



IN BRIEF

# UKRAINE REFUGEE RESPONSE IN MOLDOVA: GENDER TASK FORCE 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

The Gender Task Force (GTF) is a network of actors working to mainstream gender across the Refugee Response in the Republic of Moldova (Moldova) with the aim of ensuring that all persons in Moldova affected by the Ukrainian refugee crisis of ensuring that all persons in Republic of Moldova affected by the Ukrainian refugee crisis, have equitable access to quality and targeted humanitarian assistance, and can meaningfully participate in an equitable, effective, and efficient response.

The GTF is mandated by the Government of Moldova and UNHCR, as part of the Refugee Coordination Structure under the Refugee Coordination Model, which provides the overarching framework for humanitarian coordination. Humanitarian actors have an obligation to promote gender equality through humanitarian actions in line with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) 'Gender Equality Policy Statement' (2008), the IASC Policy and Accountability Framework on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action (2017), the Agenda for Humanity from the World Humanitarian Summit (2016), and the Grand Bargain. Humanitarian actors also have an obligation to support women's and girls' protection, participation and empowerment through targeted actions, as articulated in the Women, Peace and Security thematic agenda as outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

The Annual Report aims to take stock of the results achieved by the GTF, show the impact that individual GTF members and the collective made on the response, acknowledge gaps and identify how to best focus shared efforts moving forward.

## THE PEOPLE WE WORK WITH AND FOR <sup>1</sup>

**OVER 658,800 INDIVIDUALS**  
have fled Ukraine into Moldova in 2022.

**OVER 96,000 REFUGEES REMAIN**  
(around 4% of Moldovan population)

**92% REFUGEES**  
are women and children

**13% REFUGEES**  
are persons with disabilities

**21% REFUGEES**  
are elderly men and women

**97%**  
staying in private  
accommodation  
including with  
host communities

**3%**  
staying in Refugee  
Accommodation Centers

**120,000 INDIVIDUALS**  
from host communities affected.

**MAJORITY OF REFUGEES**  
are single women-headed households.

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Operational Data Portal: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/248?sv=0&geo=680>

# A DIVERSE NETWORK

## OUR VISION

Women, men, girls, and boys in all their diversity affected by the Ukraine refugee crisis in Moldova have equitable access to and benefit from humanitarian relief, services and information, specifically the most marginalized and at heightened risk groups.

## OUR MISSION

To strengthen accountability on mainstreaming gender in the refugee response, by ensuring that humanitarian actors understand and address the different needs, priorities and capacities of affected refugees and host community populations of all genders, ages and diversities, including the most marginalized population groups and those at heightened risk,<sup>2</sup> when designing, planning, costing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the refugee response efforts. This includes ensuring that the strengths, capacities and expertise, of refugees and host communities - including women and girls - as well as women-led organizations, are included in protection responses, participation, decision-making and leadership structures through meaningful participation and active engagement.

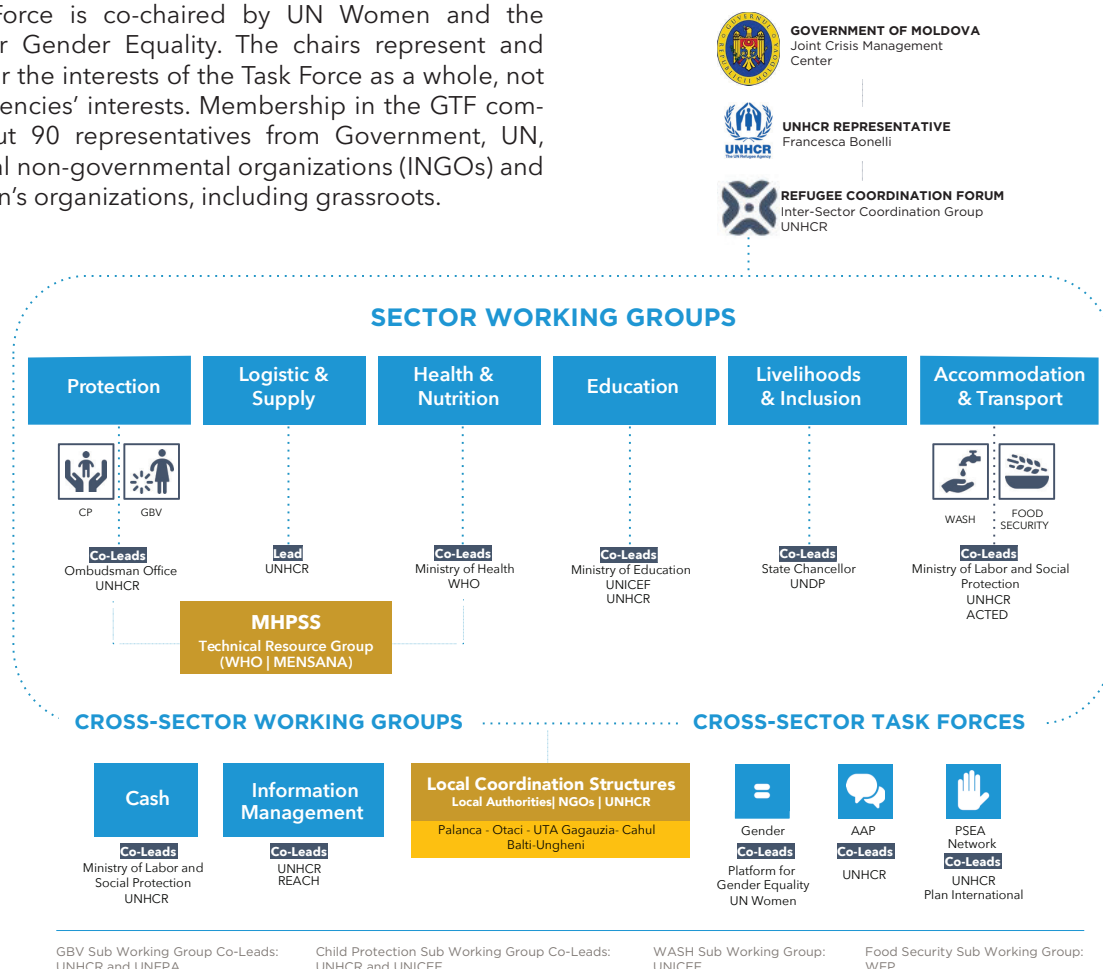
## OUR STRUCTURE

The Task Force is co-chaired by UN Women and the Platform for Gender Equality. The chairs represent and advocate for the interests of the Task Force as a whole, not the lead agencies' interests. Membership in the GTF comprises about 90 representatives from Government, UN, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and local women's organizations, including grassroots.

## OUR ACTIONS

The Gender Task Force (GTF) for the Refugee crisis response in Moldova provides cross-sectoral and inter-organizational support to ensure the integration of gender aspects across the refugee response with the following key focus areas:

- I. Coordination on gender equality programming across sectors and working groups, key government institutions, and organizations providing assistance and services to refugees from Ukraine and host communities in Moldova, including local women's rights organizations and networks.
- II. Technical support and capacity building to humanitarian actors on gender in humanitarian action, including through development of guidance tools and gender-sensitive indicators, reviewing sector specific tools and participating in sector coordination, supporting gender analysis, and delivering trainings and other capacity building efforts.
- III. Advocacy, communication and knowledge building on gender responsive humanitarian action, including through gender alerts and issue briefs, joint advocacy initiatives, information sharing and documenting lessons learned and good practices.



<sup>2</sup> Including unaccompanied and separated children; persons with serious health conditions; persons with special legal or physical protection needs; single women; women-headed households; older persons; persons with disabilities; and persons of diverse sex, sexual orientation or gender identity (LGBTQIA+ individuals).

# LOOKING BACK AT 2022

The Gender Task Force was established in March 2022 under the Refugee Coordination Structure, and was tasked with supporting efforts to mainstream gender throughout the response. Following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February 2022 and the subsequent displacement of over 15.7 million individuals, the Republic of Moldova saw over 658,800 forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine enter the country over the course of the year. While many transited to other EU countries, over 96,000 individuals remained in Moldova (4% of the population), out of which 92% are women and children and 21 % elderly. The Moldovan government and civil society responded generously to refugees from Ukraine, and throughout 2022, UN agencies, international INGOs and local civil society organizations (CSOs) supported government-led efforts to provide reception, life-saving assistance, access to basic services, and safe transport for those moving onwards.

At the onset of the emergency the GTF members aimed to support the provision of urgently needed humanitarian relief items and shape response plans to ensure their gender-sensitivity. By April, GTF members were delivering gender-responsive programs, while the GTF worked across sectors and with local women’s CSOs, to build their knowledge and skills on delivering gender-responsive humanitarian action, including through training sessions and development of context-specific guidelines. Over the second and third quarters of 2022, the GTF continued to support forums for information sharing and facilitating exchange among different actors within the refugee response. In the last quarter of 2022, the GTF has submitted actions to be delivered withing the Refugee Response Plan 2023 in the Gender Standalone chapter. The GTF invested in increasing meaningful participation of local CSOs by facilitating consultation meetings with the WROs / WLOs on gender specific needs per sector.

## 2022 GTF OUTPUTS/RESULTS

| I. Coordination   | II. Technical Support and Capacity Building   | III. Advocacy and information sharing  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>1.1.GTF meetings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 GTF meetings held to coordinate implementation, review progress, and promote gender mainstreaming across the response.</li> <li>• 90 members of the GTF (with regular attendance of 20-25 persons), including from UN agencies, governmental bodies, INGOs and local CSOs.</li> </ul>                       | <p><b>2.1 Inputs into assessments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire for returnees (IOM).</li> <li>• <a href="#">Rapid Education Needs Assessment (UNICEF/REACH)</a>.</li> <li>• Capacities and Needs Assessment of the LPA in refugee crisis management (UNDP/CALM).</li> <li>• 2022 Moldova Multi-sector needs assessment (REACH/UNICEF).</li> <li>• The humanitarian coordination group and refugee coordination structures integrated elements of gender mainstreaming through their work (indicators, needs assessments, response plans and reporting), and were better able to analyze and respond to the distinct needs and priorities of refugee women, men, girls, and boys.</li> </ul> | <p><b>3.1 Gender analysis and issue briefs:</b> 2 briefs, alerts, and reports on GiHA developed, disseminated or promoted among humanitarian actors in Moldova including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Brief Analysis on the Gendered Impacts of the refugee crisis in Moldova</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Dissemination of the Regional Gender Task Force report on gender crisis</a></li> </ul> |
| <p><b>1.2. Strengthen inclusion and participation</b> of women-led and women’s rights organizations in the GTF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22 Women Led Organizations participated in GTF.</li> <li>• 25 women CSOs representatives participated in 2023 RRP planning consultations and prepared recommended actions (held 7 October 2022 by GTF and RCF).</li> </ul> | <p><b>2.2 Planning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender-sensitive indicators for RRP 2022.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Gender Standalone section for Inter-Agency Winterization Plan (November 2022 - March 2023)</a>.</li> <li>• Gender Standalone section for Moldova Refugee Response Plan 2023.</li> <li>• Gender-sensitive review of Moldova Refugee Response Plan 2023.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>3.2 Joint advocacy initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocated jointly for regular collection of SADD across all sectors.</li> <li>• Advocated for funding for women CSOs from Ukraine and Moldova and assured funding from Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund.</li> </ul>   |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 GTF members participated in drafting the gender section of the inter-agency winterization plan. Refugee women and girls, and their families benefitted from emergency food and non-food items, protection services, social integration, livelihood and economic opportunities, and information about their rights and access to services.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender-sensitive review of Moldova Refugee Response Plan 2023.</li> <li>Initiation of mapping of local NGOs providing refugee response services in 12 districts of Moldova and in Transnistria including women's rights CSOs.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocated jointly with UNFPA, UN Women, UNHCR and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection to prevent and reduce GBV country wide and increase demand for available GBV services.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>1.3. Collaboration with other sectors and coordination mechanisms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender focal points from GBV and with Inclusion and Livelihood working groups regularly participated in GTF meetings.</li> <li>GTF members regularly participated in sector working groups, sub-working and cross-cutting task forces.</li> </ul>                     | <p><b>2.3 Gender training and information sessions:</b></p> <p>120 individuals have improved knowledge and skills on GiHA as a result of training, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circa 50 individuals reached with self-paced training on GiHA.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>17 individuals (local NGOs, INGOs, UN Agencies, and UN Women) attended the in-person training on GiHA (13-15 June 2022).</li> <li>35 government representatives of key ministries and agencies involved in refugee response in Moldova attended information session on GiHA (17 June 2022).</li> <li>62 front line workers reached with training on GiHA and PSEA (25 August 2022).</li> <li>Members of GBV sub-working group introduced to the Gender in Humanitarian Action checklist.</li> <li>Actors involved in the humanitarian response (UN, NGO, Government staff, local government actors, and front-line workers) gained new knowledge and skills on how to mainstream gender into their humanitarian response, about GBV prevention and response, as well as on refugee crisis management, as a result of tools, guidelines and trainings.</li> <li>Local CSOs and women's organizations improved their knowledge and skills on humanitarian programming and leadership and were able to meaningfully participate in the humanitarian response.</li> </ul> | <p><b>3.3 Engage with donors/share funding opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17 local women CSOs<sup>4</sup> funded through the Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund promoted by GTF.</li> </ul>              |
|   | <p><b>2.4 Gender tools and guidance:</b></p> <p>"Gender Mainstreaming Checklists to inform Refugee Response in Moldova" adapted to local context and translated to <a href="#">English</a> and <a href="#">Romanian</a> language.</p>  |  |

<sup>3</sup> Training series on concepts, international framework, and methods for working toward gender equality and women's empowerment. Links to key courses: [I Know Gender 1-2-3](#) (mandatory for all other courses), [I Know Gender 10: Gender Equality in Emergencies](#) and [IASC e-learning on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action](#).

<sup>4</sup> La Strada, Women's Law Center, Motivatie, Institutum Virtutes Civilis, Gender Centru, Women for Women, ROMNI, Women Political Club, Union for Equity and Health, Help, National Youth Council, Nika Generation, Moldova Project, CCF Moldova, Innovation and Development Agency, Association of Entrepreneurs with Disabilities from Moldova, Faclia

# LOOKING BACK AT 2022

## EXAMPLES OF GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS BY GTF MEMBERS

GTF members implemented gender-responsive programs for refugees over the course of 2022, which covered a broad range of activities, issues, and sectors.

### Four examples of GTF members' and their refugee response actions in 2022:

#### GENDER CENTRU

- » Provided grants to 17 NGOs to support them in institutional strengthening of 20 crisis cells in 34 localities which overall served 1700 refugees and 100 host families.
- » Conducted capacity trainings for host communities and refugees to increase their ability to identify needs and provide gender-sensitive humanitarian support in which overall 179 people participated, including professionals, service providers, host community and refugees.
- » Created a discussion platform to capitalize on experience and expertise between civil society organizations, women's organizations, activists, and refugee women involved in humanitarian actions to strengthen civil society within the management of the humanitarian crisis.
- » Organized a Women Leaders for Peace Academy (WLPA) for 30 women and girls of Moldova and Ukraine through which 10 graduates received small grants for peace building initiatives.

#### INSTITUTUM VIRTUTES CIVILIS

- » Provided financial support to women-led CSOs in 4 regions and organized trainings sessions to strengthen the capacities of 32 representatives of women led CSOs, LPAs and volunteers to cooperate in planning and providing assistance to refugee women and children.
- » Carried out initiatives to strengthening the partnership between civil society organizations (CSOs) and local public authorities (LPAs) to be most effective in responses to the humanitarian crisis in the districts of Edineț, Cahul, Criuleni, Anenii-Noi and the municipality of Bălți.
- » Developed two sex-disaggregated databases, one on refugees accommodated and one on women-led CSOs, both covering 10 districts.

#### LA STRADA

- » Conducted a [study](#) that analyzed the mechanisms for preventing and combating violence against women and girls in a humanitarian context, as well as policies and practices in the Republic of Moldova aimed at victims of violence in a humanitarian context.
- » Carried out extensive awareness campaign about SV and GBV, and available services in Moldova, aimed at both Ukrainian refugees and Moldovan nationals. The campaign was developed in consultation with Ukrainian women refugees.
- » Expanded a mobile team and its capacities including psychological assistance at shelters as well as operation of a trust-line for women and girls, which overall reached more than 235 women and girls.
- » Conducted one training for frontline professionals to support NGOs and community-based organizations in protecting women and girls affected by forced displacement from GBV and SV in Moldova.
- » Provided 4 small grants to CSOs to conduct outreach activities.

#### MOTIVATIE

- » Extended the efforts of improving the quality of life of people with disabilities to refugees.
- » Conducted a training for 41 local and refugee women, with and without disabilities, on how to properly manage emotions in crisis situations and how to distinguish fake news during security challenges.
- » Provided information to women on how to get involved in decision-making processes and communicate effectively with Local Public Authorities in inclusive humanitarian crisis planning and response.
- » Organized activities to promote social cohesion, such as a community event in Leova district that promoted Moldovan traditions and culture to illustrate how traditions can unite people, and a sanitation activity in Ialoveni district that highlighted the potential of people with disabilities and the contribution of Ukrainian refugees to the community.

<sup>5</sup> These four exemplary initiatives and actions were supported through funding by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF).

## STORIES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

### Digital Literacy Contributes to Women's Employment and Prevention of GBV

Women refugees from Ukraine participated in digital skill training offered at the Center for Rehabilitation of Survivors of Gender-Based Violence in Găgăuzia region, with UNDP support.

Forty-one-year-old Evgeniya fled from Odessa, Ukraine, with her two children. She used to work as a seamstress in Ukraine and together with her fashion designer husband, had a family business selling clothing. She is now lives in the region of Gagauzia Moldova and registered for the digital learning program there. Learning IT skills has been very helpful to her. "I have gained experience that will be very useful for me. It will help us a lot in the development and promotion of the business". Evgeniya is determined to find a job, despite not knowing how long she'll stay in Moldova.

Thirty-year-old Anastasia fled from Mykolaiv Ukraine with her two children. She worked in the banking sector in Ukraine prior to having her second child. In Moldova she completed the digital education program which she said was very helpful for her. "I used to work in Excel and Word - they were familiar to me. But [through the digital skills program] I improved my skills. I learned that I could work much more efficiently".

Acquiring new digital skills can not only make women more competitive in the workplace, but securing a job and improving their financial status, can also make them more independent. This financial independence can make it easier for them to leave an abuse domestic situation.

For the full story go to <https://moldova.unwomen.org/en/stories/reportaj/2023/02/implicare-cu-grija-servicii-de-infrumusetare-combinata-cu-asistenta-psihologica-pentru-persoanele-refugiate-din-moldova>

### Responding with care: Beauty services coupled with counselling for Ukrainian refugees in Moldova

Free psychological counselling and beauty services for Ukrainian refugees. An example of local action taken by a woman for women, through the support of Gender Centru and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF). Since the first day of the war in Ukraine, Anastasia Bacico has been actively involved in the refugee response in Hîrbovăț, Anenii Noi, a village in central Moldova. A 28-year-old from the local community, Anastasia studied as a foreign language interpreter, but her interest in civic engagement and community aid led her to begin a salon that offers free beauty services and psychological support for refugees and local women. The salon is

run through the project "Feminist and localized humanitarian action", supported by Gender Centru - a partner organization of UN Women that receives funding from the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF).

As the crisis went on, Bacico realized that the level of stress women refugees are under required something more than just covering their basic needs. "Most men have remained in their country, and women are involved in an ongoing struggle here - they have to do their best to acquire food, hygiene products, clothing and various other services that they and their children need," she said.

Bacico decided to act, and through the WPHF-funded project, she has been providing a space where Ukrainian refugees and local women can come to receive free psychological counselling and beauty services. Getting a haircut or a manicure helps them feel better and, in the process, they also receive psycho-emotional counselling. More than that, Bacico's project offers an opportunity for displaced women to be involved in the refugee response. The activities were designed with inputs from a local group of refugees, and several refugees volunteer at the salon.

For the full story go to <https://moldova.unwomen.org/en/stories/reportaj/2023/02/implicare-cu-grija-servicii-de-infrumusetare-combinata-cu-asistenta-psihologica-pentru-persoanele-refugiate-din-moldova>

### Motivation for life: One Ukrainian refugee's mission in Moldova

Tatiana came to Moldova from Ukraine and started to help other refugees through her work with the Association "Motivație" from Moldova, a partner organization of UN Women that is financially supported by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF).

Even though Tatiana didn't know where her daughter was and whether her husband and son were still alive, she offered to help other women refugees from the first day she arrived in Moldova. She connected with volunteers from the Association "Motivație" from Moldova, who were working on the ground to help refugees, particularly those with special needs, with accommodation, food packages, first aid and psychological counseling. Together, Tatiana and the Association have worked to address the problems war has generated for these refugees and help thousands of Ukrainian women and girls navigate their new 'refugee' status in Moldova. "I am a simple woman who is used to working and cooking for my family," says Tatiana.

"I started looking after an elderly woman and continued to volunteer. Then my colleagues from the Association "Motivație" from Moldova offered me a paid job and taught me how to properly approach people who needed our help". Since arriving in Moldova, Tatiana has worked with local organizations that host refugees to

better understand the crisis and how to remain effective during tense times with high flows of people, particularly those with special needs, whom she describes as being confused by the uncertainty they now find themselves in because of the war. "Personally, only when I started earning my own money did I regain confidence and a slight sense of normality" she says.

Along with her colleagues from the Association "Motivație" from Moldova, Tatiana has travelled around the whole country with aid packages and kind words to help local authorities and civil society groups better understand the situation of refugees in Moldova, especially those with special needs. She says she has received thousands of calls since starting this work. "People need help, but they also need moral support," she says. "Helping them makes me feel better, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to do something necessary and useful during this very complicated time for all of us".

For the full story go to <https://moldova.unwomen.org/en/stories/reportaj/2023/01/motivatia-pentru-viata>

## PRIORITY AREAS AND LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023

As the refugee crisis in Moldova entered the second year, the Gender Task Force will continue the work along leading on gender mainstreaming across the inter-agency response within the Refugee Response Plan 2023 to promote integration of gender into the refugee response. Close cooperation with sectors, working groups and task forces will be continued to ensure collaboration and that the needs, capacities and priorities of women, girls, men and boys – related to pre-existing gender roles and inequalities, along with the specific gendered impacts of displacement – are recognized and addressed. By mainstreaming gender equality and promoting women's empowerment in humanitarian action it will ensure that the response is equitable, and both establishes and protects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons.

The Gender Task Force will work in close collaboration with sector leads and all members of the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF), with a specific focus on:

- Enhancing the systemic collection and analysis of sex and age disaggregated data, in close collaboration with the Information Management Working Group (IMWG);
- Carrying out targeted gender assessments and integrating gender and intersectional considerations into sectoral and cross-sectoral assessments;
- Building the capacity of UN, government, CSO partner on gender in humanitarian action;
- Ensuring regular and inclusive consultation and feedback with affected women, girls, men and boys, in particular those from at-risk groups, to identify their needs,

priorities, and capacities, and ensure these inform the response, in close collaboration with the Accountability to Affected People (AAP) Taskforce;

- Increasing the meaningful participation and leadership of refugee women, as well as national and local CSOs, including women-led organizations and women's rights organizations in the refugee response, through flexible funding, capacity building, and facilitating access to humanitarian coordination structures, in collaboration with RCF sectors;
- Advocating for: (a) gender-responsive programs that are available, accessible, responsive to all, (b) targeted services for women and girls, – in particular prevention, mitigation, and response to gender-based violence (GBV) and access to and availability of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services, and (c) gender-transformative programs that address the root causes of gender inequalities in the context of the refugee response;
- Supporting actions to address prevailing gender norms that increase the risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and hinder SEA report by women, girls, men and boys, in close collaboration with the PSEA Task Force;
- Collaborating with Roma Task Force to ensure that Roma refugee women who face multiple and intersecting barriers and risks are included in the refugee response according to their needs;
- Strengthening and intensifying the collaboration between humanitarian actors, local CSOs and LPAs to enhance localization of refugee response and increase inclusion of refugees in the GTF;
- Advocating for regular and more flexible funding for local women-led and women-rights organizations to ensure their meaningful participation in refugee response and continuity of service delivery.

## FUNDING NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

Priority funding gaps for 2023 include funding for coordination, capacity building on Gender in Humanitarian Action, gender analysis and flexible funding for WLOs / WROs providing responsive programs.

**Active GTF Members in 2022:** ACTED Moldova, Action Aid, ADRA Moldova, Fiecare contribuie pentru schimbare, BiazGul, Regional Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Family Violence, Consens, Raza Începerei, CALM, Care for Ukraine, Center Partnership for Development, Church World Service, Clear Global, Foreign Policy Association in Moldova, Gender-Centru Helmut Wolf, HelpAge International, Impact Initiatives, Institutum Virtutes Civilis, Interviews, IOM, Laolalta/Moldova for Peace Project, Law Center of Advocates, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, National Agency for Social Protection, National Coalition "Life Without Violence", Femei pentru Femei, La Strada, Motivatia, Artemida, Hope4, Vivere, OHCHR Moldova, Peace Winds Japan, Plan International, Platform for Gender Equality, ROMNI, Project Hope, Red Cross France, 2 refugee women leaders from Soroca, Roma Awareness Foundation, Roma Women and Girls Network "Moldsolidaritate", State Chancellery, Tekedu, U.S. Embassy Chisinau, UN Women Moldova, UN Women Regional Office, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, Voice Amplified, WHO, Women Law Centre, WFP, Intersos, UNRPD.