Refugee and Local Community Feedback Analysis and Actions Taken

INFO UNIT, LAOLALTA NGO, MOLDOVA FOR PEACE
June 2023 and II Quarter of 2023

Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

MOLDOVA FOR PEACE

LAOLALTA

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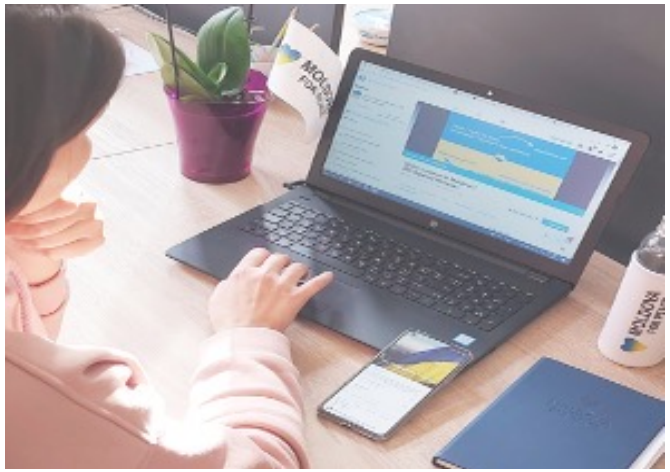
About the report



This report presents an analysis of refugees' feedback shared via online social media sources. Monitoring included 18 Telegram, 17 Viber, 10 online mass media sources and 7 FB groups and pages.

In June 2023 Info Unit has collected 1545, in the II Quarter 2023 (April, May and June) – more than 3700 rumours and feedback in more than 42 online channels.

Rumours spread quickly among the community and can have serious consequences. Rumour tracking allows to know what people are saying and address misinformation and disinformation.

The monitoring is focused on the refugees' feedback which could help to identify gaps or deficiencies in humanitarian aid provision mechanisms.

This report is part of the Accountability to Affected People mechanisms of the Refugee Coordination Forum in Moldova.

No artificial intelligence used

Data are collected manually for a deeper understanding of the context

No personal data collected

Info Unit does not collect any personal data all the feedback being analyzed anonymously

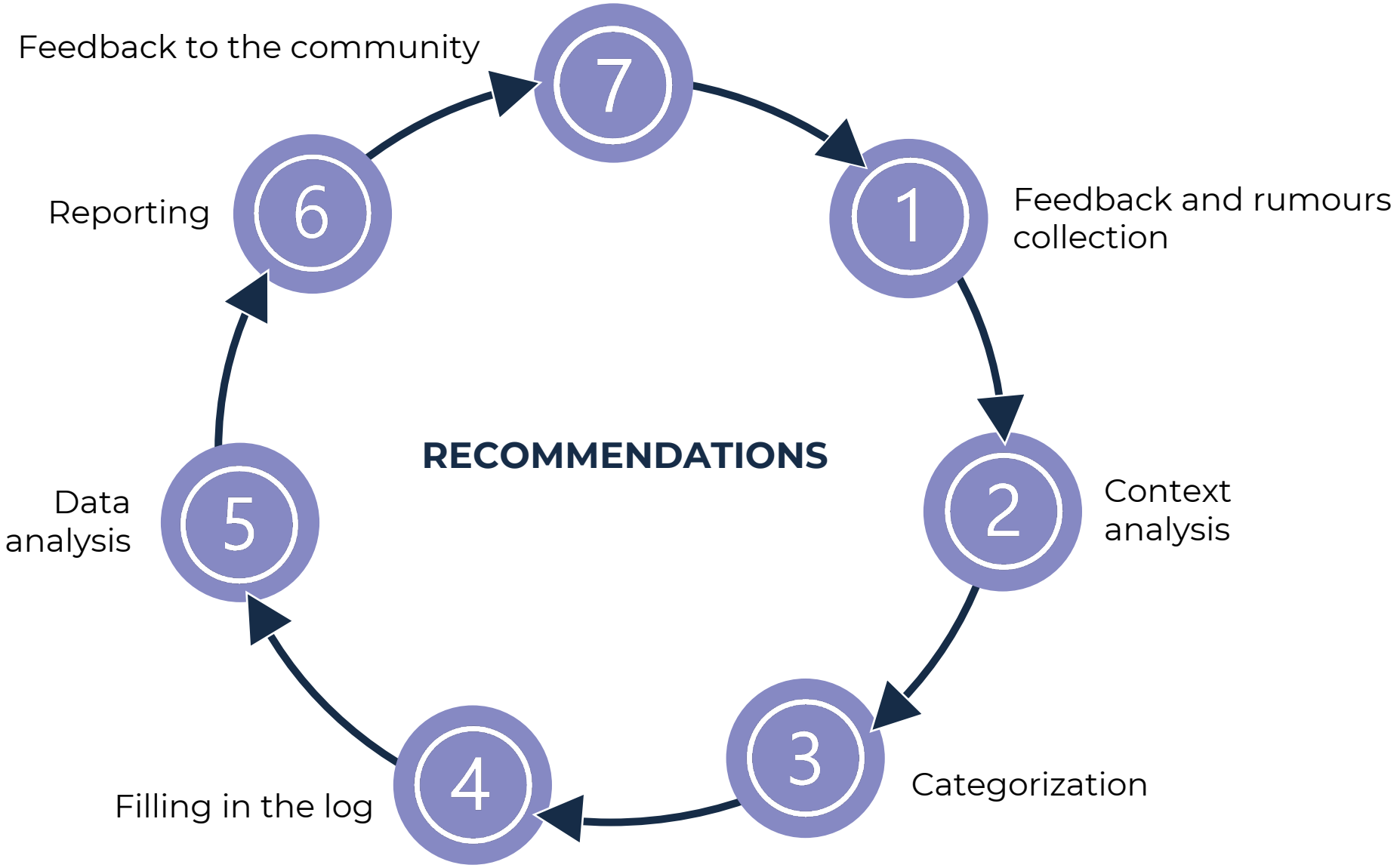
Context analysis

Feedback is collected with indication of the context in which they were shared

Quantitative analysis and categorization

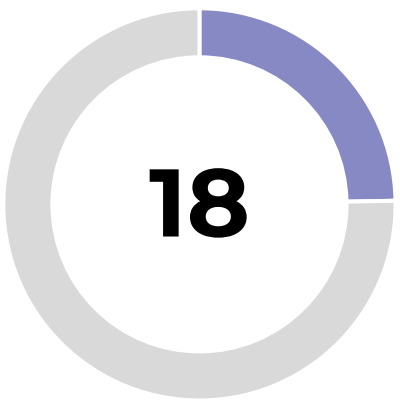
Feedbacks are grouped depending on the assistance or services.

Our process

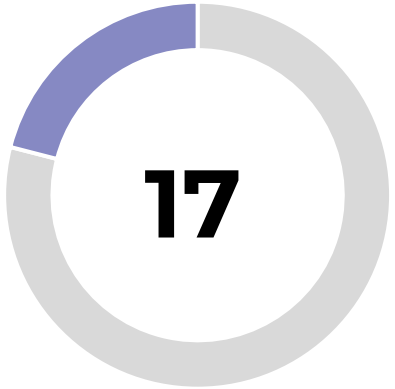

Feedback to the community
7
1
Feedback and rumours collection
Reporting
6
RECOMMENDATIONS
2
Context analysis
Data analysis
5
3
Categorization
4
Filling in the log

Refugee & Host Community Feedback Sources

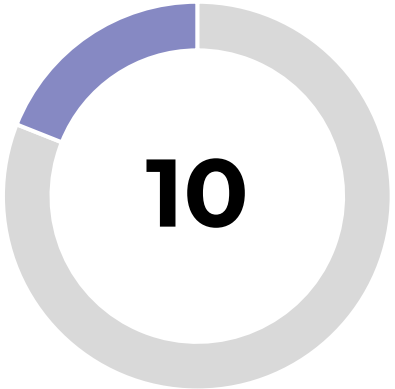
June 2023



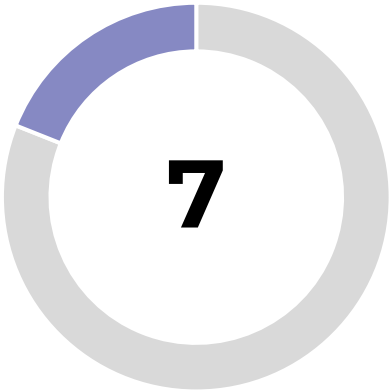
Telegram groups and channels



Viber groups



Online mass media



Facebook groups and pages

250 000+

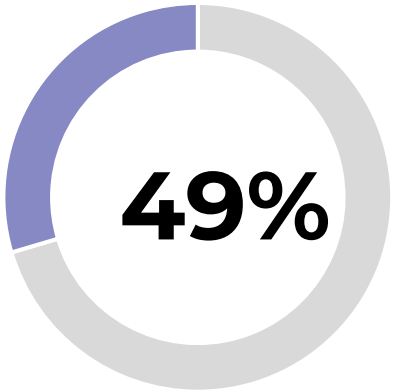
refugee and local community reached

Feedback analysis

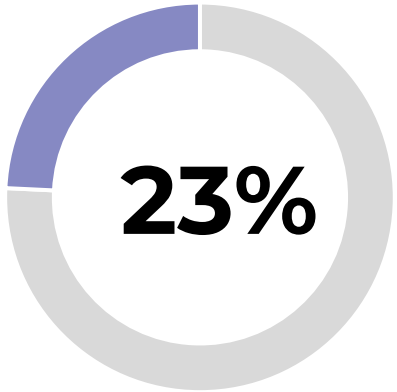
The second quarter of 2023

What people were talking about

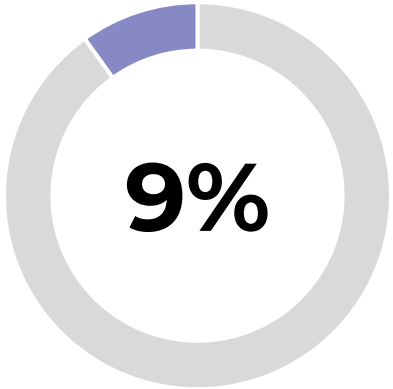
April, May and June 2023: top categories (out of 3786 feedbacks collected)



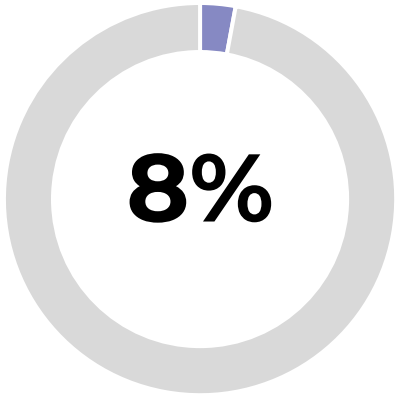
Cash assistance



Legal status



Border crossing rules

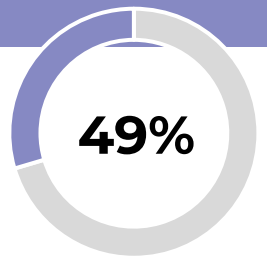


Humanitarian aid

Note: the remaining data for the other feedback categories were insignificant and therefore excluded from the analysis

Top categories

II Quoter 2023



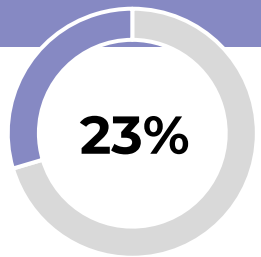
Cash assistance

During the second quarter of 2023, the topic of cash assistance continues to dominate. Discussions, with numerous questions and misunderstandings regarding operational procedures point out that beneficiaries are not receiving complete information.

Online comments point out that beneficiaries struggle to navigate the information flow concerning the rules and selection criteria set by organizations offering financial aid.

There were a significant number of questions regarding Cash assistance for Moldovan households hosting refugees. Most of the feedback received was negative. The reasons cited include unpaid amounts, inability to reach the hotline, and a lack of feedback on individual cases.

The most discussed topic within this category remains the UNHCR cash assistance program. It includes issues regarding verification, unpaid amounts, and undelivered SMS messages.



Legal Status

The legalization of status in Moldova remains one of the highly discussed topics among refugees.

Over 67% of feedback in this category pertains to issues and general questions related to obtaining temporary protection (TP).

This indicates that **refugees are highly interested in obtaining temporary protection but face a number of difficulties and unresolved problems**.

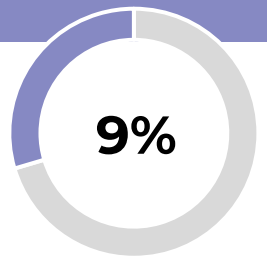
According to refugees, the main obstacles to obtaining temporary protection are

- proof of residency,
- a non-functioning General Inspectorate for Migration Website (IGM) website

A lot of difficulties have been reported on the TP registration for refugees residing in Transnistria

Top categories

II Quoter 2023



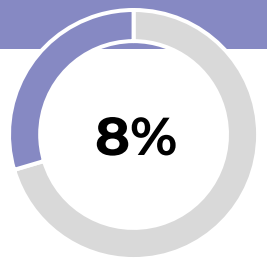
Border Crossing

The majority of problems reported by refugees in this category pertain to documents required for a car and for transporting pets.

There were a significant number of comments regarding the entry procedure into Transnistria.

Refugees reported that only those who have direct relatives in the region are allowed to enter Transnistria.

Refugees with no relatives in Transnistria and mainly men were denied the entry according to the feedback observed online during this period.



Humanitarian assistance

According to messages from refugees, humanitarian assistance remains necessary for some families.

However, many expressed a preference for cash assistance or vouchers over pre-packaged aid.

The reason cited is the varying needs of families. For example, some individuals cannot consume canned food due to health conditions and appreciate vouchers as an opportunity to purchase products based on their family's specific needs.

The shortage of assistance in certain regions continues to be a pressing issue, according to refugees. Such include Oknita, remote areas of Transnistria, and rural areas across the country.

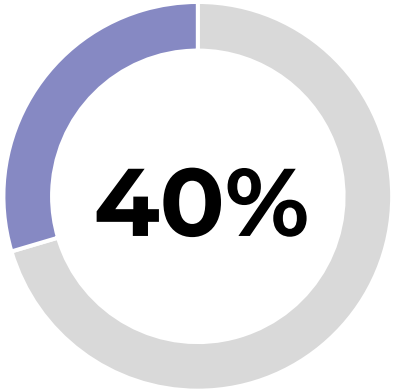
Refugees from distant regions are forced to organize transportation collectively in order to get access to aid distributed in help points located in big cities.

Feedback analysis

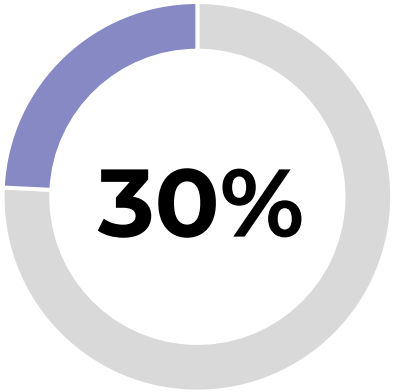
June 2023

What people were talking about

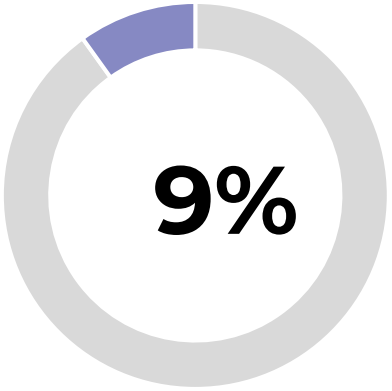
June 2023: top categories (out of 1545 feedbacks collected)



Cash assistance



Legal status



Border crossing rules

Note: the remaining data for the other feedback categories were insignificant and therefore excluded from the analysis

Cash Assistance

June 2023

UNHCR Cash Assistance

More than 40% of the feedback in this category pertains to the UNHCR cash assistance program. It is worth noting that the number of negative comments regarding the hotline's performance decreased by 5% in June compared to the data from the second quarter of 2023.

The direct involvement of UNHCR representatives in addressing the issue of unpaid sums has led to an undesirable outcome. By gaining access to the direct phone numbers of some UNHCR employees, refugees attempted to resolve individual cases by calling the provided phone number directly. This diminished trust in using the online feedback form. Additionally, refugees were skeptical of and had less confidence in utilizing the UNHCR Cash hotline.

Transnistria

In one of the online groups in Transnistria, personal data of refugees was openly collected. As a result, passport details and other personal information of refugees were made available in the public online access, claiming to be requested by the supposed OSORC for purported "verification" purposes to continue the payments.

Some examples of online feedback

> Please just stop calling that hotline anymore (UNHCR Cash Hotline). They are not competent, the answers do not correspond to reality, and only cause irritation. Hasn't anyone realized it yet? Let's all join together and kindly ask Y to contact XXX again.

> Please, everyone who has not received money for February-March, urgently write your details in the group using LATIN LETTERS, including your passport number and phone number. This needs to be done by 6.06.2023, 12:00. You should write it in the group "XXX" (Payments in Transnistria from OSORTS).

Cash Assistance

June 2023

Cash for host

Based on the feedback, beneficiaries do not understand what is happening with the financial assistance program for the Moldovan community hosting refugees. There are many comments about missed payments and the inability to reach the hotline

> We registered for the 6th and 7th rounds, received SMS notifications for both rounds, but received only the payment for the first round. It's impossible to get through on the phone: when my turn approaches, they hang up the call.

Other cash programs

The large number of questions about various cash assistance programs indicates that the information is not reaching the beneficiaries in its entirety. People are not familiar with the rules and do not possess sufficient information about the procedure and rules of obtaining assistance.

> I called them on Monday, and they said to reach them later, and they will provide the code. But I've been calling since morning, and they don't answer the phone. At the post office, they won't provide the transfer without the code. (AAH program)

It is vital to provide beneficiaries with accurate information. The online audience of the Info Unit is approximately 250.000 people.

Please reach out to us at infounit@laolalta.md for the dissemination of information about your aid programs

.

You can also publish the information yourself in one of the largest aid groups in Moldova, Ajutor Ucraineni în Moldova/SOS Українці.

Actions taken

UNHCR Cash Assistance Program

The Info Unit has reported on observed issues regarding payments to representatives of the UNHCR cash assistance program.

We are also continuesly informing refugees on official UNHCR cash program feedback mechanisms: UNHCR Cash hotline 800 10823 for inquiries and the online form for submitting complaints.

Feedback from UNHCR Cash Department

Info Unit requested from UNHCR the results of investigations of individual cases of unpaid amounts or delayed payments.

UNHCR Cash Department has informed Info Unit on the following actions taken:

1. In depth analysis of complaints received and problems faced;

2. Desk review of active caseload to detect any payment irregularities;

3. Review of system and technicalities involved including payment cycle revision;

In case of any errors found, UNHCR Cash Depratment shall take corrective action to the respective beneficiaries via the form of payments or vouchers.

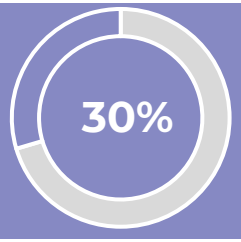
Cash for host

Info Unit attempted to call the hotline for financial assistance for the host community at 0 800 108 90.

Unfortunately, we were unable to reach any operator. Therefore, Info Unit has filed an email inquiry to clarify this issue.

Legal Status

June 2023



Almost 30% of the feedback across all categories relates to the legalization of status refugees in Moldova. More than half of the questions, rumors, mis-, and disinformation in this category pertain to temporary protection (TP).

1 Proof of residency

The biggest problems reported continue to be related to the obtaining of the proof of residency. Moldovan homeowners are not eager to assist with issuing the necessary documents being afraid of fines or verifications. The reason is that the landlords in Moldova prefer to rent appartment illegaly without paying any due state taxes.

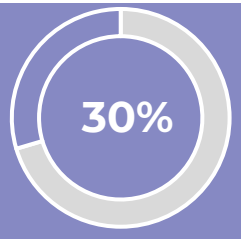
> My landlord, upon hearing the words “contract” or “declaration”, said that he decided to sell the apartment. Unexpectedly, he informed me that it's time for me to leave. Despite living there for a year as an ideal tenant, without any conflicts or payment delays... It is true that many landlords are not willing to comply with this proof of residency requirement

- **Apartment owners who reside abroad** either do not want or are unable to assist refugees in obtaining proof of residency.
- **Multiple owners.** According to beneficiaries’ feedback, hotline operators from the IGM Hotline often claim that all owners are required to be present for TP registration, which is not correct according to the law.
- **Document notarization**. There have been reported cases where notaries deceive and make separate declarations for each family member to get more money for their services.
- **Refugees are seeking ways to bypass the system**. Several online messages have been observed indicating that beneficiaries are willing to buy documents confirming their residence in the Republic of Moldova.

> Good day, we are unable to obtain the proof of residency for the TP. Can you help us? What is the price? Who offers such services? (a private message to an Info Unit member)

Legal Status

June 2023



> We came to the notary with the owner to draw up a declaration, but we were refused, because two more people are registered in this apartment and the notary told us they should be present as well.

2 Access to education

We have received multiple feedback from refugees who have obtained temporary protection status and are facing difficulties when trying to enroll their children in schools or kindergartens.

> After calling several schools in Chișinău, I've got just the same answer - that temporary protection status is not a valid reason to enroll a child from Ukraine as a full-rights student in a school! They refer us to some Decision of the Ministry of Education.

3 Access to healthcare

Refugees report that having temporary protection does not practically grant them access to free medical care.

From a significant number of similar feedback, we understand that the problem lies in the lack of information among local healthcare staff.

Another issued observed was related to the medical insurance and employment.

> I was officially employed in October 2022, I pay for medical insurance, I visited the family doctor and he told me that I need to get TP, because all Ukrainians have been removed from the database and we need to re-register. So for now my family doctor can only give me a consultation about vaccination and that's it.

Actions taken

Temporary Protection Fairs

In partnership with the UNHCR, CDA and the National Congress of Ukrainians in Moldova, Info Unit has organized a Temporary Protection Fair at the Community Center 151, opened by Laolalta.

Specialists answered beneficiaries' questions, provided individual legal councelling, and assisted those who wanted to pre-enroll for temporary protection online.

Seeing the beneficiaries' interest in assistance with registration for temporary protection, Info Unit, in the same partnership, planned to hold a second Temporary Protection Fair at Public Center 151.

Informational campaigns on TP

To address the difficulties related with proof of residency obtaining, Info Unit, in partnership with the National Congress of Ukrainians, conducted an information live session with the lawyer Mariana Maroglo.

During the live info session, we informed the local community that proof of residency does not entail additional obligations for homeowners and does not create additional grounds for state checks. The lawyer also answered a number of questions related to obtaining temporary protection.

Info Unit continues to inform refugees and the local community about the implementation of temporary protection. Our team provides information on the problems faced by refugees and strives to solve them at the local and state levels.

Access to official information and samples of documents required for TP registration

To mitigate the issues related with non-functioning official website of the IGM, Info Unit discussed with Dopomoga representatives the alternative variant on providing veridical information to refugees.

The official informational platform Dopomoga.gov.md in addition to providing detailed information on how to register for temporary protection, added samples of the necessary applications and documents.

About Info Unit

Info Unit is a part of Laolalta - one of the NGOs entering Moldova for Peace Civil Initiative.

Info Unit has been doing rumor tracking since the end of July 2022 as a part of Accountability to the Affected People Task Force (hereinafter AAP TF). In 2022 Info Unit has issued 5 Monthly and 1 Quarterly Rumor Tracking Bulletins.

Info Unit team provides answers to refugees via online social media, monitors one of the biggest refugee help group in Moldova Ajutor UA in Moldova: almost 100 000 members.

Continuous community engagement and accountability activities help to understand the ongoing situation related to refugee response in Moldova and identify gaps, deficiencies, misinformation and understand tensions between communities. Feedback collected offer evidence to decision makers, promote community-based approach and a more efficient response. Furthermore, answers go back to the community to fight mis- and disinformation.

AAP TF member

Info Unit monthly presents updated data on refugee and local community feedback and provides recommendations based on detailed and comparative analysis

TP working group member

Info Unit is a part of TP group helping to inform refugees and local community

Refugee Coordination Forum member

Laolalta is an active member of the Refugee Coordination Forum. Info Unit participates in sector and working groups including Cash.

Round table discussions

Info Unit is a part of discussions on refugee response along with the governmental entities, international and national NGOs

Ajutor UA in Moldova: the biggest help for refugee group in Moldova moderated by Info Unit. Here you can post the information about your aid programs

Українці Молдова informational telegram channel launched by Info Unit. For live sessions please write us an email

If you are interested in our working process please watch this **video**:

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