MOLDOVA: GENDER TASK FORCE MEETING

Meeting Details	
Date	25 August 2023
Time	11:00 – 12:30
Venue	Zoom
Chair/ co-chair	Dominika Stojanoska (UN Women), Nina Lozinschi (Platform for Gender Equality)

Agenda

- 11.00 - 11.10: Update from Protection Working Group on Temporary Protection
- 11.10 – 11.20: Main priorities in gender-sensitive refugee response for the second half of 2023 – voice of WROs and refugee women leaders
- 11.20 – 11.50: Update on RAC consolidation
- 11.50 – 12.20: Presentation of the Mapping of CSO in refugee response
- 12.20 – 12.30: AOB

Participants

#	Name	Organization	Function
1	Andriana Zaslavet	Platform for Gender Equality/RCTV Memoria	
2	Evghenia Hiora	UN Women	Gender in Humanitarian Action Coordination Officer
3	Daniela David-Cimpoies	UN Women	Project Manager
4	Sabine Ebner	UN Women	Programme Analyst
5	Lovisa Salomonsson	UN Women	Communications & WPS Junior Officer
6	Ala Svet	UN Women	Programme Officer
7	Nataliia Borshchevska	UN Women	Local Coordinator Ungheni

8	Oksana Khynkul	UN Women	Local Coordinator Cahul
9	Olga Dymova	UN Women	Local Coordinator Balti
10	Anatolii Oprea	UNICEF	Consultant Gender Responsive Programming and Monitoring
11	Dina Zamfirova	UNHCR	Protection Associate
12	Valentina Bordian	UNICEF	
13	Petru Lupu	UNHCR	
14	Alberto Tonon	UNHCR / OHCHR	
15	Andrea Cuisana	UNCHR	
16	Andrei Esanu	UNPRPD	
17	Iryna Rayevska		
18	Ludmila Lachim	Motivatie	
19	Valentina Roporet	Motivatie	
20	Daniela Palii		
21	Daniele Pedretti	HelpAge	Programme Coordinator
22	Fede Bagolin	Weworld	
23	Aurelia Mamolea	Magenta Consulting	
24	Andrei Hincu	CARE & SERA Romania	Program Coordinator Moldova
25	Olga Florynska		
26	Valeria Danilov	Danish Refugee Council	
27	Valentina Bodrug-Lungu	Gender-Centru	President
28	Ines Arnautovic	Danish Refugee Council	
29	Ina Cepoi		
30	Natalia Sclifos		
31	Ilaria Guidoni	INTERSOS	
32	Veronica Lupu	Asociația Femeia pentru Societatea Contemporana (AFSC)	
33	Catinca Mardarovici	Women Political Club 50/50	

Summary of discussions and agreements/ action items

Agenda/Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
Opening remarks • **Andriana Zaslavet (Platform for Gender Equality)** welcomed participants and introduced the agenda of the meeting.	
Update from Protection Working Group on Temporary Protection (TP) • **Dina Zamfirova (UNHCR)** informed that the General Inspectorate for Migration (IGM) shares weekly updates on the statistics for Temporary Protection (TP), and the latest was shared on August 21. According to the latest update, 19,339 were registered for TP, 13,258 identity documents were issued out of which 4,373 were documents issued to minors. IGM has also shared a table on the beneficiaries disaggregated by gender, age and residence which is shared in the chat. As of August 21, 2,622 people have applied for asylum, including 2,360 people from Ukraine. 1,165 people are registered in the asylum system: 199 refugees, 319 beneficiaries of humanitarian protection and 636 asylum seekers. 6,980 Ukrainians are documented with valid identity documents: 3,401 with residence permits and 3,579 with TP. • **Evghenia Hiora (UN Women)** informed that IGM has developed disaggregated statistics on gender for TP and said it would be good for this data to be analyzed and compared with the general data on refugees in Moldova, and the data from the survey on access to TP to see if there are any barriers to TP based on gender.	• Analyze disaggregated data on TP registration

Main priorities in gender-sensitive refugee response for the second half of 2023 – voice of WROs and refugee women leaders
• **Olga Dymova (UN Women Refugee Local Coordinator Balti)** informed that several RACs in Balti either do not have heating or will close before the winter due to lack of funding or utilities debt. She also shared that:
  • As many refugees cannot afford housing, they would be prepared to pay for utilities in RACs if this would keep the RACs open. The status of which RACs remain open is very uncertain.
  • Many refugees need blankets, bed sheets, pillows for the winter period.
  • Compensation for utilities and renting have been appreciated.
  • There is a shortage of vacancies, and it is even more difficult for refugees with disabilities to get jobs.
  • Problem with children getting enrolled into first grade since classes are full. Other grades are easier, but still difficult.
  • Problem with internet connection, as internet agreements need to be signed by landlords and many landlords are unwilling to do so out of fear that refugees will leave at any moment, and the landlords are left with open bills. This makes it difficult for children to study online.
  • Small children have issues with getting enrolled in kindergarten, as there are no vacant positions.
  • Still issues with landlords to receive the rental agreement as a proof of living.
  • Issues with healthcare, TP enables refugees to reach out to family doctors, but specialist doctors and
	• Share MoM with the respective sectors for information and follow-up

medicine need payment. • Food vouchers are helpful. • Working aged women have access to many training courses which helps them get a job and receive some income. • **Oksana Khynkul (UN Women Refugee Local Coordinator Cahul)** shared that the situation is similar to Balti, including the following: • Mothers with several children have issues in renting apartments. Landlord are unwilling to rent. • Roma refugees have issues with finding apartments to rent and there have been instances where they had to engage local authorities to move closer to Chisinau. • Many RACs have closed, and there is only one RAC left in Cahul which can accommodate 25 people. • Refugees who arrived later and who do not live in RACs have issues with proof of residence to get TP. Local population do not understand that the procedures needed for TP are not a threat to them. • Refugees who lived in RACs had their minimum needs met, but when they have had to move to apartments, they have the issues that apartments are rented out half empty without basics such as furniture and kitchen items, and they do not have the money to buy them. • Mothers with infants, disabled people and other vulnerable groups are unable to get jobs and it is unclear how they could sustain themselves once the RACs are closed. • There are rumors that if you have already lived in a RAC, you will not be able to move to another, and if this is true it will be very hard for many refugees. • There is an increased flow of refugees from Odessa, and it is very difficult for them to find apartments both due to lack of available apartments and high rents. • There are also issues for people living with disabilities accessing special medical equipment they need due to costs, for mothers to afford and medications for their babies, specialized food and diapers. • Some refugees who have jobs are not given the salary that they have been promised. Some who faced this issue said when raising this at their employers, they are told to accept what they get or otherwise they do not get anything. • Support with utilities for winter period and cash for rent for persons from the closing RACS are highly needed. • **Dina Zamfirova (UNHCR)** shared the Frequently Asked Questions for Temporary Protection, with a section on the documents needed for TP. One of the rental contracts are the free of charge utilization, so the landlord doesn't have to pay taxes. • **Oksana** mentioned that they are trying to explain this to people and even use the help of lawyers. • **Evghenia Hiora (UN Women)** asked how widely spread the problem is with women who are unable to find apartments because they have children, or if it is an individual problem. • **Oksana** explained that it is not an individual problem but a recurring problem. Landlords often prefer	

women with only one child. • **Olga Dymova** shared that this is an issue in Balti as well, as landlords are afraid that the children will damage the apartments. Landlords also increase the rent if there are more children. • **Olga** also shared that there are issues for refugees who were born in Moldova and have Moldovan citizenships, where their children need temporary protection to be able to go to school. Since the mothers are Moldovan citizens, they cannot apply for TP. They then must unroll from the Ukrainian school and apply to Moldovan schools as citizens. This causes issues, such as them having to take exams in Romanian. • **Daniele Pedretti (HelpAge)** asked Olga and Oksana about the RACs closure, and whether it is true that many are closing but at least one is staying open; whether refugees get all the necessary information; if refugees rather want to stay or move to another RAC and city, for integration, cash for rent, etc. Daniele also asked if they know what the intensions are for the refugees living in the RACs closing, if they will try to move to another city, move back to Ukraine, or accept the cash for rent. • **Olga** answered that in Balti all RACs might be closed, and the people who have the financial means to rent do not want to move back to Ukraine or to another city. More vulnerable groups are making the decision to move back to Ukraine because there are no other options for them, as they do not have the money to rent. Many RACs are visited by people sharing information and providing assistance, and people are connected to the Ukrainian community and share information on various platforms. • **Oksana** said that the situation is the same in Cahul, but with one RAC staying open mainly for women with children or refugees with disabilities. People are well informed and receive information from different channels, both in RACs and people living in hosting communities, but also through Viber groups and social media. • **Veronica Lupu (AFSC)** shared that the organization is carrying out training for the territorial offices that are supposed to look into issues of refugees across the country. Specifically issues around violence against different categories of refugees, such as vulnerable refugees for whom the government is responsible to help and integrate into the Moldovan society. AFSC has carried out 16 trainings for the territorial commissions and came across a number of barriers. From discussions with over 400 beneficiaries, the obstacles addressed by Oksana and Olga are reflected. Issues identified are school enrollment, getting ready for winter, food security, and legal matters, and the association tries to see if anyone uses the vulnerabilities of the refugees for their benefit, such as increasing rent which we have seen. When TP is granted, there are certain obligations from the state to the TP holders. All stakeholders must be taught about this. What AFSC does is to identify issues, provide concrete solutions that others can take away. • **Catinca Mardarovici (Women's Political Club 50/50)** shared experience, that the refugees can be divided into two categories: the very well-informed and the ones who are outside of the services, who don't know where to access information. When we do awareness raising or provide legal support, we need to be	

perceptive to see that no one is left behind. We work in 4 districts and are planning to form an initiative group with refugees from RACs and private accommodation. Refugees like to be involved in the formulation of the response, for example having influence of the vouchers and it's a good experience. People who registered and are beneficiaries of TP are informed of their rights, but we also know that they have the same rights as the citizens of Moldova. The status is still in the limits within the housing system and health system. Our proposal is to establish these consultancy groups with refugees. Catinca also emphasized the need to assess as much as possible the situation on a family-to-family basis to give a more targeted response. • **Evghenia Hiora (UN Women)** asked Catinca to provide more details on the less informed group. • **Catinca Mardarovici (Women's Political Club 50/50)** explained that usually the least informed are people in the villages, rural areas, living with others such as families or acquaintances. Also, in rural areas it is difficult to distribute the information for the social workers. • **Veronica Lupu (AFSC)** said that social workers need to learn how to work with people based on needs and not on policies. Also, a lot of young people have crossed the border without a guardian or parent, and it is important to identify these people, so they receive the support and information they need. • **Andriana Zaslavet (Platform for Gender Equality)** said that there is a need to set up mobile teams with mediators to bring information to beneficiaries, such as Roma people as they have difficulties accessing and understanding the information. Often the lawyers and IGM talk in a legal language that is difficult to understand.	
Update on Refugee Accommodation Centre (RAC) consolidation • **Andrea Cuisana (UNHCR)** shared updates on the RAC consolidation strategy, which is led by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. The decision to close RACs is based on an assessment of the cost effectiveness of the RACs and the quality of the RACs. 20 RACs were identified as short term, meaning RACs that could be closed within this year. The RACs which are identified as being included in a long-term phase will remain open until 2024 for further analysis. Notification of closure is within a maximum of 2 months, but announcements can be also much shorter. Once the notification of closure is done, a multifunctional team provides counselling to the families residing in the RACs. The multifunctional team consists of (1) relocation case management partners who counsel the families from notification of closure until the last family leaves the RAC, (2) rental assistance partners to provide alternative accommodation solutions, and (3) mental health support partners to provide MPHSS services. The process is fully supportive of the families, and information material is being developed for the families in the RACs. All families will be supported from the notice of closure until leaving the RAC, done in coordination by the ministry, the Basic Needs Working Group and Protection Working Group with support of other specific working groups, such as the Roma task force.	

Presentation of the Mapping of CSO in refugee response
• **Aurelia Mamolea (Magenta Consulting)** presented the mapping of local civil society organizations (CSOs) supporting the refugees in Moldova, including women-led organizations (WLOs), Women's rights organizations (WROs), refugee-led organizations (RLOs), men-led organizations (MLOs), people with disabilities-led organizations (OPDs) and initiative groups (IGs) carried out to understand the landscape of service providers, and to identify existing capacities and opportunities to enhance and support their meaningful engagement and participation in the refugee response. The mapping has been conducted jointly by UN Women and UNHCR.
• The study found that in 2022:
  • The type of humanitarian assistance that CSOs provided varied, ranging from NFIs to protection services.
  • The CSOs targeted a wide range of refugee population groups including adult women, girls and boys, adult men, elderly, people living with disabilities, pregnant women, Roma, survivors of gender-based violence and LGBTQIA+ persons, among others. CSOs also assisted the most vulnerable members of the host community.
  • CSOs delivered services country-wide, but assistance in remote or rural areas was provided less frequently.
• In 2023, the study showed that:
  • More CSOs planned to provide assistance to a greater number of refugees and affected local population, with a slight decrease in outreach across regions. Assistance will shift from emergency provision to medium- to long-term assistance, addressing protection as well as social and economic inclusion.
  • Women, men, children, adolescents, and elderly will remain the focus of assistance, while marginalized and at-risk groups will be targeted to a greater extent compared to 2022.
  • Limited availability of services in remote areas of the country will have an impact on the accessibility of services and effectiveness of the refugee response, if not addressed.
  • Some CSOs expressed concerns about potential tensions between the refugee population and vulnerable host communities due to scarcity of resources and perceived favoritism of refugees.
  • Regarding funding, the study found that.
  • CSOS are facing challenges with funding, and humanitarian funding was often allocated to larger, more established organizations.
  • CSOs reported facing challenges obtaining information about funding opportunities and donors.
  • Donor support was not always aligned with the evolving needs of the affected people.
  • Institutional funding is important for survival, development, and expansion of women organization, specifically those focusing on gender issues.
	• Share the report with the members of the GTF once it is designed

• Most surveyed CSOs reported not having secured funds for the 2023 response, with WLOs and WROs reporting this more often than men-led organizations (MLOs).
• Women's organizations within the refugee response:
  • WROs and WLOs managed similar budgets and reached similar numbers of beneficiaries as MLOs, but worked with half the staff.
  • Women's organization had a different focus on beneficiaries, and more often targeted women, children and adolescents, older women and women with chronic diseases.
  • Women organizations played a more active role in adapting services to gender-based needs of refugees from Ukraine as opposed to other CSOs.
  • Lack of funding for operational costs and institutional development was reported to affect WROs and WLOs to a greater extend than MLOs.
  • In 2023, a higher percentage of women organizations reported a lack of funds for the refugee response than MLOs.
• Gender mainstreaming capacities of the CSOs
  • Many refugee response programs specifically targeted women, girls and boys, with less targeted attention paid to men, LGBTQIA+ persons, older persons, persons with chronic diseases and persons with disabilities. Further attention should be paid to inclusivity.
  • A significant proportion of CSOs lack technical skills in gender equality programming, and few use available mainstreaming tools.
  • Some 21% of CSOs reported mainstreaming gender in their programmes, out of which 74% reported collecting sex and disability disaggregated data (SADDD), 51% reported using this data to inform gender analysis and 49% reported using SADDD and gender indicators to inform project implementation and monitoring.
  • Roughly half of CSOs reported not using gender equality and gender mainstreaming tools, with WROs reported being more aware of the gender mainstreaming tools and able to integrate gender considerations in their programming as compared to MLOs.
  • Lack of SADDD, lack of research on gender and diversity, and lack of funding for gender responsive programs were raised as challenges by CSOs.
  • Lack of funding for operational costs, lack of skilled human resources, and lack of funding for institutional development were reported as key barriers to deliver gender and diversity-response humanitarian programs.
• **Aurelia** presented the recommendations of the report with the gender specific being:
  • Enable CSOs to respond to evolving needs of all refugees and members of the host communities, including underserved, vulnerable and marginalized groups.
  • Strengthened CSO's ability to collect and use sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data for analysis	

to identify and respond to specific needs of distinct groups in specific sectors. • Continue strengthening the inclusivity of humanitarian coordination mechanisms to facilitate greater participation, in particular of smaller CSOs. • Create more opportunities for meaningful participation and decision making of smaller and specialized CSOs in the refugee response by continuing organizing dedicated consultations with WROs, WLOs, RLOs, OPDs and LGBTQIA+ organizations; inviting CSO representatives to strategic discussions with the government, UN, INGOs and local authorities; including CSOs representatives in ongoing sector processes and involving CSOs in decision-making. • Continue building capacity of CSOs on collection and analysis of sec, age, and disability disaggregated data (SADDD). • Continue identifying and supporting methodologies, to help CSOs collect, manage, and analyze SADDD in a more efficient way. • Continue building capacity of CSOs on key technical areas, including gender-responsive and intersectional programming, SADDD, monitoring, evaluation and learning, gender, and intersectional analysis, and GBV prevention and response. • Continue building capacity of CSOs to support underserved groups, including with multiple layers of vulnerability. • **Evghenia Hiora (UN Women)** added that the report will be shared among the task force members once it is designed. The data that has been collected for the report has been transferred to two platforms for the use of humanitarian actors: Service Advisor by UNCHR where you can see the location and services that the CSOs offer, and an excel database that is available on UN Women website which can be used for information on organizations and includes names, contact details, geographical presence, type of services they offer and beneficiaries they work with.	
AOB • **Evghenia Hiora (UN Women)** presented two initiatives that are going to be implemented within the GTF: • Gender Accountability Framework – a monitoring framework on gender mainstreaming in the crisis response which will be developed by the Gender Task Force (GTF) together with the Refugee Coordination Forum. It will analyze the efforts made by the humanitarian organizations in the crisis response regarding gender mainstreaming and will highlight best practices, gaps and formulate recommendations to improve gender mainstreaming. It is planned for September and October. • For the RRP 2024 planning, the GTF will conduct consultations with women organizations and refugee women leaders. This is planned for late September and more information will be shared. • Tentative date for the next GTF meeting is the first week of October.	• Share information on GAF and RRP consultations with the GTF members

Material shared. • **IGM table on disaggregated data for TP applicants** • **FAQ on Temporary Protection** • **NGO Database as Google Spreadsheet through UN Women's website** • **UNHCR Service Advisor**	