AD-HOC CASH WORKING GROUP Meeting

Meeting Details	
Date	*05 March 2025*
Time	*14:00 – 15:00*
Co-Chair	*Yigit Anil Gurer -CBI Officer, -UNHCR-*
Reporting	*Natalia Postaru, Associate Programme CBI Officer*
Email	*mdachcbi@unhcr.org*
Agenda	
UNHCR Moldova – Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) Programme Update	
Information collection and relevant links	
Operational Data Portal – Ukrainian Situation in Moldova	
Participants:	
Cash Working Group Partners (CWG): UNHCR, IGM, WFP, PIN, World Vision Moldova, IMPACT/REACH, ACTED, CRS, NRC, UNICEF, OIM, HelpAge, Laolalta, AAP task force.	

Summary of discussions and agreements/action points

Agenda	Discussion
	The meeting focused on strategic adjustments to the UNHCR Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) Programme in response to funding constraints. To ensure continued support for the most vulnerable refugees from Ukraine, UNHCR will recalibrate the transfer value in accordance with the available funding. During the meeting, information was shared regarding the changes to the transfer value, along with a detailed explanation of the reasons behind this adjustment, primarily due to unexpected reductions in funding. **UNHCR Cash Assistance Program Overview:** • Since March 2022, UNHCR has provided cash assistance to 145,000 unique individuals. • In 2024, two strategic changes were made to the program: linking cash assistance with legal status and refining eligibility criteria.

UNHCR Moldova – Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) Programme Update	• 52,443 individuals received at least one round of assistance in 2024, with 22,120 of these individuals receiving additional winter assistance.
	• As of now, 17,500 individuals (8,350 households) are receiving ongoing cash assistance. Caseload numbers fluctuate due to verification processes, newcomers, and individuals leaving the country.
	• New arrivals receive two months of assistance to settle in, with continued assistance provided if eligible and possessing legal status.
	
	Changes Due to Funding Constraints:
	• **Effective Date:** 01 April 2025, the MPCA transfer value will be reduced from 2,200 MDL per person per month to 1,625 MDL, representing a 26% decrease.
	• This decision is driven by unexpected funding constraints, necessitating a reduction in transfer value to continue assisting as many vulnerable individuals as possible.
	
	Managing Limited Resources:
	• Two primary options were considered:
	  ○ Decreasing the caseload/targeting by applying rigorous eligibility criteria.
	  ○ Reaching more people with a reduced transfer value.
	• The refined eligibility criteria were implemented to target the most vulnerable individuals, including older persons, persons with chronic illnesses or serious medical conditions, persons with disabilities, and single parents, as they have limited access to the labor market.
	• UNHCR decided to reduce the transfer value as a less harmful alternative, as excluding additional individuals would create significant hardship as they recently identified as vulnerable based on UNHCR's revised criteria (scorecard methodology).
	• Excluding 3,500-4,000 individuals from assistance would have a negative impact, so continued assistance in 2025 is essential. However, excluding people at short notice would additional considerable consequences.
	
	New Transfer Value Calculation:
	• The National Bureau of Statistics' household expenditure data was used to calculate the original transfer value of 2,200 MDL, focusing on minimum expenditure baskets: food, housing, utilities, health, clothing, furnishings, household equipment, transport, communication, miscellaneous goods and services, education and other.
	• The reduced transfer value was determined by prioritizing essential expenditure categories, including food, housing, utilities, health, clothing, and education, rather than covering the full range of expenditures included in the MEB.
	• These priorities were identified based on spending patterns observed through Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) and the Socio-Economic Insight Survey (SEIS), as well as urgent needs indicated by refugees during protection monitoring, to ensure that the most critical needs of refugees are addressed within the available budget.

	Reasons for Reduction and Immediate Action: • The reduction in transfer value was unexpected and required quick decision-making. • Immediate communication to refugees is necessary to allow them to make their own arrangements. • Delaying this decision would have required a larger reduction in transfer value **Communication and Information Sharing:** • Information is shared with partners through the Cash Working Group and other relevant working groups (Protection Working Group meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 19, and a Protection Advisory Group meeting on March 17). • Beneficiaries will be informed via SMS about the reduction in transfer value, effective from April, with updates also shared on social media and UNHCR Help page. • Partners will receive an explanation document related the UNHCR Moldova MPCA Programme Update and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for clarity. • Refugees will receive a one-month notice, which is shorter than the usual three-month notice for such strategic changes. **Key Requests for Partners:** • Inform affected individuals and provide referrals for additional support where possible. • Ensure clear communication that only the transfer volume is changing, not the MPCA program as a whole. • Stakeholders should be aware that the eligibility criteria have not changed. **Partner Involvement and Common Cash Facility:** • Recommendation for Partners to assist by making necessary referrals for additional support and contributing to the establishment of a common cash facility (through – RAIS) to coordinate activities, prevent duplication, and streamline fundraising efforts. • This will allow for easy identification of those receiving MPCA assistance and facilitate targeted interventions. **Transparency:** • UNHCR is committed to being transparent and open about the figures and calculation of the reduced transfer value with partners, especially those who plan to implement the same approach. **Information Sharing and Communication:** • Documents shared in the meeting will be translated and distributed accordingly. • Information will be published on the UNHCR Help Page, followed by SMS notifications to beneficiaries. • A social media communication will be created in parallel to keep stakeholders informed and meeting with the refugee community leaders.

	Refugees from the Left Bank: • Refugees in the Transnistrian region receiving cash assistance from IOM may have questions regarding their assistance value. • IOM was considering reducing its beneficiary caseload by increasing vulnerability scores. However, reducing the transfer value could also be considering. IOM will have a meeting with a donor is planned to discuss the risk analysis of either reducing the caseload or the transfer value.