

Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) of UNHCR's Cash Assistance in Romania - Round 2

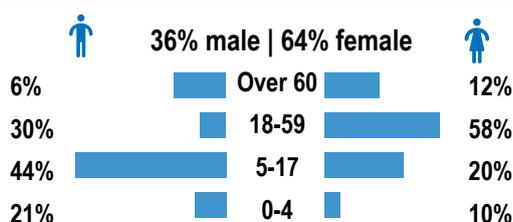
Introduction and methodology

As of 11 November 2022, a total of 7,824,440 people have arrived from Ukraine into neighbouring countries.¹ According to the latest figures, 2,203,910 people have crossed into Romania from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine since 24 February, with around 87,853 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) and in coordination with the Government of Romania.³ As of 22 November 2022, around 23,721 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 143 refugees, randomly selected from UNHCR beneficiary list, between the 26th of October and the 1st of November 2022. The sample is indicative of the beneficiary refugee population from Ukraine living in the country at the time of data collection at a 95% confidence level with a 7% margin of error. The sample included a 90% 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: 1,548 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.
- Refugees reported that the cash helped with their needs, with 67% 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 for basic needs, such as food (97%), clothes/shoes (36%), health expenses (29%) and hygiene items (22%).⁶ Most households (87%) reported they spent all the cash assistance at the time of data collection, while less than one quarter (11%) had spent more than half of the cash assistance.
- A large majority of households (80%) 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 (92%) 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 59% of households.⁷
- Only 5 households reported feeling physically unsafe or at risk of harm during the last cash assistance distribution. Out of those, 4 households reported feeling unsafe when going to enroll or get the card, while one household did not specify a reason for feeling unsafe.
- Majority of the interviewed households (91%) indicated that they intended to stay in their current location in the next three months following data collection.⁸
- About three in ten households (33%) reported that at least one member is currently working.

¹ UNHCR, Operational Data Portal – Ukraine Refugee Situation.

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

³ UNHCR, Cash assistance programme for refugees in Romania, 24 August.

⁴ 1 RON = 0.203 USD, exchange rate consulted on the 24 August in <https://www.xe.com/>.

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

⁶ Multiple answers could be selected.

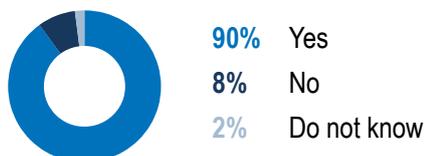
⁷ It should be noted that the link between the cash assistance and increase in prices in the community is weak at the moment of data collection due to increase in price in utilities. As such, interpretation of this specific findings should be treated with utmost caution.

⁸ Of the total of 171 interviews, 28 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.

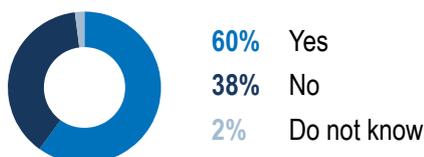
PDM of UNHCR's Cash Assistance in Moldova, May 2022

Reception of Cash Assistance

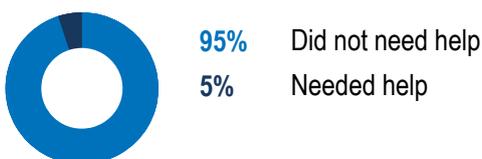
Proportion of households reporting having received the amount of cash assistance they were expecting:



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

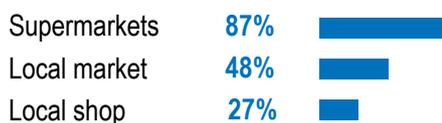


Proportion of households reporting they needed help to withdraw or spend the cash assistance:



Among the **5%** (7) of households that reported they needed help to withdraw or spend the cash assistance, the most frequently reported reasons were that the place of withdrawal of cash was not accessible (2) and that the instructions were written in a language which was not understood (2). The households most commonly reported having received help from an acquaintance (3). 0 households reported having to pay for this help.

Top 3 most frequently reported places where households went to spend the cash assistance:⁶



98% 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.

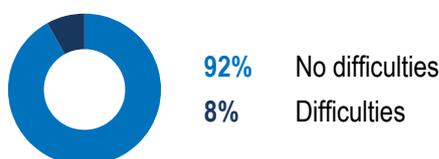
0 households reported they had to pay additional money or do favours to withdraw or spend the cash.

Difficulties Faced by Beneficiaries

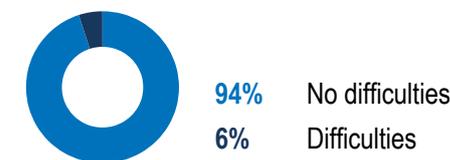
5 households reported feeling unsafe or at risk of harm in any of the stages related to cash assistance reception (e.g. when going to enroll or get the card, when going to spend or withdraw the money, for the fact of keeping the money at home, or any other difficulties related to the cash assistance).

20 households reported 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:⁹



Proportion of households reporting having faced difficulties in withdrawing the money because of poor service at the bank/post office etc.



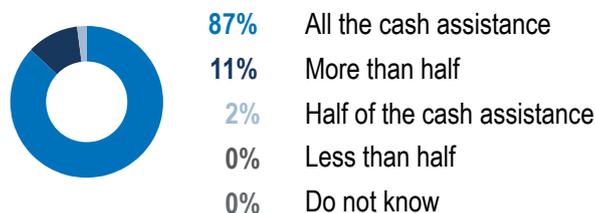
4 households reported having faced difficulties in spending the cash because market, shop trader or wholesaler refused to serve them.

⁹ The reported delays were mentioned in reference with the second and the third rounds of payment. This indicator can only be considered as indicative.

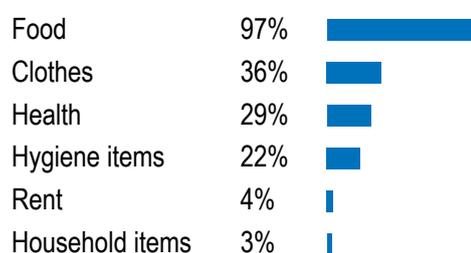
PDM of UNHCR's Cash Assistance in Moldova, May 2022

Cash Assistance Expenditure

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



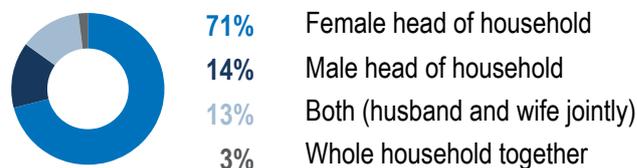
Proportion of households by most frequently reported items and services where they spent cash assistance on:⁷



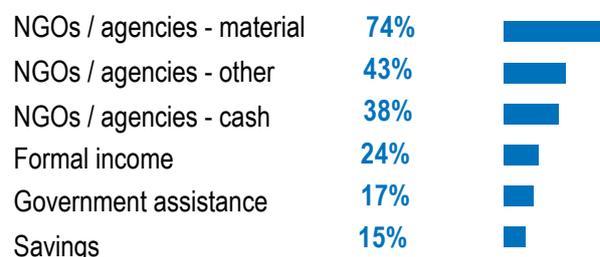
Proportion of households by items and services where they reportedly spent their cash assistance on, by order of importance:

Items / services	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice	4th choice
Food	88%	13%	5%	0%
Health costs	8%	21%	18%	33%
Clothes/shoes	4%	38%	24%	17%
Rent	1%	4%	3%	0%
Hygiene items	0%	18%	34%	17%
Transport	0%	2%	3%	0%
Utilities	0%	2%	0%	0%
Water	0%	1%	0%	17%
Household items	0%	0%	8%	0%
Entertainment	0%	0%	3%	17%
Legal assistance	0%	0%	3%	0%

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

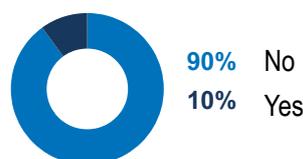


Top 6 most frequently reported sources of income or support other than UNHCR cash assistance in the last 30 days prior to data collection:⁶



All respondents reported that they have at least one other source of income or support, with 17% of respondents reporting government programs as source of income.

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



Among the 10% of households that reportedly saved a part of the cash assistance, 40% reported that they saved it in their own account.

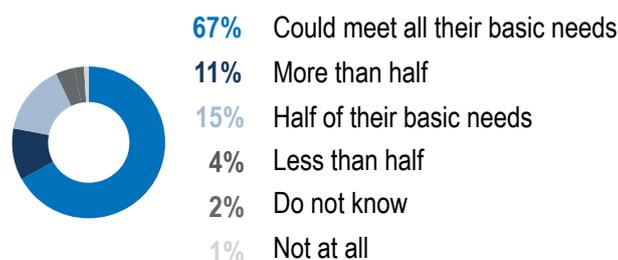
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Impact of Cash Assistance on Sense of Security

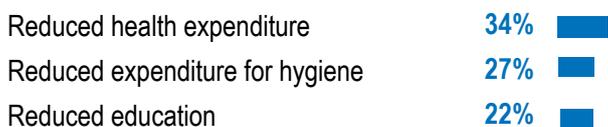
Almost all households reported that the cash assistance had a significant or moderate effect on their situation in relation to the following:

	Significantly	Moderately	Slightly	No effect
Improved their living conditions	59%	35%	6%	0%
Reduced financial burden	62%	33%	5%	0%
Reduced feelings of stress	59%	34%	6%	1%

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



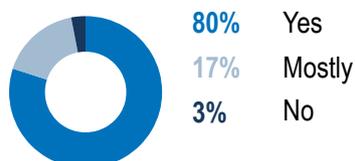
Top 3 most frequently reported livelihood coping strategies, adopted by households in the 30 days before data collection:



Most frequent livelihood coping strategy used in the 7 days before data collection was borrowing food or relying on help from a friend or relative (20%) being mostly used for the entire period within the 7 day time frame.

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:



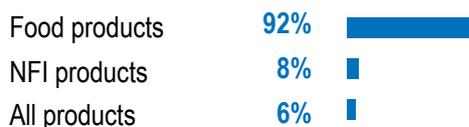
28 households reported they were no able to find specific items or services: specific medication (12), dentist (1), medical services (1), specific medical items (1), and specific food (13).

The majority of households (92%) reported that quality of needed items and/or services available in the market was in line with the households' expectations.

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



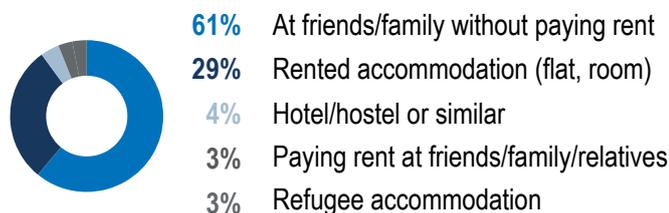
Top 4 most reported items/services, among households that noticed increase of prices in the 30 days prior to data collection:⁶



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

Housing Situation, Movement Intentions and Employment

Proportion of households by reported housing situation:

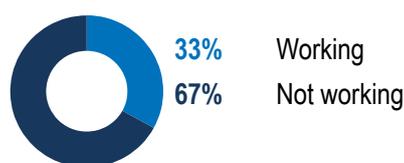


Only 5%(7) of households reported planning to change housing situation. The top three reported reasons were: looking for housing for which governmental aid is available; wanting an improvement of living conditions; moving to another place; they are not feeling safe (1), they cannot afford the rent (1), followed by that they are being evicted (1).

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

Majority of households (91%) want to remain in present location, whilst 4% want to return to Ukraine(in their oblast of origin); another 4% do not know and are waiting to make a decision, while 1% want to move inside Romania. The main condition to return is total cessation of conflict (59%).

Proportion of households where a member is currently working:



Among the 67%(n=96) of households not working, some have the intention to work (57%), others have no intention to work (41%), while the rest don't know what decision are going to take (2%).

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

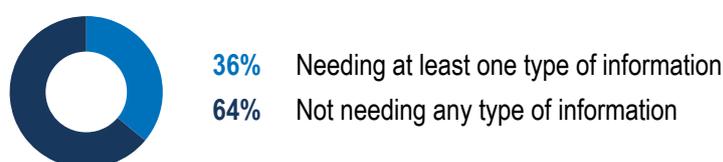


Complaints and Communication

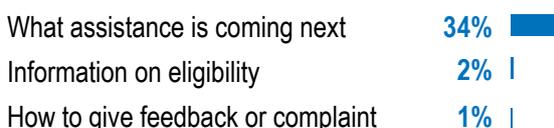
Top 3 most frequently reported channels where households heard about UNHCR cash assistance:⁶



Proportion of households that reported needing one or more types of information about cash assistance:⁷



Top 3 most frequently reported types of information needed, among the 34% of households that requested at least one of them:



Only 22% of households reported knowing one or more ways to report complaints and feedback on the cash assistance from UNHCR, while more than half (66%) did not know how to.

Main ways used to report complaints and feedback, among the 22% of households that reported knowing at least one way:



Proportion of households by reported preferred modality for future cash assistance:⁶

