%	50%	67%
% of total respondents by age group who reported **DEPRESSION**	7%	21%	27%	30%	32%	25%	33%

24 % Affect***

Data reveals that **24 %** of interviewed refugees from Ukraine have **difficulties with the affect domain**.

*4 respondents have difficulties in more than 1 functional domain
**In the Washington Group Short Set of Questions the cognition domain includes only remembering and concentrating functioning.
***The calculation of the affect domain aligns with Washington Group recommendations, entailing the counting of responses related to experiencing anxiety or depression on a 'Daily' or 'Weekly' basis, with a specific emphasis on instances marked as 'A lot', characterized by high intensity.

MEDICAL SERVICES: ACCESS AND BARRIERS

32 % (124 respondents out of 383, including 96 women and 28 men) **reported suffering from serious medical conditions**. These health issues affect 30 % of respondents residing on the left bank of the Dniester/Nistru River and 43 % of those on the Right Bank. The conditions primarily include chronic and non-communicable diseases, with a significant focus on cardio-vascular and musculoskeletal systems. Among **interviewed persons with disabilities, 92 % reported suffering from serious medical conditions**. The prevalence of these conditions is consistent across genders, with similar rates reported by both women and men. However, the impact is particularly pronounced among older persons, with 65 % of respondents aged 60 years and older reporting serious medical conditions.

Age distribution of interviewed refugees reporting that they suffer from serious medical conditions

	18-29	30-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
% of respondents by age group with serious medical conditions out of total respondents	7%	17%	37%	61%	71%	75%	100%

83 % of interviewed refugees from Ukraine (including 101 out of the 124 respondents with serious medical conditions) **reported no challenges in accessing healthcare in Moldova.** However, **17 %** (65 out of 383 respondents) **faced difficulties in accessing healthcare,** with 35 % of these having serious medical conditions. Challenges were more frequent on the Right bank (18 %) compared to the Left Bank (10 %). Among those who did not report any challenges, 23 % mentioned that they had no need to use healthcare services in Moldova.

These 65 refugees* faced the following challenges related to health care:

		Emergency	Primary	Secondary
Availability of public-health facilities; services; professionals in sufficient quantity and in a timely manner.	**Unavailability of medical facility and/ or medical services**	**1** respondent from the left bank	**2** respondents from the right bank	**2** respondents from the right bank **1** respondent from the left bank
Accessibility ⇒ physical: all health-care services, facilities, staff are within accessible physical reach for the people, especially those left behind, like those in rural areas and people with disabilities; ⇒ economic (=affordability): how services are affordable to the people regardless of the income; ⇒ information: how we ensure that the information is accessible to everyone (level of awareness is very important); we need to keep in mind the gender perspective and also that the information is accessible to persons with disabilities; ⇒ non-discrimination.	**Refusals to provide services by medical facilities or service providers**	**1** respondent from the left bank	**29** respondents from the right bank **2** respondents from the left bank	**8** respondents from the right bank **3** respondents from the left bank
	Fees associated with medical care, medications, or transportation	**0**	**15** respondents from the right bank **3** respondents from the left bank	**14** respondents from the right bank **3** respondents from the left bank
	Languages barriers	**0**	**1** respondent from the right bank	**0**
	Long waits for medical appointments	**0**	**5** respondents from the right bank **1** respondent from the left bank	**3** respondents from the right bank

Out of the 38 interviewed refugees with disabilities, **13 (10 women and 3 men) have a disability certificate issued in Ukraine**. Among these, 4 individuals reside on the left bank of the Dniester/Nistru River, while the remaining 9 were on the Right Bank. All respondents from the Left Bank faced significant challenges in accessing medical services using their disability certificate, indicating systemic issues in the recognition or facilitation of these certificates in the Transnistrian region. Conversely, respondents on the Right Bank, particularly in ATU Gagauzia and Chisinau, reported better access to humanitarian assistance and medicines due to having a disability certificate. This suggests a more supportive environment for refugees with disabilities in these areas.

237 out of 383 (62 %) **interviewed refugees from Ukraine, reported being registered with a family doctor in Moldova.** Registration rates are significantly higher on the right bank of Dniester/Nistru River, with 214 residents compared to only 23 on the Left Bank. Notably, 14 individuals residing on the Left Bank have registered with a family doctor on the Right Bank. Among interviewed persons with disabilities, 22 are registered on the Right Bank and 3 on the Left Bank, while 72 individuals with serious medical conditions are registered on the Right Bank and 10 on the Left Bank. Regarding ethnicity, 63 % of ethnic Roma, 45% of ethnic Russians confirmed registration with a family doctor. A significant number of respondents (132) do not feel the need for registration, including 12 people with disabilities and 39 individuals with serious medical conditions. Additionally, 5 individuals faced rejections from medical institutions, and only 1 respondent remains connected with their Ukrainian family doctor.

*This question allows a multiple-choice answer.

URGENT NEEDS

Financial assistance **41 %**

Medical services **25%**

Food items **25 %**

Hygiene items **21 %**

Clothes **6 %**

Winterization items **5 %**

The analysis of refugee urgent needs reveals significant challenges, with notable disparities between the right bank and left bank of the Dniester/Nistru river. **Financial assistance emerges as the top priority** for 41 % of respondents, especially among young adults (18 -29) and women on the Right Bank, indicating greater financial instability in these groups. **Food insecurity** is a widespread issue, particularly **affecting older persons** (60+) on both banks. **Access to medical care and medicines is vital, especially for older persons**, with women reporting higher needs than men, highlighting gender-specific vulnerabilities. The Transnistrian region shows a balanced distribution of needs but faces severe deficiencies in medical care and food security. **Hygiene items are crucial, with a higher demand among women on the Right Bank**, reflecting their specific health and sanitation needs.

Among 383 interviewed refugees, **the most urgent informational needs are financial aid (33 %), job opportunities (24 %), access to medical care (8 %),** and **how to find accommodation (5 %).** Additionally, **3 % seek information about legal status and documentation**, while 27 % report no additional information needed.

ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

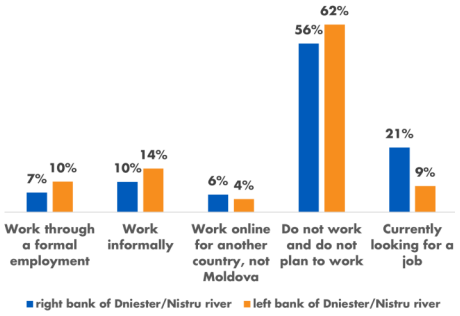
Currently, **only 18 % (68 out of 376*) of the interviewed refugees from Ukraine in Moldova are employed,** with 7 % in formal employment and 11 % in informal employment. Of those working, 14 % of the total number of respondents interviewed on the Right bank, and 25 % of the total interviewed on the Left Bank, indicating a higher employment rate on the Left Bank. Employment sectors include seasonal fieldwork, cleaning services, sales, construction, and the beauty industry. Employment rates vary among ethno-linguistic groups: 35 % among ethnic Russians, 25 % among ethnic Moldovans, and 7 % among ethnic Gagauz. All interviewed ethnic Roma are unemployed. Of the **308 unemployed respondents in Moldova (=82%), 72 are actively seeking work, 215 do not plan to work, and 21 work online for another country.**

The reasons for not being employed among respondents are diverse and can be categorized as follows:

- ⇒ **Child care and caregiving responsibilities:** 29 respondents, particularly women aged 30-49, are not employed due to the need to take care of their children or other family members, such as older or sick relatives.
- ⇒ **Health difficulties:** Health issues and having a disability prevented13 interviewed refugees from being able to work. This is especially prevalent among older persons and persons with disabilities. Only 3 out of 38 interviewed persons with disabilities are currently employed, and all of them have an informal employment.
- ⇒ **Lack of suitable job opportunities:** 24 interviewed refugees reported being unable to find jobs that match their skills or qualifications. This includes those whose formal education or training is not recognized locally, as well as those facing general unemployment issues. This challenge is widespread among interviewed men aged 30-49.
- ⇒ **Language barriers and lack of experience:** 12 respondents face difficulties in finding employment due to not speaking the local language or lacking the necessary experience, particularly younger individuals or recent arrivals.

Diversity in employment situation by the banks of Dniester/Nistru River

The graph illustrates nuanced variations in the employment landscape between the right and left banks of Dniester/Nistru River, showing slight differences in formal employment rates, a higher prevalence of job-seeking activities on the Right bank compared to the Left, and a high unemployment rate on both banks. Findings suggest that in urban areas like Chisinau and Balti, there is a higher prevalence of respondents working online for other countries and facing language barriers. In the Transnistrian region and ATU Gagauzia, health difficulties and lack of job opportunities are more prominent reasons for unemployment.



*7 respondents did not provide answers regarding their employment status.

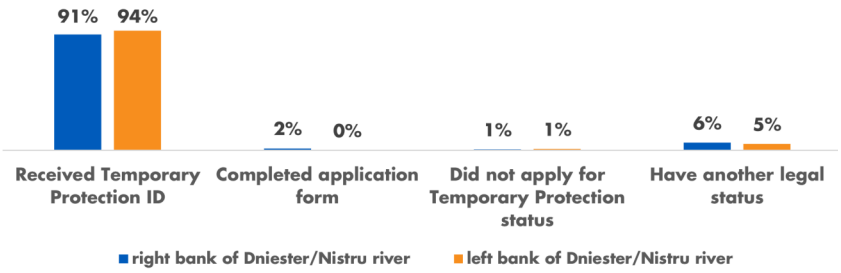
TEMPORARY PROTECTION

93 % of respondents (349 out of 376*, including 270 women and 79 men) applied for Temporary Protection in Moldova, with a consistent trend showing the similar rates on both banks. Among these respondents, **99 % (344 individuals) have received the Temporary Protection ID**, while **5 have completed the online registration form** and are awaiting their appointment at the IGM Office.

The remaining **7 % (27 respondents) did not apply for Temporary Protection**. Of these, 24 were granted an alternative legal status in Moldova, and 3 did not provide details about their legal status. However, they are aware of the 90-day permission to stay without Temporary Protection in Moldova and the risk of fines for unlawful stay in the country.

The majority of respondents who received Temporary Protection status did not report any challenge in accessing their rights. However, 21 respondents reported difficulties accessing healthcare services, 3 reported difficulties accessing social assistance and/or social services, and 3 reported challenges accessing employment since receiving Temporary Protection status.

Diversities in Temporary Protection patterns between both banks of Dniester/Nistru River



The graph illustrates minor differences in Temporary Protection applications between the right and left banks of the Dniester/Nistru River, suggesting that the situation regarding obtaining legal status in the country is quite similar on both banks.

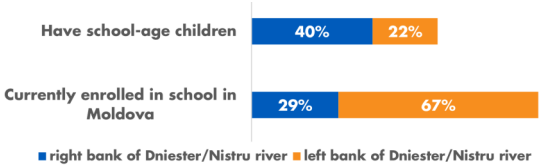
EDUCATION

Among the respondents with school-age children, grandchildren, or nephews (37 %, or 139 out of 376*), **43 % stated that their children are currently enrolled in Moldovan schools.** Notably, enrollment rates differ significantly between the banks of Dniester/Nistru River, with 29 % on the Right Bank and a substantially higher 67 % on the Left Bank. Regardless of their place of residence, interviewed refugees primarily chose schools for their children based on the language of instruction, with most opting for russian language where it possible.

Furthermore, a significant proportion **(93 %, or 86 out of 92 respondents) of those whose children are not attending school prefer online or remote learning with the Ukrainian curriculum.** This preference explains their decision not to enroll their children in Moldovan schools and is also linked to the intention of many to return to Ukraine. Additionally, 4 parents from the Roma community, all residing on the Right Bank, reported that their children do not attend public school. Of these, two prefer to send their children to classes in Refugee Accommodation centers, while the other two reported lack of places for their children in schools.

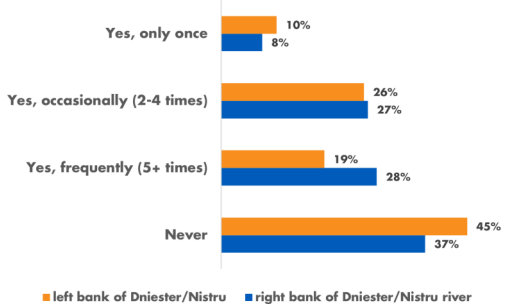
Distribution by banks of Dniester/Nistru River of respondents with school-age children and enrollment process

The graph illustrates varied enrollment trends across both banks of Dniester/Nistru River. Despite a higher concentration of refugees with school-age children residing on the right bank, a smaller proportion of them are enrolled in schools compared to those on the left bank.



INTENTIONS

Distribution by banks of Dniester/Nistru River of respondents who visited Ukraine



Among the interviewed refugees, **74 % expressed a desire to return to Ukraine in the future**, 6 % stated they had no intention of returning, and 20 % remained uncertain about their plans.

More than half of the interviewed refugees (200 respondents), predominantly women, reported occasional or frequent visits to Ukraine for personal reasons. Conversely, 145 respondents have not visited Ukraine since arriving in Moldova, with most residing on the Left bank, where crossing the administrative line between both banks of Dniester/ Nistru river poses significant challenges.

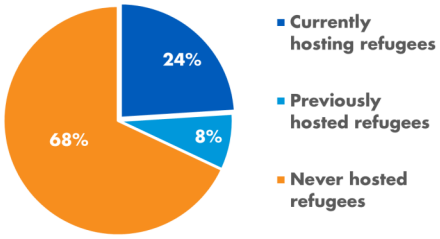
*7 respondents did not provide answers regarding the Temporary Protection application process and having school-aged children.

HOST COMMUNITIES

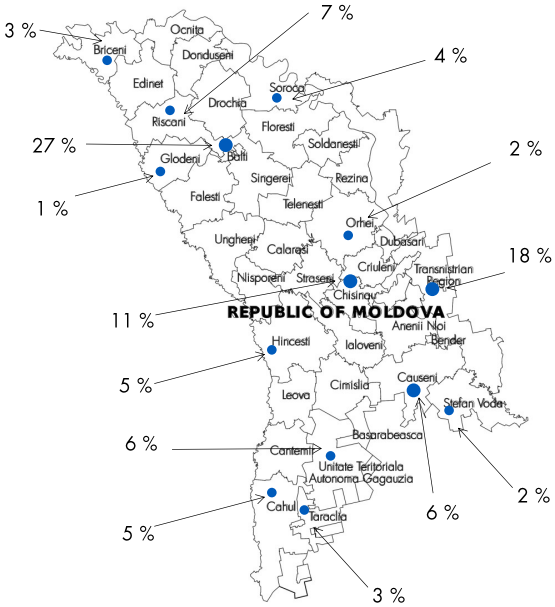
OHCHR interviewed 167 members of the host community in Moldova (114 women and 53 men, including Moldovan citizens hosting refugees and those not hosting refugees) across various regions of Moldova to assess if and how various spheres of their life, including education, employment, health care, and social cohesion were impacted by the arrival of refugees from Ukraine. The respondents primarily belonged to the age groups of 30-49 (39 %) and 60-69 (24 %).

Local hosting experience

32 % of the interviewed locals (54 individuals), had experience hosting refugees from Ukraine. Of these 54 individuals, 42 hosted their relatives without charging them any fee, 11 hosted non-relatives for free, and 1 provided housing to refugees in exchange for a rent fee. 34 out of 54 (63 %), received various forms of assistance from humanitarian or government organizations for hosting refugees. This assistance included financial aid, food packages, gas compensation, and government assistance.



Distribution of respondents by region



HEALTHCARE

The analysis of host community feedback reveals varied perceptions regarding the impact of refugees from Ukraine on the healthcare system. While **96 % of interviewed host community members noticed no changes in healthcare after the arrival of refugees**, some expressed concerns about the persistently low quality of medical services. The most significant reported impact was an increased workload on healthcare professionals, leading to longer queues and challenges in accessing timely care. Additionally, some respondents believe that refugees receive free healthcare, while locals are required to pay for services out of their own pockets.

EMPLOYMENT

Of the community members interviewed, 57 % are employed in various sectors, 23 % are pensioners, and 20% are unemployed. Findings suggest that **94% of locals reported no noticeable changes in the labor market following the arrival of refugees.** However**, 2% perceived a worsening of the job market, 7% noted some improvements, and 1% chose not to respond.** According to respondents, the influx of refugees from Ukraine into Moldova has positively impacted the employment sector by increasing the availability of specialists, creating new businesses and job opportunities for locals, and contributing to various fields including healthcare, maintenance, and agriculture. However, several respondents expressed concerns that refugees have taken jobs from local residents.

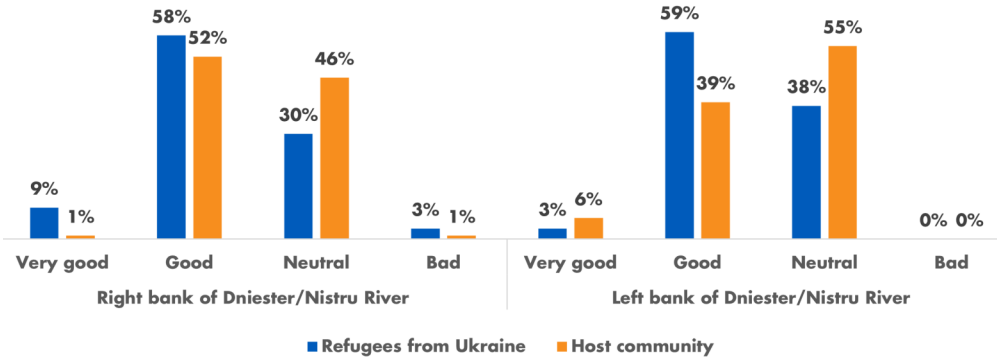
EDUCATION

Among the local respondents, 46 % have school-age children, grandchildren, or nephews. **Regarding the impact of refugee children from Ukraine on the educational system**, **100 % reported no significant changes.** Four respondents mentioned that refugees do not enroll their children in local schools without indicating possible reasons for this. Two respondents reported that the presence of refugee children has no impact because they integrate seamlessly with local children.

SOCIAL COHESION: HOST COMMUNITIES AND REFUGEES

OHCHR monitoring includes a component aimed at assessing the level of social cohesion between refugees from Ukraine and the local population through the perceptions that both groups have of their interactions and relationships. Data confirmed that activities organized by humanitarian and development actors in Moldova to promote refugees' integration into the host communities continue to be relevant to foster social cohesion between the two groups.

Respondents' perceptions of the quality of the relationship between refugees from Ukraine and local communities on both banks of Dniester/Nistru River



	Right bank of Dniester/Nistru river	Left bank of Dniester/Nistru river
Positive experience:	⇒ Instances of support, kindness, and successful integration reported. ⇒ Interviewed refugees appreciated the friendly and welcoming attitude of locals. ⇒ Locals valued the presence and contribution of refugees in society.	⇒ Similar positive reports of support and integration. ⇒ Strong mutual support within villages near Tiraspol. ⇒ Locals appreciated the cultural integration and the absence of significant conflicts.
Specific issues:	⇒ Occasional conflicts related to aid allocation and resource distribution. ⇒ Greater emphasis on the need for mutual understanding and cultural integration.	⇒ More frequent instances of negative behavior attributed to refugees. ⇒ Strong feelings about the economic burden among locals.
Challenges:	• **Language barriers**: Significant issue on both banks, leading to misunderstandings and social tensions. • **Political tensions**: Differing political views create conflict and distrust on both banks of Dniester/Nistru river. • **Resentment over aid distribution**: Interviewed locals on both banks felt neglected due to perceived preferential treatment for refugees. • **Hostility and envy**: Some locals on both banks blamed refugees for economic hardships and increased living costs. • **Negative behaviors**: Reports of bullying in schools and perceived rude behavior from some refugees, more frequently mentioned on the Left Bank.	

Suggested measures for integration of refugees from Ukraine based on respondents' feedback

From Refugees:	**From Locals**:	**To Authorities**:
♦ Increase access to language courses (Romanian) and job professional programs. ♦ Enhance support programs and communication efforts to foster better understanding with locals.	♦ Ensure fair distribution of aid and improve access to housing and employment. ♦ Implement cultural exchange programs to build empathy and mutual understanding.	♦ Focus on peace and stability, ensuring both communities receive adequate support. ♦ Promote dialogue and initiatives aimed at reducing social tensions and fostering collaboration.

PATTERNS OF DISCRIMINATION/NEGATIVE ATTITUDE BASED ON PROTECTED GROUNDS

REFUGEE STATUS / LANGUAGE / ETHNICITY / CITIZENSHIP /GENDER/ DISABILITY

Discrimination *constitutes any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference or other differential treatment that is directly or indirectly based on the prohibited grounds of discrimination and which has the intention or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights.*

91 % of interviewed refugees did not report any negativity from the local community. However, **9 % (33 women and 3 men) reported negative attitudes toward them during their stay in Moldova.**

⇒ Respondents from the right bank of Dniester/Nistru River experienced higher levels of negative attitude (11%) compared to those residing on the Left bank (4 %).

⇒ Women and men reported similar experiences of negative attitude towards them.

Discrimination based on language:

⇒ 12 respondents, all women, **reported facing negative attitudes due to language barriers**. Specifically, Ukrainian and Russian speakers often faced challenges in stores, hospitals, and public transport where Romanian was predominantly spoken.

> *"In Balti, in a store they were rude to me because I could not read on Romanian", - woman, 50 years old, Balti*

Discrimination based on citizenship:

⇒ 10 interviewed refugees from Ukraine reported **frequent discrimination, often being told to 'return home and go to war' or accused of taking local resources.** Negative attitudes were encountered in both public and private services.

> *"Locals say to return back to Ukraine, we [refugees] are not welcomed here",- man, 61 years old, Chisinau*

Discrimination based on ethnicity:

⇒ 3 out of 8 Roma respondents faced **significant discrimination in housing and accessing public services**, and were refused accommodation in Refugee Accommodation Centers upon their arrival.

> *"There are sometimes conflicts on the street because I am Roma from Ukraine", - man, 42 years old, Balti*

Discrimination based on gender:

⇒ 4 respondents reported facing **gender-based discrimination** along with other grounds such as nationality or language.

> *"My son is working, but locals told him come back to Ukraine and go to war", - woman, 45 years old, Chisinau*

Discrimination based on disability:

⇒ 6 respondents with disabilities encountered additional **challenges and negative attitudes in accessing healthcare and other essential services.**

> *"The doctor at the hospital refused to provide a consultation, so I had to go to private clinic", - woman, 67 years old, Balti*

For any questions, please reach out
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