

Temporary Protection Assessment Balti, Moldova

December, 2023

KEY MESSAGES

- In Balti, less than half of respondents stated that Temporary Protection (TP) significantly or mostly facilitated access to healthcare by slightly reducing barriers and unifying documents required to access healthcare.
- Less than half of respondents stated that TP has significantly or mostly facilitated access to education, particularly by facilitating enrolment of Ukrainian children into Moldovan schools as full-time students.
- TP's impact on employment access appears limited, with few changing their employment status after provision, although a slightly higher degree share of refugees obtaining a formal employment contract was observed.
- The level of awareness regarding TP was relatively low, as many respondents were not aware of all the obligations and rights to which they are entitled.

Guide to read the graphs in this factsheet:

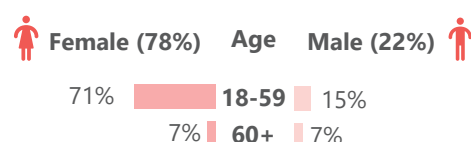
■ Bars in grey depict information concerning the situation before having received TP.

■ 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 41.

ASSESSMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

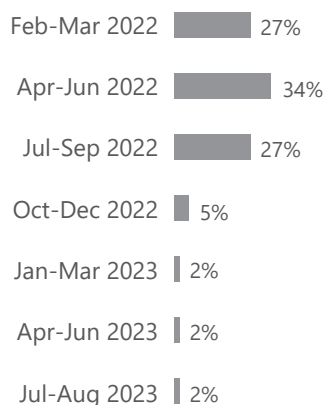
Respondents' demographics⁵



Average household size: 2.7

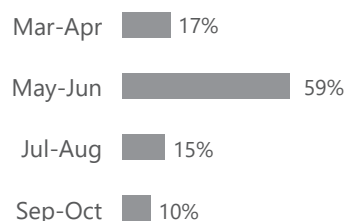
The majority of respondents in Balti were women aged between 18-59 (71%). The average household was composed of about 3 individuals, including 1 school-aged child. Most refugees interviewed in Balti arrived to Moldova between February and September 2022 (88%).

Respondents' date of arrival in Moldova⁵



TP REGISTRATION

Date of having been granted TP (respondents)⁵



Most of respondents applied for the TP status between April and June 2023 (73%). Subsequently, the majority of the respondents were granted their TP documents between May and June (59%). Almost all (97%) of the household members of interviewed refugees had received TP. All of the respondents and 97% of their household members had received a TP proof by the time of the survey.

CONTEXT & RATIONALE

As of December 3rd, 2023, 112,811 Ukrainian refugees remain in Moldova^{1,2}. 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 accommodation³. By December 18th, 2023, 26,382 individuals received TP, including 7,988 children⁴. 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.

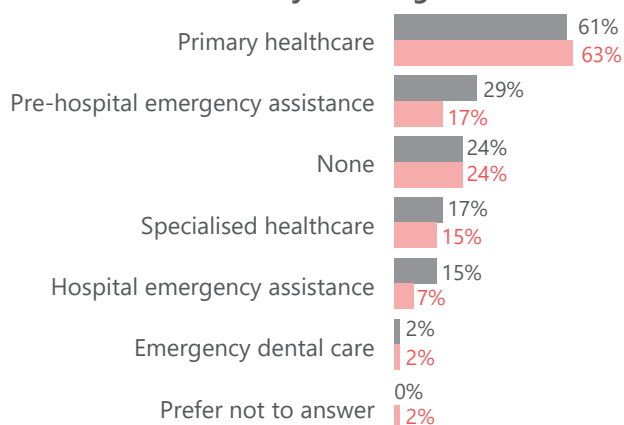
The quantitative component relied on a household survey with the refugees registered for TP, capturing their experiences regarding changes in access to healthcare, education, and employment, as well as their protection-related environment, movement intentions, and access to information.

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 Balti, 41 household surveys and 18 KIIs were conducted.

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Healthcare services accessed by the refugee households⁶



After TP provision, few changes in accessing healthcare services have been observed in Balti. Both before and after having obtained TP, 76% of respondents reported accessing any healthcare services. Primary healthcare was the most commonly accessed service, both prior to receiving TP (61%) and after (63%). All those who attempted to access healthcare services after obtaining TP have succeeded. Only 2 respondents declared that their frequency of accessing healthcare services increased, 1 of them adding that this was due to obtaining TP.

Reported barriers to healthcare access

Before receiving TP, the majority of respondents reported issues with prolonged waiting time for accessing healthcare services (16 out of 32 who attempted to access healthcare services), inability to register with a family doctor (13 out of 32), high cost of consultation, treatment, or medicines (11 out of 32) and unavailable specific medicines and treatment (11 out of the 32).

After TP provision, almost half of the households (15 out of 31) reported not encountering obstacles. The procedure of registering with a family doctor was significantly eased, as emphasised by both respondents and key informants. While the prevalence of these barriers has decreased, challenges persist with prolonged waiting time for appointments, as well as the unavailability and unaffordability of medicines and treatments.

No. of households facing barriers to healthcare access after TP provision⁸

None	15
Long waiting time	8
Unavailable specific medicines or service	6
Cost of consultation, treatment or medicines	6
Unavailable specific healthcare service	4
Long distance to facility	4
Could not register with a family doctor	2
Could not take time off work or caring for children	2
No adequately trained or insufficient staff	1
Language barrier	1
Fear or mistrust	1
Cost of transportation	1
Refused access for no clear reason	1

Reported gaps in refugee healthcare access

66%

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

20% of Ukrainian refugees interviewed in Balti highlighted that they lacked access to medicines. Another fifth noted lack of access to specialist doctors. 5% reported a lack of chronic disease treatment. Additionally, the deficiency of acute disease treatment, access to vaccination services, access to laboratory services, and access to drugs for acute illness were each reported by 1 respondent.

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 doctor⁷.

Reported payment for primary healthcare services

Among those who attempted to access healthcare, only 13 out of 32 respondents before receiving TP and 12 out of 31 respondents after receiving TP, reported that they never had to pay for accessing healthcare services. 12 respondents, both before and after receiving TP, declared that they sometimes were required to pay. Additionally, 5 respondents, both before and after receiving TP, declared they always had to pay for healthcare.

Reported documents required to access healthcare services

Documents required to access healthcare services after TP provision per respondents' mentions⁸

TP proof	28
National passport/ID	16
Birth certificate	12
State identification number (IDNP)	5
Proof of residence	4
Legal status (other than TP)	3
Insurance	1
None	1

Before TP provision, the most commonly required documents for accessing healthcare were reportedly the national passport or ID (indicated by 30 out of 32), legal status proof (16 out of 32), and IDNP (15 out of 32). In addition, respondents reported presenting a birth certificate (12 out of 32) or a proof of residence (11 out of 32) to access healthcare before obtaining TP.

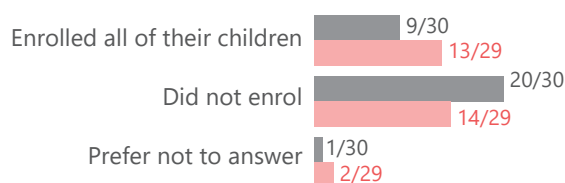
As TP beneficiaries, respondents stated that TP proof was the most commonly required document (28 out of 31). It largely replaced other required documents, although national passport/ID and birth certificate remained popular.

Healthcare access facilitation due to TP, according to the respondents⁹



ACCESS TO EDUCATION

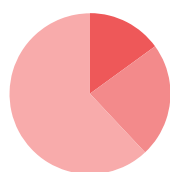
Households that enrolled their children in Moldovan schools¹⁰



10 households attempted to enrol their children in Moldovan schools before having received TP (out of 30 households with children) and 13 after (out of 29 households with children who had obtained TP). Almost all of those who attempted to enrol their children have succeeded, both before (9 out of 10, while 1 preferred not to answer) and after obtaining TP (13 out of 13).

Before TP provision, on average 1 child per surveyed household in Balti was registered as a full-time student (average: 0.89), in some cases, children were enrolled as auditors (average: 0.22). After receiving TP, all children were registered as full-time students (average: 1.15).

Refugees who enrolled their children in schools because of obtaining TP¹²



5 out of 13 households 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 noticed increased demand for education in Balti following TP provision. The increase was seemingly due to the facilitated possibility to become a full-time student (instead of an auditor).

Reported barriers to education access

Half of respondents in Balti who attempted to enrol their children in schools stated that they did not encounter any obstacles when accessing education before the implementation of TP (5 out of 10).

Before TP, 3 respondents reported insufficient access to information about the enrolment procedure, and 2 respondents noted the language barrier. Childrens' lack of documentation was indicated only by 1 household.

After having obtained TP a slightly higher share of respondents claimed that they did not face any barriers (8 out of 13). The most frequently mentioned issue was the language barrier (3 out of 13), as most schools teach in Romanian language, foreign to the majority of Ukrainian children. This barrier was often mentioned during the Key Informant Interviews by the education providers in Balti, before and after provision of TP.

Overall, 57% of households with children noticed some degree of enrolment facilitation due to TP provision. However, 30% could not tell whether TP has facilitated education access, while 7% stated that it did not.

No. of households facing barriers to education after TP provision ¹²	
None	8
Language barrier	3
Insufficient information about the enrolment procedure	2
Lack of available spaces in schools	2
Long distance to school	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)¹¹.

Reported payment for school enrolment

Despite the regulations guaranteeing access to education free of charge, 1 respondent (out of 10 who attempted to enrol their children) stated that they had to pay for school enrolment before having obtained TP, and 1 (out of 13) reported having to pay after obtaining TP.

Reported documents required to enrol children in schools

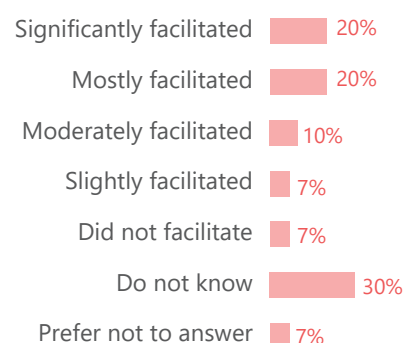
Documents required for accessing education after TP provision, per respondents' mentions¹²

TP proof	13
Child's medical records	8
Child's birth certificate	8
Proof of residence	7
Parent's passport/ID	5
Proof of prior studies	4
Child's passport/ID	3
Other	3
Legal status (other than TP)	2

The majority of respondents, 9 out of 10 before having obtained TP, indicated that parent's passport was the most commonly required document to enroll children in schools, followed by proof of residence, birth certificate and child's passport.

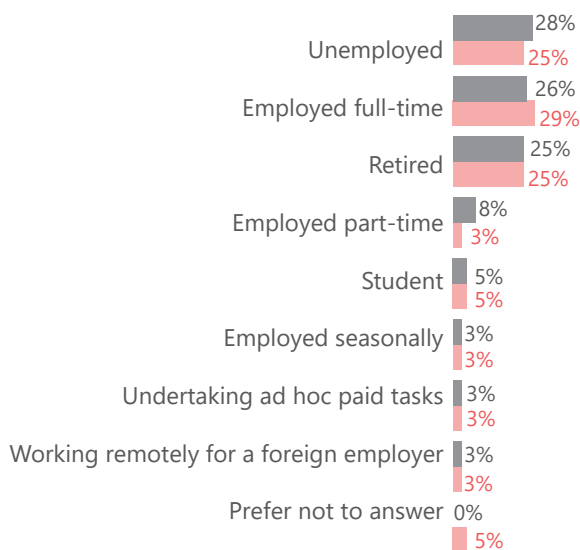
After TP provision, all respondents stated that TP proof was the most often required document for enrolment. Other required documents included child's medical records (8 out of 13 after TP compared to 1 out of 10 before TP) and proof of prior studies (4 out of 13 before TP compared to none before TP) for school enrolment.

Education access facilitation due to TP, according to the respondents (n=30)¹³



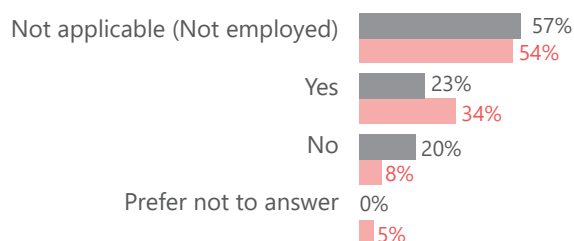
ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

Employment status of the household members (n=65)^{14,15}



The law on TP repealed the previous decisions on employment, which 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 status¹⁶.

Household members holding an employment contract (n=65)^{14,15}

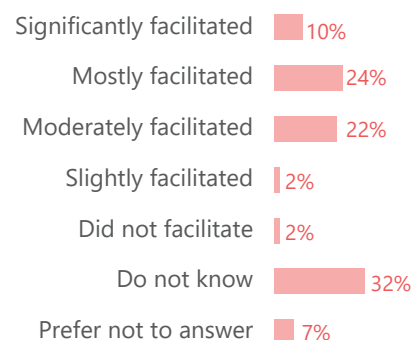


Before TP provision about 23% of refugee household members surveyed in Balti (15 out of 28 of those employed) reported to have had an official employment contract. After obtaining TP, slightly more household members (22 out of 27 employed) reportedly had employment contracts, while some respondents chose not to answer.

The disparity between unemployed or employed Ukrainian refugee household members, before and after obtaining TP, does not appear significant. After the introduction of TP the share of full-time employed persons increased slightly from 26% to 29%, while the proportion of the household members employed part-time decreased from 8% to 3%.

According to the respondents, 79% of household members did not alter their employment status after receiving TP, while only 17% made changes. 6% of the household members were planning to change their employment status due to having obtained TP. Out of those, 2 were looking for a part-time job in Moldova, 1 for a full-time job, and 1 sought to be self-employed.

Employment access facilitation due to TP, according to the respondents¹⁵

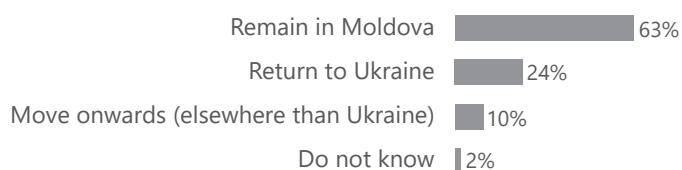


More than half of the respondents (58%) reported that TP has facilitated the employment access to some degree. They mentioned, e.g., that having the TP proof entitles them the right to be formally employed. About a third (32%) of the respondents were not sure whether TP has indeed facilitated refugee access to employment, while 2% stated that it did not.

MOVEMENT INTENTIONS

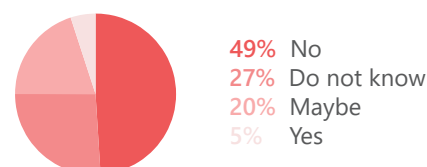
TP status grants the right to remain at the territory of Moldova until March 1st, 2024. However, the TP status expires if its beneficiary spends over 45 days abroad (in total). Refugees are then allowed to reapply for TP¹⁷.

Households' movement intentions before having obtained TP¹⁵



Before having received TP, most of the households (63%) planned to stay in Moldova, while 24% planned to return to Ukraine. About a quarter (27%) of the households reported having changed their movement plans after receiving TP, and over 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.

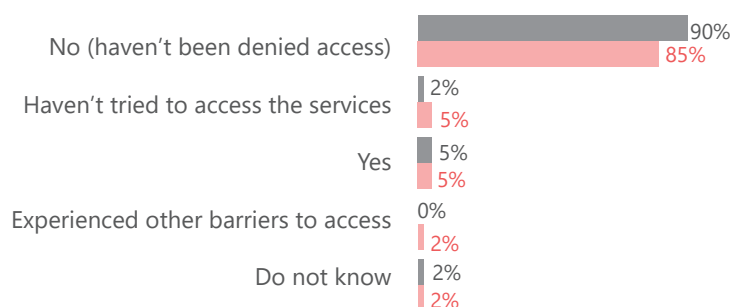
Households anticipating leaving Moldova for over 45 days¹⁵



Almost half of the respondents (49%) did not anticipate leaving Moldova for more than 45 days in total in the upcoming 6 months. Another 27% did not know, and 20% hesitated, while 5% anticipated leaving Moldova for over 45 days. Over half of those who considered such possibility declared that they would reapply for TP upon their return.

PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT

Households who were denied access to basic services on potentially discriminatory grounds^{18,19}

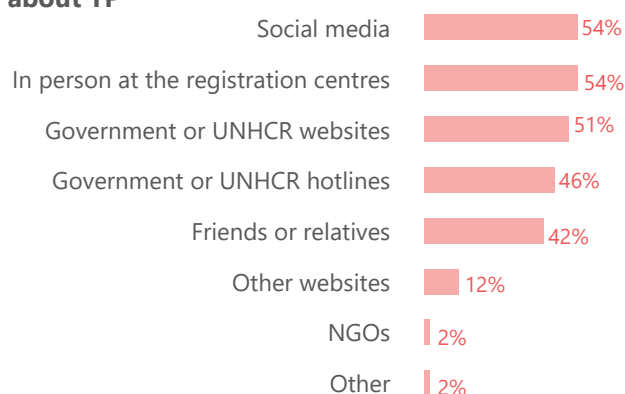


Most households were reportedly not denied access to any basic services on discriminatory grounds. Among the 2 households who reported access denial before receiving TP, 1 was denied access to employment, and 1 to healthcare services.

Similarly, after receiving TP, 2 households were denied access to basic services on perceived discriminatory grounds: 1 to employment and 1 to healthcare services.

INFORMATION ACCESS

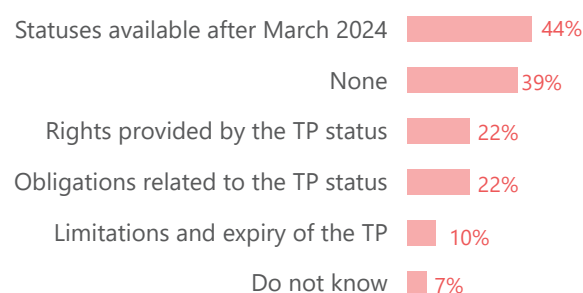
Sources used by the households to access information about TP²⁰



Internet sources and accessing information in person at the registration centres constituted crucial information sources for most households.

More than half of respondents in Balti were fully satisfied with access to information concerning TP (61%). Other respondents declared they were mostly (32%) or rather (7%) satisfied. Over half of those noted the lack of complete or clear information on TP, while some reported the lack of timely updates.

Additional information needed by the households²⁰



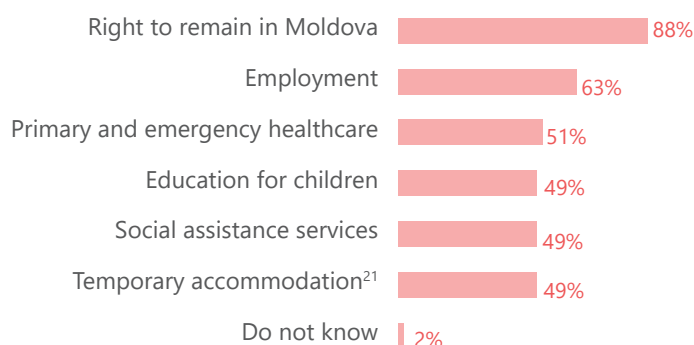
Sources preferred by the households to access additional information about TP

54% of respondents in Balti needed additional information, mostly regarding legal statuses available after March 2024, when TP is set to expire.

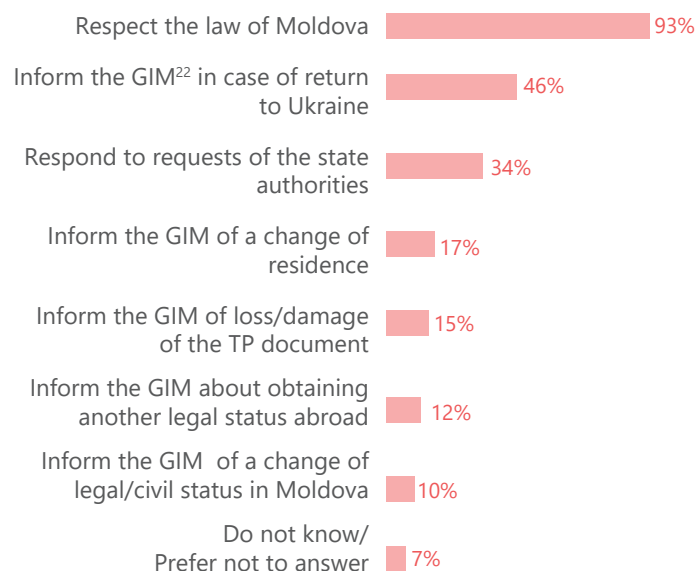
Out of 25 respondents who needed additional information on TP, 16 reported social media as their preferred source. The other preferred to obtain information in person (reported by 11 respondents), or via SMS (10), Internet (8), hotline or phone call (7), leaflets or booklets (6), billboards or posters (4), and TV or radio (4).

To assess the respondents' level of awareness of the TP, they were asked to enlist TP-related rights and obligations. Almost all respondents in Balti noted at least one right and obligation determined by TP. Meanwhile, the majority of key informants indicated that the level of awareness among the refugees was sufficient or high.

Rights guaranteed by TP, as recognized by the respondents²⁰



Responsibilities of TP beneficiaries according to the respondents²⁰



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%.

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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 31 households who attempted to access healthcare services after having obtained TP.
9. Because of rounding up, the percentages might not add up to 100%.

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10. Out of 30 households with children (for the situation before receiving TP) and out of 29 households with children, where children had obtained TP (for the situation after receiving TP).
11. 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.
12. Out of 13 households that attempted to enrol their children into Moldovan public schools after having obtained TP.
13. Out of the 30 households with children.

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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.

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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).