

Temporary Protection Assessment Chisinau, Moldova

December, 2023

KEY MESSAGES

- In Chisinau, less than half of respondents noted that Temporary Protection (TP) significantly or mostly eased access to healthcare. While the documents required for access were reportedly unified, other barriers persisted.
- Half of respondents found that TP significantly or mostly facilitated access to education. A slightly higher share of Ukrainian children were enrolled into Moldovan schools as full-time students following TP provision.
- Over a half of respondents indicated that TP significantly or mostly eased access to employment, with a decreased reported share of unemployment and a slightly higher rate of employed refugees obtaining official contracts.
- 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.

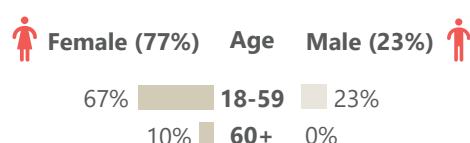
Guide to read the graphs in this factsheet:

- 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 39.

ASSESSMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

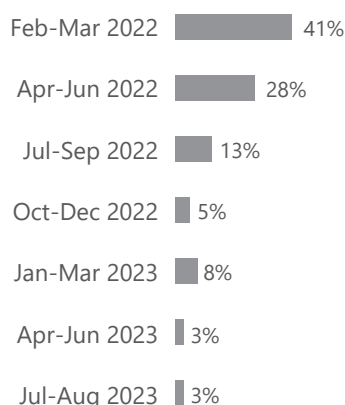
Respondents' demographics⁵



Average household size: 2.7

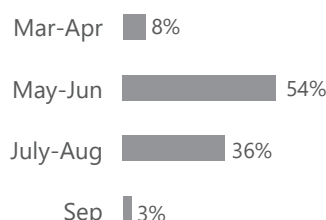
The majority of respondents in Chisinau were women aged between 18-59 (67%). The average household was composed of about 3 individuals, including 1 school-aged child. Most refugees interviewed in Chisinau arrived to Moldova between February and September 2022 (82%).

Respondents' date of arrival in Moldova⁵



TP REGISTRATION

Date of having been granted TP (respondents)⁵



Most of respondents applied for TP between May and August 2023 (87%). Subsequently, the majority of the respondents were granted their TP documents between May and August (90%). Almost all (94%) of the household members of interviewed refugees had received TP. All of the respondents and most of their household members had received a TP proof (5% of respondents declared that only some of their household members received a TP proof).

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.

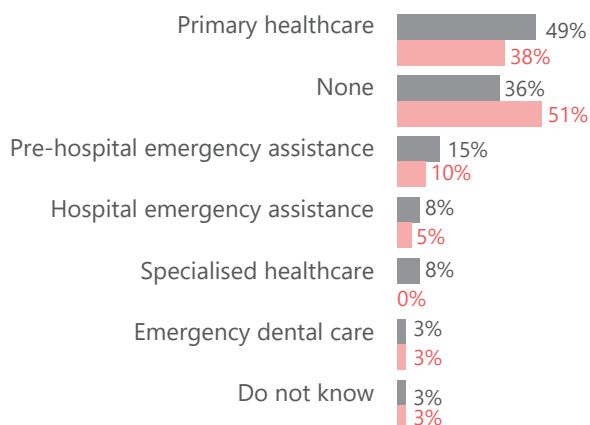
The quantitative component relied on a household survey with the refugees registered for TP, capturing their experiences regarding changes in access to healthcare, education, and employment, as well as their protection-related environment, movement intentions, and access to information.

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 Chisinau, 39 household surveys and 18 KIIs were conducted.

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Healthcare services accessed by the refugee households⁶



After receiving TP, fewer respondents reported accessing healthcare services compared to before obtaining TP (49% versus 38%). This result may be influenced by several factors, including the assessment's timeline. 5 respondents declared that their frequency of accessing healthcare services increased after obtaining TP, 4 of them adding that this was due to obtaining TP. After TP provision, primary healthcare remained the most commonly accessed service. Among those who attempted to access healthcare before receiving TP, one respondent did not succeed. After receiving TP, all those who tried to access healthcare services succeeded to do so.

Reported barriers to healthcare access

Before receiving TP, almost half of the respondents who attempted to access healthcare services (11 out of 26) reported that they did not encounter any barriers in accessing healthcare. However, others recalled barriers such as long waiting time for the appointment (7 out of 26), unavailable medicines or treatment (5 out of 26), being unable to register with a family doctor (4 out of 26), no adequately trained or insufficient staff (3 out of 26), unaffordable consultations, treatments, or medicines (3 out of 26), and language barrier or issues with communication (2 out of 26).

No. of households facing barriers to healthcare access after TP provision ⁸	
None	11
Long waiting time	6
Could not register with a family doctor	3
Unavailable specific medicines or treatment	2
No adequately trained or insufficient staff	1
Lack of documents	1
Lack of female staff at the facility	1

The introduction of TP has slightly reduced the barriers to refugee healthcare access. Among 19 respondents who sought healthcare after obtaining TP, 11 did not notice any barriers. Key informants further indicated improved access, noting a broader range of services available free of charge. However, long waiting time for appointment remained a commonly cited barrier, along with challenges when registering with a family doctor.

Reported gaps in refugee healthcare access

84%

of Ukrainian refugees interviewed in Chisinau declared that there were no gaps in refugee healthcare access⁹.

Approximately 5% of the refugees interviewed in Chisinau indicated a lack of access to medicines. Additionally, 3% noted lack of access to specialist doctors, while another 3% reported a lack of access to prophylactic dental care. About 8% of respondents did not know whether there were any outstanding gaps to refugee healthcare access.

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

Before receiving TP, 15 out of 26 respondents (who attempted to access healthcare), and after receiving TP, 8 out of 19 respondents, indicated that they never had to pay for accessing healthcare services. Both before and after receiving TP, 9 respondents (out of 26 and out of 19 respectively) reported that they sometimes had to pay. Furthermore, 2 respondents, both before and after receiving TP, consistently mentioned that they always had to pay for accessing healthcare services in Chisinau.

Reported documents required to access healthcare services

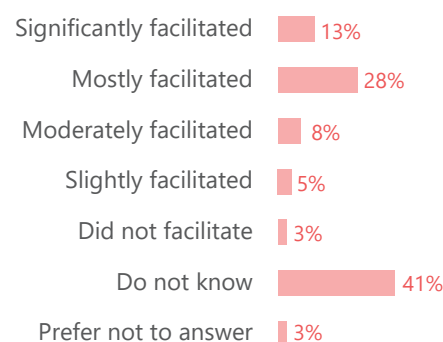
Documents required to access healthcare services after TP provision, per respondents' mentions⁸

TP proof	17
National passport/ID	2
State identification number (IDNP)	2
None	2

Prior to TP introduction, the national passport or ID (reported by all those who attempted to access healthcare services), IDNP (reported by 11 out of 26), and birth certificate (3 out of 26) were reportedly the most frequently required documents for accessing healthcare services, while 1 respondent declared that they had to present a proof of their legal status in Moldova.

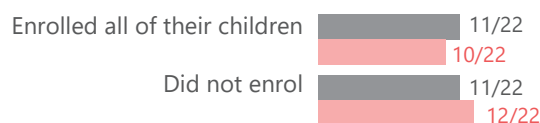
As TP beneficiaries, respondents stated that TP proof was the most commonly, and usually the only document required to access healthcare services in Chisinau (reported by 17 out of 19).

Healthcare access facilitation due to TP, according to the respondents¹⁰



ACCESS TO EDUCATION

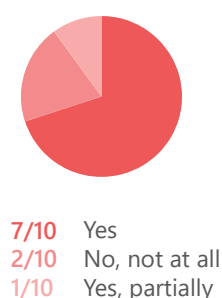
Households that enrolled their children in Moldovan schools¹¹



Half of the 22 households with children surveyed in Chisinau (all of whom had obtained TP), attempted to enrol their children in Moldovan public schools before having received TP and 1 less after obtaining it. All of those who attempted to enrol their children have succeeded, both before and after having obtained TP.

Before TP provision, on average 1 child per household in Chisinau was registered as an auditor. Children were less frequently enrolled as full-time students (average per household: 0.36). After receiving TP, the average of children registered as full-time students increased (0.9), however the average of children with auditor status remained significant (0.7).

Refugees who enrolled their children in schools because of obtaining TP¹²



The majority (8 out of 10) 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 declared that after introduction of TP the demand for education services in Chisinau has increased, although some assessed that the increase was not necessarily caused by the TP itself.

Reported barriers to education access

Before receiving TP, 5 out of 11 respondents who attempted to enrol their children in schools in Chisinau stated that they did not encounter any obstacles in access to education.

Nevertheless, some faced the language barrier (4 out of 11), lack of available spaces in school (3 out of 11), insufficient information about enrolment procedure (2 out of 11), lack of children's documentation (1 out of 11), long distance to school (1 out of 11), and financial issues (1 out of 11).

Acquiring TP status has not resolved the barriers experienced before the TP period. The lack of available places in schools and lack of knowledge of Romanian (the teaching language in most Moldovan schools), continued to be the most often reported barrier to access to education after the provision of TP. Similarly, the key informants frequently highlighted language issues as one of the remaining barriers to education.

Overall, 65% of households with children noticed some degree of enrolment facilitation due to TP provision, while 36% could not tell whether TP has facilitated education access.

No. of households facing barriers to education after TP provision ¹²	
None	6
Language barrier	3
Lack of available spaces in schools	3
Insufficient information about enrolment procedure	1
Long distance to school	1
Financial issues	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)¹³.

Reported payment for school enrolment

6 respondents (out of 11 who attempted to enrol their children) before receiving TP status, and 7 out of 10 after obtaining TP reported that they never paid for school enrolment.

Some respondents stated that they always (1 out of 11) or sometimes (4 out of 11) had to pay for school enrolment before having obtained TP. It appears that TP introduction had a limited effect on this issue in Chisinau. After receiving TP, 1 respondent (out of 10) claimed that they always had to pay, while 2 reported that they sometimes had to pay.

Reported documents required to enrol children in schools

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

Proof of prior studies	8
TP proof	7
Child's medical records	7
Parent's passport/ID	4
Child's passport/ID	4
Birth certificate	1
None	1

Before TP provision, parent's passport or ID was reportedly the most frequently required document for school enrolment (9 out of 11). Additionally, most respondents (8 out of 11) indicated that proof of prior studies was a commonly required document, followed by the child's medical records (6 out of 10), and child's passport/ID (6 out of 10). In some instances, other documents were required, including the proof of residence, birth certificate, legal status or IDNP.

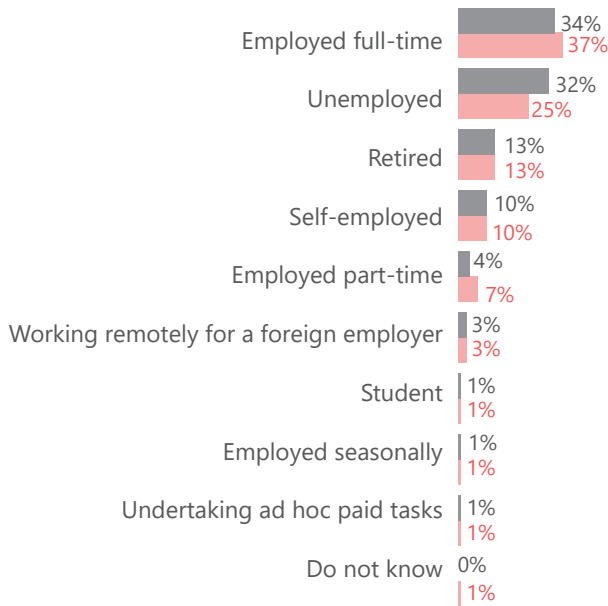
After TP provision, 7 out of 10 of respondents stated that the TP proof was required for school enrolment. Otherwise, no substantial changes were identified regarding the required documents.

Education access facilitation due to TP, according to the respondents¹¹



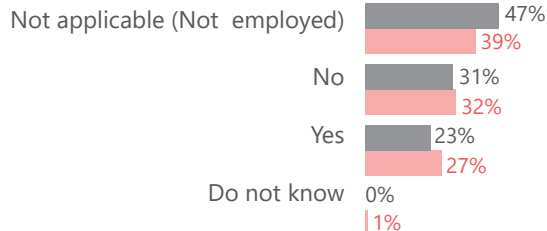
ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

Employment status of the household members (n=71)^{14,15}



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 status¹⁶.

Household members holding an employment contract (n=71)^{14,15}



Before TP provision about 23% of Ukrainian refugees surveyed in Chisinau (42% of those employed) reported to have had an official employment contract. After obtaining TP, 27% of the household members reportedly had employment contracts (45% of those employed).

In Chisinau, 54% of interviewed household members had some form of employment before acquiring TP, with 34% employed on a full-time basis. Subsequent to TP provision, the unemployment rate saw a 7 percentage points decrease, while a slight increase in reported full-time and part-time employment was observed. Remarkably, Chisinau exhibited a relatively high rate of self-employment, standing at 10% both before and after the provision of TP.

According to the respondents, 4 household members (6%) changed their employment status after obtaining TP, with 3 of them attributing the change to obtaining TP. Additionally, 6% of household members expressed intentions to change their employment status due to acquiring TP, all of whom were actively seeking full-time employment in Moldova.

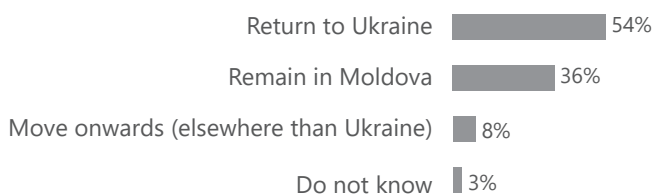
Employment access facilitation due to TP, according to the respondents¹⁵



Most respondents (67%) stated that TP status facilitated the employment access to some degree. Some mentioned, e.g., that there are no further obstacles to being formally employed. By contrast, about a quarter of the respondents were not sure whether TP has facilitated refugee access to employment.

MOVEMENT INTENTIONS

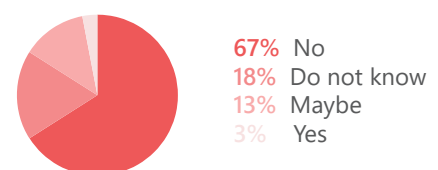
Households' movement intentions before having obtained TP¹⁵



Before receiving TP, approximately half of the households (54%) expressed a desire to return to Ukraine. After TP provision, 5 households (13%) altered their movement plans, with 3 attributing their decision to obtaining TP. Among those influenced by TP, 2 planned to stay in Moldova, while 1 intended to continue their journey.

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.

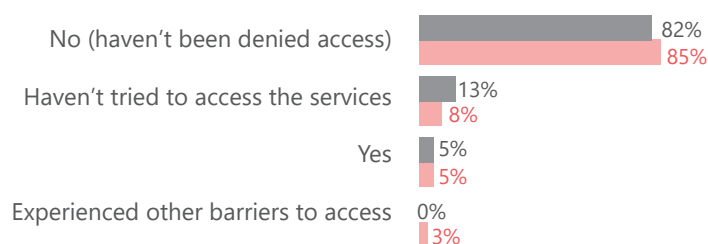
Households anticipating leaving Moldova for over 45 days¹⁵



A third of the households who anticipated or considered leaving Moldova for over 45 days declared that they would reapply for TP upon their return, while half of them were not sure.

PROTECTION ENVIRONMENT

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

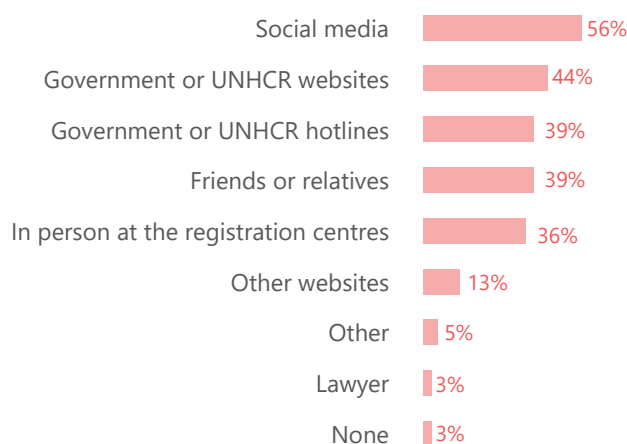


The majority of surveyed households were not denied access to any basic services on discriminatory grounds. 2 households reportedly faced denial of access to basic services before TP, including healthcare, employment, accommodation, and legal aid.

Likewise, after receiving TP, two households reported denial of access to basic services, specifically in education, employment, and accommodation.

INFORMATION ACCESS

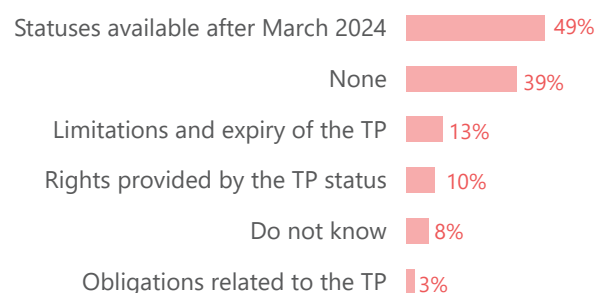
Sources used by the households to access information about TP²⁰



Online sources constituted crucial information sources for most households, as 56% accessed information on TP via social media and 44% via government or UNHCR websites.

Almost all of respondents in Chisinau were fully satisfied with access to information concerning TP (77%). Other respondents, who declared being rather (5%) or mostly (18%) satisfied noted the issues of language barrier and lack of sufficient information on TP eligibility criteria.

Additional information needed by the households²⁰



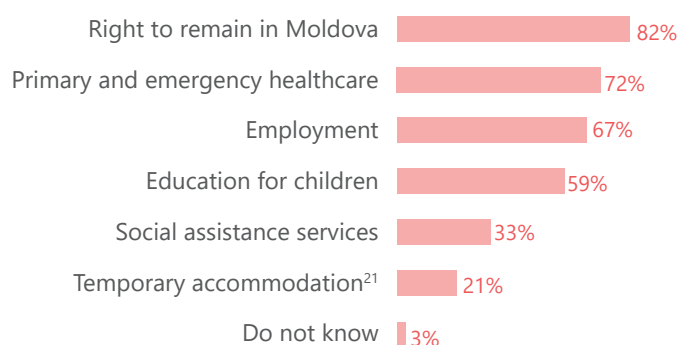
Sources preferred by the households to access additional information about TP

About a half (54%) of respondents needed additional information, mostly concerning legal statuses available after March 2024.

Among the 24 respondents who required additional information, 15 identified social media as their preferred source of information. The other preferred information sources cited were websites/Internet (indicated by 14 respondents), SMS (24), hotline or phone call (8), in-person information (4), leaflets or booklets (2), billboards or posters (2), and TV or radio (2).

To assess the respondents' level of awareness of the TP, they were asked to enlist TP-related rights and obligations. Almost all respondents in Chisinau were able to identify at least one right and obligation determined by TP. Meanwhile, the majority of key informants in Chisinau claimed 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 19 households who attempted to access healthcare services after having obtained TP.
9. Out of 38 respondents.
10. Because of rounding up, the percentages might not add up to 100%.

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11. Out of 22 households with children.
12. Out of 10 households that attempted to enrol their children into Moldovan public schools after having obtained TP.
13. 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.

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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).