

# BARRIERS & BRIDGES

COMMUNICATION AND  
INFORMATION EXCHANGE  
WITH UKRAINIAN  
REFUGEES IN ROMANIA



Internews



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JOURNALISM

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This paper was written by Mihaela Negru at the Centre for Independent Journalism in Romania in collaboration with Irene Scott and Alina Belobra from the Internews humanitarian team. Internews acknowledges the assistance of other colleagues from CIJ in the planning of this assessment, collection of data, and wise guidance.

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Cover photo: Illustration of a bridge stretching across the cover, from top to bottom, against a sun rise on a dark blue background.

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## Abbreviations

AAP - Accountability to Affected People/Populations

CEA - Community Engagement and Accountability

CFBM - Complaints and Feedback Mechanism

CNRR - Romanian National Council for Refugees

DSU - Department for Emergency Situations

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation

IEA - Information Ecosystem Assessment

IOM - International Organisation for Migration / UN Migration

KII - Key Informant Interview

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

SRHR - Sexual and reproductive health and rights

UN - United Nations

UNHCR - United Nations Refugee Agency / High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Six months into the Russia-Ukraine war, refugees in Romania are still struggling to access timely, relevant and actionable information about their rights and the services available to them. According to the findings of this research, in the early months of the response, refugees relied on informal social networks to share critical information about safe border crossings, temporary protection and early access to humanitarian services. However, they now struggle to access information to assist them in making decisions, and planning for the mid-longer term future for themselves and their families.*

Social media continues to be a significant platform for information for refugees. And whilst dozens of Facebook, Telegram, Viber groups have been created, and websites have been established by government, relief agencies and volunteers, refugees prefer to source their information from other refugees, volunteers and host community members. Refugees stated that there is an overabundance of information and sources, which can make it difficult to determine what is accurate and up to date. Refugee-only groups are considered safe spaces to ask questions, share experience and verify information found elsewhere.

Information that comes from a genuine personal experience is valued highly. However, while 98% of refugees reported having access to the internet, the heavy reliance on digital information platforms is creating a division between the digitally connected and disconnected, with the latter relying heavily on other refugees and volunteers to access and interpret information for them.

The main barrier to accessing information is language. Refugees reported that there needs to be one official information source with information translated into Ukrainian and Russian, where complex issues are expressed clearly to ensure information is accessible and relevant to their needs. There is also a preference for central information hubs where refugees can speak to someone and have their questions answered.

Information voids and misperceptions are also creating a barrier. Many refugees reported that they did not access information hotlines for fear that the operators would not speak their language. Similarly, some respondents said they would not contact the police or emergency services in a crisis for fear of not being understood. Uncertainty about their status in Romania also fuels a persistent rumour that interactions with the authorities could result in them being deported.

Many refugees see information as a pathway to integration in Romanian society. Besides basic services, such as cash assistance, accommodation, health care, transportation, there is a demand for information regarding language lessons, how to access employment, training and educational opportunities for all ages. Refugees are calling for media and other content that reflects their need for information about their rights and services in Romania as well as news and information about their new home translated into Ukrainian.<sup>1</sup>

While there is some interest from refugees in providing feedback to inform response efforts, two major barriers are preventing the response from meeting accountability commitments. Firstly, refugees state that they are unsure of how to give feedback and what platforms are available to them.

Secondly, many refugees state that a fear of being perceived as 'ungrateful' prevents many people from sharing their experience openly, preferring to offer positive feedback exclusively.

**This research included the perspectives of 1,180 refugees and 19 service providers and 2 media representatives in Bucharest, Iasi, Constanta and Brasov and was conducted between July - August 2022. See below a summary of the main findings of the research and recommendations for actors to improve information and communication access.**

## INFORMATION ACCESS



Internet access:

**98%** of refugees use the internet to get information in Romania.

Most are using mobile data and/or the Wifi connection at accommodations to access the internet. Personally owned mobile phones are the main device used to access the internet (97%), while personal computers/laptops are used less (21%).

<sup>1</sup> According to the latest [Romania Protection Profile and monitoring report from UNHCR](#), 53% of refugees in Romania plan to stay in Romania in the near future, 23% plan to return to Ukraine but most (64%) are unsure how they would do so.

**Refugees struggle to access local and hyper-local information to meet their needs.** While national policies (for education and accommodation, etc) are communicated via government websites, they have difficulty accessing information about the location and eligibility and access requirements for services in their immediate area and feel local interpretations of regulations and decisions from authorities are often poorly communicated.



### Face-to-face verification:

**Refugees from the cities where there is one main accommodation centre for refugees (Braşov, Iaşi) rely on information provided by the staff** of those centres, and refugees information needs are met to a higher degree, compared to cities where there are many accommodation/information centres (Constanţa, Bucharest) or rural areas where there are no accommodation centres.

**Besides the language barrier, the dispersion of information is one of the biggest obstacles for refugee information access.** Due to high variability of information among regions, as well as the information habits (preference to rely on others' experiences as the main information source) - the mission to get informed was described by some as similar to a "quest".

## INFORMATION NEEDS

**Key information needs are:** cash assistance, accommodation, healthcare, education access for children, tax and residency processes, employment access including recognition of professional qualifications.

Refugees stated the **need for official, structured, centralised** and verified information delivered in a timely manner to enable planning, agency, and control of their lives. Actionable information is very valued.

Refugees **regularly factcheck information** they find (only 11% never check the information).

Refugees verify information with other sources when: they suspect it to be false based on previous knowledge/context (61%), it seems incomplete (52%), and when it comes from a source they don't know (42%).

## INFORMATION SOURCE

### Community knowledge prioritised:

refugees rely a lot on other people's experiences; **other Ukrainians** are the most used information source, with **Telegram and Facebook groups** preferred over one-to-one information channels on Telegram, Viber, or WhatsApp.

**Official Information Sources:** only a quarter of refugees use official information sources from the Romanian authorities (21% sometimes, 4% often/always), however this information is accessed by host community volunteers and workers who then disseminate the information among the refugee community.

## TRUST

Trust in information increases if it is based on someone else's experience, thus personal discussions and word of mouth are an important part of the refugee information system. The gender of the source is also sometimes important; women report they trust the experiences of other women, rather than men's.

Refugees would trust official information coming from the Romanian Government and local authorities more if they received it directly via one website or via news in Ukrainian language rather than social media or information received by word of mouth.

## LANGUAGE

Refugees stated that **language is the most significant barrier** that prevents them from satisfying their information needs. Few refugees know the Romanian language. The majority recognized the need to study the language and were actively looking for both formal (courses) and informal options (language exchange meetings, speaking clubs, online classes).

**The majority of refugees speak Russian at home (72%)** but feel a social pressure to use Ukrainian in public places both online and offline. Older people expressed more challenges in communicating in Ukrainian.

Refugees use **Google translate** to search the internet to satisfy their information needs (accommodation, education, legal issues) and communicate with host communities and host families. Young people claim that Google and Facebook translation services are more accurate for Russian-Romanian, compared to Ukrainian-Romanian, and so often communicate in Russian.

Refugees want greater access to **Ukrainian and Russian interpreters** to assist access to psychological support and medical consultations.

They also express concern at the quality of translations of official information and the quality and intentions of some interpreters.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook and Telegram are the most popular social media platforms to satisfy information needs. Despite the myriad of social media groups/pages and channels for refugees, the average number of private and open groups/pages used per person is between 4 and 5. The number of social media groups/pages slightly decreases with age, and does not depend on the duration of stay in Romania.

Posts shared in medium or smaller sized Facebook groups get higher engagement (likes, shares, comments) than in the groups with more members. In larger groups, information delivery is more one-way and people are often referred to these groups to access information related to frequently asked questions.

Group administrators reported increasingly active Russian and Romanian trolls disrupting group activities in June-July 2022 including sending false reports to social media platforms to attempt to shut down response groups.

Doppelganger groups<sup>2</sup> are also regularly created, which confuses members seeking reliable information.

**ROMANIAN AND UKRANIAN MEDIA**

Awareness of existing Ukrainian language content available on Romanian media channels is low. However, there is interest in being able to access news in Ukrainian language. In particular: news about Romania (daily news, politics, economy, etc), its response for Ukrainian refugees (legal issues, changes to response strategy, etc) and daily information for refugees to access services.

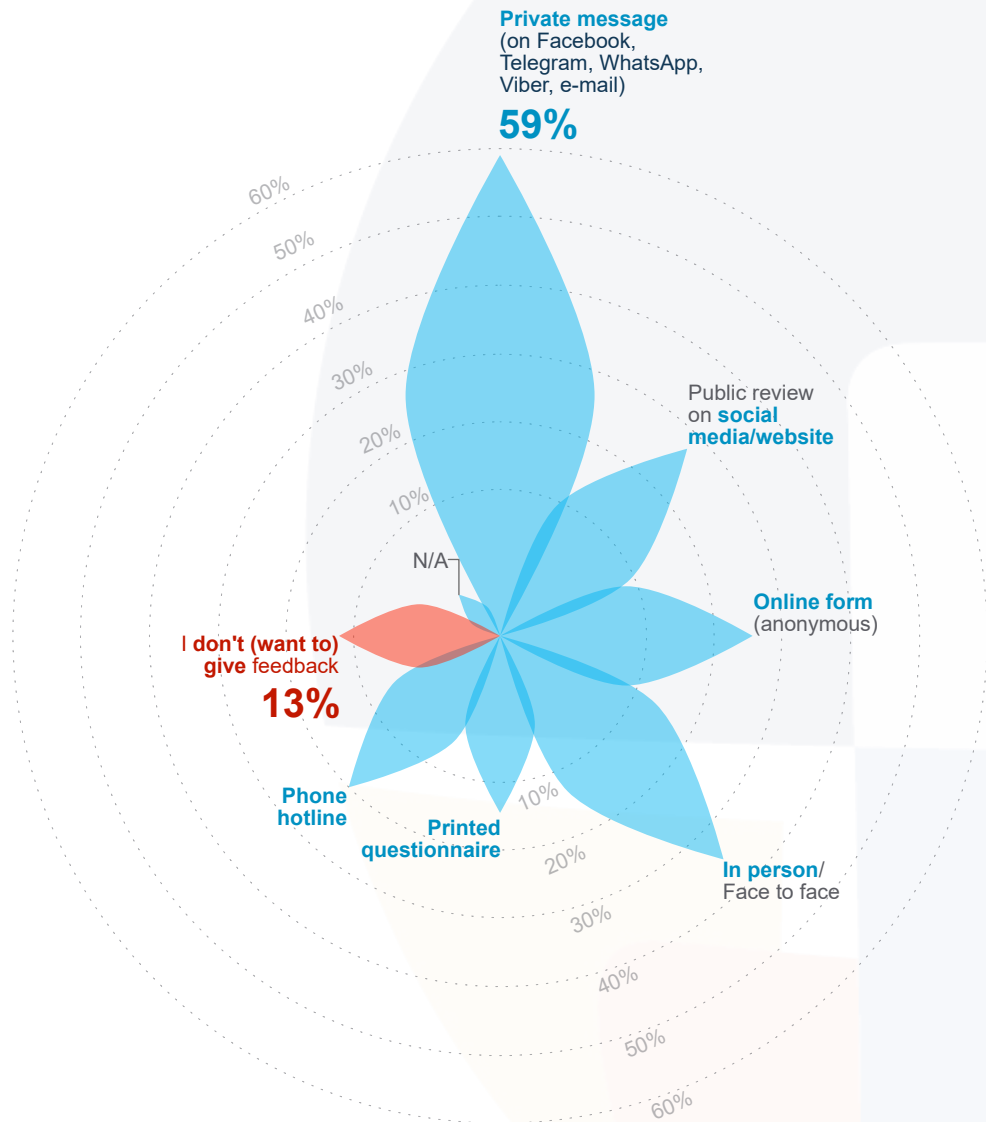
Information for refugees in Romania available on Ukrainian media websites is often geared towards the needs of people who are just leaving Ukraine (for example, long-distance transport information, border crossings, visas, etc.) and does not meet refugee information needs once in the country.

**COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK**

Ukrainian refugees **tend to leave positive feedback only**, they do not leave complaints or suggestions because they fear being perceived as ungrateful, even when they know that negative feedback/ review could be helpful to improve services or to help other Ukrainins in Romania avoid risky situations.

Despite this, only **13% of refugees do not want to offer feedback** at all. Given the right tools and access, most refugees would **prefer to give feedback in a private message** on Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, Viber, email (59%), in person/ face to face (35%) and in public review on social media/ websites (28%).

**The platforms respondents prefer to use to give feedback to refugee service**



<sup>2</sup> Doppelganger groups are social media pages or accounts designed to mimic another page/account in order to confuse and deceive users and often with the intent to spread misinformation.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. CENTRALISE AND LOCALISE INFORMATION

Refugees expressed two significant needs in relation to information: having a single source for reliable official information, and for that information to be localised to their specific region. Where possible, actors should work to collaborate on joint information, communication and feedback systems to reduce confusion. Individual systems will still be needed for sensitive or high risk services. Responders should consider supporting that platform to be up to date, include quality accessible and actionable information in Ukrainian and Russian languages, and refer other information platforms towards that source. Consider organising information by region or city to make it more accessible for refugees, but also to more easily see where there are gaps in localised information.

## 2. USE COMMUNITY INFORMATION INFLUENCERS

Refugees trust information coming from other people in their own community. Service providers should identify community information influencers and content creators and support them to be messengers within the wider refugee community. Linking to the central official information sources, the influencers can also be a valuable channel to address community concerns about access to complaints and feedback mechanisms or to address rumours and misinformation with verified information. Communication trees can also be a useful structure to ensure you are reaching varied subgroups within the refugee community, allowing for two-way communication between responders, community volunteers, and the broader community. This will ensure information is in the right language, uses popular channels and is more likely to be trusted.

## 3. DIVERSE NEEDS

Young people, and people with distinct information needs, do not feel the information available is meeting their needs. It is not surprising that young people feel that the Telegram groups frequented by their parents do not feel like the right place for them to ask questions and source information. Consider creating information and platforms tailored to high risk groups such as seniors, teenagers and children, and people living with disabilities and their caregivers. Presenting information in different formats, and with information tailored to the individual needs of these groups may increase its impact and acceptance.

## 4. COLLABORATE AND SHARE RESOURCES

While our key informants revealed several efforts to collect and analyse questions, concerns and misinformation that may be circulating in refugee social media spaces, these efforts are limited to currently internal activities and analysis output is not shared among the wider response. As many agencies may not have the skills or capacity to undertake this work, but may have the capacity to answer questions or respond to concerning information or behavioural trends, a central resource of social media analysis would be a useful resource to improve the overall response.

## 5. LANGUAGE MATTERS

Beyond increasing access to official information in Ukrainian and Russian languages, we need to ensure that complex legal and official information is accessible to a wider audience. Work with members of the refugee community to review any translations or information

materials to ask, "is the translation accurate?", "does it meet the current information needs of the community?", "is it accessible to all educational levels?", "does this include actionable information?" and "what questions do you still have after reading this?". There is currently a shortage of Ukrainian translators and interpreters, consider prioritising providing translation and interpretation training to refugees with the appropriate language skills to fill this gap.

## 6. PRIORITISE PLAIN-LANGUAGE

Information available to refugees is often complex and inaccessible to many readers. Refugees need to be able to access, and understand information related to their legal status and options to access services and support. While this information is sometimes available, it uses specialised terminology, jargon and concepts that might be new to many refugees. Where complex terms or acronyms are necessary, always provide a plain language explanation, use bullet points to separate dense text, and consider other modes of access to the information - for instance audio, video and infographics to help a wider audience access the information. Simplified text, done properly still conveys the same information, but makes that information more useful to more people. [Clear Global has an excellent guide](#) for writing clearly, using plain language.

## 7. LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Government and other service providers might not yet know how long services will be funded and available to refugees. It is natural for there to be some uncertainty on these issues.



But this needs to be communicated to refugees. Continuing to actively engage on issues can help reduce anxiety, build trust and show refugees that you understand how important this information is to them (even if the answer is "we don't know yet, but we will know in one week/month/year"). Refugees want to understand when a decision will be made, how a decision will be made and what options they have to inform and contribute to that decision making.

### 8. INFORMATION IS IN YOUR HANDS

Hand held devices, such as smartphones, are overwhelmingly the main tool used to access the internet. While you might design information on your laptop or computer, ensure any website or information materials are optimised for reading on handheld devices. Think about the need for scrolling or card-based content (rather than static PDF pages), shorten headlines, sentences and paragraphs and consider which fonts display well on smaller screens. Audio and video formats may also help your information to stand out among social media groups. As always, consider that no matter how well you have crafted your information, people will still have further questions and clarifications to tailor the information to their individual needs - so ensure you clearly display where the reader can access more information.

### 9. PHYSICAL INFORMATION HUBS

While refugees rely heavily on social media groups to share and verify information, they prefer to be able to speak to someone, share their concerns, questions and tailor that information to their individual needs. Where information hubs or refugee centres exist, ensure they are equipped to spend time responding to information needs. Where central hubs don't exist, consider what spaces could serve this purpose. Consider including [Protection, Gender and Inclusion \(PGI\)](#) teams to build on this work and ensure greater service and information inclusion.

### 10. PROTECT PERSONAL DATA

Ensure your organisation has adequate data security practices and increase open communication with refugees on how their personal data will be protected when they provide it to you. Many refugees have already handed their personal information and documents to many responding agencies and government departments - so a centralised refugee identification system would have less of an impact on refugees that are already in the country. However, contingency planning for potential refugee increases should address this information security issue, for reasons of data security and efficiency.<sup>3</sup>

### 11. FEEDBACK ON FEEDBACK

A culture of providing constructive feedback on refugee services needs to be cultivated to ensure services are in line with refugee priority needs and preferences. To combat reservations related to the fear of being perceived as ungrateful, relief agencies need to proactively report back to the community on the feedback they do receive and the positive changes made in response. Feedback reports are often kept as internal documents. Openly displaying the tangible results of feedback on popular information platforms and in face-to-face interactions with the community will increase trust and encourage greater participation in these systems.

### 12. REFUGEES AS RESPONSE DESIGNERS

Refugees currently do not feel they have been adequately consulted in the design of the services to assist them.

<sup>3</sup> For example, in Switzerland the "S permit" includes a refugee identification card that is issued when identity documents have been assessed.

Now that the emergency phase of the response is over and organisations are looking towards integration and mid-longer term planning, service providers should build sustainable approaches that allow them to listen to community needs and preferences, use them to influence the design of services and importantly, report back to the community on the changes made based on their feedback.

### 13. MULTI-PLATFORM MEDIA

While early efforts to provide information to refugees in Ukrainian have been made by Romanian media organisations, refugees are largely unaware of this programming. Greater promotion is needed. To widen reach, consider alternative broadcast platforms such as social media broadcast (Facebook live for instance) or narrowcasting through fixed speakers at places where refugees are likely to spend time (accommodation centres and info points). Media should also consider and respond to the short, medium, and long term information needs of their audiences; for instance, news and current affairs, relief services, entertainment, rumours and misinformation, and educational programming that prepares refugees to integrate into Romanian society.

### 14. MEDIA AS RELIEF ACTORS

To adequately respond to the wide range of refugee information needs and rumours and misinformation that may be circulating in the community, Romanian media that broadcast in Ukrainian need to be welcomed into humanitarian response coordination mechanisms as an information and aid actor. Acknowledging that additional funding is required to make this a reality - through a better understanding of the priorities of the response, how decisions are made and what changes may be coming, Romanian media can more effectively translate this information for their audiences, for decision makers and for humanitarian actors alike. Ukrainian language media can be a valuable platform for hosting community discussions, connecting refugees with decision makers and increasing the accountability of the response.

# INTRODUCTION

*Since 24 February 2022, the world has been confronted with one of the largest refugee movements since World War 2. More than 13 million people have been displaced by the war in Ukraine in the last six months,<sup>4</sup> with 1.6 million refugees entering Romania since the beginning of the war.<sup>5</sup> As of September 2022, more than 80 thousand people are still seeking shelter in Romania<sup>6</sup> with the support of the Government, and partners including civil society, the private sector, volunteers, and international aid organisations.*

And while there has been an extraordinarily swift response to create services to support these newly arrived communities, information and communication challenges have hampered their effectiveness. There has been a persistent challenge in ensuring the community has access to timely, verified and actionable information to support informed decision-making and genuine participation in response design. Crisis affected communities need accessible two-way channels of communication with aid providers that allow the newly arrived community to understand the services available to them (including purpose and eligibility requirements), ask questions, raise concerns and express preferences.

This research is designed to better understand how refugees in Romania and the host community are creating, accessing and sharing information about the refugee response and to identify any barriers to accessing quality information or gaps in the information and communication response that could be filled by media, humanitarian, or government service providers.

We believe that through increasing access to more participatory information channels, tailored to information refugee preferences, service providers can more closely align services with refugee needs and ultimately better engage with the communities they hope to assist. Healthy information environments enable everyone to make better-informed decisions, bridge divides, participate more fully in their communities, and hold power to account.

## The research pursued the following objectives:

### OBJECTIVE #1

**Identify the information available for refugees and the sources they use to access information**

### OBJECTIVE #2

**Identify priority information needs**

### OBJECTIVE #3

**Identify the main barriers to accessing that information**

### OBJECTIVE #4

**Describe the information dynamics/behaviour (including trust)**

As you will see in our findings detailed below, community information needs and channels have changed since the beginning of the response. Similarly, we expect these needs to evolve over time and we hope to repeat this research to capture the changing dynamics.

<sup>4</sup> Ukraine: Millions of displaced traumatised and urgently need help, say experts | OHCHR

<sup>5</sup> Document - Ukraine Situation Inter-Agency Operational Update Romania - July 2022 (unhcr.org)

<sup>6</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10782>

### Contributing partners

**Internews** is an International non-profit organisation that works to improve access to timely, actionable and reliable information and contribute to healthy information ecosystems in 100 countries. Through support to local media, health and humanitarian communicators and extensive work in identifying and combating misinformation, the organisation aims to ensure everyone has access to the information and communication channels they need to make decisions for themselves and advocate for their needs.

**The Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ)** is a Romanian non-governmental organisation active for over 25 years in protecting democracy and those who believe in its values. People, governments, practices and threats have changed over the time. CIJ remains a promoter of universal values and a partner of those who want to contribute to the consolidation of a free and diverse society.

### Acknowledgments

This research is generously produced with funding from **Twilio**, through their Tech4 Ukraine project that aims to support the people displaced by the war in Ukraine.

The Lead Researcher was Mihaela Negru from the Centre for Independent Journalism. The research team also consisted of Alina Belobra from Internews, Cristina Lupu, Bianca Rus, Tetiana Altukhova, Oleksandra Altukhova and Nadiia Ovsova from the Centre for Independent Journalism

This research would not have been possible without our wonderful team of Ukrainian and Romanian local coordinators: Anzhela Beliak (Iași), Natalia Vataman (Brașov), Liudmyla Ilchenko and Cosmin Bârzan (Constanța), Tetiana Altukhova and Oleksandra Altukhova (Bucharest); and Ukrainian data collectors in Iași: Anzhela Beliak, Liliia Horbal, Danylo Malyi, Oleksandra Dajmychenko. In Brașov: Natalia Vataman, Sergiu Vataman, Iryna Karpinska. In Constanța: Maryna Chornoivanova, Kiril Kataiev, Liudmyla Ilchenko, Larysa Stepanchenko. In Bucharest: Kyrylo Mazur, Nadiia Ovsova, Lesia Kirvas, Ganna Usac, Tetiana Altukhova, Oleksandra Altukhova, Tetiana Rieshetova.

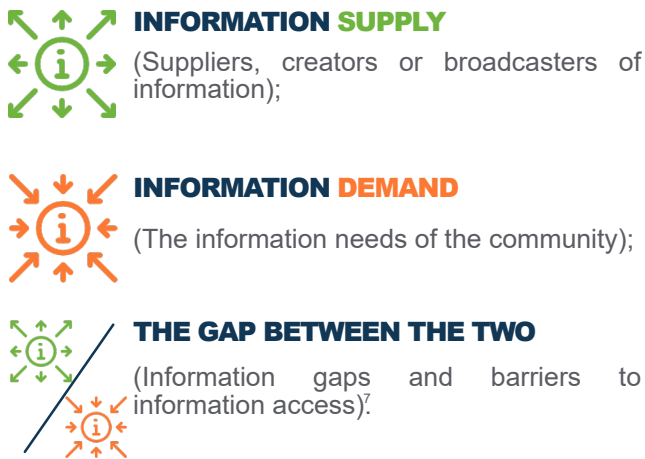
This report was designed by [Edit Gyenge](#).

We would like to thank everyone who so generously gave their time to this research including representatives of the Government of Romania, local and international relief organisations, local media and the tireless citizens and volunteers contributing to relief efforts.

Most importantly, we would like to thank the refugees from Ukraine who sat with us in community halls, in refugee centres and, over many cups of tea, shared their perspective with us. Without their contributions this research would not have been possible and we hope that we have fairly represented your views.

# METHODOLOGY

*This research uses the Information Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) as the main analytical framework to understand the information supply, demand and dynamics in this environment. The IEA assesses the "health" of an information ecosystem by investigating three main elements:*



## What is an Information Ecosystem Assessment (IEA)?

Information Ecosystem Assessments are a tool developed by Internews to understand the varied sources, influences, and unique local characteristics of how communities produce and consume information. The ways in which people produce, contribute to, interact with, and behave around information are what makes information ecosystems dynamic and diverse. Information Ecosystem Assessments are a unique, human-centred approach to capturing the relationship between information supply and demand.

The goal of an IEA is to gain a deeper understanding of how people find, share, value, and trust information in their own local contexts. In a humanitarian context, information is a vital form of aid. Timely, relevant and accessible information helps affected citizens to understand the situation, make informed decisions, and gain access to life-saving aid.

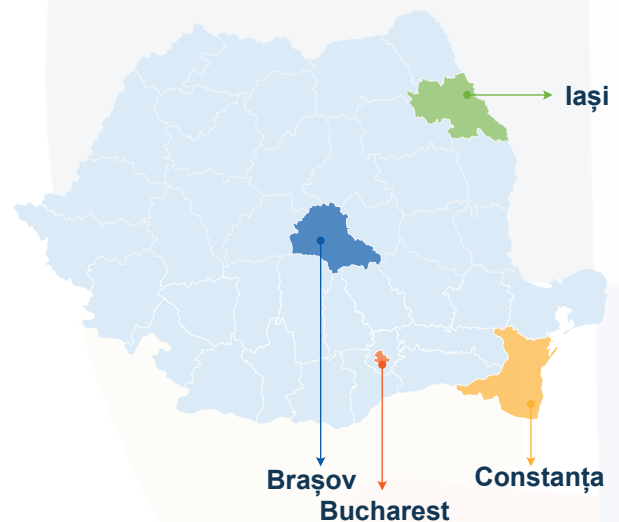
The IEA is a key approach in the Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) toolkit to ensure that aid providers can establish two-way communication channels to listen to and act on people's needs, suggested solutions, feedback and complaints, and to ensure people receiving assistance play a leading role in the decisions that affect them.

You can read more about the overall approach here: <https://internews.org/>

<sup>7</sup> Internews, 2020

## LOCATION

Data was collected from four locations in Romania: Bucharest, Iași, Constanța and Brașov. These locations were chosen because of their popularity among refugee groups as locations for mid-longer term settlement.



Some data was also collected from refugees in other regions of Romania via online survey. Despite the ready movement of refugees at border points in/out of Romania, we chose not to include these locations in our assessment as we wanted to focus on the information needs and preferences of communities that aimed to stay in Romania (at least in the mid term), rather than refugees receiving emergency or short-term support and transiting onward to other countries. Further research may determine differing information needs and challenges for these groups of refugees.

## DURATION

This research was conducted from June - September, with field data collection conducted in July and early August 2022.

## DATA COLLECTION

We incorporated a mixed methods approach to include five methods of data collection:

### METHOD #1

#### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGD)

A total number of

22

**focus groups were moderated face to face in 4 main Romanian cities (Bucharest, Iași, Brașov and Constanța).**

To ensure that participants reflected the diversity of the refugee communities, efforts were made to include participants of different genders, age groups; to include participants with different physical abilities; and of various socio-economic and educational backgrounds; and participants of various Ukrainian ethnic minorities.

### METHOD #2

#### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KII)

A total of

21

**Semi-structured Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted online and in person with Romanian relief organisations**

(Anaid, PATRIR, CRC Constanța, Motivation, ARESEL, Code for Romania), Romanian media (Radio Romania Internațional and RADOR), International NGOs (IFRC, UNHCR, UNICEF, Mercy Corps), central Romanian authorities (Government), and host community representatives (non-affiliated to NGOs volunteers from Bucharest, Iași, Focșani). 8 KIIs were done with social media groups' founders and administrators.

### METHOD #3

#### QUANTITATIVE ONLINE & OFFLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

The **Face-to-face survey** was translated into Ukrainian, with data collected using the KoBo toolbox on mobile devices by Ukrainian field researchers.

We received a total of

732

**respondents in 4 main Romanian cities: Bucharest, Iași, Brașov and Constanța.**

No personal or identifying information was collected and data was disaggregated for age and gender. Data collection took place between July 10 - July 30, 2022.

This was complemented by an online survey, which was distributed on popular social media platforms, in groups where refugees often connected. This survey received 212 responses via a Google Forms questionnaire. Data collection took place between July 28 - August 8, 2022.

### METHOD #4

#### DESK ANALYSIS

**Desk research** was undertaken to analyse existing reports, action plans, regulations etc. While there was a range of information available on the capacity of the Romanian media sector - in particular from previous reports produced by CIJ - to date there have been very few reports attempting to understand aspects of refugee information needs and barriers. We found that most organisations consulted had considered these issues, or even reported on them, but often this information was for internal purposes only.

### METHOD #5

#### MEDIA MONITORING

The media monitoring focused on assessing what humanitarian information is available to Ukrainian refugees in Romanian and Ukrainian media.

175

**articles were analysed, (130 in the Romanian media and 45 in the Ukrainian media), published from February 24th until August 11th 2022.**

We also undertook a Social Media Mapping exercise to list the popular social media platforms, groups and spaces used by refugees and rank them regarding members (refugee, host, or both), the level of activity/engagement and quality of information provided.

## RESEARCH CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The IEA approach is not, and does not intend to be, a representative sample of the community. However, we do aim to represent the diversity of the community by ensuring the data collection is representative of the community. To mitigate the risk of interviewing people with the same characteristics (ex. only young women) we used in the face to face survey the quotas sampling method (subgroups weightage were approximated based on previous research and public reports identified and analysed at the stage of desk research).

As per qualitative research, our team faced difficulties in recruiting certain refugee subgroups:

### MEN

Despite the fact that we were able to identify a number of men, most were reluctant to participate in group discussions. This was mainly based on a perceived threat to be “sent back to Ukraine” or public judgement for not fighting with the Ukrainian military;

### ROMA AND OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS

Roma and other ethnic groups - While this research planned to include several FGDs with the Roma community, we found that there were very few from the Roma community who chose to remain in the country, with most transiting to other countries. For example, in Braşov, the main accommodation centre for refugees hosted 150 Roma Ukrainian refugees, including children, and all of them left for Spain and France.



Photo: Pixabay.com

### LGBTQIA+

Our research team would have liked to better represent the perspectives of LGBTQIA+ refugees and the unique information challenges they may be facing. However, on engagement with Romanian NGOs that have worked with refugees and defend and promote the rights of LGBTQIA+ people, we determined that there are currently very few refugees still in Romania. Our informants suggested that most spent only a short time in the country and sought information about neighbouring countries with more welcoming LGBTQIA+ attitudes/policies and, in some cases, to countries with free access to specific medications.

### HOST COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Host community members that offered refugees support - We found it difficult to encourage Romanian citizens who were helping refugees to participate in this research.

The participation of teenagers at the focus group in Braşov was emotionally challenging. For some teenagers, the focus group was the very first experience to get out of their temporary homes and meet new people (peers) after several months of staying in Romania. Given the group dynamic, the moderator took a more flexible approach to the FGD guide. We recommend that future research with this subsection of refugees should include a psychologist or youth worker to better support participants.

This research did not assess service quality. However, in the process of the research, refugees gave feedback regarding the quality of service, the actions of service providers and reports of discrimination and harassment. While this is adjacent, but outside of the scope of this report, this information will be shared by Internews with the appropriate Governmental and relief agencies for action.

# Section 1: How are people currently accessing information?

## WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR INFORMATION

Focus groups discussions revealed that in February and March 2022, the refugees relied mostly on in-person/offline communication channels (phone calls, word of mouth, messages in messaging apps with acquaintances) to learn about the route and accommodation in Romania. Upon their arrival and later in response (March-July 2022), online platforms started to play a more significant role in the search for information. Volunteers and the Ukrainian community started the groups, channels and pages in social media providing an update and facilitating the exchange of information for refugees. See 'social media' below for more information on platforms and their use.

Surveys showed that the most used information channels (when accessing general information about refugee services in Romania) are: Telegram (62% often and always, and 25% sometimes use it) and personal discussions (40% often and always, and 48% sometimes). Frequently mentioned channels are also Facebook, Viber and info points, while printed media and radio are practically not used (same as Twitter, television, emails and flyers). Detailed list can be found in [Annex 1](#).

When accessing information specifically about relief services, refugees of all ages rely mostly on other Ukrainian people in Romania (61% often/always, 31% sometimes) often using Telegram groups and channels (63% often/always, 20% sometimes).

See [Annex 3](#). This is also true for ethnic minorities from Ukraine. One woman, a Crimean Tatar said:

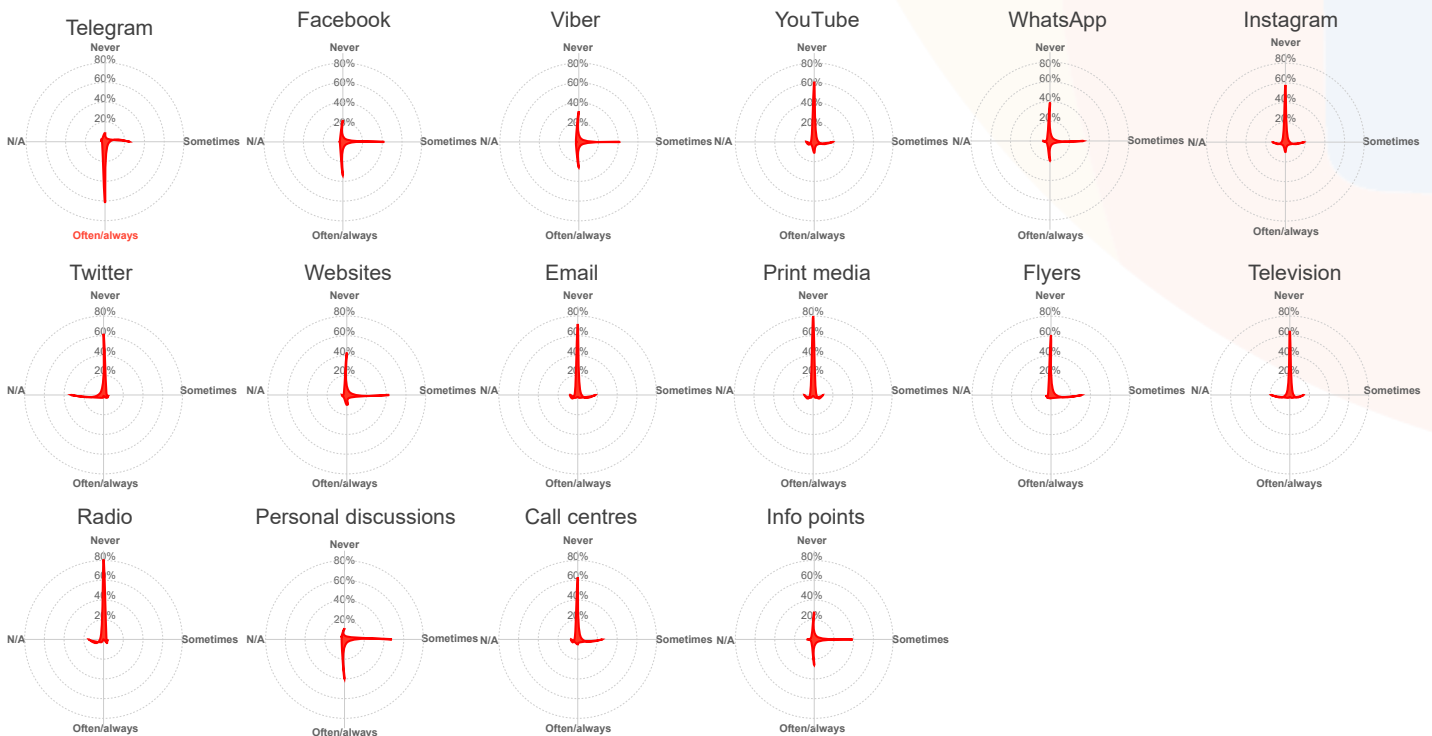


*It is easier to turn to your own (people): to your Ukrainians or those who know Turkish, Russian, Ukrainian, or those who already know everything (Crimean Tatars), they direct better, because it is difficult to explain to a Romanian what and how*

Woman, Constanta

People with disabilities rely mostly on their family members, caregivers, as well as religious and humanitarian organisations (mentioned ICAR, Red Cross, Save the Children, Iglesia Church) for information.

## How often do you use the following channels to get information you need regarding your stay in Romania?



## INFORMATION INFLUENCERS

Information influencers in the refugee community are fluid. While some informal leaders or trusted information sources have developed over the last six months, refugees did not come in distinct communities with leadership (information or otherwise) structures. Participants shared that when they find a useful piece of information, they like to share it within the mentioned groups to contribute to the community. Some mentioned that they had taken on an informal role of checking the information shared in their groups daily, addressing misinformation and making sure the groups were functioning well. One example shared by a key informant was about a woman in Odesa who has become an information influencer in her refugee community here in Romania.



*This lady was not well known back in Ukraine or a leader in the way we would think of a community leader. But she organised an event for the community for Easter. People who take the initiative on behalf of the community can become a quasi leader. And it is extremely fluid, there are those who may have really influenced decision making in the choices people made on their journey to Romania and those who now influence opinion now that the community is settled.*

Key informant, International relief agency

However the lack of a leadership structure has also made it more difficult to engage and coordinate between refugees at times. For instance, Ukrainian teachers in Braşov mentioned that they would like to be able to offer classes for refugee students in their area, but they're not sure where to start, how to find these children and what support might be available.

They felt a better communication structure would make it easier for refugees to self-organise and advocate for their needs.

The least used information sources are Romanian media (69% never) and Official sources of Romanian authorities (websites, social media pages) (66% never). Only a quarter of refugees use Official sources of Romanian authorities (21% sometimes, 4% often or always) and only 5% of respondents get their information from flyers or leaflets. See Annex 3 and Annex 16 for detailed data from the face-to-face and the online surveys.

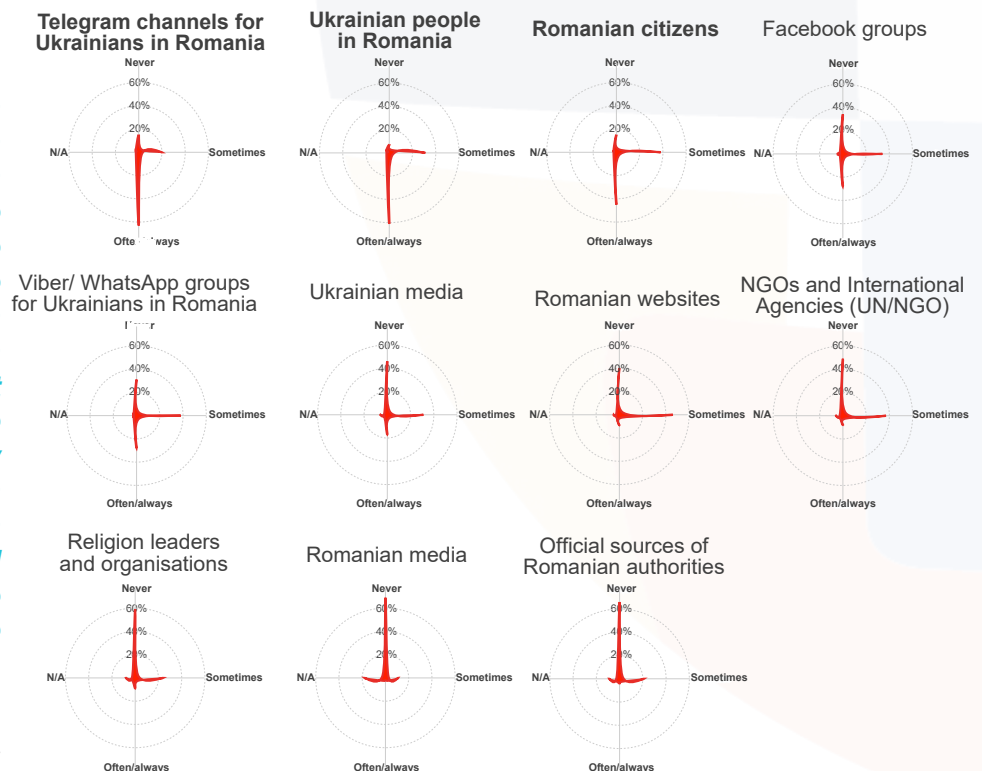
See section 5 for more information on call-centres in relation to information access and complaints and feedback mechanisms.



*I sometimes contact the general hotline for helping Ukrainians in Romania. Once I was looking for a paediatrician, they answered in Russian, they didn't give help. A Romanian volunteer helped.*

Woman, Bucharest

### % of answers to question "11. How often do you use the following sources when you want to access information about refugee services (accommodation, food, other basic needs) in Romania?"



Only one third of respondents use hotlines or call-centres, mostly occasionally (25% - sometimes, 5% often/always, according to face-to-face survey).

Refugees from Bucharest use call-centres almost twice more often (41% sometimes and often/always) than refugees from Constanţa (18% sometimes and often/always). For detailed data see Annex 1.

Eighty two percent of respondents mentioned at least one infopoint (or contact point) that was useful for them. Of the info points mentioned in the face-to-face survey: Romexpo (184 mentions), Red Cross (120 mentions) and C.A.T.T.I.A. refugees centre in Braşov (103 mentions) were the top three most useful info points/call centres, followed by



volunteers at the border (66 mentions), UN (51 mentions), [Save the Children](#) (34 mentions) and info points at Railway stations (28 mentions). See [Annex 5](#) for detailed list.

While many refugees rely on social media groups, refugees prefer to address volunteers from centres for refugees in search of both information and a solution to their problem.



**Why search for information?! It's better to get the problem solved. The volunteers at C.A.T.T.I.A. (center for refugees in Brasov) will solve your problem.**

Woman, Brasov

**I found information on Facebook, googled it - the information is different from Facebook, and I went and the volunteers personally explained everything.**

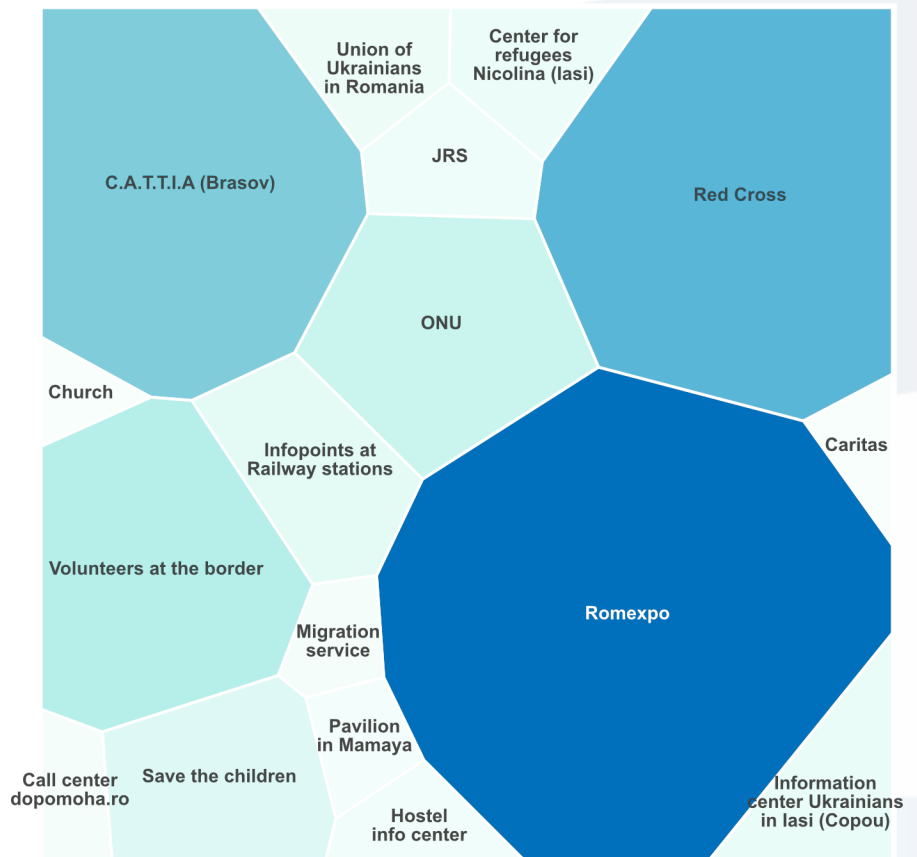
Woman, Bucharest

In Bucharest, local and international relief agencies are a key source of information, 62% respondents in the face-to-face survey mentioned they use them often/always or sometimes, compared to 50% in Braşov, 40% in Constanţa, and 43% in Iaşi.

Refugees widely use the infopoint in Braşov, 92% sometimes and often/always, compared to Constanţa where only 32% mentioned that they use sometimes and often/always an infopoint.

In cities without a main accommodation centre for refugees (e.g. Constanţa and Bucharest), word of mouth offline and online via local Telegram and Facebook groups are a main source of information.

## Info points mentioned in the face-to-face survey



Ukrainian Roma refugees in Bucharest rely mainly on authorities, info points and volunteers, they mentioned when they need information they ask a policeman, a bus controller, call the embassy, any call centre or call 112.

Senior refugees (60+) are more likely to use YouTube, and prefer Viber, to Telegram and Facebook which are far more popular in the other age groups. Senior refugees also access considerably more television, radio and printed materials to access information.

During focus group discussions some senior participants mentioned that they started to use smartphones very recently, and they are still learning how to access applications and websites. Their main reason to start using a smartphone was the need to search for information about services for refugees (for their own needs, as well as for family's needs). Most often senior people receive support on how to use mobile devices from their adult children and grandchildren.

For some of the senior participants in our focus groups, access to information was also a key driver in their decision to stay (and sometimes relocate to) in accommodation centres which they saw to have better access to information and services than hosted accommodation.



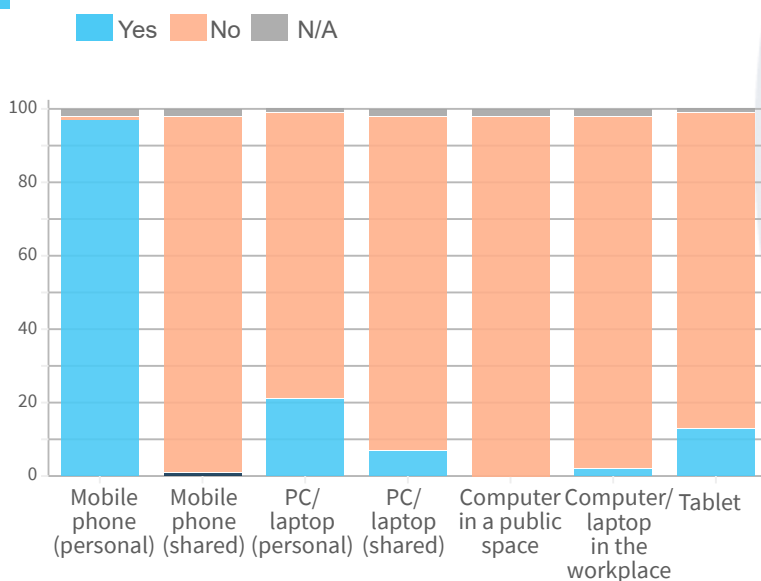
*If I knew whom to ask, I would not have to ask my daughter to search for the information.*

Woman, Constanta

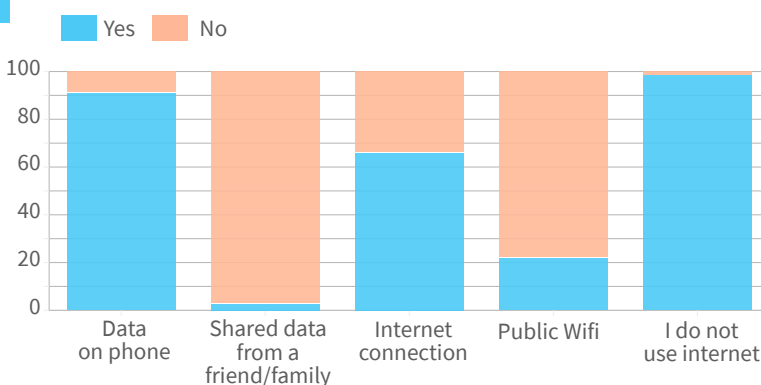
## INTERNET ACCESS

98.5% of respondents use the internet, and only 1.5% mentioned that they don't use the internet to get information (mostly 60+ years old).

### The devices used to access internet



### How do you access the internet?



Out of internet users, the vast majority use Mobile Data to access the internet (91%) and/or internet at host home/refugee accommodation (66%), public Wifi is also used (22%). Refugees rarely shared mobile data from a friend or family member (3%). Detailed data in [Annex 6](#).

Most people are accessing the internet via their own mobile phone (97%). Smaller numbers are using personal computers/laptops (21%) and tablets (13%) as their primary device to access the internet. Usually devices are not shared. Only 2% use a computer/laptop at the workplace, and almost nobody uses a computer in public space. Detailed data in [Annex 18](#).

## HOW DO YOU VERIFY INFORMATION?

According to our survey, 89% of respondents say they check the information they receive (at least from time to time), and only 11% never verify the information they receive. Refugees prioritise verifying information when: they suspect it to be false based on previous knowledge/context (61%), it seems incomplete (52%), and when it comes from a source they don't know (42%). Detailed data in [Annex 9](#). Ukrainian refugees commonly use multiple online and offline information sources at the same time. For instance they might call the service providers, ask questions to volunteers, spread the word in the refugee community, or even ask their relatives and friends in Ukraine for help in information search. Then they triangulate this information to determine what is accurate.

## DO YOU HAVE ALL THE INFORMATION YOU NEED?

Most refugees state that they have some (51%) or all (36%) of the information they need to keep themselves and their families safe.

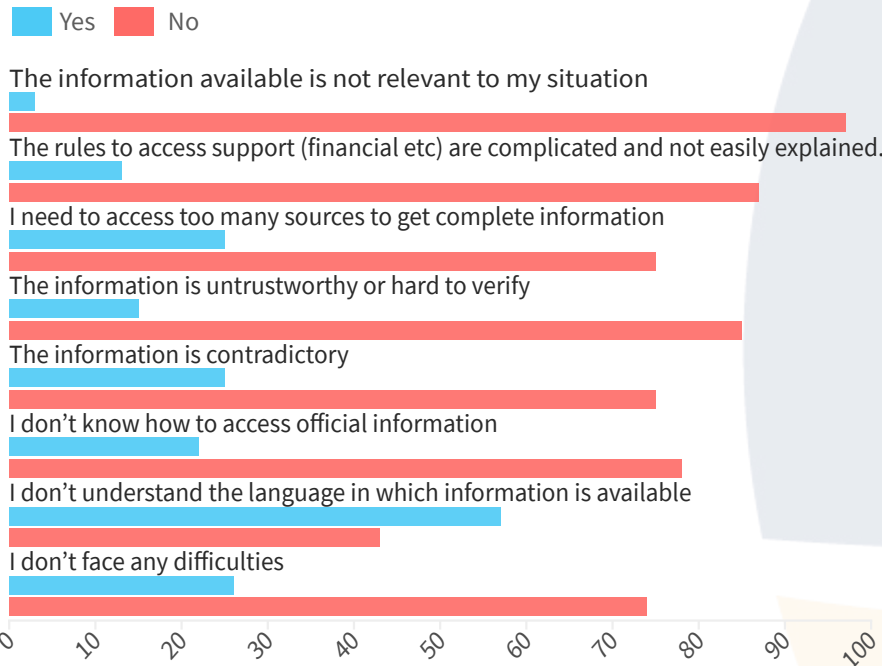
Only one in ten respondents do not have the information they need to keep safe (12%). See [Annex 7](#).

We asked survey respondents to note whether they felt that information related to refugee services was accurate, accessible, helpful and respectful. More than half of refugees surveyed (51%) thought that information was accurate (14% to a great extent, 27% mostly), more than 80% of refugees think that information related to refugee services is helpful (50% - mostly, 32% - to a great extent) and respectful (46% - mostly, 41% - to a great extent). See [Annex 10](#). Most refugees (97%) state that the information available to them is relevant to their situation. See [Annex 19](#).

Interestingly, this data is in direct contrast to the experiences shared during focus group discussions. In these discussions, refugees shared that they felt information was often out of date, not localised and confusing to navigate. See more in [Information Barriers](#).

Refugees complain of information overload, finding irrelevant or outdated information, lack of official sources of information on their changed needs. Generally, they would prefer to receive the information from official information sources like the Romanian Government and local authorities directly, or via news in Ukrainian language rather than from social media or by word of mouth.

## Barriers refugees face when accessing information



## LANGUAGE

In our survey, we asked respondents what "language they use at home?". More than two thirds (71.6%) speak Russian at home and only 26.4% said they spoke Ukrainian at home. These results were in line with our online survey that found that 67% of refugees speak Russian at home and 31.1% use Ukrainian.

It is important to note that researchers may have received different responses if the question was "What language do you prefer to receive information in?". While there is a notable community pressure against the use of Russian the language in public spaces since the beginning of war, these high rates of Russian language may also be due to the fact that close to 30%<sup>8</sup> of refugees in Romania came from Odesa, where Russian is widely spoken. More research is needed to understand the potential differences between public and private language preferences and associated impact on the community.

Researchers noted that for the focus groups facilitated by researchers who were fluent in both Ukrainian and Russian (Braşov and Constanţa), there was a preference from participants for the use of Ukrainian during focus group discussions. However, some respondents mentioned they are still more comfortable answering questions in Russian. The majority of participants expressed a preference for news, printed materials and education to be made available in Ukrainian (rather than Russian). See Information Barriers, for more on the language dynamics of this response.

<sup>8</sup> According to [UNHCR Protection Profiling and Monitoring](#), 28% of refugees in Romania come from Odesa, followed by smaller numbers from Kyiv (12%), Mykolaivka (11%) and Kharkiv and Zakarpatska (8%each).

Teenagers often assist their parents in searching for information related to their life in Romania online. They noted that they use the Russian language predominantly, finding that Google translate was more accurate from Russian to Romanian (as compared to Ukrainian to Romanian).

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media is an important information source for refugees in Romania. Refugees regularly use Telegram (87%) followed by Facebook (76%), Viber (68%), and WhatsApp (54%). See [Annex 1](#).

Ninety three percent of refugees stated that they use at least one group/page to access information in Romania, with 88% able to name at least one specific group or page that has been useful for them to get information in Romania. The majority of these groups/pages are on Telegram and Facebook. 155 unique social media groups/pages were identified after coding 1,371 mentions. A list of the source names is presented in [Annex 2](#).

Despite the myriad of social media groups/pages and channels in the Romanian information ecosystem for refugees, the average number of groups/pages used per person is 4-5, according to the face-to-face and online survey. The number of social media groups/pages slightly decreases with age, and does not depend on the duration of stay in Romania. See [Annex 4](#) for detailed distribution and correlations.

According to our social media mapping Facebook (49 groups) and Telegram (12 groups and channels) became the largest platforms for information sharing in response to the refugee crisis in Romania (least used are Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp). Telegram was named slightly more often than Facebook by Ukrainian refugees in Romania, according to data collected during focus groups and surveys.

<sup>9</sup> This is in line with [Protection Profiling and Monitoring data from UNHCR](#) that suggests that 46% of refugees prefer to receive their information via social media platforms.

Teenagers are more prone to use offline sources to verify the information they find online, they also rely on Google maps for reviews and ratings. However, teenagers expressed that they do not use the Telegram groups frequented by their parents very often. It is not surprising that a teenager may not want to ask questions (especially sensitive ones) on a platform that includes their parents. In some locations, young people have developed their own Telegram channels to share information and connect but these have had mixed success.

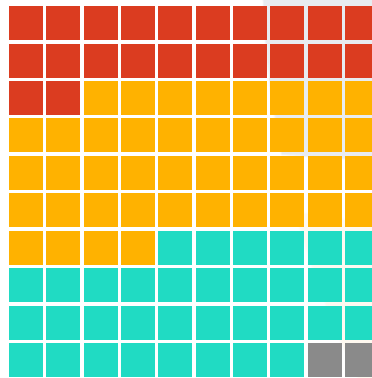
While our key informants revealed several efforts to collect and analyse questions, concerns and misinformation that may be circulating in refugee social media spaces, these efforts are internal and not shared among the wider response. As many agencies may not have the skills or capacity to undertake this work, a central resource of social media analysis would be a useful resource to improve the overall response.

FACEBOOK

**% of answers to question “8. How often do you use Facebook to get information you need regarding your stay in Romania?”**

Never   Sometimes   Often/always   N/A

Facebook is a platform commonly used in Romania and has been a popular location for the hosting of groups and pages created by Romanian volunteers, designed to help Ukrainian refugees. Group administrators told us that Facebook was chosen by Romanian volunteers as a platform because it was used in previous responses to Covid-19 and environmental protests and it is the most used social media app in Romania.



Ukrainian refugees use Facebook to learn more about the host community, and connect with accommodation, education, and job opportunities. Facebook is in this way a platform that acts as a connector between Ukrainian refugees, Romanians and other nationalities that might create groups to offer help.

Our monitoring of the most popular groups created to assist refugees on Facebook showed that posts shared in the Facebook groups with smaller numbers of members got much more engagement than in the groups with many, often several thousands of members. These larger groups are more used as an information source, rather than a two-way platform where people feel comfortable asking questions. Group administrators told us that for certain regular topics/questions, they will always refer members to the [United for Ukraine Facebook group](#) (UNIȚI PENTRU UCRAINA - Об'єднани за Україну) which has close to 280 thousand members and where the question is likely to have already been answered. Doppelganger groups to the United for Ukraine group are also regularly created, which confuses members seeking reliable information.



*We have dozens of Doppelganger groups. This is an issue. We report it to Facebook. Sometimes it works, but most of the time it doesn't.*

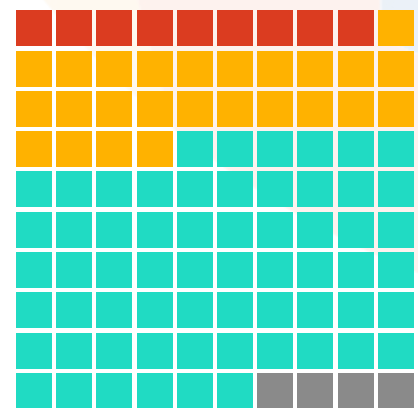
Facebook group founder

Social media mapping revealed that some pages designed to support Ukrainian refugees may be difficult for them to access because their titles were written in Romanian. Otherwise both Ukrainian and Romanian groups showed a multi-lingual approach including posts in Ukrainian, English, Romanian, and Russian. With Romanian being mostly used in groups created at the local level. Facebook's translation function is allowing the communities to connect.

TELEGRAM

**% of answers to question “8. How often do you use Telegram to get information you need regarding your stay in Romania?”**

Never   Sometimes   Often/always   N/A



The majority of Telegram groups mapped by this project were created by Ukrainian refugees or the Ukrainian community for refugees to facilitate the information exchange at the local level. The information about these channels is spread offline by word of mouth.

Informants see Telegram groups as relatively safe places to ask questions, source the information using keywords search, give feedback on services and promote their small businesses/skills/services.

Some relief agencies are now also moving to this space to connect with the refugee community. UNHCR has recently launched a Telegram group that is at this stage providing one-way verified information. They hope for this to become a two-way communication channel in the future.

Several informants from Government and relief agencies mentioned that the use of Telegram as a key communication channel in the response has resulted in a steep learning curve for them. Telegram is not widely used in Romania and several international agencies were also new to delivering Community Engagement and Accountability activities via the platform. Some agencies are now scraping the questions, concerns and complaints shared in these (open) groups and using them to inform their programming and communication priorities.

**OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND APPS**

Instagram and Viber are less prominent as information sources and are used as a second or third communication channel complementing existing channels on other platforms. WhatsApp is widely used by the host community, and some refugees have started to join this platform too. Teenagers noted that they are active users of Instagram, TikTok and Discord.

**OPEN GROUPS PREFERRED TO CLOSED GROUPS OR CHANNELS**

Most refugees do not distinguish between closed and open groups on

social media, but once explained the differences, they prefer open groups for information search and asking questions.

Despite the high information flow, less organised information and more irrelevant information, open groups on social media offer more chances to find or receive an answer and solve a problem faster (given the big number of subscribers), while closed groups are preferred for socialising, planning meet-ups and interest focused activities (hobbies, leisure, small services, etc.).

“*[there are] many participants, everyone writes and comments, a lot of garbage; but communication helped a lot to find a doctor.*”

Woman with children, Bucharest

*If a person shares information from their own experience, then this is reliable.*

Woman with children, Bucharest

Refugees prefer to use Telegram groups almost exclusively and do not regularly use channels,<sup>10</sup> even those from government or relief agencies that may be more likely to be sharing verified information. Participants in focus group discussions did not have a clear reason for this preference, but the need for connection and a preference for information to be verified through personal experience may be influencing this behaviour. Groups allow two-way communication - quick and actionable answers to questions, preferably from other people’s experiences. At the same time, informants complained about the information overload on groups because questions are often asked repeatedly. Channels do not always

allow users to respond with emojis, to ask questions or clarify information, unless the administrators specifically allow this type of interaction. With the general perception among refugees that information delivered through official channels is often too general - the lack of a two-way communication function may be another barrier. Interestingly, channels are preferred when looking for updates on Ukrainian news and the war in Ukraine.

**WEBSITES**

As part of this research we asked respondents about which websites they most frequently used to access information about the services available to them. Approximately 20 websites were mentioned by the most respondents in face-to-face, online surveys and focus groups.



Of those, [Dopomoha.ro](#) was mentioned the most consistently. The other websites mentioned were used to source accommodation (e.g. [Booking.com](#), [Airbnb.com](#), [imobiliare.ro](#), [unacoperis.ro](#)), look for employment (e.g. [ejobs.ro](#), [bestjobs.ro](#)) or transportation and general services in Romania ([cfrcalatori.ro](#), [Olx.ro](#)).

<sup>10</sup> A group is a two-way communication platform that allows people to join, post, comment and read information. In contrast, a channel is a communication platform run by administrators who can broadcast information to the group, it can be unidirectional if the administrators choose so, or it can become two-way, if the administrators enable the Comments feature to interact with their audience. (For more - [Telegram.org](#))

Another (now defunct) platform for Ukrainian refugee information, ([refugees.ro](http://refugees.ro)) was also mentioned, as were the websites of international organisations Red Cross and JRS but to a lesser extent than those listed above.

In general, respondents shared that they rarely have a specific website in mind when searching for information and will often go directly to a Google search instead. However, they would prefer that refugee response websites categorised information by location first, and then thematic category to allow them to better access localised, rather than general information.

### DOPOMOHA.RO

Dopomoha is a refugee information website which was set up within the first 48 hours of the response.<sup>11</sup> The platform was created by [Code for Romania](http://codeforromania.org) - a tech for social good organisation - and they now operate in partnership with the Department for Emergency Situations (DSU), UNHCR, IOM, and the National Romanian Council for Refugees (CNRR).

Dopomoha is among the most frequently mentioned websites used as an information source by refugees (500k unique users and 1 million visits between February 27 - August 1st, 2022<sup>12</sup>). Participants in focus groups found it useful upon arrival in Romania (or just before arriving), and the information they often used was related to legal issues (i.e. crossing border rules), overall costs of life in Romania and general information about Romanian systems (educational, legal, transportation). It was used also as a link to other information sources, and was seen as an official information portal.



*Dopomoha.ro led me to additional sources. This was the first outlet just a week after the start of the war. My daughter ended up in Romania [...] and as soon as she was in Romania,*

<sup>11</sup> Dopomoha.ro Key Informant Interview, August 25 2022

<sup>12</sup> Numbers supplied by Code for Romania in Key Informant Interview, 25 August 2022

*I immediately went to the official website [dopomoha.ro](http://dopomoha.ro), and there was a small flyer there. And in this flyer the name of the document was written, and in general, further, in principle, Google will help me.*

Woman, Braşov

Nevertheless, refugees mentioned that they do not use Dopomoha when looking for actionable information or when they have specific questions. They say that detailed content is often missing as well as specific information related to service availability and access in each region. Contact details regarding accommodation hosts, transportation, employment or healthcare specialists are perceived to be outdated.



*Domomoha.ro has generalised information, so you must definitely look for specific information on Facebook.*

Man, Bucharest

*Not up-to-date information on the site [dopomoha.ro](http://dopomoha.ro).*

Woman, Bucharest

Code for Romania sources official information for the site from the Government agencies, information gathered from relief and UN agencies operating in Romania and from field visits. They observed that Ukrainians hold a high level of trust in their government and this trust has translated over to information provided by Romanian government authority figures. Information is available in four languages (English, Ukrainian, Russian, and Romanian) and they collaborate with a team of Ukrainian translators who review translations for accuracy, readability and context.

The Code for Romania team has advertised the Dopomoha platform on social media, at border crossings through media in Romania and in Ukraine to raise awareness and users can submit questions, concerns and feedback via the

website to improve information quality or site functionality. They also have a team member dedicated to sharing information from Dopomoha in refugee chat channels, groups and pages in response to community questions.

### PROTECTIEUCRAINA.GOV.RO

The official Government website, [protectieucraina.gov.ro](http://protectieucraina.gov.ro), was launched in May 2022 and is run in Romanian and Ukrainian. The information published on the website is accumulated from relevant ministries in Romania. The information is structured by key categories: education, health, labour, housing, children and vulnerable groups, etc. The website uses a plugin created by the Code for Romania team to manage accommodation requests and donations.

This website was rarely mentioned by refugees as a source of information and was more often raised by host community volunteers, staff and hosts as a location for them to source information to share with the refugee community.

### MEDIA SOURCES

Romanian media is not a popular source of information, with only 13% of refugees using it as an information source at least “sometimes”. See [Annex 3](#). However, media monitoring revealed that the Romanian media does share information that could be of use to the Ukrainian refugee community.<sup>13</sup>

#### Information available to refugees in Ukrainian language in Romanian media

We reviewed media sources available to Ukrainian refugees in Romania by analysing media content in Ukrainian. Russian language was not included in this activity and warrants further investigation.

<sup>13</sup> We considered for analysis 130 articles in the Romanian online press, from the 4 cities where we conducted our FGDs, Bucharest, Iaşi, Braşov and Constanţa and some mainstream outlets with national coverage. We did not specifically monitor fringe outlets, but we did come upon such publications when we conducted targeted searches to identify harmful representations of refugees in the Romanian language media. From the Ukrainian media we analysed 45 articles.

We have identified three media outlets that offer content for refugees in Ukrainian: [Radio România Internațional](#), [RADOR](#) (Radio România Press Agency) and [TVR](#) (Romanian National Television). [Digi24](#) had a pilot program, but it was stopped late March. RRI and RADOR began providing news in Ukrainian for the transiting refugees from February 24th, initially covering the rapidly evolving Russian invasion in Ukraine and then (starting March 2nd) also providing [information](#) regarding conditions for entering and staying in Romania, and relief services available to them.



***We started on March 2nd to produce news bulletins in Ukrainian, 3 minutes long, with useful information. They were broadcast by the local stations of Radio România, Radio Sighet, Radio Iași and Radio Constanța. [...] This bulletin is also broadcasted by our colleagues from Radio Chișinău.***

Representative, RRI

The main topics which were addressed in Ukrainian language content are:

- Information about obtaining asylum or temporary protection
- Information about the services available to refugees (basic needs, accommodation, education, transport or healthcare, employment)
- Information about Romanian hotlines, online platforms and social media groups where support and help is offered to Ukrainian refugees
- Information about NGOs/ International Agencies that offer assistance and cash benefits



***We tried, at least in the beginning, to offer them sort of a guide for the use of Romanian cities. We tried to publish on our site all the information that is useful to them. [...] I, personally, have shared our news in groups like United for Ukraine or Bucharest helps Ukraine. We would also do the reverse - if we saw relevant information being posted in the groups, we would verify it and then also share it between our news.***

Representative, RADOR

News in Ukrainian is broadcast by Romanian public radio stations three times a day, and the transmission is also available on the website [www.rri.ro](http://www.rri.ro), on SoundCloud and Tuneln. The news bulletins mostly contain information related to the refugee services available to Ukrainians in Romania, and are not tailored to each region where they are broadcast. Radio România broadcasts live, online, the program of Radio Ukraine (UR-1), which can be listened to on the website [www.srr.ro](http://www.srr.ro). RADOR shares the Ukrainian language news bulletins created by RRI on its site, other news being accessible in Ukrainian if the refugees use the translation function of the site. [The Romanian National Television](#) (TVR) has been re-broadcasting a program of the Ukrainian national public television since March 11. The program is broadcast on TVR 3, TVR Cluj and TVR Iași from Monday to Sunday. In May, TVR also started airing [Romanian language lessons for Ukrainian refugees](#), twice a week. Some Ukrainian refugees told us during the FGDs that they are aware of the fact that Ukrainian public media programs are rebroadcast by the Romanian media, but they have no interest in these rebroadcast programs because they can access them via YouTube or via Ukrainian digital media.

RRI created a series of flyers with useful information about radio broadcasts and access to refugee services (accompanied by QR codes with redirection to the primary sources).

The flyers were distributed at the entry points Ukraine-Romania and at Gara de Nord (Bucharest train station) with the support of volunteers and the Ukrainian Union in Romania, who also promotes the RRI news bulletins in Ukrainian on their [Facebook page](#).

Based on a review of the content available to refugees through these platforms, the key findings are as follows:

- Content that is provided to refugees tends to focus on information related to their status as refugees, and does not necessarily connect them with other news, events and information about Romania.
- The information provided is standardised and general, regardless of the region where it is being broadcast to, which makes receiving locally relevant news sometimes difficult.
- While there is a translation function available on the news sites, machine-based translation is not always accurate and may distort information.

It is important to note that the Romanian media industry is significantly under-resourced and this may explain why few media institutions can provide content in Ukrainian, and why content is limited and not localised. Previous studies on the state of the press in Romania by The Centre for Independent Journalism<sup>14</sup> report a shortage in resources, both financial and human.

Media informants recognized the importance of collaborating with the NGOs involved in humanitarian response, or other relevant actors, in raising awareness of the media content available, or for sourcing information. Some partnerships have already been reported to emerge. The Centre for Independent Journalism (one of the authors of this report) is already collaborating with UNICEF and Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom Romania and Moldova to provide training and grants to Romanian journalists;

<sup>14</sup> Journalism in 2021: an obstacle course with fewer and fewer winners (report) ([cji.ro](http://cji.ro))

the Romanian Red Cross said in a KII it has a partnership with a television station they sometimes work with to share information about the response. There is room for more partnerships, support and collaborative channels between media and relief agencies to be developed. It was also shared with us that efforts for including Ukrainian refugees in content production are being made. There is room for the Ukrainian community to be more involved in content co-creation both for broadcast on traditional and social media platforms.

### Information available to refugees and to the host community in the Romanian language media

The Romanian media is sharing information that could prove actionable for the Ukrainian refugees, but due to the fact that very little is translated to Ukrainian or Russian, the access de facto to that information is challenging. This information is useful for the organisations or volunteers involved in the refugee response and the host community that share the information with the refugees they support.

The type of information provided by the Romanian media to the host community, at a glance:

- Updates about the war and EU decisions in support of Ukraine/ regarding sanctions against Russia;
- Updates and analyses on how the authorities are managing the refugee response
- Information about refugee services like the 50-20 program, transportation, etc. and relief actors involved in the response;
- Information about hotlines/ online platforms that they can use to help Ukrainian refugees;
- Calls for donations/volunteering, information about donation centres, lists of goods needed;
- Information about the number of refugees crossing to Romania, how many choose to stay, how many transit, how many have enlisted to the workforce;
- Human interest stories, like refugee or volunteer portraits;

### The portrayal of the refugee community in Romanian media

The articles we reviewed in the Romanian media, both national and local, present refugees and the response generally in neutral or positive terms. In late February and early March 2022, alongside reports related to the management of the refugee response, human interest stories featuring Ukrainian refugees at the borders would take the front pages of the outlets.

Dialogue was sparked within the public opinion on how the coverage respected and protected the human dignity, privacy and emotional balance of the Ukrainian refugees, especially of the children. Questions with the potential to amplify trauma (“What happened to your father?”, “Does the war scare you?”, etc.) were sometimes posed insistently by reporters broadcasting from the Romanian borders. The Centre for Independent Journalism, together with ActiveWatch, have spoken on the matter, advising the media to “show responsibility and decency in the accounts of the situation in Ukraine and the people fleeing the war.”<sup>15</sup>

The Romanian media reported on prejudice towards the Ukrainian refugee community - for example, scam attempts, sexual assaults or prejudice towards the Roma refugee community at Gara de Nord (train station in Bucharest). We also identified some articles that used inflammatory headlines, generalised experiences or presented one-sided stories. For example, “The Government does not have money for the Romanians, but it spends 196 million euros for Ukrainians”) or “Refugees from Ukraine, caught stealing in Bucharest! Zelenski's racketeers,<sup>16</sup> rounded up when trying to break into a house“.

### Decreasing visibility of the refugee response in the Romanian media

Compared to the first months of the war, the subject of refugee response

<sup>15</sup> <https://cji.ro/jurnalismul-impune-responsabilitate-si-respect-protejati-i-pe-cei-vulnerabili/>

<sup>16</sup> This refers to “răpăși” - in Romania the term is heavily associated with criminals from the USSR or those involved with the Russian mafia.

has been losing visibility over the summer, as the society has started to show less interest in the subject. Informants also mentioned that the general support shown by the Romanians has dropped lately and they have tried to keep the subject on the public agenda with occasional press releases or calls for donations and volunteers.

### Information available to refugees in Ukrainian media regarding their transit and stay in Romania

The monitoring of the Ukrainian media online revealed that information regarding the needs of Ukrainian refugees in Romania are mainly covered by the private media (43 sources) and public/government press (Дія - [diia.gov.ua](http://diia.gov.ua); Верховна Рада України - [rada.gov.ua](http://rada.gov.ua)).

The analysed Ukrainian press largely uses existing sources of information for refugees shared by the Romanian authorities.

The main topics addressed by the Ukrainian media are:

- Useful addresses, phone numbers and links to humanitarian organisations and information about refugee services offered by Romanian authorities and humanitarian organisations (for instance cash assistance programming);
- Legal information about gaining temporary protection and asylum status;
- Information about services available to them (healthcare access, transport, accommodation, education, safety and security, psychosocial relief)
- Costs of living in Romania, like food shopping prices, for example.

While the list of covered topics is diverse, information is very general and geared towards the early months of the response (Most references are dated March and April). For instance, information about transport is outdated and/or only for long-distance transit.



## Section 2: Trust

When asked about how much they trust information sources they use, many refugees mentioned that they “do not have the choice” and relying on an information source is not necessarily the same as having full trust in it.<sup>17</sup> Some information sources are unmissable, especially in context where information is rare and access to information constrained. If people use them, it’s not so much because they trust them, but because even poor and biased information can seem better than none.

As mentioned above, refugees in Romania often cast a wide net to access the information they need, incorporating a variety of sources (trusted or not) into their decision-making repertoire. This distinction between reliance (frequently using a channel or source to access information) and trust has very concrete implications. Reaching people through available but non-trusted channels provides little guarantee that audiences will believe the information received.

Participants suggested that they would trust information coming from official sources such as the Ukrainian Embassy, national authorities, international organisations, etc. but, in the early days of the response, they were forced to rely on the personal experiences shared by other refugees on social media because the lack of official, verified, and structured information provided on time.

Refugees rely a lot on each other’s experiences, and trust the information more if the person providing the information has had a personal experience.

“

***We started to trust other Ukrainian refugees, even strangers.***

Woman, Bucharest

Refugees report that they are more likely to doubt information when it is coming from second-hand experience. Some informants from Braşov and Iaşi named Telegram groups, created locally between refugees, as their most trusted source of information. Personal experience is becoming an important determination of trust in a piece of information.

For senior refugees, they feel more comfortable when they can personally verify information found in online groups. As an example, one senior woman, who attended our focus group, found out about the opportunity via a Telegram group, but preferred to visit the hotel where the session was being held to verify the information face-to-face with a staff member.

“

***So when you gave this information about the focus group, I took my grandson and specially made this route, came here, clarified exactly whether it would be. I was told yes, that's how it is. It was only when I checked it that I believed it.***

Woman, 65+, Bucharest

Because teenagers are digitally skilled and have a higher degree of awareness and ability to recognise online misinformation, teens were more likely to use offline sources to verify information they found online.

Some women shared that they often trust information when it comes from other women, rather than from men, specifically when it comes to information related to housing and transportation. There is room to investigate this trend further to understand the gender dynamics related to trust and information sources.

Some refugees prefer to trust information sources who are not even in Romania. As an example, one woman shared the story that she often asks her husband (who is still in Ukraine) to verify information she finds in Romania. He has a large network of friends who have wives in Romania, who he uses to verify information. She trusts her husband the most, and so despite being far away, he is still a reliable information source for her.

Insistent proposals to offer help also created doubts for women. One woman in Iaşi shared her experience where a man regularly offered help to refugee women on social media. Participants expressed that this behaviour made them suspicious of the man’s intentions. Women verified the intentions of the man through discussions with acquaintances who had a positive experience, and they determined the offers were genuine.

“

***There is a Romanian guy in this group, a volunteer who helps, and he writes how exactly he can help. I thought he wrote too much there and I didn't understand why he writes everyday, also in all groups. But when information has already appeared from people whom he really helped and, when he wrote something there later, he was trusted.***

Woman, Iaşi

<sup>17</sup> Internews had similar findings when looking at information people relied on, but did not necessarily trust in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. [Click here to read the 2021 report Understanding Trust: Global Conversations & Local Realities during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

“

*It depends on what the situation is. Well, for example, the issue of housing - a man offered housing in his house, he rented a room, then I personally would doubt it. He is a stranger.*

Woman, Iași

Telegram is perceived as being more trustworthy and “safe” when compared to other communication apps such as Viber or Facebook.

## INFORMATION SECURITY - PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

While refugees may face barriers in accessing the information they need, several refugees expressed concerns about the use and handling of their personal and identifying information in this response. Refugees shared that when they crossed the border into Romania, authorities advised them to keep identity papers safe. But later, many organisations asked for copies of identity documents in order to access assistance, in addition Romanian accommodation hosts are also sometimes required to share copies of their identity papers in order to access funding from the 50-20 program.

Refugees expressed concern that they do not have any control where the pictures of their passport and/or identity documents are circulating.

“

*We lose the sense of information safety. Our contacts are all over the internet. We escaped bombs, so the sense of threat has changed.*

Woman with children,  
Brașov

“

*We filled so many forms to get help, that we even don't know where the copies of our identity papers arrived, they are probably all over Europe.*

Woman, Iași

Refugees are not well informed about how their data is protected, stored and who it's shared with. While there are nominally data security procedures in place at most organisations, refugees do not feel confident that these are followed, and do not feel that government agencies or relief providers have done an adequate job informing refugees of their information security practices.

Some refugees feel there is a significant power imbalance at play where they have “no choice”: either they share these personal documents (whatever the personal risk), or they cannot access support. What it also highlights is the complexity of “consent” in a humanitarian settings.<sup>18</sup>

The current web of beneficiary databases may also increase risks to refugees in relation to privacy breaches in the hacking of a network or computer. Significant increases in cyber security attacks towards individuals, governments and humanitarian organisations have been well reported since the beginning of the war.<sup>19</sup>

Code for Romania reported that their Dopomoha site has been attacked several times in the last six months. The organisation identified two purposes of the attacks: first, to access the detailed personal information of refugees (mostly in the tools connecting refugees with accommodation providers), and second, discreditation of the platform itself via tampering with the website's content.

Code for Romania reportedly stores the sensitive information on different servers, so when the website was taken down, it was restored quickly.

Romanian Government officials confirmed to researchers that numerous attacks on official websites happened during the first month of the refugee crisis.

This is a major concern for aid agencies, whose mandate is to uphold the humanitarian principle of “do no harm”. Risks to the protection of beneficiary data are faced at every stage.

<sup>18</sup> See for example, [Is data consent in humanitarian contexts too much to ask?](#) and [How “informed” is consent?](#)

<sup>19</sup> For example, see <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/vladimir-putins-ukraine-invasion-is-the-worlds-first-full-scale-cyberwar/>

## Section 3: Information barriers

Refugees face a number of barriers, preventing them from accessing accurate, timely and useful information to inform decision making. According to the majority of refugees, language (57%) is the main barrier in accessing information in Romania. This barrier was also mentioned by 100% of key informants. Other key issues mentioned in our quantitative survey included complaints that information is contradictory (25%), that too many sources are needed to get complete information (25%), and 22% said they don't know how to access official information. Significantly, 26% of respondents said they faced no difficulties in accessing the information they needed. [See Annex 19.](#)

### LANGUAGE

Refugees see language as a major barrier in preventing them from accessing the humanitarian information they need. In particular, official information was mentioned as being harder to access in languages and formats understood by refugees. Refugees need to be able to communicate with service providers and legal advisers about their situation. When this is not possible, vulnerable individuals may be unable to access appropriate care or guidance.

Refugees called for more information to be made available in Ukrainian, for translations of official documents to be reviewed for accuracy and for Ukrainian interpreters to be registered or accredited. Poor translation is contributing to confusion and to the misinterpretation of official information. Refugees shared concerns that some interpreters used to access services, and in particular transportation, were not translating their words accurately and only translating the parts they perceived to be "commercially useful". For some refugees this has eroded their trust in interpreters. Even when information is translated, it may not be understood.

In particular, refugees called for complex legal documents and legislation to be provided in plain language to make the information more accessible.

Government key informants noted that they are struggling to be able to access enough Ukrainian translators. In particular, they have trouble finding interpreters who are also experts in specific thematic areas and understand the relevant terminology - for instance legal and medical.

Language is also a perceived barrier to providing feedback or complaints to service providers, as refugees believe nobody in Romania will be able to understand.



***It will be written in Russian, in Ukrainian. It doesn't matter, no one will read it.***

Man, Iași

Language may also be an impediment to reporting crimes and ensuring the safety of refugees. A fear of being perceived as "ungrateful" or a "trouble maker" or for police not understanding Ukrainian means that refugees prefer to not to send a police complaint or call the police when their rights are violated.

Several cases of discrimination were reported during focus group discussions, but the victims had chosen not to report these instances to the authorities. For example, damage to Ukrainian cars, if they are verbally harassed on the street, or if they are asked to pay for the accommodation in addition to the price agreed or not in adherence with the 50-20 program. Generally, only some Ukrainians who speak English said they would call the police in such situations.



***We don't know how to deal with the negativity, it's better to stay silent.***

Woman with children,  
Constanța

***There is no fight, what can we do? If the police arrive we might get deported. I do not feel safe here.***

Teenager, Constanța

Further community tensions exist for Russian speakers. Since the war in Ukraine started, there has been increasing social pressure for Ukrainians to avoid using the Russian language and this is an increasingly sensitive issue. According to research from international relief agency Clear Global, there are approximately 20 languages spoken in Ukraine. According to the 2001 census, 67% of the population speak Ukrainian and 30% speak Russian as their first language.<sup>20</sup>

However, as mentioned above - two thirds of respondents to our survey (71%) said that they speak Russian at home, this was corroborated by our online survey where 67% of people stated that they spoke Russian at home. Senior refugees in particular shared that they struggle communicating in Ukrainian.

While many refugees are bilingual, refugees shared stories on receiving hate messages when they used Russian to ask for help on social media. In one focus group a respondent said that he would prefer a "central website in an accessible language for all refugees", mentioning Russian and Ukrainian as the best options. This received a swift response from other group members who argued that Russian should never be used.

<sup>20</sup> Language data for Ukraine, Clear Global / Translators without Borders

There is clearly tension within the community on this issue and service providers need to be aware of these nuances to ensure people can access information not only in a language they can understand, but the language they feel more comfortable using. This is especially important when discussing sensitive issues such as access to healthcare, protection issues and legal services.

Communities of Roma refugees from Ukraine face other language challenges. Some Roma noted that there are some in their community that can confidently speak Romanian, and this allows them to more easily interact with Romanian service providers. However, anecdotally the Roma community also has higher levels of illiteracy, which can limit their access to written information in on and offline spaces.<sup>21</sup>



*We can communicate, but we can't read, and there are translator applications, but not everyone uses it.*

Woman, Roma, Bucharest

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT/ COORDINATION

The provision of information in the refugee response is perceived as being incoherent. Refugees say there is no clear understanding of how and who to ask for information from, and there are challenges receiving the information when and where you need it.

According to focus group participants, information found in different sources is often confusing, inconsistent and contradictory (or they cannot even find needed information, supposing that it does not exist).

Websites providing information about refugee services in Romania often contain outdated information.

Refugees report that they spend a significant amount of time trying to verify and fact-check information. They directly expressed the request to create one information resource that can cover the majority of their information needs. Government and service providers also expressed a preference for one online information source to be promoted as the "main" source of information, with other websites being reserved for specialist information needs. Government respondents in particular requested [Protectieucraina.gov.ro](http://Protectieucraina.gov.ro) to be the central source of information as they believe they have the greatest capacity to ensure information is up to date and accurate.

In addition, participants note that many websites providing overall information to refugees on the available services have chosen to categorise this information by topic. Respondents expressed a preference for information to be categorised by location first, and then topic, as many struggled to find information relevant to their specific location.

Twenty five percent of refugees chose to make additional comments at the end of the face-to-face survey related to information management: "there is lack of centralised information", "difficult to find, the information is scattered in different sources and it takes a lot of time to search", "one source with all the information in one place would be great".

## DIGITAL ACCESS

With so much of the available information concentrated online through websites, social media and messaging platforms and apps - refugees who do not have access to digital devices, or do not know how to use them, need additional support accessing the information they need.

This is a relatively small group of refugees, just over 1% told us that they don't use, or cannot access the internet at all. Senior refugees are among this group and they overcome this barrier by relying on younger relatives to access and interpret information for them.



*Lack of means (phones, tablets, computers) for many of us in accessing the Internet.*

Man, 65+, Bucharest

Teenagers in some areas also noted this barrier, with teenagers in Braşov less likely to own computers or tablets compared to those in Constanţa. In focus group discussions with people living with disabilities and their caregivers, they noted that they found Telegram to be a frustrating information source as it requires you to spend a lot of time reviewing the groups for information, or you miss out on vital details and experiences that are shared there. One man shared that he is diabetic and blind and requires a screen reader to access information on the internet. He desperately needs information about where to access insulin in Romania and is struggling to find this information without assistance.

With an increase in refugees turning to social media for information access, this trend has also seen an increase in scams and fraudulent behaviour. Almost one third of refugees experienced (27%) and/or witnessed (30%) at least one type of negative online behaviour. Most often, refugees experienced fake news (20%). Nineteen percent of refugees have witnessed threats towards other users with 9% experiencing them personally, while 16% have witnessed scams, 9% of respondents experiencing scams personally. Detailed data can be found in [Annex 8](#).



*By the way, I know a lot of scammers in groups, so you need to be careful regarding information.*

Man, Iaşi

<sup>21</sup> This research included only two Focus Group Discussions with Ukrainian ethnic minorities, including representatives of the Roma community. Further research is needed to fully understand their distinct information preferences, barriers and needs.

Some refugees noted that there has been an increase in "suspicious links" being shared in social media groups, for instance one example was a fraudulent message claiming to come from the Red Cross announcing a new cash assistance program. Reports of phishing, malware and other scams have led some refugees to stop clicking on any links shared in social media groups. One key informant noted that this fear of fraudulent behaviour, however well placed, is making it increasingly difficult for relief agencies to share information via verified links.



***Information appeared in May that it was possible to get financial assistance through the Red Cross. And for the first three days, many people were afraid and believed that this was a scam, because there were many similar links and similar deceptions before that moment. Therefore, they checked, as far as I know, and how they checked. We have a friend who works for the Red Cross. We called her, she turned to her superiors and said Yes, you can, it's true, really, and so on.***

Woman, Iași

## AGE APPROPRIATE INFORMATION

In focus group discussion with teenagers they shared that they found it hard to access information relevant to their needs. Many refugees in this age bracket felt that they lacked agency in the decision to move to Romania (this was made by their parents) and they now relied too heavily on their parents also for everyday information.

Service providers also noted a gap in information available to very young refugees who are likely to have different needs, preferences and interests compared to senior refugees. Information related to accessing mental health support for younger people was a need expressed by both older and younger refugees.

# Section 4: Information needs

Naturally, information needs have continually changed throughout the refugee response. In the last six months we have seen three distinct phases of need:

- Emergency needs:** the first weeks of the war when people looked for information regarding border crossings, long distance transport, immediate safety and options to relocate;
- Initial arrival needs:** finding access to basic services in Romania such as cash assistance, food, accommodation and basic necessities;
- Mid-longer term needs:** information to clarify existing services (including their expected duration) and to support temporary or longer term settling such as education, access to the labour market and integration. KIIs with government representatives stressed that they saw communication around social integration and mid-longer term information needs as the next communication challenge.

Our survey data suggests the top four information needs at this time are:



## Cash assistance

(74% - very important, 21% - somewhat important, 4% - not important in face-to-face survey; and mentioned by 83% of respondents of online survey);

very important



somewhat important



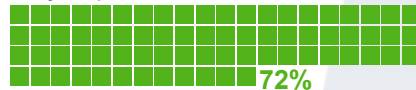
not important



## Healthcare

(72% - very important, 24% - somewhat important, 3% - not important in face-to-face survey; and mentioned by 73% of respondents of online survey);

very important



somewhat important



not important



## Basic products

(57% - very important, 32% - somewhat important in face-to-face survey, and mentioned by 56% of respondents of online survey);

very important



somewhat important



## Transportation

(53% - very important, 31% - somewhat important in face-to-face survey; and mentioned by 36% of respondents of online survey).

very important



somewhat important



Other topics with high importance are: legal assistance, accommodation, employment, children's education and technological products (mobile phone, computer, radio, television, mobile data, wifi points).<sup>22</sup>

Topics ranked as being less important at this time include: relocation to other countries (43% - not important), training and education for adults (33% - not important). While 45% of respondents said that information about mental health was "not important", researchers note that this topic was raised in almost every focus group held - in particular, in reference to accessing support for children, the older people. The difference between the survey results and FGDs can be explained by possible bias in measuring this variable due to English-Ukrainian translation (referred in Ukrainian version as to psychiatric assistance rather than psychological support). See Annex 11.

Depending on the presence and depth of the cooperation between different actors (local authorities, international and local relief organisations, volunteers, community influencers, diaspora and refugees) in different regions of Romania, the information needs might differ.

We investigated these issues further through KIIs and FGDs and found these trends:

## LEGAL INFORMATION IS INACCESSIBLE TO MANY

Limited access to clear, timely and actionable information is making it difficult for refugees to make decisions about their legal status in Romania.

While the researchers note that a lot of this information does exist on both Government and other response websites, the information is perceived to be complex, difficult to apply to individual circumstances, refugees would prefer to have more options to be able to ask questions about their status to choose what is best for them.

Refugees mentioned that they would like to be able to clarify legal information with a person over the phone, or for legal clinics to be set up in key refugee hubs where they can speak to someone face to face about their specific circumstances.

<sup>22</sup> Recent Protection Monitoring from UNHCR suggests that the main information needs are Financial aid (48%), Medical care (35%), job opportunities (32%) and Education 23%.

Key issues include:

**Rights under the Temporary or asylum status:**

Refugees from Ukraine have several options for a legal stay in Romania; two of them were considered (1) [Asylum protection](#) and refugee status, or (2) [Temporary protection](#) which currently allows them to stay in the country for up to one year.

Most refugees we spoke to preferred Temporary protection status to Asylum protection status, mainly for the reason of free circulation between Romania and Ukraine. This allowed them to visit their home or friends and family when needed.

At the time of publishing, people with Temporary protection status have the ability to work in Romania, however there are limited options to benefit from social protection payments, such as children allowances. Refugees mentioned they cannot find clear information regarding the rights guaranteed by Romanian authorities to the holders of Temporary protection (while they felt rights of Asylum holders are clear and accessible).

This caused feelings of injustice and inequity compared to Romanian citizens, as well as generated rumours both in host and refugee communities (e.g. Ukrainian refugees are using governmental money and deprive Romanian citizens from their resources, relief organisations are stealing money or don't distribute them in an equitable way, etc.).

“

**... does it mean that we are not equal in rights with Romanian citizens? We do not receive social payments like pensions or for children, but Romanians say that we are equal in rights.**

Woman, Braşov

**Cancellation of status:**

It is unclear for refugees under what circumstances the Temporary protection status can be withdrawn and under what circumstances refugees can be deported back to Ukraine. While the rules to travel from Romania to Ukraine and back

are more clear for refugees (the uncertainties were expressed only regarding the identity documents they need to cross Ukrainian-Romanian border vs. the transit through Republic of Moldova), the relocation procedure to another EU state when possessing a Temporary protection in Romania is unclear.

“

**Do the EU states have a unified database with all Ukrainian refugees? We want to move to Czech Republic, to Prague because there is a Ukrainian school there, but we don't know how to cancel the temporary protection status?**

Woman with children, Constanţa

**ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT**

Information about accommodation services is not consistent and is driving uncertainty and the spread of rumours in the community. The main information need raised in regards to accommodation was concern about the 50-20 accommodation support program.

The Romanian Government has implemented the [50-20 program](#), which allows private hosts to offer accommodation to refugees and benefit from a monthly payment of 50 RON per person per accommodation day and 20 RON per day for meals.

There is a desire from refugees to have a clear understanding of how long the program will operate so that they can plan accordingly and know their rights if they are unexpectedly evicted. Refugees in Constanţa shared stories of refugees who were asked to leave for "no reason" or told to leave accommodation in the lead up to the tourist season.

A lack of information about this support package and their rights is fuelling rumours within the refugee community and also causing uncertainty for Romanian people who are hosting refugees.

“

**We need to know when the program ends, because we need to decide whether to return to Ukraine if the program has ceased, or whether to stay in Romania if it's prolonged.**

Woman with children, Constanţa

There also remains an information gap for both refugees and for their hosts related to eligibility criteria and rules related to this scheme.

Refugees say that they are unsure of the rules related to the daily host payments. According to the law, the 20 RON daily food allowance can be given to the refugee, but it is entirely up to the host. The host can decide which is the best way to share the benefit with the refugee guests (cash, bank payment or providing food). Some refugees told us of cases where the payment was deliberately not given to refugees, but kept by the hosts for different reasons (need to pay bills, or simply not justified).

“

**Is the host supposed to pay us 20 RON?**

Woman, Constanţa

**There are also rumours that Romanians do not want to participate in this program. I have several friends, they all pay euros and cannot find housing under the 50-20 program. Yesterday at the Red Cross I met a girl. She says that the landlord refused to give her 20 RON daily. She even paid him the rent at the beginning, and then he told her to leave.**

Woman with children, Iaşi

Refugees shared that there are hosts who don't apply to participate in this program simply because they don't have enough knowledge or are poorly informed by the authorities. They might have heard it exists but are unsure where to find more information and prefer to not ask authorities.

“

*My host couldn't apply for the 50-20 program, because the office responsible for this program said that the program was closed. So, I put my host family in touch with my acquaintance — another Ukrainian refugee's host and he explained to my host how to apply for the program. Now my host is enrolled into the program.*

Woman, Constanța

*The Romanian government shall inform Romanians about the eligibility for the 50-20 program, Romanians don't want to apply for the program because they are not well informed.*

Woman, Constanța

Interviewed hosts confirmed the information shared by the refugees, that host community members often hesitate to benefit from the 50-20 program.

“

*I know people who were offering apartments, but they didn't know how to access the 50-20 program and it seemed complicated to them, and we explained to them it's not complicated at all.*

Host, Focșani

## EDUCATION

Schooling is one of the most mentioned concerns of parents and grandparents in FG discussions. While many parents expressed a preference for their children to continue their education online with schools in Ukraine, there is also a strong preference to access schools that teach in Ukrainian - of which there are very few in Romania.

When an Ukrainian online or offline school is not available, parents consider three main options: 1- enrol their child in a Romanian school,

2 - return to Ukraine, or 3- move to a third country with greater access to Ukrainian language schools.

A lack of clarity on adequate educational options in Romania is also contributing to a perceived prejudice from the wider school community.

“

*Romanian mums do not want to have Ukrainian children in classes with Romanian children. They think our children need more attention because they are new to the system and do not speak Romanian, thus their children will receive less attention from a teacher.*

Woman with children, Constanța

There were several key issues raised in relation to education and access to schools:

- **What will happen if I don't enrol my child in school in Romania?**

Because of barriers to access official information, parents do not know if there are any legal consequences if their children do not attend a Romanian school. Primary and secondary education is mandatory in Romania, and some parents fear that they might be deprived of their parental rights if they choose not to enrol their child.

- **What do I need to enrol my child in school?**

Refugees are mostly unsure of the eligibility criteria, application procedures, vaccination requirements, number of positions available, and the documents needed to enrol their children in school. Other concerns relate to whether documents need to be officially translated, legal nostrification, and what to do if their educational documents are still in Ukraine and cannot be obtained.

- **Where can I access a Ukrainian language school near me?**

Many Ukrainian refugees mentioned that they would prefer their children to continue Ukrainian education

programs, and receive accreditation by Romanian authorities. There are limited options for bilingual/ Ukrainian schools in Romania, with most located in Bucharest or the larger cities in Romania.<sup>23</sup>

- **Will previous education be recognised in Romania?**

Some refugees mentioned they had heard that if their children attend Romanian schools, they will be enrolled one grade lower than what they studied in Ukraine and will have the status of "audients" only. This raised concerns regarding the recognition by the Ukrainian education system of the school year. There is no understanding whether the school years in Romania will be equivalent to Ukrainian school years and vice versa.

“

*We do not understand the difference between two systems, and are afraid that our children will lose two school years falling behind.*

Woman with children, Constanța

- **Kindergartens and Universities**

Researchers noted similar concerns for a lack of information to access kindergartens and university education. Respondents noted a lack of knowledge on eligibility criteria, application processes and availability of places. University students also requested information on part-time jobs for students.

The lack of information about how to access kindergartens and child care options also has a direct impact on employment options among Ukrainian women.

“

*We want to work but we have no language skills and we can't leave children unattended and without being taken care of.*

Woman with children, Brașov

<sup>23</sup> <https://uur.ro/invataman/scoli-cu-predare-in-limba-ucraineana/?lang=en>



“

*I have children from 4 months to 9 years old. There is no information on kindergartens. It is not clear what is necessary, where it is necessary. There are many of us here, actually. In the public kindergarten, the older generation are all Romanians and do not speak English and it is difficult to communicate with them.*

Man, Iași

• **Adult Education**

Very few respondents mentioned the need for information to access adult education, however there were requests to access Romanian language training for the purpose of finding employment.

**ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE**

Healthcare is a subject of high interest for the majority of refugees. Information needed refers to the following aspects:

- **Family doctors** - most of the refugees struggled to find family doctors accepting refugees, mostly because of the language barrier. Lists of Ukrainian/Russian speaking family doctors have been shared by relief agencies, but refugees found them to be quickly out of date. Relief workers also shared a concern that many doctors are unaware of the various translation apps that can be used to assist in consultations and, as a result, are less willing to accept patients who do not speak Romanian. Some refugees in Bucharest reported that they can't register to family doctors because they don't have an address of residence on their papers.

“

*For a long time I tried to find a database of family doctors. Here the problem arises - someone knows English, and someone does not. [...]*

*There are on the websites lists of doctors. In fact, it turns out that the information about them is outdated. You call, and they say sorry, the information is not correct. You have wasted your time and there is no result.*

Man, Iași

- **Differences between Ukrainian and Romanian healthcare systems** - many refugees mentioned that they do not understand how the medical system in Romania works.

“

*Due to the fact that the healthcare system in Romania is different from the Ukrainian one, there is practically no information on the healthcare system (including how to sign an agreement with a family doctor).*

Woman with children, Bucharest

- **Free vs. paid medical services** - refugees stated that there is no available information regarding the full list of free and paid medical services; the information is very often based on personal experiences from other refugees and has a high degree of variability. The majority of refugees are aware that emergency medical help is free.
- **Vaccination for children and adults**, including COVID - where the vaccines can be given, how the registration will be done, what the vaccination scheme in Romania is, etc.;
- **Drug prescriptions** - how to obtain drug prescriptions, which drugs are free, what facilities have people with chronic illnesses, what are the replacement treatments for drugs that can't be found in Romania (i.e. produced in Ukraine).

“

*Our chronic diseases are always accompanied by pain. I tried to understand where to go for a drug prescription or free drugs - it's useless. We buy medicines with our own money.*

Woman with disabilities, Bucharest

- **Medical services for women**, including sexual and reproductive health services. Refugees asked where to find SRHR services or doctors, are they free or paid, etc. The information is incomplete or difficult to find, and some pregnant women travelled back to Ukraine to give birth there.
- **Free psychological aid** for refugees including children and senior people (no knowledge of hotlines, professionals, there are language barriers, etc.).

“

*Children and elderly are in dire need of psychological help. Generally, all of us need psychological help.*

Man, Constanța

Researchers also held focus groups with people living with disabilities and their caregivers; they found that most of the participants had a disability certificate issued by Ukrainian authorities. Based on that certificate they benefited in Ukraine from some facilities (ex. Free public transportation, free or price reduced drugs, etc.).

“

*There are a lot of groups (in social media) for products (Ukrainians in Europe, Ukrainians in Bucharest), but for health care - it is a complete collapse.*

Woman with disabilities, Bucharest

The information needs of people with disabilities were mostly related to transfer of disability status. The residential centre for refugees in Iași (Nicolina) provided information that the disability status issued in Ukraine is not valid in Romania and refugees with disability (or caregivers) must obtain a totally new certificate according to procedures (i.e. medical commission).

## TRANSPORTATION

While refugees felt they had enough information to make decisions for themselves in regards to long-distance transportation between countries, there remain gaps in their understanding of local transportation options and access requirements.

- **Free transport for refugees**

There is a lot of confusion related to whether local transportation is free for refugees, or whether they should be purchasing tickets. Officially, there is no ruling that public transportation in Bucharest is free for refugees, nevertheless many refugees do not pay for tickets, but are allowed free travel when they show controllers their Ukrainian documents. There are rumours that there have been some isolated incidents where refugees have been awarded fines for failing to show a ticket. In Iași only few refugees were aware that on Fridays the public transport is totally free for everyone.

Many refugees were aware of **free transportation at the national level (only railways)**. The program was extended several times, but there is no information for how long this will last.

- **Transportation of goods and passengers** between Romania and Ukraine

Many refugees search (usually on social media groups) for available and trustworthy transportation information from Romania to Ukraine and vice versa to send/receive documents and/or clothes, personal things. Post services are limited. Refugees however say they are not sure about what documents are needed to pass the border and/or transit Republic of Moldova.

“

*I tried to send a parcel to my friend in Kharkov, I came to the main post office and they told me that since everything is very serious in Kharkov now, and not only in Kharkov - in many cities on the list of banned places where they cannot send. [...] They said that I need to go somewhere else, and if I find in these lists of allowed (cities), then then go somewhere else .. I didn't understand anything.*

Woman, Brașov

*My mother does not have a [international] passport. She has an ordinary [national] passport and was looking for a car to travel through Moldova. I was scared. Someone said that it is possible, but I doubted.*

Woman, Iași

## EMPLOYMENT

Many refugees asked questions related to access to employment, skills and qualifications transfer and employment rights. As expressed earlier in the report, language is one of the main barriers to accessing employment in Romania with very few employers offering roles for applicants who cannot speak Romanian.

- **Employment access**

The information regarding available jobs for refugees is not centralised. Refugees are looking for jobs on local websites, such as: ejobs.ro, bestjobs.ro, olx.ro, dopomoha.ro or simply google. Many refugees rely on Telegram, Facebook and Viber in searching for a job.

There are Ukrainian refugees willing to work for the Ukrainian community (doctors, teachers, translators, accountants, etc.) according to their qualifications - but can't find specific information sources where these needs would be stated.

“

*Are there any employment opportunities for Ukrainian teachers? How to search for vacancies and get employed in Romania?*

Woman, Brașov

Searching for employment online could present protection risks for the employee. In KIIs with the administrators of refugee Facebook and Telegram groups, they noted that they were aware of online threats associated with human trafficking in particular. Many had developed moderation rules for their groups where they check and delete any suspicious links and vacancy announcements, and pin warning posts to protect the members of their groups.

- **Language requirements and skills transfer**

Interestingly, of the refugees we spoke to that did find employment, the majority of these respondents were able to find a role in the same industry in which they were working in Ukraine. However this is a small percentage of overall respondents and most have been unable to secure employment to date.

The main barrier to getting a job in your existing qualification is the need for Romanian language skills and confusion over the recognition of Ukrainian higher education qualifications and experience in Romania. Even if the refugees are willing to learn Romanian language and attend additional qualification courses, they are unsure of how to go about it.

“

*Volunteers and job centres offer jobs without qualification. I used to be a well-paid professional and I want to work using my skills and experience here.*

Woman, Constanța

*There is no understanding in the preparation of many documents for employment, including confirmation of a Ukrainian diploma in Romania.*

Woman with children, Bucharest

• **Employment rules and rights**

Refugees are largely unaware of the rights they have in employment and a lack of information on legal rates of pay and conditions is leading to concern and rumours among the refugee community.



***Employed Ukrainian refugees are allegedly paid less for the same work and same hours compared to Romanians.***

Woman, Constanța

Refugees also reported cases where Romanian employers avoid hiring refugees because they were unsure of whether it was legal and the hiring procedures needed.



***There is a lack of awareness among Romanian employers on how to hire Ukrainian refugees. My mom is a massage therapist, she was invited many times for job interviews in Spa centres. She was not hired because they do not know how to employ a refugee.***

Woman with children, Iași

Refugees are unsure if they will lose benefits if they gain employment and there is also a need to clarify tax legislation applicable to several situations: (1) - employees of foreign companies that continue to work online from Romania (being employed in Ukraine) - tax policies and mechanism; (2) individual entrepreneurs - residency of the company.



***If we work remotely in a Ukrainian organisation, then after 183 days of stay in Romania I become a resident and I must pay taxes for all income, from salary too. There (in Ukraine), the employer pays 22% for me. And here (in Romania) I have to pay 40% it seems.***

Woman with children, Iași

People with disabilities and their carers want more information on how to find part-time work when they cannot work full time because of their disability and what rights they have to employment. A participant of a focus group told researchers that her host family found her a part-time job as cleaning lady in a shopping centre, but when the employer learned that she has a specific health condition, suddenly refused to hire her, being afraid of perceived liability risks.

• **Youth Employment**

There is a lack of information regarding teenagers' employment (16-18 years old) in Romania: legal aspects (need parents' permissions, but not all teenagers came with parents to Romania), jobs available for them, employers open to hire teenagers etc.



***Please expand the information on employment, so that we could work legally until the age of 18, make a more permissive law - we will raise the economy for you, we want to work and we will work efficiently.***

Teenager, Bucharest

***I am looking for a job to help my family, but I do not speak Romanian, I have to learn it to find a part-time job.***

Teenager, Brașov

***My Ukrainian friends, 16 and 18 years old, got jobs as waiters, worked longer than indicated in the contract and they were underpaid, so it's scary to look for a job on your own.***

Teenager, Constanța

**CASH ASSISTANCE**

Refugees called for more information on eligibility criteria for cash assistance and the likely duration of the program. Some respondents were unsure if they were eligible to enrol in multiple cash assistance programs, and when and where the funds were distributed.

Information about access and eligibility requirements also varied. Refugees in a town with a refugee hub, or a physical service centre related to cash assistance reported better access to information than those who relied on hotlines or information found online.



***Do the UN and ICRC have the same lists? People receiving cash from one organisation aren't eligible to receive cash from another one, are they? Will the international organisations prolong the program? Are there any organisations paying cash to Ukrainian refugees after the UN and IFCR programs are closed?***

Woman, Constanța

***Lots of information and it's constantly changing. It's about payments. Will or will not be extended?***

Woman, Iași

***We are humble people and we can't ask for more but we still need aid from international organisations and Romanian authorities for some time.***

Woman, 65+, Brașov

Teenagers are often support points for their parents when searching the information about cash and humanitarian aid provided to refugees. They mentioned that there is a lot of misinformation regarding the places and times of cash vouchers or goods distribution, and perceived the process of obtaining it as a "fight" - "those who fight better, get it" [Teenager, Constanța]. A similar experience was shared by a 15 year old boy who said he went to the site of an aid distribution twice to get aid, and both times returned empty-handed. He claimed the bags with aid were allegedly thrown into the crowd of people or distributed unfairly.

## Section 5: Rumours and Misinformation

Refugees are both the source and the target of misinformation circulating in the community. When a crisis hits, the immediate needs of shelter, food, clean water and medical treatment take priority. But even with the best of planning, these services can be brought down, abandoned or distrusted because of rumours. But rumours can be a very helpful tool for responders to understand hyper-local information needs, gaps, preferences and rising protection concerns or tensions.<sup>24</sup>

As mentioned earlier in the report, a complex and often confusing information landscape is contributing to refugees not being sure what information is accurate (and importantly, in-date) as well as relying heavily on friends, family and other refugees as information sources. This contributes to the spread of misinformation among the refugee community as information may be misunderstood, misinterpreted and in some cases, mistranslated.



***We have to check every piece of information.***

Woman with children, Bucharest

Both Government and Humanitarian agencies pointed to misinformation challenges in their interviews and the delicate balance of wanting refugees to communicate in the way they prefer, while also wanting some control over the quality of information circulating. The heavy use of social media as a communication platform also makes it challenging to identify and address misinformation before it spreads widely.



***On Viber there is mostly false information, a lot of fakes. They write one thing, I came there - it is another thing.***

Man, Bucharest

In recent months, the Government, the humanitarian actors and administrators of Facebook groups reported an increasing number of disinformation and misinformation about Ukrainian refugees.

There are concerns for protection risks that are evident in this information space, in particular with regard to trafficking and abuse. It is assumed that some portion may be disinformation campaigns supported by Russia.

The Romanian Government says it is working to identify Russian propaganda.<sup>25</sup> Common narratives in these campaigns are tailored to mobilise division between the Romanian population and Ukrainian refugees and promote the idea that they cannot be trusted, or should not receive this level of support. The Government declared it is working to combat these narratives, however they note that they are cautious not to report too heavily on refugee issues to debunk the disinformation as there is a concern it could inflame tensions further.

We also spoke to the administrators of Facebook social media groups to understand their approach to misinformation. Administrators told us that they are aware of this challenge and they (mostly) have created individual moderation rules and procedures in response. They attempt to verify information posted in their groups, and if they suspect information or a link may be fraudulent, they delete the post. In Telegram channels, the moderation

policies appear to be less strict and heavily depend on moderator proficiency with the tool. Some administrators introduced bots designed to delete all suspicious links (news, scams, google forms, etc). All of them use the "Pinned posts" function to accentuate the information verified by admins and to combat misinformation. If a misleading post is detected, it's not deleted, but the administrator will comment with the correct information or a link to a pinned post with verified information.

While this project did not undertake extensive mapping of rumours circulating within the refugee community, rumours were commonly shared with researchers through KIs and FGDs. These rumours fell into these main categories:

### **Access to services:**

Refugees shared several rumours related to questions about service offerings and eligibility and access requirements. Public transport and parking was a popular topic, in particular in relation to payment and the issuing of fines. Refugees also shared incidents of perceived unfair distributions of humanitarian aid and, in particular, refugees that had managed to receive cash assistance from two or more organisations, others that claimed aid was "thrown from the back of a truck" and "the one who fights best gets it". There was another rumour heard mostly from younger refugees, that they feared if they got a job they would be kicked out of accommodation centres.

### **Fear of deportation:**

Male refugees (particularly in Constanța and Brașov) shared concerns about male refugees being extradited to Ukraine to join the war efforts.

<sup>24</sup> Managing Misinformation in a Humanitarian Context, Internews 2019

<sup>25</sup> Key Informant Interview, Romanian Government, August 2022

<sup>26</sup> For the purposes of this section, a rumour is defined as a piece of information that has not yet been verified. Included here are allegations that may upon investigation be found to be true, false, or somewhere in-between.

### **Protection concerns and safety:**

Rumours related to safety and security were about the alleged kidnapping of children (in Mamaia/ Galați) shared mostly by women (both with and without children and young people). Refugees also shared concerns about scammers and pseudo-volunteers who were targeting refugees.

### **Prejudice:**

There were significant reports from refugees related to perceived or actual prejudice experienced during their stay in Romania. Ukrainian refugees noted a "tiredness" from the host community. They feel there has been a shift.

Ukrainians felt total support at the initial stages of the war, now they feel the compassion has decreased and they are often asked why they are not employed and why they receive aid. Respondents said they feel a need to regularly explain their situation to local communities.

People shared stories of cars with Ukrainian number plates being scratched, and Russian songs being sung and fingers being shown in reaction to people speaking Ukrainian.

Ukrainian mothers shared the concern that their children were being unjustly blamed for damages and stealing. In contrast, Ukrainian mothers also shared stories about their children being robbed on the streets or being told to return to Ukraine.

On the issue of employment, refugees shared rumours that they had heard that refugees are paid less - sometimes half the amount - of similar work performed by Romanian citizens. This of course is damaging to refugees who feel persecuted, but this narrative also contributes to tensions with the Romanian community who may feel that Ukrainians will undercut the job market and reduce opportunities for them.

There is a perception circulating among the host community that refugees may be untidy or disrespectful. This is impacting access to accommodation as some landlords prefer not to rent to refugees. Refugees are attempting to combat this narrative themselves by sharing announcements on Facebook reassuring future landlords that refugees are tidy and respectful. Similarly, refugees feel they are being blamed for the increase in prices for rent and everyday goods.

“

*I was told by a Romanian woman that Ukrainians are untidy (left messy apartments) and aggressive, and don't know local rules like giving signals in cars is offensive in Romania. They also think that we are ungrateful and spoiled because we are rich.*

Teenager, Constanța

## Section 6: Complaints and Feedback

While Complaints and Feedback mechanisms do exist, Ukrainian refugees are not yet regularly using them to share negative feedback or suggestions for service improvement. Overwhelmingly, refugees told us that they fear being perceived as "ungrateful" if they share negative feedback for services provided to them by either the Government or relief agencies.

“

***Maybe I would like to (leave feedback). But everyone understands that tomorrow you will have to come back to the same place. And you can't write a bad review, because you will come there tomorrow.***

Woman, Iași

A woman in Bucharest shared her experience with us. She had accepted free accommodation from a man, who then sexually harassed her and other refugee tenants. The woman told us that she had not reported this incident to the authorities, or left a negative review online following the incident because, "he offered us the accommodation for free, why complain?". After encouragement from other FGD participants, the woman was provided with information on how to report the incident with the aim of preventing other women being targeted by this host.

Another major barrier to sharing feedback and complaints is that many people do not know where or how they can give feedback. More than 30% of respondents mentioned that they don't know where to give feedback, and 50% said they "somewhat know" how and where they can give feedback on refugee services.

Participants also expressed that they often will not call hotlines, as they assume the call operators will not speak Ukrainian or Russian - which is a challenge that is gradually being addressed with more organisations hiring Ukrainian speakers as call centre operators.

Some refugees were feeling the impacts of survey fatigue and questioned whether providing feedback would result in any improvement.

“

***We have somewhere to ask our questions and answers. Therefore, we try to convey our questions through someone, through you, through other sources. There were many focus groups, for example, on Zoom, and in others, and other groups. But so far we have not received an answer... nothing has improved, it's pointless.***

Woman, Iași

Despite these barriers, the survey revealed that 65% of refugees feel it is very important to give feedback and, given the right conditions, would be happy to. Only 13% do not give feedback because they don't want to do it. See [Annex 12](#), [Annex 13](#) and [Annex 11](#). The majority of Ukrainian refugees in this survey say they would leave feedback if they were asked to do so, and if a platform for feedback would be more available.

“

***If we are asked to leave a review - we will leave it, but otherwise - there is no need.***

Man, Bucharest

According to the face-to-face survey, most refugees (59%) prefer to give feedback in a private message (on Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, Viber, email), in person/face-to-face (35%) and in public review on social media/websites (28%). See [Annex 13](#). Ukrainian refugees in Brașov and Constanța told us they actively use the feedback mechanism in Google maps to learn about services, hostels, restaurants and cafes.

“

***In cafes and restaurants where they fed us for free, I left reviews on Facebook.***

Man, Bucharest

Participants suggested other means that they would prefer to use to give feedback. One popular suggestion was to use a 1-10 grading system through hotlines or anonymous online forms.

Government and Humanitarian actors consulted in this research acknowledge the need for better mechanisms to systematically collect feedback to inform decision making. Humanitarians are increasingly accepting that to deliver appropriate and sustainable solutions we need to listen to affected populations, respond to what they tell us and include them into every part of a humanitarian response.<sup>27</sup>

Government respondents noted that this has been a gap to date, not because the input is not valued, but due to resource and time limitations. There is also a perception that once the refugee community makes a "mental shift" to consider Romania as their home for the medium term, refugees may feel more interested in giving feedback and being involved in policy and programming design.

<sup>27</sup> For example, the [Grand Bargain](#) and [Core Humanitarian Standards](#)

There was also consensus on the need to coordinate accountability activities. Respondents stressed that there exists a confusing landscape of competing hotlines and other mechanisms currently in place. This could be preventing refugees from knowing where they should be sharing their thoughts and prevents the wider response from benefiting from this feedback. A number of individual feedback mechanisms do exist - mostly to provide input into individual agencies services and activities.<sup>28</sup> This information is for internal purposes and is not regularly shared among response actors.

Through the Accountability to Affected People/Populations (AAP) Working Group, UNHCR and UNICEF have developed a joint Complaints and Feedback reporting mechanism and are working to encourage wider use by response actors. The system utilises a Kobo Toolbox reporting form that can be used by any interested actor. Information collected through this platform will be analysed in a central database, with key trends in questions, complaints and feedback shared with the wider response. UNHCR is also establishing a regional call centre for all countries in the region that have accepted refugees from Ukraine. The aim of this service is for operators to respond to the bulk of general information, complaints and feedback with specialised questions or complaints then being referred to the appropriate service operators at the country level. UNHCR will also be installing physical complaints boxes for people that feel more comfortable sharing feedback in written form.

In September, the Government plans to launch a new hotline that they hope will be a central resource for refugees looking for information or wishing to share complaints or feedback on Government operated services. The hotline (using the easy to remember number, 345678) will use Interactive Voice Response (IVR) to direct callers to the relevant ministry.

Callers will be supported with simultaneous interpretation, and while the service is designed to support Government programming, the operators will also collect feedback on the wider response and forward information and callers to the relevant service providers.

More actors are now moving to Telegram, setting official channels to communicate with communities directly, and employing Ukrainian refugees to monitor the social media groups and to share verified information both directly within these groups and through community outreach.

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<sup>28</sup> For example, IFRC and Romania Red Cross operate a hotline (+40 374 415 000) and in-person service centre specifically servicing their cash distribution program. The call centre is staffed by Ukrainian refugees who can also refer callers to other information sources or call centres if their question does not relate to Red Cross programming. UNHCR has three hotlines currently, one connected to their cash program, and two to provide feedback on their partner organisations.

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# CONCLUSION

***In humanitarian response, governments, the private sector and relief agencies need to act fast to respond to the most pressing needs. Similarly, in the response to the war in Ukraine, a lot has been achieved in the last six months to ensure refugees could access accommodation, food, cash and basic assistance. However within this response, there remain gaps in relation to clear, accurate and accessible information channels.***

The refugee community and volunteers from Romania were quick to respond to this information vacuum - establishing their own groups and networks that continue to dominate this space. But this grassroots and ad hoc approach to information provision is sometimes leaving communities wanting. Refugees feel overwhelmed about the number of information sources in use, unsure what information is accurate, timely and available to support their decision making.

Now that the response has passed the six month mark, information needs are shifting to the medium and longer term pressures. Refugees are demanding certainty - where will they be in the coming months, what services will be available to them and importantly how they can begin to integrate in a community that is, for some, feeling increasingly less welcome.

Media should also be considered as an actor in this response and supported to play a positive role to meet the information needs of both communities, identify rumours and misinformation and address harmful stereotypes that can contribute to tensions between host and refugee communities. To be an effective Accountability actor, media need to understand the response, how decisions are made, how resources are allocated and to whom, so that they can translate this complex landscape for their audiences. In addition, media should be supported to understand Humanitarian Standards so they can, through their journalism, advocate for the needs of audiences, identify gaps and act as a complaints and feedback mechanism.

Government and relief agencies have now had time to establish the majority of activities and have the opportunity to respond to their Grand Bargain commitments to “include the people affected by humanitarian crises and their communities in our decisions to be certain that the humanitarian response is relevant, timely, effective and efficient”<sup>29</sup>.

These efforts are best placed when communities can meaningfully contribute to the identification of initial needs, preferences and approach in the early stages of a response. But it is not too late to take proactive steps to involve the community, and their questions, concerns and ideas, in the design of the services that may continue to support both the refugee and the host communities for many months to come.

The war in Ukraine triggered one of the largest and fastest refugee movements that Europe has witnessed since the end of World War II, and Ukraine's neighbours responded with an unprecedented outpouring of public and political support for the refugees. The refugee response is also unique with a heavy reliance on cash based programming, record numbers of refugees being hosted by ordinary Romanians and social media dominating the information ecosystem. But while the response may appear different to what you have witnessed in other contexts, some realities remain the same. For people to make well informed decisions for themselves and their families, to verify information, reduce misinformation and to feel agency, they need two things: a healthy information ecosystem and opportunities to have their voice heard. We hope that this report contributes to this aim and works to elevate community engagement and accountability to play a starring role in this next stage of the response.

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<sup>29</sup> Grand Bargain Signatories Commitment, 2016



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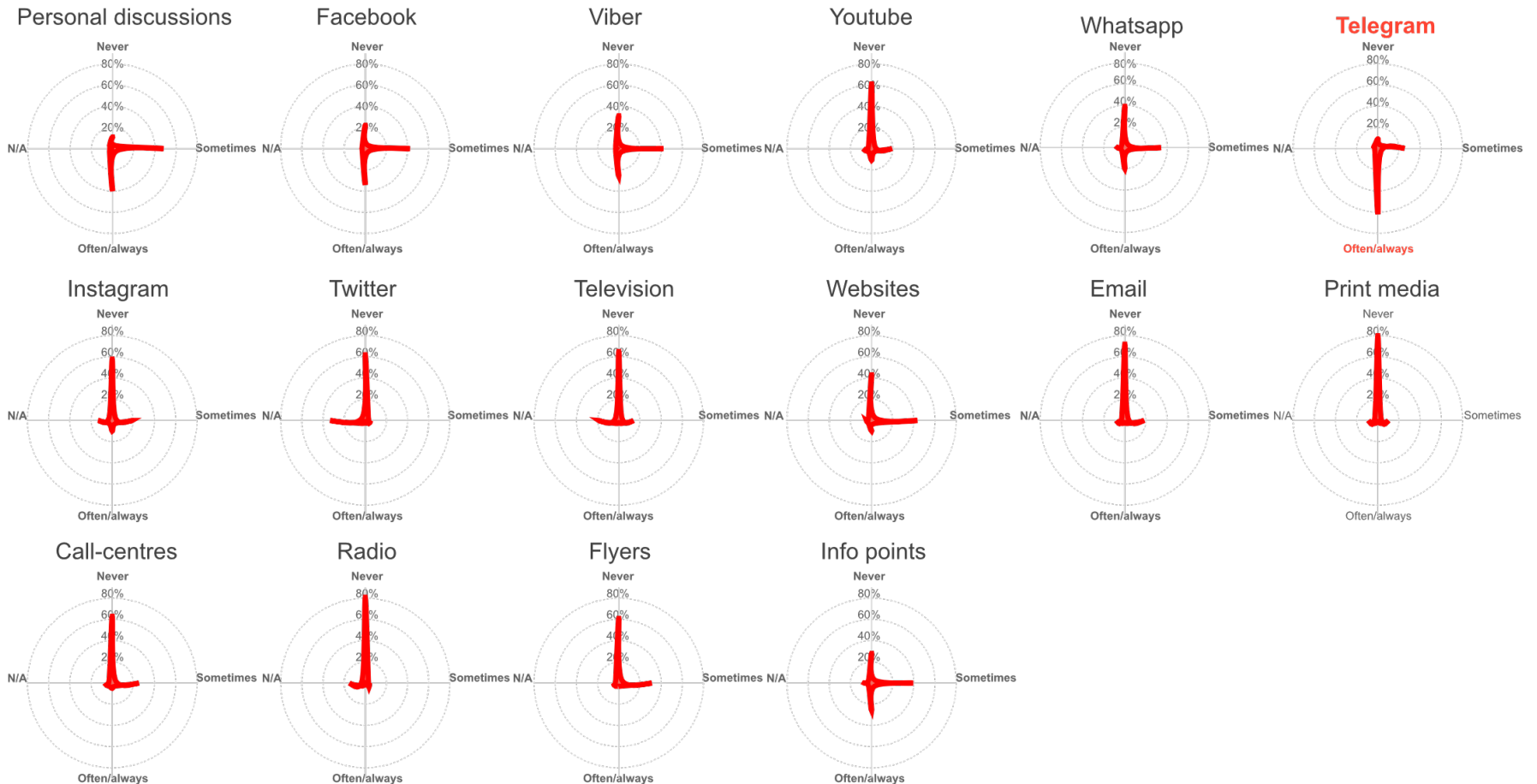
# **ANNEXES**

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# Annex 1

% of answers to question “8. How often do you use the following channels to get information you need regarding your stay in Romania?”  
Face-to-face survey, question 8 (close-ended)

	8.1. Personal discussions	8.2. Facebook	8.3. Viber	8.4. Youtube	8.5. Whatsapp	8.6. Telegram	8.7. Instagram	8.8. Twitter	8.9. Television	8.10. Websites	8.11. Email	8.12. Print media	8.13. Call-centres	8.14. Radio	8.15. Flyers	8.16. Info points
Never	11%	22%	31%	61%	39%	9%	58%	62%	65%	43%	72%	80%	63%	81%	61%	28%
Sometimes	48%	42%	42%	19%	34%	25%	19%	5%	14%	43%	18%	10%	25%	4%	31%	39%
Often/Always	40%	34%	26%	11%	20%	62%	10%	1%	2%	10%	2%	1%	5%	0%	3%	26%
N/A	1%	3%	2%	8%	7%	4%	13%	33%	19%	5%	8%	9%	7%	15%	5%	7%



## Annex 2

Most mentioned groups or pages on any social media platform that has been considered useful by Ukrainian refugees to get information in Romania (mentioned by >10 respondents).

Face-to-face survey, question 13 (open-ended).

Total nr. of mentions	Groups or pages name	Platform
124	укр в бухаресте/наши в Бухаресте (Fb) eng. Ukrainians in Bucharest	Facebook
97	Dopomoha.ro (web)	Web
93	Help for Ukrainian in Romania/Допомога українцям в Румунії/Допомога біженцям/Ajutor pentru Ucraina (Fb)	Facebook
92	iasul with ukraine /ТУкраинцы в Яссах (Tg)	Telegram
74	Pomosh v buhareste/Допомога в Бухаресті (Tg)	Telegram
64	Украинцы в Бухаресте/ (Tg)	Telegram
46	Constanța ajuta refugiatii din Ucraina/Constanța helps refugees in Ukraine.Група українців в Констанці в Фейсбуці (Fb)	Facebook
43	Українці в Констанці/украинцы в Констанции (Tg)	Telegram
41	Мамочки в Бухаресте/"Мамы в Румынии. Бухарест."/ukrainian moms Bucharest (Tg)	Telegram
39	iasul with Ukraine (Fb)	Facebook
37	(Брашов для України)/Брашов для Украины (Tg)	Telegram
36	Bucuresti Ajuta Ucraina/Бухарест допомагає українцям/Допомога в Бухаресті (fb)	Facebook
34	Украинцы в Румынии (Tg)	Telegram
25	Romania Ajuta Ucraina/ajutor pentru Ucraina (Fb)	Facebook
17	Об'єднані за Україну/ Uniti pentru Ucraina/United for Ukraine/Uniunea pentru ucraineni (Fb)	Facebook
16	поміч біженцям в Румунії/поміч біженцям в Румунії/ (Vb)	Viber
16	Ukrainian moms/ МАМИ з дітьми/Мами в Румунії (Tg)	Telegram
11	Украинцы в Брашове (Whatsapp)	Whatsapp

Most mentioned groups or pages on any social media platform that has been considered useful by Ukrainian refugees to get information in Romania (mentioned by >5 respondents).

Online survey, question 11 (open-ended).

Total nr. of mentions	% (out of 212 respondents)	Name of groups	Platform
29	13.7	Група телеграм «Українці в Румунії», <a href="https://t.me/UkrainiansinRomania">https://t.me/UkrainiansinRomania</a> UkrainiansinRomania	Telegram
22	10.4	Українці в Яссах. Telegram "Ukrainians in Iași, Romania" <a href="https://t.me/iași_ua">https://t.me/iași_ua</a>	Telegram
16	7.5	Група телеграм «Українці в Констанце», <a href="https://t.me/UkraineConstanta">https://t.me/UkraineConstanta</a>	Telegram
16	7.5	Брашов для українців / Брашов для України / "Брашов для України", <a href="https://t.me/Braşov_ua">https://t.me/Braşov_ua</a>	Telegram
15	7.1	Група фейсбук «uniti pentru Ucraina» <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/unitipentruucraina/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/unitipentruucraina/</a>	Facebook
15	7.1	Фейсбук: Українці в Румунії / <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/UkrRom/?ref=share">https://www.facebook.com/groups/UkrRom/?ref=share</a>	Facebook
12	5.7	українці в брашове <Брашов для України:Обсуждение> <a href="https://t.me/UA_Help_Braşov">https://t.me/UA_Help_Braşov</a> "	Telegram
8	3.8	Українці в Бухаресте	Facebook
7	3.3	Мамочки в Румунії / Телеграмм Мамы в Румунії <a href="https://t.me/+mtoJd2VI_iUyNjZi">https://t.me/+mtoJd2VI_iUyNjZi</a>	Telegram
6	2.8	Вайбер: Українці в Бухаресті.	Viber
6	2.8	Telegram: <a href="https://t.me/DopomogaRomania/">https://t.me/DopomogaRomania/</a> . Телеграмм «українці в Бухаресте» / Помощь в Бухаресте, Українці в Румунії	Telegram
6	2.8	Вебсайт. <a href="http://dopomoha.ro">dopomoha.ro</a> <a href="https://www.google.com/url?q=https://dopomoha.ro&amp;sa=D&amp;source=editors&amp;ust=1659535367430964&amp;usq=AOvVaw3k8Vvx2xM38vW0GfsYT5ZS">https://www.google.com/url?q=https://dopomoha.ro&amp;sa=D&amp;source=editors&amp;ust=1659535367430964&amp;usq=AOvVaw3k8Vvx2xM38vW0GfsYT5ZS</a>	Website

### Annex 3

% of answers to question “11. How often do you use the following sources when you want to access information about refugee services (accommodation, food, other basic needs) in Romania?”

Face-to-face survey, question 11 (close-ended), frequencies.

	11.1. Romanian websites	11.2. Religion leaders and organisations	11.3. Romanian media	11.4. Ukrainian media	11.5. Ukrainian people in Romania	11.6. Facebook groups worldwide	11.7. Viber/ Whatsapp groups for Ukrainians in Romania	11.9. Official sources of Romanian authorities	11.10. Telegram channels for Ukrainians in Romania	11.11. NGOs and International Agencies (UN/NGO)	11.12. Romanian citizens
Never	40%	59%	69%	46%	7%	34%	31%	66%	15%	49%	15%
Sometimes	46%	24%	11%	31%	31%	34%	38%	21%	20%	37%	38%
Often/Always	9%	9%	2%	17%	61%	28%	28%	4%	63%	8%	45%
Missing	5%	8%	18%	6%	1%	4%	3%	9%	2%	6%	2%

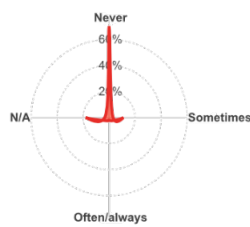
Romanian websites



Religion leaders and organisations



Romanian media



Ukrainian media



Ukrainian people in Romania



Facebook groups



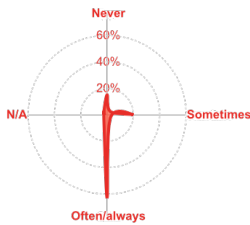
Viber/ Whatsapp groups for Ukrainians in Romania



Official sources of Romanian authorities



Telegram channels for Ukrainians in Romania



NGOs and International Agencies (UN/NGO)

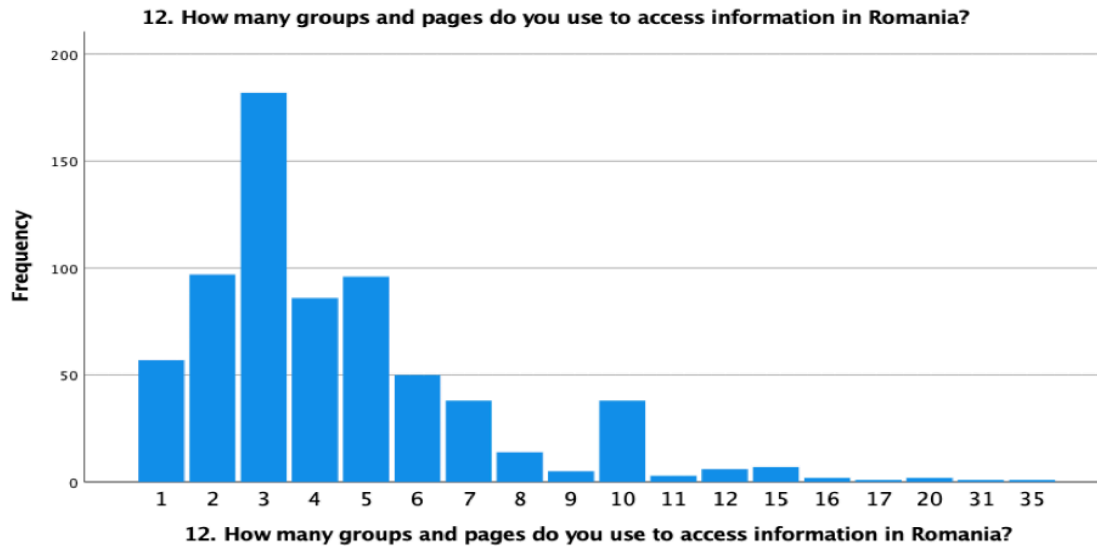


Romanian citizens



## Annex 4

The distribution of the number of groups and pages used to access information in Romania. Face-to-face survey, question 12 (open-ended).



Correlations between Age, Duration of stay in Romania and Nr. of social media groups and pages used.

	1. Age	6. How many months have you been staying in Romania?	12. How many groups and pages do you use to access information in Romania?
6. How many months have you been staying in Romania?	0.056	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.133		
N	731	731	
12. How many groups and pages do you use to access information in Romania?	-.129**	0.022	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	0.563	
N	686	685	686

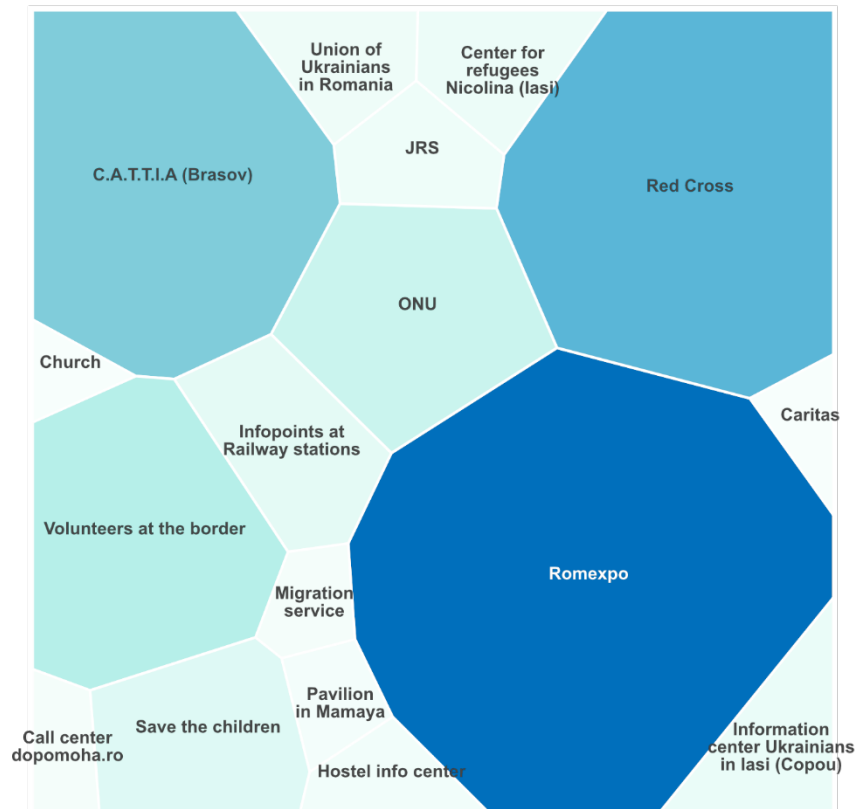
\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Annex 5

Most mentioned Info points and call centres that have been considered useful by Ukrainian refugees to get information in Romania (mentioned by >5 respondents).

Face-to-face survey, question 14 (open-ended).

Total nr. of mentions	Info points, call centres
184	Romexpo
120	Red Cross
103	C.A.T.T.I.A (Braşov )
66	Volunteers at the border
51	UN
34	Save the children
28	Infopoints at Railway stations
21	Information centre for assistance to Ukrainians in Iaşi (Copou)
19	Centre for refugees Nicolina (Iaşi)
17	Union of Ukrainians in Romania
16	JRS
13	hostel info centre
10	Pavilion in Mamaya
9	Migration service
9	Call centre <a href="http://dopomoha.ro">dopomoha.ro</a>
6	Caritas
6	Church



Most mentioned organisations and/or groups of people (volunteers, Romanians or Ukrainians from the community) that provided the information refugees needed in Romania?(mentioned by >5 respondents).

Face-to-face survey, question 15 (open-ended).

Total nr. of mentions	Organisations, groups, or people
169	Romexpo
143	C.A.T.T.I.A (Braşov )
104	Red Cross
35	JRS
30	Volunteers
26	Save the children
24	UN
24	Infopoints in Hostels
22	Centre for refugees Nicolina (Iaşi)
19	Church
17	Infopoints at Railway stations
16	MIBV (Braşov )
15	Information centre for assistance to Ukrainians in Iaşi
8	Other Ukranians
8	Volunteers at the border
8	Pavilion in Mamaya
8	Egros

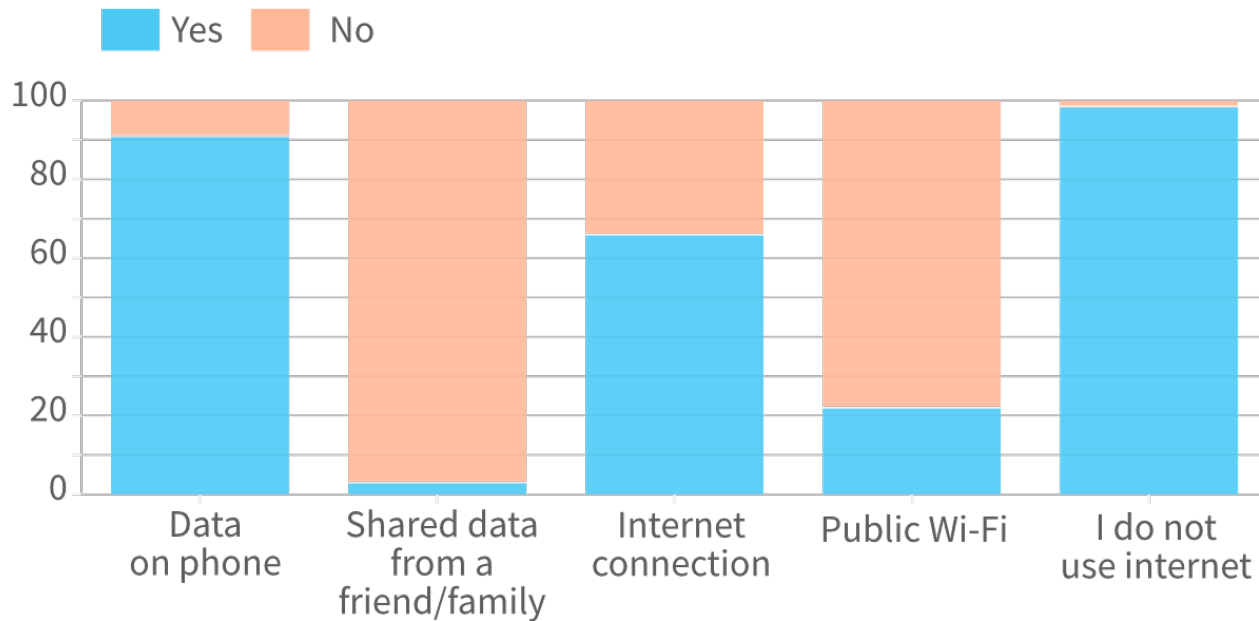


## Annex 6

How do you access the internet?

Face-to-face survey, question 9 (close-ended).

	9.1. Data on phone (3G, 4G, 5G etc.)		9.2. Shared data from a friend/family		9.3. Internet connection at host home / refugee accommodation		9.4. Public Wi-Fi (public spaces, refugee centres, libraries, other)		9.5. I do not use internet	
No	63	9%	711	97%	246	34%	568	78%	721	98.5%
Yes	669	91%	21	3%	486	66%	164	22%	11	1.5%
Total	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100.0%



Cross Tabulation. Age groups and Data on the phone (mobile internet).  
Face-to-face survey, question 9 (close-ended)/ age groups.

9.1. Data on phone (3G, 4G, 5G etc.)					
	Age groups				Total
	18-29 y.o.	30-44 y.o.	45-59 y.o.	60+ y.o.	
No	4	16	17	26	63
	2.80%	4.20%	14.50%	27.40%	8.60%
Yes	138	362	100	69	669
	97.20%	95.80%	85.50%	72.60%	91.40%
Total	142	378	117	95	732
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Cross Tabulation. Age groups and “I do not use internet” answer  
Face-to-face survey, question 9 (close-ended).

9.5. I do not use internet					
	Age groups				Total
	18-29 y.o.	30-44 y.o.	45-59 y.o.	60+ y.o.	
No	142	377	116	86	721
	100.00%	99.70%	99.10%	90.50%	98.50%
Yes	0	1	1	9	11
	0.00%	0.30%	0.90%	9.50%	1.50%
Total	142	378	117	95	732
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

## Annex 7

Frequencies, the information needed to make safe decisions.  
Face-to-face survey, question 16 (close-ended).

16. Do you have the information you need to make decisions to keep yourself and your family safe?	Count	Percentage
Yes	264	36%
Somewhat	374	51%
No	90	12%
N/A	4	1%
Total	732	100%

## Annex 8

Comparative data on negative online behaviours (experienced and witnessed).  
Face-to-face survey, questions 22 and 23. (closed-ended questions)

	22.1 Fake news		22.2. Cyberbullying or harassment		22.3. Discrimination		22.4. Threats		22.5. Scams		22.6. I have not experienced any		22.7. No answer	
<b>Experienced</b>														
No	585	80%	725	99%	725	99%	723	99%	669	91%	200	27%	705	96%
Yes	147	20%	7	1%	7	1%	9	1%	63	9%	532	73%	27	4%
Total	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%
<b>Witnessed</b>														
No	599	82%	724	99%	718	98%	713	97%	620	85%	216	30%	709	97%
Yes	133	18%	8	1%	14	2%	19	3%	112	15%	516	71%	23	3%
Total	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%

## Annex 9

24. How often do you check if the information you receive is trustworthy?  
Face-to-face survey, question 24 (closed-ended).

	Count	Percentage
Never	77	11%
Rarely	142	19%
Sometimes	218	30%
Often	152	21%
Always	137	19%
N/A	6	1%
Total	732	100%

25. When do you check if the information you receive is trustworthy? (multiple choice)  
Face-to-face survey, question 25 (closed-ended question).

	25.1. When it comes from a source you don't know		25.2. When it comes from a group where the content is not actively moderated		25.3. When its primary source is in a language I don't know		25.4. When it seems to be incomplete		25.5. When I suspect it to be false based on my previous knowledge/context		25.6. No answer	
No	347	47%	486	66%	416	57%	277	38%	210	29%	635	87%
Yes	308	42%	169	23%	239	33%	378	52%	445	61%	19	3%
N/A	77	11%	77	11%	77	11%	77	11%	77	11%	78	11%
Total	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%

## Annex 10

26. To what extent do you feel that the information related to refugee services you receive is...  
Face-to-face survey, question 26. (closed-ended).

	26.1. Accurate		26.2. Accessible		26.3. Helpful		26.4. Respectful	
Not at all	11	2%	21	3%	5	1%	2	0%
Very little	43	6%	37	5%	24	3%	12	2%
Somewhat	194	27%	161	22%	106	15%	67	9%
Mostly	376	51%	377	52%	364	50%	340	46%
To great extent	100	14%	132	18%	231	32%	301	41%
N/A	8	1%	4	1%	2	0%	10	1%
Total	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%

## Annex 11

How important is it for you to get more information about?  
Face-to-face survey, question 17 (closed-ended).

	17.1. Relocation to other countries	17.2. Technological products	17.3. Legal assistance	17.4. Veterinary services	17.5. Accommodation	17.6. Specialised support for older	17.7. Transport	17.8. Employment	17.9. Training and education for adults	17.10. Cash assistance	17.11. Basic products	17.12. Child education	17.13. Mental health assistance	17.14. Specialised disability support	17.15. Give feedback on humanitarian services	17.16. Extra school activities	17.17. Healthcare
Very important	13%	35%	42%	11%	48%	22%	53%	38%	23%	74%	57%	44%	7%	9%	15%	36%	72%
Moderately	31%	35%	42%	14%	34%	17%	31%	31%	31%	21%	32%	21%	18%	9%	50%	30%	24%
Not at all	43%	27%	13%	31%	14%	23%	12%	20%	33%	4%	10%	16%	45%	31%	29%	19%	3%
Missing	13%	4%	4%	44%	4%	38%	5%	11%	13%	1%	1%	19%	30%	51%	6%	15%	1%

## Annex 12

20. To what extent do you feel you know how to...  
Face to face survey, question 20 (closed-ended).

<b>20.1. Ask questions about the refugee services</b>		
	Count	Percentage
To great extent	145	20%
Somewhat	467	64%
Not at all	112	15%
No answer	8	1%

<b>20.2. give feedback on the refugee services</b>		
	Count	Percentage
To great extent	105	14%
Somewhat	362	50%
Not at all	245	34%
No answer	20	3%

### Annex 13

The platforms respondents prefer to use to give feedback to refugee service  
Face to face survey, question 21 (closed-ended).

	21.1. Private message (on Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, Viber, e-mail)		21.2. Public review on social media/website		21.3. Online form (anonymous)		21.4. In person/Face to face		21.5. Printed questionnaire		21.6. Phone hotline		21.7. I never give feedback - don't want to give feedback at all		21.8. No answer	
Yes	432	59%	202	28%	180	25%	259	35%	103	14%	143	20%	92	13%	6	1%
No	300	41%	530	72%	552	75%	473	65%	629	86%	589	81%	640	87%	726	99%
Total	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%	732	100%

### Annex 14

Online survey, refugees localities.

4. Where in Romania do you currently live? (open question)

	Town	Frequency	Percent
1	București	76	24.4
2	Brașov	31	9.9
3	Iași	27	8.7
4	Constanța	25	8
5	Suceava	11	3.5
6	Cluj-Napoca	4	1.3
7	Galați	4	1.3
8	Tulcea	4	1.3
9	Bistrița	2	0.6
10	Botoșani	2	0.6

11	Gura Humorului	2	0.6
12	Oradea	2	0.6
13	Râmnicu Vâlcea	2	0.6
14	Târgu Mureș	2	0.6
15	Other (Abrud, Aleșd, Babadag, Brăila, Bușteni, Călimănești, Huși, Marghita, Mediaș, Năvodari, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Ploiești, Popești-Leordeni, Roman, Sânnicolau Mare, Sibiu, Târgoviște, Zărnești)	18	8.7
	Total	212	100



## Annex 15

Online survey, most used information channels by refugees (frequencies of mentions). 8. Choose the below channels which you use to get the needed information (multiple choice).

Channel	Count	Percentage (% out of 212 respondents)
Telegram	142	67
Viber	95	45
WhatsApp	70	33
Websites	35	17
Instagram	34	16
Discussions (f2f, phone)	34	16
Info Points	25	12
Email	17	8
YouTube	16	8
Flyers, leaflets	10	5
Call centres	9	4
TikTok	8	4
TV	2	1
Other	8	4

## Annex 16

Online survey, most preferred information sources by refugees (frequencies of mentions).

9. When you want to receive information about services for refugees in Romania (food, accomodation, basic needs) which sources of information from the following do you use? (multiple choice).

Source	Count	Percentage (% out of 212 respondents)
Telegram channels	147	69
Viber/ WhatsApp groups	88	42
Facebook groups in Romania	86	41
NGOs and Agencies UN	61	29
Other Ukrainians	54	25
Romanian citizens	48	23
Facebook groups worldwide	39	18
Romanian authorities	37	17
Websites of the Romanian authorities	21	10
Romanian media	15	7
Religious org./leaders	8	4

## Annex 17

Online survey, most important topics for the refugees to get information about (frequencies of mentions).

12. On what topics is it important for you to get more information during your stay in Romania? (multiple choice).

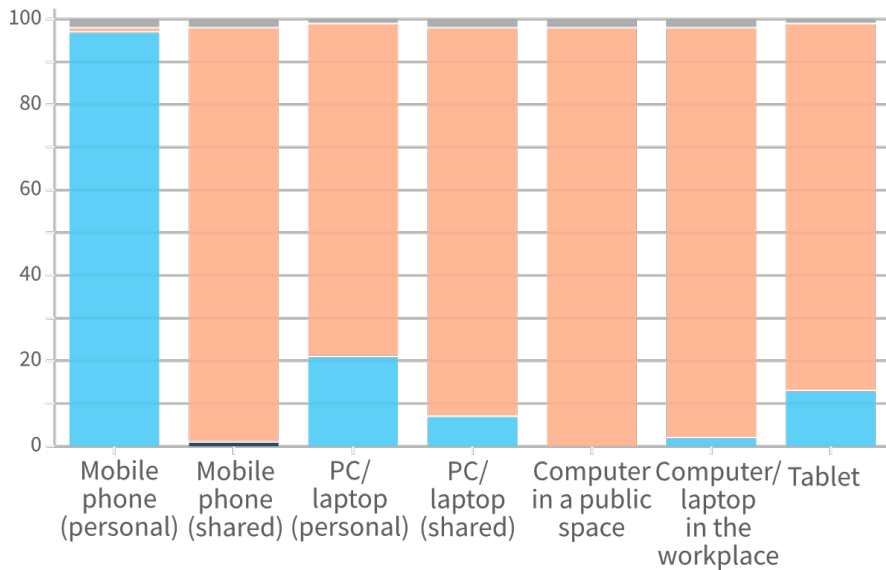
Topic	Count	Percentage (% out of 212 respondents)
healthcare	154	73
basic products	119	56
employment	104	49
child education	99	47
accomodation	96	45
legal assistance	87	41
transport in Romania	76	36
extra-school activities	73	34
education for adults	67	32
tech products (internet, phone)	44	21
veterinary services	27	13
give feedback on humanitarian services	19	9
mental health assistance	17	8
support for elderly	16	8
relocation to other countries	15	7
support for PWD	11	5
socialisation with Ukrainians	1	0

## Annex 18

The devices used to access internet  
Face-to-face survey, question 10 (closed-ended question).

	10.1. Mobile phone (personally owned)	10.2. Mobile phone (shared with a family member or friend)	10.3. Personal computer/laptop	10.4. Computer/laptop shared with a family member	10.5. Computer in a public space	10.6. Computer/laptop in the workplace	10.7. Tablet
Yes	97%	1%	21%	7%	0%	2%	13%
No	1%	97%	78%	91%	98%	96%	86%
No answer	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Yes No N/A



## Annex 19

Barriers refugees face when accessing information  
Face-to-face survey, question 19 (close-ended).

	19.1. I don't face any difficulties	19.2. I don't understand the language in which information is available	19.3. I don't know how to access official information	19.4. The information is contradictory	19.5. The information is untrustworthy or hard to verify	19.6. I need to access too many sources to get complete information	19.7. The rules to access support (financial etc) are complicated and not easily explained.	19. 8. The information available is not relevant to my situation
Yes	26%	57%	22%	25%	15%	25%	13%	3%
No	74%	43%	78%	75%	85%	75%	87%	97%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%