

Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) of UNHCR's Cash Assistance in Romania - Round 3, December 2022

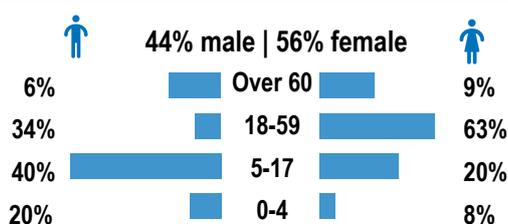
Introduction and methodology

As of 27 December 2022, a total of 7,896,825 people have arrived from Ukraine into European countries.¹ According to the latest figures, 2,514,425 people have crossed into Romania from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine since 24 February, with around 106,629 remaining in the country.²

In response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in neighbouring countries, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has organised cash distributions under the Regional Refugee Plan (RRP) for Ukraine and in coordination with the Government of Romania. As of 27 December 2022, around 28,188 refugees have benefitted from the assistance that consisted of a one time monthly payment of 568 RON per person (about 120 USD), for a period of three months and one additional month of assistance to vulnerable households. The transfer amount is equivalent to the amount of assistance provided to refugees by the Government of Romania.^{3,4} Eligible households received the money via their preferred modality, either transferred into their Romanian bank account or a SMS containing a pick-up code notifying them that cash assistance is ready, and can be collected at any Smith & Smith (company specialized in payment and money transfer services) locations providing they show identity documents and the unique pick-up code. More information on eligibility criteria and the distribution process can be found on UNHCR portal.⁵

As part of UNHCR's efforts to monitor the quality of their service delivery and to ensure accountability to Persons of Concern (PoC), IMPACT conducted a Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) of UNHCR's cash assistance in Romania. Using a structured survey REACH conducted remote interviews (via phone) with a total of 125 refugees⁶, randomly selected from UNHCR beneficiary list, between the 6th and the 19th of December 2022. The sample is representative of people who have registered and received cash assistance from UNHCR in Romania at the time of data collection with a 95% confidence level and a 7% margin of error. The sample included a 100% buffer in order to cover for the potential non-responses due to the fluidity of the number of refugees.

Assessed household demographics



Average household size: 3



Average cash assistance received per household: 1,581 RON

Key findings

- **Overall, results from this round continue to indicate that cash assistance is well adapted to the context**, easy to spend in the local markets and supermarkets and that receiving or spending the assistance did not pose any threat or challenges to beneficiaries. It allowed them to cover a major part of their basic needs and had a significant impact on their situation.
- **Only two households reported needing help** to withdraw or spend the cash assistance because they had a limited mobility. **Two other households reported feeling physically unsafe or at risk of harm** during the last cash assistance distribution.
- **Refugees reported that the cash helped to cover their basic needs**, with 60% of households meeting all of their basic needs at the time of data collection. Cash assistance was most frequently reported to be used to cover basic needs, such as **food (93%), clothes (53%), health expenses (25%) and hygiene items (23%).**⁷ Most households (75%) reported they spent all the cash assistance at the time of data collection. Cash assistance was mainly spent in supermarket (92%).
- **A large majority of households (85%) reported that they were able to find the items and/or services that they needed in the markets and/or shops.** Almost all the households (98%) reported that items and/or services were available in the markets and/or shops and the quality was in line with households expectations. Price increases were, however, noted by 44% of households.⁸
- **Majority of the interviewed households (94%) indicated that they intended to stay in their current location** in the next three months following data collection. Three-quarters of the households were living in a family or friend's accommodation without paying a rent.
- **The majority of households (61%) reported that none of their members were working** at the time of the data collection. The main reported barriers to access labour market were **language (35%), childcare (30%) and skill recognition (10%).**
- Besides UNHCR cash assistance, **the majority of households were relying on aid from other NGOs/agencies or the government for their livelihood needs. Only 29% reported having a formal source of income.** The most used coping strategies in the 7 days prior the interview was relying on less preferred or less expensive foods (62%).

¹ UNHCR, Operational Data Portal – Ukraine Refugee Situation, "Europe" corresponds to all Europe sub-regions, including EU and non-EU countries.

² UNHCR, Operational Data Portal – Ukraine Refugee Situation, Romania.

³ UNHCR, Cash assistance programme for refugees in Romania, 29 December

⁴ 1 RON = 0.215 USD, exchange rate consulted on the 29 December on <https://www.xe.com/>.

⁵ UNHCR, <https://help.unhcr.org/romania/unhcrs-cash-programme/>

⁶ Of the total of 145 interviews, 20 were invalidated, and therefore were not taken into account. The reason for invalidation was either the non-granting of the consent or the fact that the respondent was not over 18 years old

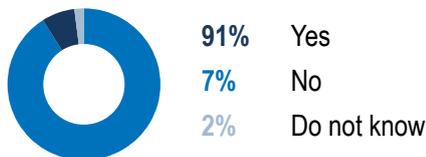
⁷ Multiple answers could be selected.

⁸ It should be noted that the link between the cash assistance and increase in prices in the community is weak at the moment of data collection, and that the current global inflation might be the reason for the perception of price increase. As such, interpretation of this specific findings should be treated with utmost caution

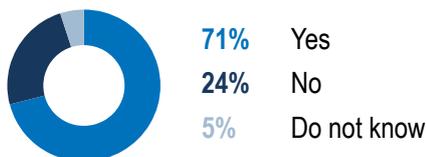
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Reception of Cash Assistance

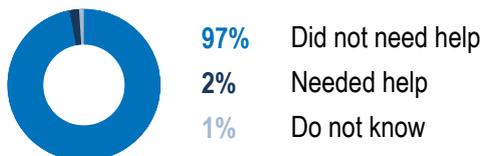
Proportion of households that reported receiving the amount of cash assistance they expected:



Proportion of households that reported receiving the cash assistance the day they expected it:



Proportion of households that reported they needed help to withdraw or spend the cash assistance:



Among the **2% (n=2)** of households that reported they needed help to withdraw or spend the cash assistance, the most reported reason was that they had a limited mobility which prevented them from withdrawing or spending the cash assistance (**n=2**). The households who needed help reported having received help from a family member (**n=1**) or from an acquaintance (**n=1**). **0** households reported having to pay for this help.

Top 3 most frequently reported places where households went to spend the cash assistance:⁹



93% of households reported that the household member registered as recipient in the UNHCR distribution list was in possession of the SIM card at the time of data collection.

Non-Compliance Cases

0 household reported not having received any cash assistance despite being on the beneficiary list.

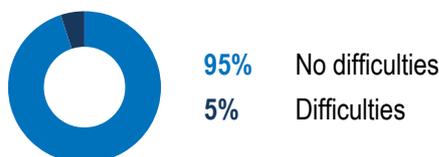
0 household reported they had to pay additional money or do favours to withdraw or spend the cash.

Difficulties Faced by Beneficiaries

2 households reported feeling unsafe or at risk of harm in any of the stages related to cash assistance reception (e.g. when going to enroll or get the card, when going to spend or withdraw the money, for the fact of keeping the money at home, or any other difficulties related to the cash assistance).

21 households reported having faced difficulties in accessing and spending the cash because the member registered as recipient was not available.

Proportion of households that reported facing difficulties in accessing and spending the cash because they had the wrong PIN code, forgot it or could not enter the PIN code themselves:



Proportion of households that reported facing difficulties in withdrawing the money because of poor service at the bank/post office etc.



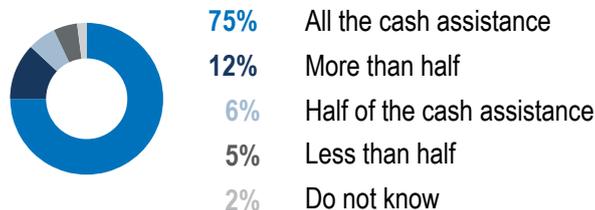
1 household reported having faced difficulties in spending the cash because a market, shop trader or wholesaler refused to serve them.

⁹ Multiple answers could be selected.

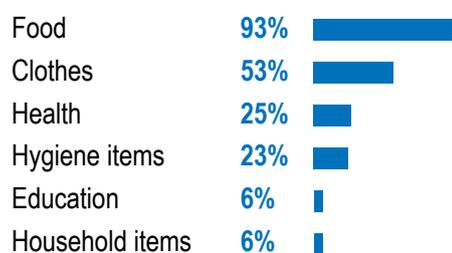
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Cash Assistance Expenditure

Proportion of households by share of cash assistance that was reportedly already spent at the time of data collection:



Proportion of households by most frequently reported items and services on which they spent cash assistance:¹⁰

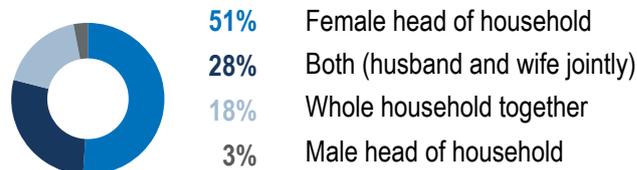


Proportion of households by items and services where they reportedly spent their cash assistance on, by order of importance:¹¹

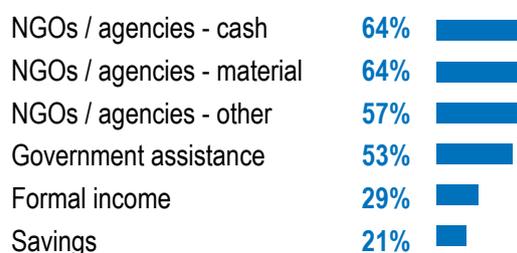
Items / services	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice
Food	70%	24%	12%
Health costs	11%	11%	14%
Clothes/shoes	11%	36%	31%
Rent	3%	1%	2%
Education	2%	4%	5%
Hygiene items	1%	18%	21%
Transport	1%	0%	2%
Utilities	1%	0%	5%
Water	0%	0%	2%
Shelter repair	0%	0%	2%
Household items	0%	4%	0%
Entertainment	0%	1%	0%
Debt repayment	0%	0%	0%

n=125 n=95 n=42

Proportion of households that reported on the main household member(s) deciding how the money should be spent:

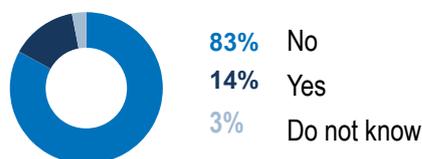


Top 6 most frequently reported sources of income or support other than UNHCR cash assistance in the last 30 days prior to data collection:¹⁰



Except one household, all respondents reported that they have at least one other source of income or support. NGOs/agencies (cash, material or other) support as well as government assistance were reported as other source of income by more than half of respondents.

Proportion of households that reported they saved a part of the cash assistance:



Among the 14% (n=17) of households that reportedly saved a part of the cash assistance, 12 households saved it in their own account.

¹⁰ Multiple answers could be selected.
¹¹ Respondents could choose up to 5 choices to this question. Given the limited number of respondents who selected a 4th and 5th choice, no clear trends could be observed. Therefore, those answers have not been reported in the table.

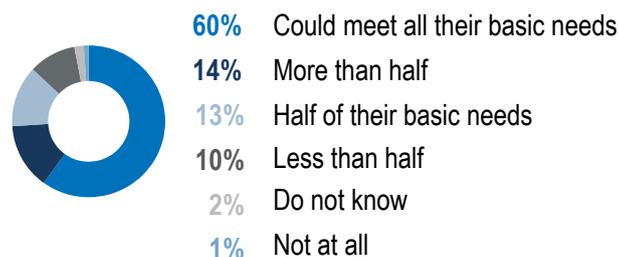
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Impact of Cash Assistance on Sense of Security

Almost all households (91-94%) reported that the cash assistance had a significant or moderate effect on their situation in relation to the following:

	Significantly	Moderately	Slightly	No effect
Improved their living conditions	72%	22%	5%	1%
Reduced financial burden	72%	21%	6%	1%
Reduced feelings of stress	73%	18%	7%	2%

Proportion of households by share of basic needs they were reportedly able to meet at the time of data collection:



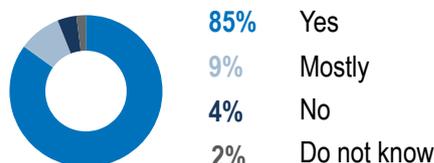
Top 3 most frequently reported livelihood coping strategies, adopted by households in the 30 days before data collection:

Reduced health expenditure	6%
Stopped child from attending school	3%
Took out a new loan or borrowed money	2%

Most frequent livelihood coping strategy used in the 7 days before data collection was relying on less preferred and less expensive foods (62%), being mostly used two or three times within the 7 day time frame.

Availability of products needed at an affordable price in the markets

Proportion of households that reported being able to find the items/services they needed in the markets and/or shops:



Sixteen households reported they were not able to find specific items or services: specific medication or treatment (n=7), specific fish (n=3), specific cereals (e.g., buckwheat) (n=3), grease (n=1), tools for reparations (n=1) or warm shoes (n=1).

The majority of households (98%) reported that quality of needed items and/or services available in the market was in line with the households' expectations.

Proportion of households that reported an increase of prices in the market for some items/services in the 30 days prior to data collection:

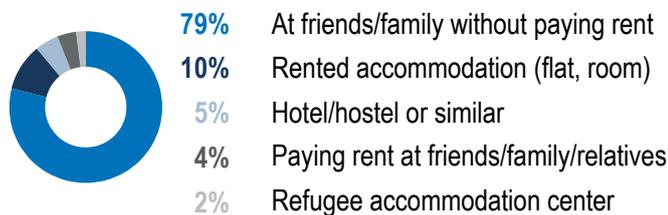


Among the 44% (n=55) of households who reported price increases, 96% reported a rise in prices of food products, while 4% noted that all categories of products had increased.

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Housing Situation, Movement Intentions and Employment

Proportion of households by reported housing situation:

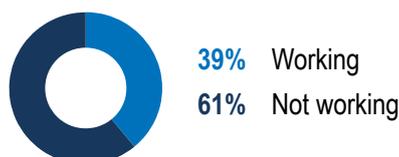


Only 2 households reported planning to change housing situation. The reported reasons were: planning to move to another city (n=1) and wanting an improvement of housing living conditions (n=1).

Proportion of households by reported movement intentions in the three months after data collection:

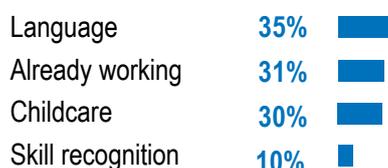
The majority of households (94%) want to remain in present location, whilst 4% want to return to Ukraine (in their oblast of origin); another 2% do not know and are waiting to make a decision. The main reported conditions¹¹ to return in Ukraine are a total cessation of conflict (88%), an improvement of livelihoods situation (23%) or a temporary ceasefire (18%).

Proportion of households where a member was working at the time of data collection:



Among the 61% (n=76) of households not working, some reported having the intention to work in Romania (42%), others have no intention to work (50%), while the rest don't know what decision to take (8%). Among those who have the intention to work in Romania (32), the most reported preferred sectors was households activities (e.g., domestic help, maids, etc.).

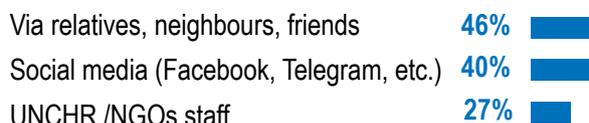
Top 4 of most frequently reported challenges to accessing the labour market:¹²



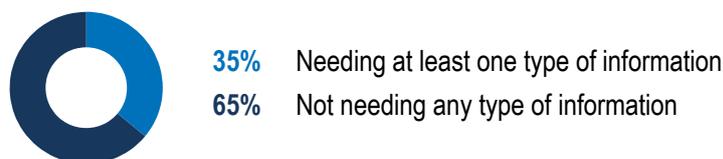
¹² Multiple answers could be selected.

Complaints and Communication

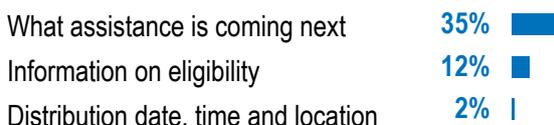
Top 3 most frequently reported channels where households heard about UNHCR cash assistance:¹²



Proportion of households that reported needing one or more types of information about cash assistance:



Top 3 most frequently reported types of information needed:



Only 5% (n=6) of households reported knowing one or more ways to report complaints and feedback on the cash assistance from UNHCR, while the great majority (95%) did not know how to.

Most commonly reported complaint and feedback mechanism, among the 6 households that reported knowing at least one way:¹²



Proportion of households by reported preferred modality for future cash assistance:

