

# Temporary Protection Assessment Cahul, Moldova

December, 2023

## KEY MESSAGES

- In Cahul, only about a tenth of respondents noted that Temporary Protection (TP) significantly or mostly eased access to healthcare. However, few encountered barriers to healthcare either before or after TP provision.
- Less than a fifth of respondents found that TP significantly or mostly facilitated access to education, while a slight increase in Ukrainian refugee children enrolling as full-time students was observed.
- The impact of TP on employment access appears limited, with no significant changes observed. About a quarter of respondents reported that TP did not facilitate access to employment.
- Refugee access to information and level of awareness concerning TP-defined rights and obligations appears to be relatively good in Cahul.

### Guide to read the graphs in this factsheet:

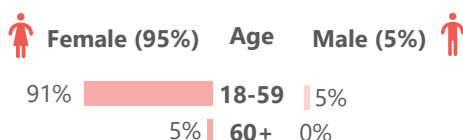
Bars in grey depict information concerning the situation before having received TP.

Bars in red depict information concerning the situation after having received TP.

Unless the sample size is specified, percentages were calculated based on a sample of 44.

## ASSESSMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

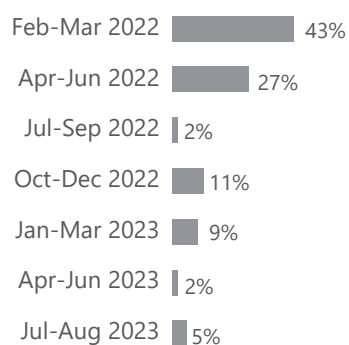
### Respondents' demographics<sup>5</sup>



Average household size: 2.8

The majority of respondents in Cahul were women aged between 18-59 (91%). The average household was composed of about 3 individuals, including 1 school-aged child. Most refugees interviewed in Cahul arrived to Moldova between February and June 2022 (70%).

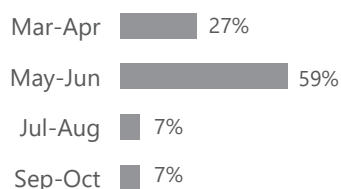
### Respondents' date of arrival in Moldova<sup>5</sup>



Most of respondents applied for TP between April and May 2023 (70%). Subsequently, the majority of the respondents were granted their TP documents between May and June (59%). All of the household members of interviewed refugees had received TP by the time of the interview. All of the respondents and most of their household members had received a TP proof (2% of respondents declared that only some of their household members received a TP proof).

## TP REGISTRATION

### Date of having been granted TP (respondents)<sup>5</sup>



## CONTEXT & RATIONALE

As of December 3rd, 2023, 112,811 Ukrainian refugees remain in Moldova<sup>1,2</sup>. In a swift response to the crisis in 2022, Moldova declared a state of emergency, granting those displaced from Ukraine special entry/exit rights, legal stay, and access to education, healthcare, and employment.

On March 1st, 2023, Moldova introduced Temporary Protection (TP) for Ukrainians and eligible Third-country Nationals. TP status offers employment rights, access to education, healthcare, social assistance, and temporary accommodation<sup>3</sup>. By December 18th, 2023, 26,382 individuals received TP, including 7,988 children<sup>4</sup>. As of December 2023 registration is ongoing.

While existing research focuses on TP enrolment, REACH conducted an assessment to get an initial understanding of TP's impact on refugees' conditions, access to basic services, and employment.

## METHODOLOGY

This assessment relied on the mixed method approach. To capture the dynamics of the refugee situation, both quantitative and qualitative components included retrospective questions. All results are indicative.

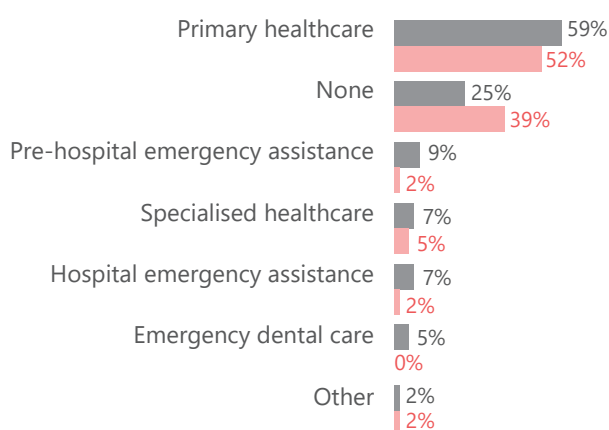
The quantitative component relied on a household survey with the refugees registered for TP, capturing their experiences regarding changes in access to healthcare, education, and employment, as well as their protection-related environment, movement intentions, and access to information.

The qualitative component consisted of key informant interviews (KIIs) with representatives of the public services, local authorities and NGOs.

Data was collected between September and October 2023. In Cahul, 44 household surveys and 18 KIIs were conducted.

## ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

### Healthcare services accessed by the refugee households<sup>6</sup>



A higher proportion of respondents declared accessing healthcare services before receiving TP (75%), than after (61%). This disparity could be due to the timeline of the assessment, as respondents received TP relatively recently and may not have needed to access healthcare services yet. All those who had reportedly attempted to access healthcare services in Cahul before or after having obtained TP indicated that they succeeded. Primary healthcare was the most commonly accessed service, both prior to receiving TP (79%) and after (85%). Only 1 respondent declared increased frequency of accessing healthcare services post-TP, citing TP acquisition as the reason.

### Reported barriers to healthcare access

Most respondents reported that they did not encounter barriers in accessing healthcare before (25 out of 33 who attempted to access healthcare services) or after having received TP (20 out of 27). Unavailable specific medicines and treatment, and long waiting time were the most reported barriers both before (4 out of 33) and after (3 out of 27) TP provision. 2 out of 33 households reported that they were not able to register with a family doctor before receiving TP, and only 1 out of 27 respondents reported such issues after.

Insufficient staffing at the health facility was indicated by refugees before receiving TP (1 out of 33), and after (2 out of 27). Additionally, before having received TP respondents struggled with unavailability of specific healthcare services, inability to afford the cost of treatment or medicines, and the health facility being too far away. These barriers were no longer reported after TP provision. Within the qualitative interviews, many key informants declared that access to healthcare in Cahul was already sufficient before TP implementation and did not notice significant changes to barriers.

#### No. of households facing barriers to healthcare access after TP provision<sup>8</sup>

None	20
Unavailable specific medicines and treatment	3
Long waiting time	3
Not enough staff at health facility	2
Could not register with a family doctor	1

### Reported gaps in refugee healthcare access

# 86%

of Ukrainian refugees interviewed in Cahul declared that there were no gaps in refugee healthcare access.

2 Ukrainian refugees interviewed in Cahul highlighted that there was a lack of appropriate access to medicines, while 1 noted a lack of access to specialist doctors, and 1 reported a lack of access to prophylactic dental treatment. Additionally, some key informants highlighted the unavailability of specialised treatments and unaffordability of specific medicines.

Prior to TP, refugees from Ukraine had cost-free access to primary and emergency healthcare. Currently, beneficiaries of TP are entitled to free primary healthcare, emergency healthcare, and free medical examination for public health reasons. They can also register with a family doctor<sup>7</sup>.

### Reported payment for primary healthcare services

Among those who reportedly attempted to access healthcare services, most respondents, (27 out of 33 before receiving TP, and 21 out of 27 after receiving TP), reported that they never had to pay for accessing healthcare services. However, 3 of them, both before and after receiving TP, reported that they always had to pay. Additionally, 3 other respondents, both before and after receiving TP, noted that they sometimes had to pay.

### Reported documents required to access healthcare services

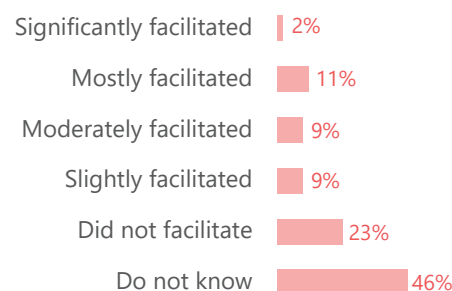
#### Documents required to access healthcare services after TP provision, per respondents' mentions<sup>8</sup>

TP proof	25
National passport/ID	3
State identification number (IDNP)	2
Birth certificate	1
None	1

The national passport/ID (reported by 28 out of 33 who attempted to access healthcare services) and IDNP (26 out of 33) were the most frequently required documents for accessing healthcare services prior to TP.

As TP beneficiaries, respondents stated that TP proof was the most commonly required document (25 out of 27), with only 3 respondents being reportedly asked to present their national passport or ID, and 2 respondents - IDNP.

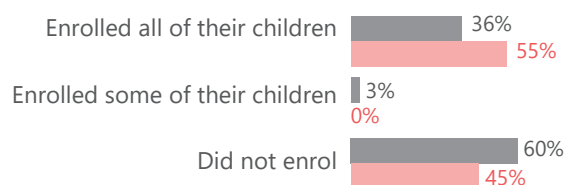
### Healthcare access facilitation due to TP, according to the respondents<sup>9</sup>



## ACCESS TO EDUCATION

### Households that enrolled their children in Moldovan schools

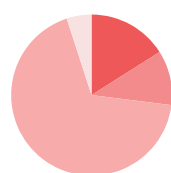
(n=33)<sup>10,11</sup>



Out of the 33 households with children, 42% (14 households) attempted to enrol at least some of their children in Moldovan schools before having received TP and 58% (19 households, where all children had obtained TP) - after. Almost all those who tried to enrol their children have succeeded, both before (13 out of 14) and after having obtained TP (18 out of 19).

Before TP provision, on average 1 child per household in Cahul was registered as a full-time student (average: 0.77), while in some cases, children were enrolled as auditors (average: 0.38). After receiving TP, slightly more children were registered as full-time students (average: 1.39).

### Refugees who enrolled their children in schools because of obtaining TP<sup>13</sup>



3/19 Yes  
2/19 Yes, partially  
13/19 No, not at all  
1/19 Prefer not to answer

Only 5 of those who attempted to enrol their children into Moldovan schools were to some degree motivated in their enrolment decision by obtaining TP. Similarly, most key informants did not notice significant changes to demand for education in Cahul following TP provision.

### Reported barriers to education access

Almost all respondents who attempted to enrol their children in schools in Cahul stated that they did not encounter any obstacles in accessing education before the implementation of TP (13 out of 14), 1 respondent noted the language barrier, and long distance to commute to school.

After having obtained TP less respondents claimed that they did not face any barriers (12 out of 19). The most frequently mentioned issue after having obtained TP was the language barrier (mentioned by 5 out of 19), as most schools teach in Romanian language, foreign to the majority of Ukrainian children. Likewise, language barrier was mentioned during the Key Informant Interviews by all education providers in Cahul.

Overall, 30% of households with children noticed some degree of enrolment facilitation due to TP provision. However, 55% could not tell whether TP has facilitated education access, while 9% stated that it did not.

No. of households facing barriers to education after TP provision <sup>13</sup>	
None	12
Language barrier	5
Long distance to school	1
Children lack documentation	1
Financial issues	1
Lack of available spaces in schools	1

According to the regulations, before and after the introduction of TP, refugee children could access public education in Moldova free of charge, registering as a full-time student or an auditor (i.e., following courses on a voluntary basis, without receiving grades)<sup>12</sup>.

### Reported payment for school enrolment

One respondent (out of 14 who declared that they attempted to enrol their children in school) stated that they had to pay for school enrolment before having obtained TP. One (out of 19 who attempted to enrol their children) claimed that they had to pay despite having obtained TP.

### Reported documents required to enrol children in schools

Documents required for accessing education after TP provision, per respondents' mentions <sup>13</sup>	
Proof of prior studies	16
TP proof	15
Child's medical records	15
Parent's passport/ID	13
Child's birth certificate	10
Child's passport/ID	8
State identification number (IDNP)	2
Proof of residence	2
None	1

The majority of respondents (12 out of 14 before and 16 out of 19 after obtaining TP) indicated that proof of prior studies was the most commonly required document to enroll children in schools, followed by the parent's passport/ID and child's medical records. Additionally, before the introduction of TP, refugees were often required to present their state identification number (10 out of 14).

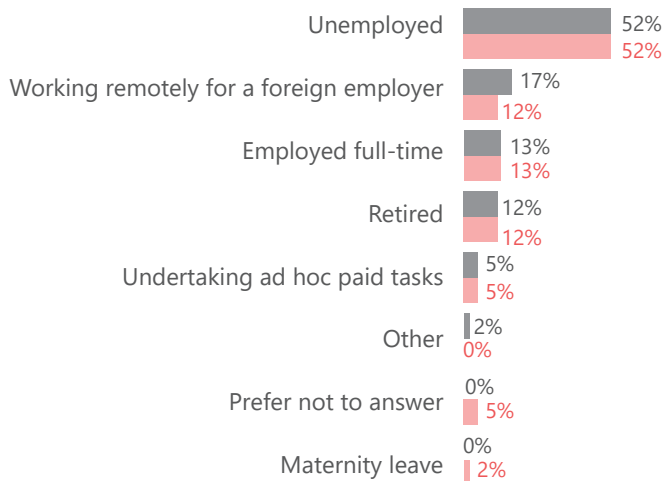
After TP provision, 15 out of 19 of respondents stated that TP proof was required for enrolment.

### Education access facilitation due to TP, according to the respondents (n=33)<sup>10</sup>



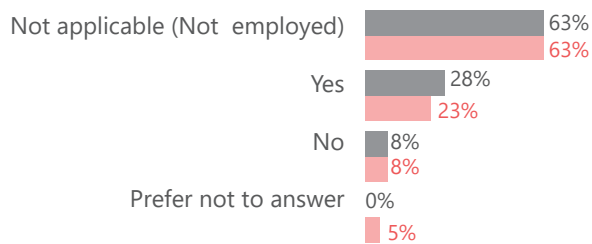
## ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

### Employment status of the household members (n=60)<sup>14,15</sup>



The law on TP repealed the previous decisions on employment, which had granted Ukrainian refugees the right to work in Moldova without a residence permit. According to the TP legislation, refugees must obtain TP or another legal status to be employed in Moldova. Employment contracts in place as of May 15th, 2023, remained valid while refugees regularized their status<sup>16</sup>.

### Household members holding an employment contract (n=60)<sup>14,15</sup>

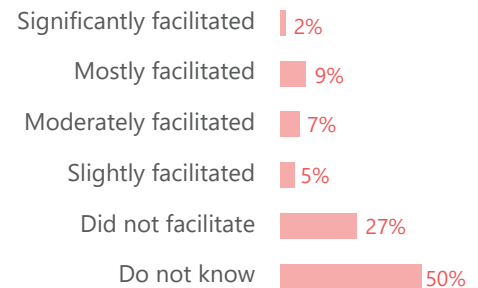


Before TP provision about 28% of refugee household members surveyed in Cahul (17 out of 22 of those employed) were reported to have an official employment contract. After having obtained TP, 23% of the household members reportedly had employment contracts (14 out of 19 employed). However, the share of employed household members without an official contract remained the same, while more respondents chose not to answer.

According to the survey, about a half of the Ukrainian refugee household members in Cahul were reportedly unemployed (52%), both before and after having received TP. Only 13% of household members were employed full-time in Moldova, while 5% declared undertaking ad hoc paid tasks, both before and after having received TP.

According to the respondents, 95% of the household members did not change their employment status after having received TP, while 5% preferred not to answer. About a fifth (18%) of the household members were reportedly planning to change their employment status due to having obtained TP. Out of those, 5 were looking for a full-time job in Moldova, 5 for a part-time job, and 1 sought to work remotely for a foreign employer.

### Employment access facilitation due to TP, according to the respondents<sup>15</sup>

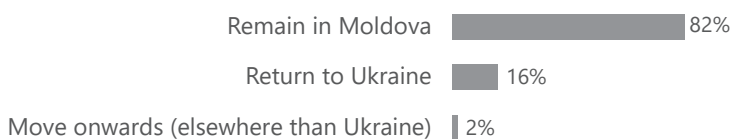


Half of the respondents were not sure whether TP has indeed facilitated refugee access to employment. About a quarter of respondents reported that TP has facilitated the employment access to some degree. They mentioned, e.g., that having the TP proof increased their chances of being formally employed.

## MOVEMENT INTENTIONS

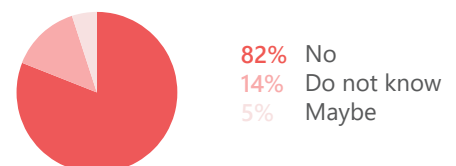
TP status grants the right to remain at the territory of Moldova until March 1st, 2024. However, the TP status expires if its beneficiary spends over 45 days abroad (in total). Refugees are then allowed to reapply for TP<sup>17</sup>.

### Households' movement intentions before having obtained TP<sup>15</sup>



Approximately 14% of the households reported having changed their movement plans after receiving TP - half of them declared that their decision was motivated by having obtained TP. All those who changed their movement intentions due to TP intended to remain in Moldova.

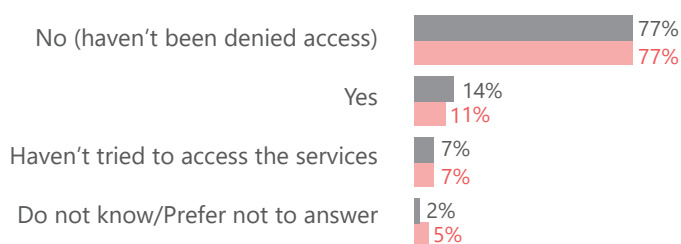
### Households anticipating leaving Moldova for over 45 days<sup>15</sup>



Most of the respondents (82%) did not anticipate leaving Moldova for more than 45 days in total in the upcoming 6 months. Another 14% did not know, and 5% hesitated. Half of those who considered this possibility, declared that they would reapply for TP upon their return.

## PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT

### Household who were denied access to basic services on potentially discriminatory grounds<sup>18,19</sup>

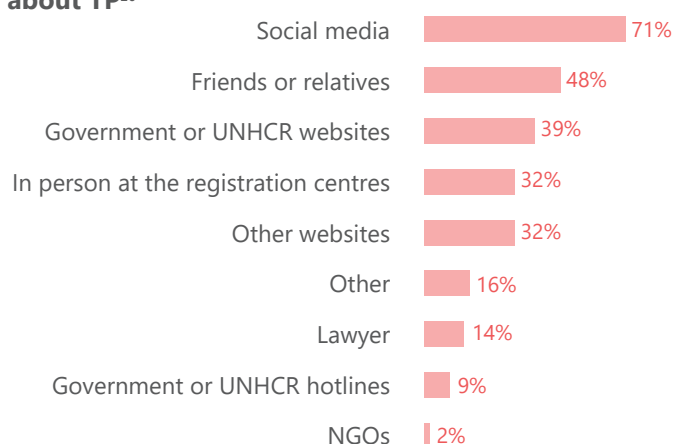


Most households were not denied access to any basic services on discriminatory grounds. Among the 6 households who reported access denial before receiving TP, 3 were denied access to employment, 2 to accommodation, and 1 to banking services.

After receiving TP, 5 households reported that they were denied access to basic services on perceived discriminatory grounds: 3 to employment and 2 to accommodation.

## INFORMATION ACCESS

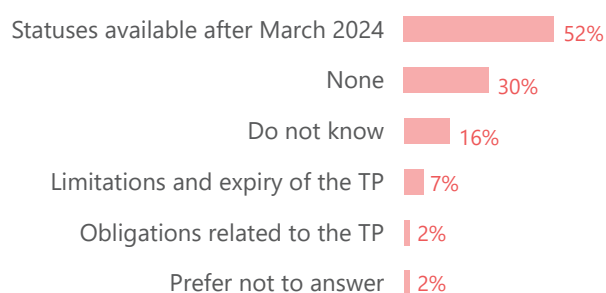
### Sources used by the households to access information about TP<sup>20</sup>



Social networks constituted crucial information sources for most households, as 71% accessed information on TP via social media and 48% through friends and relatives.

Almost all respondents in Cahul were fully satisfied with access to information concerning TP (98%). The respondent who declared being rather satisfied emphasized the lack of sufficient information on TP eligibility criteria.

### Additional information needed by the households<sup>20</sup>



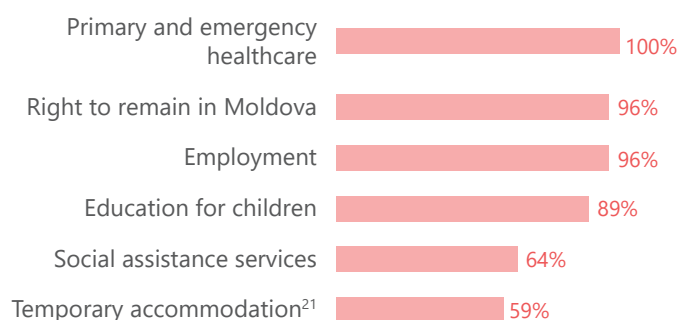
### Sources preferred by the households to access additional information about TP

About half (52%) of respondents needed additional information, mostly regarding legal statuses available to them after March 2024, when TP is set to expire.

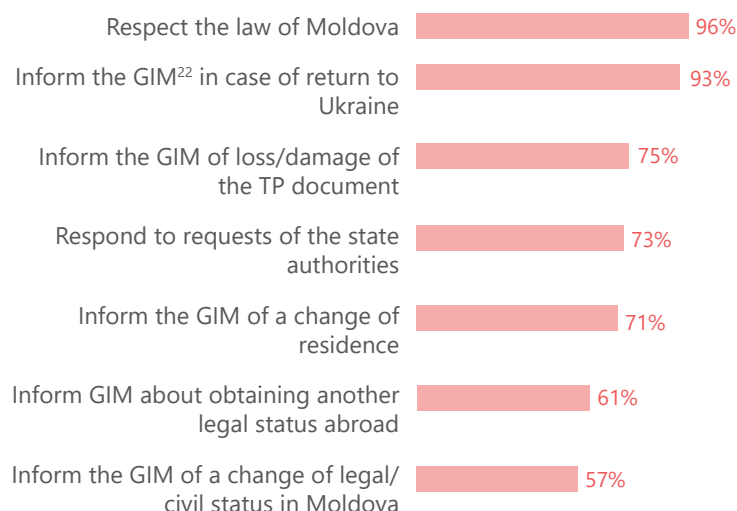
Out of 29 respondents who needed additional information, 24 reported that social media was their preferred source of information. Other information sources selected by the respondents included SMS (indicated by 17 respondents), websites/Internet (13), hotline or phone call (12), in-person communication (9), leaflets or booklets (4), TV (3), radio (3), and billboards or posters (3).

To assess the respondents' level of awareness of the TP, they were asked to enlist TP-related rights and obligations. All respondents in Cahul noted at least one right and obligation determined by TP, displaying a good level of awareness. This was confirmed by the qualitative findings of this study.

### Rights guaranteed by TP, as recognized by the respondents<sup>20</sup>



### Responsibilities of TP beneficiaries according to the respondents<sup>20</sup>





## LIMITATIONS

- The assessment of change in access to services is retrospective and lacks baseline data to compare the results with – respondents and informants were asked to assess the situation before and after TP provision. Their assessment of past experiences could be subjective or have shifted with time.
- As the assessment was conducted relatively soon after the mandatory registration timeframe for TP (May-August 2023), the results provide a first understanding of how the TP status impacts (if at all) refugees' living situation and access to the services, rather than offering a thorough overview of the TP measure's impact.
- The household survey originally included the Area of Knowledge (AOK) method. AOK consists of asking the respondent questions concerning their close community, in this case, other Ukrainian refugees that they have been interacting with in their location in Moldova. However, due to the low number of responses received within the AOK questions, these findings were not included in the report.

## ENDNOTES

### PAGE 1

1. UNHCR, [Operational Data Portal, Ukraine Refugee Situation](#), updated on December 3rd, 2023.
2. The term "refugee" is used here to refer to persons displaced from Ukraine after the escalation of the conflict on February 24th, 2022 (i.e., not to be confused with the legal status of a refugee).
3. UNHCR, [Temporary Protection in Moldova](#), accessed on November 7th, 2023.
4. [General Inspectorate of Migration, Weekly statistics, December 18th, 2023](#).
5. Because of rounding up, the percentages might not add up to 100%.

### PAGE 2

6. This is a multiple choice question, therefore results may add up to more than 100%.
7. UNHCR, [Temporary Protection Update, Republic of Moldova](#), August, 7th, 2023.
8. Out of 27 households who attempted to access healthcare services after having obtained TP.
9. Because of rounding up, the percentages might not add up to 100%.

### PAGE 3

10. Percentages were calculated amongst those who reported to live in households with children.
11. Because of rounding up, the percentages might not add up to 100%.
12. Ministry of Education and Research of Moldova, [Admission of Ukrainian citizens to general education institutions of the Republic of Moldova in the 2023-2024 academic year](#), accessed on November 10th, 2023.
13. Out of 19 households that attempted to enrol their children into Moldovan public schools after having obtained TP.

### PAGE 4

14. This question was asked about to respondents about each of their adult household member individually, hence the sample size exceeds the number of respondents.
15. Because of rounding up, the percentages might not add up to 100%.
16. UNHCR, [Temporary Protection Update, Republic of Moldova](#), August, 7th, 2023.
17. Ibid.

### PAGE 5

18. The potentially discriminatory grounds include grounds perceived as discriminatory by the respondents, excluding, e.g., provider's lack of capacity.
19. Because of rounding up, the percentages might not add up to 100%.
20. This is a multiple choice question, therefore results may add up to more than 100%.
21. Accommodation in the temporary placement centres for persons in need.
22. The General Inspectorate of Migration

## ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).