UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency Regional Bureau for Europe

UKRAINE SITUATION OUTCOMES OF CASH ASSISTANCE: FINDINGS FROM POST-DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

April 2023

Poland. Refugees from Ukraine register for UNHCR's cash assistance in Warsaw, May 2023, © UNHCR/Maciej Moskwa.

OVERVIEW OF CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS

At the onset of the war in Ukraine, UNHCR has been providing multipurpose cash assistance to internally displaced and war-affected persons within Ukraine, as well as to refugees in five neighbouring countries. In coordination with authorities and other cash actors, UNHCR initially delivered emergency cash assistance for a few months' duration with the intention to provide a transitional safety net until refugees could be included in national social protection schemes. As the response evolved, UNHCR shifted to targeted cash-for-protection programs in EU countries, meant to support the most vulnerable population. In Ukraine and Moldova, the multipurpose cash programs continue targeting a wider segment of the affected population; during the winter months, cash top ups were provided to most vulnerable individuals to pay for basic goods including clothing, heating and blankets, as well as services such as electricity to cope with lower temperatures during the season.

Cash assistance disbursed (as of 17 April 2023)

1.6M individuals

943k households

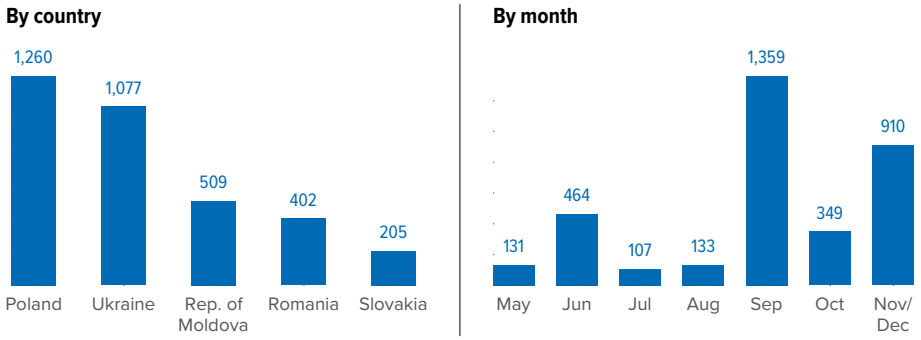
522M disbursed

INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVED CASH PAYMENTS FROM UNHCR

POST-DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

Operations received feedback from cash recipients through UNHCR's Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) tool to better understand the outcome of cash assistance programs as well as to improve the design of cash operations going forward. The tool captured core indicators on the use of cash, related challenges and recipients' overall situation vis-à-vis basic needs, allowing for a comparison of results across countries.

NUMBER OF PDMs CONDUCTED IN 2022



3,453

PDM household interviews conducted in 2022 in the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine.

This factsheet presents the main findings from the latest round of data collection conducted in each country, covering **2,375 PDM interviews** conducted between September and December 2022. Ten rounds of PDMs were conducted in 2022, at least one per month. The report summarizes data relating to war-affected people within Ukraine as well as refugees in four neighbouring countries.[1] Some of the survey results from PDM within Ukraine point to specific challenges faced by war-affected populations, such as markets disruption and insecurity, and which do not appear among responses in refugee-hosting countries. Country results have been weighted based on the overall number of recipients to calculate regional averages.

MAIN FINDINGS

Reception of cash assistance

Almost **80% of respondents preferred cash as an assistance modality**, while the remaining **20%** indicated a preference for a combination of cash and in-kind. Among refugees, **88% preferred the cash modality**, with almost all refugees in Romania reporting a preference for cash. In Ukraine, the preference reached **74%**, likely due to the challenging market and security conditions.

Only **a minority of respondents (6%) reported challenges with receiving, keeping or spending the cash.** For refugees, this percentage was **9%** and the main challenges reported were related to obstacles in accessing the money or the use of wrong/forgotten PIN. In Ukraine, that percentage was only **4%** and mostly linked to poor connectivity while withdrawing money.

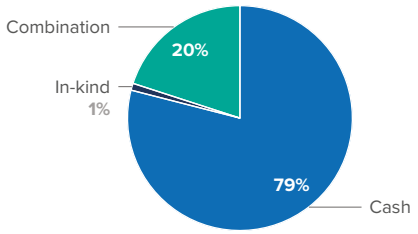
Equally, **only a minority (6%) reported feeling at risk when receiving or spending the assistance**, although this was mostly reported by recipients in Ukraine rather than refugees **(7% vs. 1%)**.[2]

Less than a third of respondents knew how to report complaints and feedback, with a higher proportion (**over 40%**)[3] in Poland and Slovakia.

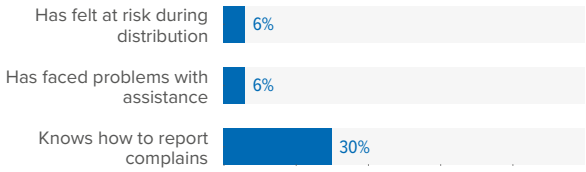
[1] PDM data from Bulgaria was not available at the time of this analysis.
[2] Among recipients in Ukraine who indicated feeling at risk, two thirds indicated they felt this way while going to withdraw or collect the money and one third while going to spend the money, mostly due to conflict-related insecurity. In addition, two thirds also indicated a sense of insecurity in keeping the money home.
[3] Since the completion of this analysis, Operations renewed their efforts to communicate and raise awareness among recipients on all available complaints and feedback mechanisms, while optimizing the existing ones; for example, in Poland and in Hungary two-way communication with refugees was enhanced though the establishment of a regional contact center (RCC), operating in Hungary since October of 2022 already and in Poland since February 2023.

Romania. Refugees from Ukraine enroll for UNHCR cash assistance at the Romexpo Integrated Service Hub for refugees, established by UNHCR in Bucharest, December 2022, ©UNHCR/Mihai von Eremia

PREFERRED MODALITY FOR ASSISTANCE



ISSUES WHEN RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

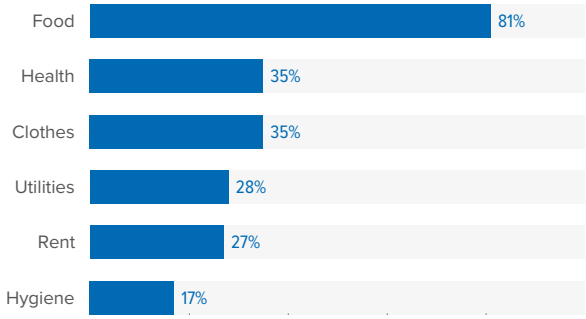


Use of cash assistance

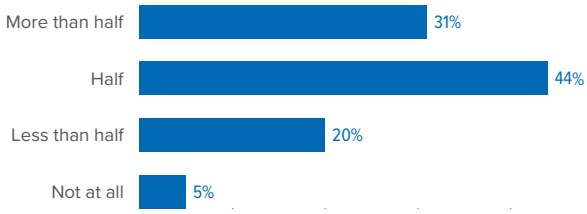
The **vast majority of respondents (93%) reported having access to the services and items** they needed in markets and shops.
By far the main immediate basic need that refugees and war-affected people reported spending their money on is **food (81%)**. Other expenditure categories pointed out by at least **a quarter** of respondents were **health, clothing, utilities, and rent**. Across countries, some categories that have higher-than-average proportion of respondents reporting expenditures are:

- Utilities and bills among recipients in Ukraine and refugees in the Republic of Moldova.
- Health among refugees in the Republic of Moldova and Slovakia.
- Hygiene items among refugees in Poland and Romania.

USE OF CASH ASSISTANCE (TOP EXPENDITURES)



MEETING BASIC NEEDS



DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AMONG PDM RESPONDENTS

82%
women

25%
older persons (60+ years)

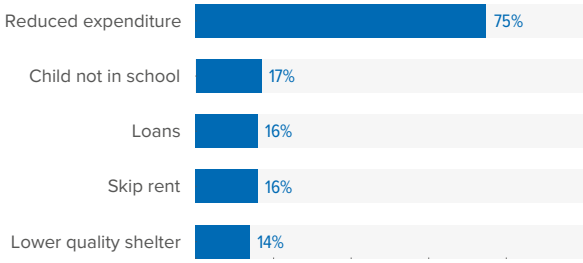
3.1
average household size

Well-being and coping mechanisms

Cash assistance significantly helped recipients in covering their basic needs, with **75% being able to cover half or more of their current needs**, with some differences among countries: more than a fourth of cash recipients in Slovakia and in Ukraine reported having been able to cover less than half of their basic needs (**29% and 27%,** respectively).

In Ukraine, **a higher percentage of recipients (64%) reported engaging in adverse coping strategies compared to refugees (28%) in the four weeks leading up to the interview**. The most frequent strategy reported among both population groups was **reduced expenditure on household items, education or health** to meet their food needs, with a smaller proportion reporting taking out loans. Among recipients in Ukraine, other strategies reported were leaving a child out of school, skip paying rent and moving to lower quality accommodations.

MAIN COPING STRATEGIES



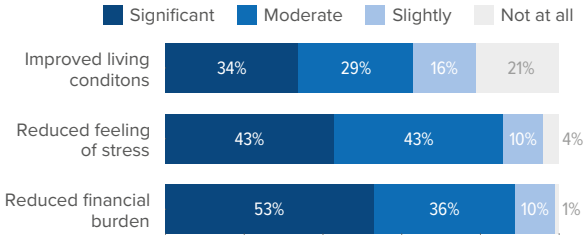
Cash assistance outcomes

In all countries, the **majority of respondents felt that the assistance had significantly or moderately contributed to**:

- Improving their living conditions (**66%**)
- Reducing their feeling of stress (**66%**)
- Reducing their financial burden (**72%**)

These indicators were higher among refugees in Poland and Romania compared to refugees in the Republic of Moldova, Slovakia and recipients within Ukraine.

CASH ASSISTANCE OUTCOMES



KEY INDICATORS PER COUNTRY

		Republic of Moldova	Poland (1)	Poland (2)	Romania	Slovakia	Ukraine
Sample	Respondents	172	637	623	125	205	613
	Dates of data collection	Nov-22	Sep-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Oct-22	Nov/Dec-22
Preferred modality for assistance	Cash	88%	86%	87%	99%	88%	74%
	In-kind	1%	3%	1%	0%	2%	1%
	Combination	11%	10%	12%	1%	9%	23%
Issues receiving, keeping or spending ssistance	Know how to report complaints	31%	45%	43%	5%	40%	28%
	Feeling at risk		3%	1%	2%	1%	7%
	Facing problems	2%	10%	10%	19%	8%	5%
	Able to find key items / services	99%	98%	99%	87%	96%	91%
Expenditures done (top-6)	Food	93%	86%	81%	92%	100%	79%
	Health costs	47%	17%	38%	25%	93%	35%
	Clothes / shoes	31%	36%	45%	53%	0%	35%
	Utilities and bills	55%	15%	10%	3%	0%	31%
	Rent	22%	46%	32%	5%	24%	25%
	Hygiene items	15%	21%	19%	23%	0%	17%
	Used negative coping strategies	43%	36%	14%	7%	35%	64%
Coping strategies used (top-5)	Reduce expend. to meet food needs	86%	85%	65%	6%	83%	74%
	Stop a child from attending school	4%	1%	2%	44%	7%	18%
	Take out new loans or borrowed	18%	11%	18%	33%	14%	16%
	Skip paying rent / debts	0%	3%	3%	0%	11%	18%
	Move to a poorer quality shelter	1%	6%	22%	0%	10%	15%
Coverage of basic needs	All	2%	16%	14%	60%	16%	6%
	More than half	7%	40%	35%	14%	16%	21%
	Half	85%	35%	42%	13%	27%	43%
	Less than half	6%	8%	7%	10%	25%	24%
	Not at all / Don't know	1%	1%	2%	3%	17%	6%
Improvement in living conditions	Significant	4%	58%	23%	72%	20%	33%
	Moderately	52%	21%	25%	22%	28%	34%
	Slightly	33%	10%	12%	5%	24%	21%
	Not at all	12%	11%	40%	1%	28%	13%
Reduced feeling of stress	Significant	19%	69%	25%	73%	34%	26%
	Moderately	59%	23%	62%	18%	34%	33%
	Slightly	16%	5%	9%	7%	21%	24%
	Not at all	6%	3%	3%	2%	11%	16%
Reduced financial burden	Significant		78%	41%	72%	35%	33%
	Moderately		17%	52%	21%	35%	34%
	Slightly		4%	6%	6%	21%	26%
	Not at all		0%	1%	1%	9%	8%

Notes: (1) PDM covering those enrolled between 11th March and 26th July 2022; (2) PDM covering those enrolled between 27th July and 9th September 2022.