

Post-Distribution Monitoring of UNHCR's Cash Assistance in Moldova

Round 1, May 2022

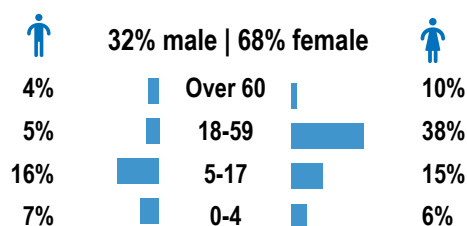
Introduction and methodology


As of 27 May 2022, a total of 6,659,220 people have arrived from Ukraine into neighbouring countries. According to the Government's latest figures, the total refugee influx from Ukraine into the Republic of Moldova is of about 475,011 individuals since 24 February.¹ Among the refugees who fled into Moldova, 87,006 Ukrainian refugees and 3,643 third-country nationals have remained in the country.²

In response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) set up multi-purpose cash distributions for refugee households, in collaboration with its partners Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Caritas Moldova and Diaconia, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).³ By 7 June, over 60,000 refugees have benefited from the assistance that consists of a monthly multi-purpose cash grant of 2,200 Moldovan Lei (MDL) per person (about 115,75 USD), equivalent to the Moldovan minimum consumption basket.^{3,4} Eligible households receive a bank card from UNHCR partner bank, maib, that can be used free of charge for payments in supermarkets, local shops, pharmacies, etc. and for withdrawals from ATMs all over the country. More information on eligibility criteria and the distribution process can be found [here](#).

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 Moldova. IMPACT interviewed via phone calls a total of 134 beneficiary refugee households, randomly selected from the UNHCR beneficiary lists, between 6 and 13 May 2022. The sample is representative of the beneficiary refugee population from Ukraine living in the country at the time of data collection at a 95% confidence level with a 10% margin of error. It included a 40% buffer due to the high mobility of refugee population. A minority of the interviewed households had already received a second payment at the time of data collection which may influence some of the findings.

Assessed household demographics



 Average household size: 3

 Average cash assistance received per household: 6,348 MDL

Key findings

- **Overall, results indicate that cash assistance is well adapted to the context**, easy to spend in the local markets and that receiving or spending the assistance did not pose any threat or challenges to beneficiaries. It allowed them to cover a part of their basic needs and had a positive impact on their situation.
- **Cash assistance was most frequently reported to be used to cover for basic needs, such as food (96%), hygiene items (50%), clothes/shoes (45%) and health expenses (34%).**⁵ More than half of households (52%) reported they spent all the cash assistance at the time of data collection, while around a third (33%) had spent more than half of the cash assistance.
- **A vast majority of households (95%) 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 (97%) also reported that items and/or services were available and the quality was in line with households expectations. Price increases were, however, noted.⁶
- **No household reported feeling unsafe or at risk of harm due to cash assistance.** They felt safe during all stages of the assistance cycle 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.⁷ People could access and use the cash easily, although some households (18%) reported having difficulties withdrawing or accessing the cash because the registered person was not available.
- **Refugees reported that needs remain high**, with 81% of households meeting only half or less of their basic needs at the time of data collection.
- **Majority of the interviewed households (74%) indicate they intend to stay in their current location** in the next three months. The most frequently reported conditions for returning to Ukraine include total cessation of conflict and/or a temporary ceasefire or reduction in conflict.

¹ UNHCR, Operational Data Portal – Ukraine Refugee Situation.

² UNHCR, Operational Data Portal – Ukraine Refugee Situation, Republic of Moldova.

³ UNHCR, Cash assistance programme for refugees in Moldova, 26 May.

⁴ 1 MLD = 0.052 USD, exchange rate consulted on the 26 May in <https://www.xe.com/>.

⁵ Multiple answers could be selected.

⁶ It should be noted that the link between the cash assistance and increase in prices in

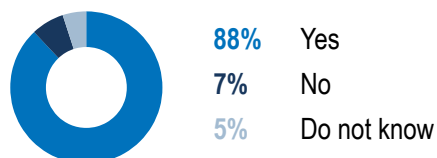
the community is weak, as Moldova was experiencing a high inflationary state at the moment of data collection due to increase in price in utilities following the war in Ukraine. As such, interpretation of this specific finding should be treated with utmost caution.

⁷ Due to some errors in the Russian translation for the first two days of data collection, this indicator can only be considered as indicative.

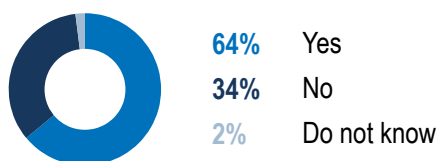
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Reception of Cash Assistance

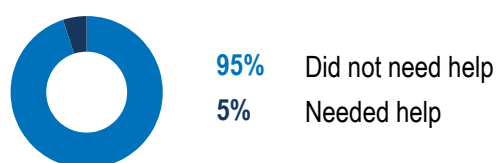
Proportion of households reporting having received the amount of cash assistance they were expecting:⁸



Proportion of households reporting having received the cash assistance the day they were expecting it:⁹

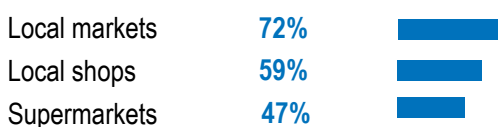


Proportion of households reporting they needed help to withdraw or spend the cash assistance:



Among the 7 (5%) households that reported they needed help to withdraw or spend the cash assistance, the most frequently reported reason was that they did not know how to use the card (3 households). The households most commonly reported having received help from a member of agency staff (3). No household reported having to pay for this help.¹⁰

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



99% households reported that the household member registered as recipient in the UNHCR distribution list was in possession of the maib prepaid card at the moment of data collection.

⁸ Of the 7% (9 households) reporting not receiving the amount of cash assistance, for three it was due to a technical issue in enrolment. The three households were referred to UNHCR, which solved the issue.

⁹ For a large part of the 34% of households reporting not having received the assistance on the expected day, the delay was due to issues with the reception of the SMS confirming that the cash was available in the maib card. A part of them reported having received the message many days after the registration while others reported not having received the message at all. This indicator can only be considered as indicative.

Non-Compliance Cases

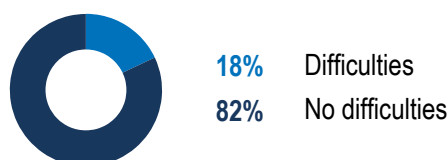
2 households (1%) reported not having received any cash assistance despite being on the beneficiary list.

1 household reported they had to pay additional money or do favours to withdraw or spend the cash. They reportedly had to give money or do favours to another household member.

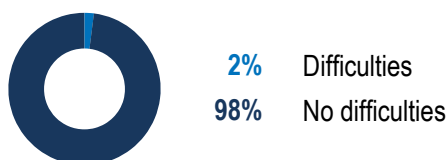
Difficulties Faced by Beneficiaries

No household reported feeling unsafe 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).¹¹

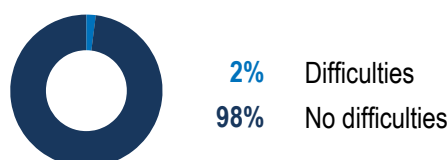
Proportion of households reporting having faced difficulties in accessing and spending the cash because the member registered as recipient was not available:



Proportion of households reporting having faced 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 reporting having faced difficulties in spending the cash because market, shop trader or wholesaler refused to serve them:



No household reported having faced difficulties because of poor service at the bank when withdrawing the money at ATMs.

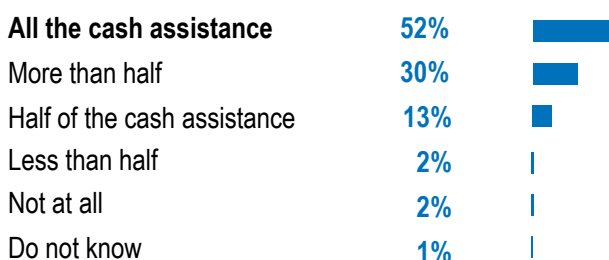
¹⁰ As the subset for this indicator is below 30 households, figures are reported as numbers and should be only considered as indicative.

¹¹ Due to inconsistencies between responses that could not be verified, 16 entries were deleted from the dataset. This is only applicable for this specific indicator.

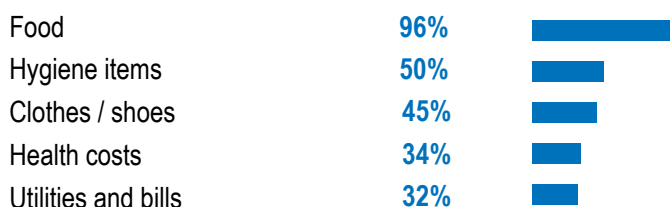
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Cash Assistance Expenditure

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



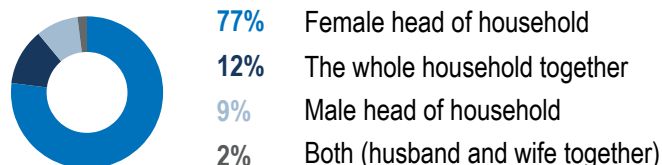
Proportion of households by most frequently reported items and services where they spent cash assistance on:⁶



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

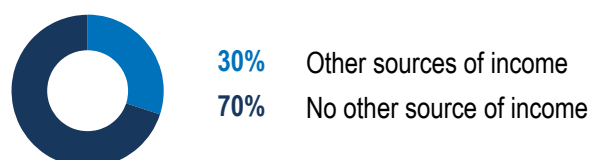
Items / services	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice	4th choice	5th choice
Food	64%	25%	9%	3%	0%
Clothes / shoes	9%	14%	20%	15%	10%
Hygiene items	0%	11%	23%	34%	10%
Health costs	5%	17%	14%	6%	0%
Utilities and bills	11%	14%	9%	0%	0%
Rent	8%	10%	4%	2%	0%
Transport	0%	0%	3%	15%	45%
Water	1%	6%	3%	11%	10%
Household items	0%	2%	4%	6%	14%
Education	1%	1%	6%	2%	0%
Fuel for cooking or heating	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%
Debt repayment	0%	0%	0%	2%	7%
Legal assistance	0%	0%	1%	2%	3%
Shelter repair	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%
Other	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%

Proportion of households reporting on the person in the household deciding how the money should be spent:



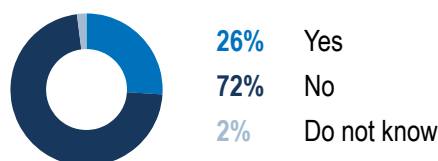
98% of households reported having no disagreement regarding the use of the cash assistance.

Proportion of households reporting having had sources of income or support other than UNHCR cash assistance in the last 30 days prior to data collection:



Among the 30% (39) of households reporting other sources of income, 9 households had received support (other than cash or material assistance) from other agencies/NGOs, 9 had received support from friends/family. Others reported as additional sources: income from employment or generating activities (8) and receiving remittances (8).⁸

Proportion of households reporting they saved a part of the cash assistance:



Among the 26% (34) of households that reportedly saved a part of the cash assistance, 71% (24) reported that they saved it in their own account.⁸

PDM of UNHCR's Cash Assistance in Moldova, May 2022

Impact of Cash Assistance on Sense of Security

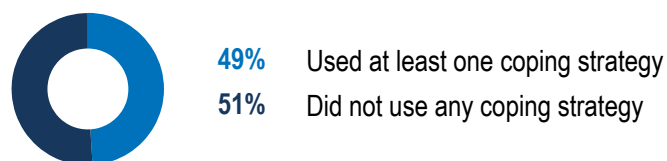
Almost all households reported that the cash assistance had a positive effect on their situation in relation to the following:

	Significantly	Moderately	Slightly	No effect
Improved their living conditions	21%	51%	20%	8%
Reduced financial burden	31%	44%	24%	1%
Reduced feelings of stress	23%	47%	26%	4%

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

Could meet all their basic needs	2%	
More than half	14%	■
Half of their basic needs	49%	■
Less than half	28%	■
Not at all	4%	
Do not know	3%	

Proportion of households reporting they used one or more negative livelihood coping strategy in the 30 days before data collection:

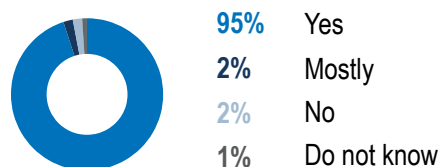


Top 5 of most frequently reported livelihood coping strategies, among households (64) having reportedly used at least one of them:^{6, 8}

Reduce essential expenditures in order to meet their food needs	84% (54)	■
Skip paying rent and/or debt repayments	20% (13)	■
Take out new loans or borrowed money	19% (12)	■
Sell livelihood and/or productive assets	16% (10)	■
Send a member of the household to work far away	4% (6)	

Availability of products needed at an affordable price in the markets

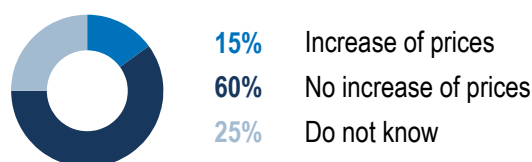
Proportion of households reporting they were able to find the items/services they needed in the markets and/or shops:



Among the 4 households that reported they were not able to find specific items or services, 2 reported not having found specific medications and 2 larger size clothes.⁸

A vast majority of households (97%) reported that needed items and/or services were available in the market and the quality was in line with the households' expectations.

Proportion of households reporting an increase of prices in the market for some items/services in the last 30 days, at the time of data collection:



16 households among the 20 households that reported an increase of prices in the last 30 days noted increases in food prices.⁸

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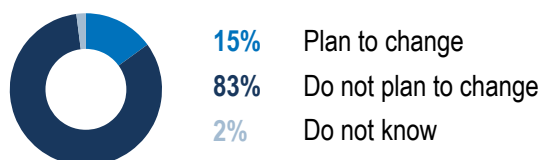
Housing Situation and Movement

Intentions

Proportion of households by reported housing situation:

At friends/family without paying rent	46%	
At friends/family/relatives by paying rent	20%	
Rented accommodation (flat, room)	20%	
Refugee Accomodation Center	11%	
Hotel/hostel or similar	3%	

Proportion of households that reported planning to change their housing situation:



Among the 20 households that reported planning to change, the two most frequently reported reasons were that hosts were no longer able to host them (10), followed by household not able to afford the rent (5).⁸

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

Remain in present location	74%	
Do not know - waiting to make a decision	10%	
Return to area (oblast) of origin	9%	
Move to another country	3%	
Return to another location (oblast) inside Ukraine	2%	
Move to another area (raionul) inside Moldova	2%	

Proportion of households by conditions most frequently reported as necessary in order to decide to return:⁶

Total cessation of conflict	93%	
Temporary ceasefire or reduction in conflict	45%	
Improved livelihoods situation	8%	

Complaints and Communication

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

Via relatives, neighbours, friends	37%	
Social media (Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, etc.)	35%	
Community gathering	15%	

Top 5 of most frequently reported types of information households would like to have regarding the cash assistance:⁶

When the next cash distribution will take place	63%	
Eligibility for cash assistance	45%	
Distribution date, time and location	37%	
How to spend the cash assistance	11%	
How to send complaints and feedback to agencies	6%	

A minority of households (15%) reported knowing how to report complaints and feedback on the cash assistance from UNHCR, while a vast majority (85%) did not know how to.

Top 3 of most frequently reported ways to report complaints and feedback, among the 20 (15%) households that reported knowing how to do it:⁸

Hotline	12	
Via community mobilisers; complaints / reception desk	7	
Via local leaders	6	

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

