

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN SUPPORTING THE UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

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Summary

The article presents the analysis of a part of results of the sociological study „Mapping the efforts of Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection members and other NGOs supporting Ukrainian refugees in the Republic of Moldova”, the purpose of which was to map the efforts of civil society organizations, especially those members of the Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection in providing support to Ukrainian refugees in the Republic of Moldova. The data collection took place between June and July 2022, by applying a methodology in a combined design through quantitative research methods (survey by questionnaire administered online and by telephone) and qualitative research methods (individual interview, focus group, documentary analysis). The quantitative research sample comprised 100 civil society organizations selected from a total of 204 organizations. The qualitative research involved 11 individual interviews and two focus group discussions with representatives of the national civil society from different areas of the country. The study highlighted a special involvement of civil society in the management of the refugee crisis, with a variety of services being provided, both at the border crossing points and at the place of residence in the Republic of Moldova. The development and provision of services by the vast majority of civil society organizations has been based on the needs of refugees. The need for a

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minimum package of services for refugees is one of the conclusions of the sociological study.

Keywords: refugee assistance, refugee crisis, services

Sommaire

L'article présente l'analyse de certains résultats de l'étude sociologique „*Cartographie des efforts des membres de l'Alliance des ONG actives dans le Domaine de la Protection Sociale de l'enfant et de la Famille et d'autres organisations non gouvernementales soutenant les réfugiés ukrainiens en République de Moldova*”, dont le but était de cartographier les efforts des organisations de la société civile, en particulier celles des membres de l'Alliance des ONG actives dans le domaine de la protection sociale de l'enfant et de la famille, pour apporter un soutien aux réfugiés ukrainiens en République de Moldova. La collecte des données s'est déroulée entre juin et juillet 2022, en appliquant une méthodologie en design combiné à travers des méthodes de recherche quantitatives (enquête par questionnaire administré online et par téléphone) et des méthodes de recherche qualitatives (entretien individuel, focus group, analyse documentaire). L'échantillon de recherche quantitative comprenait 100 organisations de la société civile sélectionnées parmi un total de 204 organisations. La recherche qualitative a consisté à mener 11 entretiens individuels et deux discussions de groupe avec des représentants de la société civile nationale de différentes régions du pays. L'étude a mis en évidence une implication particulière de la société civile dans la gestion de la crise des réfugiés, avec une variété de services fournis, tant aux points de passage frontaliers qu'au lieu de résidence en République de Moldova. Le développement et la fourniture de services par la grande majorité des organisations de la société civile ont été basés sur les besoins des réfugiés. La nécessité d'un paquet minimum de services pour les réfugiés est l'une des conclusions de l'étude sociologique.

Mots clés: assistance aux réfugiés, crise des réfugiés, services

Rezumat

Articolul prezintă analiza unor rezultate ale studiului sociologic „*Cartografierea eforturilor membrilor Alianței ONG-urilor active în domeniul Protecției Sociale a Copilului și Familiei și ale altor organizații neguveramentale de sprijinire a refugiaților ucraineni în Republica Moldova*”⁵, scopul căruia a fost maparea eforturilor organizațiilor societății civile, în special a celor membre ale Alianței ONG-urilor active în domeniul Protecției Sociale a Copilului și Familiei în oferirea suportului refugiaților ucraineni în Republica Moldova. Colectarea datelor s-a desfășurat în perioada iunie-iulie 2022, prin aplicarea unei metodologii în design combinat prin metode cantitative de cercetare (ancheta prin chestionar administrat online și telefonic) și metode calitative de cercetare (interviu individual, focus grup, analiza documentară). Eșantionul cercetării cantitative a cuprins 100 de organizații a societății civile selectate dintr-un număr de 204 organizații. Cercetarea calitativă a cuprins desfășurarea a 11 interviuri individuale și două discuții de grup cu reprezentanți ai societății civile naționale din diferite zone ale țării. Studiul a evidențiat o implicare deosebită a societății civile în gestionarea crizei refugiaților, fiind prestate o diversitate de servicii, atât la punctele de trecere a frontierei, cât și la locul de reședință în Republica Moldova. Dezvoltarea și prestarea serviciilor de marea majoritate a organizațiilor societății civile s-a

⁵ Study carried out within the project „Increasing the Visibility of Civil Society in Providing Response to Emergencies”, implemented by the Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection with the financial support of Caritas Austria

realizat în baza nevoilor refugiaților. Nevoia unui pachet minim de servicii pentru refugiați etse una din concluzia studiului sociologic.

Cuvinte cheie: asistarea refugiaților, criza refugiaților, servicii

1. Introduction

The start of the war in Ukraine represented the beginning of a crisis for the whole world, with the countries bordering the conflict being especially affected. One of the challenges of the conflict is providing assistance to people who have fled the war. The Republic of Moldova was fully involved in supporting Ukrainian refugees, which required a massive mobilization of both the authorities and civil society.

The data presented by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reveal that in the period 24.02.2022-08.11.2022, more than 15 million people crossed the borders of Ukraine. 7.824.400 Ukrainian refugees are settled in European countries, of which 60.1 percent (4.699.333 people) are registered for temporary protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe. According to the same source, the number of Ukrainians who crossed the border with the Republic of Moldova, during the reference period, was 685.088 persons. Of these, 95.928 were registered as refugees.

The flow of Ukrainians entering the Republic of Moldova has generated an unprecedented situation for the national authorities. A special contribution to supporting Ukrainian refugees was made by civil society organizations. In order to understand and assess the involvement of local civil society in assisting refugees, the sociological study „*Mapping the efforts of the Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection members and other NGOs supporting Ukrainian refugees in the Republic of Moldova*” was carried out.

2. Research methodology

The sociological study focused on mapping the efforts of civil society organizations, especially those members of the Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection, in providing support to Ukrainian refugees in the Republic of Moldova, analyzing and describing these efforts, highlighting best practices and success stories, and identifying the needs of these organizations. The research design consisted of the application of the following research methods:

a) the survey method, the data were collected online and via telephone by applying the questionnaire to a sample of 100 civil society organizations, both members (34 organizations) and non-members (66 organizations) of the Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection, which provided services to Ukrainian refugees. The research sample was selected as a result of contacting 204 civil society organizations in the Republic of Moldova. The data collection period was June 1-24, 2022;

b) documentary analysis of information published on official web pages and social networks of civil society organizations, reflecting the activities carried out in supporting refugees;

c) the in-depth individual interview with 11 representatives of civil society organizations, members and non-members of the Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection;

d) focus group, two group discussions were held with representatives of civil society organizations both from Chisinau and from the regions of the country.

Qualitative data were collected between June 27 and July 8, 2022.

3. Profile of refugees supported by civil society organizations

According to the data collected in the study, by the beginning of June 2022, the civil society organizations participating in the study provided support for around 240.000 refugees. About a fourth of the organizations could not provide a concrete number of refugees assisted. In this context, at the time of the study, it was difficult to estimate the total number of refugees who were assisted by the participating organizations.

The largest number of refugees assisted by an organization participating in the study was 56.000, and the smallest number was nine persons. In total, each of the organizations assisted/provided services during the reference period, on average, to around 3.200 refugees (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of refugees from Ukraine assisted by organizations participating in the study

Category	Total	Minim	Maximum	Average
Adults	121.833	2	48.000	2.256
Children	51.498	1	10.000	919
Elderly	13.585	1	5.000	388
Persons with disabilities	3.169	1	1.000	75
Total number of refugees assisted	239.781	9	56.000	3.197

The data can be corroborated with those presented by the National Social Assistance Agency (July 15, 2022), which reveals a significant presence of adult women (18-65 years) in placement centers (1191 people or 39.0 percent of the total number of people placed in 68 placement centers) and children (1283 people or 42,0 percent). The share of elderly people (over 65) was 4,6 percent (140 people), and of persons with disabilities – 3,5 percent (107 people). Also, 334 adult men were accommodated in the placement centers, which constituted 10,9 percent.

About 3/4 of the organizations participating in the study supported both refugees housed in people's households/rents (79.0 percent) and those housed in placement centers (77,0 percent). About one-third of the organizations provided services to refugees without a stable place to live (31,0 percent), and more than a quarter supported refugees staying in hostels (28,0 percent).

According to the qualitative study, Ukrainian refugees were categorized based on the period of time since they left Ukraine. *The first category of refugees*, less numerous, was of persons with a high level of well-being, who especially required informational support regarding accommodation and the possibility of

emigrating to a European country. *The second category* was represented by people from the middle class, who were documented (most of them having identity documents) and with experience traveling outside the country (Ukraine). *The third category* was the category of persons without travel documents, without any migratory experience, economically vulnerable, and with certain health problems, especially the elderly.

„Initially the first to come were the people who had money, who had other needs. They simply needed clear information regarding, firstly how to get settled and secondly how to go on to Europe and who would meet them there. In addition, they wanted to know if there was anything for refugees. Then the next wave started to come, the people in the middle class. These people were somehow prepared and had some documents, maybe they didn't have all the documents in order, but they had some documents. These people had already left the country, but they still knew certain rules. Some of them, for example, even if we are talking about very sick people, they did not need medical assistance, because they know how to handle themselves. And when the third category started coming, the very poor people, that's when the most serious problems started, because some of them didn't have foreign documents, they didn't have biometric passports and they only had internal documents. In some, the internal documents are expired. Some of them have not gone further than the district center and for them going so far away from home is a stress they will always stay here and wait for the end of the war, they will not go further. Among them are the elderly” (IA_8⁶).

4. Reasons for the involvement of civil society organizations in assisting refugees

The sociological study highlighted the prompt involvement of civil society in assisting the refugees, even from the first days after the outbreak of the war. Most of the civil society organizations participating in the study – 66,0 percent - made the decision to get involved in providing support for refugees in February (as soon as the war broke out). In March 2022, about 1/3 of them got involved in refugee activities, and the rest (3,0 percent) in April. Actions aimed at supporting refugees were carried out on their own initiative – 92,0 percent, especially in the first days or weeks after the beginning of the conflict (see Figure 1). More than half of the research sample (53,0 percent) carried out refugee assistance activities following the request of partner donors. It is relevant to note that the funding available for refugee projects was an impetus for involvement in the refugee crisis. This is for about a third of the civil society organizations participating in the study. For more than a quarter (26,0 percent) of the organizations participating in the study, involvement was due to requests from citizens in the community/donations from the community. To a lesser extent, organizations were involved in providing refugee support at the request of local public authorities (17,0 percent) and at the request of the government (11,0 percent).

⁶ IA – individual interview

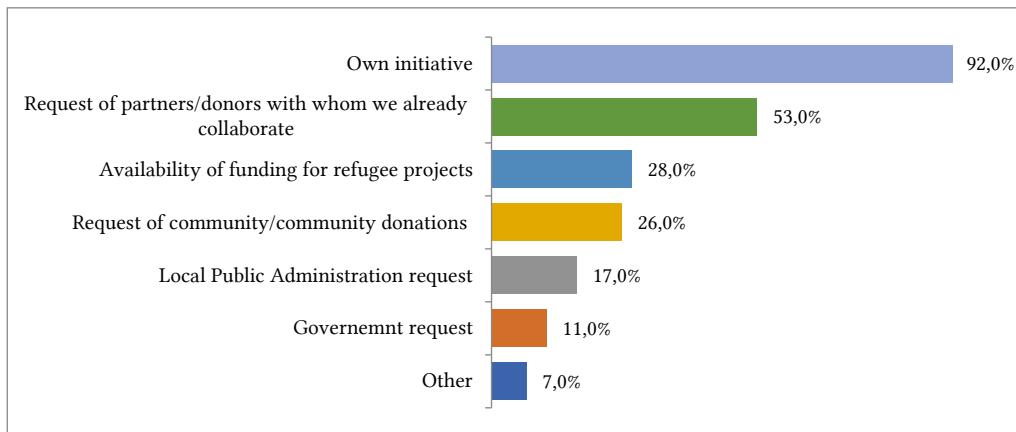


Figure 1. Reasons for the involvement of civil society organizations to assist Ukrainian refugees

The analysis of the reasons for involvement in the provision of refugee support services according to the number of refugees assisted reveals that the organizations that assisted a number of up to 200 refugees got involved especially at the request of the community, instead, the organizations that assisted more of 1.000 refugees became involved in a larger share following requests from donors. Also, civil society organizations that operate in various regions of the country to a greater extent were requested by the local public authorities to get involved in assisting refugees compared to those that operate in Chisinau.

5. Types of services provided to refugees

The refugees' crisis involved the provision of a wide range of services. As part of the research, it was proposed to evaluate the services provided in two reference moments: at the beginning of the crisis (end of February - beginning of March 2022) and at the time of the study (June 2022). Thus, at the beginning of the crisis, the civil society organizations participating in the study provided an average of 9 types of services to refugees, out of the total of 21 types of services presented in the questionnaire. At the time of conducting the research (June 2022), their number decreased to 7,6 types of services. The data presented in Figure 2 highlight that 6,0 percent of organizations at the time of data collection (June 2022) did not provide any services to refugees. The share of those providing up to 5 services increased by about 7 percentage points. The share of those providing 6-10 services also increased by 2 percentage points. Instead, the share of organizations providing between 11 and 15 services decreased considerably - by 11 percentage points, and by 4 percentage points of those providing more than 16 services.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

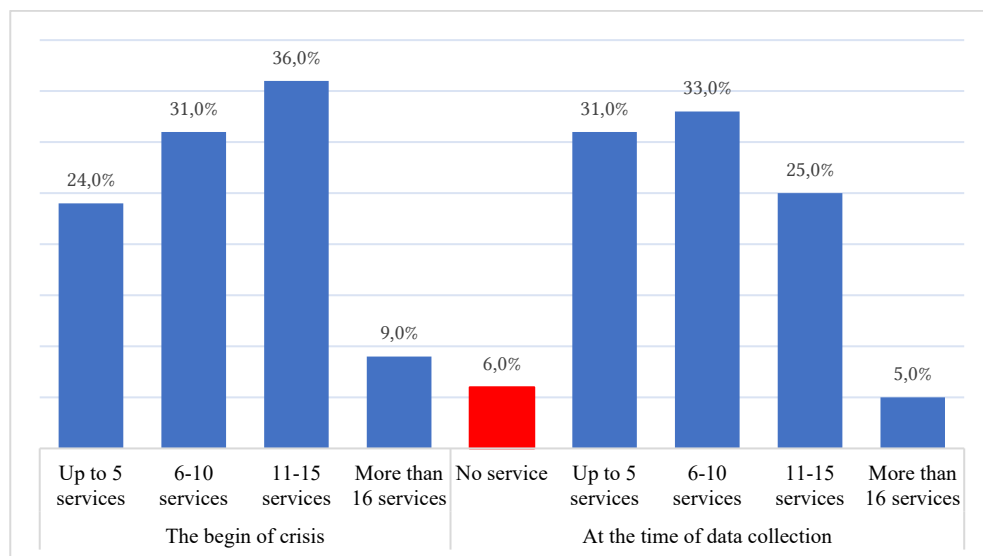


Figure 2. Number of services provided to refugees at the beginning of the crisis and at the time of data collection

A study conducted in the Republic of Moldova revealed that services are provided to refugees both at the moment of crossing the border and at the point of residence. The main role of civil society organizations was to meet the refugees' primary needs, but later the services were diversified to suit the refugees' needs.

„If from the beginning everyone was working on alert, let's feed and house them, now the spectrum is much wider and it concerns all the needs of the people, not just the primary ones, and this seems to me to be a very positive evolution.” (FG_17)

The provision of **hygiene products** was carried out at the beginning of the crisis by 78,0 percent of the organizations, but in June 2022 (at the time of data collection) this service was carried out by 62,0 percent of them (see Figure 3). *„We gave hygiene packages for them (refugees).” (IA_1)*

Best practice example

The non-governmental organization HelpAge provided two types of hygiene products packages: an institutional package that contained products used to sanitize common spaces, and individual packages for each refugee.

„Hygiene products and these could be... we used to call them institutional, for example a center needs liquid soap for bathroom, right? So it is institutional. In addition, we paid for each person separately. That is, for the person, for example, to have their shampoo.”

There were 76,0 percent of organizations **providing food services** in June 2022; however, this number had decreased by 18 percentage points to 58,0 percent.

⁷ FG – focus group discussion

As part of establishing social peace, food packages were offered to refugees and the vulnerable local population.

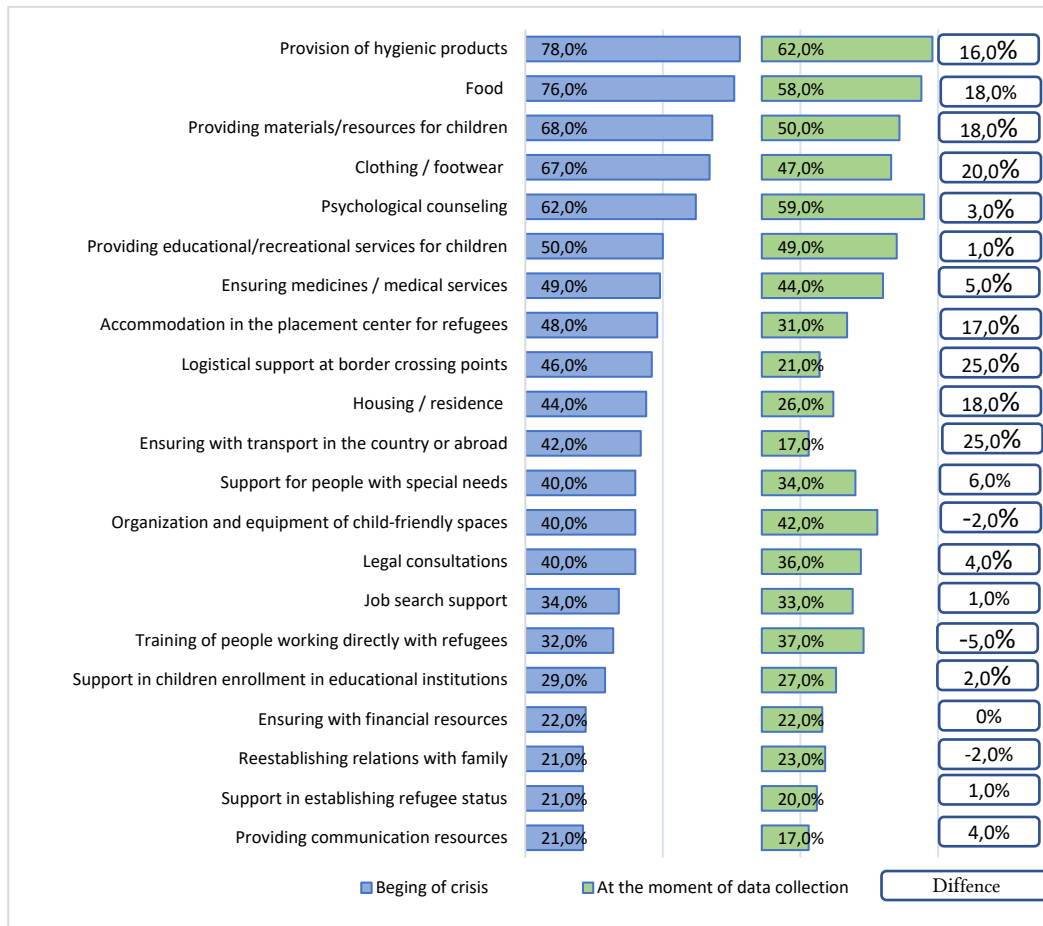


Figure 3. Types of services provided to refugees at the beginning of the crisis and at the time of data collection

Best practice example

The non-governmental organization Concordia. Proiecte Sociale mobilized the team to provide both refugees and Ukrainian customs workers with food products, given that in the first days there was no shift change. Thus, about 27 thousand pies were cooked and distributed.

„We made pies... at Tudora the refugees were standing in columns, it started to rain with snow, they were frozen for 2-3 days until they reached Tudora and they didn't eat for 2 days. There was something dramatic there. As humans, we instinctively went and cooked 300-350 pies every day. The pies did not reach the refugees for the first 2 days. Because the first 2 days we fed only the customs workers - Ukrainian citizens because they had no change at all for 3 consecutive days. No one changed them, they

had no water and no food. When we brought pies, the refugee children cried and said that it was okay to give to the customs workers, because they had nothing to eat. Then obviously, we fed customs workers) first and then moved on to the refugees. So far, we have cooked 27.000 pies according to our statistics.”

The non-governmental organization Ave Copiii provided water to the refugees directly at the Palanca border, on both sides of the border.

„We stood out, primarily with water at the border. The biggest thing is when you don't have water. People stood in line at the beginning. It was cold, it's true. It was on the other side of the border, at Palanca. Sometimes, there was a queue 3-5 km or 6 km long. People needed food, but they also desperately needed water. And then we did what we did: we transported the water and we transported it to the Ukrainian side.”

A new practice was implemented to ensure the ability to access food products in the second period of the crisis, especially in the summer months, by distributing vouchers that could be used in stores.

Best practice example

The non-governmental organization Children. Community. Family Moldova started offering food vouchers on July 1, 2022, to vulnerable categories, both refugees and locals, based on an assessment of the level of vulnerability. Using best practices from other countries, the program „Protection Food Voucher” was developed to ensure better access to food. The voucher is available in addition to the food packages distributed to refugees.

„We start from July 1 and in refugee centers, in refugee communities but also in local communities we start a food voucher program - Protection Food Voucher.”

Clothing and footwear were provided by 67,0 percent of the organizations. The distribution was 47,0 percent at the time of the research (June 2022).

The need for clothing was felt especially in the warm period (spring-summer), as most refugees were equipped only with winter clothes.

„A lady, for example, did not wear thin, light clothes, she wore thick clothes. This was because it was winter and it was cold, in March it was cold and in April it was cold and she had no clothes. We only appeal to people with a big heart.”(FG_1)

To facilitate the purchase of clothing according to individual needs, some organizations have distributed special vouchers for the purchase of clothes.

„One voucher was for food products, one for clothes, and one for the pharmacy. In May we gave food and hygiene products, but in July we already started the distribution of vouchers.”(IA_1)

The war and the need to take refuge in another country emotionally affected the refugees, a context in which the civil society organizations participating in the study organized **the provision of psychological counseling services** (62 percent). This type of service has helped to ensure the emotional well-

being and strengthen the mental health of refugees. So, a series of activities were carried out, including therapy through art, dance, textiles, music, etc.

„We provide psychological counseling in the placement center. We have a community mediator who helps migrants and communicates with them to identify any problems.”
(IA_2)

„We also offer the psychological side, the psychological support of the children.”
(FG_2)

Best practice example

The non-governmental organization „Each Contribute for Change” from Criuleni applies music therapy to refugee children.

„We provide music therapy, we have a very talented teacher, a musician, who is also a composer and a very talented vocalist. We try to create this positive and confident atmosphere so that they can more easily overcome the state of crisis they are experiencing.”

The non-governmental organization Amici dei Bambini launched a free phone line for psychological counseling.

During the refugee crisis, special attention was paid to children's needs. The contribution of civil society organizations consisted of ensuring children's access to education services. This was done by enrolling them in the local kindergarten/school or facilitating their participation in the online education process. Thus, 68,0 percent of the organizations participating in the study provided children with materials/resources, 50,0 percent carried out educational and recreational activities, and 40,0 percent contributed to the organization and provision of child-friendly spaces. Furthermore, 29,0 percent supported children's enrollment in educational institutions. These services were provided throughout the period (February-June 2022), with insignificant differences.

„We enrolled 26 Ukrainian children in school, 17 in kindergarten.” (FG_1)

„At Basarabasca, we integrated a lot of children into kindergarten.” (FG_1)

Best practice example

The non-governmental organization Partnerships for Every Child initiated a program to support students in crisis situations called the „Program for Better Learning” (BLP). In this program, trainers, particularly from the psycho-pedagogical assistance services, were trained. This is a psychosocial support program that can be integrated into education programs in crisis contexts, including humanitarian ones. The program has a holistic approach to supporting children's recovery from traumatic events experienced during conflict or the impact of displacement on both displaced and host communities. This approach improves learning conditions. It mobilizes a child's support network to restore a sense of normalcy and hope. This program is implemented in 26 countries.

„We have a program for schools and we have already trained the first group of trainers. Better Learning Program – a psycho-social support program focused on

refugee children who are enrolled in schools. An evidence-based program that launched in June. A group of trainers has been trained. A larger group will be trained, after which we will visit the schools.”

Learning the language of the local community (Romanian, Gagauz, etc.) is an activity carried out by some organizations, which contributes to better integration into the community. Courses were offered in both online and offline formats, depending on the availability of beneficiaries and trainers.

„They already know many words in the Gagauz language and use them in communication.” (FG_1)

„We offer Romanian language course to those who wish to learn it. It seems to me that within the limit of 30-40 people participate online, offline in these courses.” (IA_2)

Best practice example

Psycho-social Center from Vulcanesti - to facilitate communication and activities with children, they employed two Ukrainian language teachers. At the same time, the knowledge of Ukrainian by some of the center's employees facilitated the interaction with the refugees.

„Two are Ukrainian language teachers and when the children had problems in school with the language, they helped with the translation.”

In order to facilitate the participation of Ukrainian children in the online educational process, efforts were made to equip the refugee centers with IT equipment. Thus, with the support of donors, laptops and tablets were purchased.

„We understood that we had to help the children to go on to continue their studies. The majority, 60 percent were children who were in our services. What to do? They have a phone in a family with three children, what do we do? They can't connect and continue their studies via phone, they don't have activities and that was depressing for them. Then we looked for sponsors to buy laptops, and tablets to provide one or two in each center and for them to do homework.” (IA_10)

The problem of participation in the educational process of refugee children is acutely felt by representatives of civil society organizations. They consider it necessary to make efforts to solve this problem. The need for the authorities to be concerned about enrollment in the education process of Ukrainian children was revealed. This took into account the peculiarities of the study program in the country of origin.

„There is a huge flow of children. We need to think in perspective about what we are planning to do with them. We do not know when it will end, we do not know how it will end, and we do not know the way. I understood that in Ukraine, now the structure of the school year is generally changed, plus the program there differs from ours, and we have to think from now on.” (FG_1)

Another problem that concerns civil society is the difficulty of enrolling young children in kindergarten or nursery, taking into account the lack of available

places or the lack of nurseries in general, especially in rural areas. The lack of childcare opportunities creates a barrier to the employment of Ukrainian women. „The problem is with kindergartens, mothers can't work, because we generally don't have nurseries.” (IA_10)

Best practice example

The Caritas Charity Foundation created kindergarten groups to facilitate the educational integration of refugee children.

„In addition, our centers have a „Kids Corner” and we have also assisted in other parts of the country. We have also created a temporary kindergarten. We are doing everything we can.”

A contribution of civil society organizations was **the organization of free time (recreation) activities for children**. A variety of activities were organized, such as trips, various games, shows, activities organized by art schools, etc.

„The director of the art school gave us the whole list of activities: piano, drawing, English courses, painting, dances. I made a timetable. The kids came when they were supposed to, but they still keep coming. They don't work during the summer, but the specialists offer services at the moment” (IA_11).

Best practice example

The non-governmental organization Amici dei Bambini organized recreational activities for refugee children from various placement centers, but also for those from local communities, through the Ludobus service.

„We intervened with free time activities for children. We reactivated the Ludobus, which provides services to communities with refugees. But not only there, we were lucky to have wise sponsors who understood that the communities in Moldova have exactly the same needs as the children in Ukraine.”

The non-governmental organization Children. Community. Family Moldova ensured the creation of child-friendly spaces, offering two types of programs. One of the programs is unstructured, short-term, provided in refugee centers with a small number of children, consisting of creating an accessible playground and informing refugees about documentation, employment, schooling, and identifying their needs. The second program, developed based on the Teams UP model, includes structured activities for children and their caregivers. The program includes the activities from the first program and other activities, such as game-based intervention for children under 5 years old, movements and gestures for children 6-17 years old, who have only one language of communication (Russian or Ukrainian), continuous needs assessment and communication to overcome stressful situations for caregivers.

„Child-Friendly Space is the main service offered. In areas where there are fewer refugee children, we offer the reduced model. There is a children's game center open all the time, unstructured. Children usually come with their parents or older siblings.” The provision of playgrounds was carried out also by the Pestalozzi Foundation.

„The second part of the support was equipment, the children's room.”

The non-governmental organization Casmed organized a series of socio-cultural activities for refugee children in the localities of the Northern part of the country, employing animators. Cultural activities were carried out according to the age of the children: animation activities were organized for the younger ones and social theater for teenagers.

„I have also done socio-cultural activities for children. I contacted animators who go once a week or once every two weeks to centers or towns and organize events. One-and-a-half-hour or two-hour events, including theatrical aspects. A kind of social theater. The social theater is more for teenagers, but animation activities are more for small children.”

Less than half of the organizations were involved in **providing housing for refugees**. Thus, 49,0 percent offered accommodation services in refugee centers and 44,0 percent secured a place to live. Providing housing has been a challenge for civil society. One solution identified in the first period of the crisis was to reallocate beneficiaries within the placement center from one room to another to create accommodation for refugees.

„At the same time, we also have services for young people, through which we still offer them assisted social housing. On that night (the first night of the war) the young people that we had accommodated, we reorganized them and put together in the rooms, to make room for the refugees who needed accommodation.” (FG_1)

One concern of the organizations is to reduce refugees' dependence on placement services by supporting them to identify housing. This fact would facilitate better social integration of refugees. While the national standards require a short period for placement (6 months), for refugees it is difficult to meet the requirements.

„We also want to help them to find hosts, we cannot always keep them in the center. Placement centers are good, but you have to see what needs to be done. A person should not stay in a center, in a small room, for a long time” (FG_2).

Best practice example

The government of Poland is in the process of developing a strategy for the integration of Ukrainian refugees into local communities. One of the proposed actions is to establish more public housing and to renovate vacant properties to make them habitable.

One effort of the national civil society organizations was **to mobilize local communities to provide support in sheltering and feeding refugees**.

„Many of my students agreed to receive two-three refugees a night, especially the first month and a half when they came intensively. My students and our fellow citizens collected some clothes.” (FG_1)

One way of supporting refugees who were renting living space was **to cover a part of the rent payment** by civil society organizations. This was in order to reduce the costs sustained by refugees.

„We found financial resources, we helped people pay for some of the accommodation.” (FG_1)

In order to ensure decent living conditions, civil society organizations were involved in providing various goods, such as pillows, duvets, electrical appliances, etc., especially to the placement centers.

„Student dormitory became refugees camps overnight. It has nothing, especially since it was not functional. Then we provided some equipment or household techniques that was needed.” (IA_3)

„We bought a lot of pillows, duvets, pans, spoons, forks, toiletries, washing machine, stove.” (IA_2)

Logistics support services at border crossing points were provided by 46,0 percent of the organizations participating in the study. They also informed refugees about the national procedures for establishing refugee status, applying for asylum, and obtaining other services.

„We reorient them where to go, to the Migration Office, to the doctor, to school. We communicated about how and where they can get financial help, how to register, how to get the card.” (IA_2)

Ensuring access to medicines or medical services was provided by approximately half of the organizations participating in the study (49,0 percent), their share decreasing by 5 percentage points by June 2022. In this sense, two mechanisms were applied:

- the purchase of medicines by the organizations, being distributed to the refugees directly or through the family doctors' centers.

„The medicines were purchased here. They are simple medicines that are issued without a doctor's prescription, but we did not want to distribute them directly, and we sent them to the medical centers in the villages.” (IA_2)

- distribution of vouchers, with which the refugees purchased their necessary medicines.

„We distributed Food and Non-Food vouchers and for pharmacies to refugees in Telenești and Fălești.” (IA_1)

During the crisis, some organizations provided medical recovery services, targeting both refugees and the local population. Also, in the case of disabled and immobilized persons, medical services were provided at home, through mobile teams.

„We work in mobile teams. We have our cars in the field every day” (IA_1).

Best practice example

The non-governmental organization Casmed offers a package of psycho-medical-social services to refugees in the Northern area of the country. The services have been developed and improved based on the experience gained while assisting the beneficiaries in the given area, as well as the refugees.

The non-governmental organization „Life Without Leukemia” offered assistance to children with oncological diseases, ensuring in cooperation with partners the transfer of patients to hospitals in other countries. In this process, the organization cooperated with partners from Poland, and the coordination of the actions was carried out by the Saint John Hospital (United States of America). Easier cases were treated in the Republic of Moldova.

Another service provided by local civil society organizations, identified in the qualitative study, is **the coverage of the costs of funeral services** for refugees who died on the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

„Several cases of payment of funeral services for people who died in Moldova.” (IA_3)

42,0 percent of the organizations provided support for Ukrainian refugees by **organizing transport services** within the country or abroad. Refugees were transported both within the Republic of Moldova and to the border crossing points with Romania. Some organizations organized such transport routes, others paid for the services provided. Travel ticketing practices were identified to support people who wanted to go to another country.

„In the first period, they needed transportation, and in the next two weeks, free routes were established outside of the country as well. Initially there were none. Someone found us, we bought tickets either to Germany or wherever they wanted to go.” (IA_10)

The employment of refugees is still a concern of civil society organizations. Given that part of the refugees remained in the Republic of Moldova, the need arose to identify ways to employ them in the labor field. Refugees' basic needs were met during the first months they lived in the Republic of Moldova; then, during the following period, they asked to be involved in the labor market, both as volunteers and as employees. Thus, more than a third of the organizations (34,0 percent) **offered support in employment**, cooperating in this aspect with the National Employment Agency and local employers. The data presented on November 15, 2022, by the National Employment Agency highlight a number of 884 Ukrainian refugees employed in the labor market, with a higher proportion (74 percent) of women.

In the qualitative study was established that the employment of refugees was carried out based on relationships between representatives of civil society organizations and employers, who are generally reluctant to employ refugees.

„We arranged seven persons at work, two of whom are Ukrainian language teachers and when the children had problems in school with the language, they helped with the translation. Today, these seven persons have a job and are very grateful.” (FG_1)

An aspect identified in the research is **the informal employment of refugees** for the provision of services within the refugee community or the local population, including agricultural activities. Refugees sometimes provide services unofficially, which are encouraged by the local population due to attractive prices and their willingness to support them. At the same time, the need to formalize their activity requires refugees to provide informal services.

„There are some who managed to be employed, but unofficially. They work unofficially. A lot of them provide services unofficially to each other or to our population, that is, they don't want to work officially. I know many people who go to them to support them. Even if it is unofficial, it is some money that brings them an income and a lot of people access their services. Because they are unofficial, they have quite attractive prices. It's not official, because you have to pay taxes and so on. You have to accredit the activity and many other things to get an activity license.” (IA_1)

Financial support was provided by more than a fifth of civil society organizations (22,0 percent), as the vast majority of refugees had exhausted their reserves. Monetary support was also offered to the host families. This was because the need was established to reduce the pressure on the budgets of the host families. *„3500 lei, we paid approximately to 200 persons, citizens of the Republic of Moldova who stayed with them for more than a week or more than two Ukrainian citizens.” (IA_2)*

Other services for refugees provided by civil society organizations were:

- **strengthening the capacities of professionals involved in assisting refugees**, by organizing training sessions, developing methodical materials, etc., and supervising them. Of all the organizations participating in the study, 32,0 percent carried out training activities for staff involved in assisting refugees.

„We have developed a training program for professionals working with refugees, which involves topics such as minimum child protection standards in the humanitarian context, psychological first aid, and management. We have developed a guide with recommendations for volunteers on what is appropriate to do and what is prohibited and a guide for professionals working with young refugees. We are now in the process of finalizing the concept of professional supervision and will provide supervision for professionals.” (IA_6)

- **strengthening relations with the local community**, by carrying out joint activities, such as cooking. Engaging in activities with the locals facilitates the social integration of refugees.

„At the moment, we are already starting different activities, integrating these people into society and doing more activities together with our Moldovans, so that they can interact, and make friends, both children, and adults.” (FG_1)

The experience of the last months has proven the need to establish and regulate a minimum package of services for refugees. Some civil society organizations have tried to develop programs/packages of services that cover all the needs of refugees.

Best practice example

Three civil society organizations: Children. Community. Family Moldova, Terre des Hommes and Partnerships for Every Child, with the financial support of UNICEF, organized transit centers at the Otaci, Sculeni and Leușeni border crossing points, called „Blue Dot”. They provide services for children and their families. The Blue Dot is accessible 24/24 hours, offering a complex range of services such as

short-term accommodation (four-five hours), hygiene services, including baby diapers, nursing space for babies, food services (tea, biscuits, baby food, etc.), space for children, counseling, information, offering phone cards and telephones, documentation of unaccompanied or separated children. Services can be expanded according to the needs of refugees. The experience of establishing Blue Dots was also identified in Poland, where UNICEF created 12 such centers.

The National Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse developed the „PIDRIMKA” program, which includes the organization of three regional mobile teams (North, Center and South) that offer social, legal and psychological support services to refugees. The program is structured. The refugees were informed by local public authorities, staff of the placement centers and public information. The team includes six specialists, including social workers, psychologists and teachers.

The non-governmental organization Casmed developed and implemented an assistance program for refugees: the duration for children – six days and five days for adults. The program includes skills training activities and psychological support provided by professionals. The program is provided both at the placement center level and at the community level.

Depending on the activities and services provided, the following typology of civil society organizations involved in the management of the refugee crisis can be made:

- organizations that directly assisted refugees at the border crossing points or at the place of accommodation, by organizing food, accommodation, psychological counseling,
- organizations that offer support to host families,
- organizations that have provided support to other organizations in identifying resources for the provision of services for refugees

Best practice example

The Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection, as an umbrella organization, provided support to both member and non-member organizations, including refugee crisis management. Thus, since the beginning of the crisis, the Alliance has offered grants in the amount of Euro 1.000 to Euro 62.000. These grants were given to 21 organizations that work with Ukrainian refugees, but also with the vulnerable local population. In addition to channeling financial resources, during the crisis period, the Alliance carried out information campaigns on ethical communication with and about refugees. In addition, the Alliance implemented activities aimed at increasing the visibility of civil society in responding to crisis situations.

The organization „People in Need” did not provide services directly to refugees. People in Need's contribution consisted of providing grants to about 20 civil society organizations involved in assisting refugees at the local level.

The organization „Interaction”, a member organization of the Coalition „Life without violence in the family”, which operates on both banks of the Dniester river,

managed to attract external funds both for direct assistance to refugees and for providing grants in the amount of USD 2.500 for civil society organizations, including from the left side of the Dniester river. A total of 54 grants were distributed.

- organizations that support local initiatives to strengthen solidarity at the community level, through socio-cultural activities (sports, cultural activities, etc.),
- organizations that have provided support to communities to organize accommodation, recreational and educational spaces for refugees,
- organizations that contributed to strengthening the capacities of public institutions, including the Border Police, the Migration and Asylum Office, the People's Advocate Office and territorial social assistance structures. The contribution consisted in: the organization of training sessions (the topics addressed were the documentation of people, migration, asylum, etc.); delegation of qualified specialists from civil society organizations to provide support in crisis management, especially in the first period; donating goods (care products) to be distributed to refugees; covering costs for professional training courses for refugees, conducted through the National Employment Agency.

The study conducted among civil society organizations highlights that services were provided based on the needs of refugees (79,0 percent), in a higher proportion among organizations that assisted more than 1.000 refugees and those that benefited from support in assisting refugees. At the same time, the third part of the organizations provided services to refugees emerging from the organization's profile: the services provided were part of the organizations' portfolio. In the given category of organizations are those that assisted a small number of refugees (up to 200 refugees). Every fifth organization (21,0 percent) provided services to refugees at the request of the donor, and every tenth (11,0 percent) – at the request of central or local public authorities.

6. Conclusions

The sociological study carried out highlighted the full involvement of civil society in the management of the Ukrainian refugee crisis. The diversity of services provided between February and June 2022 revealed the broad spectrum of refugee needs. In addition, it revealed the adaptation of civil society organizations to the needs of beneficiaries assisted during the crisis. Civil society interventions were similarly driven by poorly developed national resilience/contingency mechanisms, especially in the first period of the crisis. The experience of the organizations participating in the study demonstrated their adaptability to crisis situations. However, consolidated efforts are needed in establishing a minimum package of services for refugees/people affected by crises. This includes strengthening the capacities of organizations, establishing a coordinating structure at the national level, improving cooperation between civil society organizations in order to avoid duplication of support, etc.

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