

The Local Integration of Refugees in the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine

“A Strategy for Action”

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Final Report*

“You cannot feel grounded until you belong, you cannot belong until you are accepted”.

(Mr. Erik Stenström, Legal Counsellor of Swedish Migration Board addressing Concluding Seminar of the Local Integration Project, Gomel, 9 October 2007 and speaking about what is needed for successful integration).

* *This report has been translated into Russian but the English text prevails. Both are available on www.soderkoping.org.ua and www.refworld.org.*

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BRC – Belarusian Red Cross;
BSU – Belarusian State University;
BYR – Belarusian Ruble;
CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States;
CTD – Convention Travel Document;
CV – Curriculum Vitae;
EC – European Commission;
ECRE – European Council on Refugees and Exile;
EU – European Union;
EUR – Euro;
G – Government;
GDP – Gross Domestic Product;
HIV/AIDS – Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome;
ID – Identification Document;
IFAD – Fund for Agricultural Development;
IFC – International Financial Corporation;
IO – International Organizations;
IOM – International Organization for Migration;
IPA – International Public Association;
LIP – Local Integration Project;
MDL – Moldovan Lei;
MID – Ministry of Information Development Moldova;
MoI – Ministry of Interior;
NGO – Non-Government Organization;
R – Refugee Community/Refugees;
RSD – Refugee status determination;
SBU – Security Service of Ukraine (*Sluzhba Bezopasnosti Ukrainy*);
SCNR – State Committee for Nationalities and Religions (Ukraine);
SDCIRNP – The State Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Registration of Natural Persons (Ukraine).
TAC – Temporary Accommodation Center;
TB – tuberculosis;
TD – Travel Document;
UAH – Ukrainian Hryvnia;
ULIM – Universitatii Libere Internationale din Moldova;
UN – United Nations;
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme;
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;
UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund;
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
USD – United States Dollar;
UT – Unified Tax (*Ediny Nalog*, Belarus);
VAT – Value Added Tax.

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The Experts' conclusions and recommendations, while based on the information gathered with the help of their many interlocutors, were reached and formulated independently and must thus be their sole responsibility. The Experts express their sincere hope that this "Strategy for Action" will be of assistance to Governments, International Organizations and NGOs alike in serving exiles and the societies which have offered them refuge.

*Geneva/Helsinki
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1. Executive Summary

The ongoing globalization process means that people are likely to be more mobile than ever in the past; while some move voluntarily, others seek to escape persecution in their country of origin. Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine are already countries of immigration - they can not possibly isolate themselves from present-day migratory trends. International conventions have been signed, asylum seekers have access to refugee status determination procedures, willy-nilly refugees and their families share the fate of their host societies.¹ If their problems are not attended to, the asylum systems in the three countries will be undermined.

The decision to study the integration of refugees in the three countries was taken by the Senior Level Review Meeting in October 2006 in Stockholm when the Advisory Board on Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine agreed to “*Research on local integration of refugees in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus by enhancing governments’ capacities in assisting to develop a Comprehensive Integration Strategy*”. Two international Experts were tasked to examine how refugees manage to integrate and to assess whether existing policies, administrative procedures and/or legislation need to be improved. The project on “*Local Integration of Refugees in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine*” (hereafter LIP) was carried out between April and November 2007.²

As indicated in the *Interim Report* presented to the Söderköping Process Senior Level Review Meeting in Stockholm (September 2007)³, the concern of the Governments of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine to fully implement the 1951 *UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951 Convention) by enhancing their capacity to integrate refugees, led to a request to the international community to conduct this study.

The Concluding Seminar of the LIP in Gomel, Belarus (9-10 October 2007) allowed the Government representatives of the three countries as well as NGO staff and refugee community leaders, to review the situation jointly. A preliminary report gave an overview of main problem areas and formulated some possible solutions. On the second day of the Seminar the country delegations considered the need to draft national integration strategies and commented on the recommendations elaborated by the Experts. It was agreed that all the participants would present their written comments by 26 October 2007, so that the Experts could adjust their recommendations and prepare a final report to serve as a strategic framework for the local integration of refugees in all three countries.

The present final report takes into account the comments received to the extent possible and is submitted for consideration to the Governments of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine as well as to the European Union and the Office of the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees.

Although so far, the issue of the integration of refugees in the three countries has been largely left aside, the Experts were greatly encouraged to meet so many interlocutors who approached it with an open mind. They are grateful for the cooperation extended by the respective refugee authorities; it was exemplary and allowed them to assess much data in considerable detail. In some instances, where cooperation and inputs were not as forthcoming, the Experts, having repeatedly solicited information and inputs, were left with no option but to rely on their own observations and analysis. It will be up to the Governments concerned to consider the recommendations presented herewith and to decide on appropriate action.

It has been observed that the quality of any asylum system can be judged by the level of integration of refugees in the host country, especially when voluntary repatriation is unlikely in a foreseeable future. The Experts fully appreciate that the integration of refugees in any society presents formidable challenges, some of which have not been satisfactorily tackled even in relatively wealthy democracies. One could question whether the timing of the present study was optimal, especially if its outcomes required additional government financial outlays. But from that perspective, one could argue that the timing would hardly ever be right. Certainly, resources pose a considerable obstacle and unless the State budgets allocate funds or additional resources are raised from the international community, the integration of refugees is unlikely to proceed at the desirable pace. On the other

1 While integration measures are often extended to most third country nationals (e.g. immigrants) within existing migration management efforts, the Terms of Reference required the Experts focus on to the situation of refugees (and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, former refugees or stateless persons who have been naturalised – hereafter referred to as refugees). The Experts followed EU guidelines that recommend that persons who are granted subsidiary protection are treated equally with refugees; see Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Immigration, Integration and Employment, COM (2003) 336, para. 3.1, 3 June 2003; see http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/2004_2007/doc/com_2003_336_final.pdf.

2 The report was prepared by a team of independent Experts led by Mr. Oldrich Andrysek (Senior Legal Expert) and Ms. Tarja Rantala (Senior Socio-Economic Expert); upon completion of their assignment the Experts returned to their work in UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior of Finland respectively; see <http://soderkoping.org.ua/page16067.html>

3 For text see <http://soderkoping.org.ua/page16072.html> .

hand, to continue to ignore integration issues also exacts a price. Integration is a complex process for which there is no one speedy recipe. Not all the measures proposed imply an increase in financial expenditures; qualitative improvements are required in many areas.

The success of integration measures depends primarily on the willingness of the State to foster favourable conditions, *i.e.* to actively develop and pursue policies that empower the newcomer and that promote positive societal attitudes. As this report shows, promotion of integration does not depend on financial resources only; it also depends on the behavior and thinking of officials, on understanding the concept of equality. Societies need to become "learning societies" familiarizing themselves with new types of interaction and communication with new and diverse groups of people. Integration demands a capacity to adapt from a range of actors, including from refugees themselves. Two processes are critical to improving an immigrants' prospects: the elimination of inequalities, and the acquisition of marketable skills. These changes are at the heart of integration policies of Europe.⁴

The task of formulating realistic integration measures has not been made easier by the fact that some refugees are difficult to integrate or would have wished to seek asylum elsewhere and have approached the authorities of the host country only when all other options failed – a natural phenomenon as an asylum seeker looks for the best options. Other factors, such as the impact of ongoing national socio-economic reforms, the variable ability of newcomers to successfully adapt in a confusing environment, entrenched or sceptical attitudes on the part of government officials, *i.e.* that the present asylum systems cannot be modified easily (only if laws change, if more money is made available, if extra staff is allocated, if a reorganisation is carried out *etc.*) had also to be kept in mind.

The Experts examined whether UNHCR, the responsible international agency, discharged its mandate as effectively as possible and whether its programmes in the sub-region, were adequately resourced and adapted to the political and economic realities of daily refugee life. One particularly relevant consideration was the availability of resources for capacity building. It was found that over the years, UNHCR's funding had diminished considerably and that the Organization planned to phase down its activities in the sub-region even further. In that circumstance, Governments may need to up-grade their own capacity to fundraise, so that the LIP recommendations may be fully implemented.

Accession to the 1951 Convention opened the door to the formidable task of establishing asylum systems and it is most commendable that today, all three States provide refugees with a safe haven.⁵ In each of the three countries, some refugees have managed to integrate and some have even obtained citizenship. It is encouraging to note how much progress has been achieved. Few Government officials directly involved with refugees, disagreed with the premise that some refugees constitute one of the most vulnerable categories of society. Most also agreed that refugees deserve/need support with specific problems, which include language/interpretation, medical assistance, housing, legal guidance, as well as access to education and employment opportunities. Upon reflection, few disputed that both governments and refugees essentially share converging interests: refugees wish to start a new life and earn their own living and governments would wish that refugees contribute to society, rather than augment state expenditures.

Committed to implementing their international obligations, the Governments' assistance to refugees has nonetheless rarely gone beyond the provision of primary and secondary education of children, documentation and the protection from *refoulement*. The central authorities responsible for refugee issues have, for understandable reasons, hitherto placed most emphasis on introducing asylum mechanisms, status determination, registration and various administrative measures, including building up their own capacity and structures. Integration-related activities have not been a priority and thus have remained peripheral and fragmented. To this date, there are no specific entities (or dedicated personnel with a clear authority and objective) to manage and be responsible for integration. Existing staff need to refocus and receive training to implement existing rules relating to refugees consistently. Their lack of language skills and the absence of interpretation facilities, compromise the interaction that is required. There are no dedicated budgetary means. Other than granting refugee children

4 See "Handbook on Integration" (2nd edition 2007), European Commission. See http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/doc_centre/immigration/integration/doc/2007/handbook_2007_en.pdf

5 Accession to the 1951 Convention: Belarus and Moldova (2001), Ukraine in 2002. Moldova's instrument of ratification included a number of reservations including Article 3: "... the government ... shall hold consultations with ... UNHCR regarding the participation of the latter in the process of refugee status determination, identification of necessary means for the implementation of the provisions of this convention, particularly aiming to adopt projects financed by UNHCR for the material assistance of refugees: (temporary shelter, food, medical assistance, education, integration related costs and provision of other services) that would permit covering the costs for a due implementation of the 1951 Convention's provisions"; See "Monitorul oficial", 11 December 2001 of the Republic of Moldova, no. 150-151.

access to both primary and secondary education⁶, there are surprisingly few examples of active Government assistance to refugees to adapt to their new environment. With the exception of one AENEAS⁷ project awaiting approval (Moldova), Governments have rarely actively sought international aid for local integration and when they have, they have not always been successful.⁸ It is also fair to say that a number of government officials expressed disappointment that many of their expectations of anticipated/required support from the international community, including UNHCR, have not been met. The Experts also noted a limited capacity to formulate/submit pertinent projects and concluded that Governments actually needed additional direct support to build their capacity to apply for, utilise and eventually report on such additional funding as may be made available.

The process of integration is complex and much depends on the skills and attitudes of the individuals concerned, but on the whole, the degree of integration is contingent upon the objective conditions that prevail in or that have been created by the host society. The absence of positive measures designed to facilitate integration or the non-removal of existing/known obstacles, impede the process and in some cases, makes integration a remote or completely unrealistic proposition.

The Experts' analysis and recommendations have been extensively discussed with relevant stakeholders (over 100 interviews/exchanges with Government officials, NGO and refugee community representatives at local and central levels) and reflect concerns voiced by refugees and their community leaders (over 200 individually interviewed refugees replied to the LIP questionnaire – see Annex 1).⁹ Following the Interim Report presented to the Senior Officials in Stockholm (September 2007), draft recommendations for each country were shared with the Governments and further discussed at the final LIP Gomel Seminar.¹⁰ The Seminar brought together Steering Committee members, representatives of various Government departments, representatives of international organisations and of NGOs, as well as several refugee community representatives. Many issues were debated at length. All stakeholders were given additional time to comment on the preliminary recommendations and - to the extent possible and in the spirit of cooperation and independent analysis - their observations have been incorporated into the present report.

The recommendations (Chapters 4-7) aim to offer solutions based on best known practice, building on existing national structures. The Experts have therefore tried to avoid recommending anything that would entail creating parallel systems for refugees; instead, they propose to fine tune and adapt systems geared to benefit nationals so as to ensure that these comprehensively respect refugee rights. The recommendations present a way forward for the three Governments and suggest measures to be considered and implemented progressively to foster the local integration of refugees. Well aware of the complex socio-economic, demographic and administrative realities in the region, the Experts took into account both the constraints faced by the authorities and external factors such as the proximity of the EU and the impact of irregular movement (in all its diverse aspects - sources of migration, primary destination, transit *etc.*).

In formulating recommendations the Experts have considered integration measures as a process allowing newcomers to adapt to the host society. Integration is/should be an integral part of every asylum policy and practice; while States may adopt a variety of approaches to integration, there is a recognizable set of best practices based on a widely accepted definition:

*Integration is a two-way, multifaceted, dynamic, long term, continuous and voluntary process. Integration is based on mutual accommodation, equal opportunities and acceptance of all third-country nationals as well as their descendants and the host society.*¹¹

6 Providing primary education, irrespective of status, is an obligation imposed by the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (all three States are signatories).

7 Regulation (EC) No 491/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2004 established a programme for financial and technical assistance to third countries in the areas of migration and asylum (AENEAS).

8 Apart from regional and national programmes, non EU member States can apply to the *Thematic Programme of Cooperation with Third Countries in the Areas of Migration and Asylum* which continues the AENEAS activities in 2007-2013; it is designed to support projects that aim to improve the management of migratory flows (*i.e.* links between migration and development, economic migration, preventing and fighting illegal immigration, voluntary return and reintegration of migrants, international protection) but not the integration of refugees specifically. See <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l14510.htm>

9 The Experts conducted field visits and reviewed numerous sources on the subject. It is noteworthy that the "*Identifying Gaps in Protection Capacity*", prepared by UNHCR's for the 2005 CIS Conference process also dealt with integration (see paras. 101 & 102). This document illustrates how little the situation has evolved to date.

10 Gomel, Belarus 9-10 October 2007, see <http://soderkoping.org.ua/page16088.html>.

11 The essence of this definition appears in various EU documents and is generally agreed upon in practice in many European countries.

Experience shows that it is advisable for the process of integration to commence as early as possible by offering asylum seekers targeted support in the form of language or familiarization programmes to facilitate their understanding of and adaptation to the host country. In this regard, it is recognized good practice to adopt the view that all foreigners may integrate and thus to systematically involve citizens and consciously address the issue of discriminatory stereotypes. It is crucial to constantly sensitize society to be open to newcomers (explain why refugees arrived); to assist refugees to exercise their rights, to gain access to local services and to create their own dignified space. States are well advised to actively implement anti-discrimination and anti-racism policies and pursue awareness raising activities to nurture and promote the positive aspects of multicultural diversity.

It is well known that existing administrative structures are not always easy to change, especially if such change is in favour of a relatively small group of individuals who may have specific needs. Implementing change and adopting special measures that would be responsive to the host societies' traditions is contingent on the capacity of the responsible organization and of its staff. Clearly, the implementation of integration policies will imply both administrative and legislative changes and may entail some additional expenditure.

The Experts would underline however, that a functioning set of finely balanced measures leading to integration, has positive consequences for the society and the economy of every host country. Integrated refugees contribute to collective wealth, reduce social expenditures and promote attitudes of tolerance. The absence of integration prospects on the other hand, results in marginalization and socio-economic exclusion. Experience shows that any initial investment will be offset by the gradual decrease of the financial and social costs of exclusion, by the progressive increase in the number of integrated and thus tax paying individuals and by many difficult to quantify - but still very real - gains, notably a cohesive society.

It is noteworthy in the three countries that many refugees who had sufficient resources (inner and/or financial) and good fortune have managed to integrate. They no longer depend on help, quite to the contrary, they contribute to their host societies and provide support to less successful countrymen (reducing the demand on State assistance in the process); they pay their taxes and play a positive role in society. In Ukraine, refugees, in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Odesa, annually pay 3,516,888 UAH (703,378 USD) in taxes and social contributions. In Belarus, in the Gomel region, the Experts estimated that 15 Afghan refugees (individual entrepreneurs) pay approximately 90 million BYR (41,400 USD) in taxes; while in Minsk, another 48 refugees pay some 151,200 EUR annually.¹² The Experts found that refugee contributions to the host society in taxes and social security payments were not always sufficiently recognized. To the contrary, refugees were often believed to be a real or potential "burden" on society.

If it is incumbent on the State to create favourable conditions for the exercise of legitimate economic, cultural, social, civic and political rights of third country nationals, the duties and obligations incumbent upon refugees should not be forgotten. Beneficiaries of protection must abide by local legislation and demonstrate respect for basic values and traditions of the host society. Refugees need not renounce their identity, but must make a conscious effort to adapt themselves and to co-exist with citizens.

Refugees do have the capacity to help themselves, but they are dependent on the existence of a minimum of favourable conditions. These include the facilitation, in a holistic approach, of access to employment, housing, education, health and social services in conditions of non-discrimination and with special attention to vulnerable persons and to those with special needs. In this regard NGOs and refugee communities have contributed considerably, often stepping into the gap left open by Governments, absorbing shocks and assisting those who would otherwise remain destitute. It appears self-evident that to establish and maintain favourable conditions, Governments must empower a responsible entity that would build on past achievements, to coordinate and promote integration systematically, audit progress and mainstream refugee needs into existing social structures.

Finally, the central authorities, as well as NGOs, have developed considerable local expertise and in many instances, have been able to draw on international contacts. A strengthening of their respective capacities will be required to allow them, both singly and jointly, to move integration processes forward.

The Experts believe that a positive attitude and a consistent effort to provide for an environment conducive for refugees to start new lives will bring about tangible solutions. Where a reasonable investment is underpinned by supportive Government structures, the results can be effective and sustainable. All three countries have an opportunity to manifest their political will to integrate refugees.

¹² In the absence of official data (requested but not obtained from the three Governments), the Experts have made several estimates basing themselves on known tax rates and social contributions paid also by refugees, *i.e.* those who earn a wage or engage in individual entrepreneurship – for more see respective country chapters.

2. Objectives of the Local Integration Project

The aim of the project was to systematically examine the state of affairs with regard to local integration of refugees in the three countries and to propose measures to solve identified problems in the most effective manner. The resulting analysis and recommendations should be of assistance to the respective Governments to chart a course and launch actions to foster local integration efforts and provide a reliable platform on which to raise funds for relevant projects.¹³

To this end the Experts have:

- Investigated current situations of refugees in relation to integration in the three countries concerned, both at the central and local levels.
- Identified obstacles and deficiencies of the principle entities dealing with refugees and explored possible solutions in the main problem areas, in the light of generally known best practices. This has included consideration of how the asylum systems function in their entirety; achievements and gaps to date; national social and security policies and peculiarities; and the broader implications of prevailing migration trends.
- Formulated recommendations for Governments and relevant organizations, including UNHCR, to improve the integration opportunities of refugees; indicating to the international community that funds be mobilized where appropriate solutions are clearly beyond the present capacities of States.

¹³ Although strictly speaking not their responsibility, whenever applicable, the Experts counselled refugees on their rights and/or referred them to UNHCR or to the appropriate Government authority.

3. Methodology

The LIP was undertaken as a bottom-up exercise that would focus on analyzing the current reality with a view to providing suitable and practical guidance on best practices and policies that could and should be pursued. To this end the Experts requested and obtained that Governments instruct relevant Ministries to extend their active co-operation.¹⁴ The Experts have sought to candidly identify problem areas and rely on the good will of the Governments concerned to accept critical remarks.

The Experts have examined the prevailing legal, administrative and socio-economic conditions and conducted a holistic and independent analysis which has led to the formulation of general and country-specific recommendations based on empirical findings.¹⁵ Thus the Experts have:

- closely coordinated with the designated responsible authority in each country (*i.e.* central refugee/Migration Office), convened national Task Forces (composed of representatives of stakeholder ministries, NGOs and refugee community leaders) and sought guidance as appropriate. In Belarus, in compliance with the Government policy, a local institution was also commissioned by the Ministry of Interior to produce a separate analysis (the report of the Research Institute of the Ministry of Labour was completed on 10 November 2007).¹⁶
- relied on triangulation *i.e.* examining the situation on basis of existing reports/documentation, interviews with refugees and with relevant Government officials and non-government representatives, UNHCR and international organizations; the preliminary recommendations were shared with Governments with a view to obtaining comments and correcting any erroneous perceptions;
- conducted interviews (voluntary and confidential) with persons forming a representative sample of the adult population of concern *i.e.* a mix of women and men, single and married, the young and the aged, different ethnic groups, the employed and unemployed, those living in rural and in urban areas *etc.*;
- produced a statistical/qualitative analysis from data collected on the basis of a standard questionnaire designed to elicit and record the views and aspirations of refugees, beneficiaries of humanitarian status, stateless persons or former refugees who had obtained citizenship in their country of asylum.¹⁷

A summary analysis of the main obstacles to integration common to all three countries is presented in Chapter 4 below. The problems essentially revolve around income and housing, registration and administrative requirements, language and cultural induction training or the absence thereof. The Experts have also seen a need to enhance the actual knowledge/capacity of refugees to exercise their rights (*i.e.* access to information, support from qualified counselors). General recommendations on how these issues may be addressed will be found in Chapters 4.1. to 4.5. While some recommendations may not lend themselves to immediate implementation, they should be viewed as constituent building blocks of the asylum system. Separate country-specific recommendations are presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The introductory texts to these Chapters summarize the nature and the key elements of the problems. They are based on the Experts' observation and on the views expressed by persons of concern, officials and staff of NGOs. The introductory texts cannot be deemed exhaustive or applicable to every locality, but the Experts are confident that when read in conjunction with the statistical analysis (see Annex 2) they can be considered as sufficiently argued, indicative of a need for corrective measures and conclusive within acceptable margins of error.

14 Throughout, the Experts reported progress to the Steering Committee (EC, IOM, Swedish Migration Board and UNHCR), to the 2007 Söderköping Senior Officials Meeting and to the Delegation of the European Commission in Kyiv. Where appropriate, the Experts provided direct operational feedback to UNHCR and the Government authorities on issues that deserved immediate attention or follow up.

15 To maintain momentum/continuity country assistants were recruited to carry out routine duties related to the project (administrative matters but also to conduct interviews with refugees, to solicit on behalf of the Experts, additional information from relevant sources *etc.*).

16 The study makes a number of recommendations along the line of those contained in this report and serves as a useful point of reference, especially on issues concerning employment. It also makes a suggestion to create a website dedicated to informing refugees about their rights and obligations. See "Отчет о научно-исследовательской работе "Разработка рекомендаций по содействию местной интеграции беженцев в Республике Беларусь", Минск, 2007, № госрегистрации 20072509".

17 210 refugees were interviewed: in Moldova 56 (over 46% of the adult target group); in Belarus 57 (11%); in Ukraine 97 (4%). It is notable that most were quite skeptical and reluctant to be interviewed stating that they keep getting visitors, have to answer all sorts of questions and very little results ever ensue.

4. General observations in relation to the integration of refugees in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine and related recommendations

When macro-economic conditions in a country are unfavourable to such an extent that even citizens seek employment abroad and that rural areas are drained of inhabitants, the local integration of refugees can easily become politically sensitive. When social support systems fail to meet even elementary needs of citizens, achieving self-reliance for refugees may appear to be an unreasonable proposition. It is thus hardly surprising that, given the complexity of the situation in each of the three countries and prevailing financial constraints, all three Governments have yet to systematically implement one of the key obligations assumed when acceding to the 1951 Convention, *i.e.* to facilitate the assimilation of refugees into the host society (Article 34: “*The Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees...*” (emphasis added)).¹⁸

The Experts have found that all three States are at various stages of amending their refugee legislation. This process has absorbed much energy, but has not sufficiently addressed the need to dovetail new refugee law and existing laws and by-laws, or to eliminate possible sources of misinterpretation. As a result, local integration prospects have been severely hampered and many potential solutions have been left pending. Few officials (other than those directly responsible for refugees) are sufficiently conversant with applicable refugee rights and obligations. Too many officials perceive a refugee as just another foreigner and some actually continue to consider their presence as unjustified or undesirable. Many find it inconceivable that any national financial resources should be directed to solving refugee problems – especially when so many citizens also live in poverty. Partnership between government and civil society is weak and there is little recognition by the State, of how many crucial services are being provided to refugees (especially in the field of community services and assistance) by *ad hoc* programmes executed by NGOs. Not all of these have been coordinated; some have not addressed the most acute problem areas or have not been designed to achieve longer term objectives. Additionally, donor funding and technical support has not been sufficiently forthcoming to meet needs and the capacity of some UNHCR Offices to implement projects has been reduced to a point where doing more is not always feasible.

In each country, UNHCR has continued to fund a lion’s share of the health costs for recognized refugees and to supplement a range of other social costs without which the most vulnerable refugees would have found it difficult to survive (*e.g.* social security insurance, school related costs, emergency assistance for the destitute). National budgetary allocations to designated refugee authorities are below levels that would permit to make a meaningful contribution to solving these problems.

Despite the rapid evolution of the economy in the three countries, employment and housing are chronic, all pervasive problems for refugees; they are compounded by the fact that certain rights are contingent on the place of residence (where the person manages to obtain a propiska/registration). Salaries are generally low. Compared to the local population, refugees however, tend to incur higher costs, especially for rent. Given the shortage of sufficiently paid official jobs, refugees’ prospects of legal employment are limited. Given the lack of housing and rising rents in urban centers, especially capitals, refugees are forced into sub-standard accommodation. To meet rental payments, most refugees continue to prefer to work in the informal sector where incomes are invariably higher. By working illegally they avoid taxes, but as they also wind-up not paying medical/social insurances or contributing to pension funds, they are unprotected against future needs.

There are positive signs on the horizon as well. Although access to employment remains problematic, this is likely to change in the near future due to stabilizing economies and projected demographic trends. In some areas, new employment opportunities already outstrip supply (*e.g.* tourist and hotel industry, construction) and salary levels are expected to rise. This situation will create new demands on people to re-qualify and acquire new skills.

Refugees, like citizens, must overcome many bureaucratic obstacles, but find it particularly difficult to cope with the numerous and complex procedures to register and obtain residence permits and/or to renew their refugee documents. Refugees tend to be more exposed to administrative fines (or extortion), subject to more frequent identity checks or home visits by the police *etc.*. This leads them to feel that they are discriminated against and not welcome, a further hindrance to integration.

It is generally recognized that knowing the language of the host society is an essential element of integration. In each country a great majority of refugees have a good command of Russian, but the assertiveness of official languages (especially Ukrainian and Romanian) is creating new demands. Language courses, usually organized

18 In all three countries international treaties are considered to override conflicting national legislation.

by NGOs and financed by UNHCR, are not always available or effective. Attendance rates are low even when related transport costs are reimbursed (some refugees have to choose between earning a living and going to classes). Furthermore, NGOs are not usually habilitated to certify language proficiency. None of the Governments have invested any funds in language training; at the same time however, proficiency is expected of refugees applying for jobs, attempting to gain access to educational institutions or to obtain citizenship.

Refugee students face difficulty in competing with locals for subsidized study opportunities once they have graduated from secondary schools (secondary education has been provided generously, at no cost, by the State), because they fail to attain sufficiently good results at university entry exams. This has generally been attributed to their weaker educational backgrounds and inferior language skills. Many have been prevented from entering universities because fees have been calculated at rates applicable to foreigners, which they could not afford to pay. Access to student loans for refugee children is difficult (parents can rarely prove a sufficiently high income to be eligible).

NGOs have played an indispensable role in providing refugees with essential services and basic safety nets. Some partner organizations, however, lack suitably experienced staff with the desirable level of qualifications, to further integration single-handedly (e.g. in the legal area no state-sponsored legal aid programmes exist). Another fairly acute problem identified by the Experts is that NGOs do not receive due recognition or support from Governments and rely solely on international grants and *ad hoc* programmes. This has led to an uneven performance and donor driven agendas that have not necessarily taken real refugee needs into consideration. The Experts are of the opinion that NGOs working in isolation cannot be expected to replace or supplement Government structures or to develop and implement long term integration projects.

It is quite obvious that all three countries have made tangible progress; it would be disingenuous however, if the Experts were to ignore the numerous *lacunae* and unaddressed problems. None of these are unbridgeable or insurmountable, but there is little evidence so far, of any serious consideration being given to the creation of a functioning integration friendly environment. Perhaps the most striking feature common to all three countries is that the Governments have yet to articulate comprehensive and sufficiently detailed policies that could be translated into a cohesive set of actions to facilitate the integration of recognized refugees. With no national strategy for the integration of refugees, no budgeted resources and no dedicated staff even at central levels (specialists that would be responsible for integration), it has indeed been quite surprising to see how many refugees have managed make to some sort of a living. The few integration related projects that have been attempted in the past, primarily by NGOs and almost exclusively with UNHCR funds, have borne only limited results.

The Experts could only conclude that the reception of refugees and their integration were still considered marginal issues and as such were not given priority by the Governments concerned. This was hardly surprising in societies and economies that are still in transition, the refugee issue is easily eclipsed by any number of urgent and unresolved problems.

Literature and experience indicate that it is not simple to secure an optimal “durable solution” for refugees, especially when its aim is local integration. Problems notwithstanding, few would dispute the premise that refugees must be allowed to regain control over their day to day life, *i.e.* a space needs to be created for refugees if they are to manage to successfully fend for themselves. In the three countries concerned, the issue is influenced by their geo-political location and the proximity to the European Union.¹⁹ The State holds the key to integration simply because only the State can exercise power and implement asylum related policies that facilitate or curb the prospects of a refugee.

The Experts found that many Government officials were convinced that refugees were not disadvantaged, as most legislation equated their status to that of citizens (or to that of permanently residing foreigners). Others felt that integration was a matter to be delegated to NGOs or to international organizations. Few questioned that integration should be based on a clear concept with objective benchmarks. Most argued that as the State was not in a position to do more for citizens, there was not enough reason to adopt special measures for refugees, ignoring the objective handicap a refugee has (*i.e.* that citizens have a better starting position if only because they have their inherited flats, family and other networks, native language and social skills). Some insisted that citizens had to pay for everything too and received little in return. On the other hand, the Experts also noted numerous instances when officials directly responsible for refugee affairs, had not remained indifferent to the problems confronting a refugee and routinely exerted considerable personal energy to resolve their

19 On 11 February 2008 the EU-Ukraine Political Directors will meet (the Troika) and on 10 April 2008 the EU Ukraine Sub-Committee on Justice, Freedom and Security are to discuss a range of issues including asylum (an element of the EU-Ukrainian Action Plan).

difficulties (interventions with other line Ministries, expediting temporary documentation and even facilitating employment). Such good will however, had a limited impact as it rarely created positive precedents that would help solve similar problems in the future.

Positive factors in all three countries, albeit to varying degrees, are their legislative frameworks and their nascent asylum institutions and structures. Yet the building process is incomplete and central refugee authorities remain ill-equipped as well as under-funded for all related tasks, including integration. In fact, as a result of repeated reorganizations, the refugee authorities in Moldova and Ukraine are in a state unfinished institution-building and still need to be strengthened. None of the three Governments have actually articulated a clear conceptual framework on how to deal with recognized refugees beyond issuing them documents. While overall recognition figures for all three countries may appear to be substantial (since 1995 over 6,000 persons have been granted refugee status), on closer inspection the situation is not that good. The number of persons recognised has been steadily dropping, waiting times for refugee status decisions remain protracted and recognition rates are very low.²⁰

While quite a few refugees have managed to successfully integrate and some have also acquired citizenship, too many fail or feel they are doomed to fail. Best available estimates indicate that only some 3,000 recognized refugees continue to reside in the sub-region²¹; the missing balance cannot be accounted for by resettlement, voluntary repatriation or naturalization - one can only conjecture spontaneous departures to other countries, mostly EU member States. A reasonably successful local integration process - if in place - might lead one to expect that the number of individuals who remain dependent on various support mechanisms would begin to drop.

The overall impression gained is that the system had started to stagnate and that many initial successes are being slowly but surely eroded or even erased. Many of the persons interviewed were losing hope to the point that they were ready to renounce their recently acquired refugee status. It was preoccupying to note that even refugees who had been in country for 10 - 15 years or more, continued to face integration challenges. Some no longer considered that applying for citizenship would be in their best interest, because they would lose the few advantages they had as recognized refugees (emergency assistance; lower number of square meters required for purposes of propiska; eligibility for resettlement *etc.*). Such individuals feared that as citizens, they would be relegated to the fringes of society. Not surprisingly, many refugees hoped to move to a friendlier environment. Rather paradoxically such individuals were sometimes perceived by officials as slackers who had come only to exploit the system. The widespread feeling amongst the refugees was that their quality of life had progressively deteriorated and that their chances to re-establish themselves at a decent level were slim to non-existent.

The Experts found that many refugees cannot escape the poverty trap. Poverty affects not only individuals, families but sometimes also entire ethnic communities. Besides their relatives, friends and countrymen, many refugees, unless they live in reach of a refugee specific assistance programme, have nowhere to go to receive social or financial support. The assistance they receive on occasion is, at best, just enough to keep body and soul together.

With the exception of Belarus, it was found that many refugees had suffered expressions of xenophobia and corrupt practices, two phenomena that perhaps sharpen survival skills, but further exhaust an already strained capacity to cope. Many dreamed of resettlement and lacked the incentive to concentrate their energies on local integration. Some had developed thoroughly negative attitudes and tended either to remain passive or to concentrate their efforts on receiving more aid. Some interviewees openly questioned why the host country had acceded to the 1951 Convention when so little was done for those deemed to be eligible for international protection. This "message" is proving to be a deterrent for asylum seekers who think twice whether they should apply for refugee status or move to a country that respects refugee law consistently.²²

Some refugees have grown dependent on meager assistance and although past and existing aid efforts have alleviated some of the most immediate and acute problems, no sustainable framework has been created that would allow the newly arrived to integrate. At the same time, the need to address migratory flows in today's interconnected world is becoming a priority for all Governments. As the economies in the sub-region show signs of stabilizing the opportunities for refugees to successfully settle will grow. The difficulties they now face are considerably smaller than those existing in some comparable countries. The Experts take the view that the climate to implement internationally funded projects for the integration of refugees is relatively favorable.

20 According to UNHCR 2006 statistics asylum applications have been dropping. In Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine the respective figures for applications and recognitions are: 89 and 13; 71 and 87; 1,959 and 65.

21 The estimated number of recognized refugees remaining in country: Belarus 459; Moldova 153 and Ukraine 2,275.

22 Since 1995 6,481 persons were granted refugee status (799 in Belarus, 320 in Moldova and 5,362 in Ukraine).

For the refugees in the three countries, generating a sufficient income remains a serious preoccupation even though they (and some asylum seekers) enjoy the formal right to work. In reality they experience numerous difficulties in finding employment due to disparate educational levels or lack of required professional skills or lack of documents (or their too short validity). Unlike citizens, refugees are unlikely to benefit from informal support mechanisms of an extended family and regularly face the typical obstacle of being seen as a foreigner first, and thus being considered for employment last. Few, if any, effective efforts have been made to assist refugees with job placement.

Many employers prefer not to hire refugees (discouraged by supposed or real obstacles) but the Experts also found some positive examples and quite a few refugees have managed to secure more than a basic living. A number of the persons interviewed, including some refugees, were of the opinion that a refugee could find suitable employment if only s/he had more positive attitudes (or inner strength/energy), were ready to acquire new skills and to accept jobs that did not necessarily immediately meet all his/her aspirations. Private entrepreneurship, especially trading at markets, is a solution for most.²³

Attitudes towards refugees varied remarkably from country to country and even from district to district. But a surprisingly high number of officials held the view that as refugees, by law, already enjoyed the same rights as citizens it was questionable whether integration measures were actually needed. Many were simply not familiar with the concept of “positive discrimination in the form of supportive measures” and when they were, they believed it should not apply to refugees (“*they cannot expect to get more than citizens...this would cause enmity*”). Another common perception was that no additional government expenditures could be expected (“*budget austerity will not permit*”). Moreover, few seemed to realize how much refugees contributed to society in the form of direct and indirect taxes and social security contributions. Many perceived working in markets (even officially) as “*not real work*”.

At the same time, the Experts noted that an overwhelming number the officials interviewed stated, without hesitation, that refugees were generally law abiding and cooperative, behaved responsibly, followed instructions *etc.* A correlation to harmonious community relations could be actually inferred in localities where a regular dialogue with refugee community leaders had been pursued and where rules had been applied consistently and transparently.

The recommendations formulated by the Experts reflect the comments received after the Gomel Seminar. In the absence of comments, or of argued statements why a particular recommendation was ill-conceived, the Experts assumed that the draft analysis and conclusions were broadly acceptable.²⁴ The Experts hope that by shedding light on problem areas and recommending appropriate solutions, the authorities in the three countries concerned will be in a better position to progressively take corrective measures. Given that at present the number of recognized refugees is so low, the development of a functional and scalable integration system at this time will be in the best interest of Governments because it will position them to better help those refugees who will be recognized in the future.

4.1. Institution-building, national integration policy and international cooperation

To devise and execute successful refugee integration programmes, the Governments must first of all demonstrate a high level of political will and address the issues in a systematic and determined manner. Conscious decisions in this regard, will not only positively facilitate the integration, process, but will also be crucial in mobilizing the required donor support. Given the repeated reorganizations all three refugee administrations have undergone in the past few years, Governments should also consider how best to consolidate past investments in terms both of human and material resources and give themselves the means to achieve sustainable continuity.

It is obvious that a legislative asylum framework, equality before the law and non-discrimination clauses do not always remove all practical obstacles in a refugee’s path, nor do they guarantee that proclaimed rights can effectively be exercised. Not all integration efforts undertaken hitherto have had the desired results, nor has their scope been sufficient. Ongoing endeavors to integrate refugees have not been coordinated, do not have a country-wide impact or are hampered by the absence of implementing provisions or by-laws.

23 According to “the rankings on ease of doing business” when comparing 178 economies none of the 3 States are doing particularly well. According to this source the best environment is in Moldova (92nd), then Belarus (110th) and last is Ukraine (139th). See “*Doing Business in 2008*”, annual series issued by the World Bank and IFC; <http://www.doingbusiness.org/documents/DB-2008-overview.pdf>.

24 Written comments were received from the Ministries of Interior (MoI) and Education of Moldova, MoI Belarus and the SCNM, Ukraine, as well as from ECRE, one refugee community leader and NGO representatives in Donetsk and Kyiv. Some issues had been clarified during the Gomel Conference.

Compliance with international standards remains elusive because domestic legal systems are not necessarily sufficiently coherent and because many Government officials are either not informed or properly instructed to ensure that refugee rights are uniformly respected. When this has been pointed out, a common reaction has been: “*there is no problem in this regard as we do not discriminate ... all are equal when it comes to rights*”. Overtly bureaucratic procedures have impeded access to national services and refugees have had a hard time complying with numerous, non-transparent, when not contradictory demands for various certificates and documents.

The adoption of refugee specific laws which are largely compliant with international standards, has not been systematically accompanied by amendments to other legislation or implementing decrees to take into account the special status of refugees. The legislative basis of asylum remains fragmented and incomplete and leads to collision of norms which further complicates implementation. The institution of subsidiary protection is partially available in Moldova, to a lesser degree in Belarus, and not at all in Ukraine. Refugees do not always enjoy access even to basic documentation/information to be in a position to exercise their rights, *i.e.* are still considered as “regular” foreigners. None of the three States have envisaged adopting a comprehensive “Integration act”, a tool in use elsewhere, in order to pro-actively manage the situation. The level of knowledge of officials, particularly amongst those who do not deal with refugees on a regular basis, is not always sufficient. Legal counselling that would empower refugees to access existing rights is either under-developed or not available in all locations.²⁵

| <i>Table 4.1 (1)</i> | <i>Recommendations: Development of a comprehensive national integration policy</i> | <i>Implementation</i> ²⁶ | <i>Funds</i> ²⁷ |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | Identify a central specialised unit and entrust it with primary responsibility for all matters pertaining to integration, to manage, oversee/monitor and define the implementation of a national strategy, to draw up budgets and to coordinate responses at central and local levels. The Experts believe that preference should be given to the most experienced and “refugee conscious” authority that already exists and that has accumulated valuable experience and staff know-how. | G | |
| 2. | Ensure the functioning of an advisory structure (<i>e.g.</i> an inter-ministerial committee based on membership of the national LIP Working Group) that would advise and provide guidance on desirable integration measures. | G | |
| 3. | The designated central authority for integration shall formulate a detailed multi-year national strategy with targets and milestones which would gradually encompass all elements relevant to integration and ensure that it is included into the respective national migration plans. This strategy will take into account the need to mainstream services to refugees at the local level and avoid the creation of parallel structures. | G | |
| 4. | Provide for appropriate funding by establishing an integration specific budgetary line in the national budget, allowing the central authority to devolve funds to local administrations and authorities. | G | X |
| 5. | Undertake an inventory of existing relevant legislation, identify legal/procedural gaps/deficiencies and take corrective measures (<i>i.e.</i> ensure that the fundamental principles of the 1951 Convention are fully incorporated into all domestic legislation). Ensure that complimentary forms of protection allow beneficiaries to integrate. Consider adoption of a single integration act. | G | |
| 6. | Build on positive experiences of refugees who have managed to integrate; where appropriate employ refugees (or those who have been naturalised), encourage self-help groups, seek and consult refugee views. | G/R | |

25 The Experts also noted several positive developments in this regard, for example, in the capital of Belarus the “Minsk City Statute” (*Ustav goroda Minska*) Article 22 states: “*The Competency of Minsk City Executive Committee in social sphere and protection of environment: solves according to legislation the issues of health care, education, social protection and cultural provision, commercial, communal, domestic and other service of citizens on the territory of the city, protects rights of refugees;*”.

26 Government = G, UNHCR = HCR, Non Governmental Organization = NGO, Refugee Community/Refugees = R, International Organizations = IO (*e.g.* UNDP, World Bank, European Union).

27 This column indicates the need for additional funding, including from international sources.

| | | | |
|----|---|---------|--|
| 7. | Cooperation between government and civil society can facilitate and enhance integration initiatives. Governments (at central and local levels) and NGOs should jointly elaborate mechanisms allowing such cooperation to take place and to develop or to sub-contract certain activities. | G/NGO/R | |
| 8. | Ensure gender sensitivity in all areas when dealing with refugees (registration is performed without discrimination, documentation is issued to every single adult <i>etc.</i>); ensure equal access to procedures for women, provide for positive measures, <i>e.g.</i> re-qualification and language training for women. ²⁸ | G/NGO | |

The Experts found that there is little coordination or regular contact with other comparable authorities at the central or local levels in other countries which would permit to share experiences and lessons learnt in fostering integration.

In the experience of all three Governments access to international funds in order to initiate projects, (*e.g.* credit schemes, cooperative business ventures) was cumbersome and unpredictable. Several senior officials pointed out that available funds and applicable rules were often geared to areas other than integration.²⁹ It is a fact, however, that the authorities have not been able or have not received enough targeted support to prepare projects. Nor has their capacity to evaluate, monitor and report been sufficiently developed to meet international standards. As a result they have placed too much reliance on UNHCR and have not assumed ownership of initiatives formally designed to further refugee integration.

If refugees were to meaningfully exercise their rights, international bodies prepared to contribute to refugee or migration related programmes need to attach importance to their real and effective impact in terms of integration. Project proposals should dovetail integration policies. Both the authorities and NGOs can benefit greatly from strengthening networks and learning from best practices. Moreover, there is a need to diversify funding sources and to identify projects that are likely to interest private donors.

| <i>Table 4.1 (2)</i> | <i>Recommendations: International co-operation</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | On the basis of a national integration strategy, seek co-financing from international sources for major projects (housing, employment, scholarships and re-qualification programmes for refugees), and secure the necessary training/workshops/study trips to examine best practices and lessons to be learnt from integration policies adopted elsewhere <i>etc.</i> . | G/IO | X |
| 2. | Establish cross-regional partnerships with similar agencies that have developed refugee integration programmes in comparable circumstances, in order to design and implement integration projects (<i>e.g.</i> recent signatories to the 1951 Convention in Central Europe); the Cross Border Cooperation Process could also assist. | G/IO | X |
| 3. | International organizations should provide specific assistance to Governments to enhance their capacity to define relevant integration projects, to implement, monitor and account for them in a transparent manner. | IO | X |
| 4. | Consideration should be given to tapping non-traditional funding sources (private donors, local fundraising campaigns <i>etc.</i>). | G/HCR/ NGO | |
| 5. | New projects to address migration/asylum problems should take into consideration their impact on integration. | G/IO | X |

4.2. Respect of refugee rights and access to information

Understanding one's rights is a crucial precondition for successful integration. To this end communicating with the authorities is one major obstacle a refugee faces in any country. In the three countries, a lack of qualified interpreters has led to reliance on friends/family members or on other refugees. Limited interpretation assistance has sometimes been made available by legal/social counsellors employed by the implementing

²⁸ See "In-depth study on all forms of violence against women", Report of the Secretary-General, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UN-DOC/GEN/N06/419/74/PDF/N0641974.pdf?OpenElement>.

²⁹ For example, the Government of Belarus in 2006 intended to submit an AENEAS project proposal with integration elements but given the criteria of the call for proposals the project finally focused on other areas than integration.

partners.³⁰ Government authorities have relied on UNHCR funds to provide for the translation of documents. The interpreters used have rarely received specialized training.

Nearly all existing measures designed to empower refugees to integrate (language training, counselling, job facilitation, integration grants *etc.*) have been carried out by NGOs funded by UNHCR. They tend to be concentrated in the capitals and not all reach out to refugees living elsewhere. Generally, integration measures have been *ad hoc*, carried out in context of specific projects when funding has been obtained. As no one has been invested with explicit authority for all integration issues, many efforts have been undertaken in a vacuum. As a result, past integration efforts have alleviated some of the most acute problems faced by refugees, but they have not created a sustainable system for the newly arrived to integrate into their host society.

Printed information material normally published in co-operation with UNHCR is limited and few information leaflets/brochures exist.³¹ More written guidance that would comprehensibly explain how to navigate procedures, comply with requirements and apply rights would be desirable, in languages refugees understand. Existing brochures are often out-dated or out of print or are not always known to or used by officials or even NGO counselors. Specific information material that should be available to refugees on key integration issues has not been published and no pertinent Government web pages exist (*e.g.* advice how to enter the job market).

Few of the authorities act pursuant to concise/clear guidelines. When such official guidelines exist (centrally or locally – *i.e.* how to deal with refugees in specific circumstances) they are “internal” and not always known or transparent to refugees. Explicit, clear instructions/guidelines for responsible authorities understood and consistently applied by all competent officials (central or local) would ensure that refugees are treated in a predictable manner. The publication and accessibility to refugees of guidelines on applicable rules, procedures, their rights and obligations, would empower them to comply and reduce the scope for irregularities and abuse.

The relationship between governmental authorities and the NGO community stand to be improved. Lateral co-operation between the authorities on refugee issues is, at best, intermittent where it exists. Refugees often act upon conflicting advice. There is a shortage of suitably qualified social workers or “mentors”. In the absence of coordinated policies, occasional individual initiatives to solve a refugee’s problem do not always lead to precedent setting solutions.

| <i>Table 4.2</i> | <i>Recommendations: Respect of refugee rights and access to information</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Establish a budget for interpretation and written translations required for official purposes and ensure that there are professional interpreters for those languages refugees know. | G | X |
| 2. | Train interpreters. | G/NGO | X |
| 3. | Examine options for international cooperation to make interpretation available by creating/joining interpretation banks and/or by facilitating interpretation via telephone and/or video conference. | G/HCR | X |
| 4. | Formulate transparent guidelines in relation to all relevant sectors. Provide refugees with relevant guidance in the form of brochures/fliers (in all appropriate languages) on how to exercise their rights and meet their obligations. Whenever possible, post such guidance also on the official web pages of the refugee authorities. Standard application forms <i>etc.</i> could be similarly made accessible for downloading. Relevant stakeholders (line ministries, local authorities) must receive guidance to implement integration measures that are within their purview. | G/HCR/ NGO | X |

4.3. Documents and translation of documents

Refugees are not always in a position to produce all original documents required of them by the authorities (marriage/birth certificates, educational records, extracts from criminal records *etc.*). Refugees should not be required to contact the authorities of his/her country of origin to obtain duplicate documents. Few officials are conversant with Article 25 of the 1951 Convention that foresees that the country of asylum should deliver to refugees such documents or certifications as would normally be delivered by the authorities of the country of

30 For example, interpreters contracted by the Refugee Counseling Service in Minsk.

31 In Belarus the leaflet “Memo for a Refugee” (*Pamjatka Bezhenicu*) was published in 2006 by “Evolutio” or “Information for Refugees” in four languages 2007 (both UNHCR funded); in Moldova and Ukraine such materials were unavailable.

origin. Neither has it been understood that these documents should stand in the stead of the original documents and should be given credence in the absence of proof to the contrary.

Some refugees and officials recalled instances of difficulty in obtaining notary approved translations of official documents from languages for which no translation is available or difficult to obtain.

| <i>Table 4.3</i> | <i>Recommendations: Documents and translation of documents</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | All authorities should be made aware of their obligation to provide administrative assistance to refugees. In cases of missing documentation (marriage or birth certificates, educational diplomas <i>etc.</i>) the authorities should apply Article 25 of the 1951 Convention; the same applies <i>mutatis mutandis</i> to translations <i>etc.</i> . | G | |
| 2. | The authorities should facilitate (or waive the requirement) to provide translations of official documents from languages for which no translation is available or is difficult to obtain. | G | |
| 3. | Facts recorded in the refugee document (<i>e.g.</i> date of birth, marital status) should be considered sufficient by all authorities; where appropriate, laws or methodological instructions governing the documentation and recognition of civil status of refugees should be revised. | G | |

4.4. Language skills

Proficiency in the language of the host country is of paramount importance, notably to find employment and to become self-sufficient (integration depends on the capacity to communicate with the local population).

Those refugees who have studied in the former Soviet Union have a good command of Russian. In Belarus, only few refugees speak Belarusian (*e.g.* refugee children who have attended school in recent years), however, knowledge of one of the two official languages suffices. In Moldova relatively few refugees understand Romanian (basically only those who have had the opportunity to attend school in recent years), however, expectations to know Romanian are growing. A similar situation prevails in Ukraine where relatively few are conversant in Ukrainian (especially those who live in Western Ukraine), however, most refugees acknowledge that while Russian is most useful, it would be in their best interest to learn Ukrainian too. In both Moldova and Ukraine, obtaining citizenship is conditional on passing a language exam or at least providing a certificate of proficiency. A minority of refugees have only an elementary understanding of Russian (*e.g.* those who arrived recently or women who neither work nor participate actively in local community life).

Few refugees have benefited from formal language training and the courses that have been provided have not always been assessed as particularly effective (for a variety of reasons including high drop-out rates, absenteeism, lack of time/resources as refugees often give priority to earning a living).

For those who have a poor command of Russian, especially when their comprehension of another common language (*e.g.* English) is limited, communication with officials poses a real problem. Refugees are prone to make mistakes in official documents (which can lead to administrative delays or rejected applications, confidentiality of personal data is compromised due to inappropriate translation arrangements *etc.*). In such cases communication for official business represents a degree of difficulty also for the authority concerned. The situation is aggravated by the lack of access to qualified translators (see above).

Children usually know Russian or Belarusian, Romanian or Ukrainian much better than their parents, from school. Many children also continue to speak their native tongue, but have difficulties with reading and writing in that language. Refugee communities strive to organize “Sunday schools” in respective native languages and cultural traditions; some have requested support to this end. Such activities are on occasion financed by UNHCR or by the refugee communities themselves.

| Table 4.4 | <i>Recommendations: Language skills</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Budget funds to implement language programmes to provide one elementary, intermediary and advanced level course per person. In Moldova and Ukraine where naturalization requires an exam or certificate, special classes should exist for those who apply for citizenship. In these countries candidates for naturalization would optimally also benefit from cultural orientation, acquire a degree of knowledge of the constitution <i>etc.</i> ; this should be carried out by or in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education. | G/IO | X |
| 2. | Actively encourage and facilitate refugee participation in language training on a regular basis and from the earliest stage <i>i.e.</i> shortly after an asylum application has been lodged. | G/R | X |
| 3. | Prepare courses and study materials in co-operation with professionals experienced in teaching adult foreigners (<i>i.e.</i> university teachers) to ensure that courses are of appropriate quality. Consider developing self-study modules and opportunities to allow refugees to also study from home consistent with an approved curriculum, perhaps on-line or in electronic form. | G/R | X |
| 4. | Promote possibility for diverse bodies to organize language classes so that there are as many opportunities as possible (for different age groups, in different living situations, in different areas, at various times). | G/NGO/R | X |
| 5. | Support and co-finance refugee communities to maintain their own culture and native languages; the main responsibility for organizing “Sunday schools” should be vested with the refugee communities. | G/NGO/R | X |

4.5. Resettlement needs

Notwithstanding the fact that the focus of this report is on integration, the Experts consider that resettlement as a durable solution for some refugees cannot be left outside the scope of their review. Despite the efforts made by refugees to integrate into the community of their country of asylum and natural inclination to start a new life as rapidly as possible, many fail, often due to the external factors or specific unmet needs. Overall living standards of refugees are worse than those experienced by the local population. Economic self-reliance of refugees is not sufficiently facilitated and existing integration opportunities offered by the authorities are few. Some existing administrative mechanisms are prejudicial to integration prospects, especially when a local authority implements discriminatory practices. Some refugees are perceived as “illegal immigrants” and exposed to xenophobic attitudes. The responses to the Questionnaire clearly indicated the correlations of income/self-reliance and the willingness to remain.

The legal framework remains deficient and does not sufficiently protect refugee rights. While refugee laws often grant to refugees equal rights to those of citizens they can not always be implemented in practice. The principle of family unity is not always observed. The option to apply for citizenship is frustrated by non transparent naturalization procedures and instances of corruption. Legislation, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to prevent discrimination are weak and the authorities do not always pay due attention to racially motivated attacks, often qualifying them as “hooliganism”. The actual resulting quality of asylum is poor.

Some refugees are so uncertain about their future for so long that their ability to integrate is seriously eroded. Those who belong to vulnerable categories and cannot escape the poverty trap view their prospects with skepticism and receding with time. Such perceptions promote secondary movements and act as a powerful incentive to move irregularly to third countries - usually by illegal means or with the assistance of smugglers. The Experts interviewed several persons who failed in such attempts, losing considerable amounts of money and energy in the process. Many refugees aspire to join their friends or relatives “in the West” and those who lack the resources invariably pin their hopes on UNHCR and resettlement.

The quality of public health care generally remains very low and refugees can not afford to pay for all medical services, medicines, let alone specialized treatment. There is an absence of specific programmes for

victims of torture and violence and complex medical problems cannot always be treated. Many refugees cannot afford basic food products, let alone special diets.

The elderly do not qualify for pensions and the existing refugee communities are not always strong enough to help those who are less fortunate. Charitable structures that help with basic human needs such as shelter or food are few and far between and rarely cater for foreigners. Moreover, as not all past efforts were sufficiently designed to empower refugees to integrate, some show signs of strain and fatigue. Acceptance and expressions of intolerance levels are another factor. While according to the replies to the Questionnaire, in some localities the authorities view refugees in a positive light, the environment can also be much less welcoming. The Experts recorded a number of instances when refugees were perceived with hostility that, on occasion, could be qualified as criminal (especially towards refugees of African origin). Although some refugees were evidently traumatized and/or harassed, they were also intimidated. Reporting incidents to the authorities was sometimes feared as this could lead to various forms of retaliation, perceived or real.³²

Although Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine afford protection to many refugees, they are in transition and cannot always sufficiently provide for the most vulnerable refugees. In the current situation, or if it were to deteriorate further, some persons or groups of persons can be characterized as “refugees lacking local integration prospects”.

At the same time while the Experts remain fully aware that resettlement opportunities are by definition limited, potential candidates from this part of the world will have to overcome an additional difficulty: resettlement countries are disinclined to entertain applications from persons who obtained refugee status in a signatory State to the 1951 Convention.

In the light of these considerations and bearing in mind that the eventual adoption and implementation of the integration measures proposed will be progressive or will not bear their full results for some time, resettlement is the only remaining solution. This is particularly the case for refugees with a specific vulnerability such as the disabled, with chronic health problems, single parent or female-headed households from cultures with a leading role of men or those who face specific security concerns. None of their problems can be solved by the refugee communities and such individuals remain disproportionately dependant upon UNHCR assistance.

| <i>Table 4.5</i> | <i>Recommendations: Resettlement needs</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | In the spirit of international solidarity, resettlement countries should recognize that there is and will continue to be a need for special measures and to consider third country resettlement for the most acute cases that have little or no chance to successfully integrate due to their special situation and/or protection needs. | HCR/IO | X |

³² A number of refugees took the opportunity to report irregularities, some of which were sufficiently serious to share with the local UNHCR offices or the authorities (follow-up was not in the remit of the Experts). While such alarming cases were not isolated, the Experts conclude that given the complexity of inter-personal relations it would be inappropriate to draw unequivocal conclusions without a more thorough survey of this problem area.

5. Country-specific analysis and recommendations: Belarus³³

5.1. Introduction

Belarus signed the 1951 Refugee Convention in 2001 and since 1997 recognized 799 persons as refugees (of whom 459 remain in country). 23 refugees have been naturalized (in 2005 - 3; 2006 - 8; 2007 - 12; data as of 1.10.2007). In anticipation of amendments to the refugee law to introduce subsidiary protection, temporary residence was recently granted to some 20 individuals. The number of asylum seekers is 1,432 (as of 1.10.2007; 2,434 persons of concern registered with UNHCR/Belarus since 1995). The numbers of asylum seekers and recognized refugees remain relatively small and are decreasing. The majority of refugees originate from Afghanistan; the second largest group is from former Soviet Republics (e.g. Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan); there is a small group from Africa. The majority live in Minsk, the Minsk region, Gomel, Vitebsk and Mogilev. Most of the refugees interviewed live from day to day and hand to mouth; their communities remain weak, unable to extend meaningful and sufficient help to the vulnerable to integrate better.

The central authority responsible for integration is the Ministry of Interior, which is also responsible for implementing State policies related to forced migration. The general policy directive is contained in the "State Migratory Programme for 2006-2010" which in its Annex devotes paragraph 7 to integration. The text is rather general "to implement measures to integrate persons recognized as refugees into Belarus society and in this regard assist in teaching the language, finding work and housing" ("Осуществлять меры по интеграции лиц, признанных беженцами, в белорусское общество, в том числе оказывать содействие в изучении языка, трудоустройстве и расселении"). The question of funding is dealt with in para 17 of the Annex which authorizes the MoI to seek funds for joint projects from international sources (notably from UNHCR and IOM).³⁴ The Experts received no indication of any activities launched in this regard or of any ongoing work/plans to further identify actual needs

The following analysis and recommendations take into account the socio-economic and administrative realities prevailing in Belarus and the financial constraints faced by the authorities. While the extent of the difficulties cannot be dismissed, they are considerably smaller than in some comparable countries. The problems are nevertheless deemed manageable as financial requirements can be kept to a minimum.

The economy shows signs of stability and many refugees manage to find a way to earn a basic living. Another positive factor is the quality of Belarus asylum authorities. Open attitudes and efforts to create and maintain an enabling environment for refugees to start new lives are manifest. The Experts believe that there is a sound foundation to improve integration prospects. This has been demonstrated in Gomel where a reasonable investment in an integration project, underpinned by a supportive local authority, has proven to be an effective and sustainable venture.³⁵

In a letter dated 8 November 2008 responding to the draft recommendations submitted to the Gomel Seminar, the MoI made a number of substantive observations on the draft report and reiterated that no additional funds from the State budget would be forthcoming.

5.2. Legislation and documents

5.2.1. Residence registration

The Experts were informed that the *propiska* regime was to be abolished and replaced by a new registration system (entry into force 1 January 2008); it was not clear however, to what extent the situation will change.³⁶ What remains beyond dispute is that residence rights have a profound impact on how refugees can attain economic self-reliance and start new lives.

In the experience of most refugees, the question of their residence documentation is central to their "survival". Meeting registration related obligations is a precondition for obtaining a residence permit. While

33 In writing this Chapter the Experts also drew on the expertise of the Belarus Scientific Research Institute of Labour (*Nautchno-issledovatel'skiy institut truda*) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection which had undertaken parallel research into a number of issues. The research describes refugees' rights to social benefits and housing, their access to credits, employment services, education and health care. *C.f.* footnote 16 above.

34 See Decree of Soviet of Ministers no. 1403, 8 December 2005.

35 For more on Billiards Club see Chapter 5.4.1.

36 See Presidential Decree no. 413, 7 September 2007; the MoI is of the opinion that many problems will be solved although the Decree explicitly excludes refugees from its purview.

citizens face similar problems to those of refugees, many of the latter still cannot cope, even though the *propiska* regime is in some respects simplified for them. A special regulation in force for the city of Minsk (issued in 1998 as an interim by-law by the City Council) allows only citizens to register close relatives without special permission, irrespective of available space. This privilege is not extended to refugees (see below).

While many refugees manage to register their residence, few actually reside in the place indicated. Some interviewees' residence permits had expired due to expiration of the residence registration and not all had re-applied for a temporary residence permit.³⁷

Some rights (e.g. access to medical care, social assistance or to the local employment office) are legally contingent on the *propiska*; other rights (e.g. access to employment) are only partially impacted by or perceived to be dependent on the *propiska* (e.g. there is no administrative fine for employing a person without a *propiska* either for the employer or employee).³⁸ The refugee document is not always recognized by all authorities or institutions (e.g. employers, banks) as conferring rights akin to those of citizens and different from those of other foreigners. Refugees tend to receive more visits by police checking their presence (“*uchastkovij*”) which sometimes negatively influences the willingness of landlords to sub-let. State authorities strictly follow the standard of the minimum amount of space per person (6 square meters) and many refugees fail to meet the legal requirement of living in such accommodation. The solution is often to “buy” a *propiska* - a routine phenomenon even for citizens - but this is a costly affair constituting a considerable financial burden (of at least 200 USD per person per annum).

There is no centrally managed arrangement to ensure accommodation for refugees who may be destitute, although some local authorities have reacted to acute needs. Most refugees must rent at rates higher than those required of locals and some must additionally obtain a bogus/fictitious *propiska* for a fee (few refugees own or have a lease for an apartment, few landlords wish to be seen as renting in order to avoid taxes, many refuse foreigners altogether etc.). Refugees, in contrast to citizens, cannot rely on networks of friends or extended families.

The Experts were made aware of many cases of hardship. To give but one example: a single parent refugee family (3 minors) who managed to arrange a *propiska* place for the adult and one of the children. Their application for a “residence permit” document on the basis the *propiska* was rejected by the migration authority on the grounds that the two remaining minors could not be separated from the adult. The family had to find another *propiska* for all four persons to live together. On the other hand, a local family with many children and both parents received more than one *propiska* (for example, 2 children with one parent and 2 with the other).

| Table 5.2.1 | <i>Recommendations: Propiska (residence registration)</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|----------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | <p>Pending changes that would alleviate current problems, and given the inability of a majority of refugees to buy/own housing, rent land or access sufficient credit, the current requirement of 6sqm per person in order to obtain a <i>propiska</i>/registration should be waived or abolished, at least for those who are the most vulnerable and thus can not find appropriate accommodation in a legal manner; such persons should be permitted to obtain a residence registration in a designated place (for example the relevant Registration office - <i>Pasportnyi stol</i> or with the Red Cross); this would avoid instances of fictitious registration, curb illegal activities generated by the selling of rental permissions by unscrupulous landlords and increase the refugee's cash flow/improve their standard of living.</p> <p>In absence of above:</p> <p>a) Provide State accommodation for destitute refugees;</p> <p>b) Create conditions that would allow refugees to acquire either land (e.g. to rent on long-term basis) and to build own shelter or repair vacant housing units (see under housing);</p> <p>c) To exempt landlords who offer accommodation to refugees from applicable taxes (and thus facilitate compliance with legal registration procedures).</p> | G | X |

37 Living without a *propiska* is an administrative offence so that refugees are exposed to fines (the authorities claim that very few refugees are actually fined, most are just cautioned and encouraged to register temporarily).

38 See Judgment of Constitutional Court N 3-79/99 (01 June 1999) which invalidated Article 182 of the Code on Administrative Offences (administrative fine for employing someone without a *propiska*); <http://ncpi.gov.by/ConstSud/rus/resh/zakl20.html>;

| | | | |
|----|---|---|--|
| 2. | To routinely grant temporary registration (as a right) for the period of time when a refugee cannot obtain a <i>propiska</i> with the same rights a <i>propiska</i> entails (<i>i.e.</i> issue a regular residence permit document). | G | |
| 3. | Equate refugees with citizens in Minsk with regard to regulation that permits close relatives to share accommodation irrespective of the 6sqm rule. | G | |
| 4. | Consider amending refugee document to resemble as much as possible the identity document issued to citizens and include basic information on the rights of the holders (<i>e.g.</i> “ <i>The bearer of this document has the rights and responsibilities of permanently residing foreigners, including the right to work</i> ”). | G | |

5.2.2. Convention Travel Document

The document issued to refugees for travel abroad, referred to as a *proezdnyj document*, is not compliant with international standards. Belarus, as a signatory to the 1951 Convention has not only the authority to issue a Convention Travel Document (CTD) but also a hitherto unmet obligation under Articles 27 and 28 of the 1951 Convention. While from a legal perspective, issuing another type of a travel document (TD) is not proscribed, it is not correct and creates unnecessary difficulties and an additional obstacle for refugees to exercise their rights fully. Moreover, the State cannot enjoy reciprocal advantages (Belarus is obliged to recognize CTDs but other States need not recognize the locally issued TD).

Refugees hold a fairly widespread misconception that many countries do not issue visas because they only have a Belarus TD. While this is true in part, the fact is that most countries have highly restrictive visa policies.

According to the Russian consular authorities, a visa is required for Belarus TD holders when traveling to Russia. Not all refugees have encountered problems crossing the border - there are in fact no border controls when entering Russia - but once inside its territory a TD is not always recognized by the Russian authorities, even when it contains a valid visa.

Belarus has not been invited and therefore cannot consider ratifying the European Convention on the abolition of visas for refugees (1960).

| Table 5.2.2 | Recommendations: Convention Travel Document | Implementation | Funds |
|-------------|--|----------------|-------|
| 1. | To facilitate the right to travel abroad, refugees should be issued a CTD (conforming to the 1951 Convention). | G | |
| 2. | UNHCR should be requested by the Government to assist to issue CTD. | G/HCR | X |

5.3. Educational qualifications of refugees

Many refugees have vocational or higher education. About half of the interviewees had studied in the former Soviet Union, half in their country of origin. Few refugees however, use their educational qualifications. While employment/positions reserved for citizens are very few (*e.g.* police, armed forces and certain government posts), latent discrimination (a preference for citizens) combined with misconceptions (that refugees are not eligible for some professions - including those where no limitation actually exists, *e.g.* educator/teacher) serve to discourage those refugees who in reality would qualify. Many refugees insist on working in a preferred field or one they feel qualified for and are reluctant to accept lesser jobs. Many refugees also possess irrelevant or inadequate education and cannot demonstrate sufficient fluency in the official language. Adult re-qualification possibilities are few. These factors, combined with high living-costs (primarily shelter and *propiska* related), low salary scales (especially for persons with no work record) lead to a widespread conviction among refugees that there is little point in even applying for jobs in line their educational qualification (see also Employment).

Few refugees, if any, have educational certificates from their country of origin. The authority authorized to recognize diplomas is the Education Establishment of the Belarusian State University “Republican Institute of High School”. It acts pursuant to *the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region* (21 December 1979). In principle, refugees are treated equally with others who apply for recognition of their studies; it would however appear that there is no record of *démarches* by refugees in that direction.³⁹

³⁹ As with other cases of missing documentation a refugee should not be required to contact the authorities of his/her country of origin. The State Party to the 1951 Convention should apply Article 25 and replace to refugees such documents or certifications as would normally be delivered to aliens by or through their national authorities.

| Table 5.3 | Recommendations: Educational qualifications of refugees | Implementation | Funds |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Publicize existing rules for recognition of foreign diplomas; verify that the procedure is carried out in accordance with international conventions and standards. | G | |
| 2. | Encourage/assist refugees, who have diplomas from their country of origin, to pursue their formal recognition. | G | |
| 3. | A detailed survey of the educational qualifications of refugees would be desirable. | G | |
| 4. | Consider recognizing past education through supplementary courses that would equate them with locally provided education. | G | X |
| 5. | Implement positive measures that would provide refugees with the possibility to improve their educational/vocational skills. | G | X |

5.3.1. Access to primary education

While primary and secondary education are free of charge, many refugee families, like locals who are in a socially weak position, struggle with frequent requests to make “voluntary” payments for books, stationary, class repairs, school trips, social events *etc.*. Payments can amount to 100 USD per year per child. Not paying often means exposing the child to undesirable attention and therefore becomes an informal “obligation” for parents.

According to the findings of the Experts, refugee children attend primary and secondary school with no serious difficulty. Parents stated that children did well at school and co-operation with teachers was smooth. Only in very few cases has children’s access to school been delayed for lack of the required documents (a situation that contravenes obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child); most schools appear to be flexible about documents and consider children’s access to education more important than proper documentation. One Ministry official summed up by saying “...our responsibility is to provide education to children, not to check documents”.

No children have been identified as receiving extra support in language studies, but otherwise schools and teachers have been helpful in many ways. Not all refugee parents have the resources to pay for extra coaching. A special programme, funded by UNHCR (established in coordination with the Belarusian Ministry of Education) is run in two secondary schools (Minsk and Gomel) and provides support to refugee children to catch-up with curriculum requirements. According to legislation in force, children have the right to study according to individual study plans if requested by their parents.

The Ministry of Education has not formulated specific instructions for schools applicable to refugee children. With the exception of the above mentioned special programme, all efforts made to improve refugee children’s performance have been *ad hoc* and relied on teachers’ good will.

| Table 5.3.1 | Recommendations: access to primary education | Implementation | Funds |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Ministry of Education could issue a guideline reinforcing the principle that every child should attend school, irrespectively of incomplete formalities (<i>e.g. propiska</i>) and to consider refugee children eligible for extra coaching. | G | |
| 2. | Relevant Ministry (of Education or Labor and Social Protection) to either exempt socially disadvantaged refugee families from <i>ad hoc</i> school payments (or those who have many children) or create a special fund for this purpose. | G | X |

5.3.2. Access to higher education

Most secondary school graduates have a solid command of Russian but are still handicapped when it comes to competing with nationals to enter University. The Experts have received conflicting information on whether or not refugee students enjoy the same rights accorded to citizens and pay the same fees. Although formally all can sign-up and compete for subsidized university places that are awarded on merit and on equal terms with citizens, in reality most fail to pass entry exams due to their weaker educational background and inferior language skills. The number of eligible refugee students and those who actually wish to pursue their studies in any academic year is likely to be negligible and it appears to be wasteful not to use the potential developed as a result of access to free primary and secondary education.

Bank loans for study purposes are available to refugee students at the same rate of interest applicable to citizens. Few students however, qualify for student loan schemes, as these must be guaranteed by a person with sufficient income (usually parent/relative) or by collateral (property *etc.*).

| <i>Table 5.3.2</i> | <i>Recommendations: Higher education</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Ensure that refugee students are not requested to pay as foreigners but as citizens. | G | |
| 2. | Lobby for special dispensation/agreement to reduce or waive the fees for refugee students from low income families. The same may be done with regard to re-qualification programmes at universities, colleges or State educational institutions. | G/HCR | |
| 3. | Provide refugee students extra guidance in order to facilitate access to educational institutions that are nominally less “popular” and where the competition is not so hard (<i>e.g.</i> in provincial centres or in less prestigious/trendy institutions). Guide refugee students to seek a career in field that offers solid employment prospects instead of competing for the places which are already oversubscribed. | G/NGO/ HCR/R | |
| 4. | Organize and fund refugee students to participate in preparatory courses that would prepare them better for entry exams. | G | X |
| 5. | Establish a scholarship scheme (in co-operation with appropriate international agencies) to support the most talented refugee students to access higher education (initially for 1 or 2 students annually). | G/IO/HCR | X |

5.4. Employment and employment services

5.4.1 General

While refugees should enjoy the same rights to work as citizens and they are entitled to be treated equally, in reality there are numerous obstacles, especially when attempting to enter the labor market for the first time. Few are meaningfully assisted to surmount that initial hurdle to obtain their first record of employment (*trudovaja knizhka*).

Generating a regular and sufficient income and finding accommodation are the main obstacles to refugees making their place in society. Those who do manage to earn a living rarely manage to save money and move up the social ladder. Most feel trapped and destined to just scratch-out a meager living. Some live in quite deplorable poverty.

Unemployment levels in the country are not high and in many regions there is a shortage of labour. Salaries are usually low and do not encourage refugees to enter into what is considered regular employment. Refugees do not have the same possibilities as nationals and cannot always “afford” to live on a basic income. The better paid jobs are more likely to be found in the larger cities and in the capital, competition for such jobs is consequently high. Refugees find it difficult to compete with locals or Russian mother-tongue migrants and prefer to work unofficially or at markets. Many refugee women, often also for cultural reasons, do not aspire to full time employment or are not prepared to leave the household.

Refugees would benefit from more counselling to support them in rebuilding a career, often in completely different fields. This means that refugees need more encouragement to accept even unappealing work in the beginning so as to improve their chances to get better work in future.

The Law on Legal Status of Foreigners and Stateless Persons guarantees the right to work only for those foreigners who permanently reside in Belarus, *i.e.* hold a valid *propiska* (those who have only temporary residence need to obtain a special permit to work).

Strong internal migration from the countryside to the capital and to urban centres has led to the adoption and implementation of measures designed to control migration and reduce the pressure on the housing market. For example, a majority of refugees prefer to live in Minsk or in the greater Minsk area, but many experience problems in obtaining a *propiska*. Nonetheless, in some localities, for example in Gomel, refugees appear to have managed to integrate far better than elsewhere and most have received meaningful support and managed to find

both accommodation and employment According to the statistics provided by the Ministry of Labour and local employment offices, relatively few refugees register as job seekers - only 8 refugees were registered in 2006.

Unofficially employed refugees do not pay social contributions or into pension funds; nor can they document their employment record. Unless one can demonstrate that one has held a regular salaried position for a minimum period of time, one cannot register as unemployed or claim corresponding benefits. Most important employment related services such as re-education, subsidies for start-up entrepreneurs and job placement are provided only to those who register with the employment office (which requires a *propiska*).

Refugees who have managed to find regular employment contribute to tax revenues, pension funds and to social costs. The Government could not provide any official data in this regard arguing that tax revenue details were subject to secrecy. The Experts could nevertheless extrapolate from information known to refugees who were self-employed and who pay taxes and social contributions. In Minsk alone the Experts conservatively estimate that 48 refugee entrepreneurs contribute to the State budget by some 151,200 EUR per annum.⁴⁰ In the Gomel region 15 private entrepreneurs are estimated to pay 90 million BYR (41,400 USD) in taxes.⁴¹ It must be borne in mind that the total is probably higher as some refugees officially employ others. On the other hand, few of those interviewed, appear to be taking advantage of existing benefits (sick leave, social security payments or pensions).

The Gomel Billiard Club “*Zolotaj Shar*”, a project established with UNHCR funds, is a good example of helping refugees to help themselves. Since opening on 2 December 2005 it has generated 353 million BYR in earnings (cca. 168,000 USD).⁴² Taxes paid to local authorities amount to 85 million BYR (41,000 USD), rental payments another 110 million (53,000 USD). Salaries and allocations total 56 million BYR (27,000 USD). The club has employed 39 persons, 17 of whom were forced migrants. 19 persons, 15 of whom were refugees, obtained their first employment there, thereby establishing an officially recognized work record (which significantly facilitates future employment). The Club, visited also by the participants of the Gomel Seminar, currently employs 15 persons of whom 8 are refugees.

An interesting but under-utilized Government programme on “Creation of Agricultural Towns” exists to encourage people to move to the countryside. Rural areas experience a shortage of labor and over 2000 vacancies (from tractor drivers to doctors) are listed all over the country. Some employers offer accommodation (thus also a *propiska*). The Experts were repeatedly told that refugees who have been offered such opportunities have usually not been interested. “Look and see” visits are possible but apparently none have been organized for refugees. Insufficient consideration has been given to how difficult it may be to relocate to a non urban environment (loss of contact with refugee support structures; isolation from community *etc.*) or why many cannot easily adapt to a non-urban environment.

| <i>Table 5.4.1</i> | <i>Recommendations: Employment General</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Systematically inform employers that recognized refugees have equal rights to foreigners who permanently reside in Belarus (<i>i.e.</i> the same right to work as citizens). | G/NGO | |
| 2. | Ensure that employment offices fulfil their responsibilities to assist refugees. Issue clear guidelines on how to deal with refugees: to consider refugees as members of a particular disadvantaged/vulnerable group and to provide more personalized service akin to that granted to those who are already classified as such (<i>e.g.</i> the physically disabled enjoy certain preferential treatment in attaining employment, including quotas from employers). | G | |

40 According to Minsk Afghan community leaders 48 refugees run a private enterprise and pay the following taxes: Unified Tax (UT) and VAT. As most of the refugees sell imported goods they pay 1.5 of the UT and VAT that equals 2 UT per month. It was presumed that the average UT is 75 EUR for most goods refugees who trade in Minsk (clothes, cell phone accessories, consumer goods *etc.*). Thus each entrepreneur pays $75 \times 1.5 + 75 \times 2 = 262.5$ EUR monthly. In total refugees working in Minsk thus pay $262.5 \times 12 \times 48 = 151,200$ EUR in entrepreneur's taxes annually.

41 In Gomel 15 individual entrepreneurs are estimated to pay on average 500,000 BYR (230 USD) per month; thus multiplied by 15 and 12 = 90 million BYR (41,400 USD).

42 In 2005: 13 million BYR (6,100 USD) in 2006: 182 million (86,700 USD) and in 2007: 158 million BYR (75,200 USD).

| | | | |
|----|--|---------|---|
| 3. | Consider eliminating administrative requirements which hinder refugees' participation especially in re-qualification courses. When State courses are not available, are for a fee, or when they are too intensive to allow the person to work at the same time, financial assistance should be considered in order to enable the person to pursue training, including in private institutions. | G | X |
| 4. | Guide refugees to use the services of employment offices rather than using parallel employment mechanisms e.g. NGOs. | G/NGO | |
| 5. | NGO implemented employment projects should be coordinated with employment offices. | G/NGO | |
| 6. | Increase refugees' awareness of their rights and responsibilities concerning work and how to access existing jobs (provide access to advertising media with vacancies, internet, personalized counselling, including being accompanied to potential employers, coaching to undergo interviews, job application writing, CV drafting etc.). Assist refugees by assigning "mentors" especially when finding the first job (i.e. to counsel and accompany them to employers to ensure the correct application of the labor law). | G/NGO/R | |
| 7. | Consider a pilot project to present the Government's programme " <i>Creation of agricultural towns</i> " to refugees and employ a person who understands the refugee needs sufficiently; address particular target groups in a differentiated manner (e.g. women, entrepreneurs). | G | |
| 8. | Identify the relatively few occupations for which refugees are NOT eligible (to assist refugees to access jobs for which they may be wrongly considered ineligible and include such information in a leaflet that could be entitled " <i>How does a refugee find employment?</i> "). | G | |
| 9. | Pursue a policy of co-financing from international sources for employment and re-qualification programmes etc.; consider consolidated funding proposals to the EU and other potential donors. | G/IO | |

5.4.2. Employment offices

Employment offices provide assistance only to those who approach them and who remain "pro-active". Their role remains somewhat unclear and their approach to job seekers can vary widely. No specific guidelines on how to assist refugees exist no doubt because they are considered "equal to citizens". For example, in Minsk, employment authorities co-operate with the Belarus Red Cross (BRC), but the latter is sometimes perceived by refugees as solely responsible to assist them to find jobs or to re-qualify them on an *ad hoc* basis. As a result, in addition to refugees who just seek counselling or relevant advice, many have developed a reflex to bypass local employment offices and to rely on the BRC which implements UNHCR funded projects. The potential of employment offices to assist is limited by the fact that many refugees do not actually live where they are registered; the *propiska* might be in a village, away from the actual habitual residence, with no local employment office to contact.

Officials and NGO staff working with refugees tend to think that refugees should accept whatever unqualified jobs are offered to them (usually the least qualified jobs). Existing skills are often dismissed and not actively exploited (e.g. knowledge of languages). Formidable Russian language skills are often expected even for simple jobs that do not need them (fluency is sometimes perceived to be a precondition for any kind of job).

Most refugees who had visited an employment office felt that they received insufficient or meaningless assistance. Many refugees are of the opinion that visiting an employment office is pointless. The registration procedures in some employment offices appear to be overly demanding, while in others the Experts were told that refugees need not bring all the documents normally expected from citizens and that the refugee document and a residence permit suffice.

The Experts conclude from the interviews with refugees, NGOs and with the labour authorities, that employment offices do not play a significant role in employment of refugees; they occasionally participate in the projects funded by UNHCR partners but otherwise many remain inactive.

| Table 5.4.2 | Recommendations: Employment Office | Implementation | Funds |
|-------------|---|----------------|-------|
| 1. | Issue information leaflets for refugees giving better information on the assistance employment offices can provide. | G | X |
| 2. | Train specialists in employment offices to work with clients who have different cultural backgrounds and insufficient knowledge of the local labour market. Instruct the specialists to deal also with employers so as to increase the chances of employment for refugees. Consider establishing a network of employment specialists conversant with refugee issues and who would demonstrate a multicultural attitude. | G | X |
| 3. | Review the qualifications of unemployed refugees with a view to promote re-qualification training. Guide refugees to re-educate themselves to new professions, to overcome their reluctance to change; focus on emerging/in demand employment opportunities. | G/R | |
| 4. | Identify a solution for the problem generated by the residence registration regime that one can only register for employment and related services after obtaining a <i>propiska</i> (i.e. citizens as well as refugees should be in a position to look for any employment anywhere, earn an income first, register and find housing later in correlation to income generated). | G | |
| 5. | Refugees (and employers see also below) should be informed that employment is not contingent on a <i>propiska</i> and that no administrative fines apply to either party if a refugee is employed without a local <i>propiska</i> . | G | |

5.4.3. Employers

No provisions exist to provide incentives to employers to hire refugees. Employment in the absence of a *propiska* has become legal following a Constitutional Court ruling that it is no longer a punishable offence; many employers however, still act as if it were. A locally adopted by-law in Minsk that required employers to pay a special fee if they hired a person without a local *propiska*, lapses on 1 January 2008.⁴³

Interviews with refugees, employment counselors, potential employers have led the Experts to conclude that there are several obstacles to the employment of refugees, most of which can be addressed by a determined effort to provide relevant and targeted information. Some employers are prejudiced against foreigners (“they *don't want to work like us*”), many are ill-informed of the laws and rules applicable to the employment of refugees, believing for instance that special permissions would have to be sought or that their tax obligations would be unduly complicated. The real problem however, is that refugees lack proper counselling, do not receive adequate support in finding a job or in accessing re-qualification schemes.

| Table. 4.3 | Recommendations: Employers | Implementation | Funds |
|------------|--|----------------|-------|
| 1. | Increase employers' awareness of refugee rights and responsibilities. | G/NGO | |
| 2. | Equip job-seeking refugees with a document that enunciates their legal rights that they could use to gain favor of employers who perceive that hiring a foreigner will be problematical or hard to administer. | G | |
| 3. | Consider scheme that would subsidize employers for a limited period of time if they employ refugees (e.g. lower taxes). | G | X |

5.4.4. Private/collective forms of entrepreneurship

Most refugees manage to earn a living somehow and do not rely on social support mechanisms or benefit payments (from Government or UNHCR). Many are self-employed as small scale entrepreneurs and some have managed to find employment as a result of past UNHCR integration grants.⁴⁴

43 See Judgment of the Constitutional Court N П-187/2006 (17 April 2006) confirming the lawfulness of decision N 27 of the Minsk City Soviet of 8 June 1999 (imposing on employers a fee for employing in Minsk a non-resident (a person without a *propiska*); <http://ncpi.gov.by/ConstSud/rus/resh/pr187-06.html>; Decision N 27 was annulled on 30 November 2007, see <http://news.tut.by/economics/99005.html>.

44 UNHCR Belarus has pursued a programme of “*Refugee Community Development through Social Entrepreneurship*” and at the end of 2005 four refugee “Community based organizations” were registered (in Grodno and Gomel). A billiards club in the lat-

Several UNHCR projects were examined; it was clear that not all had succeeded and that problems persist. A small minority of refugees is fortunate to work on UNHCR funded projects but the Experts on the whole found that generally these ventures were not sufficiently effective or sustainable.

Refugees who are well established usually operate serious business/trading operations. Others feel that their business is not developing as well as it could due to bureaucratic obstacles or lack of travel documents (those in business would need to move abroad more freely). Belarus provides a very complex environment for small businesses (e.g. see *Report of International Finance Corporation about Business Climate in Belarus 2006*).

Most male refugees are entrepreneur oriented and are either self-employed or would like to be. Trading is the preferred field but the most cited obstacle to start or develop one's own business is the lack of capital and difficult access to loans. Banks do not as a rule grant loans without some security i.e. evidence of a regular income, certification of employment or existence of a solvent guarantors. While some refugees claimed that a guarantor must be also a citizen, others could not successfully navigate applicable bank procedures and obtain necessary permits. Some banks do not grant loans even for residence permit holders because they fear they may abscond and leave bad debts.

Working at the market unofficially or officially is usually more profitable than regular employment. Earning a living that would correspond to one's professional skills is rather the exception than the rule. Day labourers, who rely on and accept unofficial employment, do not have a legal option to pay social security taxes or into a pension fund.

| <i>Table 5.4.4</i> | <i>Recommendations: Private/collective forms of entrepreneurship</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Undertake a detailed study to identify existing obstacles and other problems faced by those planning to start-up an enterprise (citizens, refugees, foreigners residing in country permanently, women <i>etc.</i>); its final result should present recommendations to simplify regulations and facilitate creation of small and medium size enterprises. | G/IO/UNDP | |
| 2. | Simplify existing regulations and eligibility procedures to a minimum so more are encouraged to apply for start-up entrepreneurship subsidies. Prepare and issue brochures to provide refugees with better information on the role of employment offices and the assistance they can provide in the form of start-up loans. | G/HCR | |
| 3. | Ensure access to credits so that the lack of start-up capital is not the single greatest obstacle to become self-sufficient. | G | X |

5.5. Housing

Housing is a general problem, especially in Minsk and is faced by the population as a whole but it is particularly acute for refugees. A majority of the refugees live in the capital or larger cities and some have managed to establish themselves rather well elsewhere (e.g. Svetlogorsk).

Internal migration from the countryside to regional centres and the capital continues unabated which in turn generates measures designed to control migration and reduce the pressure on the accommodation market. There is no Government funded accommodation for refugees (except temporary shelters for asylum seekers) and no funds exist to alleviate even the most extreme shelter problems. In the absence of a national integration policy and investment in this area there is little to encourage refugees to move from the capital. Housing programmes should not ignore compelling personal preferences such as living in an environment compatible with work or educational opportunities, proximity to family members or health care facilities. Refugees obviously prefer an environment where they can access assistance from NGOs, however limited.

Housing conditions differ considerably but many refugees continue to live in cramped or deplorable sanitary conditions. The majority has no other option but to rent apartments (average rent being 150-250 USD, which for many families is the single largest outlay) and while many are not satisfied, they can not afford renting anything better. The fact is that there is not enough housing to accommodate large families (and consequently, to obtain a *propiska* legally). Few refugees can afford to buy their own housing; only citizens can own land. Some refugees live for many years in dormitories/shared rooms. Those who are in mixed marriages usually live with their local relatives.

ter was examined in greater detailed by the Experts – see above Chapter 5.4.1.

On the other hand the Experts found that seven refugee families (eligible on the basis of having more than 3 children) had for the first time in 2007 received social housing in a Minsk suburb. Another 10 families are still on the waiting list. No other such cases were identified and it would appear that this is a welcome but rather isolated action to treat vulnerable refugee families on a par with vulnerable citizens.

Most refugees have only verbal rental agreements (a common practice suffered to some extent by locals also as landlords do not always wish to declare their profits). Employed refugees receive more or less satisfactory salaries but taking into account that they rent apartments and tend to have numerous families, they hardly manage to make ends meet. Many therefore rely on short term loans and some have substantial debts.

| Table 5.5 | <i>Recommendations: Housing</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|-----------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | A national integration policy must include provisions for housing both for newcomers and for existing, vulnerable refugee groups. Such provisions would aim to avoid the social problems associated with overcrowding and the congregation of refugee populations <i>i.e.</i> in the capital and to enhance the capacity of local communities and refugees to integrate. Bearing in mind refugee rights, specifically the right to freedom of movement, locations could be identified where both proper, accessible housing and sufficient work opportunities would be available and to which refugees could be directed with appropriate support and assistance. | G | |
| 2. | Inform newcomers of locations which have accessible housing; encourage relocation to such areas by promoting/subsidized work and study opportunities; offer affordable/spacious housing to those who agree to move out from the capital. | G | X |
| 3. | For the “more vulnerable” refugee population (who from a statistical perspective is always likely to remain dependent on State - the aged, the sick <i>etc.</i>) provide housing, especially in the capital (reserve or construct some social housing units/dormitories for this specific purpose). | G | X |
| 4. | Consider carrying out locally specific surveys on housing with a view to providing access to affordable housing for the most vulnerable or marginalized groups of the entire society. Such a study could serve as a basis to inform the design of new affordable social housing programmes and to attract appropriate bi- and multilateral donor funding | G/IO/HCR/ R | X |

5.6. Social benefits and pensions

By law, refugees have the same rights to social benefits as citizens; however not all provisions are currently fully complied with. It has not always been possible for the Experts to ascertain, with a degree of precision, to which benefits refugees have access and whether they actually receive them. The main reason is that social assistance is administered by numerous local authorities that do not monitor the situation with regard to refugees, and that the central authorities are not always aware of the prevailing local practices. The Experts have been able to establish that the following benefits are available to refugees: maternity allowances/benefits, disability benefits, unemployment benefits and minimum pensions.

Few refugees receive an occupational pension because the Government takes the view that as foreigners and subject to a bilateral agreement with the country of origin, their pension rights would have to be transferred. In the case of refugees this is evidently not an option. Furthermore as most refugees work unofficially or are frequently unemployed, they do not build-up a work record or contribute to a pension fund which is creating a problem in the future.

Some agencies, for example, the BRC (Minsk) and the Migration Service in Gomel are known to assist refugees to apply for benefits for those who cannot prove a past employment record. Basic pensions however are low and often considered insufficient both by nationals and by refugees – *e.g.* the present minimum pension is 25% of the minimum wage, approximately 185,360 BYR or 21.50 USD/month.

UNHCR through the programme administered by the BRC is providing additional financial support (80 USD/month) to the most destitute elderly.⁴⁵ Elderly interviewees told Experts that they did not even consider

⁴⁵ The minimum state pension augmented from the BRC (UNHCR funded) equals the minimum income (100 USD). UNHCR assis-

applying for citizenship because they would forfeit their “*refugee pension from the Red Cross*”. One elderly lady lived in a home for the aged; she was charged for her lodging like all other residents and 90% of her pension covered her accommodation, 10% remained for the person concerned.

When the Government cannot provide sufficient social security nets even for its citizens, family ties, relatives and friends become the last resort. Such mechanisms can substitute/supplement public relief and cover needs in the area of caring for the elderly and the disabled, the children and the sick. Often elderly refugees (or potentially still productive parents) rely heavily on their children who become the main providers. This implies that some cannot obtain higher education as they have to work to maintain their parents and sometimes other siblings.

Refugee families can usually achieve savings only by reducing their rental expenditures (or sometimes transport costs, reducing their mobility and also chances to integrate). The problem is that most already live very modestly often in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Daily living costs are high and any savings on food undermine their health; in some cases this leads to deplorable social problems and undermining their own health (e.g. sharing with the sick, alcoholics, lack of privacy, bad sanitation, living in damp environments).

| <i>Table 5.6</i> | <i>Recommendations: Social benefits and pensions</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Regardless of the perceived small amounts of social benefits refugees should be counseled and assisted to access them; administrative requirements that are insurmountable for refugees (e.g. providing a certain document from the country of origin to be eligible for a particular benefit) should be flexibly interpreted or waived. | G | |
| 2. | Issue guidelines to local authorities, social workers <i>etc.</i> to inform and raise awareness of the plight of refugees and of their rights, so as to ensure that refugees are treated fairly, in a non-discriminatory manner and are not denied assistance and benefits for reasons over which they have no control. | G/HCR | |
| 3. | Train specialists in the branches of social protection offices to work with clients with different cultural backgrounds and social orientation and whose knowledge of the Belarusian society is insufficient. Consider establishing a network of social protection specialists conversant with the issues and who would demonstrate a multicultural attitude. | G | X |
| 4. | Refugee-specific financial assistance should ideally be designed as a supplementary programme complimentary to public relief efforts. This approach would offer the advantage that social welfare offices and the refugees would develop a rights based relationship. Supplementary financial assistance should require a refugee to demonstrate that public relief support has been accessed and that there is still a need. | G/HCR | X |
| 5. | Review all social benefits and ascertain which are accessible to refugees and issue pertinent methodological guidelines to the relevant authorities and inform refugees accordingly. | G | |

5.7. Health

Refugees generally face the same health problems as the national population. Many refugees, however, also suffer traumas and injuries caused by war and other forms of violence. There are no programmes to provide psycho-social counselling to those in need. Health care in Belarus is free of charge for citizens provided that it is within the “*Standards for Providing of Medical Assistance*” (lists medical interventions which are free). Certain (expensive) treatments/operations and medicines are excluded and must be paid for by the patient. Refugees who suffer from TB receive treatment free of charge, as do citizens. All other medical services are not free for most refugees, they are charged as permanently residing foreigners. To solve this problem (of non-compliance with the 1951 Convention obligations) UNHCR, through the BRC, allocates limited resources to cover some of the prescribed medicines and hospitalisation costs.⁴⁶ UNHCR funds are generally inadequate and tend to cover

tance through the BRC is directed to single parents with children, families with serious or chronic diseases, mental problem or disabilities. Vulnerable refugees, who do not have a safety net of relatives and friends, would have great difficulties to survive without the extra support provided by UNHCR. See also <http://www.info.minsk.by/general/content/soc/ofpensii>.

46 In 2007 UNHCR allocated funds for medical costs of refugees and asylum seekers are: 18,300,000 BYR (9,150 USD).

only very basic medical needs (it is not possible to cover more expensive operations). Some medical conditions can not be dealt with at all – which raises the issue of resettlement to a third country. Refugees who do not find themselves close to a UNHCR financed service are at a great disadvantage.

The implementing and coordinating partner for health issues is the BRC and UNHCR pays the salary costs of a doctor who works part time in the BRC medico-social centre and in the Minsk referral policlinic. Additionally, agreements between UNHCR and the regional authorities in Minsk, Vitebsk and Gomel secure medical assistance for refugees, at no cost, in localities with the highest refugees concentrations. Refugees turn to their local policlinics according to their *propiska*: thereafter their medical expenditures are reimbursed via the regional branches of the BRC. No written information about these arrangements has been made available to refugees.

Medical services and especially reimbursement of the medicines provided by UNHCR/BRC are reasons for some refugees not to apply citizenship because then they would lose their rights to these refugee specific services.

The majority of the persons interviewed were satisfied with access to health services and nearly no one reported problems with medical staff. An Afghan doctor hired by the BRC in Minsk also provides refugees culture-sensitive services, as he speaks their language and understands their views of health issues.

| <i>Table 5.7</i> | <i>Recommendations: Health</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Grant refugees the same rights as citizens to ensure access to all health services, pursuant to 1951 Convention Art. 24 (b). UNHCR should continue to lobby on this issue, especially as the financial implications for the Government would be minimal given the size of the refugee population. | G/ HCR | X |
| 2. | UNHCR with its partners should focus on psycho-social support for traumatized refugees and victims of torture and violence. As there is little such expertise in the country at the moment, it would be desirable to launch a special joint project through a local NGO or an international organization (e.g. the UN Voluntary fund for torture victims and the local medical establishment). | G/HCR | X |

5.8. Legal counselling and capacity of NGOs

Although NGOs supplement or actually replace many crucial social services otherwise unavailable to refugees, they receive little or no recognition or support from the Government. Their services are essentially funded from UNHCR's budget – in 2007 State authorities and NGOs received 482,000 BYR (241,000 USD) The Experts found one instance of governmental support to some refugee communities in Minsk in the form of low cost rental space.

The Department of Philology of the Belarus State University (BSU), in Minsk, provides language courses for refugees funded by UNHCR.⁴⁷ Responsible staff commented on the low attendance and high dropout rates. Refugees explained that they had to earn a living first and that the courses were of poor quality

Introductory courses to local customs and culture are provided through UNHCR funded projects run by the implementing partners BRC and “Evrika” in Minsk. For basic information, many refugees often rely on their friends/countrymen and hear-say. The latter can be hardly considered as a reliable source that would tend to promote positive attitudes. As has been pointed out in previous sections, refugees also do not receive reliable information on education opportunities, labor market, current proceedings in legislation, services provided by NGOs and UNHCR *etc.*

Intermediary assistance and counselling regarding professional orientation and vocational training is provided by UNHCR funded projects run by BCR and “Evrika”.

UNHCR's implementing partner the Refugee Counselling Service provides free counselling on various rights for refugees in Minsk. In general, counselling was found to be *ad hoc* and only few written materials/handouts are available to refugees. Representation of refugees before courts is problematic because UNHCR does not have sufficient funds to retain members of the Bar full-time.

47 In 2007 UNHCR's budget for language training to the BSU was 13,809,160 BYR (6,500 USD).

| Table 5.8 | Recommendations: Legal counselling and capacity of NGOs | Implementation | Funds |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Encourage refugees to attend language courses and make them a feasible proposition. | G/HCR/NGO | |
| 2. | When appropriate, commission appropriately qualified lawyers to contest through the courts precedent setting cases. | NGO/HCR | X |
| 3. | Strengthen the professional skills of lawyers by providing training, establishing contacts and mentor relationship with qualified lawyers/law firms in the country and sub-region; facilitate contacts/joint projects with other European refugee lawyers. | G/NGO | X |
| 4. | Lobby with the authorities for a legal provision to guarantee free legal aid for vulnerable categories of people (including refugees). | G/NGO | |
| 5. | Strengthen information policies for refugees and provide them more guidance in a language they understand. | G/NGO/R | |
| 6. | Cooperation between Government and civil society can facilitate and enhance integration initiatives. The Government (at central and local levels) and NGOs should jointly elaborate mechanisms allowing such cooperation to take place and to develop. | G/NGO/R | |

5.9. Naturalization procedures/citizenship

The Experts found that most refugees wished to apply for citizenship but not all displayed an understanding of the implications of naturalization. Nor did all realize that it was not a right obtainable on demand. The lack of transparency of the procedures and sometimes conflicting advice received on how to proceed were added difficulties.

The main problem of refugees applying for citizenship is the requirement to produce a certificate of renunciation of the former citizenship, a requirement which is contrary to international practice and treaty obligations. Although it would appear that the Law on Citizenship foresees exceptions (*only an application on termination of the former citizenship is needed if a person can not provide it due to the circumstances beyond his control* –unofficial translation), such certificates are routinely required in some localities. Some Afghan refugees managed to obtain such certificates from the Afghan Embassy in Moscow thus creating a “precedent” which has become a problem for other refugees. Some have managed to obtain leniency by bribery. The approach taken by the authorities was rather surprising, as the Experts found that generally officials did not contact the authorities of the country of origin.

| Table 5.9 | Recommendations: Naturalization procedures/citizenship | Implementation | Funds |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Ensure compliance with international standards, <i>i.e.</i> do not require renunciation of prior citizenship and apply the “ <i>circumstances beyond his control</i> ” clause. | G/HCR | |
| 2. | Issue appropriate guidelines and brochures that will clarify the naturalization process. | G | |
| 3. | NGOs should be trained to provide appropriate guidance and support in the naturalization process. | G/NGO | |

5.10. Local community relations

A great majority of the refugees interviewed had not experienced hostile behavior from the local population. Those who experienced it considered expressions of hostility as exceptional. Only few have suffered serious xenophobic attacks and many believed that in general, attitudes towards them had improved. According to the respondents the urban population seems to be more tolerant than people who live in rural areas. While the Experts found that there were few Government sponsored public awareness programmes on tolerance and combating xenophobia, government officials as a rule demonstrated tolerance and respect towards refugees. Corruption levels are low; rules are generally observed by all.

Most refugees who had been in contact with local police stated that they were treated with respect. Many noted that the situation had improved during the past years, especially in comparison to the early 90s. Most

refugees (and especially those who had studied in the Soviet times) have Belarusian friends. Many maintain close relations with their countrymen and in larger cities, the refugee communities of the larger ethnic groups are active; they celebrate together national holidays, run “Sunday schools” for children, perform religious activities and support in many ways the most vulnerable members of their community.

| <i>Table 5.10</i> | <i>Recommendations: Local community relations</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | The Government in co-operation with other relevant actors (<i>e.g.</i> UNHCR, NGOs, refugee communities) should continue to actively support policies that promote tolerant attitudes towards foreigners in general and refugees in particular. Specific public awareness activities explaining the reasons why Belarus welcomes and assists refugees and how much refugees contribute to society and the level of support received from the international community, would be desirable. | G/HCR/NGO | X |

6. Country-specific analysis and recommendations: Moldova

6.1. Introduction

Moldova signed the 1951 Refugee Convention in 2001 and entered a number of reservations upon ratification. Most of these are no longer applicable following the adoption of later national legislation.⁴⁸ The Law on the Status of Refugees was adopted in July 2002 (entry into force on 1 January 2003).⁴⁹ In May 2005, the law was amended and included a form of complementary protection (the complimentary/subsidiary protection system is still being developed). The former National Bureau for Migration included a refugee authority; it was dissolved in July 2006. The Ministry of Economic Affairs is responsible for labor migration issues and the Ministry of Interior (MoI) for all other migration issues, including asylum and refugee issues, migration management, regulation of foreigners' entry and stay, granting of immigrant status *etc.*. The reorganization was a long drawn-out process that led to delays and confusion.

The total number of refugees in country is 161 (including 79 beneficiaries of humanitarian status). Due to the interpretation of the provision on time limits (regardless of the number of years spent in Moldova only the period when a residence permit existed counts) no refugees have as yet acquired citizenship, although several stateless persons have. The number of asylum seekers is 78 (as of 1.1.2007). Waiting times for refugee status determination (RSD) have recently been shorter and recognition rates are amongst the highest in the sub-region. The refugee population is diverse: most are from Russia (Chechens), former Soviet Republics (Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan), from the Middle East (Iraq, Syria, Palestine) and from Afghanistan and Africa. With a few exceptions, all refugees live in the capital Chisinau.

Issues related to asylum and refugees are the responsibility of the Refugee Directorate, which is part of the Bureau of Migration and Asylum under the Ministry of Interior (MoI). In addition to its functions related to asylum (*i.e.* registering asylum applicants, RSD), the Refugee Directorate implements measures related to protection and assistance provided to recognized refugees. The Refugee Directorate is also responsible for the Temporary Accommodation Center (TAC) where asylum seekers and destitute/homeless refugees are accommodated on a temporary basis.

The Refugee Directorate currently has a staff of 10 and another 8 in the TAC. 3 out of the 18 employees deal with social assistance and integration issues, usually on a case by case basis. Issues that would lend themselves to generic solutions thus often remain problematic (facilitating access to social benefits, education for children, medical emergency assistance and access to the labour market). There is no budget to finance anything other than these advisory activities. Two NGOs funded by UNHCR, carry out most of the existing practical integration measures, including language training, *ad-hoc* vocational counselling, job facilitation, integration grants *etc.*.

There is fruitful cooperation and good coordination between UNHCR, the Refugee Directorate and NGOs on a range of issues (social assistance, accommodation in the TAC, organizing social and cultural events *etc.*). UNHCR's financial possibilities have always been modest and recently its resources to implement new projects or to continue capacity building support to nascent structures with the aim of strengthening the asylum-system are insufficient to meet needs. Bilateral donor support to the Government and efforts of partners to assist with their own resources are therefore of crucial importance.

The normative system is still incomplete, there are instances of collisions of norms and by-laws (legislation was supposed to be amended and by-laws adopted within 6 months of the refugee law entering into force but

48 Moldova reserved the right to accord treatment not less favourable than that granted aliens generally (to be interpreted as a status similar to that granted to the citizens of the states with which Moldova has signed regional treaties); furthermore reservations were entered to consider provisions of Articles 13, 17 (2), and 21 as recommendations only and to apply Article 24 so that they "do not infringe upon the constitutional and domestic legislation provisions regarding the right to labour and social protection"; with regard to Article 26 Moldova reserves the right to establish the place or places of residence for certain refugees or groups of refugees in the interest of the state and society. Most lawyers agree that by entry into force of the subsequently adopted *Law on Refugee Status*, the reservations referring to granting refugees a treatment similar to that granted to the citizens of states with which there is a regional treaty as well as reservations to Articles 13, 17 (2), 21, 24, 26 and 31 became partially or completely obsolete because Article 23 of the refugee law provides that refugees enjoy all the rights granted by legislation to aliens: similarly a number of rights, including in social security, medical assistance and insurance, is to be provided on equal terms with Moldovan citizens; the right to work, the freedom of choice of residence and freedom of movement is regulated on the same conditions as set by the legislation for aliens.

49 The Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners and Stateless Persons (10 November 1994) is also applicable to asylum seekers and refugees. Article 29 provides for "*non-refoulement*".

little progress has been achieved in this regard).⁵⁰ There is also an urgent need to train responsible staff in various administrations to apply rules consistently.

The Refugee Directorate has developed regular contacts with its counterparts in Romania, the Slovak Republic, Germany *etc.* and many staff have benefited from training. Given a relatively high turnover of staff, both at the central and local levels, there is an ongoing need to train officials and NGO staff and to disseminate information on best practice to facilitate integration. Some ministries and local authorities are not always aware of refugees or their rights, few assume responsibility or apply specific measures; lateral co-operation between departments on refugee issues is at best intermittent.

Most authorities other than the Refugee Directorate are not aware of refugee rights. For example, according to the Ministry for Social Welfare refugees are not eligible for maternity benefits (these have only been granted when one of the spouses was a national - see below: Social benefits). Procedures are complex, unclear and non-transparent and few refugees manage to find their way through them on their own. The Experts nevertheless noted that some improvements were implemented in course of the preparation for the LIP (*e.g.* the Ministry of Education issued a "model guideline" to schools and one NGO modified its legal counselling practice in matters of naturalization).

On the other hand while most refugees are engaged in gainful employment few pay regular taxes (as is the case for many citizens).

Few concise, clear guidelines exist, centrally or locally, on how to deal with refugees in specific circumstances. When such guidelines exist they are not always followed by officials, nor are they known or available to refugees. There is practically no current printed information material for refugees on their existing rights, their obligations, the special measures applicable to them, naturalization procedures *etc.* NGOs are similarly handicapped by the absence of consistent and coherent guidelines.

NGOs provide an invaluable contribution, they are available to refugees, knowledgeable, know most refugees by name and understand their predicament well. The Refugee Directorate and NGOs interact well; they are known to have assisted refugees in some complex legal proceedings that led to the enforcement of rights.

Overall however, the counselling of refugees on key issues is not always of required standard and in key areas like naturalization, many persons of concern fail to find their way through the procedures altogether. Legal representation stands to be improved as does the training of the lawyers involved.

Projects that would properly address housing issues, job placement, access to credit, to higher education or to re-qualification programmes are few. In 2008, subject to approval by the EU, Save the Children is to launch an AENEAS funded project that aims for improvements in the health sector and access to employment, a project in which the Refugee Directorate and UNHCR will participate as partners.

The situation in Moldova remains critical even though the economy and society are showing some signs of stability. The implementation of the "EU - Moldova Action Plan", notably the chapter on Home and Justice Affairs (and migration/asylum) has produced mixed results.⁵¹ According to a recent World Bank survey Moldova remains the poorest country in Europe and it is estimated that some 20% of its population (3.6 million) have left to seek employment in other European countries, including Russia. Remittances are estimated to amount to 27% of GDP. Moldova is also a major country of transit for irregular migrants and asylum seekers en route to Western Europe and the number of Moldovan citizens applying for asylum in Europe remains rather high (over 5,000 in 2005 and 1,000 during the first six months of 2006). The unsettled conflict with Transnistria contributes to a degree of uncertainty.

Many social and economic rights are almost impossible to guarantee due to the dismal economic situation. Unemployment, low wages, as well as deficient social security and medical care systems mean that many citizens struggle to survive and poverty fuels migration (and a considerable brain drain). Corruption remains a serious problem, including in the judiciary. Many refugees claim to have friends amongst the local community and only few refugees reported cases of extortion or hostility. Authorities (and to an extent also the local population) hold fairly positive attitudes towards refugees.

Bearing in mind the socio-economic and administrative realities prevailing in Moldova and the financial constraints faced by the authorities, the Experts consider that improvements to the situation of refugees are not only desirable, but also achievable, particularly given the small numbers involved. What appears to be lacking

⁵⁰ According to the 1994 Law on Aliens, asylum seekers and refugees enjoy the same rights as citizens, except to vote, be elected and serve in the military. The Refugee law recognizes all socio-economic rights but its implementation is delayed by absence of by-laws, amendments to relevant legislation and by budgetary constraints.

⁵¹ See <http://www.e-democracy.md/en/>.

at this stage is a concept and a clear manifestation of political will to integrate refugees. In formulating their recommendations, the Experts have also taken into account the information received after the Gomel Seminar.

6.2. Legislation and documents

6.2.1 Residence registration

In Moldova the issuance of documentation is generally satisfactory for recognized refugees and asylum seekers, but some gaps remain with regard to humanitarian status beneficiaries (essentially a problem related to the duration restricted to 1 year and the need to obtain a fiscal code which is necessary for employment). The Law on Identity Documents of the National Passport System (9 November 1994), last amended in 2005, also regulates the documentation system for refugees since 2003 (refugee documents and Convention travel documents); identity documents have been issued to refugees since 16 December 2005.

The situation of internally displaced persons is not comprehensively regulated but the displacement of over 50,000 persons in 1991 has been largely resolved. Moldova still does not have control over a part of its territory and the 1951 Convention and the Refugee law are not enforceable in Transnistria. The situation, while currently relatively stable, does on occasion become volatile. Only one refugee is known to live in Transnistria but cannot apply for asylum there.

Freedom of movement and the free choice of residence in Moldova are guaranteed for foreigners and stateless persons staying legally in Moldova by Articles 19 and 27 of the Constitution as well as by Article 16 of the Aliens Law. The former residence visa system (“*propiska*”) was abolished in 1993 and the Constitutional Court ruled in 1997 that all the provisions referring to “*propiska*” were unconstitutional. Currently citizens and foreigners are required to register with the Ministry of Information Development (MID). Certain rights are still linked to registration (*e.g.* a person cannot get an ID if he/she is not registered). Registration with the Ministry of Information Development is necessary for refugees and asylum seeker; it is done automatically when the Refugee Directorate registers the person or extends the validity of documents (the Refugee Directorate has direct access to the registration database, can enter bio data of all persons, including their address and print the registration documents).

Refugees are issued a refugee document (*Buletin de identitate pentru refugiati*), which is similar to the ID issued to citizens. The refugee ID is valid for 5 years and is extended in what should be, but not always is, a purely administrative act (a replacement document is issued while status is reconsidered). The refugee must nevertheless obtain his/her resident registration (on the basis of an ownership contract or a letter from owner confirmed through the notary office). If a person cannot present such documents, residence registration can be still obtained by registering in the TAC. Half of the recognized refugees are registered in the TAC (a reflection of their inability to pay high rents and the difficulty of obtaining a landlord’s permission).

Identity documents pose a problem for those who have been granted humanitarian status as these must be extended annually and the status is subject to review (and a replacement documents is issued). This generates many obstacles and has a negative impact on the attainment of other rights (*e.g.* access to medical care, employment). Some rights (*e.g.* access to medical care or services from the local employment office) are legally contingent on registration.

Asylum seekers and refugees who fail to renew their ID in time (or when the Refugee Directorate cannot renew documents for technical reasons), or fail to inform the authorities about a change of their residence, expose themselves to administrative and even criminal proceedings. Moreover, the MoI regularly conducts spot-checks of foreigners in special operations and cases of arbitrary arrest and detention have been reported; few refugees are prepared to complain against the police fearing reprisals.

Some government officials and entities such as banks are not always aware of the rights conferred by a refugee document and treat the bearer as an ordinary foreigner, depriving him/her of the rights granted to refugees.

Some refugees reported problems with the police during ID checks, but this is not common. The Refugee Directorate is aware of and working to resolve problems in cooperation with the Ministry for Information Technology (which issues ID documents).

| <i>Table 6.2.1</i> | <i>Recommendations: Residence registration</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Given that the extension of the refugee ID is a purely administrative act that does not imply termination of refugees status but rather serves to ascertain whether the refugee is physically present and still wishes to avail him/herself of refugee status, extensions should not lead to the withdrawal of the document and to replacement documents being issued, <i>i.e.</i> the process should be completed without undue delay (“while you wait”). | G | |
| 2. | A clear instruction should be issued to all responsible authorities (notably the police) to recognize the refugee document, explicitly enunciating the basic rights it entails. | G | |
| 3. | Inform all entities a refugee normally contacts of refugees’ rights by enunciating these in the refugee document (<i>e.g.</i> “ <i>The bearer of this document has the rights and responsibilities of a Moldovan citizen with the exception of the right to vote, but including the right to work</i> ”). | G | |

6.2.2. Convention Travel Document

Refugees cannot exercise their fundamental right to free movement fully as, to date, Moldova has not provided for a mechanism to issue a CTD. Preparations to print CTDs with EU funding have advanced considerably and the Refugee Directorate believes that they can be issued in the foreseeable future.

Moldova has not availed itself of the option to ratify the European Convention on the abolition of visas for refugees (1960).

| <i>Table 6.2.2</i> | <i>Recommendations: Convention Travel Document</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | To facilitate the right to travel abroad, resolve the longstanding issue to make available CTDs (based on the 1951 Convention), preferably by the same authority that issues the Refugee document. | G | |
| 2. | Consider accession to the European Convention on the abolition of visas for refugees (1960). | G | |

6.3. Educational qualifications of refugees

Half of the refugees interviewed have vocational or higher education. Many interviewees have studied in the former Soviet Union or in Romania.

Some refugees have an inadequate educational background or cannot demonstrate sufficient fluency in Russian or Romanian. Not much is done or can be done to improve the qualifications of any person as cost free/inexpensive or subsidized adult re-qualification possibilities and language classes are few.

Few, if any refugees have educational certificates from their country of origin; those who have them may apply for their recognition. A unit of the Ministry of Education of Moldova can be approached to recognize education documents either on the basis of bilateral agreements in force (with the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania) or the *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region* (11 April 1997). On 14 March 2007 Moldova ratified the *Hague Convention of 5 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents* (the Apostille Convention) that facilitates the circulation of public documents between State parties to the Convention. It replaces the cumbersome and often costly formalities of a full legalization process with the mere issuance of a so called Apostille Certificate. The procedure takes about 20 working days. No refugees are known to have taken advantage of the procedure.⁵²

⁵² As with other cases of missing documentation, Article 25 of the 1951 Convention applies: *i.e.* a refugee need not contact the authorities of his/her country of origin and is entitled to expect the host State to issue substitute documents or certifications. These documents shall stand in the stead of the official instruments delivered to aliens by or through their national authorities, and shall be given credence in the absence of proof to the contrary.

| Table 6.3 | Recommendations: Educational qualifications of refugees | Implementation | Funds |
|-----------|---|----------------|-------|
| 1. | Undertake a detailed survey of the educational qualifications of refugees. | G/HCR | X |
| 2. | Clarify existing rules for recognition of foreign diplomas and ensure that the procedure is carried out in accordance with international conventions and standards. | G | |
| 3. | Encourage/assist refugees, who have diplomas from their country of origin, to pursue their formal recognition with Ministry of Education | G | |
| 4. | Consider recognizing past education through supplementary courses that would equate them with locally provided education. | G | X |
| 5. | Implement positive measures that would provide refugees with the possibility to improve their educational/vocational skills. | G | X |

6.3.1. Access to primary education

Access to primary and secondary education for refugee children is granted on the basis of a Ministerial Order issued in 2000. The Experts found that the children of refugees and holders of humanitarian status attend primary and secondary school with no major difficulties; minor problems were reported with regard to asylum seekers. Most parents interviewed stated that children did well at school and co-operation with teachers was smooth. On occasion, the lack of residence registration has been an obstacle, but normally such problems have been resolved.

The Experts noted a very positive development when the Ministry of Education for the first time in preparation for the 2007-2008 academic year included Article 7 (6) of the “*Model Statute for Secondary Education Institutions*” the following text: “*Pupils with refugee status are enrolled in educational institutions located in their area of residence. Pupils with refugees status have the same right to education and have access to the same benefits as children of Moldovan citizens.*” The Ministry of Education has no statistics or other systematically collected data on the refugee children but is otherwise sensitive to the issue.

No children have been identified receiving extra support in language studies. The Experts did not identify any special programmes or guidelines to address the situation of refugee children that would allow them to catch up on curriculum requirements.

While primary and secondary education is free of charge, many refugee families, like locals who are in a socially weak position, struggle with frequent requests to make “voluntary” payments for books, stationary, class repairs, school trips, social events *etc.*. Payments can be around 100 USD per year per child.

The Experts were informed by the Minister of Education that local authorities support children from most vulnerable families with necessary school equipment and subsidize payments but there was no certainty whether refugee families benefit also. Schools do not always extend such benefits. A UNHCR implementing partner therefore provides refugee children with school supplies and uniforms.⁵³

The Experts were nevertheless informed that presenting proof of previous studies sometimes poses a problem when it is not always feasible to supply the required documentary evidence.

| Table 6.3.1 | Recommendations: Primary education | Implementation | Funds |
|-------------|---|----------------|-------|
| 1. | The Ministry of Education should annually reiterate the 2007-8 guidelines that every child should attend school, irrespectively of incomplete formalities of the parents (<i>e.g.</i> registration) and be treated as citizens; access to education should in line with best practice not be postponed for longer than 3 months. | G | |
| 2. | Ministry of Education should enforce principle to exempt socially disadvantaged refugee families (or those who have many children) from <i>ad-hoc</i> and so called voluntary school payments or create a special fund for this purpose; a mechanism needs to be devised to assess the degree of vulnerability to be eligible. | G | X |
| 3. | Ministry of Education should establish guidelines on best practices of integrating children into regular classes. | G | |

53 UNHCR's annual budget in 2007: 69,000 MDL (5,750 USD).

| | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------|---|
| 4. | Refugee children should be eligible for extra tuition to allow them to catch up. | G | X |
| 5. | School principals should be authorized to decide on the admission of a pupil with unfinished studies. | G | |
| 6. | Assist secondary school graduates to prepare for university exam (allocate funds for extra preparatory lessons and/or support NGOs to run them). | G / I O / N G O / HCR | X |

6.3.2. Access to higher education

Refugees, theoretically, enjoy the same rights to enter tertiary education as citizens (a right not foreseen by the 1951 Convention). The Experts however, could not ascertain the exact situation with any degree of precision. They did not meet/hear of any refugee students who had managed to enter State University faculties on the same basis as Moldavians, pursuing their education free of charge or benefit from a scholarship upon passing the competitive exam. Refugee students who do not succeed to pass the entry exam may register as foreigners and are charged a fee.

Both state and private universities have varying fees for citizens and foreigners (on average double for foreigners). The Experts came across one refugee who was accepted to the ULIM (private university) and was charged like a foreigner but later, with the assistance of the Refugee Directorate, was granted a dispensation and the right to study on same basis as a citizen. The same university has recently concluded an agreement with UNHCR to provide refugees free access to courses.

In addition to accepting refugees, ULIM is also willing to develop civic induction and language training and if authorized, to certify the results at minimal cost.

Quite a few refugees and humanitarian status holders are young and interested in completing their studies or acquire education/vocational training, especially when they completed primary and secondary education with good results. They feel however, that their chances are very limited as the first priority for parents (and for themselves) is to earn a living. For example there are refugees, who have completed their medical studies but cannot afford the compulsory 1 – 3 years practice “*rezidentura*” (due to the lack of financial resources and being charged like foreigners). Taking a credit from a bank to complete studies is hardly an option as employment and income perspectives after graduation are not auspicious. The Experts did not meet anyone who had applied for student loans; several respondents informed about difficulties to obtain credit from banks.

| <i>Table 6.3.2</i> | <i>Recommendations: Higher education</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Issue guidelines to higher education institutions to consider refugees as citizens for free of charge and paid places. | G | |
| 2. | Promote the introduction of special programmes to reduce or waive the fees for refugee students from low income families. The same may be done with regard to re-qualification programmes at universities, colleges or State educational institutions. | G/HCR | X |
| 3. | Provide refugee students extra guidance in order to facilitate access to educational institutions that are nominally less “popular” and where the competition is not so hard (e.g. in provincial centres or in less prestigious/trendy institutions). | G | |
| 4. | Guide refugee students to seek a career in fields that offer solid employment prospects instead of competing for the places which are already oversubscribed. | G/NGO/HCR/R | |
| 5. | Subsidize refugee students to participate in preparatory courses that would prepare them better for university entry exams. | G | X |
| 6. | Establish a scholarship scheme (in co-operation with appropriate agencies) to support the most talented refugee students to access higher education (initially for 1 or 2 students annually). | G/IO | X |
| 7. | Provide for a realistic refugee student credit scheme or equate them with citizens. | G/IO | X |

6.4. Employment and employment services

6.4.1 General

Generating a regular and sufficiently high income (to pay for housing in particular) is the single greatest obstacle to refugees asserting their place in society. Those who do manage to earn a living rarely manage to save money and move up the social ladder. Exceptional cases have been noted where refugees have managed to secure an income allowing them live rather comfortably. Most feel trapped and destined to just scratch-out a meager living. Some live in quite deplorable poverty and nearly one half are homeless (for more see under housing).

Since May 2005, the refugee law grants asylum seekers (if they have no other income) and refugees the right to work but the problem has been in obtaining a proper ID with a personal fiscal code number. Such IDs have been issued to refugees only since December 2005. A similar ID is being prepared for beneficiaries of humanitarian status.

Given the prevailing poor economic condition in the country few refugees find work (formal or informal). UNHCR therefore continues to cover basic needs of asylum seekers and vulnerable refugees and sees little prospect that this situation will change very soon. Past attempts to promote self-reliance did not achieve the expected results. Only one UNHCR implementing partner provided limited vocational training to refugees; the related integration activities are currently in the planning stage and subject to approval of an EU AENEAS grant.

The Refugee law does not require special permission for refugees to be employed; they enjoy the same right to work as citizens. Refugees are confronted with numerous obstacles, especially when they attempt to enter the labor market for the first time. Apart from poor language skills, refugees lack proper counselling (usually they are advised by persons who cannot find a job themselves), they do not receive adequate support in finding a job or in accessing re-qualification schemes. In a situation where so many nationals seek employment abroad, it is clear that access to employment for refugees remains problematic; they do not always qualify for support like citizens and few have family safety nets to rely on.

Although there are job openings especially in the capital (in August 2007, 8,000 vacancies according to employment office) and unemployment rates are dropping in the service and construction sectors, the labour market remains tight; many jobs have very low remuneration; salaries do not always reflect demand or the level of qualifications; unemployment among young adults is still high and periods of unemployment are long.

Almost all refugees interviewed worked unofficially and were periodically unemployed. Jobs ranged from retailing to construction, working in bakeries, restaurants or hairdressers. Only few had managed to find fulltime work, but even then salary levels remained very low or implied double working hours – a situation no different to that encountered by nationals. As so few hold regular employment, estimating the amount of paid taxes and social security payments proved impossible. Repeated requests to the Refugee Directorate to obtain such data went unanswered.

Although humanitarian status holders (and asylum seekers) have the right to work there is no automatic access to an identification code to all *i.e.* no possibility to pay taxes. The Refugee Directorate does endeavor to resolve such situations and provides temporary IDs, but this entails much paper work for the employer. Nevertheless even those with proper documents tend to work unofficially as day labourers.

Earning a living that would correspond to one's professional skills remains an exception. None of the highly educated interviewees have work which corresponds to their educational qualifications. Many cannot work in their profession as they do not have work experience and their studies were completed many years ago. The most crucial reason for not working according to their qualification (*e.g.* doctor, mathematician, engineer), is the fact that the salaries in such professions tend to be too low for the main breadwinner in a family. Competition for the better paid vacancies is extremely tough and refugees hardly qualify, if ever. Other factors, such as high expenditures (primarily for housing) and latent discrimination (preference is given to citizens) lead to a widespread frustration/conviction among refugees that there is little point in even applying for jobs corresponding to educational qualifications.

Unofficially employed refugees do not pay social contributions or into pension funds. They do not build-up an employment record and face many other problems as they are not insured. Their position tends to be very insecure; they can be fired any time and they are not eligible for secondary benefits *etc.* (problems which many citizens face also). Many expressed their concern about their current situation and their insecure future.

UNHCR's implementing partners carry out some pragmatic pro-employment measures (driving courses, computer and language classes). They also provide some *ad hoc* counselling and job placement.

| Table 6.4.1 | Recommendations: Employment General | Implementation | Funds |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Inform employers that recognized refugees have equal rights to foreigners who permanently reside in Moldova (the same right to work as citizens). | G/NGO | |
| 2. | Eliminate administrative requirements, which hinder refugees' participation in re-qualification courses. When State courses are not available, are for a fee, or when they are too intensive to allow the person to work at the same time, financial assistance should be considered in order to enable the person to pursue training, including in private institutions. | G | X |
| 3. | Increase refugees' awareness of their rights and responsibilities concerning work and how to access existing jobs (provide access to media advertising vacancies, internet, personalized counselling, including being accompanied to potential employers, coaching to undergo interviews, job application writing, CV drafting <i>etc.</i>). | G/NGO/R | |
| 4. | Refugees should be better counselled to accept that their position in society and the labour market cannot be equated with what they were used to in the country of origin. Refugees must be assisted/ taught to start to build their career again, often in completely different fields. This means that refugees need more encouragement to accept even unappealing work in the beginning so as to improve their chances to get better work in future. Review the qualifications of unemployed refugees with a view of actively offering re-qualification training. Guide refugees to re-educate themselves to new professions, to overcome their reluctance to change; focus on emerging/in demand employment opportunities. | HCR/G NGO/R | |
| 5. | Inform refugees better of the legal, social and financial consequences of continued reliance on unofficial employment and stress more the direct and indirect benefits of being legally employed. | HCR/G | |
| 6. | Identify the relatively few occupations for which refugees are NOT eligible (to assist refugees to access jobs for which they may be incorrectly considered ineligible and include such information in a leaflet that could be entitled " <i>How does a refugee find employment?</i> "). | G | |
| 7. | Pursue a policy of co-financing with international sources for employment and re-qualification programmes <i>etc.</i> ; consider consolidated funding proposals to the EU and other potential donors. | G/IO | |

6.4.2 Employment Office

The recent amendment to the refugee law allows humanitarian status beneficiaries and asylum seekers to work but has not abolished the related requirement of issuing an identification number (*fiscal code*), a prerequisite for insurance and taxation purposes. This imposes extra paper work on employers, *i.e.* to obtain a temporary identification code (so called "*forma 9*").

The Ministry of Labour does not collect refugee specific statistics or any other data on refugees. According to the information provided by the Ministry and by the employment offices visited, all holders of a residence permit and an ID card (*i.e.* refugees but not humanitarian status holders) are entitled to register as unemployed but few do. Refugees see no point in registering at employment offices, mostly because they do not have an official work record which would entitle them to unemployment benefits. Even though access to vocational training for the unemployed could be provided by employment offices at no cost, most refugees - and citizens- prefer to work whenever they can, rather than train themselves further, as unemployment benefits are too low to cover living costs.

The employment authorities questioned, did not see any reason why refugees would not receive the same services as citizens but noted that many preferred to seek better paid unofficial jobs. There is not much an employment office can do to correct this situation. The Experts concluded from the interviews with refugees and NGOs (as well as with the authorities), that employment offices do not play a significant role in employment of refugees; they have occasionally participated in the projects funded by UNHCR partners, but otherwise they have remained inactive.

Except some attempts by UNHCR's implementing partners and the Refugee Directorate, the Experts could not identify any viable effort to assist refugees systematically in finding work. Although employment is a high

priority problem, not enough has been done to help job-seekers write up their CVs, to accompany refugees to their first job, to counsel on how to prepare for interviews, to inform employers and explain refugee rights.

| <i>Table 6.4.2</i> | <i>Recommendations: Employment office</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Raise the awareness of employment specialists regarding refugees and the desirability of their integration; ensure that employment specialists are able to provide refugees with information and additional counselling to facilitate their entry into the labour market. Issue clear guidelines by the Ministry of Labour to employment offices to assist refugees and so help reduce the number of individuals who work in the semi-legal and unofficial sphere. | G | |
| 2. | Guide refugees to the services of employment offices rather than create parallel employment mechanisms <i>e.g.</i> with NGOs. Implement employment projects in close co-operation with employment offices; ensure that the job placement is carried out by specialists, who would possess the skills to match refugee potential with labour market demands. | G/NGO | |
| 3. | Increase the responsibility of employment offices to assist refugees; consider refugees who come for job placement, as members of a particular disadvantaged/vulnerable group and provide more personalized service akin to that granted to those who are already perceived/classified as such (<i>e.g.</i> the physically disabled enjoy certain preferential treatment in attaining employment, including quotas from employers). | G | |
| 4. | Provide information brochures for refugees on the assistance they can obtain from employment offices. | G | X |
| 5. | Train specialists in selected employment offices to work with clients who have different cultural backgrounds and insufficient knowledge of the local labour market. Ensure that the specialists sensitize employers and thereby increase the chances of employment of refugees. | G | X |
| 6. | Review the qualifications of unemployed refugees and actively promote re-qualification training. Guide refugees to overcome their reluctance to change and orient them towards to re-education in new professions, with a focus on emerging/in demand employment opportunities | G/R | |

6.4.3. Employers

Many employers either refuse foreigners, or are reluctant to hire refugees specifically. This may be due in part to a lack of information about applicable laws/rules (some may believe that they need extra permissions, that they would unduly complicate their taxation obligations *etc.*) or to latent prejudices against foreigners, because it is presumed they “*do not to want to work like locals*”.

Employers have the latitude to select their manpower and treat them as they wish. Official employers are hardly willing to employ *e.g.* humanitarian status holders, whose recruitment presumes more bureaucratic requirements than for citizens. Moreover, unofficial employment prevails even for citizens.

One typical obstacle is that the ID for humanitarian status beneficiaries is valid for a maximum of one year and employers consider this to be an additional reason not to hire them.

| <i>Table 6.4.3</i> | <i>Recommendations relating to employers</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Increase employers’ awareness of refugee rights and responsibilities. | G/NGO | |
| 2. | Equip job-seeking refugees with an official document summarizing their legal rights that they may use to inform potential employers that hiring a refugee will not be problematical or hard to administer. | G/NGO | |
| 3. | Consider scheme that would subsidize employers for a limited period of time if they employ refugees (<i>e.g.</i> lower taxes). | G | X |
| 4. | Assist refugees (<i>e.g.</i> by assigning “mentors”) especially in finding the first job (<i>i.e.</i> counsel them and accompany them to employers to ensure the correct application of the labor law). | G/NGO | X |

6.4.4. Entrepreneurship

Most refugees of working age manage to earn a modest living somehow with some assistance (*e.g.* obtain a residence registration from Refugee Directorate) or benefit payments (mostly from UNHCR). Very few are known to be self-employed or act as small scale entrepreneurs. Some feel that their business is not developing as well as it could due to bureaucratic obstacles or a lack of travel documents (those in business would need to move abroad more freely). Past attempts to help refugees to launch their own businesses through small grants (UNHCR funded) have not delivered the desired results. Some of the beneficiaries reflected that apart from over-ambitious business plans one of the key problems was the number of bribes that had to be paid.

Most male refugees are entrepreneur oriented and would like to run their own business. Trading is the preferred field but the most cited obstacle to start or develop one's own business is the lack of capital and difficult access to credit. The refugees did not really know where to address questions concerning entrepreneurship, permissions, licenses *etc.*. One had to visit one office after another and still many questions remained unanswered. Bribes for various permissions were another obstacle. Interviewed refugees concluded that one had to have good relationships and much money to start any sort of business.

Access to commercial credit in Moldova is limited, interest rates are high and most refugees rely on friends for short term loans. The Experts met with representatives of three leading banking institutions and with managers of the United Nations IFAD Project designed to stimulate small rural enterprises and farms.⁵⁴ Banks check credit worthiness and as a rule grant loans only to persons who present a certificate of their earnings or to those who are backed by "guarantors". While some refugees claimed that a guarantor had also to be a citizen, others could not successfully find their way through the applicable procedures and to obtain the necessary documentation. No one was found to be in a position to advise refugees on these matters effectively.

| <i>Table 6.4.4</i> | <i>Recommendations relating to private entrepreneurship</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Given the complexity of existing arrangements, undertake (with the assistance of international organizations) a proper study to review existing laws, rules procedures for the creation and running of small and medium size enterprises to identify problems, obstacles and gaps which may be a hindrance to all persons (citizens, women, refugees, foreigners residing in country permanently) when planning to start-up an enterprise. The project's final result should present concrete measures to simplify regulations facilitating the creation of small and medium size enterprises, and include proposals for entrepreneur courses for each target group | G/HCR/IO | X |
| 2. | Simplify existing regulations and eligibility procedures to a minimum so more refugees are encouraged to apply for services and increase their chances to find employment or start their own business; provide guidelines (in booklet form) to refugees on how to use said regulations and procedures. | G | |
| 3. | Ensure access to credit so that the lack of start-up capital is not the single greatest obstacle to become self-sufficient. | G | X |
| 4. | Examine the possibility to allow refugees who earn a living without official employment to pay into social security and pension fund schemes. | G | |
| 5. | Promote small business pilot projects based on past experience with persons who have a proven track record. | HCR/NGO/G | X |

6.5. Housing

The Experts are acutely aware that housing poses an enormous difficulty also for citizens; however, for refugees it constitutes an even larger problem and comparatively affects a much higher percentage of the population. Although the Refugee Directorate would like to encourage refugees to move from the capital where rents are high (on average a one room costs 100 - 150 USD), a majority of the refugees prefer to remain there, as it provides more work opportunities as well as access to all UNHCR financed support (health services, financial assistance, counselling, activities *etc.*). Moreover, a more multiethnic community supports them socially. In

⁵⁴ ProCredit, Viktoria and Eximbank.

order to cover their high living expenses refugees (as do many citizens) often earn a living in every possible manner, even if this means unofficial self-employment.

The quality of housing varies, but the majority of refugees live in cramped or deplorable sanitary conditions. Homeless refugees try to stay in the TAC as rent is not charged this constitutes a substantial saving.

In Chisinau the Government has funded the TAC, constructed with EU and UNHCR support (offering 160 beds) for asylum seekers, but the Refugee Directorate has also allowed the most vulnerable and homeless refugees to stay there. Such persons include the chronically ill, single parents, or the elderly, or those who live on a “minimum pension” and have no means to pay rent. A majority of the humanitarian status beneficiaries live in the TAC. The Experts noted that some refugees married to locals lived in the TAC, however at the end of the summer of 2007 eight such couples/families were issued eviction orders. Refugees who have difficulties in obtaining a residence registration are allowed to at least register in the TAC (approximately half of the interviewed refugees do so).

Some refugees share housing with other families or singles. Some of those who are in mixed marriages live with their local relatives. Some refugees rent cheap flats which are usually in a very poor state of repair and which they frequently also share with as many others as possible, as the only savings a refugee family can usually achieve is by reducing their rental expenditures. The overcrowding, lack privacy, proximity with sick persons or alcoholics, bad sanitation and insulation, lead to deplorable social problems and undermine refugees’ health; the latter is further threatened when high daily living costs force refugees to economize on the quality of their diet. As a consequence some face serious problems and risk losing their incomes altogether, only to live off grants or fall into debt.

Most refugees are not satisfied with their accommodation, but cannot afford renting anything better, particularly in the overheated rental housing market of the capital. Practically no refugees can afford to buy property. All consumers have limited or no access to commercial credit or affordable housing mortgage schemes and interest rates are generally very high. The Experts could not gather sufficient information (e.g. from “*Hypotheka*”, an institution which provides services to government officials), to reach any conclusions as regards possible options, if indeed any exist, to acquire property.

Most refugees have only unwritten rental agreements (a common practice suffered equally by locals as landlords do not always wish to declare their profits). Tenants are often in a very insecure position, fearing eviction at any moment.

| Table 6.5 | Recommendations relating to housing | Implementation | Funds |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Include in a national integration policy provisions to reserve a quota of social housing units for refugees throughout the country and inform newcomers of locations which have accessible housing. | G | X |
| 2. | Offer affordable/spacious housing to those who agree to move out from the capital and further encourage such relocation by promoting/subsidizing work and study opportunities | G | X |
| 3. | Carry out locally specific surveys of existing affordable housing with a view to respond to current needs of accommodation of the most vulnerable or marginalized groups of the entire society. In a longer-term perspective, a study to identify a range of social housing solutions for nationals and refugees alike (e.g. land allocation, low-cost long-term credit, etc.) should be undertaken in cooperation with bilateral and multilateral donor support, to serve as a basis for new low income housing programmes to be co-funded with appropriate donor contributions. | G/HCR/R | X |
| 4. | For the vulnerable refugee population most likely to remain dependant on State/UNHCR assistance (the aged, the sick, single women heads of family, orphans etc.) provide housing, especially in the capital. Reserve or construct some social housing units/ dormitories for this specific purpose in coordination with donors and international organizations (UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank, EU etc.). | G/IO | X |

6.6. Social benefits and pensions

With regard to social protection, Moldova strives to accord refugees the same treatment as to citizens. Refugees are guaranteed, by law, equal rights to social benefits provided that they submit all necessary documents to the local social protection departments.

The current social protection system is based on contributions to the social insurance system (unless registered as unemployed or in a few other exceptional cases). The other basic requirement is to have a residence. Once included in the public social insurance system there are entitlements to benefits *e.g.* maternity and child benefits/allowances and some work disability related payments. The law has certain requirements concerning the period/length of paying contributions; most often the required period is 3 years before a person is entitled to benefits. Contributions to the social security system as well as to the pension fund are paid by the employer which means that only officially employed persons (citizens or refugees), can rely on benefits in a case of illness, maternity, old age or death.

The *Law on State Assistance to the Families with Children* (2004) mentions refugees explicitly; the law *On State assistance to families with low income* (2004) does not, but its Article 3 stipulates that families with a low income permanently residing in Moldova have the right to State assistance as citizens. In 2007 the amount of the one time payment at child birth both for insured and uninsured women was 1.000 MDL (83 USD). All other maternity related benefits depend on whether the person (or spouse) has contributed the public insurance system.

According to information from the Ministry of Social Protection a new law on social assistance has been drafted recently to improve the situation of the most vulnerable groups; until it is adopted the system remains based on paid contributions and not on the individual needs or living conditions. The future law aims to provide a minimum guaranteed income to poor families through the provision of social support established in accordance with the assessed monthly average income of the family. The law will cover a) families whose members are citizens and/or have permanent residence on its territory b) families whose members are citizens of other states, stateless or refugees who have permanent residence in Moldova.

The Experts did not identify any refugees receiving the existing benefits; most are not entitled because they have not contributed for the minimum required period. Some of the mixed families are known to receive maternity related benefits as the Moldavian spouse is covered by the insurance system.

There is no provision to include refugees into pension schemes on the grounds that they did not contribute to them. The problem is compounded by the fact that most refugees work unofficially or are frequently unemployed and do not build-up a record of employment or contribute to a pension fund. Some of the elderly refugees receive an “allowance for the person who is not entitled to labor pension”; the amount of the allowance is 360 MDL (30 USD). The Refugee Directorate and UNHCR’s implementing partners attempt to assist refugees to apply for the allowance. One refugee is known to receive a labor pension based on an employment record in Moldova many years ago. The Refugee Directorate is not aware whether Moldova has concluded bilateral agreements, which might allow the transfer of individual pensions.

When the Government can not provide sufficient social security safety nets even for its citizens, family ties and friends become extremely important. Such networks can substitute/supplement public relief and cover needs in the area of caring for the elderly and the disabled, the children and the sick. Often elderly refugees (or potentially still productive parents) rely heavily on their children who become the main providers. This implies that some cannot obtain higher education as they have to work to maintain their parents and sometimes other siblings.

UNHCR allocates funds to cover the needs of most vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers.⁵⁵ According to jointly agreed criteria and collective decision of all relevant stakeholders (UNHCR, Refugee Directorate, TAC, implementing partner), assistance is distributed through the implementing partner to destitute refugees and humanitarian status holders (persons with health problems, elderly, pregnant and single women and families with children).

| <i>Table 6.6</i> | <i>Recommendations: Social benefits and pensions</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Notwithstanding the amounts involved, refugees should be counseled and assisted to claim social benefits on an equal basis; administrative requirements that are insurmountable for refugees (<i>e.g.</i> providing a certain document from the country of origin to be eligible for a particular benefit) should be flexibly interpreted or be waived. | G | |

⁵⁵ UNHCR’s budget in 2007 is 480,000 MLD (40,000 USD).

| | | | |
|----|---|-------|--|
| 2. | Accelerate the approval of the new social protection law to provide social assistance to those who fall outside the existing social insurance system; Ministry of Social Protection should ensure that refugees are included in the group of most vulnerable population, who will receive support although they may not have contributed to the social insurance system. | G | |
| 3. | Special attention should be paid to maternity and child issues; pregnant refugee women and refugee families with children should effectively enjoy the same rights as citizens to health care and maternity allowances/benefits. | G | |
| 4. | Ascertain countries from which labor pensions are transferable to Moldova and establish a system for transfer pensions. | G | |
| 5 | Confirm access to pensions for refugees who cannot demonstrate a past labor record, clarify and simplify a refugees' access to allowances which are payable to those who are not entitled to labor pensions. | G | |
| 6. | Social workers when conducting home visits/inspections should be instructed to take into account the exceptional circumstances a refugee may face and propose measures based on actual social hardship and not ability to comply with regulations (<i>e.g.</i> living conditions of refugees: not living in the correct address, overcrowding due to the lack of financial resources) and not "punish" refugees by denying a benefit in circumstances that are beyond their control (<i>i.e.</i> deny social assistance to persons who may need it most). | G | |
| 7. | Refugee-specific financial assistance should ideally be designed as a programme complementary to other public relief efforts; this approach offers several advantages: it allows both social welfare bureaus and the refugees to develop a rights based relationship and promotes good practices before recourse is made to refugee-specific assistance. | G/HCR | |
| 8. | Supplementary financial assistance should require a refugee to demonstrate that public relief support has been accessed and that there is still a need. | G/HCR | |
| 9. | Review all social benefits and ascertain which are accessible/ applicable to refugees; provide relevant methodological instructions to relevant authorities and appropriate guidelines for refugees. | G | |

6.7. Health

Refugees generally face the same health problems as locals, but there are also considerable differences. Many refugees are survivors of traumas and injuries caused by war and other forms of violence. The NGO "Memoria" specialises in providing support to torture victims (not a UNHCR implementing partner); it assists refugees with socio-psychological counselling and organises peer group meetings. It also reimburses 50% of refugees' medicines and related costs (a non-UNHCR funded project). Refugees were satisfied with this support.

While the Constitution guarantees citizens free health care and Article 20 of the Refugee law stipulates that refugees have the same rights as citizens to free medical care, treatment and insurance, reality is different.⁵⁶ Under the compulsory medical insurance system, basic medical services are provided free of charge. In practice, however, even citizens must pay if they wish to obtain prompt and qualified assistance. UNHCR continues to provide basic medical assistance and medical supplies to asylum seekers and refugees through the NGO "Save the Children". Basic medical services are also available at the TAC. A draft regulation on medical insurance of foreigners under which asylum seekers would fall is still under discussion. Medical care for certain types of rare health problems (*e.g.* tropical diseases) is problematic and UNHCR hopes that a diagnostic laboratory will be established soon with EU funding (AENEAS funding for MoI Clinic).

In order to gain access to health services, refugees and citizens must be insured. Normally the employer provides the health insurance but if a person is employed unofficially or is unemployed, s/he has to take care of insurance him/herself. Annual insurance costs are approximately 100 USD. UNHCR's implementing partner provides insurance for recognised unemployed refugees, but not to humanitarian status beneficiaries. UNHCR was prepared to cover those costs as well, but the Ministry of Social Protection did not approve the insurance due to their temporary residence (1 year). Insured persons can turn to local policlinics and hospitals. Patients

⁵⁶ Government Regulation No. 43 (21 January 2002) guarantees the same rights to citizens and to foreigners and stateless persons and to refugees but not to asylum seekers.

(including citizens) must pay not only for medicines but also for some services, as it is almost impossible to get medical treatment in policlinics and hospitals without paying so called “voluntary contributions” to the medical staff. This makes medical treatment a costly affair. However most refugees were satisfied with the services and treatment (they faced only financial problems). Humanitarian status holders (and asylum seekers) do not have access to public health care as they do not have the insurance; health services are organized through the TAC. There they can receive first aid and some basic treatment and medicaments free of charge; services are available for both asylum seekers and refugees. One UNHCR implementing partner distributes some medicaments for the above mentioned groups free of charge, but only those that are affordable within its the budget or that it receives from other donors. Both refugees and implementing partners reported that the financial resources for medicines are insufficient.

UNHCR funds tend to cover only very basic medical needs (it is not possible to cover more expensive operations). Some medical conditions can not be dealt with at all – which raises the issue of resettlement to a third country (one medical case has been awaiting resettlement since 2006). Refugees who do not find themselves close to a UNHCR financed service are disadvantaged. In 2007, UNHCR contributed 145,000 MDL (12,000 USD) towards health costs for the above mentioned groups.

Testing for HIV/AIDS is mandatory for all foreigners, including refugees and asylum-seekers (UNHCR global policy recommends voluntary testing). UNHCR’s implementing partner distributes awareness-raising information materials. In 2006, one asylum seeker who had tested positive, was supposed to be hospitalized in a specialized institution but moved spontaneously to Ukraine and registered in the Reception Centre in Odesa. Since March 2003, HIV/AIDS testing for asylum seekers is provided free of charge.

| Table 6.7 | Recommendations relating to health | Implementation | Funds |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Enforce access to health services on equal footing to citizens (notably medical insurance). | G | X |
| 2. | UNHCR should continue to lobby for better health services for refugees, especially as the financial implications for the Government are minimal for a population of less than 200 persons. | HCR | |
| 3. | UNHCR with its partners should focus on psycho-social counselling for traumatized refugees and victims of torture and violence. | G/HCR | X |
| 4. | As long as citizens must also pay for their medicaments, it would be desirable to develop a supplementary programme to cover costs for the most vulnerable groups. Most vulnerable refugees should be included. | G | X |

6.8. Legal counselling and capacity of NGOs

The Refugee Directorate has a mandate to implement integration measures; in reality, however, it has mainly focussed on procedural matters (refugee status determination, registration, extension of refugee documents *etc.*). The Experts noted nonetheless, that the Refugee Directorate has provided *ad hoc* integration support and that numerous positive interventions have been made by committed staff who have demonstrated a helpful approach. Although they could not always assist all refugees systematically, they have tried to solve problems in the best possible way on a case by case basis.

The authorities have not dealt with integration largely due to a lack of resources. UNHCR contributions have been decreasing but are still significant. In 2007, the Refugee Directorate will have received *cca.* 45,240 USD in allocations that aim to strengthen its capacity (*e.g.* 6,000 USD to renovate office space, 10,000 USD for staff external training, participation in international seminars). Four NGO’s received about 2 million lei (163,840 USD) and additional funds were reserved for subsistence allowances, voluntary repatriation costs, training for partners, translation of legal/country of origin information and other documents and some equipment.

UNHCR implementing partners manage to play a remarkable role, filling many gaps and providing a range of integration services. NGOs assist vulnerable categories of refugees. They encourage the development of a self-supporting refugee community (*e.g.* children and their mothers are regularly invited to visit places of cultural interest such as theatres, cinemas, museums, circus). A summer camp for around 100 children is organized every year (both for refugees and locals). The “Charity Center for Refugees” is open for children during weekends and organizes cultural as well as educational activities (Children’s day, Christmas/New Year’s party, Romanian and English language classes).

Until such a time that the responsibility for protection and assistance can be effectively carried out by the authorities, UNHCR through its partners, will have to continue to assist children in various areas, including with school supplies, in-kind grants to institutions attended by refugee children, monitor that newly born children receive birth certificates and that separated/unaccompanied children have access to RSD procedures and are treated as a vulnerable group.

NGOs operate in Chisinau (where most refugees live) but it is self-evident that three organizations cannot respond to all needs of the refugee population. NGOs work on tight budgets that are often reduced mid-year and face many additional obstacles (lack of training, burn-out due to the pressures involved, low/uncompetitive salaries, workload and expectation not commensurate to resources/skills *etc.*). NGOs receive no funding and little encouragement from the Government.

NGOs concentrate on securing the basic living conditions for refugees (cash assistance, food and hygiene packs, medical services and medicines). In addition to implementing “life sustaining” measures, some have organized language courses, employment projects, including vocational training; they have also supported cultural events of refugees. Past integration efforts have alleviated some of the most acute problems faced by refugees but have created no sustainable system for the newly arrived to integrate into their host society.

Counselling on procedures has not always met required standards and many refugees have failed to master complex procedures. There is a shortage of printed material (leaflets or brochures), in any language). Refugees sometimes base their decisions on conflicting information; they need reliable guidance at least on elementary issues.

Few refugees can afford to hire lawyers and there are no free legal aid programmes even for Moldovan citizens. Projects that would address housing issues, job placement, access to credit or higher education or re-qualification are too few and inefficient.

| Table 6.8 | Recommendations: Legal counselling and capacity of NGOs | Implementation | Funds |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Stimulate refugees to attend language and other courses by making them a feasible proposition. | G/HCR/ NGO | |
| 2. | Devote more attention to legal counselling (ensure that staff is properly remunerated, qualified, trained and provided with support on complex issues, including gender related matters); focus resources on high impact issues and precedent setting cases that would empower refugees and pave the way for them to assume their rights. | HCR | X |
| 3. | The Government should enhance cooperation with NGOs and closely involve them in integration related activities. | G/NGO/R | |
| 4. | Strengthen the professional skills of lawyers by providing training, promoting contacts/joint projects with other European refugee lawyers and mentor relationships with qualified lawyers/law firms in the sub-region. | G/NGO/ HCR | X |
| 5. | Promote the adoption of a legal provision to guarantee free legal aid for vulnerable categories of people (including refugees). | NGO/IO | |
| 6. | Strengthen information policies for refugees and provide them with more guidance in a language they understand. | G/NGO/ HCR/R | |

6.9. Naturalization procedures/citizenship

Many refugees continue to aspire to acquire full civic rights through naturalization but none have been naturalized to date (*e.g.* 32 of those interviewed during the LIP stated that they intended to apply). The key reason is that few have “legally” (not only factually) resided in Moldova the minimum eight years required. Some refugees who married a Moldovan meet the reduced criteria of 3 years. While a substantial number of those interviewed wished to apply for citizenship, a relatively high percentage (about 18%) are not sure whether this option is in their best interest. Some refugees fear becoming second class citizens as well as losing their right to UNHCR support. The authorities had a different viewpoint and were of the opinion that most refugees have no intention to apply for citizenship but rather plan on leaving (usually illegally).

UNHCR’s legal implementing partner in the past distributed an information leaflet on legal requirements regarding the acquisition of citizenship; the drafting of a new version started in the summer of 2007.

Some stateless persons have acquired citizenship (they had a long record of residence and managed to regularize their situation before the refugee law took effect). Others, in spite of holding a stateless document issued by the Moldovan authorities, have seen their applications rejected on the grounds that they have not renounced their prior citizenship; some find it difficult to prove that they have resided legally and habitually in Moldova and are eligible. All applicants must prove proficiency in Romanian (as well as know Russian in order to increase their capacity to communicate).

Some refugees thought that the process was unpredictable, discriminating and non transparent. The problems experienced are many: difficulty in submitting the file with the appropriate authority, repeated requests for additional documents and/or need to update documents or simply rejections of the application on unclear grounds. Most applicants have received insufficient or inconsistent information and advice. It is unclear whether an applicant must really renounce prior citizenship (especially those granted complimentary protection).

A basic issue is that according to current practice, a refugee practically never receives confirmation (a receipt) that the application has been lodged, even when the applicant explicitly requests such confirmation. This leads to irregular situations and makes it virtually impossible to track the progress of an application. A few refugees claimed that their files had been repeatedly lost and had to be re-submitted, while some stated that had been bluntly turned away as ineligible. The Experts were glad to note that the supervisory authorities were aware of the need to introduce improvements to the process and that in several cases corrective action had been taken in the course of the project.

The criteria for the language test and knowledge of the Constitution have not been clearly defined with the result that applicants are sometimes expected to meet arbitrarily fixed standards (e.g. applicants have been asked technical questions on details of the Moldovan Constitution). The Experts did not meet any refugee who had undergone specific language training nor was anyone really aware of the advisability to do so.

Hence, while naturalization procedures, as described in the law, can be deemed to be straightforward, with the documentary burden on refugees not overtly demanding, the lack of transparency of the procedure and the absence of rudimentary counselling, give rise to anomalies. When guidelines exist, they are not available to refugees. The Experts met with lawyers working for UNHCR legal projects but none actually had any experience or solutions to the problem.

| Table 6.9 | Recommendations: Naturalization procedures/citizenship | Implementation | Funds |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Issue clear instructions/guidelines on naturalization procedures to be adhered to by officials, so that the applications of refugees can be dealt with in a uniform, predictable and transparent manner (e.g. establish one official checklist of required documents; instruct that the receiving authority to issue a refugee with a receipt and list of the supporting documents submitted by the applicant; record administrative steps taken so as to keep track of the status of an application; communicate with the refugee by registered mail i.e. before a file is closed on the grounds that it has been abandoned; provide proper guidance on avenues of redress when the application appears to be have been “lost in the procedure”). | G | |
| 2. | Ensure that valid guidelines are available to refugees and that specifically drafted brochures exist for applicants; that applicants receive qualified legal support (e.g. advising refugees how to prepare for language test, where and how to obtain required documents, who can be contacted in case of difficulty, expected duration of process and time-limits involved etc.). | G | |
| 3. | Give applicants the opportunity to attend classes in civic training, familiarization with Moldovan culture, preferably combined with language tuition and based on a common curriculum. Refer and counsel refugees to undertake language training that would be best coordinated by the Ministry of Education (which also conducts the language exam). | G | X |
| 4. | Clarify concept of “legal and habitual residence” in accordance with the European Convention on Nationality and systematically enforce the rule that a refugee (and humanitarian status beneficiaries) need not formally renounce their prior citizenship. | G/HCR | |

| | | | |
|----|--|---------------|---|
| 5. | NGO staff should be trained to provide appropriate guidance and support in the naturalization process. | G/HCR/ NGO | X |
|----|--|---------------|---|

6.10. Local community relations

A majority of respondents to the LIP questionnaire had not experienced hostile behavior towards them in the local community. Relatively few reported serious xenophobic incidents (there was one abortive attempt of UNHCR to settle several refugee families in a village in 2002 when the initial welcome extended to the newcomers was soon to be replaced by tension and even physical confrontation); those who had been confronted with hostility considered such occurrences as exceptions and unusual in the capital. The refugees and ethnic communities are too weak to assist or support the advancement of the most vulnerable members of their own community.

Most refugees who have been in contact with local police stated that they were treated fairly well. A majority of the respondents have friends in the local population and are also on good terms with their neighbors, whom they find helpful and friendly. Many maintain constant relations with their countrymen and other refugees. As refugee communities based on same ethnicity are small, there are ethnically mixed communities, which are not very strong and in some ways they are in conflicting terms with each other. In co-operation with refugee communities, implementing partners organize a reasonable number of cultural events (UNHCR and the Government sponsor public awareness programmes, e.g. Refugee Day, which present aspects of what it is to be a refugee, why the need for tolerance and combating xenophobia *etc.*).⁵⁷ Officials generally demonstrate positive attitudes and assist refugees to solve various difficulties although their knowledge of the issues is sometimes limited.

| <i>Table 6.10</i> | <i>Recommendations: Local community relations</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | The Government in co-operation with other relevant actors (e.g. UNHCR, NGOs, refugee communities) should continue to actively support policies that promote tolerant attitudes towards foreigners in general and refugees in particular. Specific public awareness activities explaining the reasons why Moldova assists refugees and how much the international community contributes would be desirable. | G | |
| 2. | Local officials should receive elementary training in human rights and how to fulfill their duties in a non-discriminatory fashion. | G/HCR | X |

⁵⁷ Events such as "Rock for refugees", the film or annual festival for minorities, the teacher toolkit training programme, the training of students in journalism, the publication of the "Refugium" magazine, interviews and media appearances are all of course subject to available staffing resources and budgetary constraints.

7. Analysis and recommendations with regard to the situation in Ukraine

7.1. Introduction

Since 2002 Ukraine has recognized 5,411 refugees (estimated remaining in country is 2,264) and naturalized 927 persons (as of 1.1.2007). The number of asylum seekers is relatively small and dropping. Recent developments in Russia have led to new arrivals but many individuals attempt to solve their problems through other means than applying for asylum (as this is largely considered to be an exercise in futility, not least because of the lengthiness of status determination procedures and subsequent appeals). There is no established system for complimentary/subsidiary protection (draft legislation has been under review for the past several years).

The State Committee for Nationalities and Religions (SCNR) is the central authority for refugee matters; it has a supervisory function in relation to local Migration Services countrywide. The SNCR has overall responsibility for the asylum process, refugee status determination and integration. The State Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Registration of Natural Persons (SDCIRNP) is responsible for registration of refugees within the Ministry of Interior. While in theory Migration Services are supposed to implement “integration measures”, in reality they concentrate on procedural matters (RSD, extension of refugee certificates, cooperation with other authorities including local Ministry of Interior offices that register refugees *etc.*). At the time of the study most government officials expected yet another reorganization, if only as a result of the elections, and it was rather unclear what changes could be expected.

Waiting times for status determination are long and there is no assistance to asylum seekers who routinely wait months, if not years for a decision. The SCNR had actually placed all decisions on hold between March and 23 November 2007, because it lost the legal basis for taking such decisions.⁵⁸ This caused much difficulty for the individuals concerned, undermined the trust in the entire asylum system and in effect amounted to a suspension of the 1951 Convention; furthermore a key element of good practice was ignored, *i.e.* to facilitate integration at an early date (*e.g.* learning the language – *c.f.* Chapter 4.4. Language skills). It also stretched the resources of NGOs and resulted in more irregular movements, shifting responsibility for international protection to neighboring States.

Most refugees originate from Afghanistan, the second largest group are Africans (Angola, Congo). The majority of refugees reside in Kyiv (and its region), Kharkiv, Odesa and also in Donetsk, Lyugansk, Sumy, Poltava, Lviv and Uzhgorod (only the first three were visited by the Experts).

The Experts examined the “*Plan of activities on furthering adaptation of persons granted refugee status and asylum into Ukrainian society*” which according to paragraph 5 of the Programme on regulation of migration processes for 2003-2005 referred to integration. They noted that the foreseen measures were never fully implemented and no consistent integration strategy had been launched.⁵⁹ Comments on the draft analysis and recommendations presented at the Gomel Seminar were received from the Government in mid January 2008.

NGOs (funded by UNHCR) carry out all existing integration activities (language training and counselling, job facilitation, integration grants *etc.*) mainly in the larger cities, with limited measures pursued elsewhere. As responsibility for refugee related issues is shared between several government departments, there is no dedicated Government personnel to concentrate on integration, to define and issue guidelines; no budgetary provisions have been made to further meaningful integration measures. Any integration measures are by consequence *ad hoc* and usually carried out in the context of specific projects on the initiative of well-meaning Government staff or by NGOs. To some extent Migration Service staff attempt to assist refugees on a case by case basis to integrate into society and resolve their daily problems (counselling them in various situations, ensuring the support of other authorities, writing letters of support *etc.*). In some localities there are efforts to assist with employment (Odesa), to organize social assistance and cultural events (Kharkiv) but none of the work is conducted on a regular basis, consistently or particularly effectively.

Few of the authorities with whom the Experts met, had clear guidelines or methodological instructions on the application of existing laws and procedures relating to refugees. When such guidelines existed (centrally or locally) they were not always known to refugees. The Experts found that generally refugees were insufficiently

58 The backlog of cases awaiting a decision was *cca.* 1,500. For more see “*Strengthening Asylum and Protection Capacity in Ukraine by Enhancing the Capacity of Governmental and Civil Society Stakeholders in a participatory Approach and Cross-Sector Cooperation; Analysis Of The Ukrainian Refugee Status Determination Application/Interview Process*”, Krista Zongolowicz, Danish Refugee Council, October 2007 (awaiting publication).

59 Approved by Vice-Prime Minister of Ukraine, D.V. Tabachnyk in February 2004; approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 20 August 2003, №.1296.

or ill-informed of their rights in Ukraine or of special measures applicable to them and on how to exercise or use them. Refugees frequently relied on conflicting advice and they could not refer to suitably qualified social workers or to a “mentor”. There was no real professional approach to refugee needs that could differentiate and/or build on their individual skills. The resulting state of uncertainty has had a negative impact on the ability of refugees to integrate.

It was apparent that refugees rarely benefited from social services, the only entitlement being a one-time payment on acquiring status, which government officials themselves recognized to be insignificant - 17 UAH (about 3 USD). Even this payment has often not been made because refugees have not bothered to apply for it (the time involved and related costs are higher) or because the money has not been made available to the competent administration. In one local Migration Service the Experts were told that there was no provision in their budget for the payments in question and that a request to the local authorities to release the funds was not a simple “internal” procedure. The local authorities were supposed to be reimbursed for those expenditures from a central budget.

On the other hand, most refugees are engaged in gainful employment and many pay regular taxes. For example, in Kyiv 200 Afghans and 64 Africans work in the Troeshina and the Shulyavka markets and annually pay 1,032,768 UAH in taxes. In Odesa 400 Afghans and 35 Africans work in the “7th km market” and annually pay 1,701,720 UAH. In Kharkiv 200 refugees of Afghan and African origin work in the Barashovo market and annually pay 782,400 UAH. Thus, it can be estimated that refugees and naturalized persons running private enterprises in Kyiv, Odesa and Kharkiv alone, pay annually 3,516,888 UAH (703,378 USD) in taxes and social contributions. In addition, many others, including, asylum seekers manage to find employment and some pay taxes also.⁶⁰

Approximately 1/3 of the persons interviewed have acquired citizenship, 1/3 is planning to apply and 1/3 has rather negative attitudes towards residing in the country and/or naturalization. Refugees of the latter group feel that they are not welcome, will be unable to make a living, have just complicated their life by staying in Ukraine and/or that they would lose their last chances to be resettled through UNHCR if they were naturalized.

In all of the locations visited, the Experts found that at the lower levels of national/local administrations and among NGOs, there was a general lack of guidelines and practical information materials concerning refugees and/or for them. A leaflet for refugees on “*How can a Refugee Acquire Ukrainian Citizenship*”, last published in 2003 in co-operation with UNHCR, was being updated and completed in an agreement between UNHCR and the Presidential Administration of Ukraine. Due to the restructuring of the central asylum authorities and related uncertainties, documentation on refugees’ rights and responsibilities, refugee legislation and special measures concerning them and/or information materials to orientate refugees either did not exist, were unavailable or were not accessible to refugees. More accessible information on key issues would empower refugees to assume their rights and responsibilities.

There is no free legal aid to refugees (there is a draft law under consideration and it does refer to refugees explicitly). Counselling on key issues is not always of required standard and in some areas like naturalization, many refugees fail to navigate the procedures altogether. Some refugees due to their residence in localities with no UNHCR implementing partners have no legal counselling or support at all. Legal representation is not always in the hands of fully qualified lawyers. Refugee support activities that would properly assist them to deal with housing issues, job placement, access to credit, to higher education or to job re-qualification, are scarce and uncoordinated.

Officials have reported that refugees are generally law abiding and cooperative, behave responsibly, follow instructions *etc.*. Many refugees stated that they had friends amongst the local communities, but a high percentage reported cases of extortion or hostility from various authorities. In some cases the Experts detected fairly negative attitudes towards refugees, especially to those of African origin.⁶¹

60 According to community leaders it is estimated that refugees and naturalised persons running private enterprise pay the following taxes: 69 UAH income tax, 0.5% of the minimal salary to the pension fund and 100 UAH for the patent. If an entrepreneur has employees, for every employee he/she pays 32.3% and 1.3% of the minimal salary to the pension fund and employment center respectively. The minimal salary is 460 UAH. It was presumed that each entrepreneur has one employee (some of them have more than one, other have no employees at all). In Kyiv: $264 \times 326 \times 12 = 1,032,768$ UAH, in Odesa: $435 \times 326 \times 12 = 1,701,720$ UAH and in Kharkiv: $200 \times 326 \times 12 = 782,400$ UAH.

61 The Experts were informed of an alarming number of cases of intolerance, including physical assaults. In some localities the refugees felt that law enforcement authorities turn a blind eye to such excesses and lived in fear. See also “*Ukrainian Korrespondent*”, article by Tetyana Kremen (3 November 2007) which refers to the creation of a special unit within the SBU (Security service) to combat xenophobia and ethnic intolerance. See also <http://unian.net/ukr/news/news-221390.html>.

It remains a reality that in spite of all progress achieved in Ukraine, vulnerable refugees are immeasurably more disadvantaged than destitute citizens and in some cases cannot be expected to live with any degree of dignity.⁶² Some refugees have lost faith, show signs of strain and fatigue, opting to leave Ukraine altogether (usually by illegal means and often with the help of smugglers). The Ukrainian authorities have successfully managed to advance the reintegration of a large number of Crimean Tatars; in this circumstance, one would hope that resolving the situation of a few thousand refugees would not be considered to be too great a challenge.

An estimated 3,000 Abkhaz war refugees and their children (of the 15,000 individuals who arrived initially) remain in a precarious situation with no proper status.⁶³ This issue needs to be addressed urgently as such persons are in this situation since 1996. A change for the better cannot be anticipated before May 2009 (at the expiration of the latest decision of the Cabinet of Ministers, in February 2007, to once again extend their temporary residence permits). Abkhaz refugees often resort to any available means to extend residence permits, including marriage. With no access to permanent residence they are disadvantaged in finding employment, accessing social services *etc.*

Abkhaz refugees have been largely left to their own devices and legal aid has only been provided by UNHCR implementing partners in some regions (Donetsk and Lugansk). A draft law introducing amendments to the final Provisions of the Law on Immigration which foresees the possibility for Abkhaz war refugees to obtain permanent residence permits awaits adoption since 2005. The ultimate objective of many Abkhaz war refugees is to obtain the citizenship of Ukraine.

In view of the protracted nature of the problem and constant expectations of changes that never materialize, it is surprising to note how few Abkhaz war refugees have applied for refugee status under the 1951 Convention. The complexity of their situation could not be fully examined by the Experts, but it was obvious that while probably most, if not all, would qualify for 1951 Refugee Convention status, they would, given their origin, integrate and rapidly find their place in Ukrainian society. It was also evident that the legal obstacles created by years of temporary measures which did not allow them to obtain proper residence permits, have effectively excluded them from integrating and developing their full potential in Ukraine.

7.2. Legislation and documents

7.2.1. Refugee documents and residence registration

The authorities issue to every refugee over the age of 16 a document (*Udostvoverenie bezhentsa*) upon recognition of refugee status. It is similar to the “internal passport” (identity document) of citizens but the refugee document has a different color cover, it is grey. The refugee document (referred to in the law as a “certificate”) has according to Article 14 of the refugee law a validity of one year and must be extended before its expiration date by the respective Migration Service.⁶⁴ Although this extension should be a purely administrative and rapidly accomplished act, one local Migration Service in a procedure referred to as a “short interview” used the opportunity to examine whether grounds to maintain refugee status continue. Consequently, and in view of the latitude given (*i.e.* the pertinent instruction allows the document to be withdrawn for a week) the refugee document is withdrawn under the guise of extending it during which time the refugee is provided with a temporary “attestation” in the form of a stamped photocopy of the old document.

A widespread lack of awareness of the rights a refugee document often means that the bearer cannot enjoy his/her rights fully (*e.g.* is treated like an ordinary foreigner), a situation which is aggravated by the limited validity of the refugee document and by the fact that it is frequently overlooked that every extension is a mere administrative procedure. Many everyday *démarches* which require the presentation of proper identification are thus rendered unnecessarily difficult and cumbersome for refugees: obtaining employment, a lease, banking transactions *etc.* A relic of past travel restrictions, the requirement to show an identity document simply to purchase a train ticket, results in higher expenses as the refugee is charged the price for “foreigners”.

62 For an analysis of the human rights situation including a chapter Asylum seekers and migration, see also *Report By The Commissioner For Human Rights, Mr Thomas Hammarberg, on his visit to Ukraine, 10 – 17 December 2006*, p. 24 ff; <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1190727&Site=CommDH&BackColorInternet=FEC65B&BackColorIntranet=FEC65B&BackColorLogged=FFC679>

63 For more detail see: *Исследование положения лиц, которые вынужденно покинули Автономную республику Абхазия (Грузия) и получили временные справки в Украине, но не смогли получить постоянный статус*. Аналитический доклад Анисимова Т., Бойкова О., Заяц Н. – Донецкий фонд социальной защиты и милосердия. Март – Май 2007 г.

64 Law Of Ukraine “On Refugees” as amended on 3.04.03 and 31.05.05

Some refugees claimed that police officers in the course of street checks routinely refuse to recognize the official document, a situation usually resolved with a small bribe. Frequently, the refugee document was not recognized by employers or banks as conferring rights akin to those of citizens. Several banks have provided credit to refugees (to those who can prove a degree of prosperity) but only for the duration of the refugee document as they perceive refugee status (and the permission to reside) to be limited to the date indicated in the refugee document.⁶⁵ Most refugees reported that they failed to qualify even for short term loans as some lending institutions, in violation of the law, did not recognize the refugee document at all. No known redress procedure is effective in this respect.

The obligation to extend the validity of the refugee document each year is an improvement on the past - it used to be once every three months. It nevertheless generates numerous and unnecessary problems that reduce chances of integration. The Experts understand the rationale of requiring annual renewal, *i.e.* to facilitate a degree of control by obliging the refugee to demonstrate his/her continued presence in the country. The one year validity, however, in reality leads to too many unwelcome consequences. *Inter alia*, this practice has at least in one Migration Service led to the unwarranted practice to consider cessation (or withdrawal) of refugee status every year. While obviously cessation of refugee status cannot be excluded at any point in time, the continued need for protection or otherwise, cannot be determined by the expiry date of the refugee document (Article 14 of the refugee law stipulates that *Refugee status in Ukraine shall be granted for the period of time during which the circumstances stipulated in paragraph 2 of article 1 hereof are in effect*, a reference to the reasons for which refugee status had been granted). The law regulates the withdrawal of refugee status in Articles 15 and 16 and requires a separate decision of the SCNM (and even then, such a decision would enter into force only after an appeal before a court).

In other words, while the expiration of the refugee document has no immediate bearing on the continued legal status of the holder (and dependants), a refugee is issued a document that is widely perceived as limiting his/her status to one year at a time. When the document expires or when it is not extended without delay, the person can no longer exercise a number of attendant rights.

To extend a refugee document the Migration Services require a refugee to present him/herself in person, to complete a form and to supply two photographs. The extension of the document utilizes pre-printed application forms and follows SCNM instruction no. 69 dated 9 September 2005 which provides *i.a.* that for the purpose of extension, the refugee document may be withdrawn for the maximum duration of 7 days. Few refugees have access to the text of the instruction no. 69 (there are no handouts, no copies posted visibly on notice boards) and challenging the procedure was considered futile. In this regard it should also be noted that asylum-seekers face even more burdensome requirements, and although some may await a decision for years, they must re-register on a monthly basis. (NOTE: while perhaps outside the strict remit of the LIP, the Experts noted that this procedure does not appear to be justified and inflicts considerable hardship on persons of concern, undermining confidence the authorities would like to enjoy).

Until the extension routine is completed, a photocopy of the document, sometimes adorned with a wet stamp (*spravka*), is given to refugees as a temporary replacement. This in effect temporarily deprives refugees of their basic form of identification, as the validity of the replacement photocopy is frequently questioned. Some refugees reported instances of harassment by police officers who did not recognize the photocopy as officially valid. Other refugees experienced problems and delays with their naturalization applications which had been suspended because the expiration of their refugee document occurred while their application was being processed. Without a proper document the refugee faces additional problems in obtaining employment, when attempting to make a banking transaction or when traveling within the country. The requirement to supply two photographs every year leads to extra expenditures and further delays. As the present practice generates so many perhaps unintended negative side-effects, it is neither understood nor appreciated by refugees. Some question why the documents are withdrawn at all (citizens need not extend their documents every year) but more importantly, why are they always perceived to be refugees only for one year. Some consider it only as another opportunity to be easily extorted.

When the Experts sought clarification it was said that some officials did not interpret valid rules properly. Cases when the extension procedure of the refugee document was used to review the situation in the country

65 Some refugees managed to get business development credits from the Nadra and Pravex banks (3,000 – 6,000 USD). Larger credits (*i.e.* for car or flat loans) are not granted as they require a longer repayment periods and the refugee document is valid for a maximum of 1 year. Many refugees are known to have their credit applications rejected due to their inability to demonstrate a sufficiently high income. Some African refugees managed to obtain small business development credits from the Aval and TAS bank (500 USD). Also these reject refugees if they apply for a credit several months before the expiration of their refugee document. Of the persons interviewed, 20 reported to have ever received bank credits, 12 of which as private entrepreneurs; another 77 did not attempt to apply.

of origin (to ascertain whether the individual's claim to refugee status remained valid) were attributed to over-zealousness. In 2006 several individuals were actually considered by the local Migration Services to no longer be in need of international protection and the central authority in Kyiv withdrew status. The refugees successfully appealed in the courts and such *ad hoc* reviews were discontinued. It is obvious that if such a practice were to repeat itself simply because the opportunity presented itself in connection with the extension of the refugee document, it would be unlikely to prove effective (if it takes months, years to adjudicate a case in the first instance, what sort of a review is feasible in a week?).

The registration of the place of residence is required of refugees as of citizens. Refugees obtain the residence registration on the basis of their refugee document and for the same duration (maximum 1 year). Unlike citizens, they are not required to submit proof of residence. Some rights (e.g. access to medical or access to employment offices) are legally contingent on residence registration. Given high rental costs and the reluctance of landlords to accept refugees as tenants (see under Housing) some refugees are induced to buy "rental permissions" from unscrupulous landlords, while actually living elsewhere; others give entirely fictitious addresses. In Kyiv and Odesa nearly one in two refugees does not live at the given address; in Kharkiv the situation is different, most live at the address they have reported.

Not living at the address indicated in the residence registration document constitutes an administrative offence; refugees are thus exposed to harassment and the threat of fines, all too often resolved on the spot by the payment of bribes. The use of fictitious addresses also means that refugees are not easy to locate for official business and communications.

In their discussion with the authorities, the Experts found that the problems of the documentation of refugees (refugee document and residence registration) were not clearly understood, when not dismissed outright. Some officials claimed that the replacement copy of the refugee document was perfectly sufficient, even for travel outside the immediate place of residence. The only problems that were acknowledged were that some refugees came for an extension without photos and that many came in the summer period (as a result of changing the law and extending the time limit from 3 months to a year on one date - hence documents always expire when staff take leave and it is more difficult to ensure timely processing). MoI officials perceived refugees as privileged in comparison to citizens who had to demonstrate proof of where they lived; refugees had the latitude to report a fictional address. At the time of their visit, the Experts also found that the central database of addresses of refugees was corrupted and unexploitable. To locate refugees for the purpose of interviews, the Experts had to rely mainly on information from refugee community leaders.

The practice of withdrawing the refugee document to extend it was discussed with Government officials at some length during the Gomel Seminar. The senior Government representative agreed that this was an aberration that had to be corrected and the Experts were assured that all authorities concerned would be instructed to desist from such a practice in the future and that refugees would be informed accordingly. In other regards the practice of annual extensions was to remain. As no confirmation documenting that such corrective action had been taken was communicated to the Experts, the relevant recommendations are retained.

| Table 7.2.1 | <i>Recommendations: Refugee document and residence registration</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|-------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Amend the Law on Refugees and the Decision of the SCNM no. 69 and establish the validity of refugee documents for a duration of several (preferably 5 years). In order to meet the Government's concern regarding the refugee's continued presence in the country, a provision that refugees report to the competent Migration Service once a year could be added; the failure to report in person could then trigger withdrawal of status procedures. The annual residence registration could remain unchanged. | G/HCR | |
| 2. | Ensure that the extension of the refugee document is a purely administrative act and that the process is completed without delay; extensions should not entail the withdrawal of the document and the issuing of replacement certificates. Instructions should be explicit that the extension of the refugee document does not trigger a review of the refugee status but serves to ascertain whether the refugee is physically present and still wishes to avail him/herself of refugee status. For extensions, dispense with requirement to present a photograph. | G | |

| | | | |
|----|--|---|---|
| 3. | Explicit instruction must be issued to all responsible authorities (notably police officers) to recognize the refugee document and respect attendant rights. | G | |
| 4. | Provide that refugees, or at least the most vulnerable, who cannot find appropriate accommodation in a legal manner, obtain a residence registration at a designated place, for example the Migration Department. To facilitate compliance with residence registration, serious consideration should be given to exempting landlords who offer accommodation to refugees from applicable taxes. | G | |
| 5. | In order to ensure that all persons and entities with which refugees interact, are aware of the rights of holders of a refugee document, the following note should be included in the document: <i>“The bearer of this document has the rights and responsibilities of a Ukrainian citizen with the exception of the right to vote, but including the right to work”</i> . | G | X |

7.2.2 Convention Travel Document

Refugees can apply for a Convention Travel Document (CTD) in compliance with international requirements. CTDs must be requested from and extended annually by the central authorities in Kyiv. This limited duration poses a problem as in practice the CTD's validity can be well under a year given that its issued for the validity of the refugee document and that the procedure for extension cannot be initiated simultaneously. Issuing visas into a document that has such a short life span is sometimes contrary to consular requirements of countries of destination. Extensions of the CTD are conducted in a manner that must confound any third country official who at first sight notices that the document has expired (the typed validity of the document is on the main page with no pre-printed space for extensions). Extensions are therefore “recorded” as best possible: on a free page, by hand, in Ukrainian and accompanied by a round stamp. The bona fide of such extensions is frequently questioned.

The Experts also received accounts that not even Ukrainian border guards sometimes recognize the locally issued CTD. Some refugees believe that the document is deficient as many countries do not issue visas to them, while in fact the real reasons for applications being rejected are restrictive admission policies. Off the record consular officials of several EU States confirmed that there is a fear that refugees would not return to Ukraine (an implicit recognition that their situation and level of integration remains precarious).

Ukraine has not availed itself of the option to ratify the European Convention on the abolition of visas for refugees (1960).

| <i>Table 7.2.2</i> | <i>Recommendations: Convention Travel Document</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | To facilitate procedures, refugees could be issued CTDs by the same authority that issues the Refugee document. | G | |
| 2. | Instruct Ukrainian border officials to honor CTDs. | G | |
| 3. | Extend validity of CTDs and issue it for at least 5 years or re-issue the CTD each year (in order to avoid the current practice of extending the document by a handwritten annotation in Ukrainian). | G | |
| 4. | Consider accession to the European Convention on the abolition of visas for refugees (1960). | G | |

7.3. Educational qualifications of refugees

Many refugees and naturalized persons have vocational or higher education. About half of the refugees interviewed have studied in the former Soviet Union, half in their country of origin. Nearly no one has work which corresponds to his/her educational qualifications.

Many cannot work in their profession as they do not have work experience and their studies were completed too many years ago. The most crucial reason for not working according to their qualification (e.g. doctor, agronomist, engineer, historian), is the fact that the salaries of such professions tend to be so low that the main breadwinner can

not afford to accept them. Many have also been told (e.g. by employment offices) that there are no suitable work opportunities for them as citizens are prioritized for those jobs or that such jobs are actually reserved for the citizens.

Some refugees insist on working in the area they prefer or feel qualified for and are reluctant to accept lesser jobs. While employment/positions reserved for citizens are very few (e.g. police, armed forces and specific government positions), latent discrimination (preferring citizens) combined with misconceptions (that refugees are not eligible for some professions - including those where no limitation exists, e.g. educator/teacher) serve to discourage those who would actually qualify.

Many refugees hold irrelevant or inadequate qualifications or cannot demonstrate sufficient fluency in Russian/Ukrainian. Not much has been done to improve their qualifications as adult re-qualification possibilities and language classes are few. These factors combined with high living costs (primarily for accommodation and various registrations), low salary scales (especially for persons with no employment record) lead to a widespread frustration/conviction that there is little point in even applying for jobs in line with the educational qualification (see also under Employment).

Few, if any refugees have educational certificates from their country of origin and even for those who may have them, there is no known practice/precedent for their recognition; e.g. the relevant body for recognition under the Ministry of Education and Science did not encounter cases of persons claiming to be refugees and trying to have their diplomas recognized.

Ukraine has signed the “*Convention on Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region*” (**Lisbon Recognition Convention, 1997**) and the recognition of foreign diplomas is governed by “*Regulations on recognition of foreign documents on education*” registered by the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine (30 September 2003). According to the regulation, an applicant is required to submit the original diploma, documents which should include information of grading system, studies subject itinerary, general weekly scope in class, number of study credits, practices and graduate works. In addition the applicant is required to submit a document issued by the educational authorities of the country proving the accreditation of the educational institute where he/she conducted the studies (which is usually an impossibility for a refugee).

The recognition procedure is for a fee. If a person studied in a country which has a bilateral agreement with Ukraine on recognition of diplomas, then the procedure is simpler and costs 300 UAH; if not, the procedure is more complicated and costs up to 960 UAH depending on the extent of involvement of different specialists into the process of recognition. In the case of refugees who may not always be able to provide all necessary documents, some requirements could be simplified or waived (e.g. by testing to verify level of education).⁶⁶

| <i>Table 7.3</i> | <i>Recommendations: Educational qualifications of refugees</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Clarify existing rules for recognition of foreign diplomas; verify that the procedure is carried out in accordance with international conventions and standards | G | |
| 2. | A detailed survey of the educational qualifications of refugees would be desirable. | G/IO | |
| 3. | Encourage/assist refugees who have diplomas from their country of origin, to pursue their formal recognition with Ministry of Education. | G/NGO/HCR | |
| 4. | Consider recognizing past education through supplementary courses that would equate them with locally provided education. | G | X |
| 5. | Implement positive measures that would provide refugees with the possibility to improve their educational/vocational skills. | G | X |

7.3.1. Primary and secondary education

Children attend primary and secondary school with no major difficulties and most refugee parents interviewed stated that children do well and that co-operation with teachers is smooth. Bullying of refugee children at school occurs and reflects a rather widespread rejection of foreigners. Lack of residence registration has on occasion been an obstacle to enrolment but normally such problems have been resolved. According to some parents’ views, teachers do not treat refugee children with sufficient understanding of their difficulties to cope with their new environment.

66 As with other cases of missing documentation a refugee should not be required to contact the authorities of his/her country of origin. The State Party to the 1951 Convention should apply Article 25 and replace to refugees such documents or certifications as would normally be delivered to aliens by or through their national authorities.

No children have been identified receiving extra support in language studies or in any other subject unless parents could pay (some refugee parents do not have resources to pay for extra coaching). The Experts found that the Ministry of Education and Science has not formulated specific instructions for schools concerning refugee children; no special programmes or guidelines to address the situation of refugee children that would allow them to catch up on curriculum requirements without cost have been foreseen.

While primary and secondary education are free of charge, many refugee families, like locals who are in a socially weak position, struggle with the regularly collected “voluntary” school payments for books, stationary, class repairs, school trips, social events *etc.*. Payments can amount to 100 USD per year per child. UNHCR implementing partners provide refugee children with school supplies and uniforms in Kyiv and in Odesa.⁶⁷

Proof of previous studies can be a problem for a refugee who cannot always provide documentary evidence that would attest to his/her academic record.

| <i>Table 7.3.1</i> | <i>Recommendations: Primary and secondary education</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Ministry of Education and Science should issue a guideline to school directors that would reinforce the principle that every child should attend school, irrespective of the status of the parents (e.g. incomplete formalities of registration); access to education should not be postponed for longer than 3 months. | G/HCR | |
| 2. | Ministry of Education and Science should establish guidelines on best practices in integrating children into regular classes. | G/IO | |
| 3. | Refugee children should be eligible for free extra tuition to allow them to catch up. | G | X |
| 4. | Assist secondary school graduates to prepare for University exam (allocate funds for extra preparatory lessons and/or support NGOs to run them). | G / I O / N G O / HCR | X |

7.3.2. Higher education

Refugees, theoretically, enjoy the same rights as citizens to enter tertiary education (a right not foreseen by the 1951 Convention). Entry into University is on the basis of a competitive exam. Superior grades qualify students for free education and a monthly scholarship; otherwise fees are charged for tuition; foreigners are charged at a higher rate.

In reality, refugees, despite successful completion of secondary schooling in Ukraine, are handicapped in meeting the high standards required to pass the University entrance competition. The Experts found only one student who had attained the grades required and had obtained free education. Those refugees who pass the entry exam are billed either like nationals (*cca.* 1,500 USD per year) or like foreigners (approximately double price compared to citizens).

Not all authorities in educational institutions are always aware of the rights connected with refugee status and especially of the fact that it entitles refugees to be treated equally with citizens. There are no guidelines issued by the Ministry to this effect. Refugees are often expected to pay for their studies as foreigners on the ground that they are not permanent residents. Refugee students face difficulties when proving their right to study as citizens and few, if any, have access to student loans. Some refugee students reported that they have had to negotiate their right to enter like a citizen with university authorities, starting from the secretary of the admission commission to the rector of the university. Some had simply failed in their negotiations or ran out of time to apply while doing so. One refugee student had been told that he could not apply on the same basis as nationals as in this case he would have to attend the military “Kathedra” and complete military service (although refugees are exempted from this obligation). He had therefore been advised to enroll as a foreigner.

Refugee students who would have qualified for entry into university were not well informed about the educational opportunities in Ukraine and no NGO had the know-how to advise them. Refugees tend to apply to most popular faculties where the competition and fees are very high. Not all were in a position to assess their chances correctly and most could not rely on their parents or acquaintances for knowledgeable advice. As a result, existing opportunities to study at less popular institutions offering relatively more places, are not exploited. Most refugees lack information about preparatory courses for which prices can be reasonable (400 – 600 USD for the 7 month course).

67 Annual budget for year 2007: 115,800 UAH (23,160 USD).

Few students qualify for loans/credit as these must be guaranteed by a person with sufficient income (usually parent/relative) or by collateral (property *etc.*). Favorable credit from banks is available only to citizens (foreigners with a residence permit can obtain bank credit but, in comparison with citizens, they pay higher interest rates).

| <i>Table</i> 7.3.2 | <i>Recommendations: Higher education</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Amend Higher Education Act (and relevant legislation) to bring it in line with the existing refugee law, in order to provide that refugees enjoy the same treatment as citizens. | G | |
| 2. | Provide for special dispensation to reduce or waive the fees for refugee students from low income families. The same may be done with regard to re-qualification programmes at universities, colleges or State educational institutions. | G | |
| 3. | Provide refugee students guidance in order to facilitate access to educational institutions that are nominally less “popular” and where the competition is not so hard (e.g. in provincial centres). | G | |
| 4. | Establish a scholarship scheme in co-operation with appropriate organizations to support the most talented refugee students to access higher education. | G/IO | X |
| 5. | Provide for a realistic refugee student credit scheme or equate them with citizens. | G | X |

7.4. Employment and employment services

7.4.1. General

Generating a regular and sufficiently high income (to pay for housing in particular) is probably the single greatest obstacle to refugees asserting their place in society. Those who do manage to earn a living rarely manage to save money and move up the social ladder. A few exceptional cases have been noted where refugees have managed to secure an income allowing them to purchase apartments, have their own cars and live rather comfortably. Most of the refugees interviewed however, felt trapped and destined to just scratch-out a meager living. Some live in quite deplorable poverty.

While by law refugees do not need special permission to be employed and enjoy the same right to work as citizens (see Article 43 of the Constitution, the “*Law on Employment*” and Article 20 of the Refugee Law), they are not in fact always treated equally, but rather as ordinary foreigners requiring work-permits. Few jobs are reserved for citizens (see the “*Law on Civil Service*” of 1993 which reserves certain jobs in Ministries or regional administrations but allows non-citizens to access “non-specialist” posts, *i.e.* State budget jobs like doctors and teachers). Refugees are nevertheless confronted with numerous obstacles, especially when they attempt to enter the labour market for the first time. Finding work in small towns is often considered more difficult, if only due to higher levels of prejudice. One typical obstacle is that the refugee document is valid for a maximum of one year and employers consider this to be an additional reason not to hire refugees.

The Experts found that refugees should be better counselled to accept that their position in society and the labour market cannot be equated with what they were used to in the country of origin. Refugees must be assisted/taught to start to build their career again, often in completely different fields. This means that refugees need more encouragement to accept even unappealing work in the beginning so as to improve their chances to get better work in the future.

The Experts have acquired much evidence that relying on statutory rights alone does not provide genuine equality to work. For a refugee to find gainful employment, the State cannot just remain passive, pro-active measures must be taken.

Generally in Ukraine unemployment levels are dropping and there are numerous new job openings. Salary levels, however, usually remain fairly low (at least the official ones) and competition for better paid jobs is considerable. Refugees find it difficult to compete with locals or Russian mother-tongue migrants for better paid or official jobs and prefer to work in markets, where they can earn their living somehow, employed officially or unofficially.

The Experts interviewed 60 persons in employment of whom 42 worked in markets as traders or loaders. 12 refugees work in UNHCR-sponsored jobs. A few entrepreneurs did not work in a market. Afghans mostly worked as traders and some have managed to build up substantial businesses (and apparently often assist their less fortunate countrymen). Most Africans work as loaders and day labourers. Recently some refugees have found more employment possibilities in the hospitality/entertainment sector (in restaurants as doormen or waiters, especially in the capital), which also offer possibilities of promotion and access to more responsible positions.

Most Afghan women interviewed stayed at home and took care of children or supported their husbands' business and lived rather isolated lives (they rarely participated in social life). Many of them said they would like to work but the majority were not aware of suitable job opportunities. Many suffered chronic health conditions that limit their access to jobs. Few were qualified to earn a living (some had benefited from sewing classes). While doing all that can be done for these refugee women, it will be important to focus on the second generation of women refugees to ensure them a dignified existence (including equal access to the labour market and equal pay for work done) and to develop their full potential.

| <i>Table 7.4.1</i> | <i>Recommendations: Employment General</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Organize periodic awareness campaigns (radio, TV, written media) to inform the public in general and employers in particular of refugee rights and of refugees' right to work (in most jobs). Such campaigns should also underline that xenophobic, discriminatory attitudes and practices are unacceptable. | G/NGO/ HCR | |
| 2. | Consider eliminating administrative requirements which hinder refugees' participation, especially in re-qualification courses. When State courses are not available, are for a fee, or when they are too intensive to allow the person to work at the same time, financial assistance should be considered in order to enable the person to pursue training, including in private institutions. | G | X |
| 3. | A concerted effort on the part of Government, UNHCR, NGOs and refugee community leaders must be made to increase refugees' knowledge of their rights and of their responsibilities in Ukraine. Particular attention must be given to assisting/guiding refugees in their demarches to enter the job market; provide access to media advertising vacancies, internet, accompany to potential employers, coaching to prepare for interviews, job application writing, CV drafting etc.. Better inform refugees of the legal, social and financial consequences of continued reliance on unofficial employment and stress the direct and indirect benefits of being legally employed. Identify the relatively few occupations for which refugees are NOT eligible (to assist refugees to access jobs for which they may be incorrectly considered illegible) and include such information in a leaflet (that could be entitled "How does a refugee find employment?"). | G/NGO/ HCR/R | X |
| 4. | Conduct a survey of the qualifications of unemployed refugees with a view of actively offering re-qualification training. Guide refugees to re-educate themselves to new professions; focus on emerging/in demand employment opportunities. | HCR/G/ NGO/R | X |
| 5. | Organize workshops or schemes for women refugees which take into account cultural and gender issues (e.g. to facilitate work for women that can be carried out from their home environment) to promote self-sufficiency and lead to more integration (improving language skills, drawing them into the local community). | G/NGO/ HCR/ IO/R | X |
| 6. | Attract support from international sources for employment to co-finance employment and re-qualification programmes etc.. | G/IO | X |

7.4.2 Employment offices

The Experts found that at central and local levels (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Employment Offices) little if any information was available regarding the actual situation of refugees in the labour market. The employment offices visited indicated that refugees were entitled to register as unemployed, but that few did. The Experts also found that there was a lot of space for misunderstanding and misinterpretation as the employment offices had not been systematically instructed how to deal with refugee clients and were not sufficiently aware of refugee rights (e.g. that the expiration of the refugee document did not signify a cessation of status and thus exclusion from the labour market; that as foreigners they are not automatically excluded from all government jobs; etc.). In one employment office, the Experts were informed that the refugees could visit the employment office, check the open vacancies and receive some preliminary counselling, but that they could not register as unemployed because they were considered foreigners who reside in country only temporarily. Most importantly, the failure of employment offices to register refugees meant that the latter were effectively deprived the services and benefits employment offices offer: job placement, re-education, subsidies for start-up entrepreneurs, unemployment benefits, etc..

The refugees interviewed held the view that employment offices were not for them because the jobs on offer carried minimal salaries while more qualified jobs were considered as reserved for citizens; and because, as often as not, their status as refugees was disregarded and they were informed that as foreigners they were not entitled to the service. The Experts found only one refugee who had been registered as unemployed and had been directed to a vocational course (i.e. accountancy). Furthermore, unemployment benefits generally do not cover living costs so that refugees, as well as citizens, prefer to work whenever they can rather than train themselves further.

Working at the market, officially or unofficially, is usually more profitable than other “regular” employment. Earning a living that would correspond to one’s professional skills is rather the exception than the rule. The Experts found cases where refugees who had managed to find regular employment and had actually contributed to tax revenues, pension funds and to social costs, they had not always derived any benefits there from. In other instances, some refugees officially employed in markets had tried to pay the pension costs but had been advised by the authorities that as foreigners, they would not be entitled to pensions later on, so that they gave up paying the pension contributions.

In order to pay/receive official payments like salaries and benefits and/or to conduct any other financial operations, one must have an Identification code (*identifikatsionnyi kod*), which is provided by the State tax administration. When applying for the code, one has to show one’s passport. Some refugees have had difficulties in obtaining the code as they had been considered as foreigners.

The unofficially employed, refugees and citizens alike, face conditions of considerable insecurity: they can be fired any time; they do not build up an employment record; as no social pension fund contributions have been paid, they are not eligible of any related benefits.

The interviews with refugees, NGOs and with the labour authorities, have led the Experts to the conclusion that employment offices did not play a significant role in employment of refugees; occasionally, they have participated in the projects funded by UNHCR partners, but otherwise they have remained inactive.

In one location UNHCR’s implementing partner was assisting refugees to find employment. The Experts were informed that prospective job opportunities advertised in a specially issued periodical had been selected in close co-operation with the local employment office by the NGO staff who ensured that suitable jobs were offered to refugees. The Experts then telephoned all employers whose positions had been “re-advertised” to inquire whether those positions were still available and whether the employer would consider a refugee applicant. None of the jobs on offer required prior qualification (e.g. courier, packer, loader, cleaner, bakery worker, assembler, operator in laundry). 39 advertisements were followed up: only 10 employers were ready to consider refugee applicants; 4 were employment agencies that were willing to find a job for a non-reimbursable advance fee (40 – 50 UAH); 4 vacancies had already been filled; 3 employers could not be reached and 7 stated either that they did not employ refugees because they did not want to have trouble with the authorities or that the position was reserved for citizens, or that they could not provide accommodation (which refugees are presumed to want), or that the employment of a refugee was subject to the presentation of work record/registration/medical certificate (or sanitary pass). One position required the applicant to work naked (a position of masseuse).

The Experts were told by the refugees that from their view point, this sort of assistance was of little help and for some it was actually insulting (“*look what they are offering us*”). One person was identified to have found employment through such advertising but rapidly lost the job. One Afghan woman had found a job as a cashier as a result of a “job fair” organised by the NGO and Government authority concerned, but even in her case she received a salary in an “envelope” (thus also unofficially).

Another employment project also counselled refugees (and asylum seekers). Its results, despite much good intent, were not impressive. Over the two year period reviewed, in the first year, of 166 beneficiaries, 11 found a job and 5 were guided to vocational training. In the second year, of 238 beneficiaries, 73 were interested in finding employment, 4 did and 3 started vocational training. The project implementers considered employing refugees an extremely demanding and thankless task - employers simply did not want to employ refugees (and of course unemployment generally remains high and salaries low).

With the exception of these two projects and although employment is a high priority problem, the Experts did not identify any other viable effort to assist refugees systematically to find work. Not enough has been done to assist job-seekers with CVs, to provide access the internet or to phones, to facilitate contacts with employers, to accompany refugees to their first job, to advise on how to prepare for an interview, to inform employers of refugees' rights. At the same time it was obvious that some refugees help other refugees.

The Experts reviewed several employment and re-qualification programmes run by NGOs (TV repairs, creation of a band and purchasing music instruments *etc.*). They could not find any evidence that the refugees who had attended had actually benefited in terms of using newly acquired skills to become self-sufficient (some refugees claimed that the training was either worthless or fictional, an opportunity for the trainers who pocketed hefty fees).

| <i>Table 7.4.2</i> | <i>Recommendations: Employment authorities</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Issue appropriate guidelines to employment offices staff to inform them of the situation of refugees and explain their rights, to stress the desirability of integrating refugees and the need to address the particular obstacles refugees might face in entering the labour market e.g. by specific counselling for refugees and targeted approaches to employers. | G | |
| 2. | Train specialists in employment offices to work with clients who have different cultural backgrounds and insufficient knowledge of the local labour market. Require the specialists to deal also with employers to increase the chances of refugees to be employed. Consider establishing a network of employment specialists conversant with the issues and who would demonstrate a multicultural attitude. Consider assisting refugees (e.g. assign "coaches/mentors") especially in finding the first job (i.e. counsel them and accompany them to employers to ensure the correct application of the labor law). | G/NGO/ HCR | |
| 3. | Guide refugees to the services of employment offices (rather than create parallel mechanisms) and other existing Government services, for instance, by publishing information brochures for refugees on how to access the assistance available. | G | X |
| 4. | Conduct a survey of unemployed refugees and their qualifications with a view to organizing appropriate re-qualification training. Actively encourage and assist refugees to re-educate themselves to new professions with a focus on emerging/in demand employment opportunities. | G/R/NGO/ IO | X |

7.4.3. Employers

Refugees' access to the labour market is theoretically equal to that of citizens, however, many employers either refuse foreigners, or are reluctant to hire refugees specifically. This reluctance appears to be due partly to a lack of knowledge of the applicable laws/rules (some believe that they need extra permissions, that they would unduly complicate their taxation obligations *etc.*). In this regard, the limited, one-year validity of refugee documents is a distinct disincentive to the official employment of refugees. Prejudice against foreigners (assumptions such as "they do not to want to work like locals") also contribute to barring refugees from employment.

Employers have the latitude to select their manpower and treat them as they wish. Unofficial employment is common amongst citizens and most frequent where refugees are concerned.

| <i>Table 7.4.3</i> | <i>Recommendations: Employers</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Ensure that employers are aware of the rights and responsibilities of refugees and of their own obligation not to discriminate. | G/NGO/ HCR | |
| 2. | Create a scheme/programme whereby employers would be assisted for a limited period of time if they hired refugees (e.g. lower taxes). | G | X |

7.4.4. Entrepreneurship

Most refugees have managed to earn a living somehow and do not rely on social support mechanisms or welfare benefits (from Government or UNHCR). Many are self-employed as small scale entrepreneurs and several are known to be reasonably established, managing serious business/trading operations.

Some of these entrepreneurs felt that their business was not developing as well as it could, due to bureaucratic obstacles or lack of travel documents (those in business would need to move abroad more freely). It is fairly easy to open up a small business/enterprise to employ yourself. Those who worked at markets were increasingly concerned that their future was limited as the era of deregulated sales was ending.

Some banks (e.g. Nadra bank and Procreditbank) provide credit to prosperous refugees but in most cases only for duration of the refugee document. Many refugees failed to obtain credit and customer-credit as the bankers do not recognize/accept the refugee document. Banks do not as a rule grant credit to those who cannot present a certificate of their earnings or to persons who lack solvent “guarantors”. While some refugees claimed that a guarantor must be also a citizen, others could not successfully navigate applicable bank procedures and obtain necessary permits. No one was found to be in a position to advise on feasible solutions.

| <i>Table 7.4.4</i> | <i>Recommendations: Entrepreneurship</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Given the complexity of existing rules, regulations and practices, conduct a study (with the assistance of international organizations) to shed light on obstacles, gaps and other problems that all persons (citizens, women, refugees, foreigners residing in country permanently) face when planning to start-up a business. The project should concentrate on small and medium size enterprises and present recommendations to simplify regulations and to facilitate their creation. | G/IO/EU | X |
| 2. | Ensure access to bank credit so that the lack of start-up capital is not the single greatest obstacle to becoming self-sufficient. | G | X |
| 3. | Publish brochures to provide refugees with better information on how to receive assistance from employment offices. | G/NGO | X |

7.5. Housing

The Experts found that housing, particularly in urban centers, poses enormous difficulties for citizens; for refugees however, it constitutes an even bigger problem and comparatively affects a much higher percentage of the population. It also represents a significant drain on their resources as rent is the largest item of expenditure for singles and families.

There is no Government funded accommodation designated for refugees or access to subsidized housing (except the temporary shelter in Odesa designed for asylum seekers where a handful of the most vulnerable refugees can stay for a short while). A facility to house asylum seekers in the Kyiv region has been under construction for the past four years and is nowhere near to being operational. No funds exist to alleviate even the most extreme shelter problems, although refugees are explicitly mentioned in the Regulations on access to temporary accommodation in hostels and dormitories (entered into force 1 January 2005). Article 7 of the Law on Refugees (regional Migration Services should facilitate the provision of housing to asylum seekers and refugees) has not been implemented. As the State has not provided accommodation for destitute refugees (except the few places in Odesa where authorities do allow some refugees to reside in the temporary accommodation facility) the right to shelter is largely illusory.

Few refugees own or have a title to an apartment and many have difficulty in finding appropriate accommodation officially (i.e. few landlords wish to be seen as renting in order to avoid taxes, many refuse foreigners altogether). Some refugees have referred to problems with the local police (*uchastkovij*) who either conduct unjustifiably frequent visits or who, in extreme cases, act in a way they interpret as attempts to keep a neighborhood “free of refugees” (or of asylum seekers or of certain categories of foreigners).

Many refugees live in substandard conditions and cannot afford anything better. Rents demanded from refugees are often higher than those paid by citizens. Most refugees have no alternative but to pay what landlords ask - on average, depending on the city, 200 – 400 USD rent for a one room flat of mediocre quality. Large families find it particularly difficult to house themselves. Some refugees share their accommodation with other individuals or families. The Experts found cases of more than 10 persons living in a one-room flat (overcrowding

is one reason for officially registering at a different/fictitious address). Refugees who are in mixed marriages sometimes live with their local relatives. Destitute elderly refugees cannot gain access to old persons homes; the Experts were appraised of a case where numerous UNHCR interventions with the authorities having failed, a geriatric woman has effectively been left homeless.

It was found to be common practice for most refugees (as well as locals) to have only unwritten rental agreements, as landlords do not always wish to declare their profits. Tenants therefore were not only in a very insecure position, fearing eviction at short notice, they also had difficulty in obtaining residence registration. This led refugees to live in one place while securing a bogus registration for a fee. “Buying” a registration is a costly affair - at least 200 USD per person - and is a substantial financial burden given that the residence registration has to be renewed annually. Naturalized refugees often find it even more difficult to register because the simplified registration requirement applicable to refugees no longer applies to them.

Given high rental and living costs, most refugee families can make no savings. Few economies can be made on their housing, which is usually exiguous and in poor condition; economies on food undermine their health. Shared, overcrowded accommodation, the proximity with the sick, with alcoholics, the lack of privacy, poor insulation and sanitation added to inadequate diets have lead to some quite deplorable social problems. These are all the more difficult to resolve as refugees, in order to cover their expenses, often opt and succeed to work unofficially. Even if they obtain more or less satisfactory salaries they hardly manage to make ends meet and any accident or serious health problem may mean that they loose their income ending up in debt.

A majority of the refugees, for good reason, converge on the capital and surrounding areas or on larger cities, where they find more work opportunities and some UNHCR related support (health services, financial assistance *etc.*). Also their ethnic communities in large cities are fairly strong and can provide some support to those who need immediate help.

Afghan community leaders in Odesa and Kharkiv have indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to rent land from the local authorities in the outskirts of the city in order to build their own houses. They have also considered partially funding the construction of a dormitory for the most vulnerable refugees. In Odesa 150 Afghan families have shown an interest in a long-term lease of land and taking credit to build houses. So far the negotiations are at an exploratory stage.

| <i>Table 7.5</i> | <i>Recommendations: Housing</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | A national integration policy must include provisions for housing both for newcomers and for existing, vulnerable refugee groups. Such provisions would aim to avoid the social problems associated with overcrowding and the congregation of refugee populations i.a. in the capital; and to enhance the capacity of local communities and refugees to integrate. Bearing in mind refugee rights, specifically the right to freedom of movement, locations could be identified where both proper, accessible housing and sufficient work opportunities would be available and to which refugees could be directed with appropriate support and assistance. | G | |
| 2. | Inform newcomers of locations which have accessible housing; encourage relocation to such areas by promoting/subsidized work and study opportunities; offer affordable/spacious housing to those who agree to move out from the capital. | G | X |
| 3. | For the more vulnerable refugee population (those who are always likely to remain dependent on State - the aged, the sick <i>etc.</i>) provide housing, especially in the capital; reserve or construct some social housing units/dormitories for this specific purpose in coordination with donors and other organizations (e.g. UNDP, UNESCO, World Bank, EU). | G/IO/R | X |
| 4. | In order provide access to affordable housing for the most vulnerable or marginalized groups of the entire society, consider carrying out locally specific surveys on housing and adapted housing solutions (e.g. land allocation, subsidized credit schemes) to serve as a basis for new affordable housing programmes for both refugees and other vulnerable or marginalized groups in the country and to attract the support of international organizations and bilateral donors. | G/HCR/R | X |

7.6. Social benefits and pensions

Refugees are guaranteed the same rights to social benefits as citizens by law, provided that they submit all necessary documents to the local social protection departments. The *Law on State Assistance to the Families with Children* (3 June 2004) mentions refugees explicitly. While the law *On State assistance to families with low income*” (3 February 2004) does not, its Article 3 does stipulate that families with a low income, permanently residing in Ukraine, have the right to State assistance.

Refugees are thus theoretically entitled to a number of social benefits (pregnancy allowance, nursing, single mother allowances, payments to families with three children and more, assistance to persons who do not have the right to a pension and to the disabled, assistance to families with a low income, widows *etc.*).

It was not always possible for the Experts to accurately ascertain which benefits refugees could effectively obtain and whether they actually received them. This was primarily due to the fact that social assistance is in the competency of numerous local authorities that do not monitor the situation of refugees. Furthermore, the central authorities are not always aware of prevailing practices and gaps in legislation continue to hinder access to some benefits which require permanent residence registration.

Few refugees receive occupational pensions. In some places refugees informed the Experts that they did not pay into pension funds because although they were now working in Ukraine legally, the authorities had informed them that as foreigners, they would not be entitled to pensions anyway. The explanation provided to the Experts by the authorities was that labor pensions for foreigners essentially hinge on bilateral agreements with countries of origin (Ukraine has such bilateral agreements mostly with CIS countries); consequently some refugees, even when they worked officially, were not included in pension schemes, did not contribute to them and hence could not benefit by them. The problem is compounded by the fact that most refugees work unofficially or are frequently unemployed and do not build-up a work record which would allow them to receive at least a minimum social security pension.

Some of UNHCR partner organizations have attempted to assist refugees to apply for various benefits. In cities where there are no UNHCR partner organizations, no one provides such assistance. Authorities, UNHCR partner organizations, locals and refugees informed the Experts that refugees consider some benefits so low and the process to obtain them so complicated, that it was simply not worth all the trouble. When the benefits are of a reasonable level (*e.g.* the child delivery allowance amounts to some 1,700 USD) the application process is exceedingly complex and includes home checks by social workers.

UNHCR partner organizations and refugees reported numerous difficulties in obtaining social benefits, not least because so many of authorities concerned did not recognize the refugee document and implied rights. The most common response refugees received was that as foreigners they were not entitled to benefits. Too often it was up to a refugee to inform the authorities about his/her rights; evidently the chances of succeeding to convince his/her interlocutors were not always the best. Some local authorities have refused to issue refugees the so called “certificate of family composition” which is required when applying for social benefits. The reason for the refusal has been that as they are registered in SDCIRNP, they are not eligible for the certificate. Refugees were also reluctant to contact the “Departments of Labor and Social Protection of the Population” because they were worried about reactions to their cramped (and unofficial) housing arrangements.

Overall, the Experts noted that access to social protection was cumbersome and lacking in transparency. Refugees were ill- or insufficiently informed; social workers and officials were not always very helpful, more intent on following bureaucratic procedures than driven by concerns for the social well being of their clients (for instance, showing little interest in assisting to overcome technicalities, *e.g.* the lack of documents). The authorities tend to observe rules and regulations strictly, but because social protection and labor laws have not been harmonized with the Refugee law, numerous rights that refugee should and could enjoy, remain out of reach. Evidently the situation is not rendered any easier by the fact that the Government cannot provide sufficient social security nets even for citizens.

In such circumstances, family ties, relatives and friends become extremely important. Such mechanisms can substitute/supplement public relief and cover needs in the area of caring for the elderly and the disabled, for children and for the sick; however they can also become a burden which further impedes productive activities and efforts to integrate. The Experts noted numerous cases of elderly refugees (or unemployed but potentially still productive parents) relying heavily on their children who became the main providers of the family, thereby compromising their education and chances to attain higher, appropriate qualifications.

UNHCR assistance is distributed through the implementing partners to the most vulnerable refugees (*e.g.* persons with health problems, elderly, pregnant and single women and families with children). Vulnerable

refugees, who do not have a safety net within their community, would have great difficulties to survive without the extra support provided by UNHCR. Normally UNHCR's implementing partner decides on how to distribute financial assistance by collective decisions. Committees take into consideration whether it is feasible for the refugee to receive government benefits, but that does not necessarily affect their decision.

| <i>Table 7.6</i> | <i>Recommendations: Social benefits and pensions</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Harmonize the law On State assistance to families with low income to ensure that refugees are included in the group of the most vulnerable population, who will receive support although they are not contributing the social insurance system. | G | |
| 2. | Counsel and assist refugees to access social benefits (notwithstanding the sometimes small amounts involved) on an equal basis with citizens; administrative requirements that cannot be met by refugees (e.g. providing a certain document from the country of origin to be eligible for a particular benefit) should be flexibly interpreted or be waived as appropriate. Special attention should be paid to maternity and child issues; pregnant refugee women and refugee families with children should enjoy the same rights to health care and maternity allowances/benefits as citizens. | G/NGO/ HCR | |
| 3. | Issue guidelines to local authorities, social workers, etc. to inform and raise awareness of the plight of refugees and of their rights so as to ensure that refugees are treated fairly, in a non-discriminatory manner and are not denied assistance and benefits for reasons over which they have no control. | G/HCR | |
| 4. | Train specialists of social protection offices to work with clients who have different cultural background and whose knowledge of Ukrainian society may be insufficient. Consider establishing a network of social protection specialists conversant with the issues and who would demonstrate a multicultural attitude. | G | X |
| 5. | Supplementary financial assistance from UNHCR should require a refugee to demonstrate that public relief support has been accessed and that there is still a need. | HCR | |
| 6. | Publish brochures for refugees to provide them with better information on how to access assistance from the different branches of social protection offices. | G | X |

7.7. Health

The Constitution guarantees citizens free health care and Article 20 of the Refugee law stipulates equal rights to free of charge medical care, treatment and insurance as for citizens. In reality, patients (including citizens) must pay not only for medicines but also for some services (it is almost impossible to get medical treatment in polyclinics and hospitals without paying "voluntary contributions" to medical staff). This makes medical treatment a costly affair. On occasion, refugees are perceived as foreigners, thus rich and in a position to pay more. Many refugees' state of health has deteriorated as a result of cramped and poor living conditions.

UNHCR, through its implementing partners, meets some of the refugees' medical costs, however, its resources are insufficient to meet more than very basic needs (the costs of expensive operations cannot be met). The sum reserved by UNHCR for the medical costs in Odesa is 23,000 USD for year 2007 and in Kyiv 92,000 USD. Refugees who do not find themselves close to a UNHCR financed service may be severely disadvantaged. Some medical conditions cannot be treated locally at all and can only be addressed by resettlement to a third country.

In Kyiv and Odesa, UNHCR implementing partners have special agreements with hospitals, which provide basic medical treatments and medicaments to refugees free of charge. The implementing partners and hospital staff reported that the financial resources were insufficient and not all costs could be covered. For example, some diseases, which required special treatment, could easily exhaust their entire annual budget. Hospitals were also struggling with delayed funding from UNHCR implementing partners. Many respondents complained about the services and medicines provided by the partner hospitals. Some refugees preferred to pay and go to local polyclinics and hospitals.

Many refugees are survivors of traumas and injuries caused by war and other forms of violence. UNHCR's implementing partner in Kyiv specialises in providing support to torture victims and assists refugees with socio-psychological counselling. Refugees who suffer from TB benefit from free treatment but government TB programmes cover only very basic medicines; some treatments, supplementary medicines, adapted and proper diets as well as hospitalization have to be borne by the individual. UNHCR covers some supplementary costs for TB treatments and partner organizations distribute food and hygiene packages.

Medical services and especially reimbursement of the medicines funded by UNHCR are reasons for some refugees not to apply for citizenship because then they would lose their rights to these refugee specific services.

| <i>Table 7.7</i> | <i>Recommendations: Health</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | UNHCR with its partners should provide their assistance and technical support when the State has good cause not to be in a position to assist refugees. Such services could be in the field of psycho-social counselling for traumatized refugees and victims of torture and violence. As there is little such expertise in the country at the moment, it would be desirable to launch a special joint project through a local NGO or an international organization (e.g. the UN Voluntary fund for torture victims and local medical establishments). | HCR | X |
| 2. | As long as citizens must also pay for their medicines, it would be desirable to develop a supplementary programme to cover costs for the most vulnerable groups of the population. Vulnerable refugees should be included to this category. | G | X |

7.8. Legal counselling and capacity of NGOs

As indicated earlier, it was found that while in theory Migration Services were supposed to implement integration measures, in reality they concentrated on procedural matters (RSD, issuance and extension of refugee documents, cooperation with other authorities including local MOI offices that register refugees *etc.*). The SDCIRNP was responsible for registration of refugees under the Ministry of Interior, but its activities were not always conducted with a rights based approach. Dilatoriness in following the already lengthy procedures, rudeness and demands for bribes were prominent in the expression of many refugees' dissatisfaction. The Experts, however, also noted numerous positive exceptions.

Given that the authorities are not involved systematically in any integration measures, the Experts found that UNHCR's implementing partners were often the only providers of integration actions/services. They have operated in a few large cities (where most refugees live), but it was self-evident that less than 10 NGOs could not respond adequately to all pressing needs of the refugee population, especially when social and legal problems remain considerable. NGOs worked on tight budgets that are subject to the availability of funding and faced many additional obstacles (lack of training, a high turn-over of staff, burn-out due to the pressures involved, low/uncompetitive salaries, heavy workloads and expectation not commensurate to resources/skills *etc.*). Additionally NGOs were not always perceived as partners by the authorities, nor did they receive any Government funding, support or encouragement.

In the main, NGOs have concentrated on securing the basic living conditions for refugees (cash assistance, food and hygiene packs, medical services and medicines). In addition to undertaking "life sustaining" measures, some have organized language courses, employment projects including vocational training and supported cultural events for refugees. Their past efforts to promote integration have alleviated some of the most acute problems faced by refugees, but have not permitted to establish sustainable mechanisms for the newly arrived to integrate into their host society.

Counselling on key issues has not always been of the standard required to adequately guide refugees through complex procedures. The Experts found few printed materials (leaflets or brochures) to correctly inform refugees at least on elementary issues and none in a suitable language. All too frequently refugees based their decisions on incomplete or conflicting information.

In some areas of high refugee concentration (e.g. Kharkiv), refugees did not have access to reliable legal counselling or to advice on integration. In other regions some refugees considered that legal representation was of poor quality: "*the lawyers are not professional enough to defend the refugees in courts properly*" or "*the lawyer*

promised to assist and inform me of the results, but never called me back”. Few refugees can afford to retain the services of lawyers. A law on free legal aid is currently under consideration.

Some refugees expressed dissatisfaction with and a lack of understanding of the decision-making process adopted in the selection of beneficiaries and the distribution of UNHCR material assistance. Some claimed that implementing partners were not impartial and even-handed. The Experts found that although eligibility rules did exist, refugees were not always informed about applicable criteria. This increased the potential for rumors/dissatisfaction and limited the efficacy of programmes. Some refugees openly wondered how UNHCR monitored projects and could “*tolerate abuse*”.

Projects that would address housing issues, job placement, access to credit or to higher education or re-qualification were too few and inefficient.

| <i>Table 7.8</i> | <i>Recommendations: Legal counselling and capacity of NGOs</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Strengthen the professional skills of lawyers in human rights and refugee law by providing training, having contacts/joint projects with other European refugee lawyers, establishing contacts and mentor relationships with qualified lawyers/law firms in the country and sub-region. | G/HCR/NGO | X |
| 2. | Strengthen the capacity of NGOs and their staff working with refugees to build-up their knowledge and expertise through training programmes, twinning programmes etc.; provide additional support on complex issues, including gender related matters; ensure that NGO staff are properly remunerated. | HCR/IO | X |
| 3. | Devote more attention to legal counselling; focus resources on high impact issues and precedent-setting cases that would empower refugees and pave the way for them to assume their rights. | HCR/NGO | X |
| 4. | Cooperation between government and civil society can facilitate and enhance integration initiatives. The Government (at central and local levels) and NGOs should jointly elaborate mechanisms allowing such cooperation to take place and to develop. | G/NGO/R | |
| 5. | Encourage refugees to attend training courses and to make them a feasible proposition. | G/NGO/HCR | |
| 6. | Adopt a law on free legal aid for vulnerable categories of people, including refugees. | G | |
| 7. | Strengthen information policies for refugees and provide them with more guidance in a language they understand. | G/NGO/HCR/R | |

7.9. Naturalization procedures/citizenship

Many refugees continue to aspire to acquire full civic rights through naturalization. Much to its credit, Ukraine, has naturalized nearly 1,000 refugees. The Experts, however, also noted several cases of refugees whose attempts to apply for citizenship took years for no apparent good reason (instead of the prescribed 6 months, maximum 1 year).

A high percentage (some 40%) of the refugees interviewed stated that they no longer considered the acquisition of Ukrainian citizenship to be in their best interest. Many reported that the process was unpredictable, discriminatory and completely lacked transparency. Some had been advised not to apply for citizenship but for permanent residence permits. The problems experienced were diverse: difficulty in submitting the file with the appropriate authority (*pasportnij stol*); repeated requests for additional documents and/or need to update documents (notably expired refugee document); changes in procedures/rules; delays or failure to advise applicants in a timely manner; rejections of the application on unclear grounds, *etc.*. The Experts recorded numerous statements confirming a pattern where some local SDCIRNP offices imposed additional/unlawful conditions/requirements on the applicant that appeared to have no purpose other than to frustrate the process. Most applicants received no counselling or relevant information, even from UNHCR legal partners, other than “*to call back in a few months time*”. At the same time, the problems were sometimes of a local nature: the Experts noted that quite a few refugees obtained citizenship with little or no difficulty.

One basic issue was that according to current practices, a refugee rarely received confirmation (a receipt) that the application had been lodged (even when applicants explicitly requested such confirmation). This led

to many irregular situations and made it virtually impossible to track an application's progress. Many refugees claimed that their files were repeatedly lost and had to be resubmitted, while some stated that they had been bluntly turned away as ineligible because of the color of their skin. The Experts were glad to note that the supervisory authorities were aware of the need to introduce improvements to the process and that in several cases corrective action had been in fact taken.⁶⁸

One of the other problems noted by the Experts was the degree of uncertainty as to criteria to be met by refugees to obtain citizenship. Some refugees obtained certificates confirming their knowledge of the Ukrainian language without difficulty, while others had to demonstrate considerable fluency. Some managed to obtain certificates without knowing Ukrainian at all and when their knowledge was randomly tested, their application was rejected. Others had been asked questions on the Ukrainian Constitution such as “*what Article deals with labor questions*” which most Ukrainians, save constitutional lawyers, would not have been able to answer. The Experts did not meet any refugee who had undergone specific language training, nor was anyone aware of the advisability of doing so.

Hence, while naturalization procedures as stipulated in the law can be deemed liberal, straightforward, with the documentary burden on refugees not overtly demanding, the lack of transparency of the process and the absence of rudimentary counselling have given rise to much difficulty. Where guidelines existed, they were not available to refugees. The Experts met with a number of lawyers working for UNHCR legal projects, but none actually had any experience or solutions to the problem; given the need to prioritize, they usually focused on assistance to asylum-seekers during the asylum procedure.

| <i>Table 7.9</i> | <i>Recommendations: Naturalization procedures/citizenship</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Issue and publish clear and transparent procedures to be followed by the authorities on the one hand and by applicants (refugees) on the other, so that applications will be dealt with in a predictable and verifiable manner, e.g. the receiving authority records the submission of an application and issues written confirmation thereof; on the basis of one official checklist of required documents, confirms receipt of the documents submitted by applicants; records successive administrative steps; communicate with the refugee by registered mail (before a file is closed on the grounds that it has been abandoned etc.). In particular, the expiration of the refugee document in the course of the processing of the application, should not lead to delays, to a suspension of the procedure or to requests for additional documentation from the applicant. Avenues of redress should exist in the event of loss or failures to follow the prescribed procedure. | G | |
| 2. | Ensure that existing guidelines are posted and available also to refugees and that specifically drafted brochures exist for applicants, also in Ukrainian and that applicants receive qualified legal support (e.g. advising refugees how to prepare for language test, where and how to obtain required documents, who can be contacted in case of difficulty, expected duration of process and time-limits involved). | G | |
| 3. | Establish (and give applicants the opportunity to attend) classes in civic training, familiarization in Ukrainian culture, preferably combined with language tuition and based on a common curriculum. | G | X |
| 4. | Refer and counsel refugees to undertake language training in Ukrainian. | G/HCR/NGO | X |
| 5. | UNHCR should follow-up with appropriate authorities where irregularities are reported by refugees attempting to naturalize. NGOs should be trained to provide appropriate guidance and support in the naturalization process. | G/HCR/NGO | |
| 6. | Consider naturalization as the most appropriate durable solution for those Abkhaz “war refugees” who wish to settle permanently. | G/HCR | |

⁶⁸ The Experts reported a number of cases related to them by refugees in Kharkiv and Odesa to UNHCR for follow-up (deficient procedures or when waiting times were much in excess of the norm etc.). The response was serious and prompt: several cases were reviewed by the respective supervisory authority, including the Presidential administration, and resolved to the full satisfaction of those who lodged the complaint.

7.10. Local community relations

The Experts are concerned that a significant number of refugees (in fact the majority of those interviewed) experienced latent and overt hostility from the local community. Many refugees had personally been subjected to repeated, racially motivated insults and attacks and/or knew relatives, friends, neighbors who had been ill-treated. Relatively few believed that the police investigated such incidents or would effectively protect their rights and their physical integrity. Those who had faced hostile behavior believed that it was not exceptional and many lived in fear of being attacked. Those refugees who had suffered from serious manifestations of xenophobia, believed that the general atmosphere towards “the colored” had deteriorated and that perpetrators enjoyed impunity. A high percentage of refugees who had been in contact with the police have stated that they had not been treated with respect.

Many refugees also stated that they had Ukrainian friends. Most refugees try to keep up relations with their own ethnic communities (e.g. to celebrate national holidays, run “Sunday schools”, religious activities, assisting each other). In some locations ethnic refugee communities splinter; in others they are strong enough to assist destitute countrymen, find emergency shelter, day or short term employment *etc.*. Many refugees with health problems survive thanks to the assistance of the wealthier members of the community.

Few local authorities and officials were found to adopt open, positive attitudes towards foreigners and refugees or to consider that refugees could/would usefully contribute to society; some considered refugees with suspicion as to their motives for coming to Ukraine. The Experts were not informed of any Government sponsored public awareness programmes or campaigns to promote tolerance and combat discrimination and xenophobia.

| <i>Table 7.10</i> | <i>Recommendations: Local community relations</i> | <i>Implementation</i> | <i>Funds</i> |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | The Government in co-operation with other relevant actors (e.g. UNHCR, NGOs, refugee communities) should actively support policies that promote tolerant attitudes towards foreigners in general and refugees in particular. Specific public awareness activities should be undertaken to explain the reasons why Ukraine hosts and assists refugees and how much the international community contributes. | G/NGO/ HCR | X |
| 2. | Government, local officials and police should receive systematic training on fundamental human rights principles and how to fulfill their duties in a non-discriminatory fashion; such training will not only be of benefit to refugees and other disadvantaged communities, but to that of society as a whole. | G/HCR/IO/ NGO | X |

8. General conclusion

At the close of this study, as they submit their findings and recommendations to their sponsors, to governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and to refugee communities in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, the Experts would particularly draw attention to the following:

Much has been achieved in all three countries in creating asylum systems that largely comply with international standards. A legislative framework has allowed the functioning of dedicated refugee authorities. Government staff have acquired new qualifications and civic initiatives have been launched to assist refugees. The space for asylum has been expanded and many individuals now enjoy protection from persecution suffered in their countries of origin. Many refugees have found new homes and are managing to establish themselves in their host societies. Those who have found regular employment contribute, in no small manner, to government revenues. New capacities have emerged in civil society in each country, as a number of national non governmental organizations have provided crucial social and legal support to refugees. Over the years, the efforts of the three countries and of the refugees they have recognized have been encouraged and supported by international organizations, notably by UNHCR.

Notwithstanding these remarkable achievements however, many problems remain. While some refugees have integrated and assumed the rights and obligations of citizenship, too many continue to face serious obstacles in their daily lives. While the legislative basis of asylum has been established, it needs to be perfected further and harmonized with social and labour legislations to be fully effective in practice. While NGOs have played a vital role in assisting refugees, largely on the basis of the enthusiasm and generosity of their staff, supported by external funding, that role has not been sufficiently recognized or backed by governments. Development opportunities benefiting refugees and nationals alike, which would normally arise from a mutually supportive interaction between civil society organizations and government, have thus remained unexplored. While new capacities have emerged in government and in civil society, these remain fragile and need to be consolidated. It has not hitherto been fully understood that unless the institution of asylum is mainstreamed and provides for the longer term integration of refugees, that institution itself could falter and fail. As a consequence, while structures have been created and financed to administer the recognition of persons in need of protection, the Governments' responsibility has not been engaged across the board and international funding, which remains necessary, cannot be put to optimal use.

The discussions that took place at the Gomel Seminar and the recognition by participants that the effective integration of refugees into the host societies, sooner rather than later, is not only in the best interest of the Governments of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, but also in that of the international community, constitutes a significant turning point. The commissioning of the present report must be seen as a sign of the political will and commitment to take the necessary measures that will make local durable solutions a viable reality.

Bearing in mind the socio-economic situation in the three countries concerned, having examined their legislative frameworks and closely consulted with all the stakeholders, the Experts have formulated a series of recommendations based on best practice and on lessons learnt from other recent signatories to the 1951 Convention in similar circumstances. Their objective is not only to resolve existing problems, but also to lay the ground for sustainable and comprehensive asylum practices comprehensible to all concerned, including to the native population, that will ensure newcomers the possibility and means to assume a dignified place in the host society and to actively contribute to its prosperity.

Each Government needs to formulate a cogent strategy that will be an integral part of their national migration plans and give itself the budgetary means to implement it. Lacunae in laws and the harmonization of legislation, implementing decrees and practice must be addressed. Systematic measures need to be taken to inform national administrations and local authorities of the rights of refugees in each country and to ensure that these rights can effectively be exercised. Determined, pro-active and comprehensive efforts must be made to ensure that refugees know and understand their obligations and their rights in the country of asylum on the one hand and, on the other, to educate host populations, to systematically combat xenophobia and to promote non-discriminatory practices.

A number of the measures recommended by the Experts will require a redirection and redistribution of existing governmental human and financial resources, rather than significant additional financial commitments. It is evident however, that the willingness of the three Governments to undertake the recommended transformations also requires continued active, practical and effective support. The Experts therefore hope that where additional resources for integration will be required, the international community, including the EU and UN agencies will rise to the challenge.

Questionnaire for Interviews

QUESTIONNAIRE

CONFIDENTIAL

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS PREPARED FOR THE LOCAL INTEGRATION PROJECT, WHICH WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN UKRAINE, MOLDOVA AND BELARUS IN SUMMER 2007. WITH THE HELP OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE, THE PROJECT STAFF WILL INTERVIEW THE REFUGEES IN ORDER TO PERCEIVE THEIR PRESENT SITUATION IN EACH COUNTRY. GATHERED INFORMATION WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN DRAFTING FINAL REPORT OF THE PROJECT.

INTERVIEWS ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND REFUGEES WILL BE INTERVIEWED ANONYMOUSLY.

NUMBER OF INTERVIEW: UKRAINE №

MOLDOVA №

BELARUS №

INTERVIEWER: _____

PLACE AND DATE OF THE INTERVIEW: _____

1. Basic information

1.1. Sex: Male Female1.2. Age: 10 – 17 years 18 – 28 years 29 – 38 years 39 – 48 years 49 – 58 years Over 59 years1.3. Marital status: Single Married, no children Married, with children nr: Single parent Widow Mixed marriage

1.4. Country of origin: _____

 Urban Rural

1.5. Year of arrival to the country:

 2006 2005 2004 1995 - 2000 2003 2002 2001 before 1995

1.6. Refugee status:

 Recognised in year: _____ In process, application submitted in year: _____ Any other, please specify _____

1.7. Which of the following documents you have:

 CTD Driving licence Stateless Residence registration Residence permit Work permit Passport (Ukrainian/ Moldovan/ Belarusian) Valid passport, country of your origin Other, please specify _____

1.8. Family members residing in the present country:

 None Spouse Children

1.9. Family members residing in the country of origin:

- None Spouse Children

1.10. Family reunification:

- Not necessary In process Desirable Don't know
 Applied but no result

2. Language skills

2.1. Mother tongue: _____

2.2. Ability to read and write mother tongue:

- Yes No

2.3. Spouse can read and write his/her mother tongue:

- Yes No Not applicable

2.4. Children can read and write their mother tongue:

- Yes No Not applicable

2.5. Any other language skills:

- Russian, level: good some
 Ukrainian, level: good some
 Romanian, level: good some
 Belarusian, level: good some
 Any other, specify: _____ good some

2.6. Other language skills of the spouse:

- Russian, level: good some
 Ukrainian, level: good some
 Romanian, level: good some
 Belarusian, level: good some
 Any other, specify: _____ good some

2.7. Other language skills of the children:

- Russian, level: good some
 Ukrainian, level: good some
 Romanian, level: good some
 Belarusian, level: good some
 Any other, specify: _____ good some

2.8. In case you need interpreting when dealing with the authorities, who interprets for you:

- Professional interpreter, who has been hired by the authority
 One of the authorities, who knows the same language as me
 My friend, who knows the language
 My family members, for instance my children
 Representative of NGO, for example lawyer
 No interpretation needed

2.9. Assess your present situation, how well you/ your family manage in this country with the language skills you/ your family members have:

- Very well Reasonably well With problems Not at all

3. Education and employment situation

3.1. Basic education:

- None Primary school Secondary school High School
 Vocational education University degree
 Studies suspended, specify _____

3.2. (Main) profession: _____ No profession

3.3. Working years in the profession:

- None 1 – 3 years 4 – 9 years 10 years or more

3.4. Do you have documents of your education:

- Yes No

3.5. Is your education/ diploma recognised in this country:

- Yes No Don't know Not applicable

3.6. Documentation of employment record exist:

- Yes No

3.7. Present employment situation:

- Unemployed
 Part-time, not corresponding professional skills legal informal
 Part-time, corresponding professional skills legal informal
 Full-time, not corresponding professional skills legal informal
 Full-time, corresponding professional skills legal informal
 Something else, please specify _____

3.8. Have you visited employment office:

- Yes No

3.9. If yes, what kind of services you received:

- None Registration Unemployment benefit
 Counselling Work placement Paid work
 Training Not applicable

3.10. Do you have a work permit:

- Yes No

3.11. If you have applied work permit, what was the procedure like:

- Normal Complicated High-priced
 Lengthy Pending Not applicable

3.12. If you had difficulties in obtaining your work permit, please describe:

3.13. If you are employed by an other person, how is your salary paid:

- In cash In bank Not applicable

3.14. Do you get the same salary as the local people for the same work:

- Yes No Don't know Not applicable

3.15. How much you get salary per month:

- Under 100 USD 100 – 150 USD Over 400 USD
 150 – 200 USD 200 - 400 USD
 Don't get paid
 If you get paid daily, how much do you earn per day? _____

3.16. What kind of payments are deducted from your salary:

- Taxes Pension costs Insurance
 Other None Not applicable

3.17. Do you have savings or investments:

- Yes No

3.18. Can you lay aside any of your salary:

- Yes No

3.19. Do you have debts?

- Yes No

3.20. If you need credit, where do you turn:

- Circle of acquaintances Legal entity, for example bank Don't know

3.21. What is the biggest problem concerning your employment at the moment (if any)?

3.22. Plans and wishes of the future employment:

4. Self-employment

4.1. Have you experience of being entrepreneur:

- Yes No

4.2. Have you considered setting up your own enterprise in this country:

- Yes No (If NO, go to question nr 4.7.)

4.3. In what branch you have planned to establish / are running your business?

- Trade/ retail
- Restaurant/ café
- Import/ export
- Technology/ information technology
- Construction
- Tourism
- Health
- Translation/ interpretation
- Agriculture
- Carpentry/ Handicraft
- Other _____
- Not applicable

4.4. Did you face any of the following difficulties when trying to establish own business:

- Lack of personal documents hindered the effort
- National regulations prohibits foreigners to establish their own business
- Lack of information and counseling
- Lack of initial capital
- Lack of capital to pay for permit
- Something else, please specify _____
- Not applicable

4.5. In order to set up your own business, what would you need most:

- Assistance in overcoming technicalities
- Counseling on local business conventions
- Initial capital
- Something else, please specify _____
- Not applicable

4.6. If you are running your own business, please describe the difficulties you have faced (if any):

- Interference of police
- Interference of other authorities
- Request of bribes
- Financial problems
- Problems with licenses and certificates
- No knowledge & skills to administrate business
- Competition
- Other _____
- None
- Not applicable

4.7. What kind of activities you have practised in order to earn an income:

- Retailing products in the street
- Growing vegetables and selling them
- Attending seasonal work in the countryside
- Receiving minor occasional assignments (for example sewing, renovation, repair)
- Something else, please specify _____
- Not applicable

4.8. Do you own/ have an access to the following means/ tools, which would ease your employment opportunities:

- Telephone
- Mobile
- Computer
- Driving licence
- Car
- Any other, please specify: _____
- None

5. Schooling

5.1. I have school age children, who attend school: (if NO, go to question nr 6.1.)

- Yes
- No

5.2. Children don't attend school because:

- They lack personal documents
- No resources to pay the school fees or provide children with books etc.
- Children don't understand anything because they don't get any extra support
- Children are bullied at school
- Children have to work
- Girls are needed at home to perform household duties
- Fear for security
- Other, please specify _____
- Not applicable

5.3. What kind of payments the school collects from you:

- Term fee
- Material costs of books, copies, stationary
- Other, please specify _____
- Not applicable

5.4. Have your children faced serious difficulties (bullying, learning problems etc.) at school:

- Yes
- No

5.5. Have you been in contacts with the teacher or any other member of the school staff:

- Yes
- No

5.6. If yes, please describe your experience:

- Normal
- Positive
- Negative
- Mixed
- None
- Not applicable

5.7. Have your children received any special support (for example in language studies) at school:

- Yes
- No

5.8. How do your children compare to locals?

- Worse results
- The same results
- Better results

6. Accommodation

6.1. Describe your housing circumstances, where do you live, with whom and what is the flat like:

6.1.1. Type of housing:

- Refugee Centre Flat Dormitory House

6.1.2. Number of rooms (kitchen etc. not included):

- 1 room 2 rooms 3 rooms 4 rooms more

6.1.3. Number of persons sharing the housing (the interviewee included):

- 1 2 3 4 5 6
 7 8 9 10 more

6.1.4. Rent:

- None Under 50 USD 50 – 100 USD
 101 - 200 USD 201 - 300 USD 301 – 400 USD
 401 – 500 USD Over 500 USD

6.1.5. I'm living in the flat for what I have registration:

- Yes No

6.2. Do you have a rental agreement with the landlord:

- Yes No Not applicable

6.3. Are you a subtenant in the flat you live:

- Yes No Not applicable

6.4. How do you pay the rent (communal payments excluded):

- In cash Through bank Not applicable

6.5. Do you feel safe in your flat:

- Yes No Mixed feelings

6.6. Are you satisfied with your flat:

- Yes No, why not? _____

6.7. In order to improve your accommodation conditions, would you like to/ are you planning to move some other place/ suburb/ city:

- Yes No

7. Health and Social Services

7.1. Please, assess your state of health:

- Excellent Good Minor problems Serious problems

7.2. ME or my family member(s) has:

- Acute health problems (cancer, heart illness etc.), which require treatment
- Other constant illnesses and/ or complaints, which complicate daily life
- Disability
- Mental problems
- Dietary problems
- Subsistence abuse
- None

7.3. Have you or your family member visited the local public health centre (or hospital):

- Yes No (if NO, go to question nr 7.7.)

7.4. If yes, what kind of services you received:

- None Counselling Treatment for the complaints

7.5. Were you satisfied with the provided health care services:

- Yes No

7.6. Did you face any of the following in the health care centre:

- I was informed that I'm not entitled to the medical services
- I didn't get services because I could not pay for them
- I didn't have common language with the medical staff
- We didn't attain mutual understanding of my problems with the medical staff
- I was not advised how to go further in solving my health problems
- I can't afford medicine or treatments
- None

7.7. In case of urgent medical help, where to you turn:

- Local public health care centre (or hospital)
- Refugees' health care centre run by project/ NGO/ UNHCR
- Circle of acquaintances
- No place to turn/ don't know

7.8. If you are not earning your living by working, who provides you financial or material support:

- Local authorities UNHCR NGO/ Charity organisation
- Circle of acquaintances Selling my ownership Remittance from abroad
- No one

7.9. In case you have problems in housing, family relations or livelihood where to you turn:

- Local authorities/ Local public social service
- Support centre for refugees run by project/ NGO/ UNHCR
- Circle of acquaintances
- No place to turn/ don't know
- So far I haven't had any problems

8. Local Community Relations

8.1. Have you/ your family members experienced hostile behaving in the local community:

- Yes No

8.2. Have you been in contacts with the local police:

- Yes No

8.3. How the police treated you:

- With respect Without respect Mixed Not applicable

8.4. Could you turn to your local neighbours in case you would need urgent help:

- Yes No

8.5. Do you have any local friends:

- Yes No

8.6. Please estimate how large is your ethnic community in the region you live:

- I'm the only one in this region (If yes, go to question nr 8.10.)
 Less than 10 persons
 10 – 40 persons
 More than 50 persons
 Don't know

8.7. Do you co-operate with them:

- Yes No

8.8. Is the community organised (leader, regular meetings etc.):

- Yes No Don't know

8.9. What kind of activities you perform together:

- Food production for household consumption
 Take care of the children and the elderly
 Cultural events and other social gatherings
 Teaching children native language and traditions
 Religious activities
 None

8.10. In the region where you live, are there other refugee groups than your ethnic group:

- Yes No Don't know (If NO, go to question nr 9.1.)

8.11. Do you co-operate with them:

- Yes No

8.12. Is the community organised (leader, regular meetings etc.):

- Yes No Don't know

8.13. Please estimate how large is your ethnic community in the region you live:

- Less than 10 persons
 10 – 40 persons
 More than 50 persons
 Don't know

8.14. Please describe what kind of activities you perform together:

- Food production for household consumption
- Take care of the children and the elderly
- Cultural events and other social gatherings
- Teaching children native language and traditions
- Religious activities
- None

9. Integration measures

9.1. Have you been offered any language training in this country:

- Yes No (If NO, go to question nr 9.5.)

9.2. Did you attend the course:

- Yes No, why not? _____

9.3. Was the course useful:

- Yes No, why not? _____

9.4. Did you pay for the course:

- Yes No

9.5. Have you had any introductory courses, which would have helped you to settle down to this country:

- Yes No

9.6. Was the course useful:

- Yes No, why not? _____

9.7. Have you been offered in this country any vocational training (of a new profession) or updating training of your present profession:

- Yes No

9.8. Please describe what kind of orientation you would need to settle down here?

- | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documents | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Language training | <input type="checkbox"/> Information on refugees' rights & responsibilities | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My ethnic community | <input type="checkbox"/> NGOs supporting refugees | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> UNHCR | <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

9.9. Do you feel safe in this country:

- Yes No

9.10. What is your overall impression, are you accepted/ welcomed in this society?

- Yes No

9.11. How well you know your rights in this country:

- Very well Fairly well Badly

10. Future prospects

10.1. Do you intend to stay in this country:

- Yes No

10.2. Do you plan on getting citizenship?

- Yes No

10.3. If you have had difficulties in applying citizenship, please describe:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Normal | <input type="checkbox"/> High-priced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complicated | <input type="checkbox"/> Lengthy | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties with the language exam |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Normal | <input type="checkbox"/> Complicated | <input type="checkbox"/> High-priced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pending | <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

10.4. Have you visited your country of origin while living here?

- Never
Occasionally, no more than 1 – 3 times in all
Each year at least once
More than 2 times each year

10.5. What are your future plans:

- Stay here Go to my country of origin Go to an other third country

11. Integration Services

11.1. How are you satisfied with the help/ services provided by NGOs dealing with refugees: are they helpful, polite, understand your situation, provide you services and counselling
1= Very poor 2 = insufficient 3 = satisfactory 4 = good 5 = excellent

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| NGO, name _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| NGO, name _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| NGO, name _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |

11.2. How are you satisfied with the help/ services provided by Government agencies dealing with refugees: are they helpful, polite, understand your situation, provide you services and counselling
1= Very poor 2 = insufficient 3 = satisfactory 4 = good 5 = excellent

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Agency, name _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Agency, name _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Agency, name _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |

11.3. How are you satisfied with the help/ services provided by UNHCR : are they helpful, polite, understand your situation, provide you services and counselling
1= Very poor 2 = insufficient 3 = satisfactory 4 = good 5 = excellent

- Name _____ 1 2 3 4 5

11.4. Any other remarks or wishes:

Local Integration Project (LIP): BELARUS⁶⁹

Statistical Analysis of replies to the Questionnaire

This document contains a series of charts, which illustrate the socio-economic and legal situation of refugees residing in Belarus. The information on which these charts are based, was gathered in the course of 57 confidential interviews of persons of concern who replied to a standard questionnaire (Annex 1).

According to the official statistics, 798 persons have been granted refugee status in Belarus; the authorities have informed the Experts of the LIP that their files show that there are 673 refugees registered and residing in Belarus of whom 474 are adults. 20 refugees have acquired Belarusian citizenship and can thus be considered as having achieved the highest level of integration. LIP interviewers have reached 52 recognized refugees (11% of the adult refugee population in Belarus) and 5 naturalized persons with refugee background (25% of the total number of naturalized refugees).

The LIP team has not necessarily reached those refugees who integrated well, as such persons tended to be less available to the interviewers compared to those who could be reached through UNHCR implementing partners and refugee communities.

NOTE:

The present analysis based on the subjective, personal accounts of persons of concern whose statements have not been individually verified. Interviewees were requested to respond truthfully and on the whole, the import of their replies has been confirmed by the objective findings of the LIP study. Diagrammatized, the interviewees' responses offer (within a statistically acceptable margin of error) a graphic summary of key issues and problems.

Some questions were "open" and the Experts noted verbatim responses indicative of refugee views and experiences (see below).

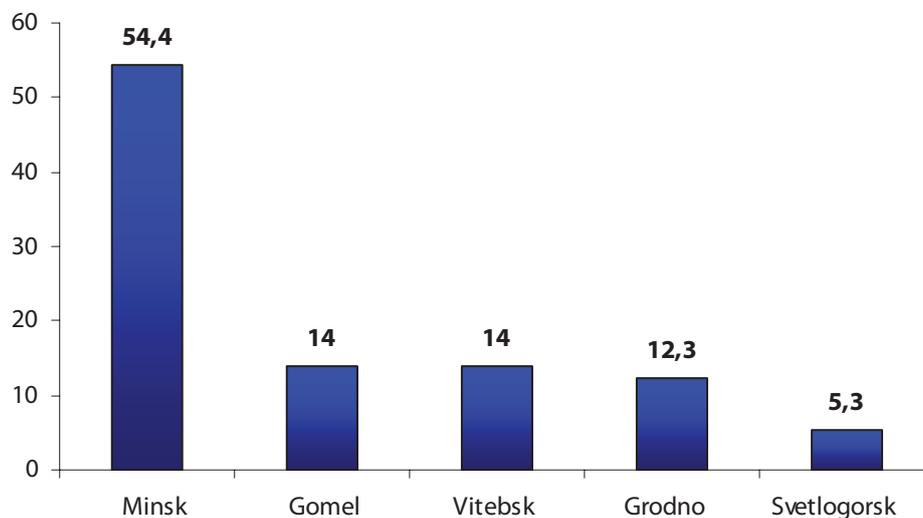


Chart 1. Geographic distribution of respondents, in %

The number of respondents interviewed in different regions of Belarus is approximately proportionate to the number of refugees who reside in the urban and peri-urban areas indicated. Minsk and Gomel regions (Svetlogorsk is situated in the Gomel region) have the first and second largest refugee communities (according to the official statistic 63% and 15% of the total number of refugees reside there). One of the reasons for visiting Gomel, Vitebsk and Grodno was that UNHCR funded integration projects in those locations (*i.e.* the billiards club in Gomel; a Refugee Counseling Service in Vitebsk; a bakery in Grodno).

⁶⁹ Face to face interviews were conducted in Belarus between 23.6.–5.9.2007. On average each interview lasted 1 to 1 1/5 hours

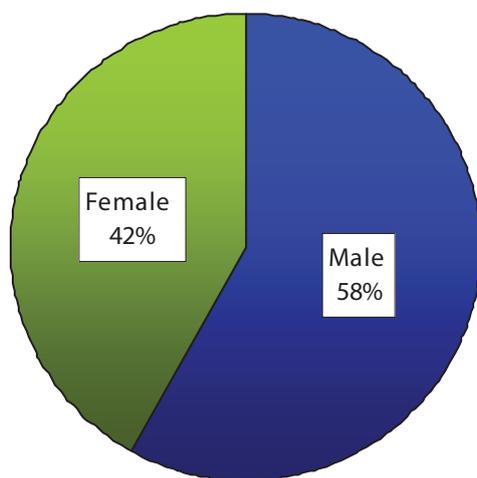


Chart 2. Number of respondents by gender, in %

The gender composition of the sample corresponds to the gender composition of the adult refugee population living in Belarus (57% and 42% respectively according to the official statistics).

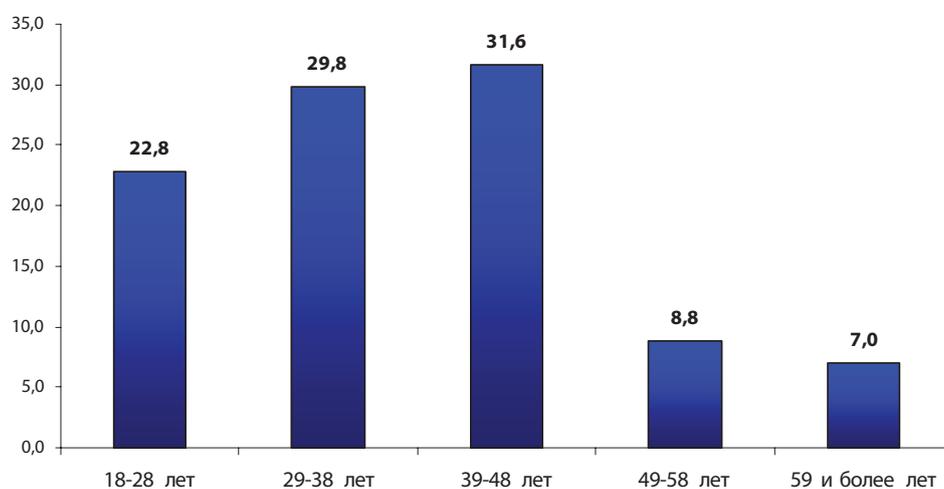


Chart 3. Number of respondents by age group, in %

Most respondents fall within the age groups of “29-38” and “39-48”, many of them are around 40 years old. Many respondents have studied in Belarus (or other CIS countries) but due to war/ political conflicts, they could not return to their countries of origin (e.g. Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Liberia). Some were victims of the military conflicts, which took place in the former Soviet republics (e.g. Abkhazia, Georgia).

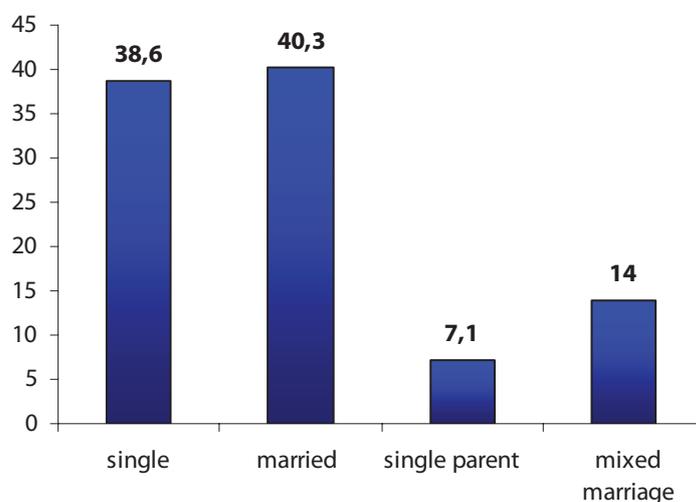


Chart 4a. Marital status of respondents, in %

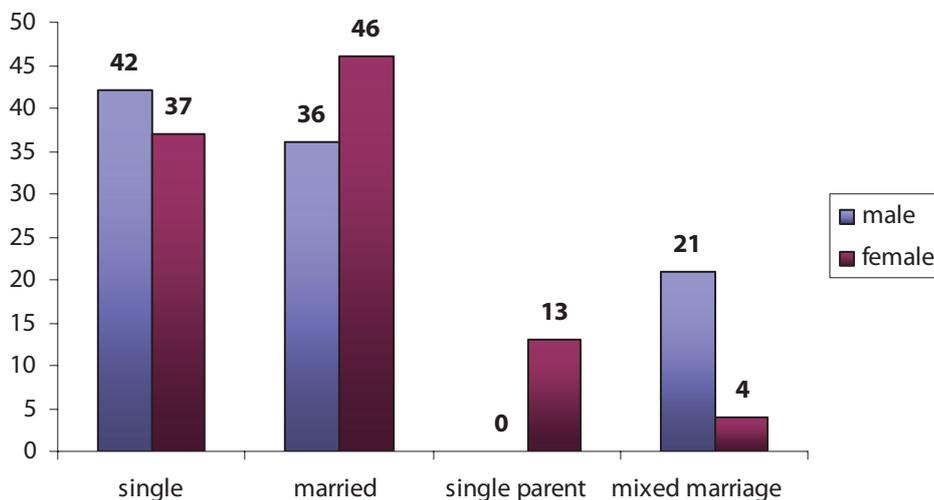


Chart 4b. Marital status of respondents (breakdown by gender), in %

Chart 4a shows that most respondents are married (54,3% including mixed marriages). “Mixed marriage” indicates a marriage with a citizen of the host country. Chart 4b shows that in mixed marriages most often the wife is Belarusian (21% of male respondents are married to nationals compared to 4% of female respondents). A local spouse may restrict a refugee’s access to certain benefits. Chart 4b shows also that among the respondents there are more married women than men (46% and 37% respectively).

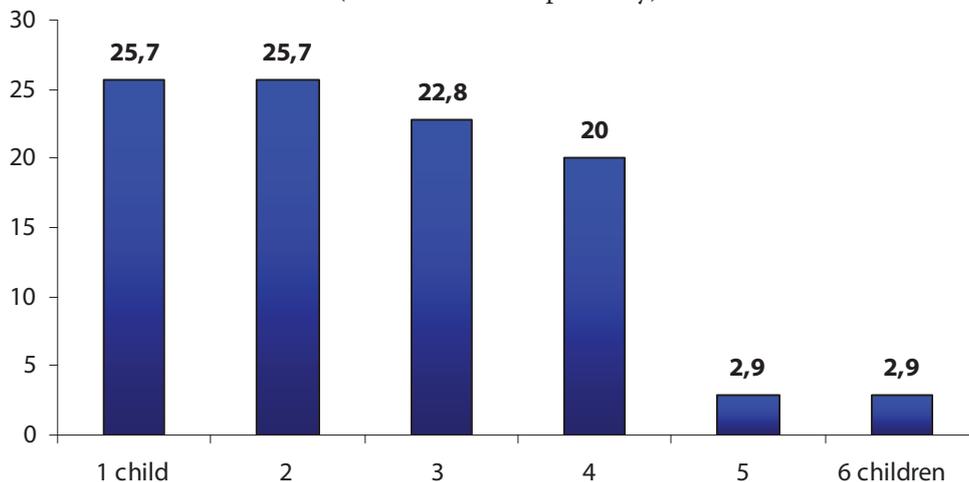


Chart 5. Size of respondents’ families (the number of children), in %

There are three and more children in a about a half (48,6%) of the families; according to Belarusian legislation, these families can be registered as “large” and have access to extra social assistance. Some of the respondents have already acquired the certificates of large families, but very often they are not aware of how to use the additional rights which arise from such a status (e.g. priority for social housing).

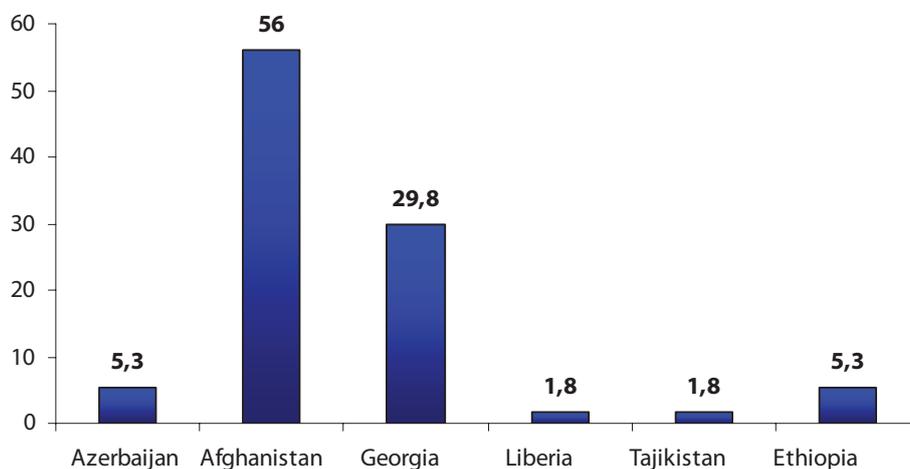


Chart 6. Number of respondents by country of origin, in %

The composition of sample of respondents is similar to that of the total refugee population in Belarus. According to the official statistics, most adult refugees (66%) originate from Afghanistan and Georgia (18%) constitute the second largest group.

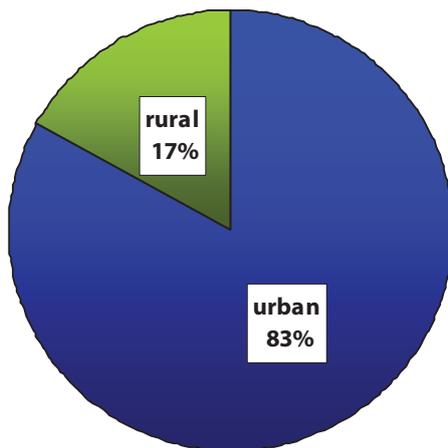


Chart 7. Number of respondents according to their urban or rural backgrounds, in %

Chart 7 shows that most respondents, as indeed a majority in the refugee community, come from urban areas. This fact largely explains the reluctance of refugees to settle in the countryside, although this option is offered by the Government. Refugees with an urban background also tend to have higher educational qualifications.

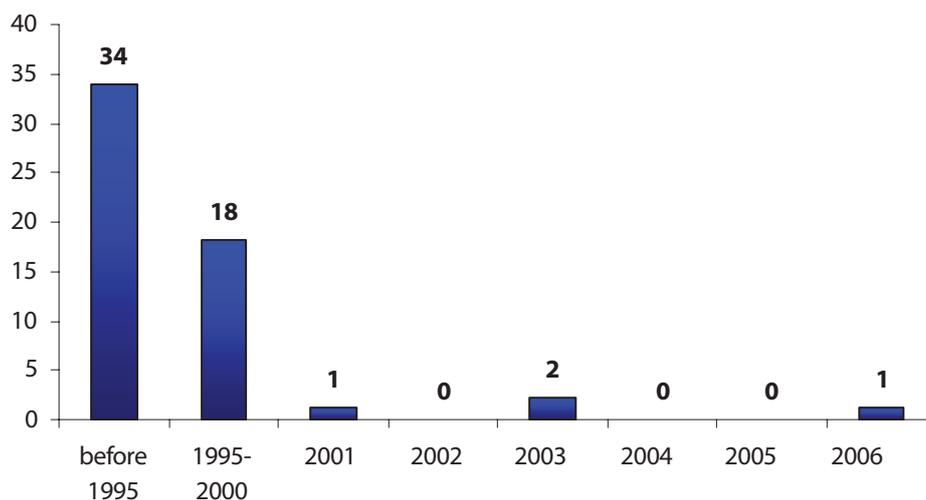


Chart 8a. Number of respondents by year of arrival in the host country

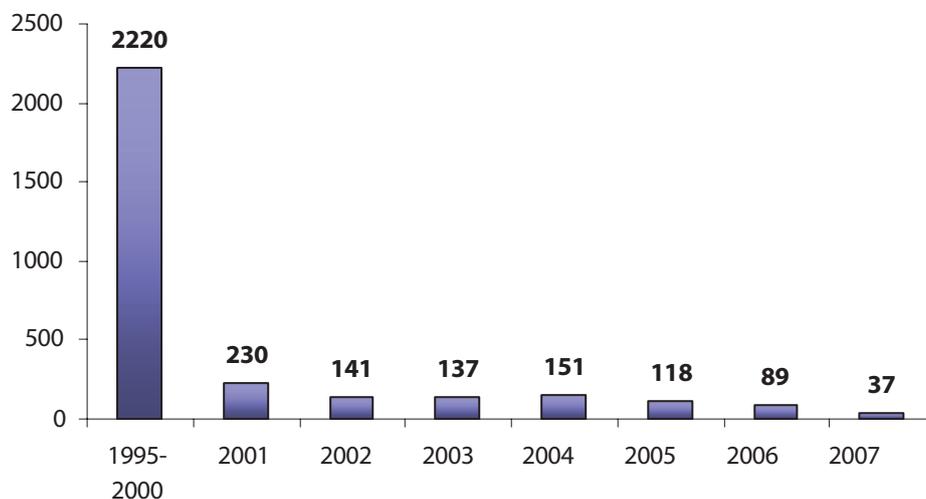


Chart 8b. Total number of applications for refugee status per year

Charts 8a and 8b show that the respondents, like most refugees in Belarus, either arrived in that country in early the 1990s, at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, or had remained there following the completion of university studies.

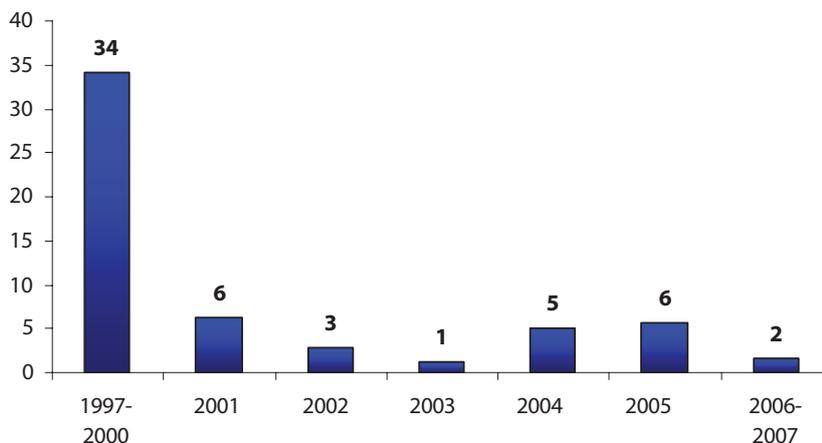


Chart 9a. Number of respondents by year of recognition of their status

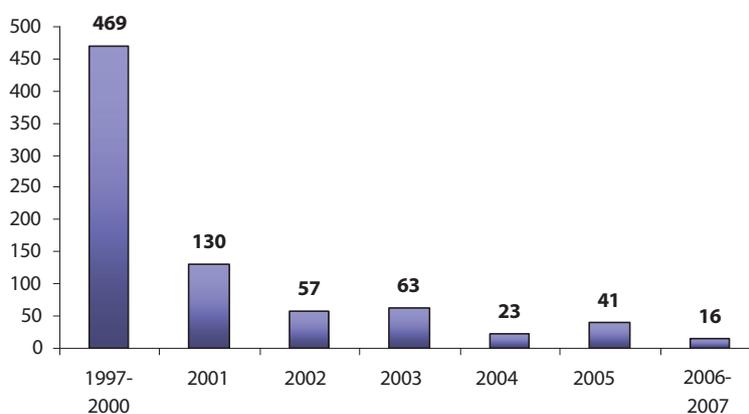
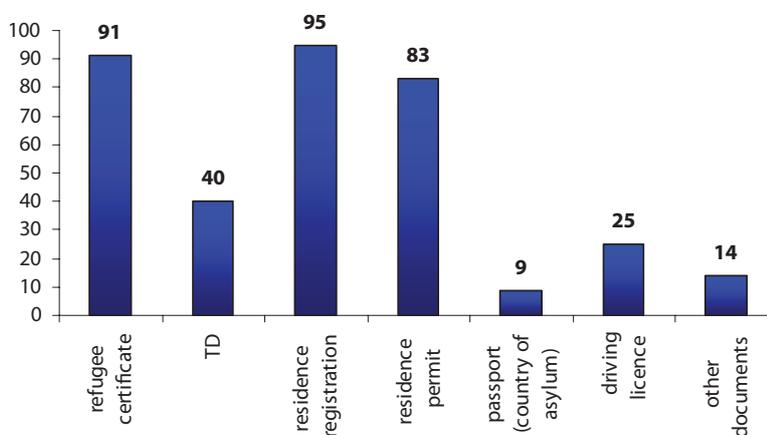


Chart 9b. Total number of refugee status recognitions per year

Refugee status recognition procedures were implemented in Belarus from 1997 onwards.

A comparison of charts 9a and 9b shows that most of the respondents, like the majority of all refugees in Belarus, obtained refugees status between 1997 and 2000. The year of refugee status recognition of respondents was noted as stated by the interviewees; it was not checked. In recent years, recognition rates have been low.



Total is over 100% as a respondent could choose more than one answer

Chart 10a. Number of respondents according to the documents they hold, in %

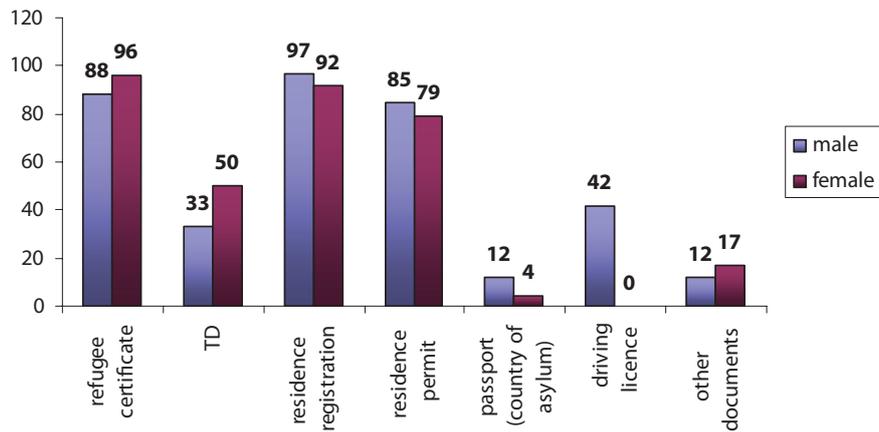


Chart 10b. Number of respondents according to the documents they hold (breakdown by gender), in %

The low percentage of naturalized respondents (9%) can be partially explained by the Belarusian requirement that applicants document their renunciation of their nationality of origin. Although this requirement should not apply to refugees (it is contrary to the 1951 Convention); some have managed to comply. Refugees are issued a Travel Document (TD) which is not compliant to the 1951 Convention. 24,6% of respondents having a driving licenses obtained either in their countries of origin or in Belarus. None of the female respondents had one. Respondents who ticked “other documents” (14%) usually meant the “certificates of families having many children”.

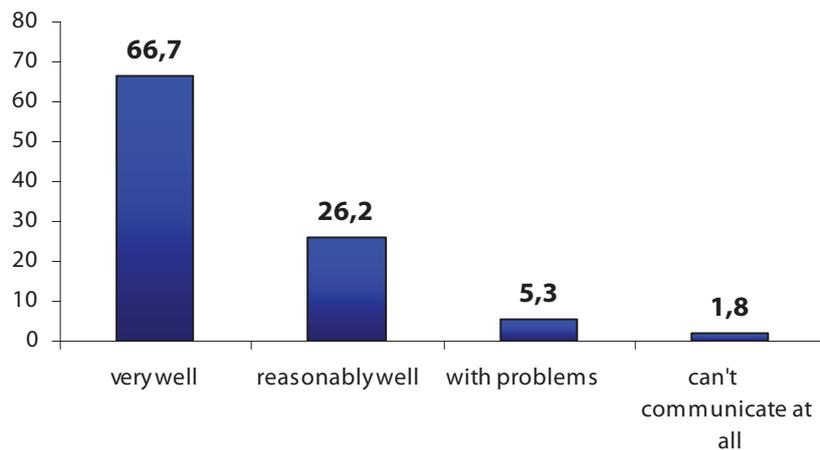


Chart 11a. Number of respondents according to their self-assessed command of Russian, in %

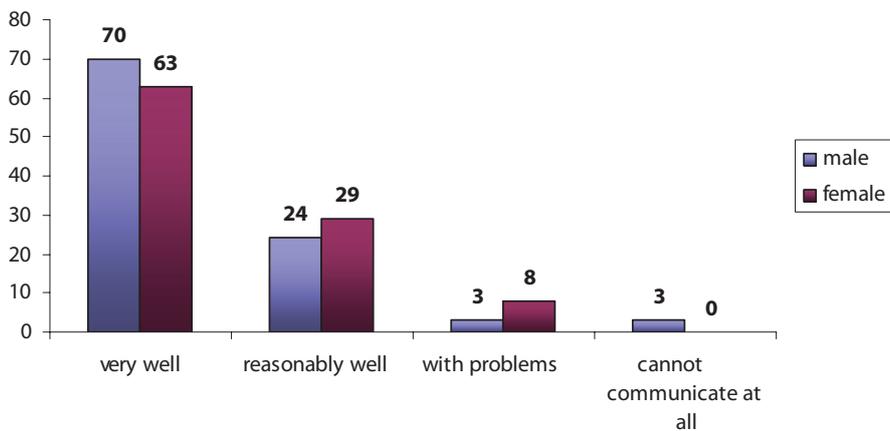


Chart 11b. Number of respondents according to their self-assessed command of Russian, (breakdown by gender), in %

Chart 11a and 11b show that most respondents have a good command of Russian, as many of them have studied in Belarus and/or have lived in the country for at least 10-15 years. Those who have language problems have arrived in the recent years. Chart 11b shows that in terms of Russian language skills, there are no significant

gender differences. It may be that this data is influenced by the fact that most respondents may have agreed to be interviewed because they spoke Russian well.

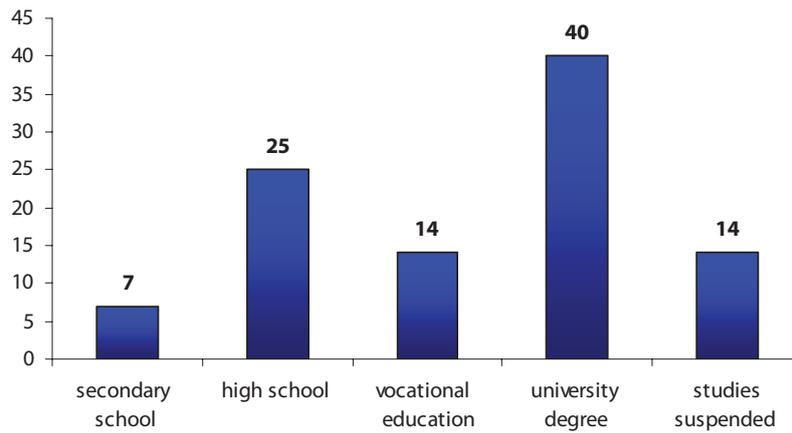


Chart 12a. Number of respondents according to the level of education, in %

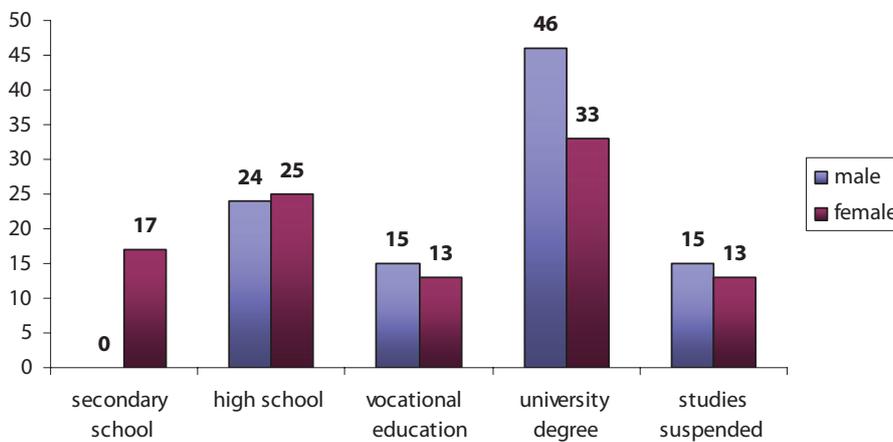


Chart 12b. Number of respondents according to the level of education (breakdown by gender), in %

Chart 12a shows that most refugees have a high educational background: 93% of respondents have at least secondary education, 54,4% have vocational or higher education (14% and 40,4% respectively). About 2/3 of respondents studied in the former Soviet Republics, thus they do not need to have their diplomas recognized. None of those who studied in Afghanistan have tried to have their qualifications recognized. The breakdown by gender (Chart 12b) shows that refugee women have a lower educational background than men.

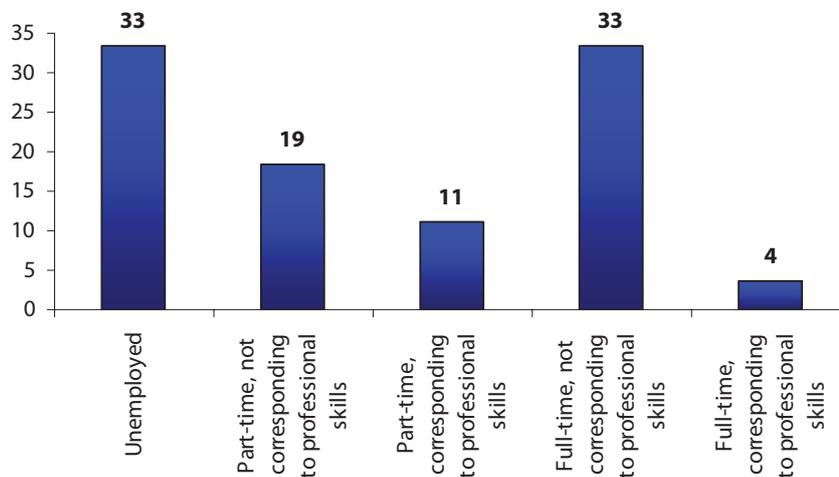


Chart 13a. Number of employed and unemployed respondents, in %

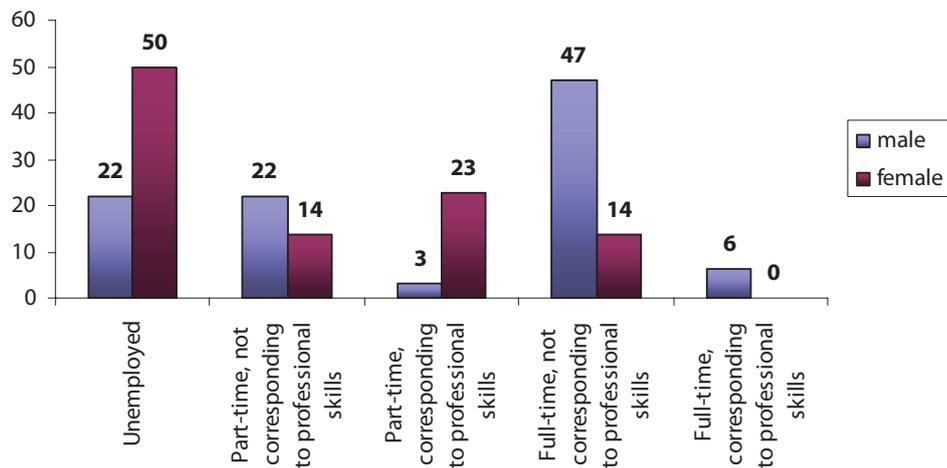


Chart 13b. Number of employed and unemployed respondents (breakdown by gender), in %

Chart 13a shows that most respondents (52%) in employment do not hold jobs that correspond to their professional skills. This can be attributed in part to the fact many employers consider their knowledge of Russian insufficient and prefer not to hire foreigners; and in part to the fact that higher incomes can be earned, for instance in the markets. About 33% claimed to be unemployed.

Chart 13b shows that most of the unemployed respondents are women who stay at home and take care of their children.

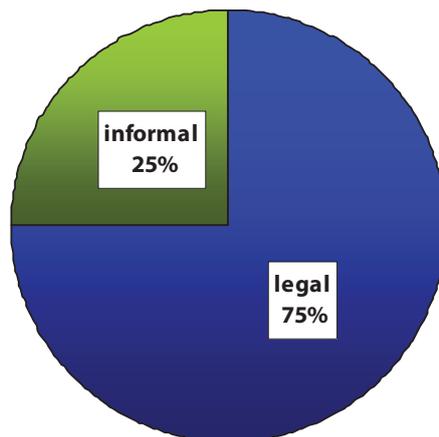


Chart 14. Number of respondents in legal or informal employment, in %

According to interviews 3/4 of respondents reported to be working legally, although it is known that illegal employment is widespread among refugees. A high percentage of legal employment means that refugees contribute to tax revenues and pay social security contributions.

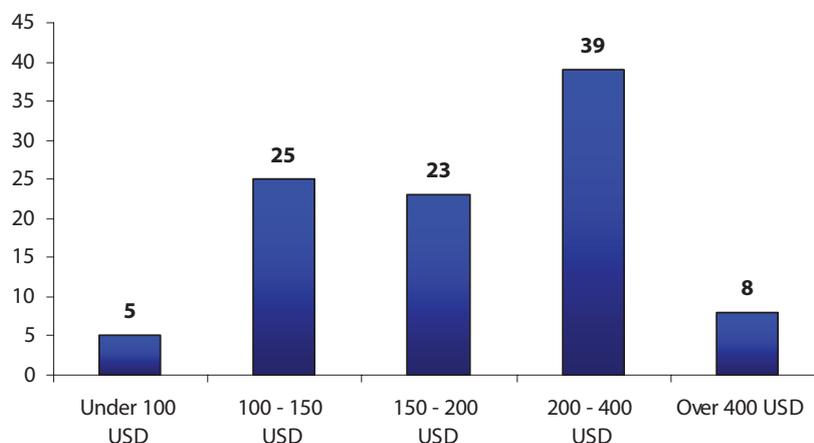


Chart 15. Number of respondents according to their monthly income, in %

47% of respondents earn more than 200 USD per month; this corresponds to the average level of salaries in Belarus which amounts to 250 USD per month. Although salaries are not lower compared to the earnings of Belarusian people, it is necessary to take into account that in the most cases refugees have to pay more for housing and maintain large families. This consideration explains why almost everybody wants to get better paid job and rarely accepts official jobs corresponding to the professional skills.

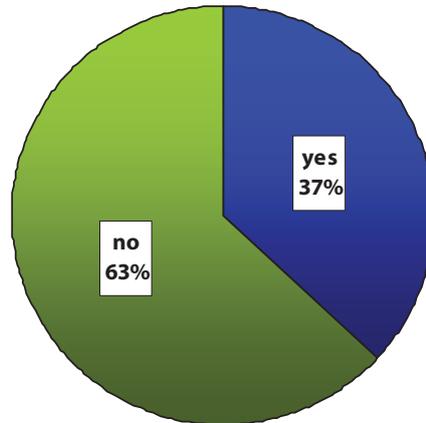


Chart 16. Number of respondents who have debts, in %

Although many respondents consider their income insufficient, 63,2% of them manage to live without debts. The majority relies on a “circle of friends” when they need a credit, but some respondents reported to have obtained bank loans.

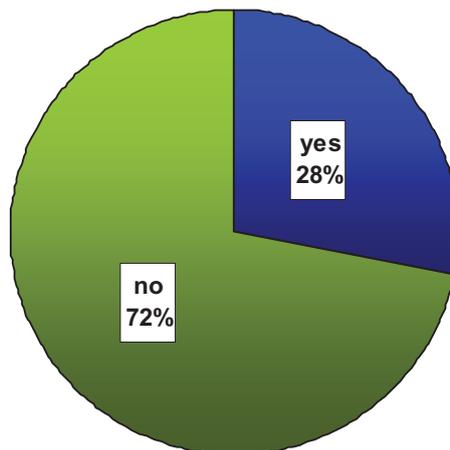


Chart 17. Number of respondents who have entrepreneurial experience, in %

Many refugees are entrepreneur oriented, 78% of them have been thinking of launching their business. Only 28% have a real experience of running an enterprise. According to the respondents, their main difficulties stem from a lack of initial capital (68% stated that the initial capital would be the most necessary for them in order to start a business).

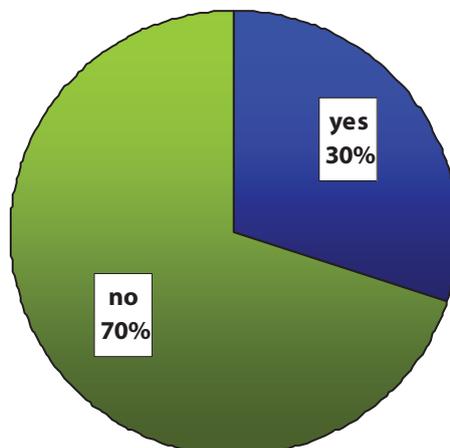


Chart 18. Number of respondents who have obtained bank credit, in %

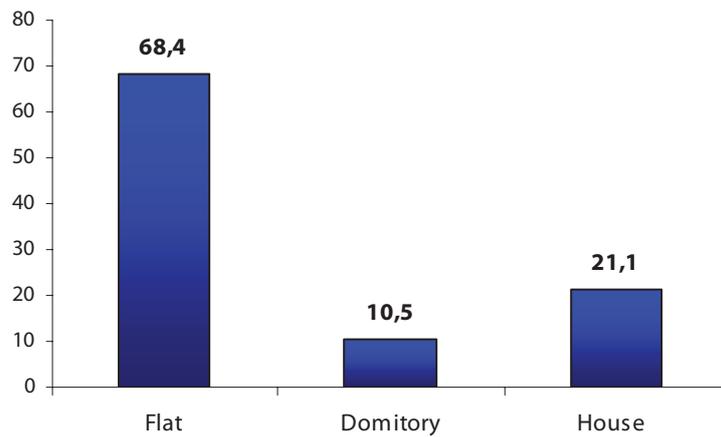


Chart 19. Number of respondents per the type of accommodation, in %

There are no temporary accommodation centers in Belarus. Most respondents live in sub-let flats. Most of respondents holding a lease to their flats are married to locals (as their spouses have access to social housing). A small number of respondents indicated that they owned their accommodation.

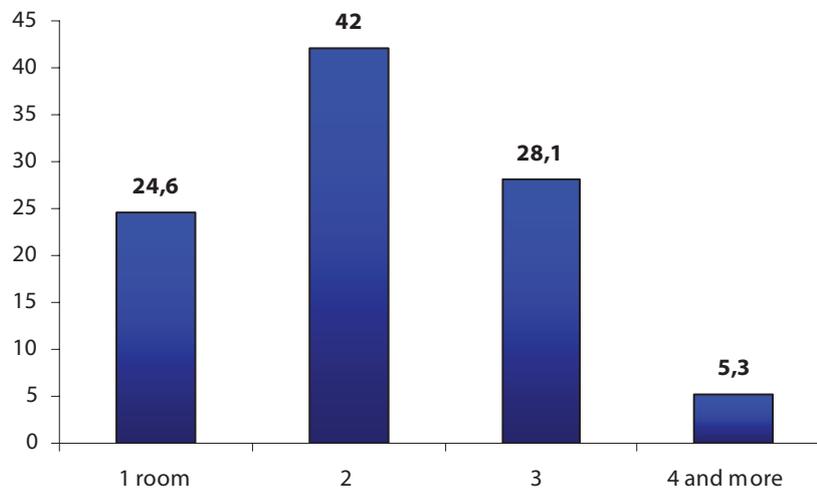


Chart 20. Number of rooms per housing unit occupied by the respondents, in %

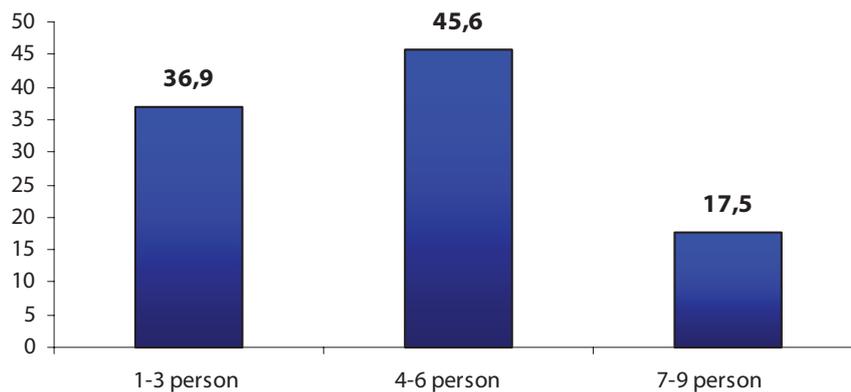


Chart 21. Number of respondents sharing a housing unit, in %

A comparison of charts 20 and 21 shows that more than 63% of the respondents live in shared accommodation with 4 or more other persons (usually family members, other relatives and friends) per 2-3 rooms (a kitchen is counted as a room) Three generations may live together. Occasionally flats are shared with landlords.

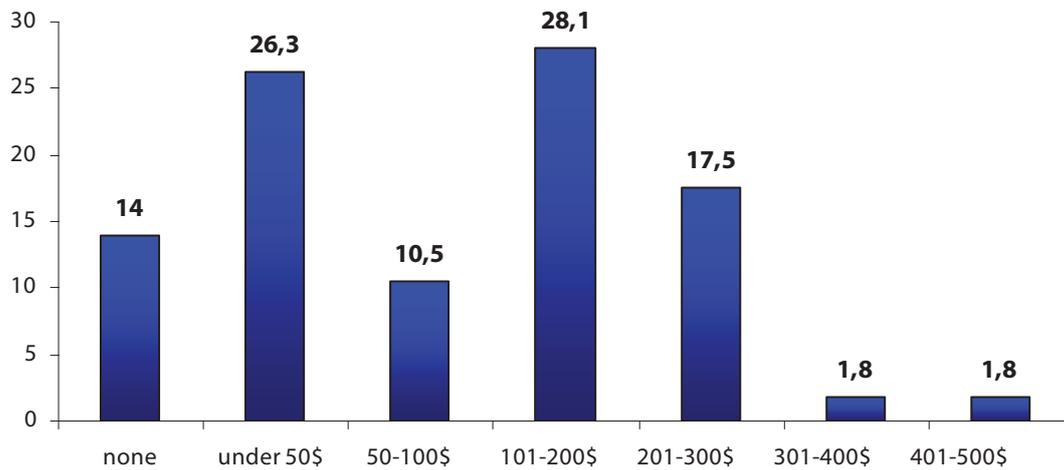


Chart 22. Respondent's rental costs (per month), in %

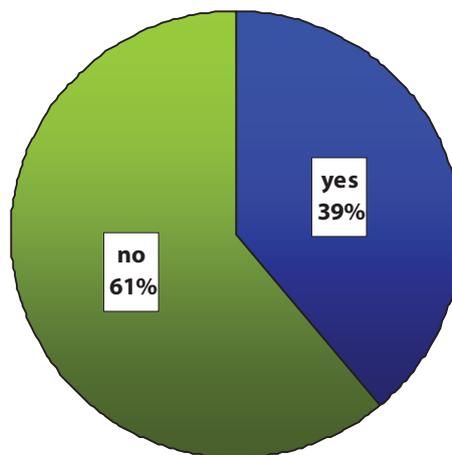


Chart 23. Number of respondents who actually live where they are registered, in %

The “registration” (“propiska”) of a majority of respondents (61,4%) does not correspond to their actual place of residence, which means that they had bought a faked “propiska” and faced problems in accessing social services and benefits. They can be fined for violation of the permanent residence regime, but few claimed to have been prosecuted.

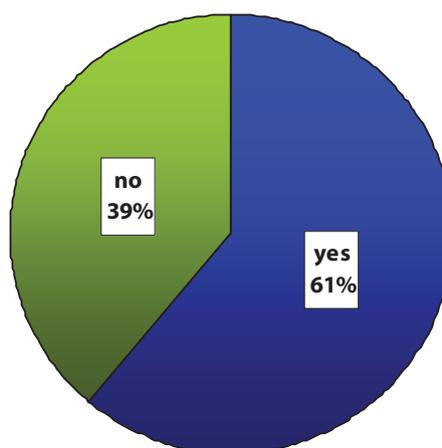


Chart 24. Number of respondents who are satisfied/ not satisfied with their accommodation, in %

Although 61,4% of respondents claimed to be satisfied with their housing conditions, only 1/3 of them did not want to change their place of residence. Many would move to better housing, if they could afford it.

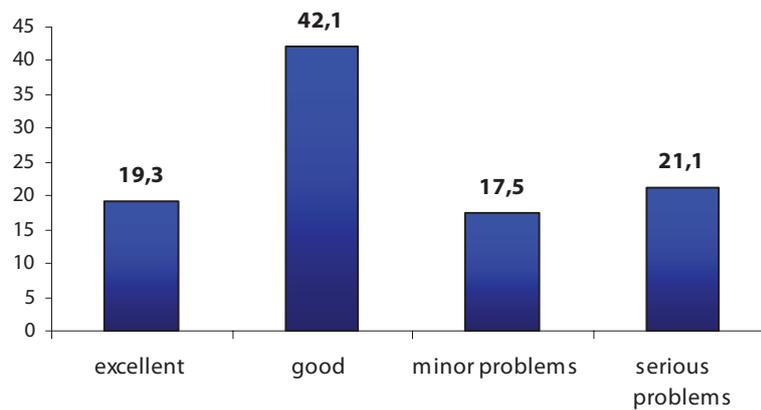


Chart 25a. State of health of respondents, in %

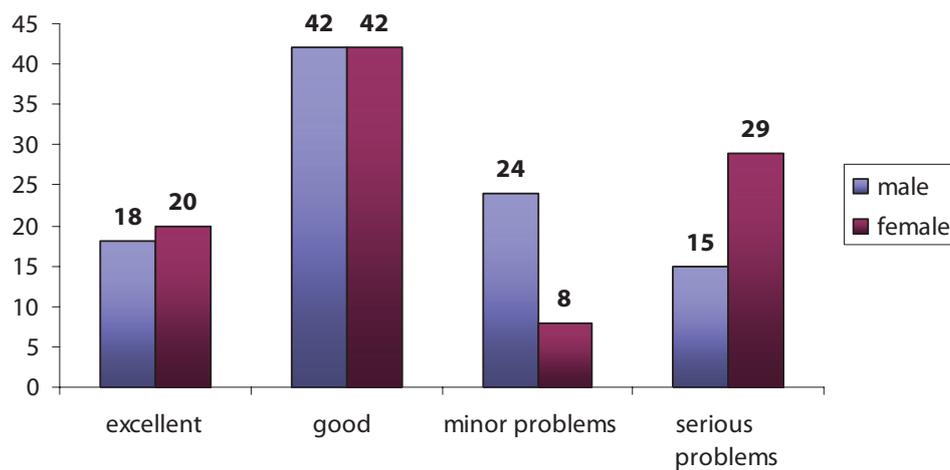


Chart 25b. State of health of respondents (breakdown by gender), in %

Charts 25a and 25b are based on the information provided by respondents as regards their health. It can be seen that more women (29%) than men reported ill-health. Usually refugees have the same health problems as the local population.

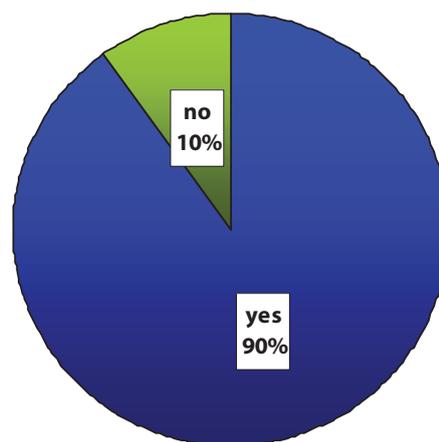


Chart 26. Number of respondents who are satisfied/ unsatisfied with medical services, in %

Respondents were mostly satisfied with the medical assistance they receive in hospitals and polyclinics, but in many cases they lack money to pay for better medical treatment or medicines. However, some respondents mentioned cases of inappropriate behavior of the medical staff, which may be attributable to ignorance of the situation of refugees and of their rights, on the part of some medical staff.

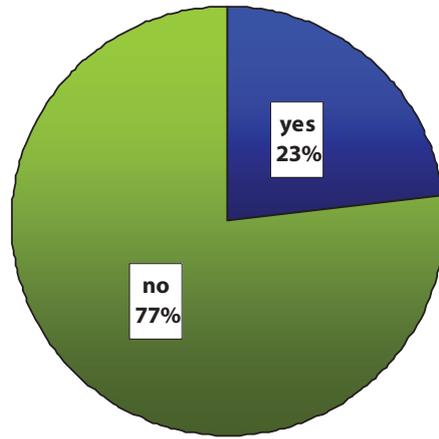


Chart 27a. Number of respondents who have faced hostility from Belarusians, in %

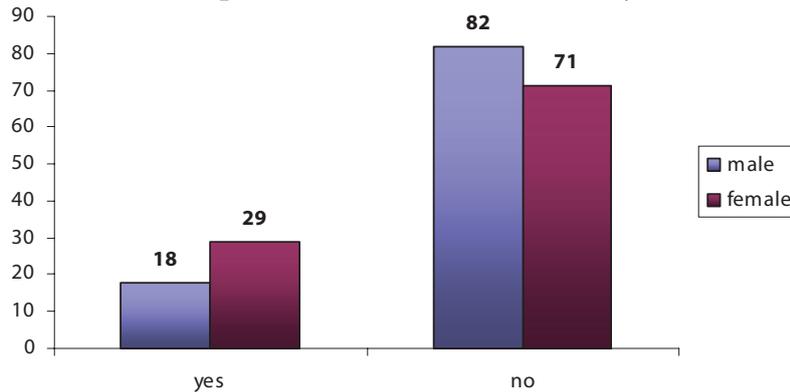


Chart 27b. Number of respondents who have faced hostility from locals (breakdown by gender), in %

A comparison of charts 27a and 27b shows that although more women than men have had negative experiences, the majority of respondents have not faced hostility from the Belarusian population. The LIP team found that in general, attitudes towards refugees were positive. Some respondents indicated that the hostility encountered was of a personal nature (not ethnic), Certain respondents mentioned that the attitude in the big cities was better than in the countryside.

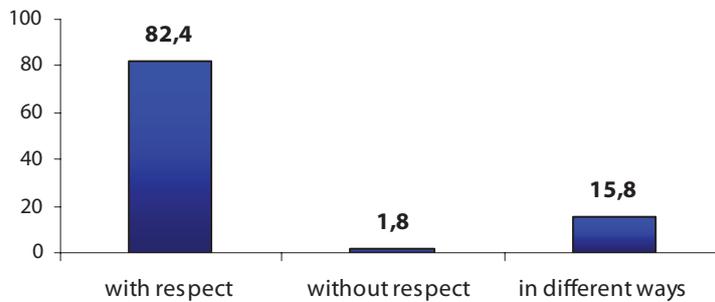


Chart 28a. Frequency of answers to the question "How does the police treat you?", in %

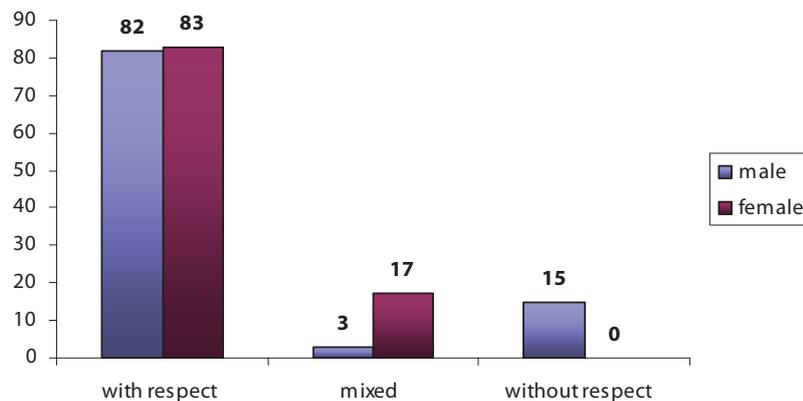


Chart 28b. Frequency of answers to the question "How does the police treat you?" (breakdown by gender), in %

Charts 28a and 28b show that generally, both female and male respondents have been treated correctly by police; only 15,8% have mixed experiences. No one claimed to have been asked for bribes.

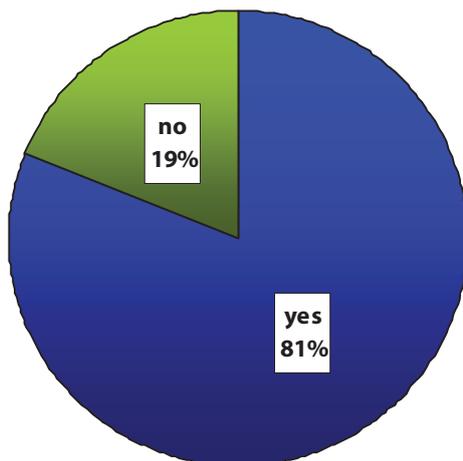


Chart 29a. Number of respondents who have friends among the local population, in %

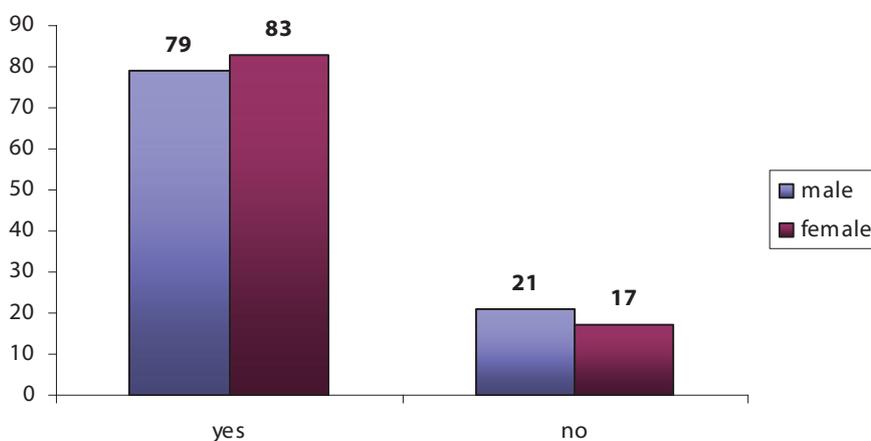


Chart 29b. Number respondents who have friends among the local population(breakdown by gender), in %

A comparison of charts 29a and 29b shows that irrespective of gender a significant majority of respondent (80,7%) have local friends.

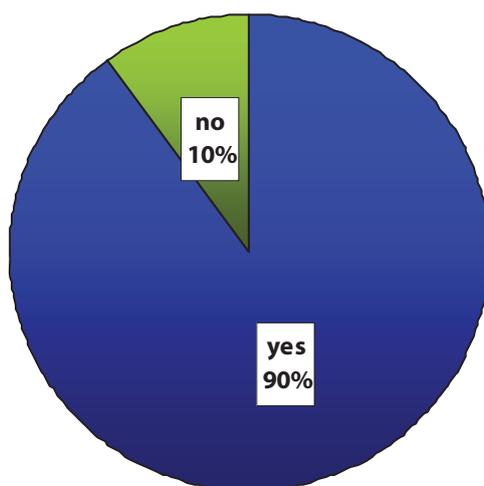


Chart 30a. Number of respondents who “feeling safe” in the host country, in %

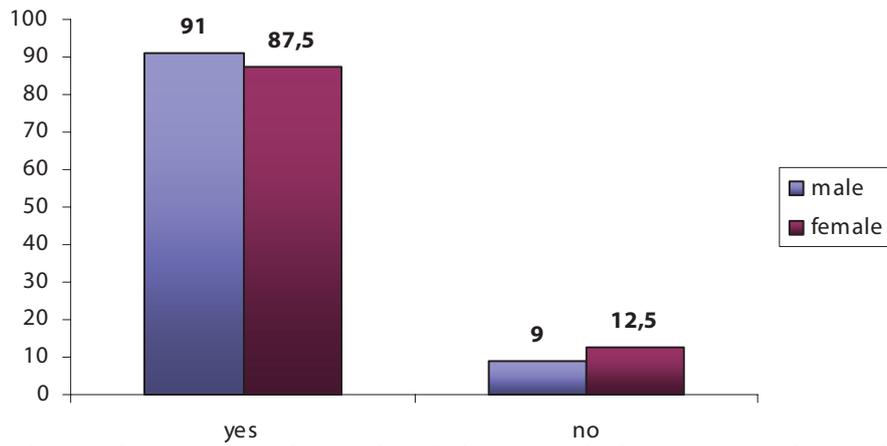


Chart 30b. Number of respondents who “feel safe” in the host country (by gender), in %

Feeling safe in the host country is one of the fundamental prerequisites for successful integration. The fact that 89,5% of respondents feel safe in Belarus taken together with the data presented in Charts 27-29 and the independent findings of the LIP team, indicates that Belarus provides conducive environment for the integration of refugees. This conclusion is also supported by Charts 31-32 indicating that 3/4 of respondents are planning to stay in Belarus and to apply for citizenship. Chart 30b shows that most refugee women also feel safe in the country.

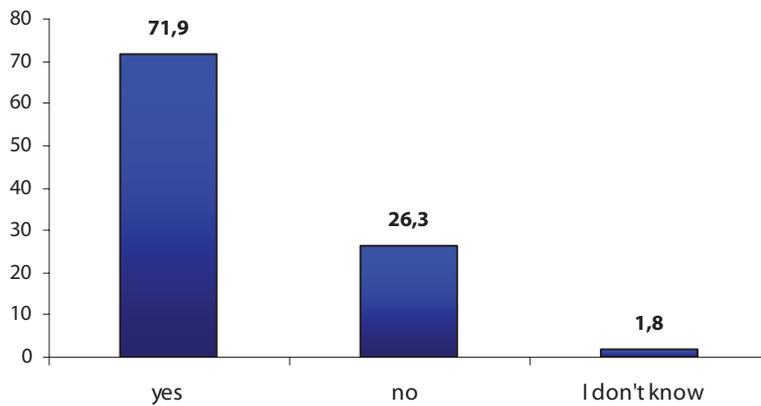


Chart 31a. Number of respondents planning to stay in the host country, in %

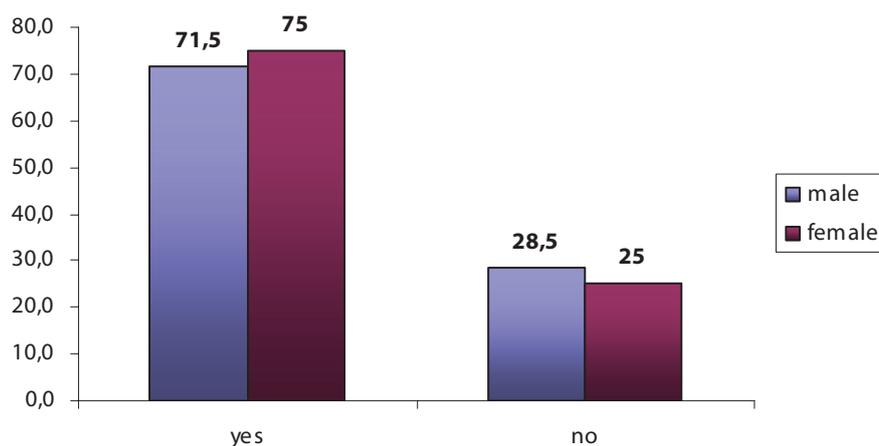
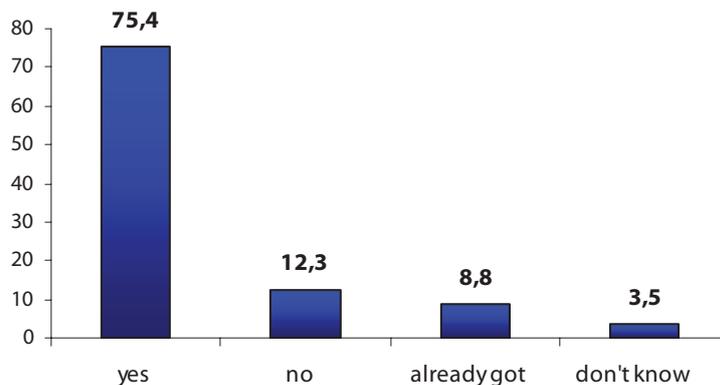


Chart 31b. Number of respondents planning to stay in the host country (by gender), in %

Charts 31a and 31b show that most respondents, irrespective of the gender, were planning to stay in Belarus. Most of those who were not planning to stay hoped to move to a third country; 5% of respondents wanted to go back to their country of origin.



"Yes" indicates that the respondents have applied or are planning to apply for citizenship

Chart 32a. Frequency of respondents applying for citizenship, in %

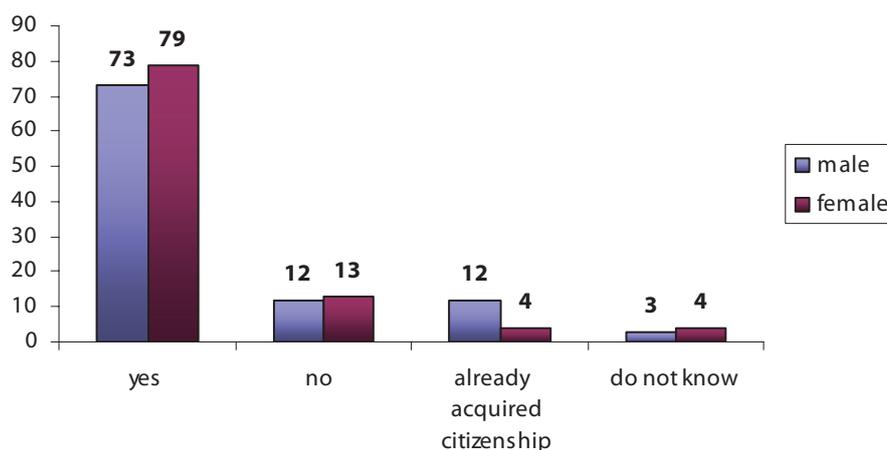


Chart 32b. Number of respondents applying for citizenship (breakdown by gender), in %

Charts 32a and 32b show that among the respondents, both men and women are informed of the possibility of acquiring citizenship and most of them (75%) have applied or intend to apply.

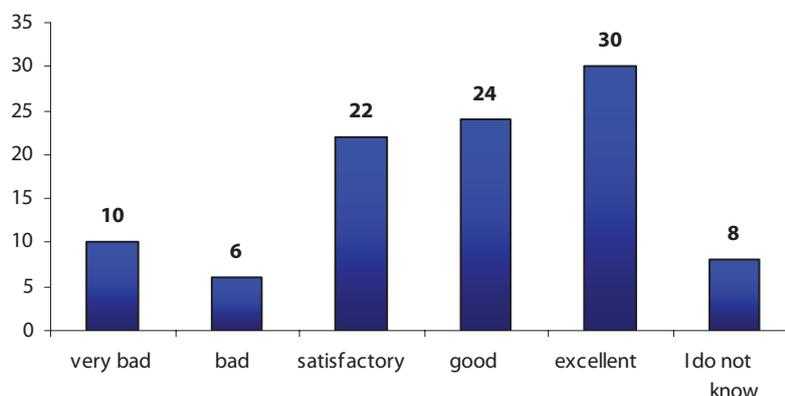


Chart 33. Respondents' evaluation of quality of assistance provided by the Red Cross, in %

In general, the services provided by the Red Cross are highly appreciated by respondents (54% gave "excellent" and "good" ratings). This can be explained by the fact that many receive monthly financial assistance and some are provided with clothes. Sometimes refugees have rather high expectations of the Red Cross, but these are not always realized, which explains why some respondents put lower marks (16 % of "bad" and "very bad" marks). 8 % of respondents who could not estimate the Red Cross's activities; they were mostly well integrated persons, who were not in need of material assistance.

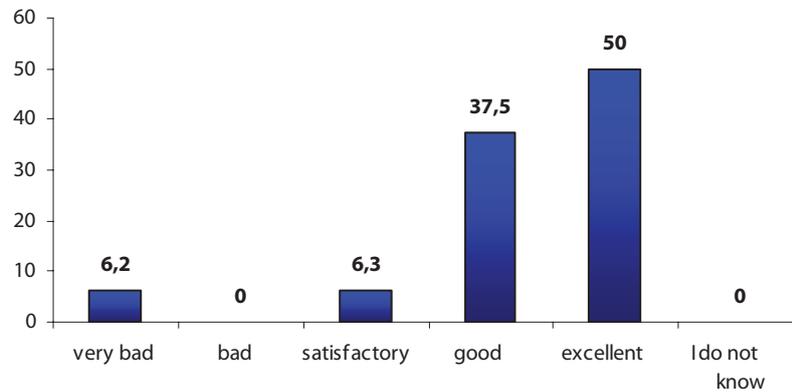


Chart 34. Evaluation of quality of assistance provided by “Evrika“, in %

“Evrika”, the Centre for Children and Adolescents which is dealing with refugee children under the UNHCR project has mainly excellent and good marks, which can be explained by the fact that refugees understand that keeping their children busy with different after school activities is one of the main steps for their integration into the Belarus society. Besides, some of the young respondents used to attend “Evrika” themselves some years ago. They felt that this organization had done much to develop their skills and helped to make friends with locals.

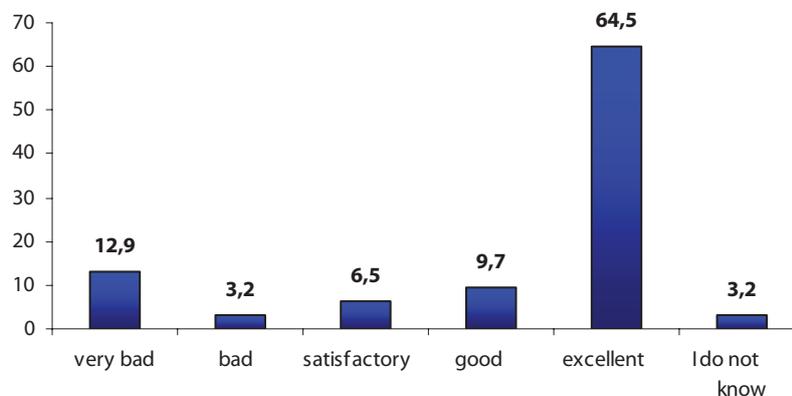


Chart 35. Respondents' evaluation of quality of assistance provided by the “Refugee Counselling Service”, in %

The “Refugee Counseling Service” is an NGO which deals with refugees more than any other organization. They accompany refugees from the very first step when they apply for asylum in the Republic of Belarus, and continue to assist them and provide also para-legal counseling for recognition as refugees. Refugees highly appreciate the assistance provided by this NGO and in many cases understand that while staff do their best, they cannot solve all their problems.

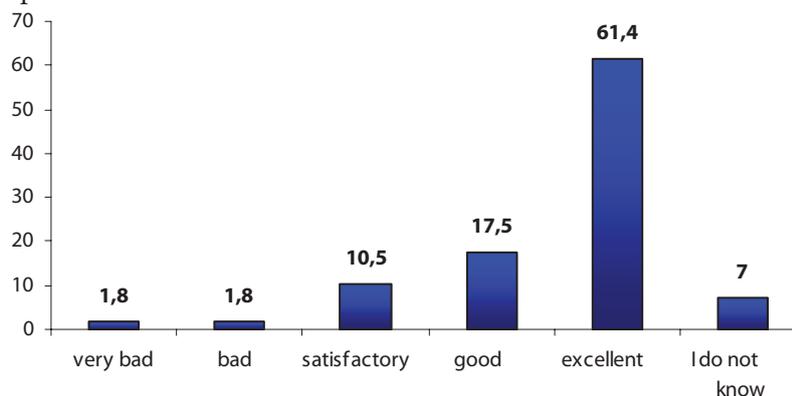


Chart 36. Respondents' evaluation of quality of services provided by the Department of Citizenship and Migration, in %

With very few exceptions, the respondents rated the services provided by the Department of Citizenship and Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs highly, an indication that generally this entity fulfills its responsibilities connected with refugee recognition and the granting of citizenship satisfactorily, that rules are observed and that its staff treat refugees with respect.

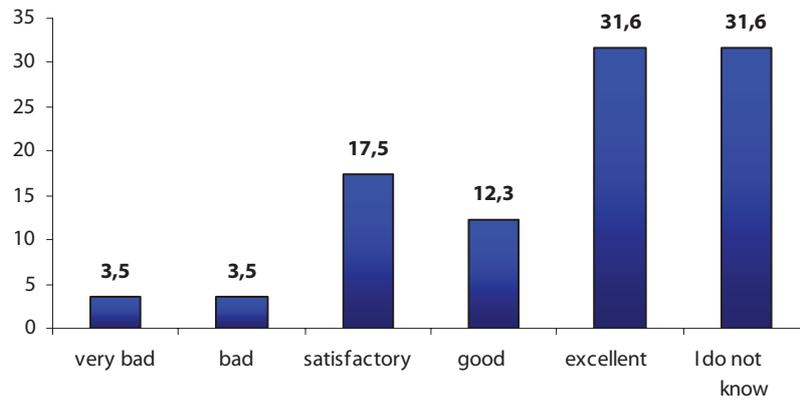


Chart 37. Respondents' evaluation of quality of the UNHCR activities, in %

The number of respondents who could not evaluate UNHCR's activities (31,6%) can be explained by the fact that many refugees are not always aware of how the UNHCR actually works. Those who understand that many NGO activities are made possible under UNHCR projects give it "excellent" or "good" marks.

Quotes from individual interviews of refugees in Belarus

1. I cannot move to work in another city because my children attend school in Minsk. Besides the safety of my children is not guaranteed in the other place. Red Cross does not guarantee it either (Afghan lady).
2. Attitudes have changed; refugees are not accepted any more (Afghan lady).
3. We could not gather all the necessary documents to get into the housing queue, because we do not have propiska (Afghan lady).
4. Police always takes us to police office to check the documents, especially our sons' (Afghan lady).
5. My son was sentenced for two years of prison. If he was a citizen, he would get suspended sentence (Afghan lady).
6. We are seven persons in my family. Every year I pay for the propiska 300 USD per person (Afghan man).
7. To get a credit I need two Belarusian guarantors; it is quite difficult for us to find them (Afghan man).
8. It is difficult to rent an apartment for a family with many children, because people are afraid when they see so many children (Afghan man).
9. A policeman forced our landlady to kick us out of the flat because we did not have the right propiska. I told the police that if we are kicked out again I will come to their office with all my stuff and call the TV reporters around (Afghan man).
10. It is possible to earn the living but rent and propiska costs eat much money (Afghan man).
11. I want to get passport and everything will be ok (Georgian lady).
12. They refused to give us assistance in the policlinic because our propiska was for a different district. Only children were let in (Afghan lady).
13. The Red Cross used to give us money for school stationary but they stopped it since last year (Afghan lady).
14. They wanted to us to pay in the hospital but then they checked our status and everything was ok (Afghan lady).
15. We would rather go to the West, it is better there (Afghan lady).
16. I do not attend school, I just finished three grades. To earn some money I bake pies, which I sell with my brother on the market. With the money I can pay the rent and buy some food. Only weekends I have some time of my own to visit Evrika. I work hard for my family as I do not want my brothers to miss classes. I also take care of my father, who is an invalid and needs to go to hospital every day. His health is constantly getting worse and worse. Sometimes he has his epilepsy bouts in the street and everybody around thinks that he is drunk. We filled in the application for resettlement to another country because he needs better medical treatment (Afghan girl).
17. Never experienced harassment at school because of my refugee status (Georgian girl).
18. The conditions in the dormitory are bad. My daughter fell ill with asthma. I had to send her to live with my friends to avoid her getting worse (Afghan man).
19. If I do not get into the university, I will find myself a work (Afghan young man).
20. Evrika is the best project. Still it is not very well organised. People go there without knowledge and leave it without knowledge (Afghan man).
21. UNHCR could work better. First of all they could stop thinking they are the smartest (Afghan man).
22. In Minsk live many rich Afghans, who could help refugees to start their business (Afghan man).
23. In employment office they offered me a job to take care of animals for 75 USD. I refused (Afghan man).
24. My son finished 7 grades but after that I had to take him to the market to work as a loader (Afghan man).
25. UNHCR staff does not do anything. They always promise something in the meetings but nothing happens afterwards (Afghan man).
26. There is a holiday programme for children, but only those children, whose parents have the right connections, are accepted (Afghan man).
27. Teachers understood our difficult situation well and helped us always. They never charged us for school meals or theatre tickets (Afghan lady).
28. I could live in this town if only the sanitary conditions were better (Afghan man).
29. I would like to go back home when the war is over (Georgian man).
30. My mother wants to go back home but I would like to stay in Belarus (Georgian man).
31. I wake up at 4 – 5 am and go to load on the market. Midday I attend classes at the university and around 4 pm go back to work. I pay my studies this way. (Georgian man).

32. When I get Belarusian passport I will go to Afghanistan. My heart is aching when I recollect my mother who is staying there (Afghan man).
33. I would agree to settle in the countryside but it is impossible now when I have a Belarusian wife and a daughter here in town (Afghan man).
34. My sister and I were offered language courses. We used to attend them for a while but finally gave up. We did not like much there (Afghan girl).
35. We received integration grant from the Red Cross to have a farm, but my son fell ill and I spent all the money for medicines (Georgian man).
36. If nobody helps us we go back to Georgia (Georgian man).
37. I do not report to the police the hostilities I come cross. I do not want to waste my time on it (African man).
38. Taxi driver refused to give me a ride probably because I am black. When I refused to leave the car he started threatening me and called other drivers to help him (African man).
39. Police always treats us with respect. It used to be worse when I came here but their attitudes have changed since then (Afghan man).
40. I am happy that my children and grandchildren live together here far away from the war (Georgian man).

Local Integration Project (LIP): MOLDOVA⁶⁹

Statistical analysis of replies to the questionnaire

This document presents a series of charts, illustrating the socio-economic and legal situation of refugees residing in Moldova. The information on which these charts are based was gathered in the course of 56 confidential interviews of persons of concern who replied to a standard questionnaire (Annex 1).

According to the official statistics provided to the LIP team, Moldova has 153 refugees (87 refugees and 66 holders of humanitarian status) of whom 122 are adults. LIP interviewers reached 56 persons or 46 % of the adult (over 18 years) refugee population.

The LIP team has not necessarily reached those refugees who integrated well, as such persons tended to be less available to the interviewers compared to those who could be reached through UNHCR implementing partners and refugee communities.

NOTE:

The present analysis is based on the subjective, personal accounts of persons of concern whose statements have not been individually verified. Interviewees were requested to respond truthfully and on the whole, the import of their replies has been confirmed by the objective findings of the LIP study. Diagrammatized, the interviewees' responses offer (within a statistically acceptable margin of error) a graphic summary of key issues and problems.

Some questions were "open" and the Experts noted verbatim responses indicative of refugee views and experiences (see below).

Selected correlations between respondents' socio-economic status and of certain attitudes and opinions can be also found below.

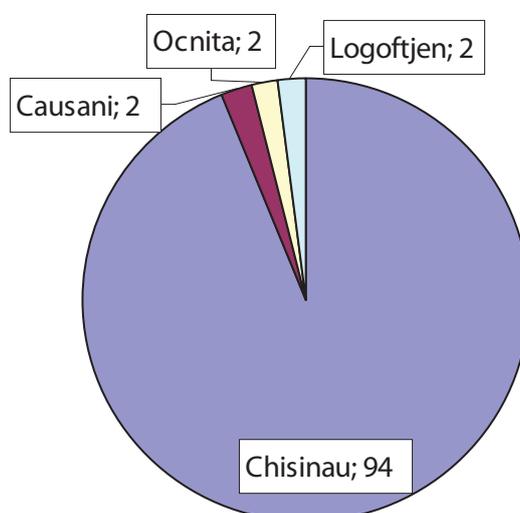


Chart 1. Number of respondents according to the place of residence, in %

The number of respondents interviewed in different regions of Moldova, is roughly proportionate to the number of refugees residing in the urban and peri-urban areas indicated. Most refugees are concentrated in the capital and its suburbs, where job opportunities are higher than elsewhere.

⁶⁹ Face to face interviews were conducted in Moldova between 7.06.–7.08.2007. On average each interview lasted 1 to 1 1/5 hours

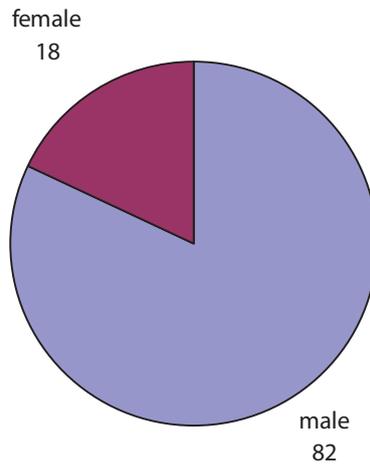


Chart 2. Number of respondents by gender, in %

The gender composition of the sample corresponds to the gender composition of the refugee population in Moldova, where most refugees are male.

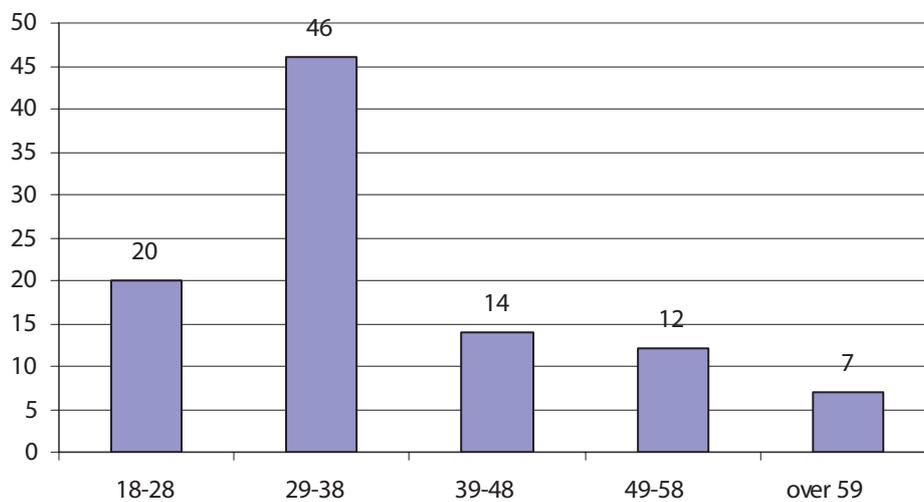


Chart 3. Number of respondents by age group, in %

Most refugees are fairly young and in their most productive years (*i.e.* 29-38 years old). Some of them have studied in Moldova (or other CIS countries); due to war/ political conflicts, they either could not return to their countries of origin (*e.g.* Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Iran) at all or came back to Moldova after a short while and applied asylum.

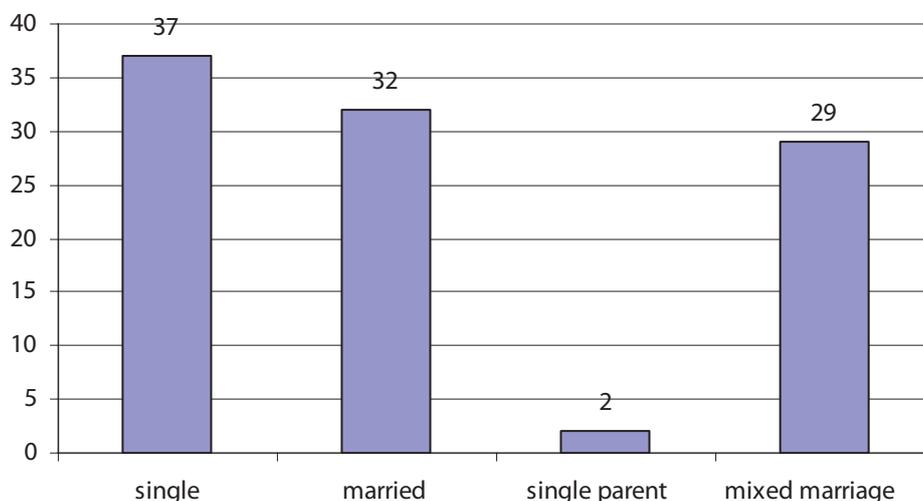


Chart 4a. Marital status of respondents, in %

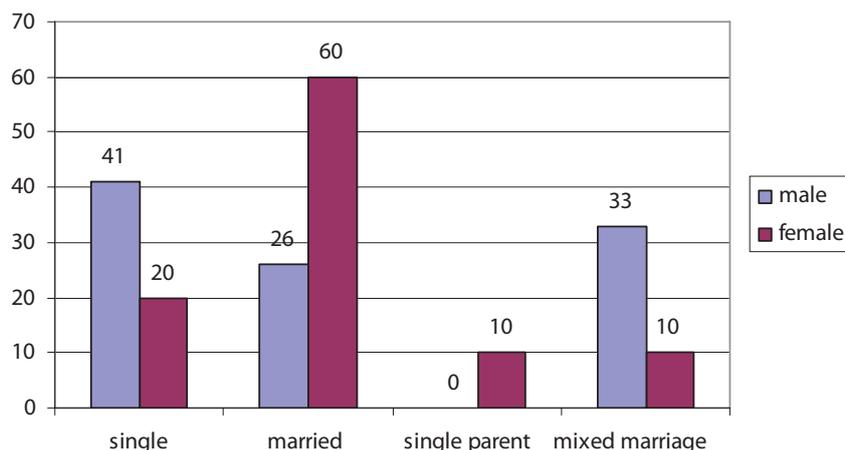


Chart 4b. Marital status of respondents - breakdown by gender, in %

Chart 4a shows that most refugees are married (61% including mixed marriages). “Mixed marriage” indicates marriage of a refugee with a citizen of host country; such marriages are widespread in Moldova (32%). Chart 4b shows that in these mixed marriages most often the wife is the citizen (33% of male and 10% of female respondents are married to Moldovans). A local spouse may restrict a refugee’s access to certain social benefits, but can also facilitate access to others normally available to citizens (*i.e.* some refugee families qualified for maternity benefits only because one of the spouses was a citizen). Fig. 4b also shows that there are many single male refugees, while most female refugees are married.

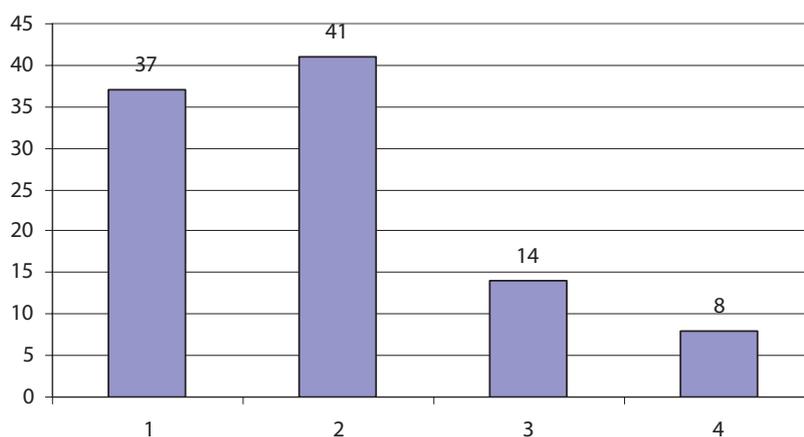


Chart 5. Size of respondents’ families (number of children), in %

Chart 5 shows that refugee families have children, most respondents have 2 children (41%), 22% of respondents have 3 and 4 children. Such a situation explains why refugee women usually stay at home taking care of children.

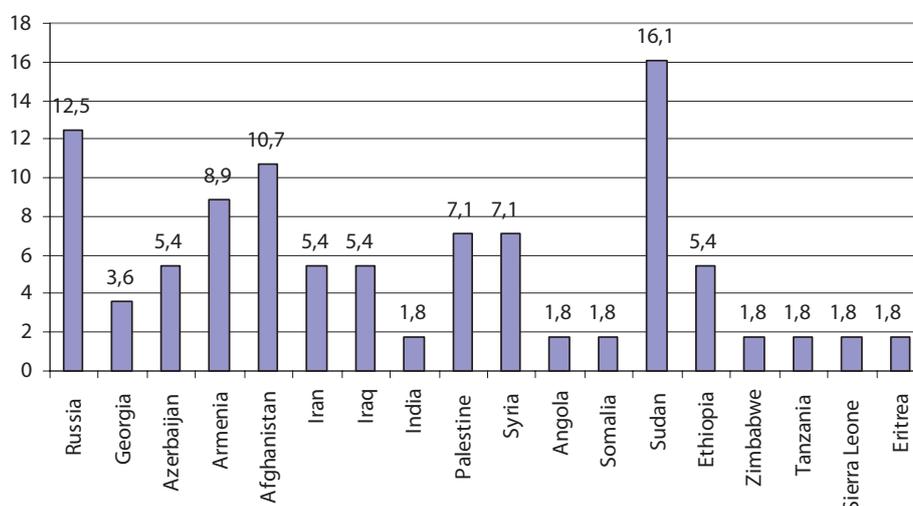


Chart 6. Number of respondents by country of origin, in %

While the respondents represent most of the nationalities of refugees living in Moldova, the composition of the sample is not proportionate to the various communities. The LIP team did not have access to all communities. According to the official statistics, refugees from Russia constitute the largest community.

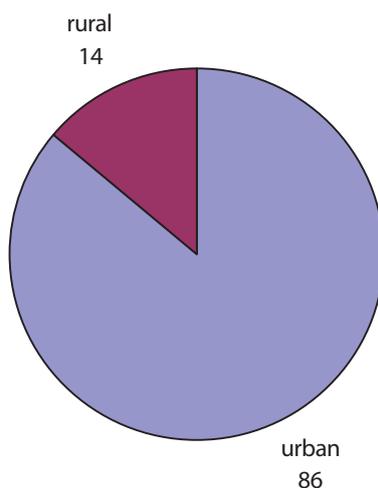


Chart 7. Number of respondents according to their urban or rural backgrounds, in %

Most refugees living in Moldova, are of the urban origin, a fact which no doubt explains why most of them have rather high educational qualifications. The composition of the sample is proportionate to that of the refugee population as a whole.

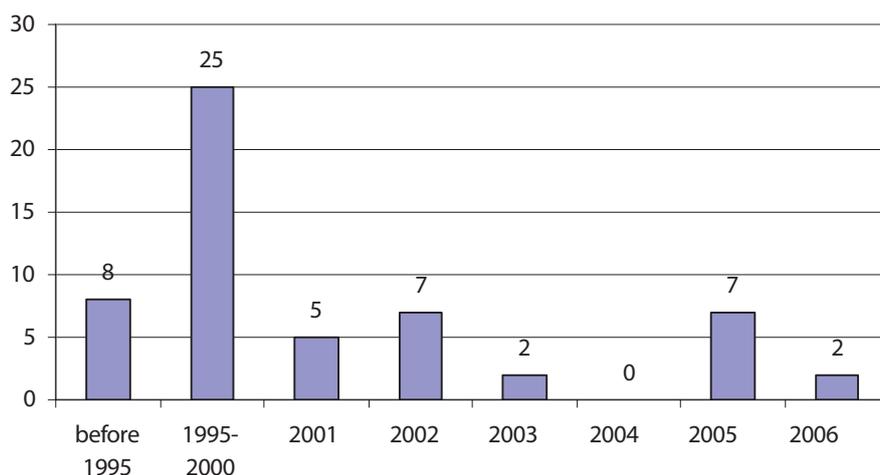


Chart 8a. Number of respondents according to the year of arrival in the host country.

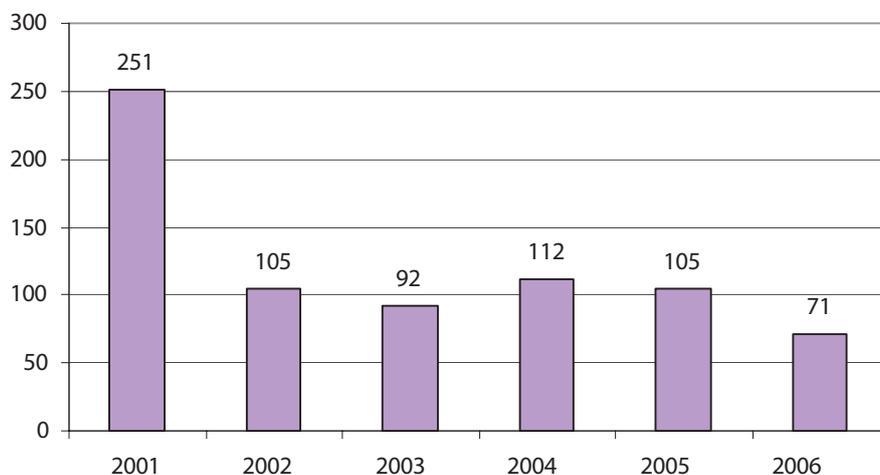
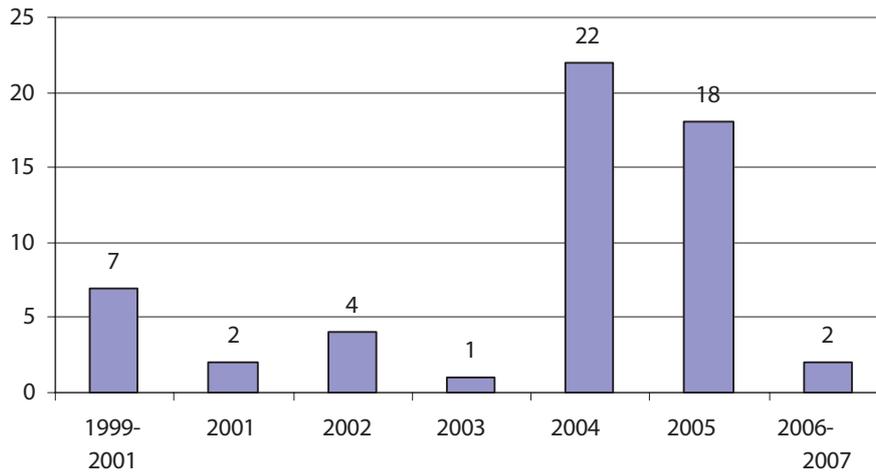


Chart 8b. Total number of applications for refugee status per year.



Prior to the adoption by the Republic of Moldova of the Law on Refugee status (2002), the recognition of status was the responsibility of UNHCR.

Chart 9a. Number of respondents by year of recognition of refugee status

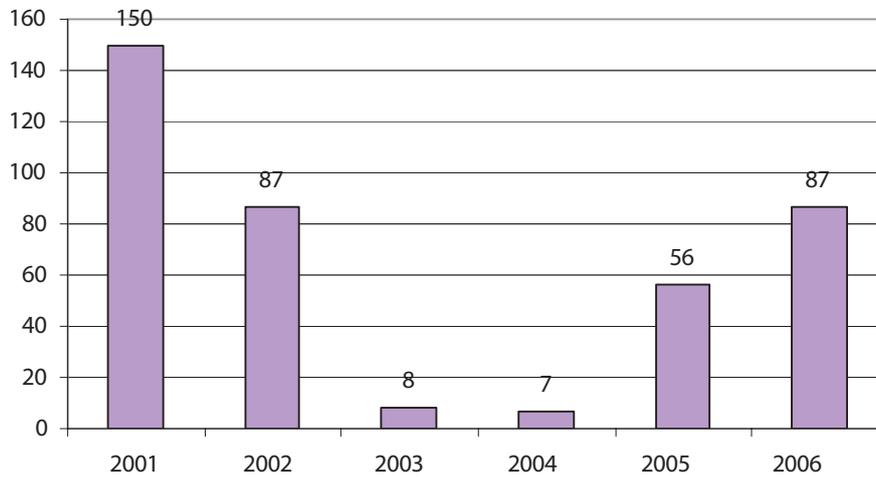
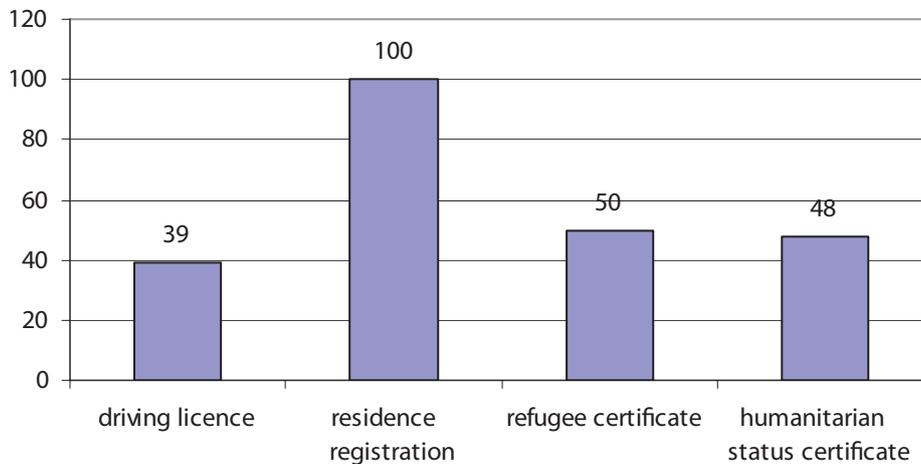


Chart 9b. Total number of refugee status recognitions per year

Chart 9a shows that a significant number of respondents stated that they had obtained refugee status in 2004 – their statements were not checked.



Total is over 100% as a respondent could choose more than one alternative

Chart 10a. Number of respondents according to the documents they hold, in %

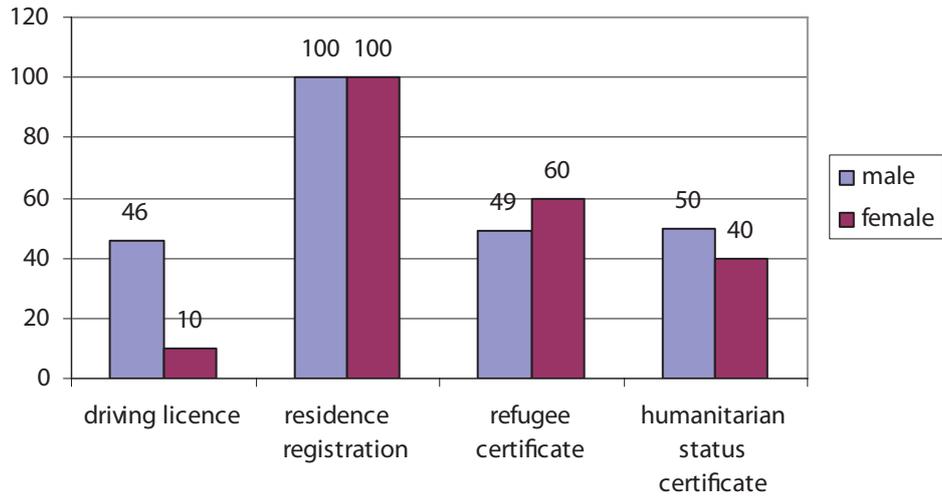


Chart 10b Number of respondents by gender according to the documents they hold in %

A comparison of this chart (10b) with the preceding one (10a) shows that with the exception of the driving license (46% of the men; 10% of the women) there are no significant differences in respect of the documents held by the respondents. None of the refugees hold Convention travel documents (CTD) and thus cannot travel abroad.

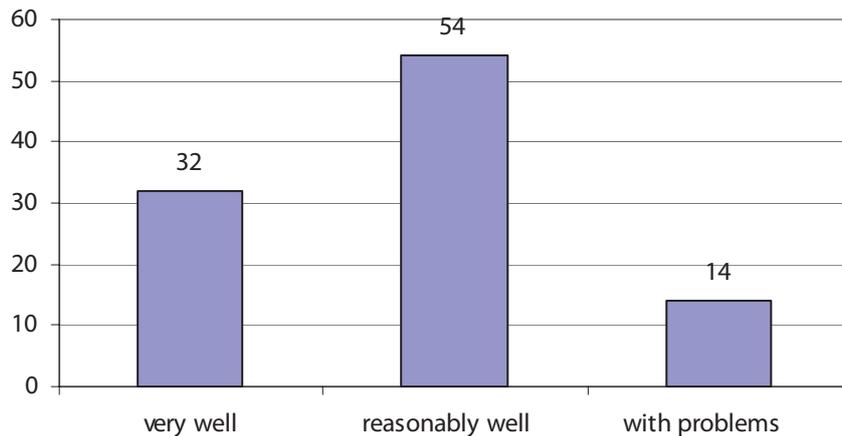


Chart 11a. Number of respondents according to their self-assessed command of Russian/Romanian, in %

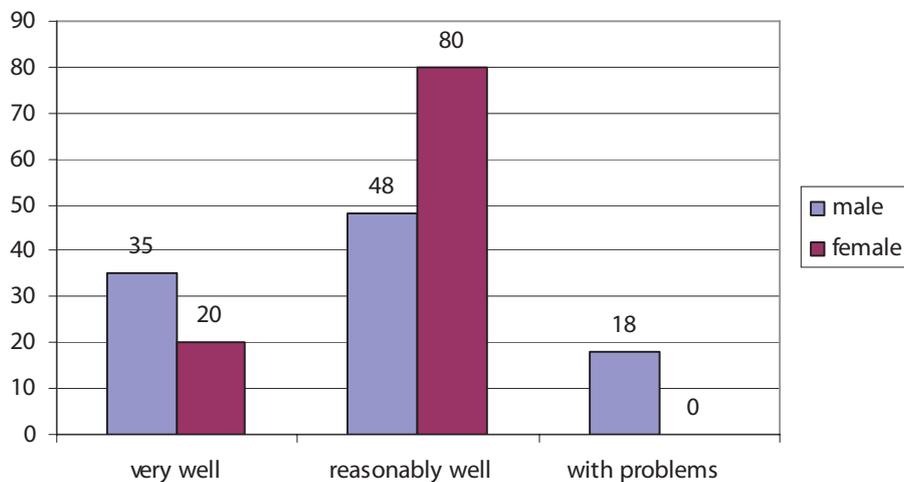


Chart 11b. Number of respondents by gender and according to their self-assessed command of Russian /Romanian, in %

A comparison of the charts 11a and 11b shows that most respondents can communicate in the languages of their host country; only 14% reported to have language problems. None of the respondent ticked the option “cannot communicate at all” in the questionnaire. These results may be due to the fact that the respondents agreed to be interviewed because they could communicate well. Usually refugees in Moldova know both Romanian and Russian, but most of them speak Russian better: 68% of respondents speak good Russian, and only 29% can speak Romanian well.

The breakdown by gender shows that the female respondents have an even better command of the local languages than the men. This is because 80% of female respondents come from the former Soviet republics and that Russian is usually their mother tongue.

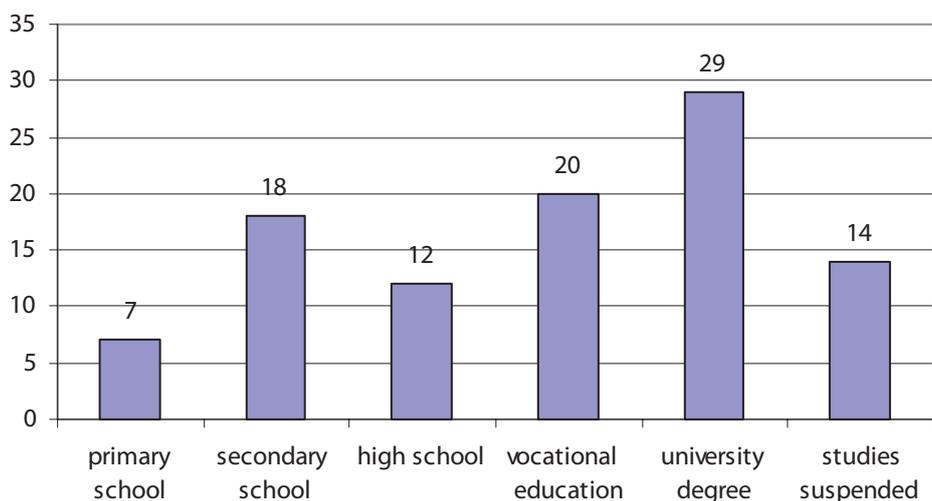


Chart 12a. Number of respondents according to levels of education, in %

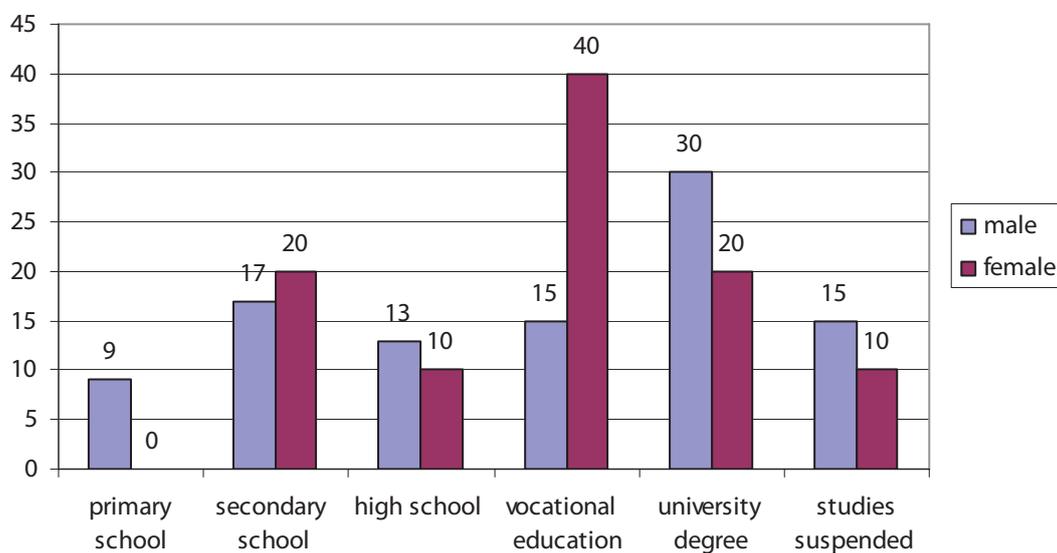


Chart 12b. Number of respondents by gender according to levels of education, in %

Most refugees have a high educational background, 49% of them have either vocational or higher education. The breakdown by gender shows that refugee women have a somewhat lower educational background than men (most of them have vocational but not higher education).

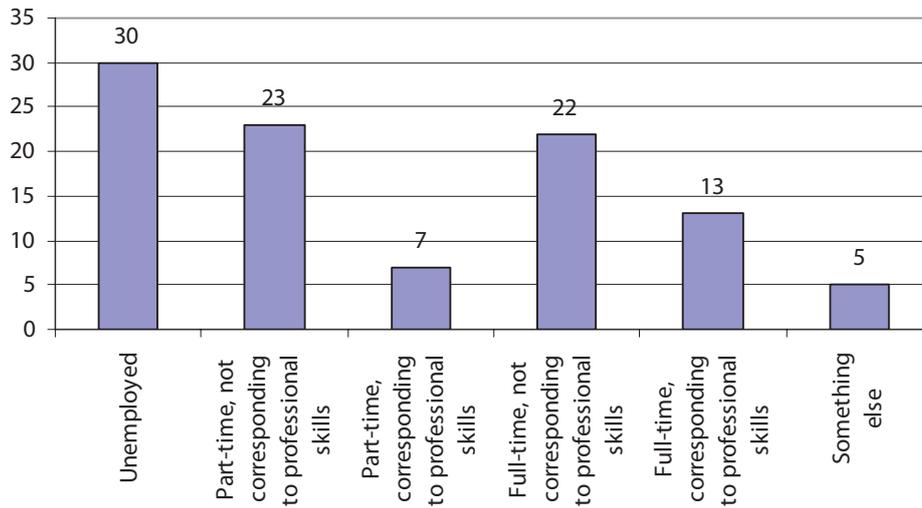


Chart 13a. Number of employed and unemployed respondents, in %

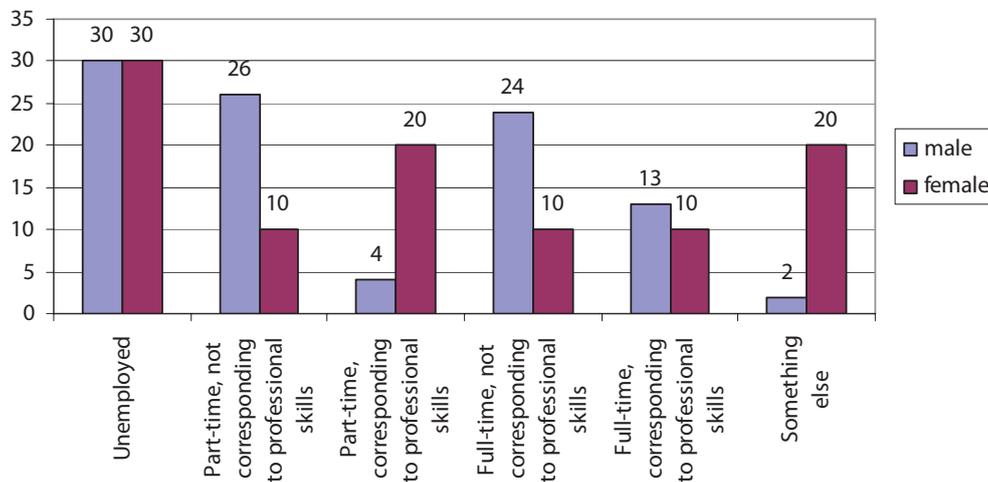


Chart 13b. Number of employed and unemployed respondents (by gender), in %

Most respondents are employed, although often their job does not correspond to their professional qualifications. A comparison of charts 13a and 13b shows that more women than men are in part-time employment. Those female respondents who ticked “something else” usually meant that they were housewives.

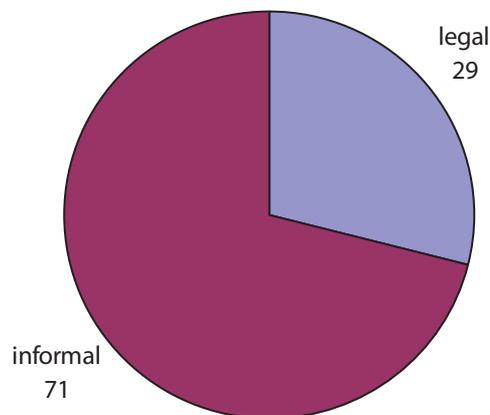


Chart 14. Number of respondents in legal/ in informal employment

Interviews show that 71% of all respondents are employed illegally, which means that they do not pay taxes or social security contributions. As a result, they are not entitled to social benefits of any kind.

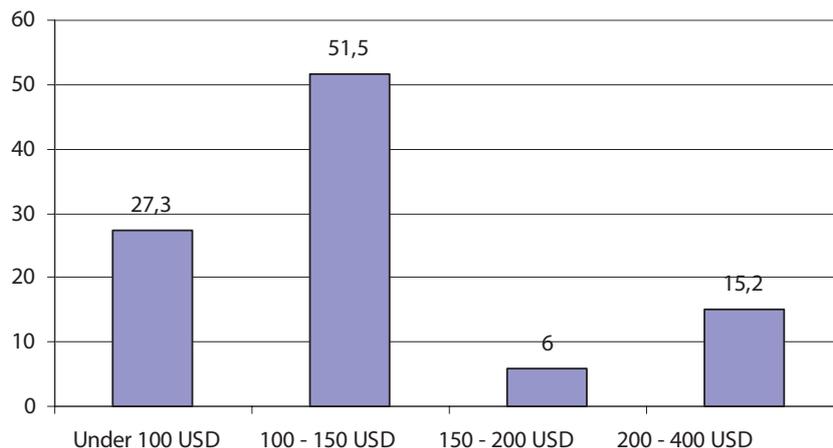
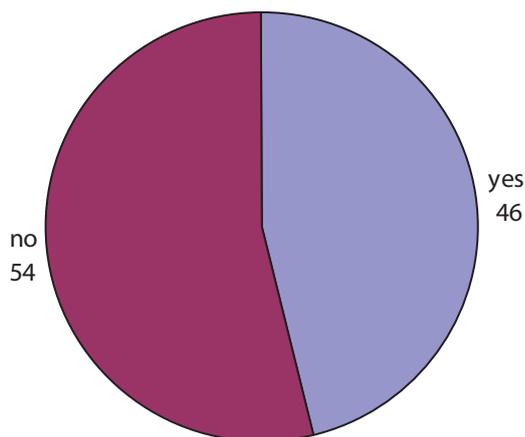


Chart 15. Number of respondents according to their monthly income, in %

51,5% of the respondents earn 100-150 USD per month, which corresponds to the average level of income in Moldova. Although their salaries are not lower than the earnings of Moldovans, it is necessary to take into account that in most respondents have to pay more for housing. This consideration explains why almost everybody wants to get better paid job and rarely accepts official jobs corresponding to professional skills which usually carry low salaries.



Few of the respondents apply for official loans, most borrow money from friends/countrymen

Chart 16. Number of respondents who are in debt, in %

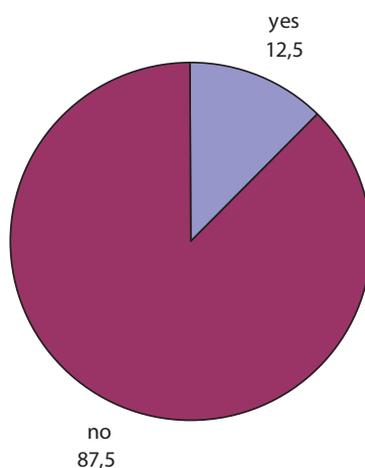


Chart 17. Number of respondents who have obtained bank loans, in %

Although many respondents claim to have insufficient incomes, 54% of them manage to live without debts (Chart 16). The majority relies on a “circle of friends” when they need a credit, only 12,5% of respondents reported to obtained credit from a bank (Chart 17).

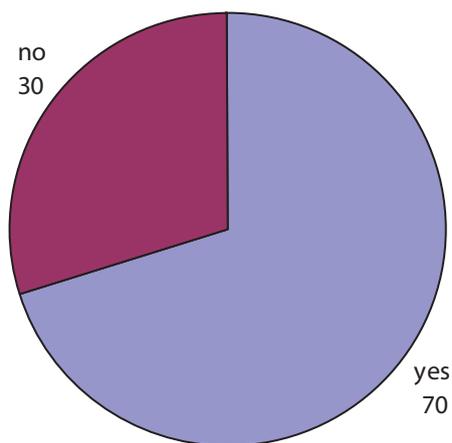


Chart 18. Number of respondents who have entrepreneurial experience, in %

Most refugees are very enterprising; they either run their own business or would like to. According to the respondents, their main obstacles are the lack of initial capital and of personal documents (holders of the humanitarian status are not eligible to set up an enterprise due to the lack of appropriate documents).

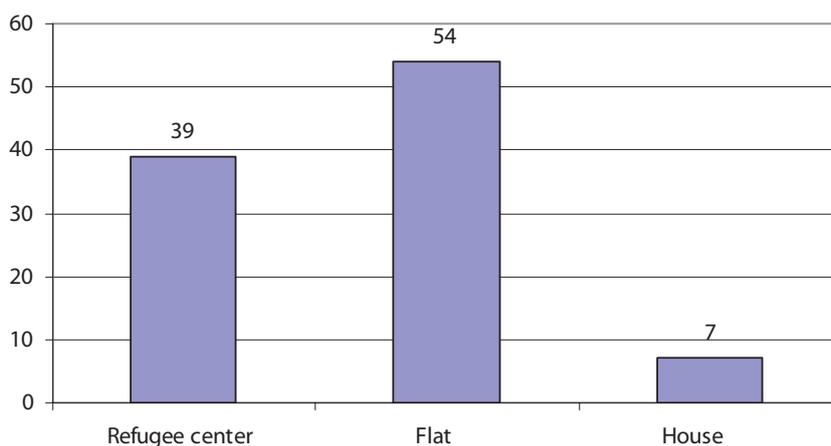


Chart 19. Number of respondents according to the type of housing, in %

Many refugees live in a Temporary Accommodation Center, but the majority has to rent flats. Only a few respondents live in their own flats/houses.

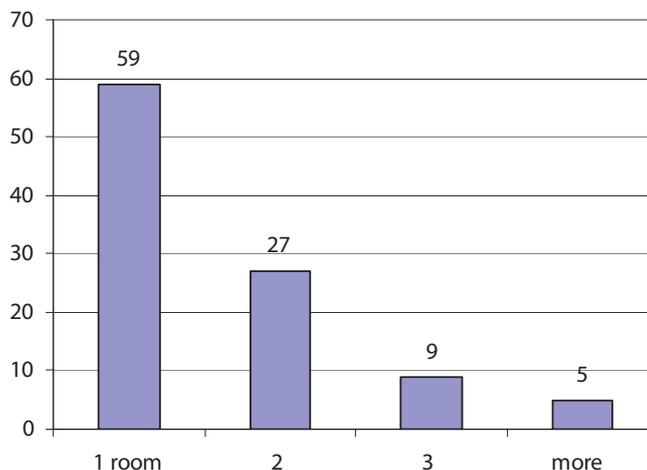


Chart 20. Number of respondents per size of housing unit, in %

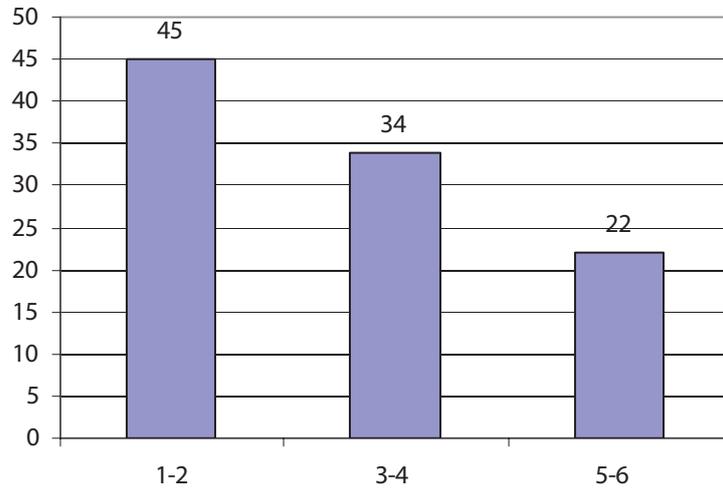


Chart 21. Number of respondents sharing accommodation with one or more persons, in %

Charts 20 and 21 show that many refugees live very tightly sharing flats with other people. Three generations may live in one flat. Other persons are most often family members and other relatives, but also friends, other countrymen and sometimes landlords. Comparing Charts 20 and 21 one can see that far not always families consisting of 3 and more people live in bigger flats (*i.e.* having over 1 room).

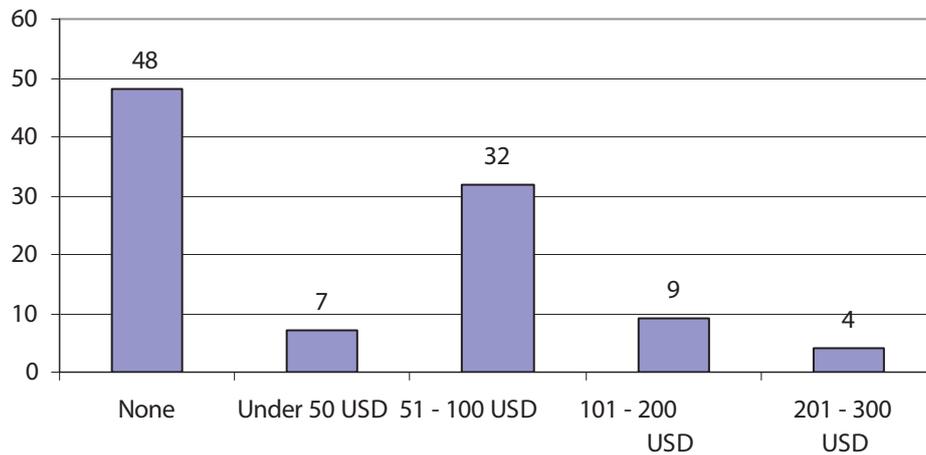


Chart 22. Respondents' rental costs (per month), in %

Most of the respondents who pay no rent live in the Temporary Accommodation Center, few have their own housing.

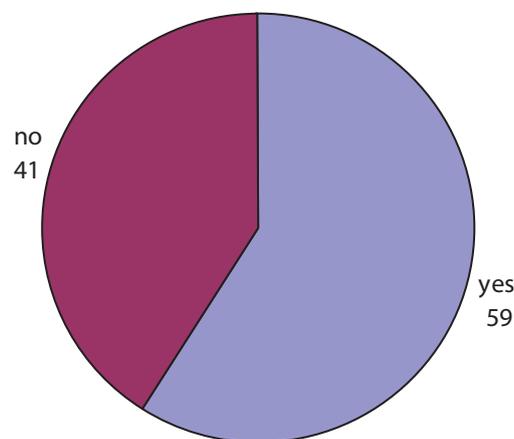


Chart 23. Number of respondents who actually live where they are registered, in %

The residence registration of many respondents (41%) does not correspond to their actual address, which causes different problems when accessing social services and benefits.

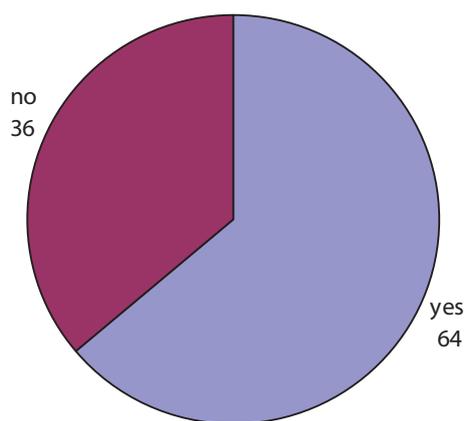


Chart 24. Number of respondents who are satisfied/not satisfied with their housing conditions, in %

Most of the replies of the respondents were ambiguous, for although a majority claimed to be satisfied with their accommodation, many of them actually hoped for better housing, but could not afford it.

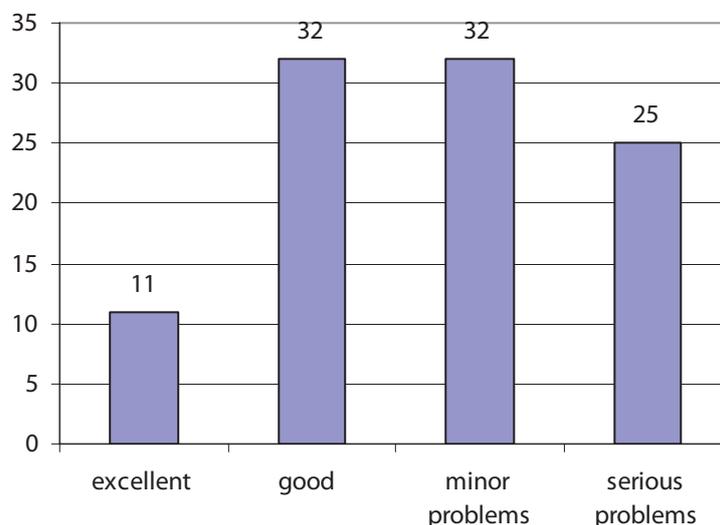


Chart 25a. state of health of respondents , in %

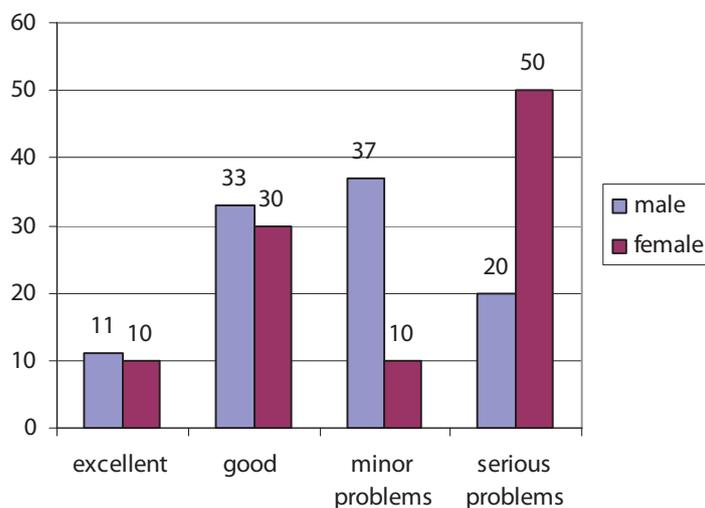


Chart 25b. State of health of respondents (breakdown by gender), in %

Charts 25a and 25b are based on the respondents' own statements as regards their health. The breakdown by gender shows that a significantly higher number of women than men reported ill-health. Usually refugees have the same health problems as locals.

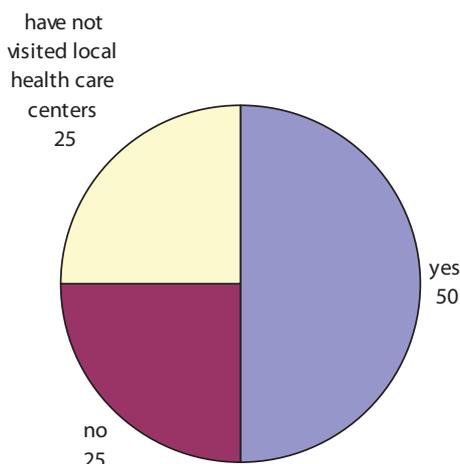


Chart 26. Number of respondents who are satisfied/ unsatisfied with medical services, in %

Respondents were mostly satisfied with medical assistance they receive in hospitals and polyclinics, but in many cases they lack money to pay for better medical treatment or medicines. Some of those who have never visited local health care centers use the free of charge services provided by the doctor employed by the NGO “Save the Children”.

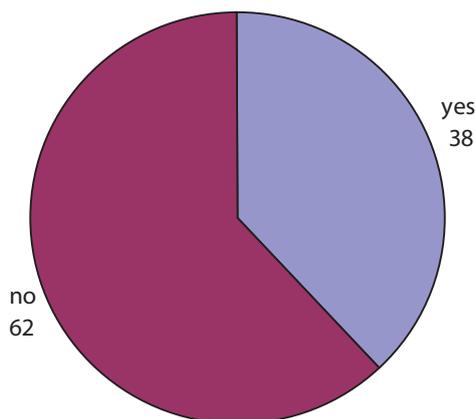


Chart 27a. Number of respondents who have faced hostility from locals, in %

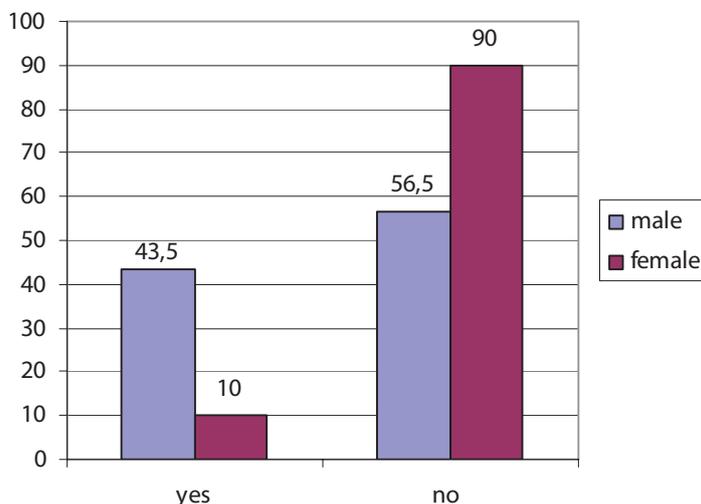


Chart 27b. Number of respondents who have faced hostility from locals (by gender), in %

Chart 27a illustrates the attitude of the local population towards refugees. Although most respondents have not faced hostility from the local people, 38% of them stated that they had met with various forms of prejudice and intolerance. Such cases indicate that the problem of tolerance is still on the agenda in the Moldovan society.

The breakdown by gender (Chart 27b) shows that female respondents have faced less hostility than men; this may be due to the fact that almost all the female interviewees originated from the former Soviet republics and do not differ much from the local people.

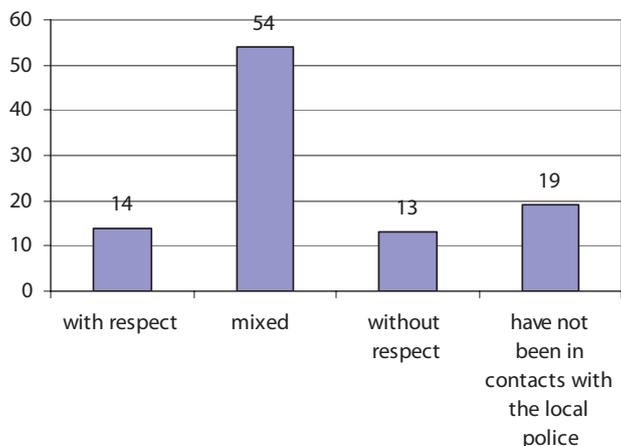


Chart 28a. Frequency of answers to the question “How does the police treat you?”, in %

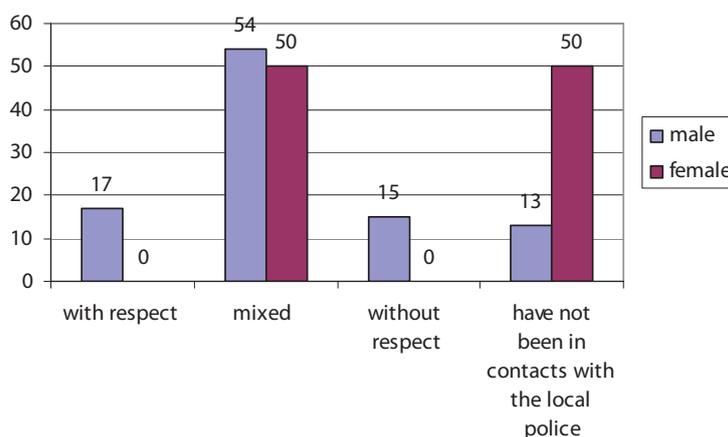


Chart 28b. Frequency of answers to the question “How does the police treat you?” (breakdown by gender), in %

A comparison of Charts 28a and 28b shows that more male respondent than female respondents have had dealings with local police; that the experience of those women who had, had been mixed as was the case for a majority of men, and that while no women reported that they had met with disrespect, none had been treated uniformly with respect either. The percentages recorded in both charts tend to indicate that in the police, prejudice towards refugees runs higher than in the population at large.

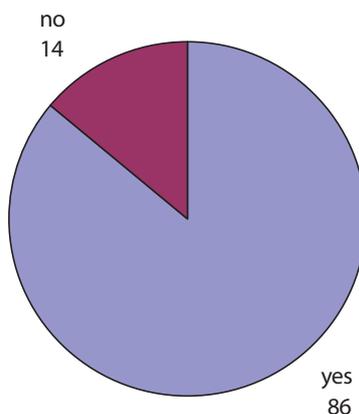


Chart 29a. Number of respondents who have Moldovan friends, in %

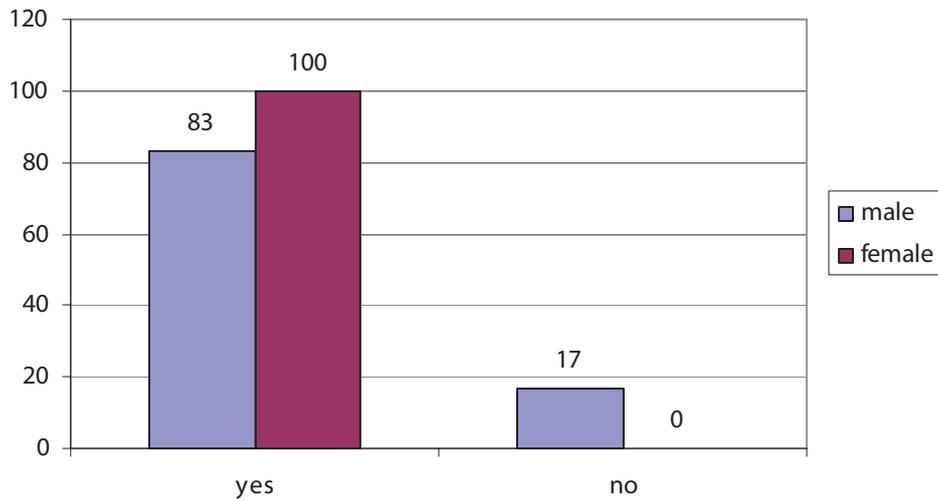


Chart 29b. Number of respondents who have Moldovan friends, (breakdown by gender), in %

Overall, even if one takes into account that 80% of the female respondents originated from the CIS countries and easily blend into local society, fewer than 20% of all respondents reported having no friends among the local population. This must be considered a positive factor when assessing the prospects of integration of refugees in Moldova

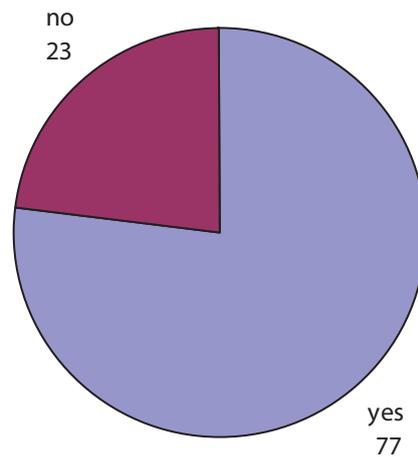


Chart 30a. Number of respondents who “feel safe” in the host country, in %

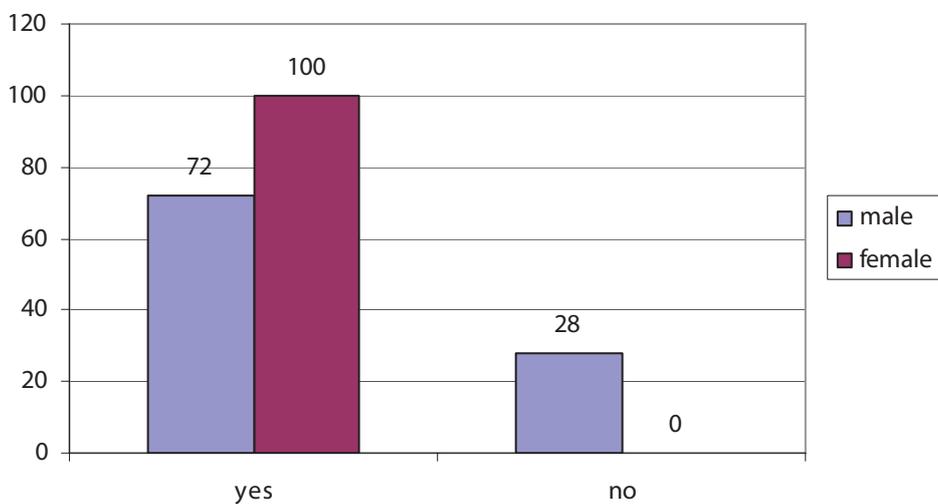


Chart 30b. Number of respondents who “feel safe” in the host country (breakdown by gender), in %

The replies to the questionnaires indicate that 77% of all respondents feel safe in Moldova. In a number of instances however, their answers while positive, also reflected a degree of insecurity because of different socio-economic difficulties. As in relation to Chart 29b, the fact that 100% of all female respondents feel safe in Moldova is largely due to the origin of the majority among them.

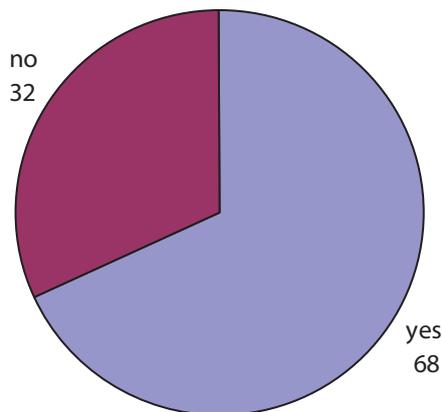


Chart 31a. Number of respondents planning to stay in the host country, in %

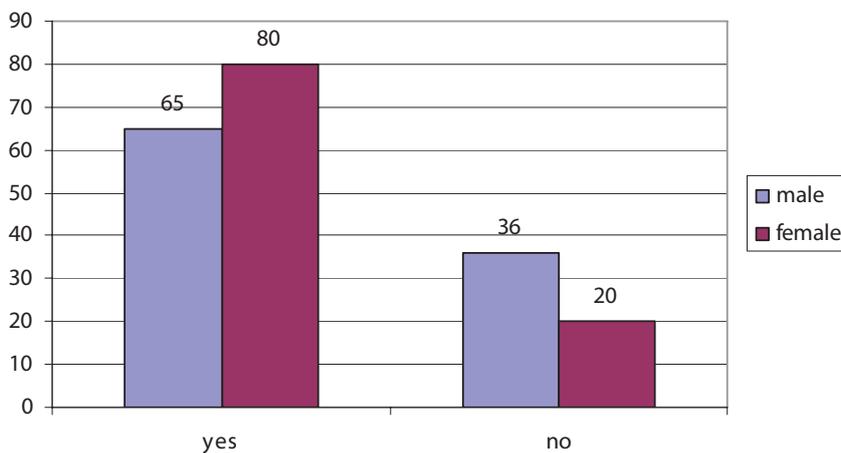


Chart 31b. Number of respondents planning to stay in the host country (breakdown by gender), in %

A comparison of Charts 31a and 31b shows that while overall the majority respondents plan to stay in Moldova, more women than men are thus inclined. The replies to the question are ambiguous however, as many respondents who answered positively also expressed hope for resettlement to a third country

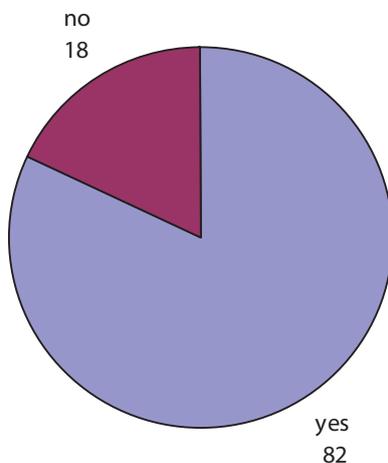


Chart 32a. Number of respondents planning to apply for citizenship, in %

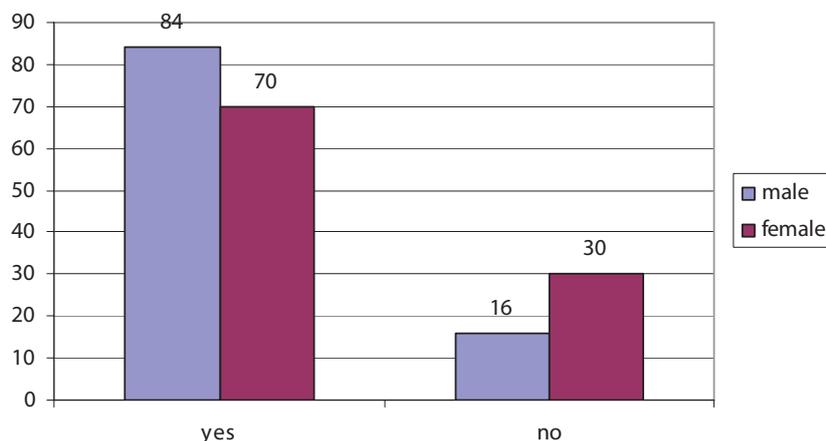


Chart 32b. Number of respondents planning to apply for citizenship (breakdown by gender), in %

No refugees have been naturalized to date although many intend to apply (e.g. 32 or 82% of those interviewed). The main reason is that few have “legally” (not only factually) resided in Moldova the required minimum of eight years. Some refugees who married a Moldovan meet the reduced criteria of 3 years. While a substantial number of those interviewed wish to apply for citizenship, a relatively high percentage (about 18%) are not sure whether this option is in their best interest.

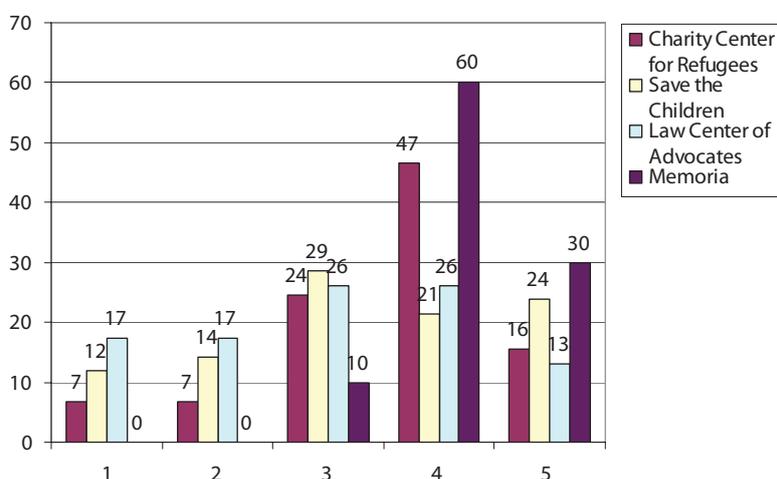


Chart 33. Respondents' evaluation of quality of assistance provided by NGOs (1=very bad, 2=bad, 3=satisfactory, 4=good, 5=excellent), in %

Respondents are satisfied especially with the support and assistance provided by NGO “Memoria” (not a UNHCR implementing partner), specialized in providing support to torture victims and assisting refugees with socio-psychological counselling as well as reimbursing refugees 50% of costs incurred for medicines.

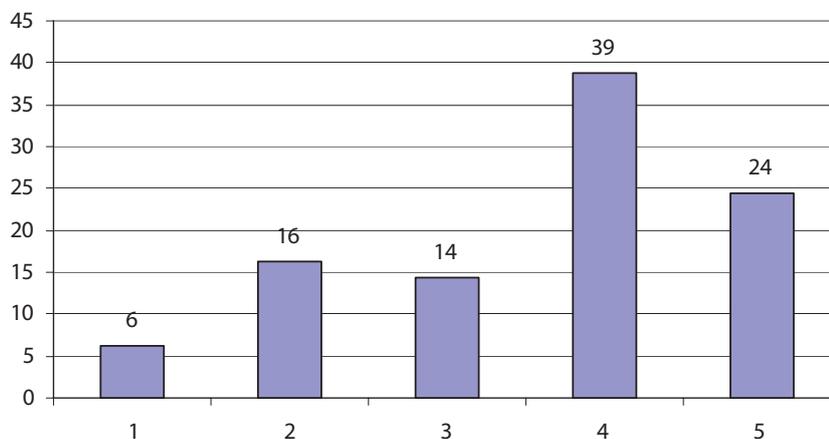


Chart 34. Evaluation of quality of services provided by the Directorate for refugees (1=very bad, 2=bad, 3=satisfactory, 4=good, 5=excellent), in %

The services provided by the Bureau for Asylum and Migration of the Ministry of Interior are estimated mostly as good. One can conclude that this Government agency fulfills its responsibilities connected with refugee status determination and the administration of the Temporary Accommodation Centre well and that the staff treats refugees with respect.

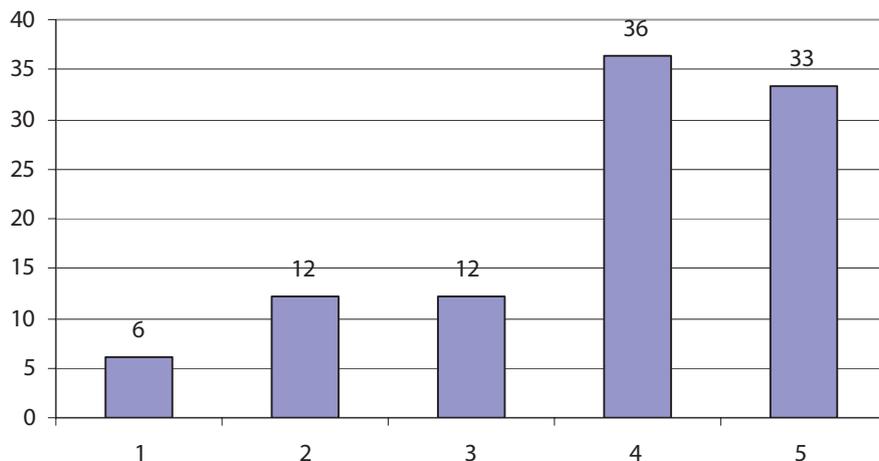


Chart 35. Respondents' evaluation of quality of services provided by the TAC (1=very bad, 2=bad, 3=satisfactory, 4=good, 5=excellent), in %

See comment provided above under chart 34.

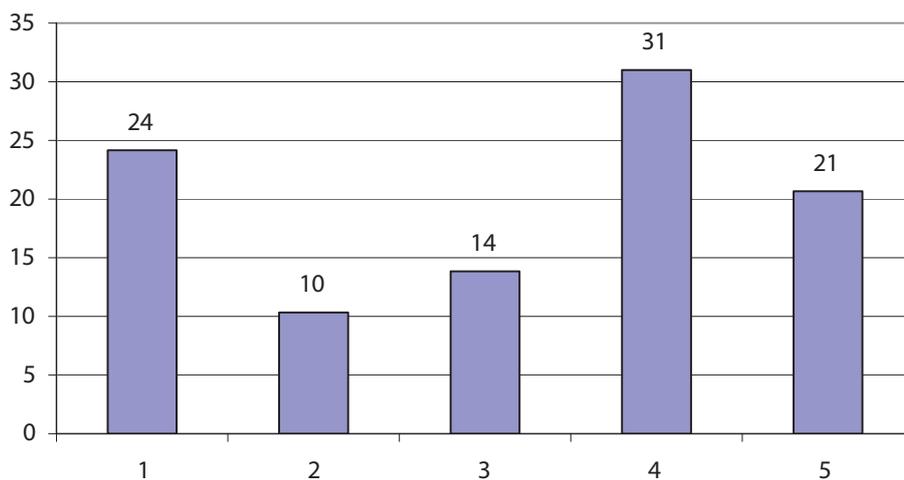


Chart 36. Respondents' evaluation of quality of the UNHCR activities (1=very bad, 2=bad, 3=satisfactory, 4=good, 5=excellent), in %

Quotes from individual interviews

1. I cannot marry my girlfriend because I have no documents (Sudanese man, holder of the humanitarian status).
2. I live in a two-room flat, me and my girlfriend in one room and four other girls sharing another room (Sudanese man, holder of the humanitarian status).
3. People are afraid of law here. It is changing every day (Sudanese man, holder of the humanitarian status).
4. The refugee office is frightening because it is full of policemen. Refugees are not criminals (Sudanese man, holder of the humanitarian status).
5. Everyone wants to have good life, family and work. That is all (Sudanese man, holder of the humanitarian status).
6. I will never take a credit, because I would never pay it back without having a stable income (statement made by more than one refugee).
7. My business partner invited me to Germany and promised to cover all my costs, but I could not go because I had no travel document. (Chechen man).
8. In 1999 I applied for citizenship and was required to withdraw my former citizenship. But how can I approach authorities in my country, if I was persecuted by them? (Afghan man)
9. How can I find job in Moldova, if Moldovans cannot find job themselves? (Syrian man).
10. There is a lot of discrimination for a simple fact that a word “refugee” is indicated in my document (Ethiopian man).
11. My wish for the future is to work without paying bribes and facing problems with policemen (Syrian man).
12. I would like to be a farmer, but it is not profitable here (Afghan man).
13. It took me 15 years to get citizenship. My friends went to Belgium and were naturalized in a very short time; they wondered why I am not coming there too (Afghan man).
14. In order to avoid discrimination I took the family name of my Moldovan wife
15. I feel discriminated in Moldova because of my color.
16. I feel safe only in Chisinau, but not in other parts of Moldova (Syrian man).
17. My dream is to gather money and open a private clinic. I am planning to go elsewhere to earn some money and then come back to Moldova and open my clinic (Syrian man).
18. If I had a chance to leave, I would leave this country.
19. Local people do not understand us refugees.
20. I live with my wife and two children, but I cannot register my marriage officially, as I have no documents (holder of the humanitarian status).
21. I feel established and safe but I also need a document (holder of the humanitarian status).
22. I studied agriculture in Moldova and have some experience in growing up animals and selling them. If I were able to take a credit, I would set up agricultural business (Afghan man).
23. It is 100% corruption everywhere (Ethiopian man).
24. I would like to work as a teacher but salary is so poor: after paying the rent nothing would be left (Syrian man).
25. I have studied medicine in Romania, but I cannot obtain a permit to work as a doctor in Moldova (Palestinian man).
26. At the moment I am no one here (Sudanese man).
27. I am planning to go to another country; the employment situation is hopeless here (African man).
28. Refugees do not know their rights and they do not get their documents; lack of information is evident (Palestinian man).
29. I had to give up Romanian classes. It was simply too difficult to study without having a vocabulary, in which the other language would have been my mother tongue (Afghan man).
30. Life is hard without documents (African man).
31. The doctors told me that my disease cannot be healed in Moldova (Syrian man).
32. I have lost my trust towards UNHCR (African man).

Selected correlations

Country of origin – level of command of the local language

There is a correlation between the country of origin and a respondent's level of command of the local languages (mostly Russian and sometimes Romanian). Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 5% level and Cramer's V equals 0,353.⁷⁰

Table 1

| Country of origin | | 2.9 Assess your present situation, how well you/ your family manage in this country with the language skills you/ your family members have? | | | Total |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---|-----------|-----------------|-------|
| | | | Very well | Reasonably well | |
| CIS countries | Count | 3 | 14 | 0 | 17 |
| | % | 17,6 | 82,4 | 0 | 100 |
| African countries | Count | 5 | 7 | 6 | 18 |
| | % | 27,8 | 38,9 | 33,3 | 100 |
| Afghanistan and other Asian countries | Count | 10 | 9 | 2 | 21 |
| | % | 47,6 | 42,8 | 9,5 | 100 |
| Total | Count | 18 | 30 | 8 | 56 |
| | % | 32,1 | 53,6 | 14,3 | 100 |

It is quite natural that refugees originating from the CIS countries know Russian well and have no language barrier in Moldova, although the official language is Romanian. Table 1 shows that refugees from the CIS countries (i.e. Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia) manage with their language skills without any problems, refugees from Afghanistan and other Asian countries scored a bit worse, and African refugees have the worst command of the local languages.

Country of origin – facing hostility from locals

Table 2

| Country of origin | | 8.1. Have you/ your family members experienced hostile behaving in the local community? | | Total |
|---------------------------------------|-------|---|------|-------|
| | | | Yes | |
| CIS countries | Count | 2 | 15 | 17 |
| | % | 11,8 | 88,2 | 100 |
| African countries | Count | 11 | 7 | 18 |
| | % | 61,1 | 38,9 | 100 |
| Afghanistan and other Asian countries | Count | 8 | 13 | 21 |
| | % | 38,1 | 61,9 | 100 |
| Total | Count | 21 | 35 | 56 |
| | % | 37,5 | 62,5 | 100 |

Although most respondents (62,3%) said that they had never experienced hostile behaving in the Moldovan society, certain respondents mentioned cases of prejudiced attitude. Unfortunately, the origin of a person still affects the attitude of the local community; Table 2 shows that there is a correlation between these two factors. Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 1% level and Cramer's V equals 0,403.

One can see that refugees from the CIS countries are mostly welcomed in the Moldovan society, only 11,8% of them have ever experienced hostile behaving. Refugees from Afghanistan and other Asian countries are less accepted, 38,1% of them reported the case of hostile behaving. African refugees appear to be in the most disadvantaged position as 61,1% of them have experienced hostility in the Moldovan society.

⁷⁰ **Chi-Square Test** identifies correlation between nominal variables. If its significance level is less or equals 5% level, a correlation exists.

Cramer's V is one of the symmetric measures for nominal data. It varies from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates the absence of correlation, 1 – the strongest correlation.

Table 3

| | | 9.10. What is your overall impression, are you accepted/ welcomed in this society? | | | Total |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--|------|------|-------|
| | | | Yes | No | |
| Country of origin | CIS countries | Count | 16 | 1 | 17 |
| | | % | 94,1 | 5,9 | 100 |
| | African countries | Count | 11 | 7 | 18 |
| | | % | 61,1 | 38,9 | 100 |
| | Afghanistan and other Asian countries | Count | 16 | 5 | 21 |
| | | % | 76,2 | 23,8 | 100 |
| Total | Count | 43 | 13 | 56 | |
| | % | 76,8 | 23,2 | 100 | |

Table 3 also shows that the attitude of the local community depends on the origination of a respondent. Although there is no correlation in terms of statistics between the origination and respondent's impression whether he/she is accepted in the local society, one can see that refugees from the CIS countries seem to be the most welcomed group (94% of them fell accepted in Moldova), refugees from Afghanistan and other Asian countries are in the middle position (76,2%) and African refugees are the least accepted group (61,1%).

Country of origin – feeling safe in Moldova

Here one can observe the same trend as in the previous pair of factors. Nominally, the correlation is absent, but Table 4 shows that different groups of refugees differ according to their feeling safe in Moldova. 94,1% of refugees from the CIS countries, 76,2% of refugees from Afghanistan and other Asian countries, and 61,1% of the African refugees feel safe in this country. Again, one can see that the refugees from the African countries appear to be in the most disadvantaged position compared to other groups of refugees.

Table 4

| | | 9.9. Do you feel safe in this country? | | | Total |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--|------|------|-------|
| | | | Yes | No | |
| Country of origin | CIS countries | Count | 16 | 1 | 17 |
| | | % | 94,1 | 5,9 | 100 |
| | African countries | Count | 11 | 7 | 18 |
| | | % | 61,1 | 38,9 | 100 |
| | Afghanistan and other Asian countries | Count | 16 | 5 | 21 |
| | | % | 76,2 | 23,8 | 100 |
| Total | Count | 43 | 13 | 56 | |
| | % | 76,8 | 23,2 | 100 | |

Country of origin – planning to stay in Moldova

Correlation between these two factors is another evidence of the fact that different ethnical groups of refugees are not equally integrated into the Moldovan society (Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 5% level and Cramer's V equals 0,294). Table 5 shows that most refugees from the CIS countries are planning to stay in Moldova (70,6%), while half of refugees from the Asian and African countries hope for resettlement to the third countries.

Table 5

| | | 10.5. What are your future plans? | | | Total | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------------------|
| | | | Stay here | Go to my country of origin | | Go to an other third country |
| Country of origin | CIS countries | Count | 12 | 3 | 2 | 17 |
| | | % | 70,6 | 17,6 | 11,8 | 100 |
| | African countries | Count | 9 | 1 | 8 | 18 |
| | | % | 50,0 | 5,6 | 44,4 | 100 |
| | Afghanistan and other Asian countries | Count | 10 | 0 | 11 | 21 |
| | | % | 47,6 | 0,0 | 52,4 | 100 |
| Total | Count | 31 | 4 | 21 | 56 | |
| | % | 55,4 | 7,1 | 37,5 | 100 | |

Local Integration Project (LIP): UKRAINE⁷¹

Statistical analysis of replies to questionnaires

This document presents a series of Charts, illustrating the socio-economic and legal situation of refugees residing in Ukraine. The information on which these charts are based was gathered in the course of 97 confidential interviews of persons of concern who replied to a standard questionnaire (Annex 1).

According to the official statistics (as of 1 January 2007) 2,275 refugees reside in Ukraine, of whom 1,658 are adults. Since 2002, 928 refugees have acquired Ukrainian citizenship, and can thus be considered as having achieved the highest level of integration. LIP interviewers reached 70 recognized refugees (4.1% of the adult refugee population in Ukraine) and 27 naturalized persons with a refugee background (2.9% of the total number of naturalized refugees).

The LIP team has not necessarily reached those refugees who have integrated well, as such persons tended to be less available to the interviewers compared to those who could be reached through UNHCR implementing partners and refugee communities.

NOTE:

The present analysis is based on the subjective, personal accounts of persons of concern whose statements have not been individually verified. Interviewees were requested to respond truthfully; and on the whole, the import of their replies has been confirmed by the objective findings of the LIP study. Diagrammatized, the interviewees' responses offer (within a statistically acceptable margin of error) a graphic summary of key issues and problems.

Some questions were "open" and the Experts noted verbatim responses indicative of refugee views and experiences (see below).

Selected correlations between respondents' socio-economic status and certain of their attitudes and opinions can be also found below.

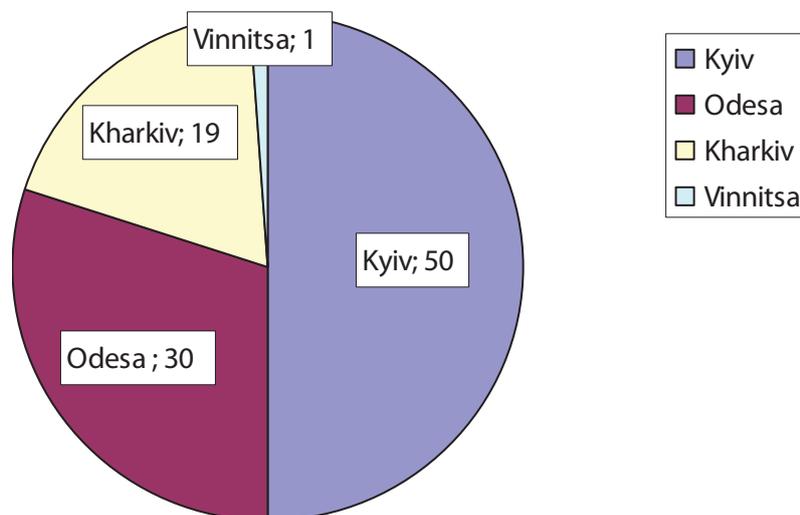


Chart 1. Number of respondents according to place of residence, in %

The number of respondents interviewed in different regions of Ukraine is roughly proportionate to the number of refugees residing in urban and peri-urban areas indicated. According to the official statistics, as of 1 January 2007, the majority of refugees live in Kyiv; the second largest refugee community is in Odesa and third largest in Kharkiv.

⁷¹ Face to face interviews were conducted in Ukraine between 20.6.–16.9.2007. On average each interview lasted 1 to 1 1/5 hours

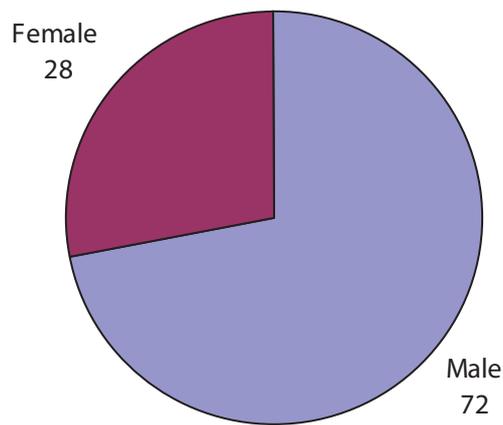


Chart 2. Number of respondents by gender, in %

The gender composition of the sample corresponds to the gender composition of the adult refugee population living in Ukraine. According to the official statistics as of 1 January 2007, 73% of adult refugees are male and 27% - female.

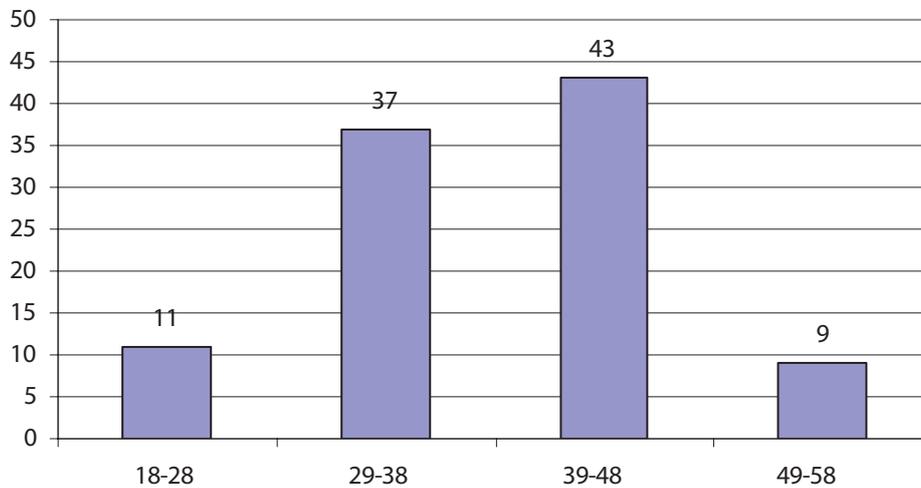


Chart 3. Number of respondents by age group, in %

Most refugees are fairly young and in their most productive years. Many of them have studied in Ukraine (or other CIS countries); due to war/political conflicts, they either could not return to their countries of origin (e.g. Afghanistan, Angola, Sudan, DR Congo) at all or returned to Ukraine after short while and applied asylum. Some were victims of military conflicts, which took place in the former Soviet Union (*i.e.* Georgia, Armenia *etc.*).

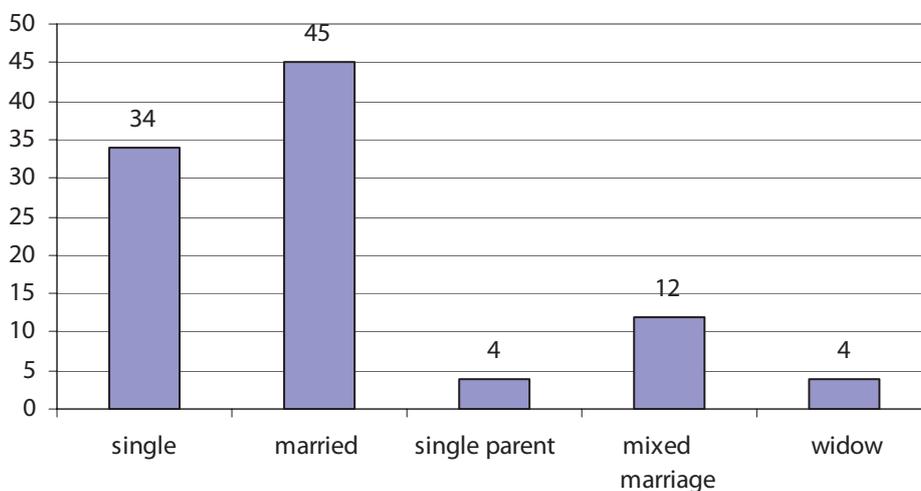


Chart 4. Marital status of respondents, in %

“Mixed marriage” indicates marriage with a citizen of host country, most often the wife is Ukrainian.

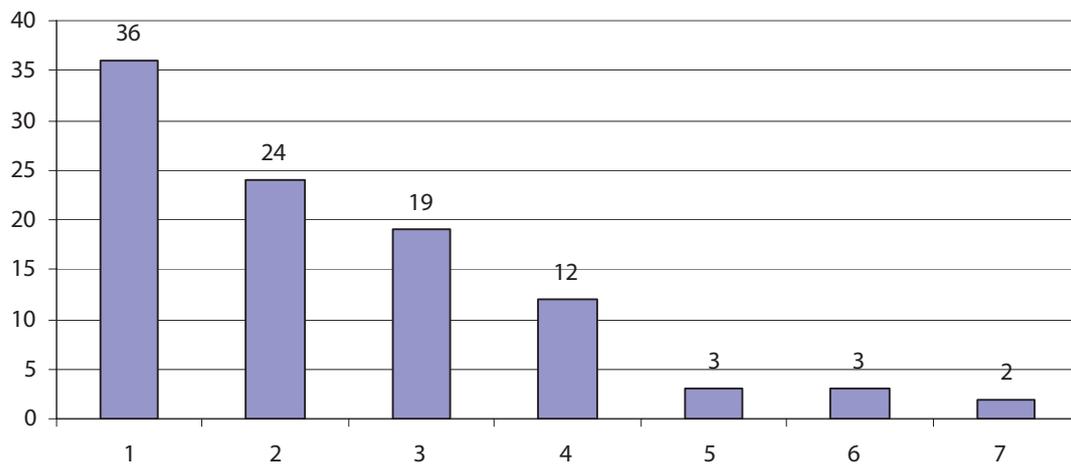


Chart 5. Size of respondents' families (number of children), in %

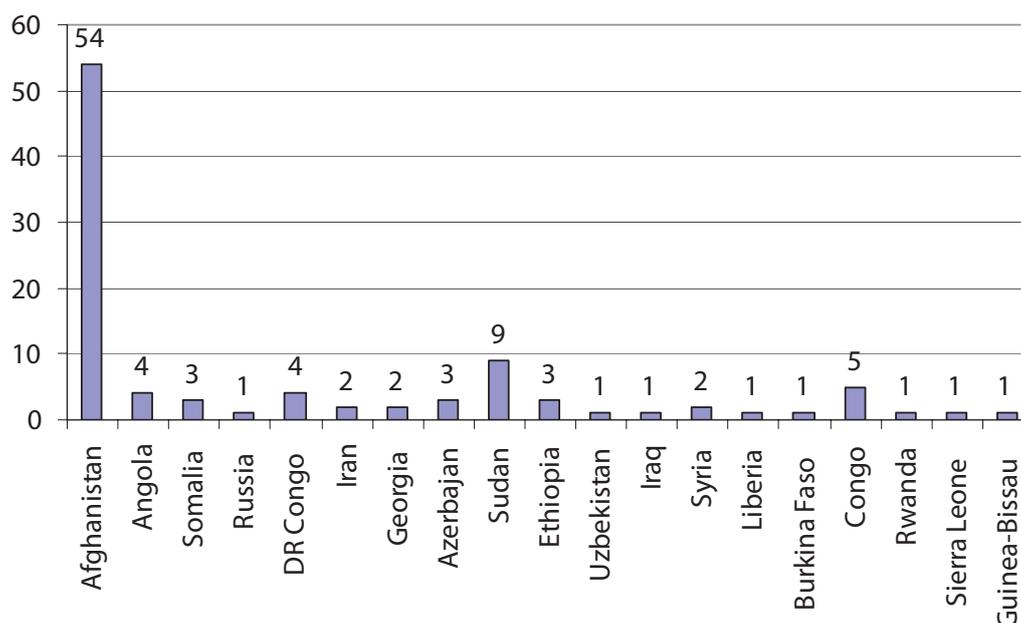


Chart 6. Number of respondents by country of origin, in %

According to the official statistics, as of 1 January 2007, nearly 52% of refugees residing in Ukraine are from Afghanistan, 28% from the former Soviet Union (mostly from Chechnya) and 13% are African refugees. The composition of sample of respondents does reflect that of the refugee community in Ukraine, as Chechen refugees could not be reached by LIP interviewers (they were reluctant to be interviewed). As regards the Afghan and African refugee communities the sample is representative.

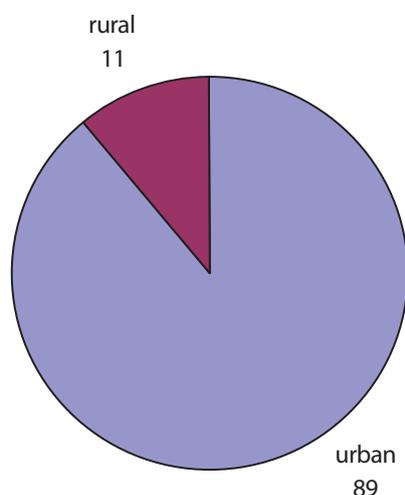


Chart 7. Number of respondents according to their urban or rural backgrounds, in %

A significant proportion of the refugees living in Ukraine are from urban backgrounds; this is clearly reflected in the sample interviewed and no doubt explains why many of them have rather high educational qualifications.

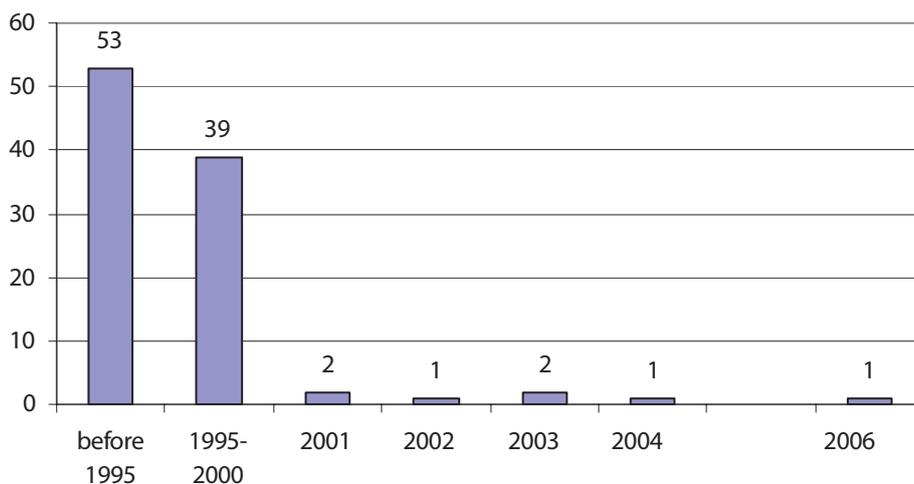


Chart 8a. Number of respondents by year of arrival in the host country, in %

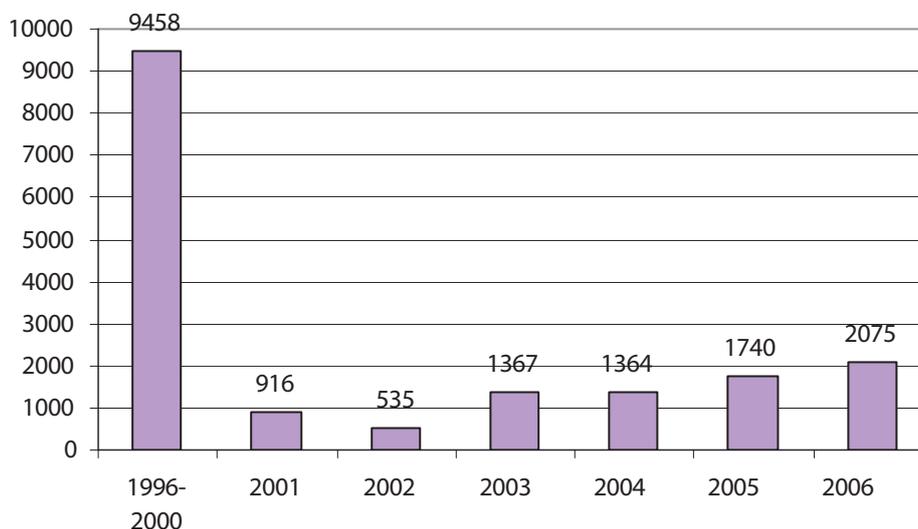


Chart 8b. Total number of applications for refugee status per year

In Ukraine, recognition procedures began in 1996.

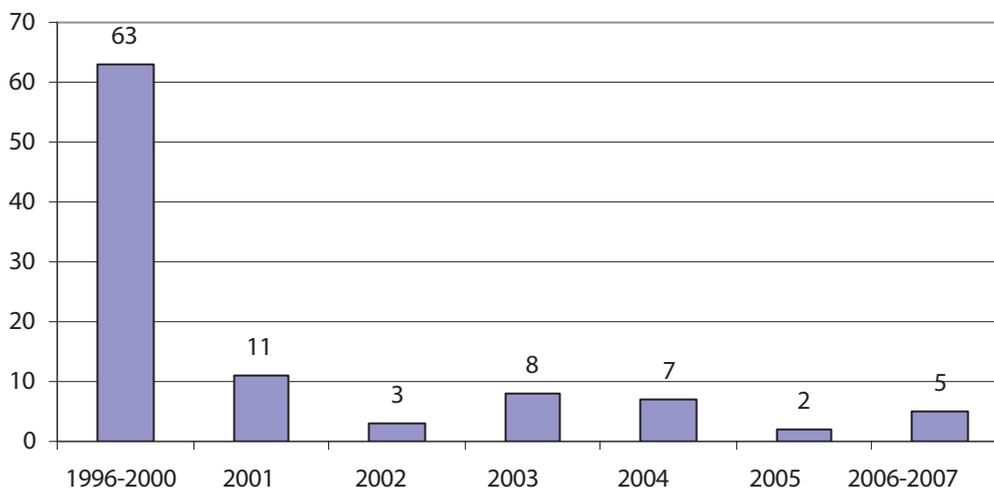


Chart 9a. Number of respondents by year of recognition of refugee status, in %

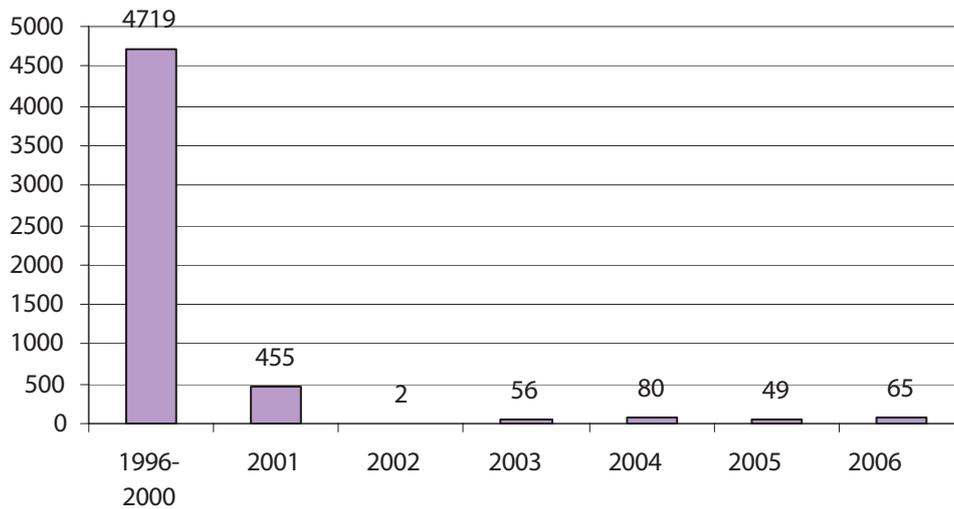
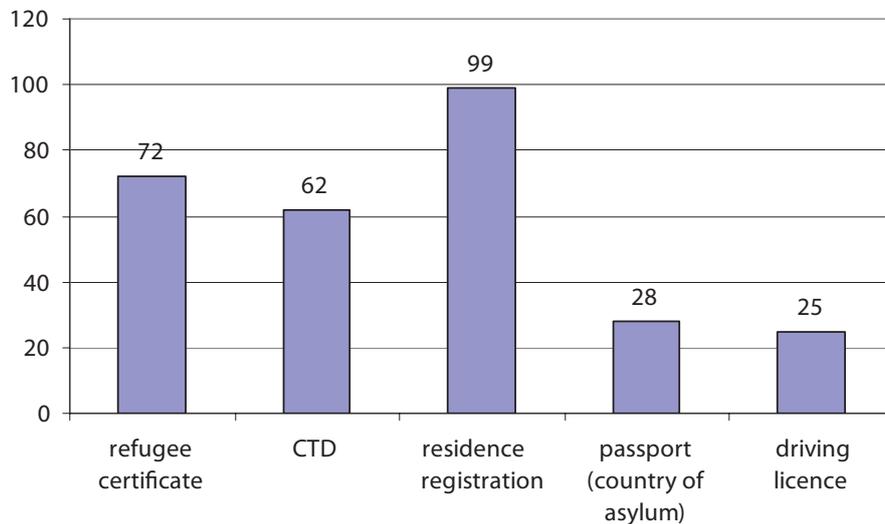


Chart 9b. Total number of refugee status recognitions per year

Most refugees arrived to Ukraine before 1995 and were recognized in 1996-2000. Recognition rates during past five years are very low; those who came recently remain asylum seekers. Only few refugees have been granted the status of late, a trend which is also in evidence in the sample of refugees interviewed (Chart 9a).



* Total is over 100% as the respondent could choose more than one alternative.

Chart 10a. Number of respondents according to the documents they hold, in %

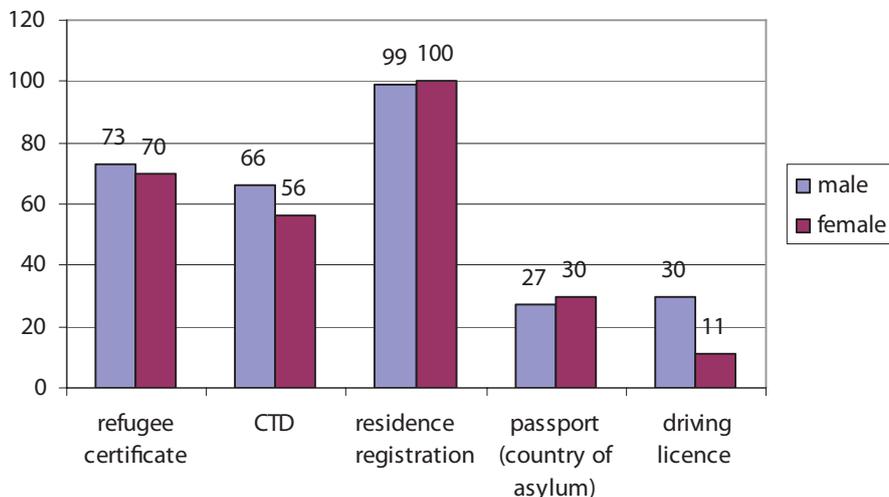


Chart 10b. Number of respondents by gender according to the documents they hold, in %

A comparison of this Chart 10b with the preceding Chart 10a, shows that with the exception of the driving license (men: 30%; women: 11 %), there are no significant gender differences in respect of the documents held by the respondents.

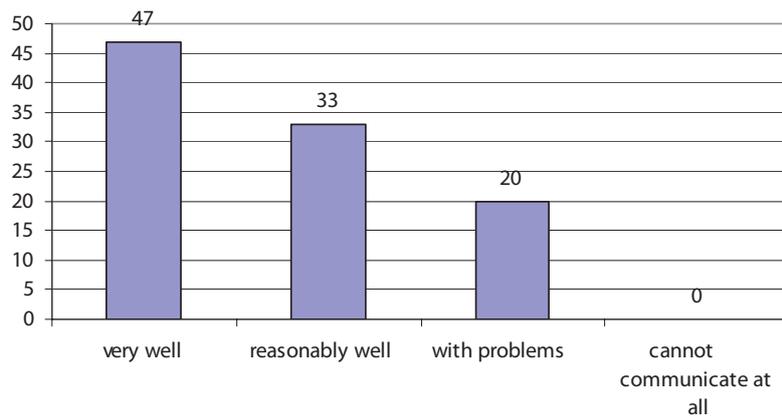


Chart 11a. Number of respondents according to their self-assessed command of Russian/Ukrainian, in %

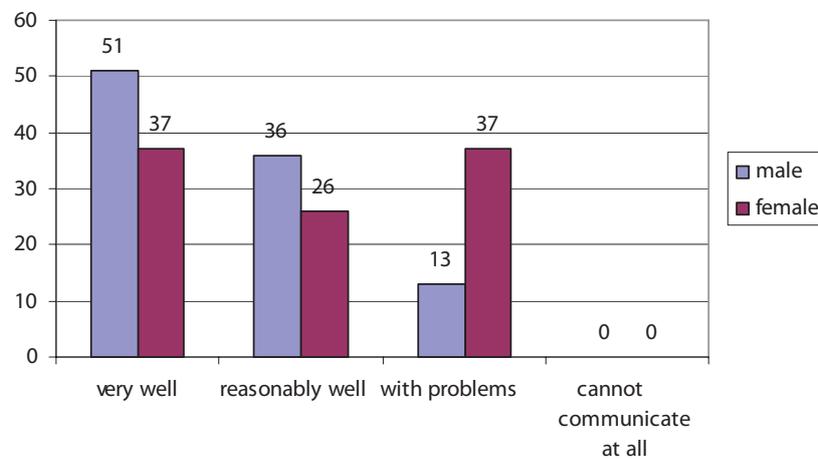


Chart 11b. Number of respondents by gender according to self-assessed command of Russian/Ukrainian, in %

Chart 11a shows that most respondents have a good or fairly good command of Russian and/or Ukrainian (many of them studied and/or lived in Ukraine for more than 10 years). Those who had arrived more recently had more language problems. It may be that these numbers are to be explained by the fact that most respondents agreed to be interviewed because they could speak Russian well. A comparison between Charts 11a and 11b shows that refugee women have a poorer command of local languages than men (37 % of refugee women have problems with local language) no doubt because many female respondents do not work outside the home and have fewer opportunities to learn/study the language.

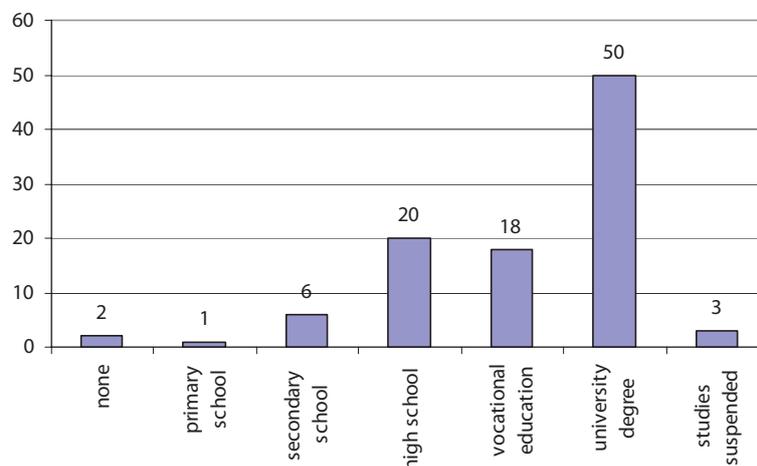


Chart 12a. Number of respondents according to levels of education, in %

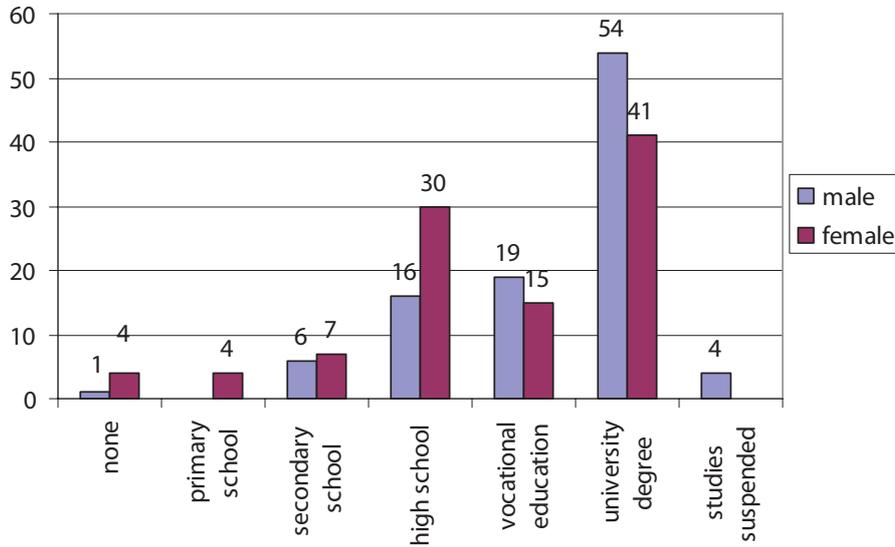


Chart 12b. Number of respondents by gender according to level of education, in %

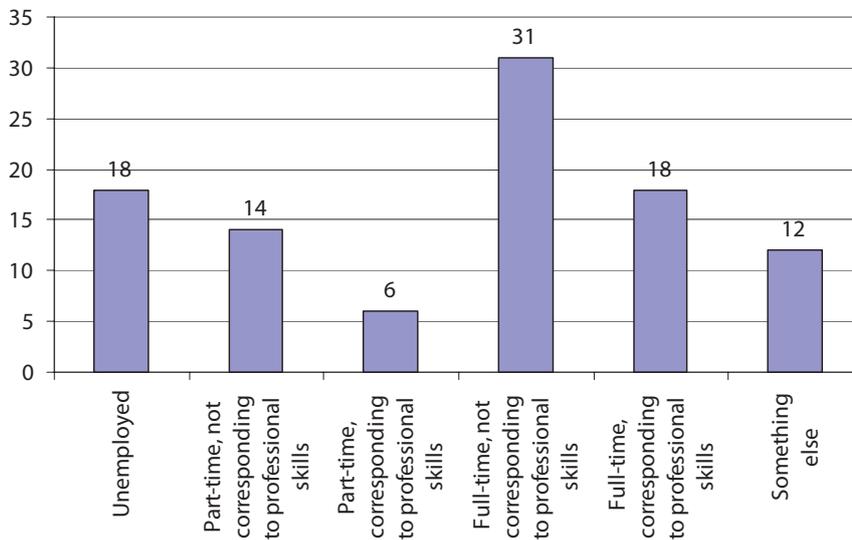


Chart 13a. Number of employed and unemployed respondents, in %

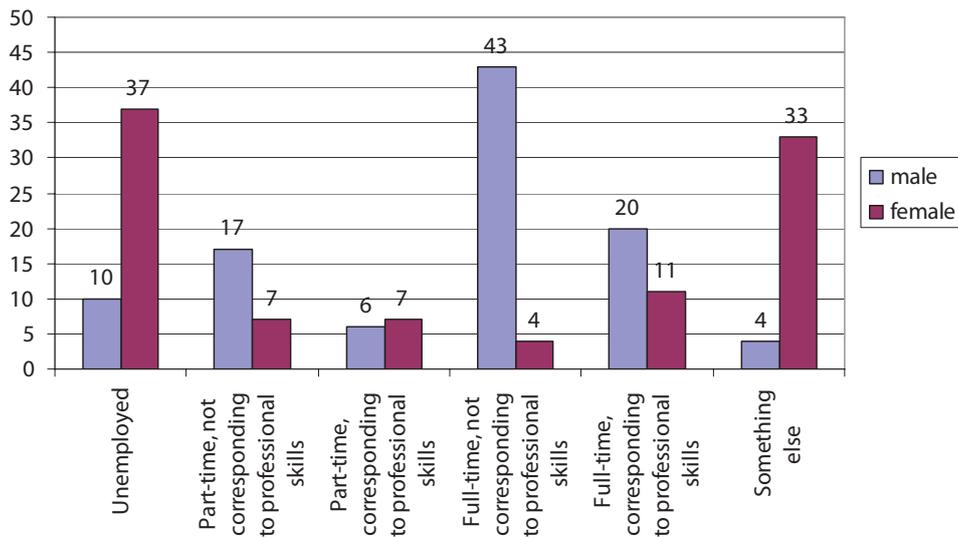


Chart 13b. Number of employed and unemployed respondents by gender, in %

Most respondents are employed, although their work does not correspond to their professional skills. Chart 13b shows that there is a strong connection between the gender of a respondent and his/her present employment situation. 37% of women are unemployed and 33% are housewives (column "something else").

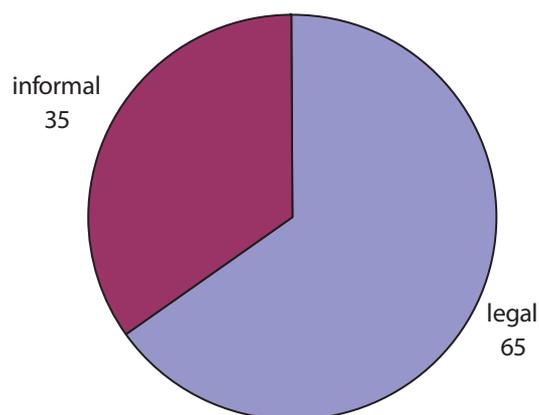


Chart 14. Number of respondents according to legal/ informal employment, in %

According to the interviews 65% of respondents claimed to work legally, which would mean that they contribute to tax revenues and social security payments.

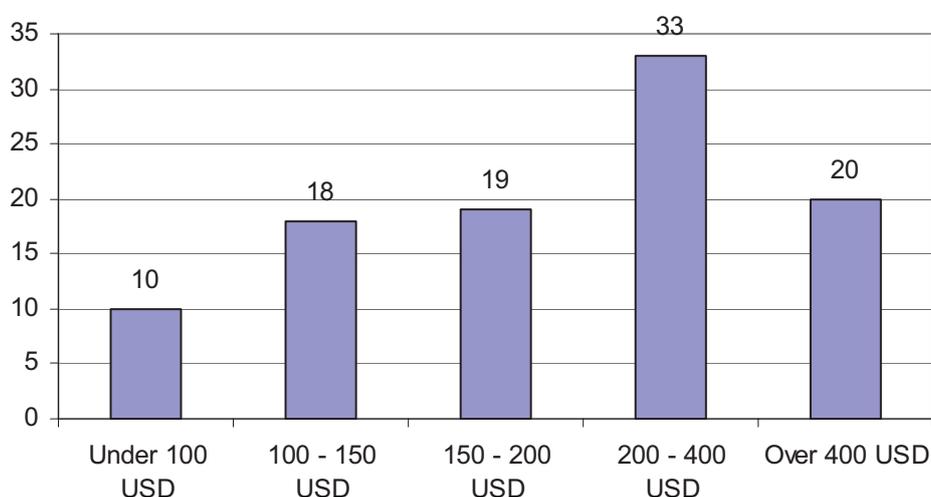


Chart 15. Number of respondents according to their monthly income, in %

One third (33%) of the respondents earn 200-400 USD and 20% earn over 400 USD. These income levels correspond to the average income levels of Ukrainians; it must be borne in mind however, that most refugees incur higher monthly living costs (esp. for housing). This is why many refugees rarely take up official jobs corresponding to their professional skills which usually are not well paid.

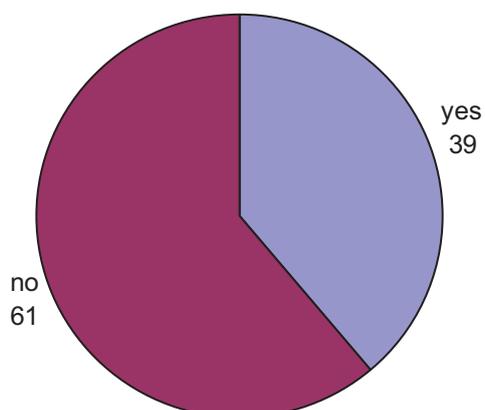


Chart 16. Number of respondents who acknowledge being in debt, in %

Although many respondents claimed to have low salaries, 61% of them managed to live without debts. The majority relied on the “circle of friends” when in need of a loan, but some respondents reported to have taken out bank loans.

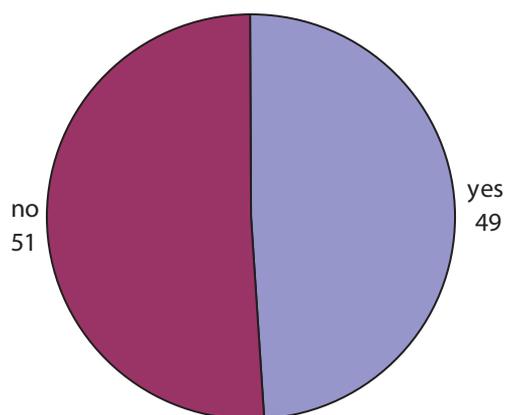


Chart 17. Number of respondents who have entrepreneurial experience, in %

Most refugees are very entrepreneur oriented; they either run their own business or would like to. According to the respondents, their biggest obstacles are lack of initial capital and of reasonable credit schemes.

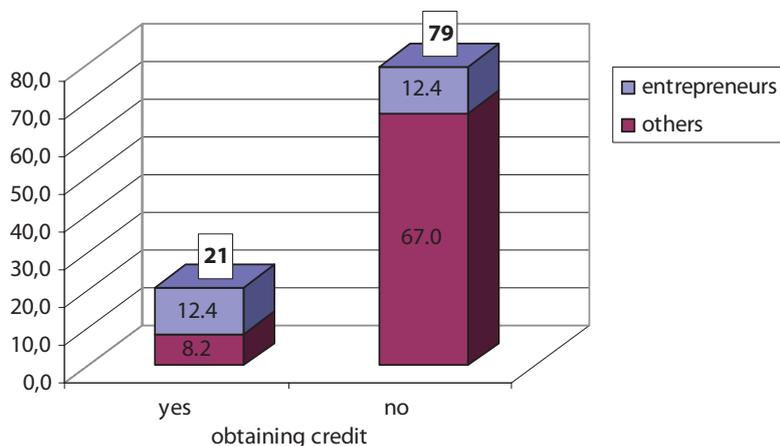


Chart 18. Number of respondents who have obtained bank credit, in %

21% of respondents have obtained bank loans; 12.4% of them are entrepreneurs. The comparatively low proportion of respondents who have obtained bank loans is an indication that refugees find it difficult to meet bank criteria of credit worthiness for loans that are not granted for more than a year, given that the validity of their refugee document is limited to 1 year.

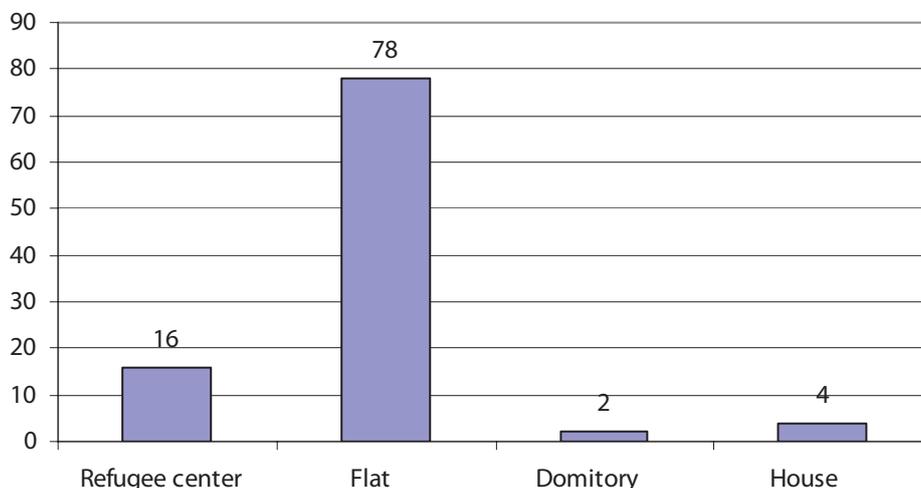


Chart 19. Number of respondents per type of housing, in %

Most refugees have to rent flats. There is only one Temporary Accommodation Center (in Odesa) which provides shelter to most disadvantaged refugees.

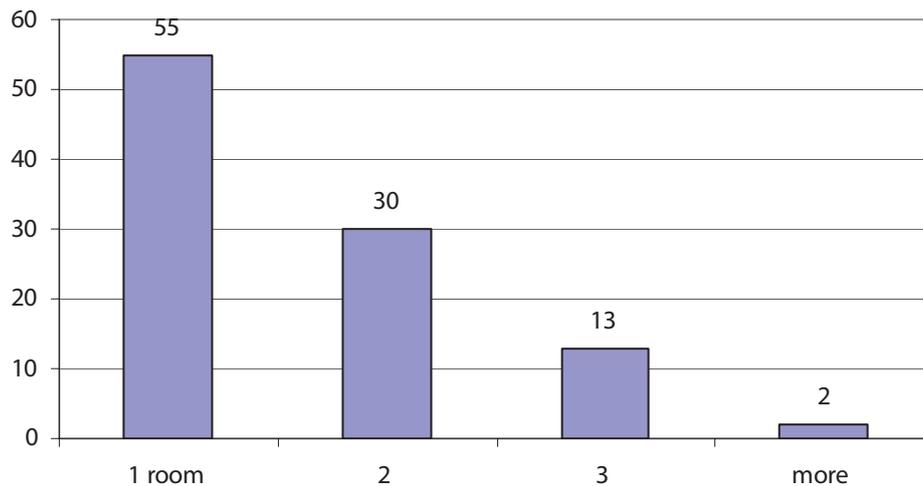
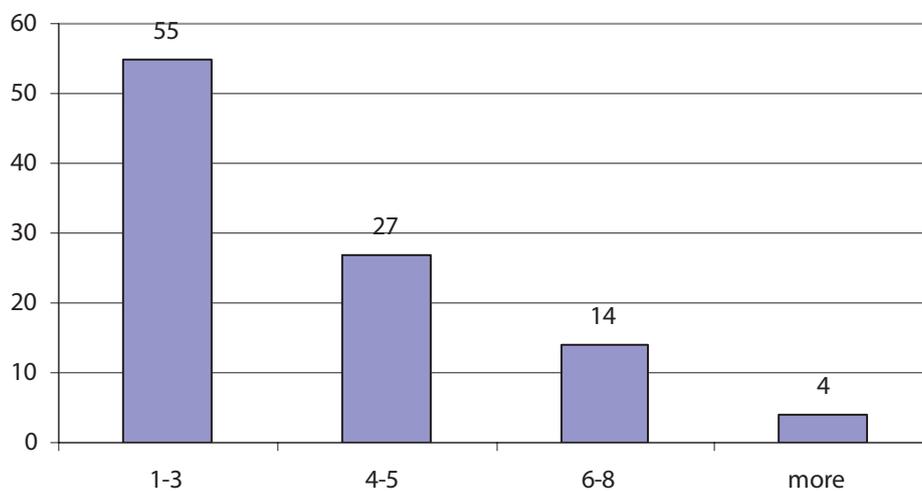


Chart 20. Number of rooms per housing unit per respondent, in %



It should be noted that generally a kitchen is counted as an additional room.

Chart 21. Number of respondents sharing accommodation with one or several other refugees, in %

Charts 20 and 21 show that many respondents, to reduce expenditures, share accommodation with others. Three generations may live in one flat. Over 45% of respondents live in groups consisting of 4 people and more, most usually family members and other relatives but also friends, other countrymen and sometimes landlords.

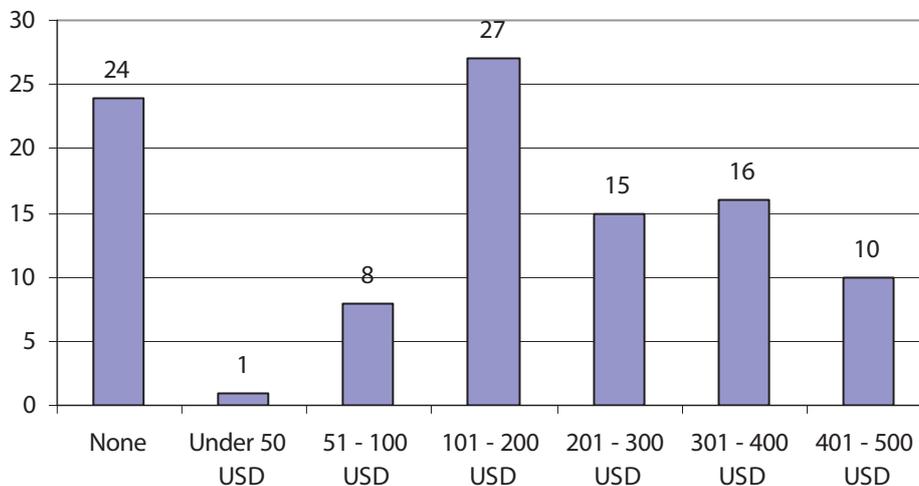


Chart 22. Rental costs (per month), in %

These rental cost represent averages of what the respondents paid in various cities. Most of those paying around 50-200 USD, rent 1 room and live together with the landlord. Most of the respondents who ticked “none” live in the Temporary Accommodation Center in Odesa

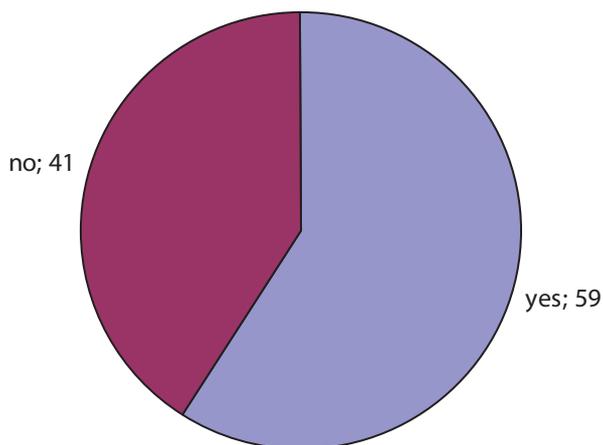


Chart 23. Number of respondents registered at their own address, in %

41% of all respondents could not be registered at the location/address where they effectively live; having purchased a fake “propiska” they are in breach of the law, can incur sanctions and may not be able to access social services and benefits.

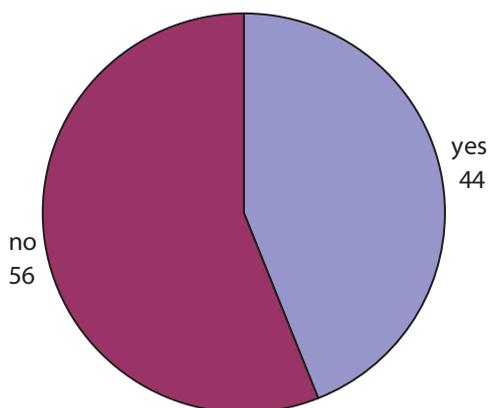


Chart 24. Number of respondents who are satisfied/not satisfied with their accommodation, in %

Although a significant number of respondents (44%) claimed to be satisfied with their housing, many of them actually hoped for better housing conditions.

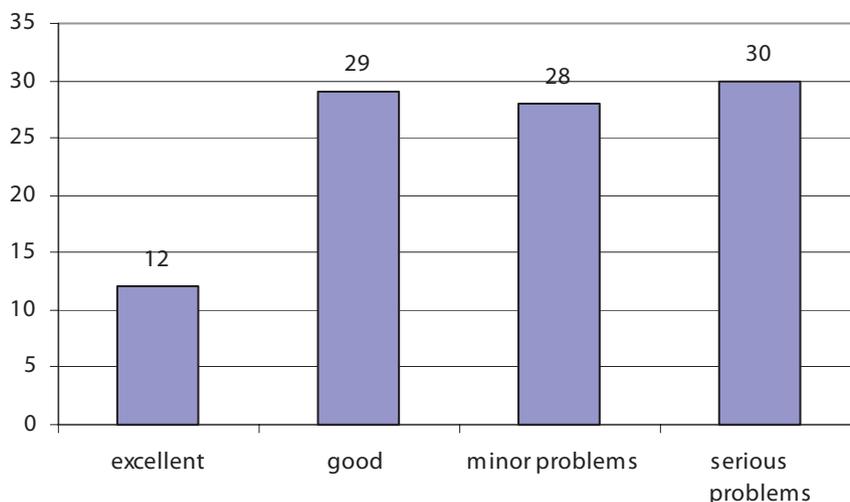


Chart 25a. State of health of respondents, in %

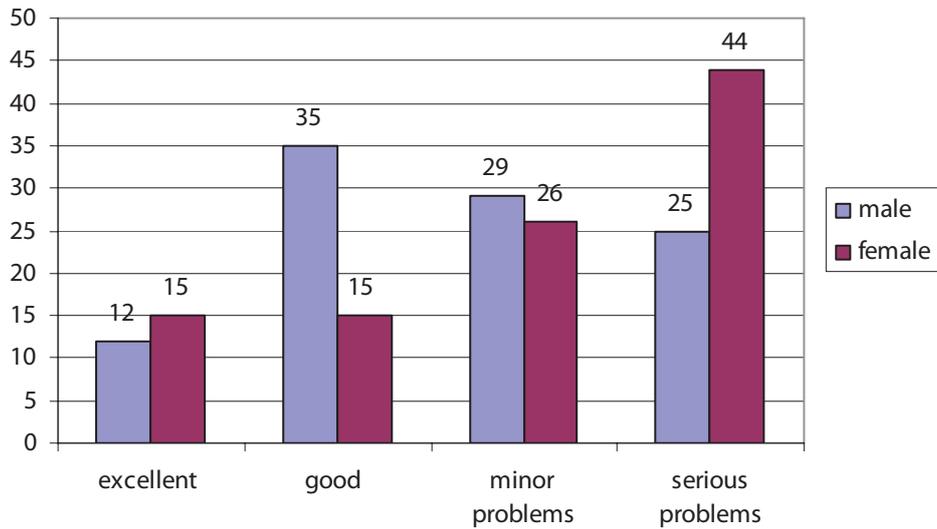


Chart 25b. State of health of respondents (breakdown by gender), in %

Charts 25a and 25b represent the respondents' own statements as regards their health. The breakdown by gender shows that a significantly higher number of women than men reported ill-health.

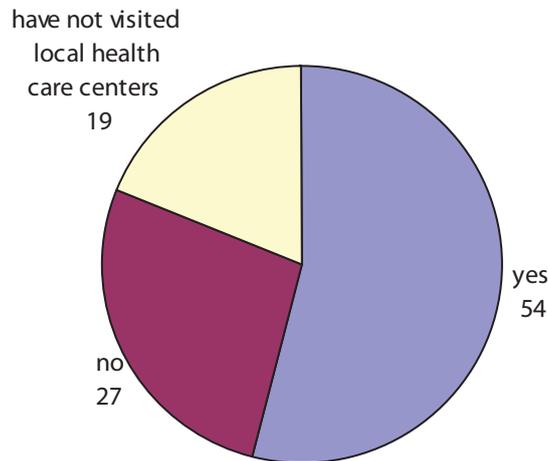


Chart 26. Number of respondents who are satisfied/ unsatisfied with medical services, in %

Respondents were mostly satisfied with medical assistance they receive in hospitals and polyclinics, but in many cases they lack money to pay for better medical treatment or medicines.

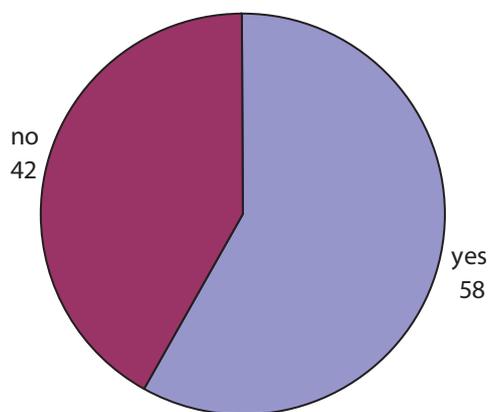


Chart 27a. Number of respondents who have faced hostility from nationals, in %

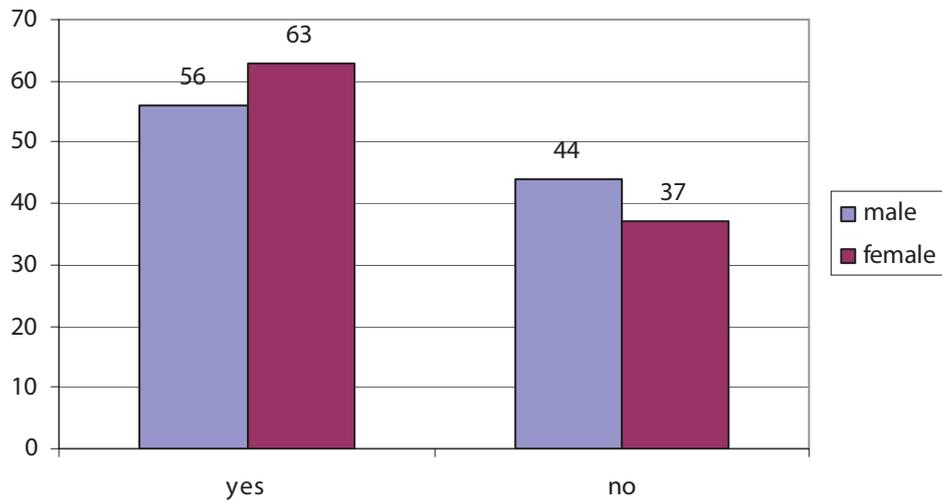


Chart 27b. Number of respondents having faced hostility from nationals (by gender), in %

Charts 27a and 27b reflect the statements of respondents regarding manifestations of hostility towards them from Ukrainians. The fact that 58% of all respondents and 63% of female respondents reported instances of prejudice against them, is a clear indication that levels of tolerance towards refugees are not very high in Ukrainian society.

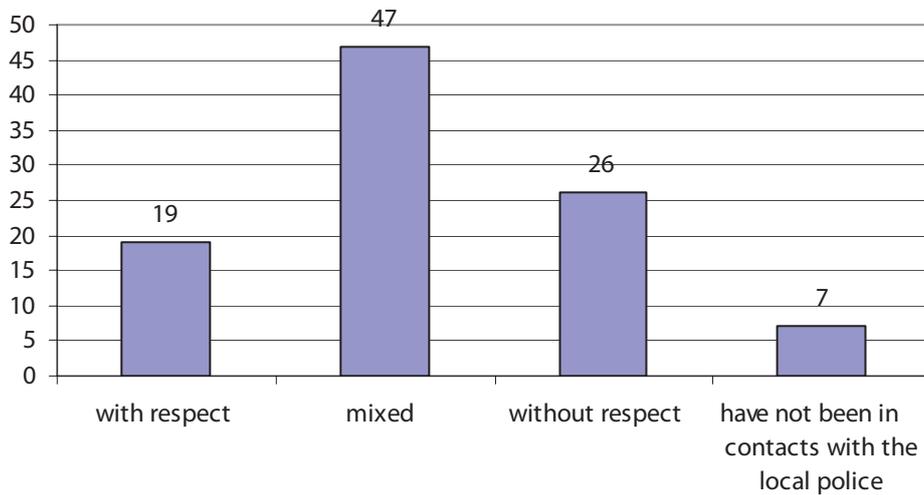


Chart 28a. Frequency of answers to the question "How does the police treat you?", in %

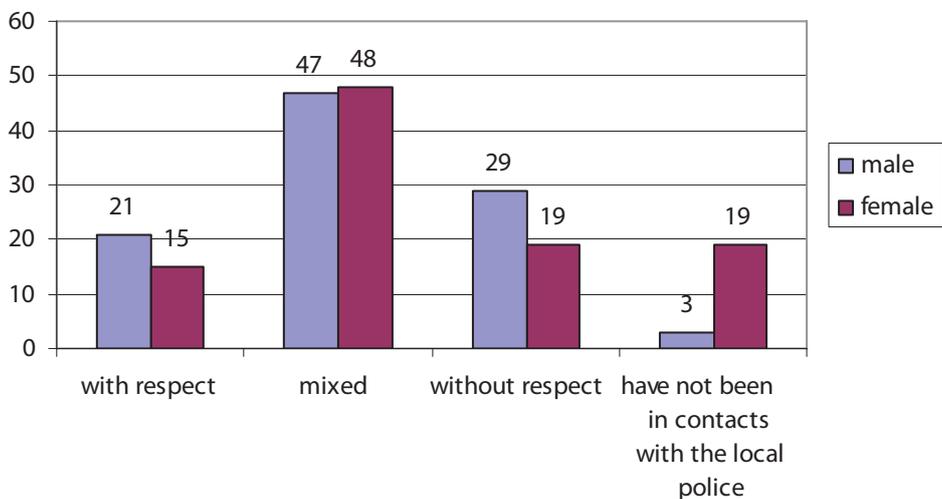


Chart 28b. Frequency of answers to the question "How does the police treat you?" (breakdown by gender), in %

A comparison of the data recorded in Charts 28a and 28b shows that of the respondents who have had dealings with police officers, fewer women than men and less than 20% of all women and men, consider that they have been treated with respect, while more men than women reported that they have met disrespect. Whereas fewer women than men have had contact with the police, close to 50% of both women and men who have, have had mixed experiences.

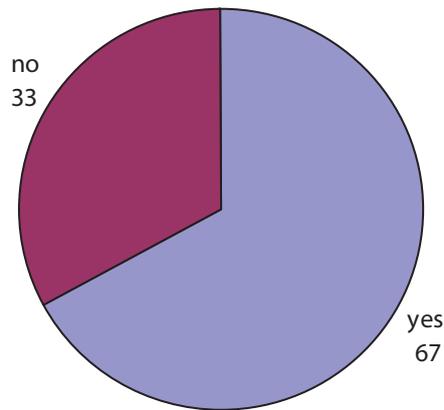


Chart 29a. Number of respondents who have Ukrainian friends, in %

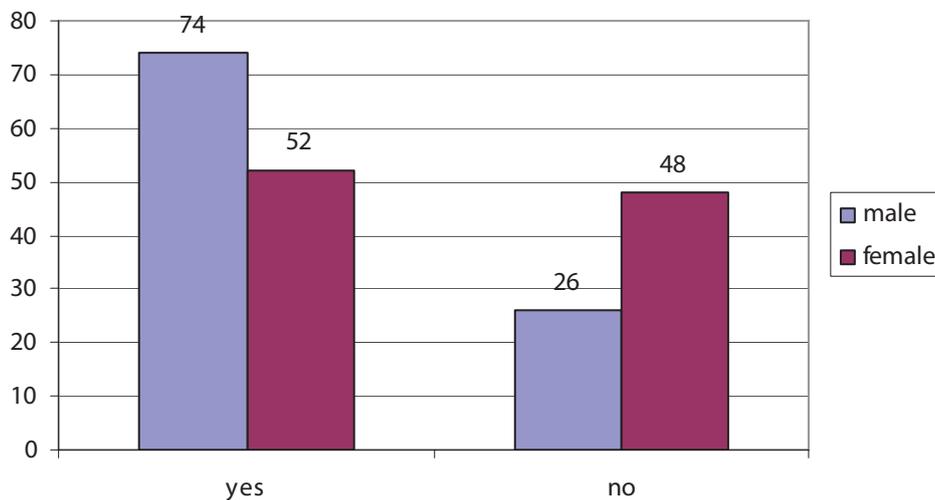


Chart 29b. Breakdown by gender of the number of respondents who have Ukrainian friends, in %

Chart 29a shows that overall, a majority of respondents have some local friends, the breakdown by gender (Chart 29b) however reflects the fact women, who are more often unemployed and staying at home (*c.f.* Chart 13b), have fewer chances to socialize with locals.

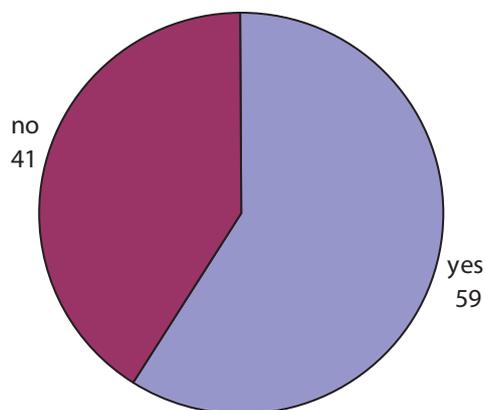


Chart 30a. Number of respondents who “feel safe” in the host country, in %

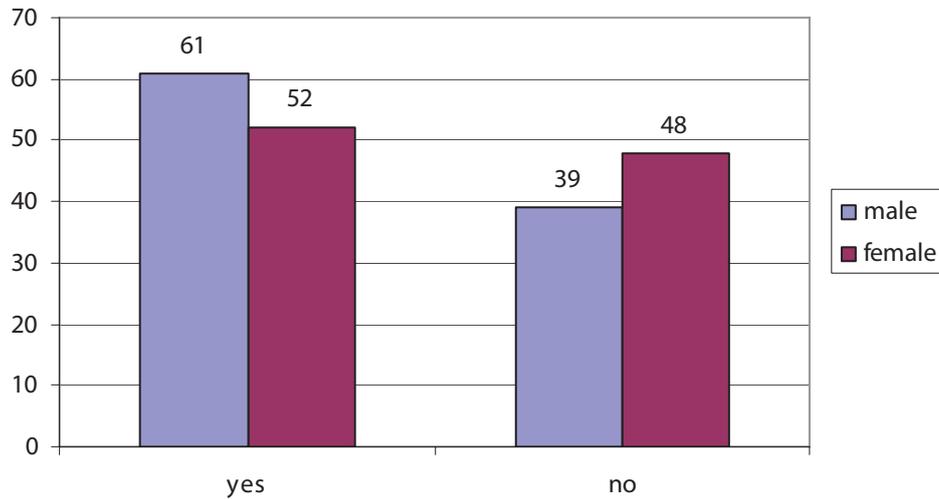


Chart 30b. Breakdown by gender of the number of respondents who “feel safe” in the host country, in %

According to their replies to the questionnaires, 59% of respondents feel safe in Ukraine; while answering positively however, many also expressed concern about the insecurity of their social and economic situations. Chart 30b shows that refugee women feel more insecure in Ukraine than men.

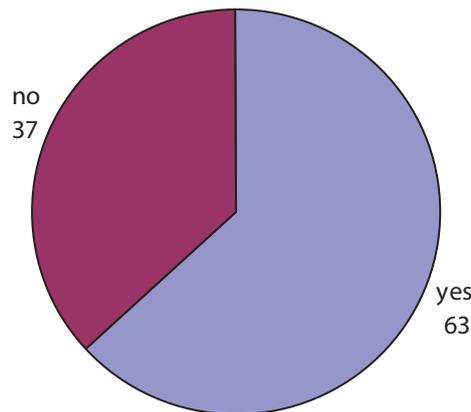


Chart 31a. Number of respondents planning to stay in the host country, in %

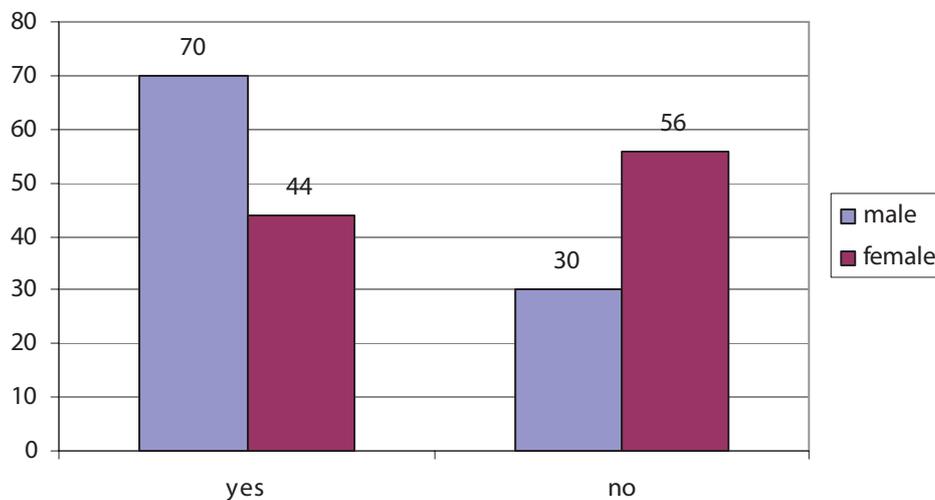
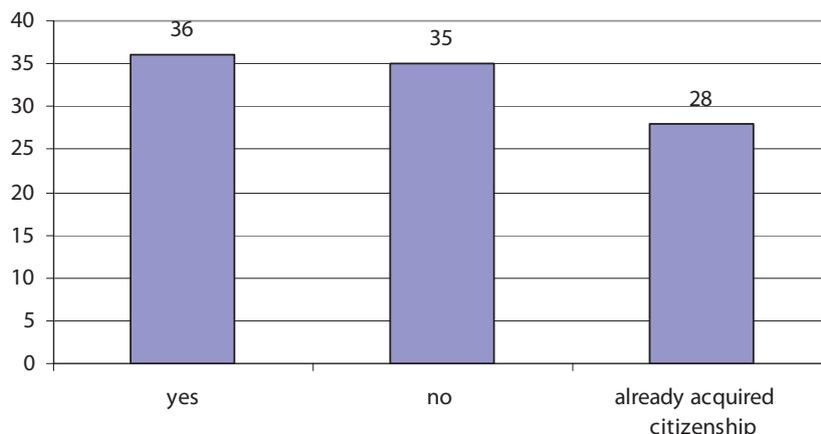


Chart 31b. Breakdown by gender of the number of respondents planning to stay in the host country, in %

Chart 31a shows that most refugees are planning to stay in Ukraine; while answering positively however, many respondents also expressed hope of resettlement in a third country. Women tended to hope for resettlement more than men (56% of female respondents are not planning to stay Ukraine). Such a situation can be explained by the fact that refugee women may have more idealistic views of resettlement than men.



*"yes" indicates both respondents who have already applied for citizenship and those who plan to do so

Chart 32a. Number of respondents applying for citizenship, in %

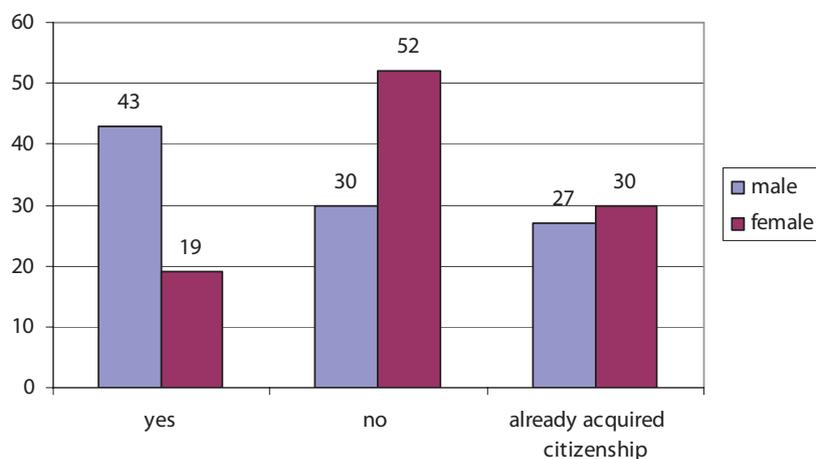


Chart 32b. Breakdown by gender of the number of respondents applying for citizenship, in %

Chart 32a shows that half of the respondents who are not naturalized yet, have or are planning to apply for citizenship (36%). The higher proportion of refugee women (52%) reportedly not planning to apply; may reflect the fact that refugee women are generally less well informed of the opportunities to acquire citizenship.

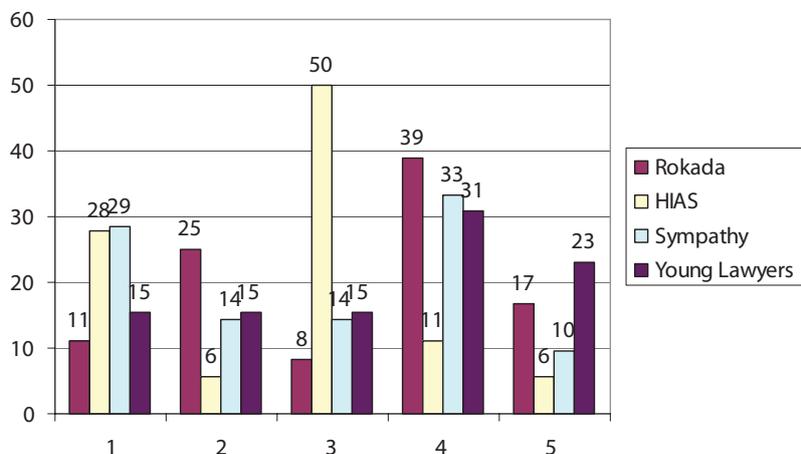


Chart 33. Respondents' evaluation of quality of assistance provided by NGOs (1=very bad, 2=bad, 3=satisfactory, 4=good, 5=excellent), in %

The respondents' ratings are a reflection of their own experiences and relations with a given NGO; they cannot be considered to be an entirely objective assessment of the quality of that NGO's overall activities and service. Nonetheless, the relative satisfaction or dissatisfaction of refugees with the services of some NGO are indicative of some situations and realities.

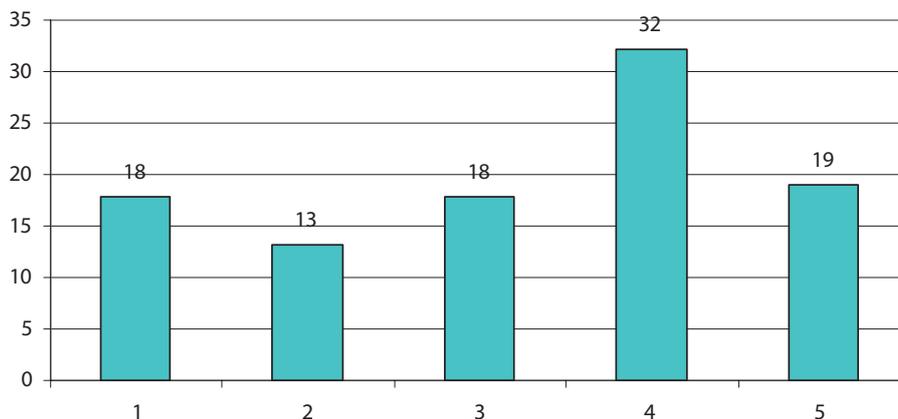


Chart 34a. Respondents' evaluation of quality of services provided by Regional Migration Services (1=very bad, 2=bad, 3=satisfactory, 4=good, 5=excellent), in %

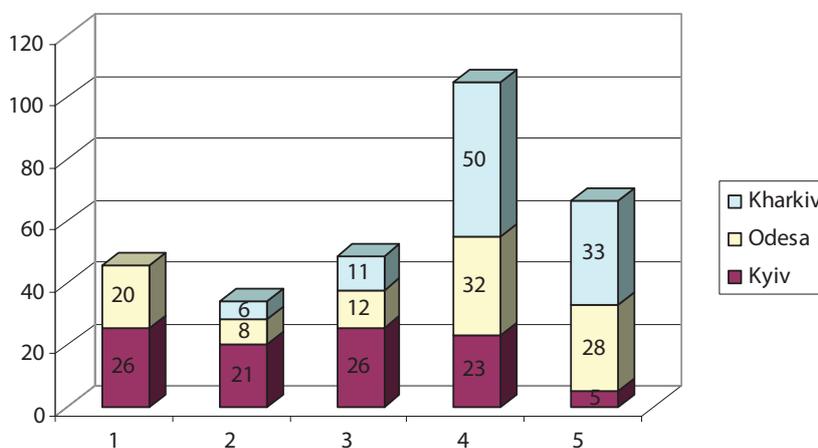


Chart 34b. Respondents' evaluation of quality of services provided by Regional Migration Services (breakdown by city), in %

The evaluation of Regional migration services differs strongly from region to region. Kharkiv RMS has acquired the highest marks, while Kyiv RMS scored the worse. Good marks given to the Odesa RMS can be explained by the fact that most of the Odesa respondents live in the TAC and are grateful for the RMS for this. The most usual reasons for low ratings are the following: rude or indifferent attitude of the officials, lengthy and non transparent procedures, and different bureaucratic barriers.

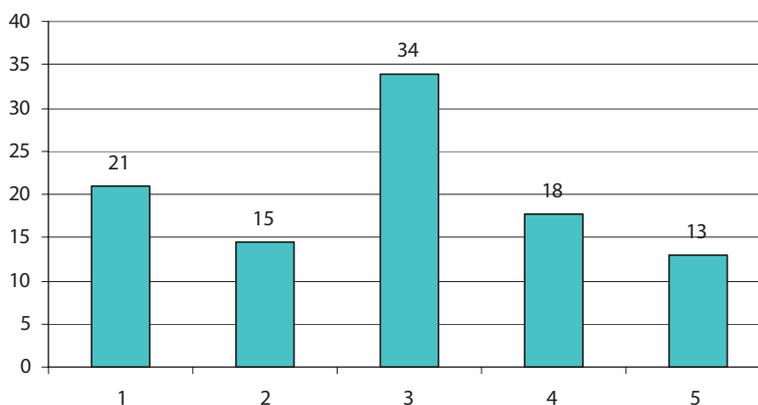


Chart 35. Respondents' evaluation of quality of services provided by the offices of the State department of citizenship, immigration and registration of natural persons (SDCIRNP) (1=very bad, 2=bad, 3=satisfactory, 4=good, 5=excellent), in %

The high percentage of low marks given to SDCIRNP offices can be explained by the fact that many refugees reported to have faced serious problems in acquiring citizenship. The respondents also mentioned that the annual registration procedure was too lengthy.

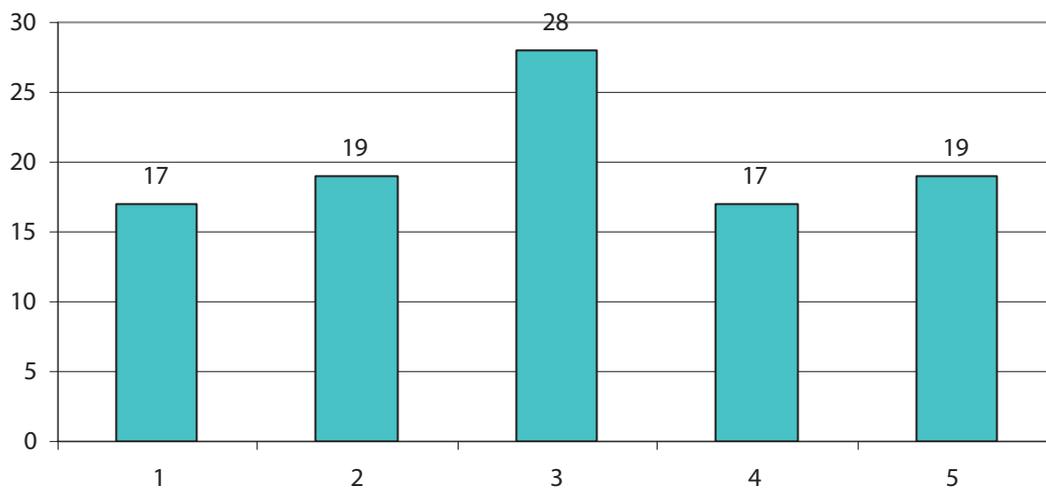


Chart 36. Respondents' evaluation of quality of the UNHCR activities (1=very bad, 2=bad, 3=satisfactory, 4=good, 5=excellent), in %

The interviews showed that many of the respondents did not fully understand that the assistance they received from NGOs was funded by UNHCR; in a number of instances their dissatisfaction was a reflection of their disappointment at not having been resettled by the Organization.

Selected correlations

Gender/Employment

There is a correlation between gender of respondents and their employment situation (Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 0.1% level, Cramer's V = 0.583⁷²).

Table 1

| | | 3.7. Present employment situation | | | | | | Total |
|-------|--------|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--------------------------------|-------|
| | | Unemployed | Part-time, not corresponding professional skills | Part-time, corresponding professional skills | Full-time, not corresponding professional skills | Full-time, corresponding professional skills | Something else, please specify | |
| 1.1 | Male | 7 | 12 | 4 | 30 | 14 | 3 | 70 |
| Sex | Female | 10 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 27 |
| Total | | 17 | 14 | 6 | 31 | 17 | 12 | 97 |

Table 1 shows that most female refugees are unemployed and take care of household and children (this option falls within the category "something else"). Only 30% of female respondents are currently employed. But many of them expressed their willingness to work, if a job was paid more or less decently and allowed them to take care of their children.

Rate of incomes/Feeling safe in host country

There is a slight correlation between the level of income and feeling safe in the host country (Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 5 % level, Cramer's V = 0.340)

Table 2

| | | 9.9. Do you feel safe in this country: | | Total |
|---|---------------|--|----|-------|
| | | Yes | No | |
| 3.15. How much you get salary per month | Under 100 USD | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| | 100 - 150 USD | 4 | 7 | 11 |
| | 150 - 200 USD | 5 | 7 | 12 |
| | 200 - 400 USD | 10 | 9 | 19 |
| | Over 400 USD | 10 | 1 | 11 |
| | n/a | 10 | 8 | 18 |
| Total | | 42 | 36 | 78 |

Table 2 shows that level of incomes affects to certain extent the psychological condition of a respondent. It is interesting that 91% of those who earn over 400 USD per month feel safe in the host country.

Rate of incomes / Staying in host country

Most of the better integrated respondents are planning to stay in Ukraine. One can observe a correlation between the levels of income and the respondents' plans for the future (Chi-Square Test is significant at the 1% level, Cramer's V=0.461).

⁷² **Chi-Square Test** identifies correlation between nominal variables. If its significance level is less or equals 5% level, a correlation exists.

Cramer's V is one of the symmetric measures for nominal data. It changes from 0 to 1.0 indicates the absence of correlation, 1 – the strongest correlation.

Table 3

| | | 10.1. Do you intend to stay in this country: | | Total |
|---|---------------|--|----|-------|
| | | Yes | No | |
| 3.15. How much you get salary per month | Under 100 USD | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| | 100 -150 USD | 7 | 8 | 15 |
| | 150 - 200 USD | 9 | 7 | 16 |
| | 200 - 400 USD | 20 | 5 | 25 |
| | Over 400 USD | 15 | 0 | 15 |
| | n/a | 7 | 11 | 18 |
| Total | | 61 | 36 | 97 |

Table 3 shows that those who have more or less well paid jobs are planning to stay in Ukraine and do not envisage resettlement. It is probably that those who have managed to find a good job and are self-reliant, also have more realistic views on the prospects of resettlement. 100% of those who earn over 400 USD per month are planning to stay in the country of asylum.

Rate of incomes/Citizenship

Those who are doing better would like to acquire citizenship or have already acquired it. They do not rely on different forms of assistance provided by UNHCR’s implementing partners and consider that in order to become completely self-reliant, they need citizenship. There is a correlation (though quite weak) between the level of incomes and the wish to acquire citizenship (Pearson Chi-Square Test is significant at the 5% level, Cramer’s V=0.372).

Table 4

| | | 10.2. Do you plan on getting citizenship? | | | Total |
|---|---------------|---|----|-----------------------|-------|
| | | Yes | No | I’m already a citizen | |
| 3.15. How much you get salary per month | Under 100 USD | 2 | 4 | 2 | 8 |
| | 100 -150 USD | 5 | 9 | 1 | 15 |
| | 150 - 200 USD | 6 | 7 | 3 | 16 |
| | 200 - 400 USD | 12 | 4 | 9 | 25 |
| | Over 400 USD | 7 | 1 | 7 | 15 |
| | n/a | 3 | 10 | 5 | 18 |
| Total | | 35 | 35 | 27 | 97 |

Table 4 shows that most respondents, who earn 200-400 USD and more, are either citizens or plan to apply for citizenship. Poorly integrated refugees, who can not earn a living, rely on different refugee benefits on the one hand and are afraid of problems with “propiska”, on the other, are reluctant to apply for citizenship. Most of those respondents who earn less than 200 USD are not planning to apply.

Quotes selected from individual interviews

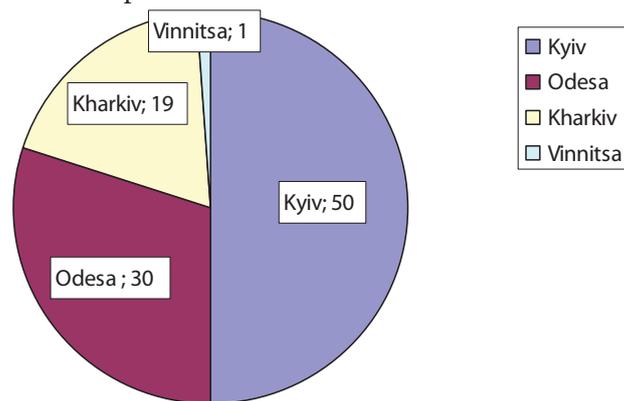
1. My wife got seriously ill several years ago. All our money went for the medical treatment and drugs. I had to stop my business as I got bankrupt. We started to borrow many to be able to pay rent and buy medicine. Now we have around 10 000 – 12 000 USD debts (Afghan man).
2. Two of my sons did not attend school at all as they had to work. It was very difficult for me as a father, but there was no other way out (Afghan man).
3. Our main problem is that we really do not know our rights. A legal training would be very-very useful (Afghan man).
4. When I tried to apply for citizenship I was told that there was no appropriate Presidential Decree on the date when I was granted the refugee status, however, the date is in my refugee certificate (07/09/2001). This was the only reason why they returned my documents back (Afghan man).
5. Russian became my second mother language (Congolese man).
6. Refugees in Kharkiv do not receive credible information on the services and assistance provided for refugees by UNHCR and NGOs. Even if anything is being done for refugees, we do know not about it (Congolese man).
7. In order to apply for refugee status a person is required to submit too many documents (*i.e.* national passport, different proofs of what you claim in the application). If a person were able to submit everything what the Migration Service demands, a person would not need the refugee status (Afghan man).
8. Being a refugee I managed to get a credit from Nadra bank, but only for 1 year (as the refugee certificate is valid for 1 year). It is a real problem, because one cannot get a bigger credit, which would really help to extend business, for instance to buy a car on credit (Afghan man).
9. I have many local friends; our relations are as close as between family members (Afghan man).
10. You ask me whether I intend to stay in Ukraine. Sure, we have nothing else except this country (Afghan man).
11. SDCIRNP in Kharkiv is requiring a rent agreement in order to extend registration in refugee certificate (Afghan man).
12. I had been lying in a hospital with fracture of leg for 1 week, and no medical help was provided until I collected money and paid (Afghan man).
13. The procedure of registering in SDCIRNP is very lengthy and bureaucratic. It takes them 3 hours to put a stamp and one has to hang around, because you cannot go anywhere without a document. Why cannot they make it faster? (Afghan man).
14. All Africans should go through plastic operation (change color of skin) to find job in Ukraine (Sudanese man)
15. If I had money, I would overcome all the technicalities on my own. And what concerns competition and financial problems, they always exist in the business world (Afghan man).
16. I want to take credit in order to buy a car and work as a taxi driver and hope that UNHCR can help me to receive a credit (Sudanese man).
17. I am planning to set up agricultural business (*i.e.* meat, chicken) if I get a credit; I have a lot of practical experience in that field (both in Sudan and Ukraine) (Sudanese man).
18. I am working as an English teacher: I am giving private lessons to refugees. But I am planning on extending my business: I want to open a private English school, retain 3 teachers: for beginners, intermediate and advanced students etc (Sudanese man).
19. I live in a village in Makarskiy rayon and the nearest school is situated in 8km from home that is why my children cannot go to school (Uzbek man).
20. It is difficult to say whether I am satisfied with medical services. If you pay, you will get the necessary treatment, the same as locals (Afghan lady).
21. My husband was killed in hospital. I'm afraid to go there (Azerbaijani lady).
22. A policeman threatened me to go home (Afghan man).
23. I have no local friends; I have no friends at all. I had a friend, my countryman, but he was killed a year ago in a fight with locals (Angolan man).
24. There are many Uzbeks in Kiev, but they afraid to even meet. Still we have a community called "*Birlik*". We are doing political work: demonstrations in front of Uzbek Embassy, Migration Service etc (Uzbek man).
25. Thank God there is no war in Ukraine, but what will happen to us next? (Afghan lady).

26. Ukraine is my second motherland! (Afghan man).
27. Many things are not clear, nobody talks to us. I got zero information from Government (Sudanese man).
28. I just wanted to go to a free democratic country. But then I was detained and brought into a prison. And I asked a prisoner where I am. He answered, that I am in Ukraine. And I did not even know what Ukraine is... Now I realize that it is neither free nor democratic. That is why I want to go to a third country (Somali man).
29. If I had a place to live in Afghanistan, I would live there, as in Afghanistan police at least doesn't ask documents everyday (Afghan man).
30. I need Ukrainian passport in order to pass lawyer test and work as an advocate; my profile is international law and I have many clients. (Congolese man).
31. I need citizenship in order to continue my studies (in this case I will pay less for post-graduate course and will be able to acquire Doctor's degree in chemistry (Sudanese man).
32. I have graduated from the Institute of International Relations (in Kyiv) and even completed a post-graduate course. I should have never thought that I will end up working at the market (Afghan man).
33. I have lost 15 years in this country; I am still in the same position as 15 years ago (African man).
34. Every year I participate in the green card lottery of United States and hope for the best (African man).
35. I do not dare to go anywhere. I just sit at home (Afghan girl).
36. Tell me honestly; is there any chance for me to go somewhere else? (Abkhaz lady)
37. The officer in Migration office told me that she did not know what to do with a citizenship application submitted by a negro. That is how they call us (African man).
38. I do not have steady living place. I am staying short whiles by my friends and countrymen. This is not life (African man).
39. I live in kitchen and I wake up almost every morning 3 am to bake pies, which I sell at the market. Neighbours complain about the noise and smell but it is the only way I can earn some money. My husband is invalid and can not work (Afghan lady).

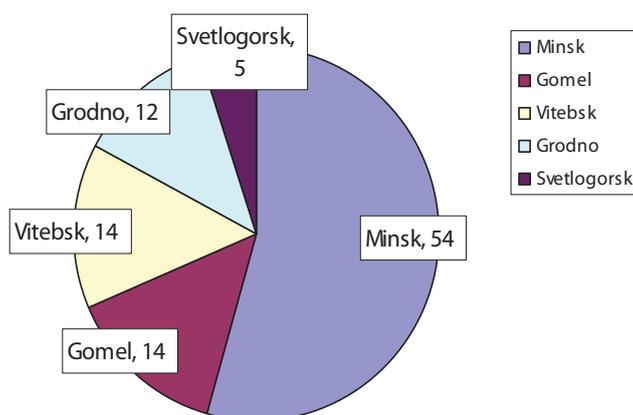
Local Integration Project (LIP): UKRAINE, BELARUS AND MOLDOVA⁷³

Comparative Statistical Analysis

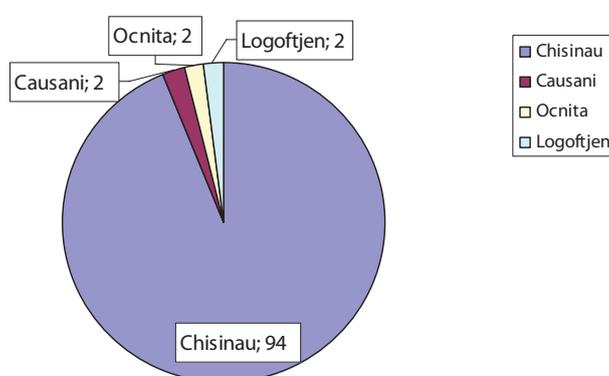
This document contains selection of 32 charts, which illustrate the socio-economical conditions of refugees residing in all three countries studied by the LIP team. These charts summarize the responses of 210 confidential persons of concern interviewed on the basis of a standard questionnaire (Annex 1). The information they provided was personal and subjective; their statements were not individually verified. The interviewees were requested to respond truthfully and on the whole, the import of their replies has been confirmed by the objective findings of the LIP study. Diagrammatized, the responses offer (within a statistically acceptable margin of error) a graphic summary of key issues and problems.



Ukraine



Belarus



Moldova

Chart 1. Number of respondents by host country and place of residence, in %

⁷³ Face to face interviews were conducted between 07.06.–16.09.2007. On average each interview lasted 1 to 1 1/5 hours

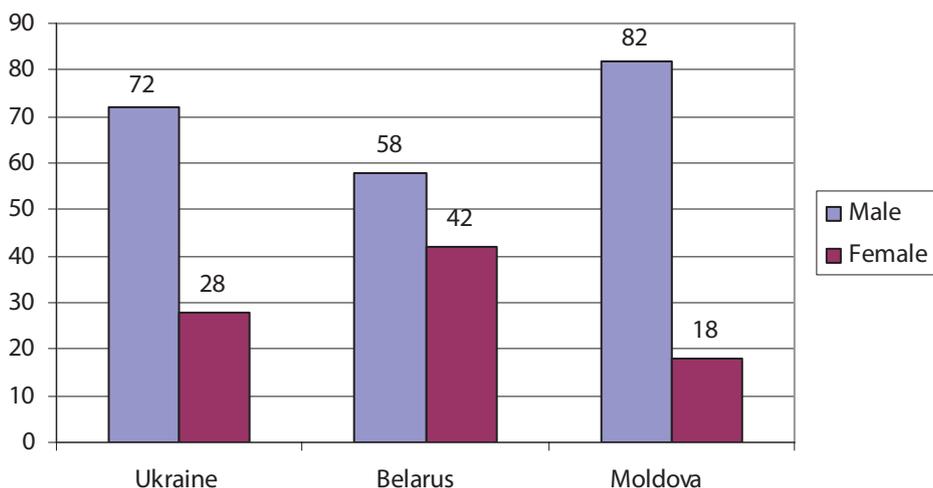


Chart 2. Number of respondents by gender and by host country, in %

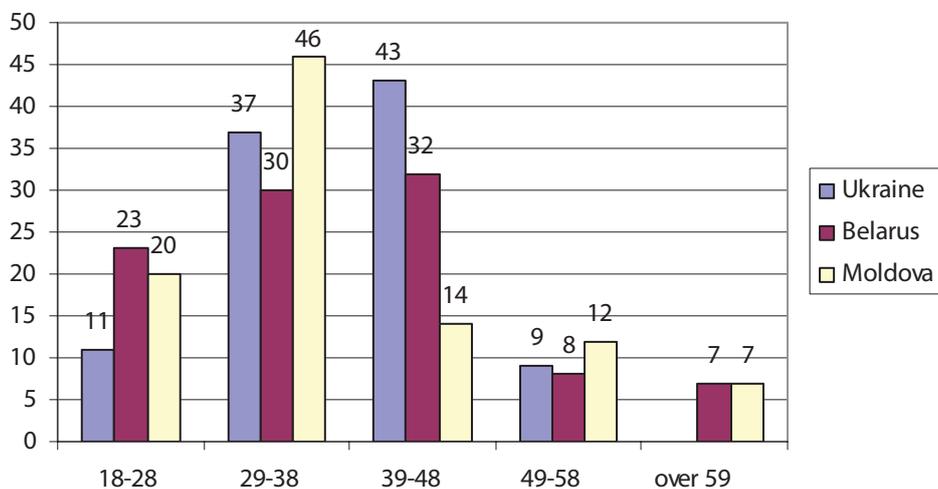
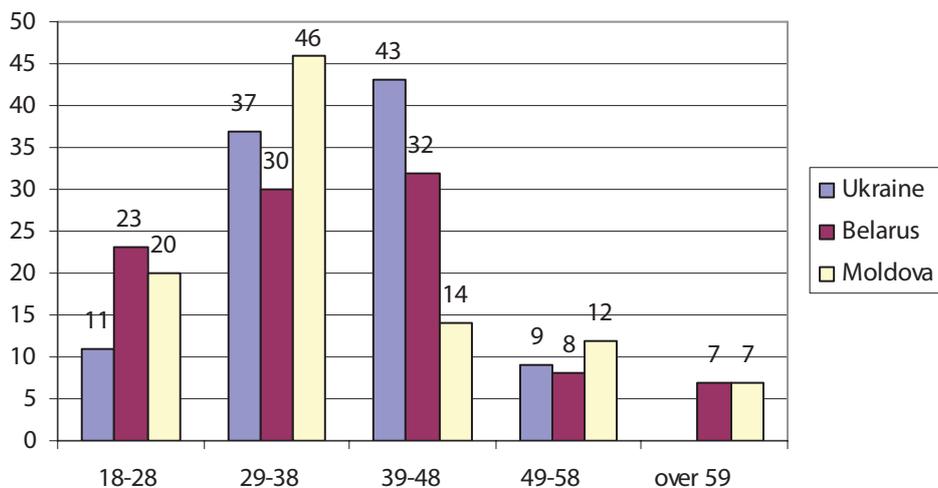


Chart 3. Number of respondents by age group and by host country, in %



* mixed marriage = marriage with citizen of host country

Chart 4. Marital status of respondents by host country, in %

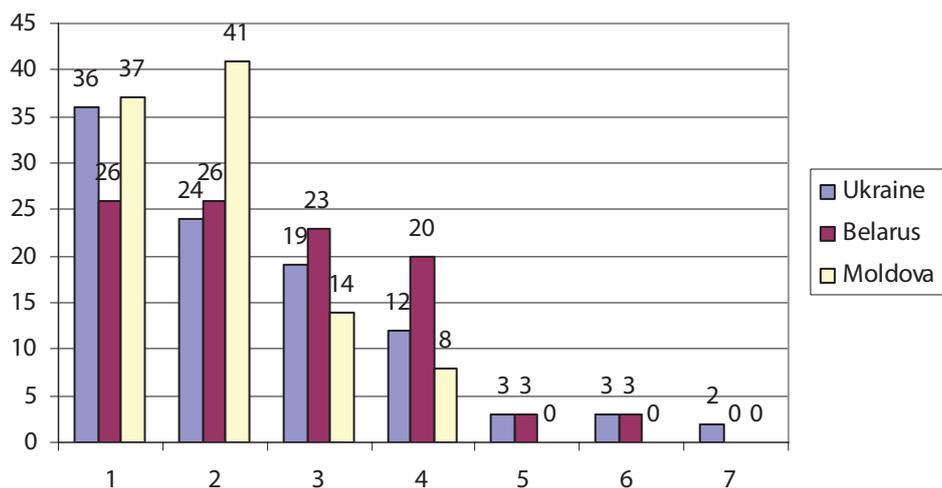
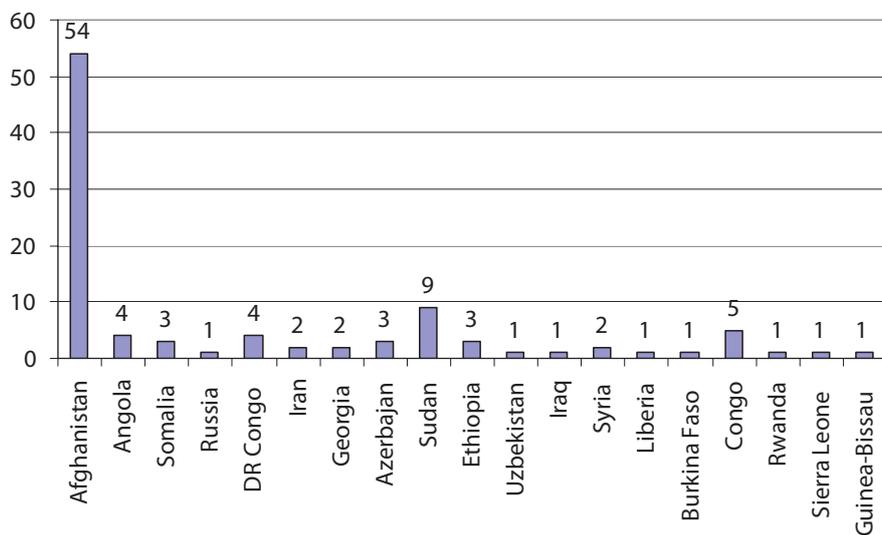
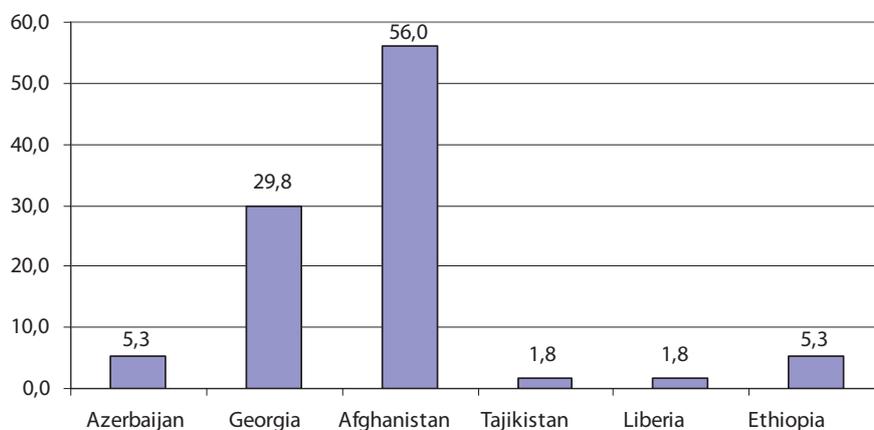


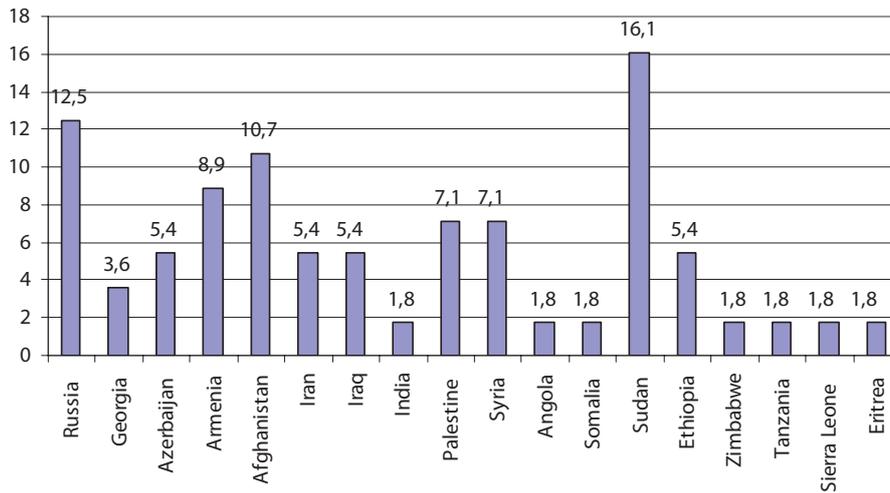
Chart 5. Number of respondents by family size (number of children) and by host country, in %



Ukraine



Belarus



Moldova

Chart 6. Number of respondents by country of origin and by host country, in %

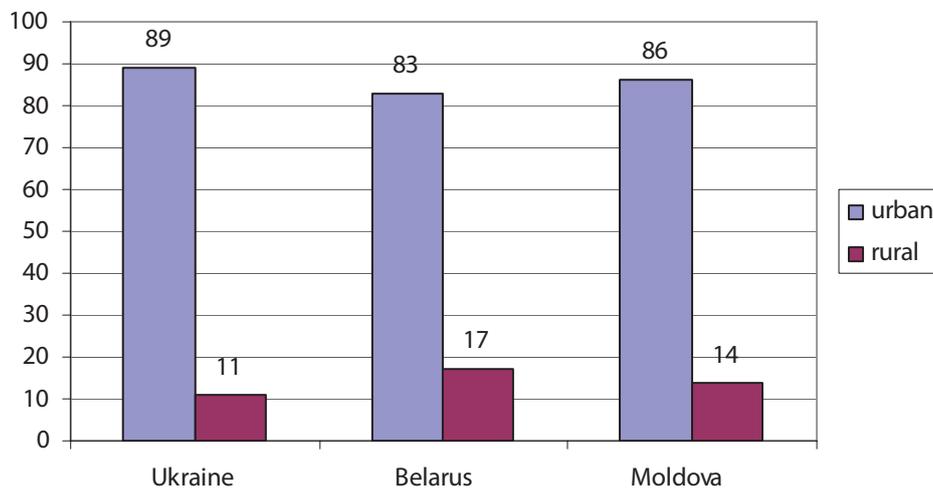


Chart 7. Number of respondents according to their urban or rural backgrounds, in %

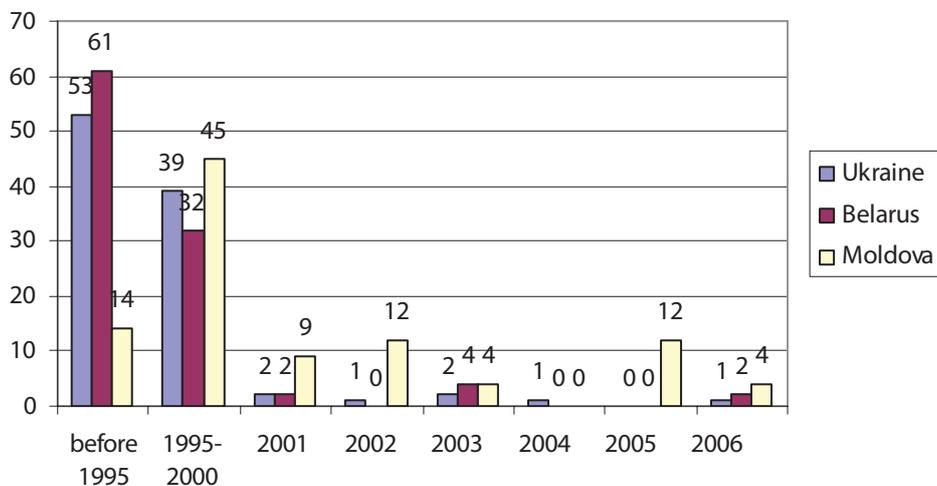
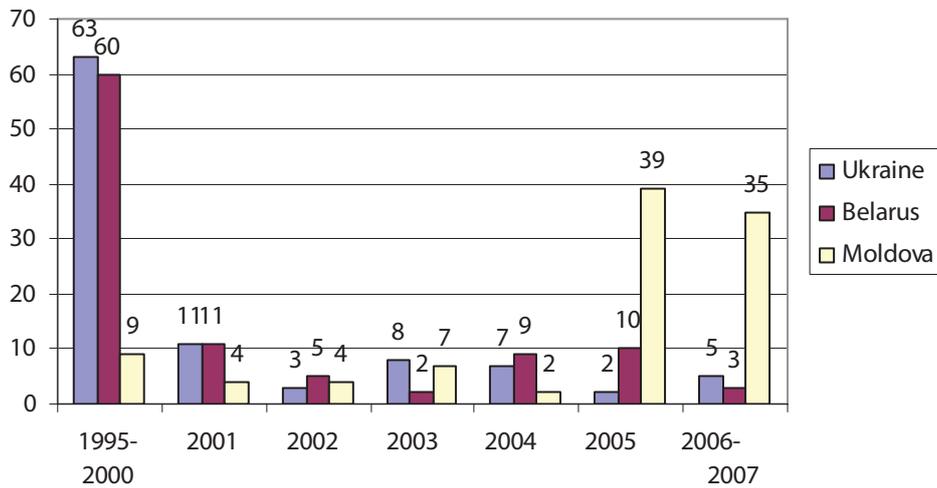
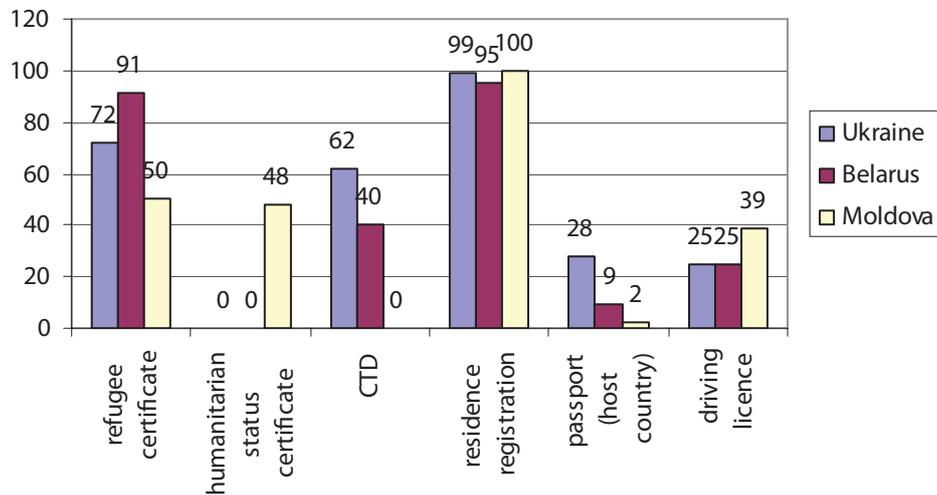


Chart 8. Number of respondents by year of arrival in the host country, in %



* in Moldova, prior to adoption of the Law on Refugee status (2002), status determination and recognition were undertaken by UNHCR.

Chart 9. Number of respondents by year of refugee status recognition, in %



* The sum of answers is over 100% as the respondents could choose more than one answer.

** Belarus issues a travel document which does not correspond to the 1951 Convention.

Chart 10. Number of respondents according to the documents they hold, in %

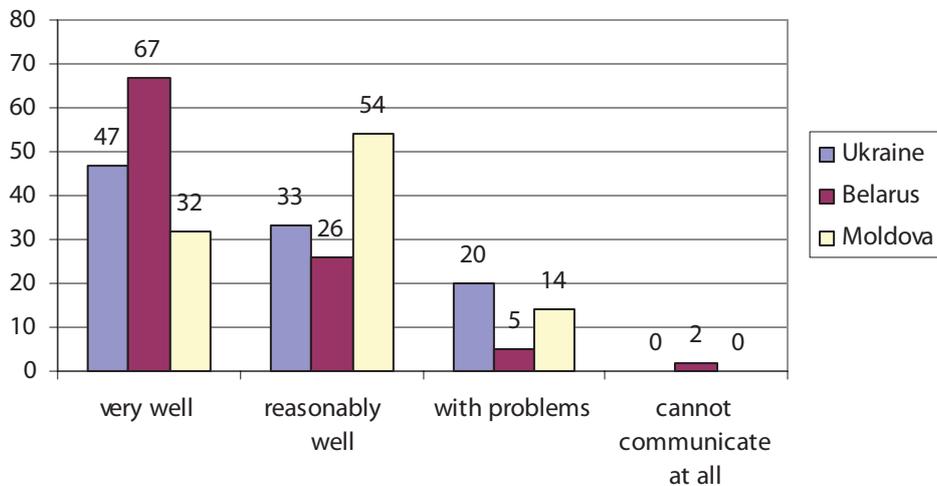


Chart 11. Number of respondents according to their self-assessment command of the languages of the host countries, in %

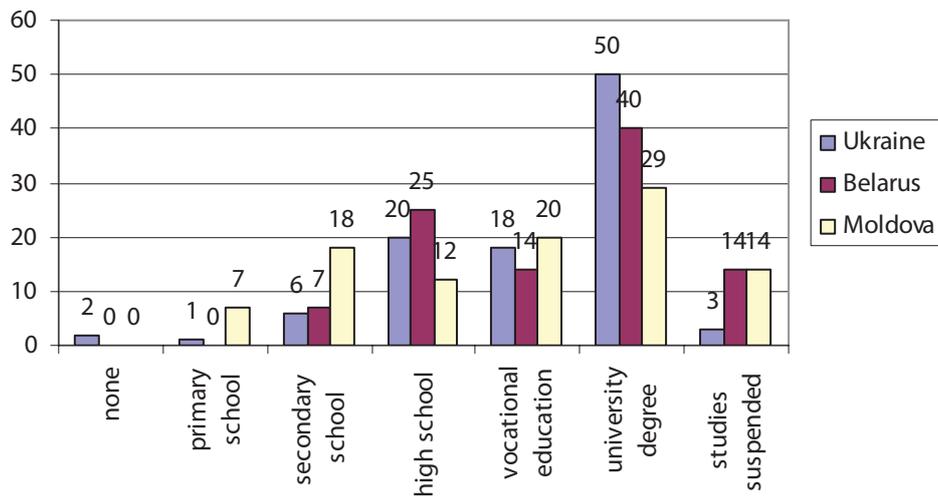


Chart 12. Number of respondents according to levels of education per host country, in %

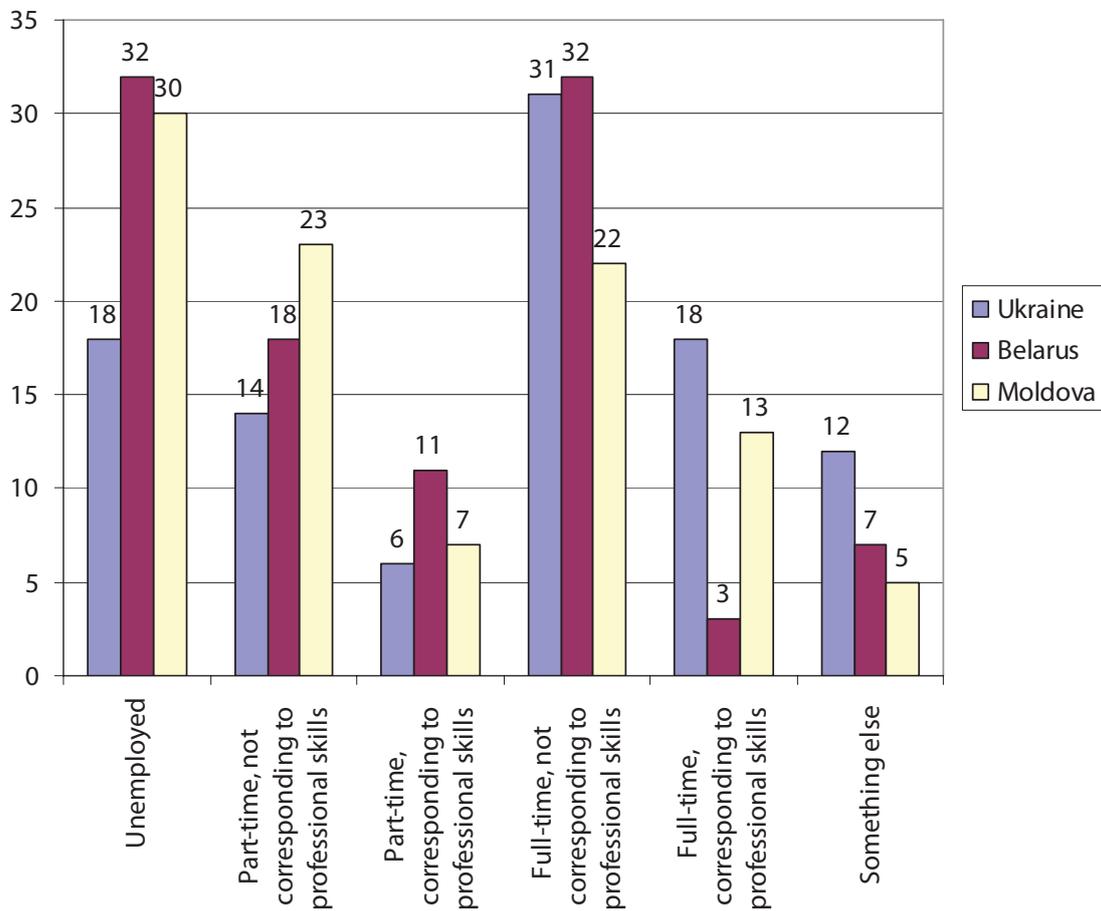


Chart 13. Number of employed and unemployed respondents per host country, in %

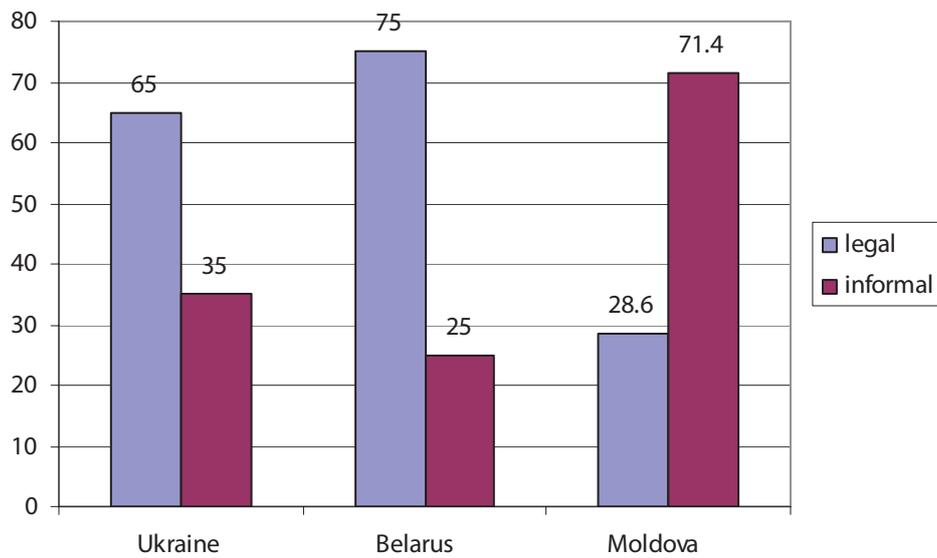


Chart 14. Number of respondents in legal or informal employment per host country, in %

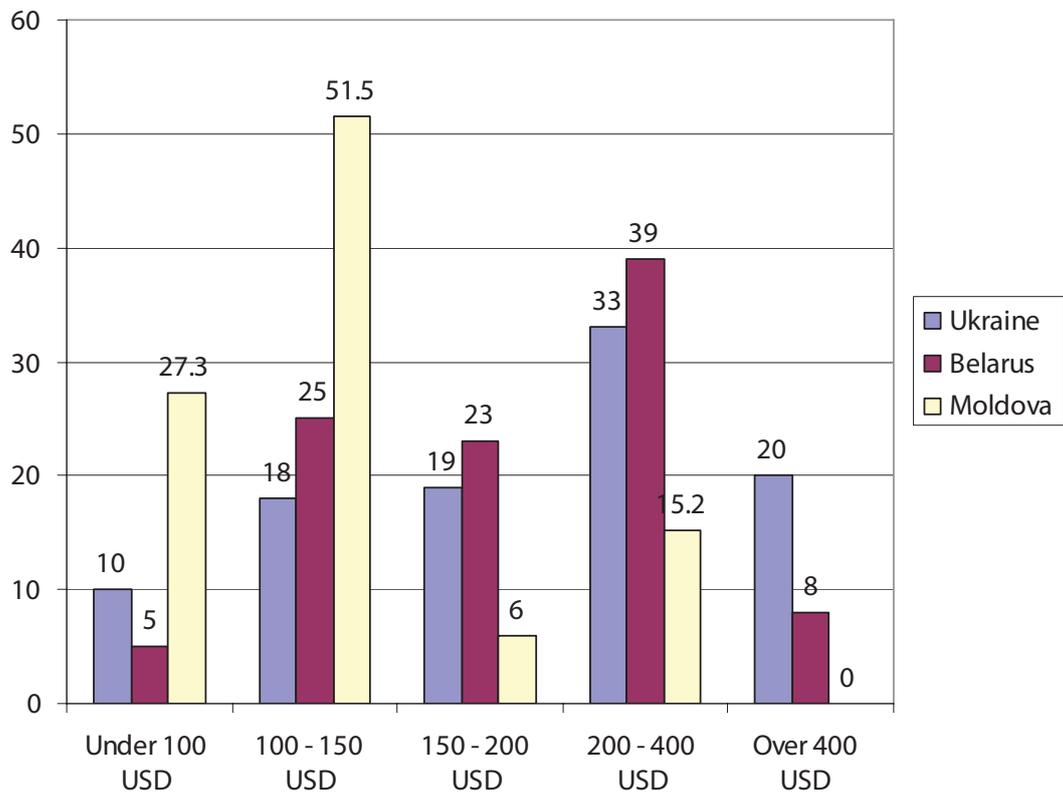
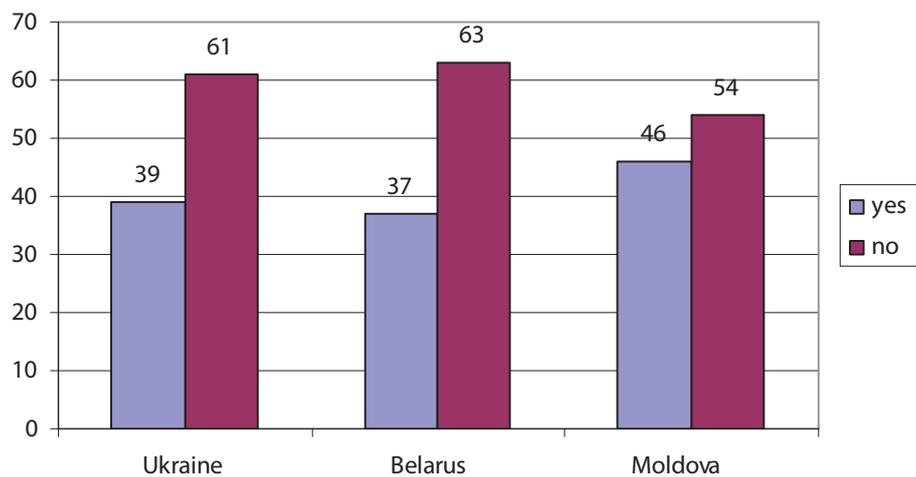


Chart 15. Number of respondents according to their monthly income, by host country, in %



* Few respondents have applied for bank loans, most borrowed money from friends/countrymen.

Chart 16. Number of respondents in debt per host country, in %

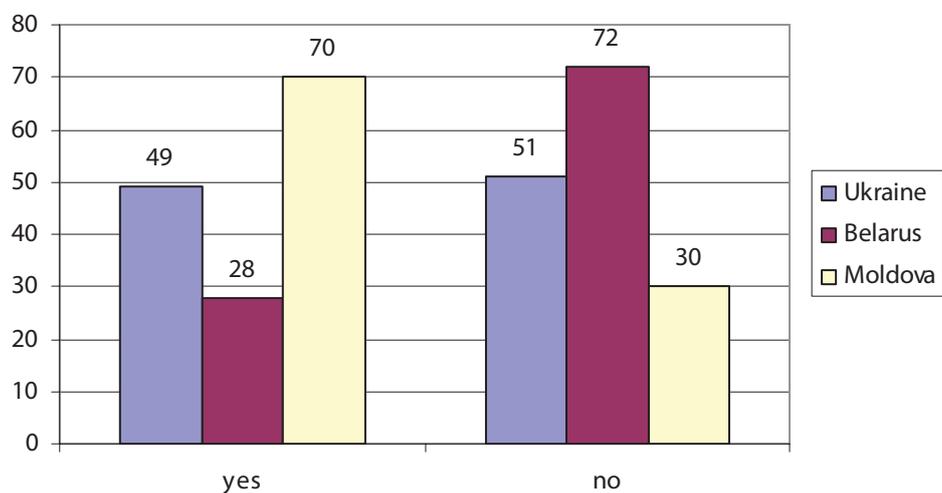


Chart 17. Number of respondents who have entrepreneurial experience per host country, in %

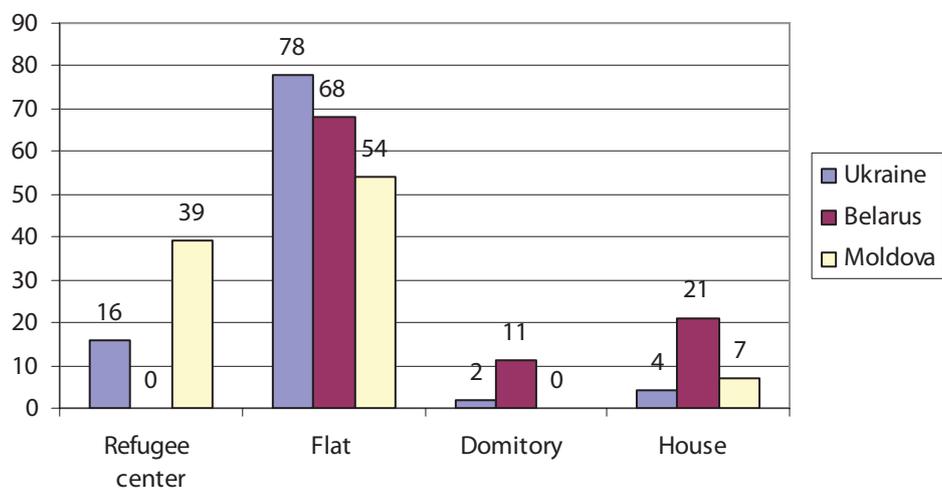


Chart 18. Number of respondents and type of accommodation by host country, in %

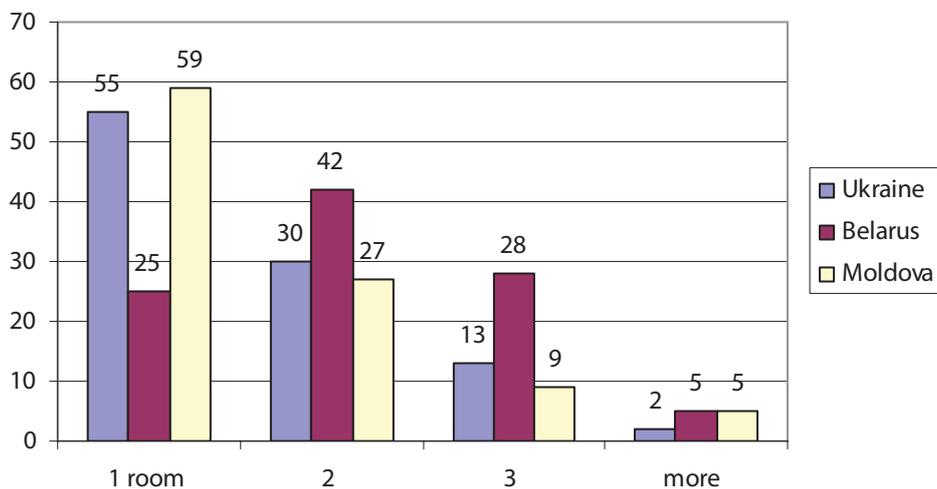
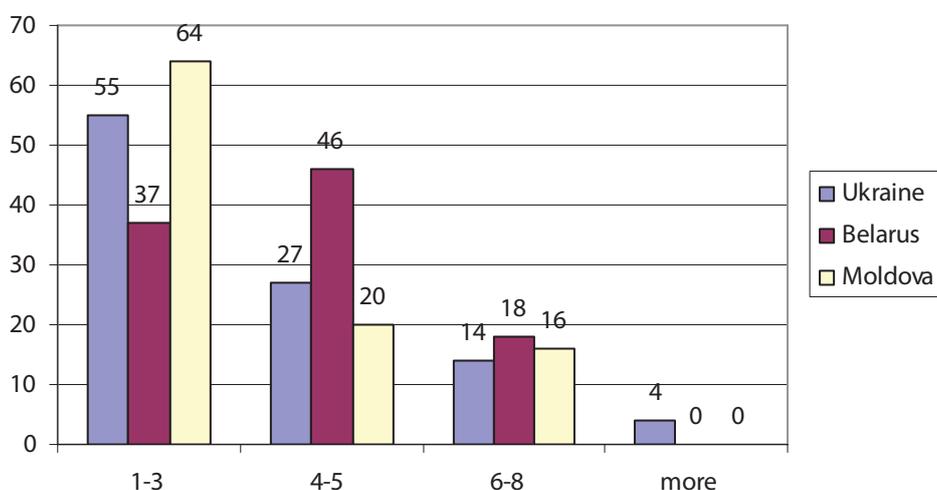
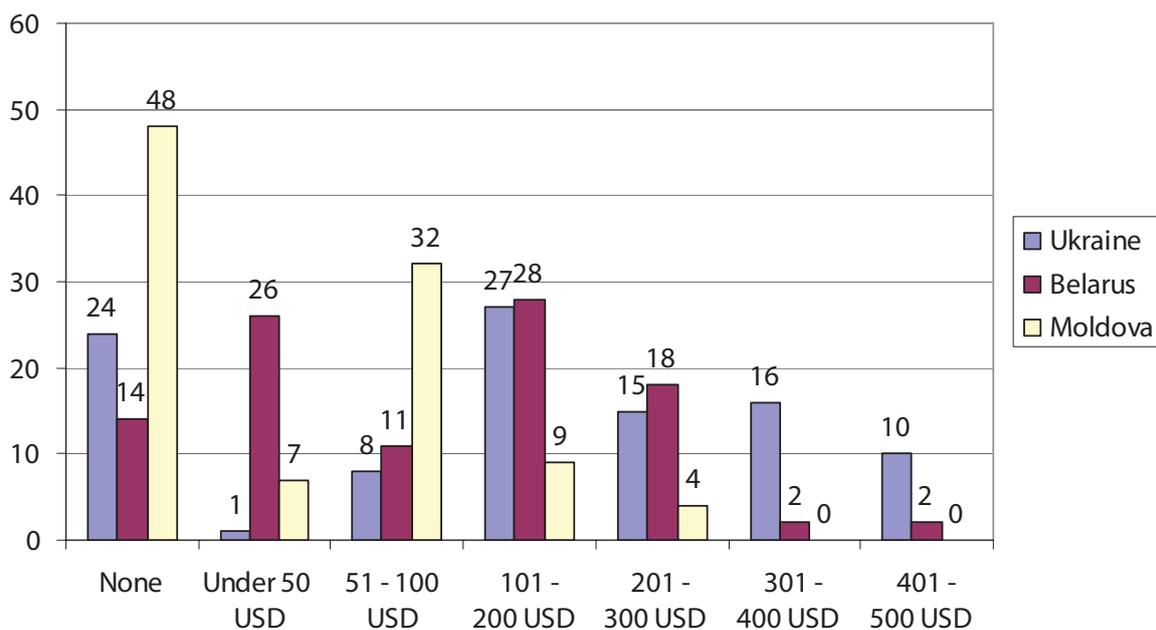


Chart 19. Number of rooms per housing unit occupied by respondents, by host country, in %



* Most respondents live in shared accommodation with other refugees or in sub-let rooms in landlord's flat/house.

Chart 20. Number of respondents sharing accommodation with one or several other refugees, per host country, in %



* Most of those who do not pay rent live in refugee centers, few have their private housing.

Chart 21. Average monthly rental costs by respondent and by host country, in %

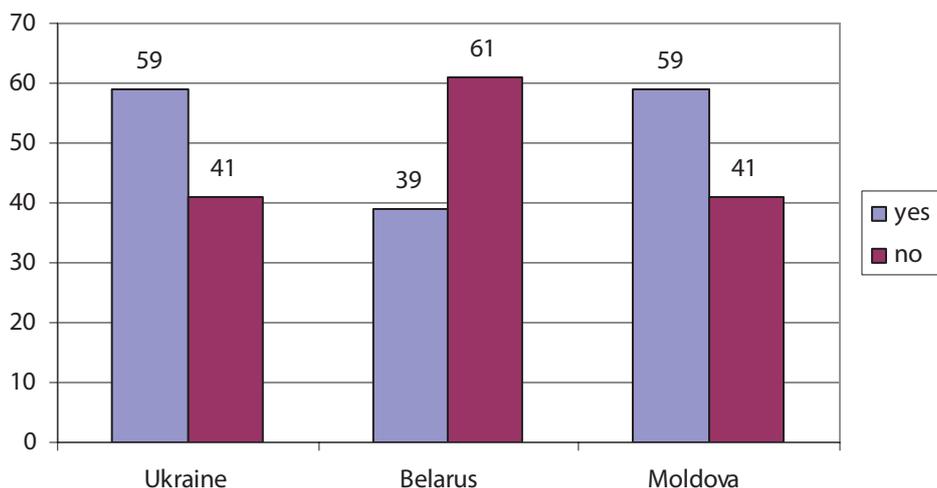
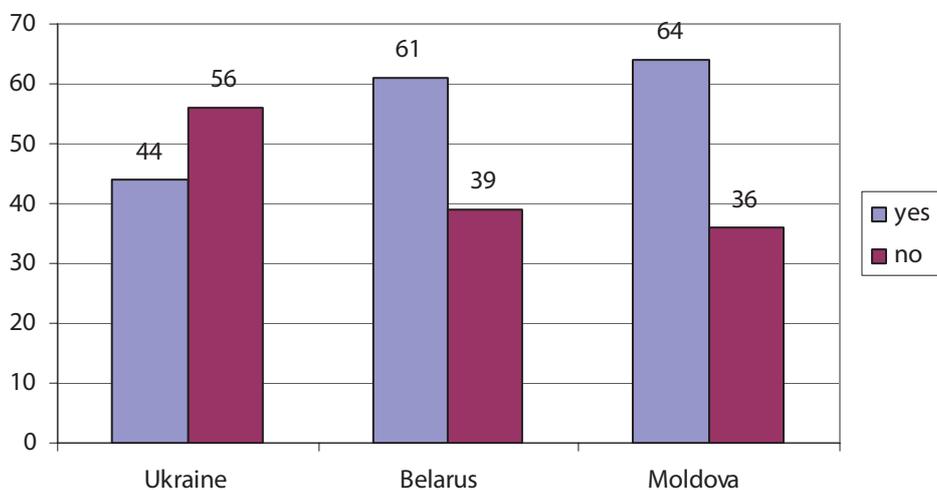


Chart 22. Number of respondents who actually live where they are registered, per host country in %



** Many respondents, while answering positively, also expressed hope for better housing.*

Chart 23. Number of respondents who are satisfied/ not satisfied with their housing conditions, by host country in %

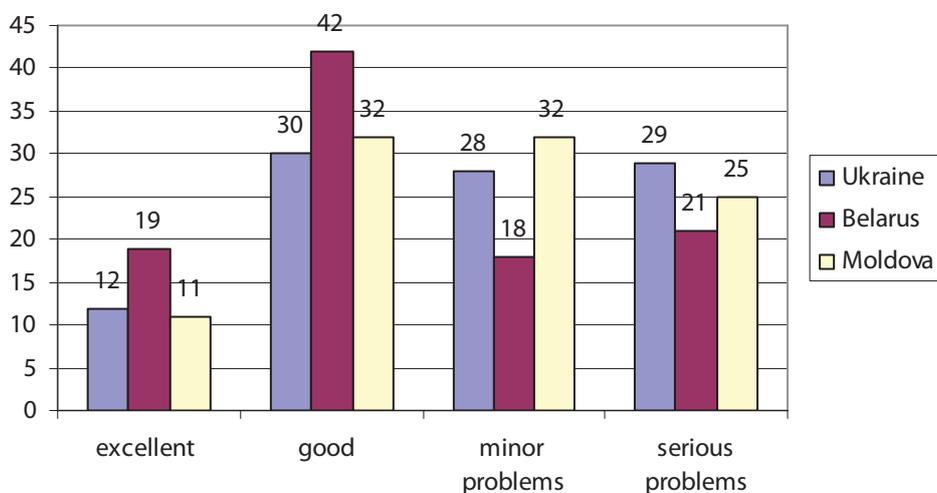


Chart 24. Self-assessed state of health of respondents, per host country, in %

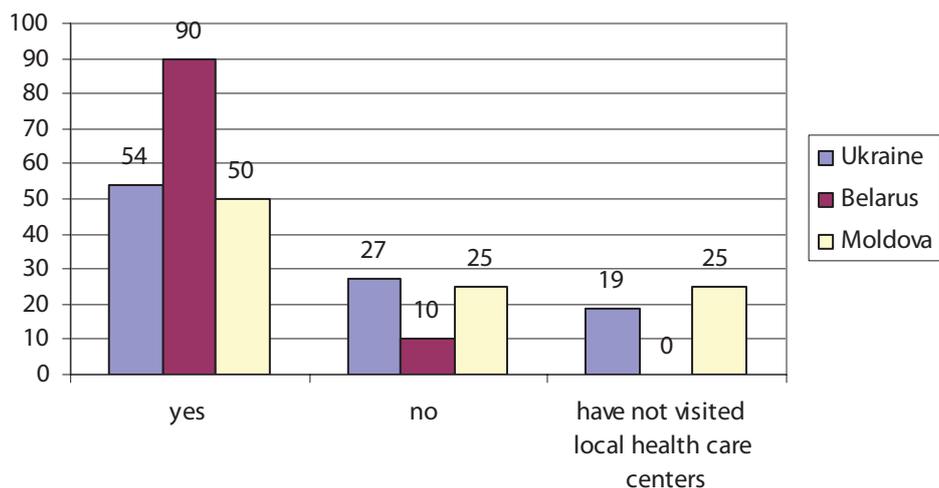


Chart 25. Number of respondents satisfied/ unsatisfied with medical services, per host country, in %

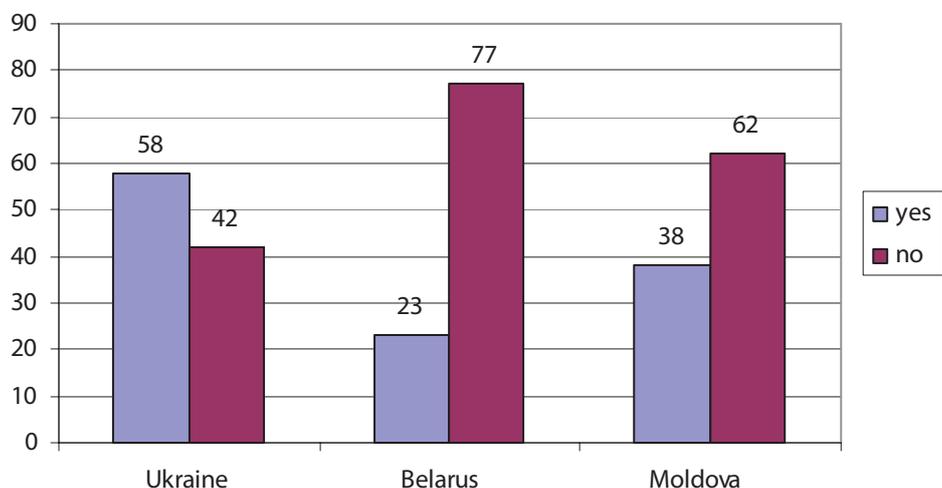


Chart 26. Number of respondents who faced hostility from host country nationals, in %

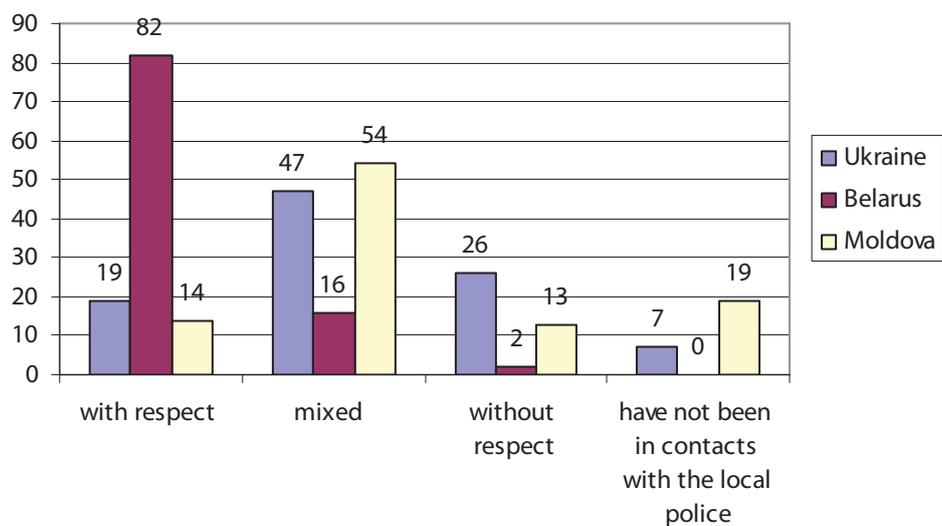


Chart 27. Frequency of answers to the question "How does the police treat you?", per host country, in %

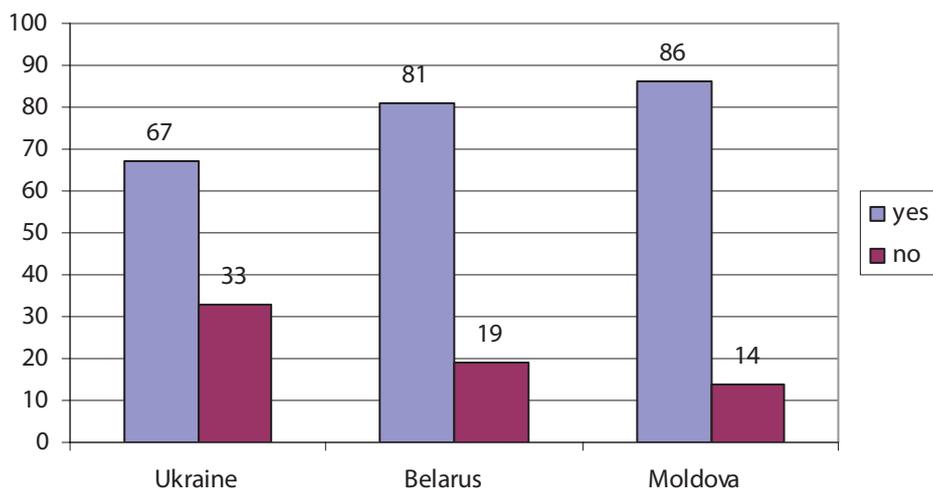
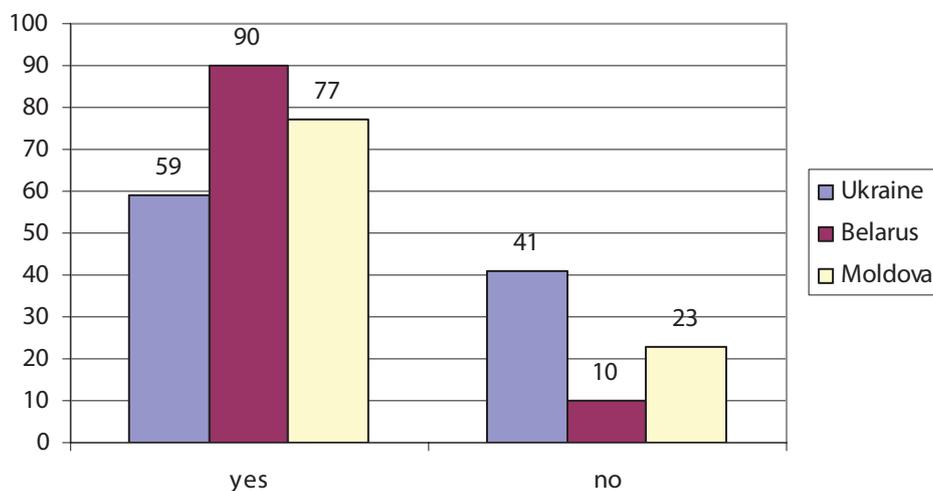
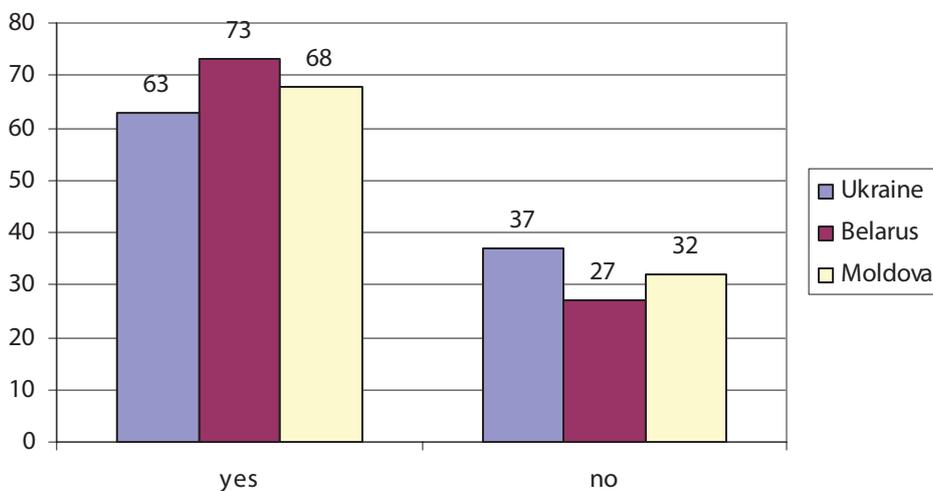


Chart 28. Frequency of respondents who have friends among host country nationals, in %



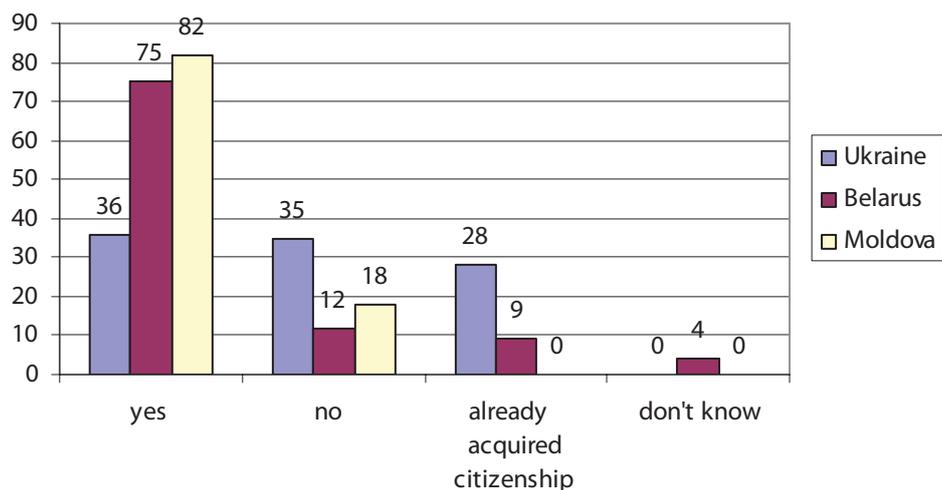
** Many respondents while answering positively, also expressed feelings of insecurity because of socio-economic difficulties.*

Chart 29. Number of respondents who feel safe in their host country, by host country in %



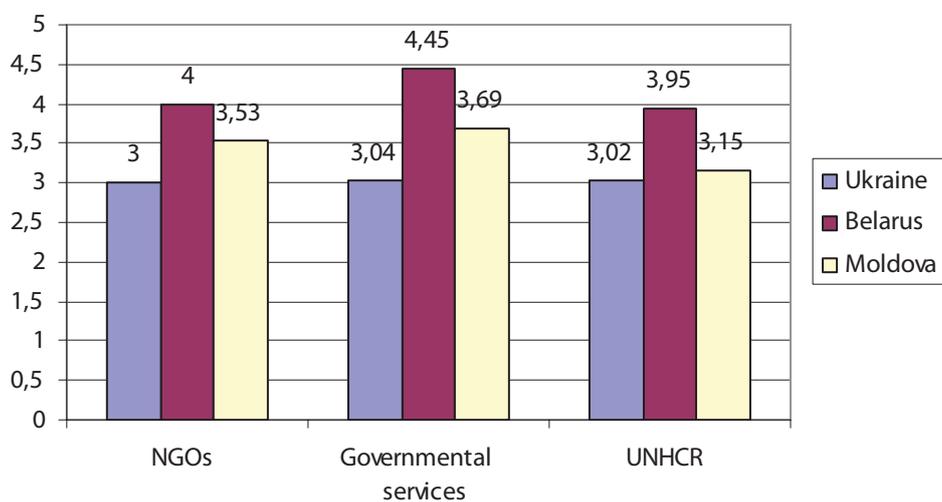
** Many respondents while answering positively also expressed hope of resettlement/ family reunification.*

Chart 30. Number of respondents planning to stay in host country, by host country, in %



* "Yes" indicates respondents who have already applied and/or are planning to apply for citizenship.

Chart 31. Number of respondents applying for citizenship, per host country, in %



* For details, see the country statistical analysis.

Chart 32. Respondents' evaluation of the quality of assistance provided by NGOs, Governmental services and UNHCR, by host country, (from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest mark and 5 is the highest one)

List of interlocutors (authorities, NGOs and international organizations)

The Republic of Belarus

Officials

bold designates members of the Inter-ministerial Work Group on Local Integration

Ministry of Interior

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Sergei Matus | Deputy Head, Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Tatiana Tumashik | Head of Section for Refugee and Asylum Issues, Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Sergei Kasinsky | Deputy Head of Section for Refugee and Asylum Issues, Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Natalya Sokolovskaya | Senior Specialist, Section for Refugee and Asylum Issues, Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Edita Fedosova | Senior Inspector, Section of Interaction with International Organizations, Department of International Cooperation |
| Alexander Matsukov | Inspector, Section for Work with Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons, Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Alexander Sherbach | Deputy Head, Minsk City Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Ekaterina Shidlovskaya | Specialist, Section for External Labour Migration, Refugees and Asylum, Minsk City Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Alexander Zelenkevich | Head, Minsk Regional Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Sergei Suboch | Deputy Head, Minsk Regional Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Alla Zgurskaya | Head of Section for External Labour Migration, Refugees and Asylum, Minsk Regional Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Alexander Gorlenko | Head, Gomel Regional Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Anatoly Suomalainen | Deputy Head, Gomel Regional Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Natalya Korkutj | Head of Section for Refugee and Asylum Issues, Gomel Regional Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Elena Kondratova, | Head of Section for Work with Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons, Gomel Regional Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Andrei Smalyuga | Head of Section for Citizenship and Migration of Sovetsky District of Gomel, Gomel Regional Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Olga Lazareva | Specialist for Work with Refugees and External Labour Migration, Vitebsk Regional Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| Valentina Shulyak | Specialist for Work with Refugees and External Labour Migration, Grodno Regional Department on Citizenship and Migration |

Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Nikolai Kokhanov | Head, Department of Employment and Population |
| Elena Usova | Senior Specialist, Department of Employment and Population |

Ministry of Justice

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Irina Tregubovich | Consultant, Department of Legal Regulation of State Social Activity |
|--------------------------|---|

Ministry of Education

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Galina Romanovets | Senior Inspector, Department of Secondary Education |
|--------------------------|---|

Ministry of Health

Tatjana Migalj Deputy Head, Department of Organization of Medical Assistance
Irina Mezen Consultant, Section of External Relations

Minsk City Executive Committee

Cheslav Rovba Head, Population Employment Department, Committee on Labour, Employment and Social Protection
Alla Puchko Head of Section for Organisation of Work on Population Employment Assistance
Valentina Ivanova Deputy Head, Employment Section “Oktyabrsky”

Gomel City/Regional Authorities

Sergei Poroshin Deputy Head, Gomel City Executive Committee
Alexander Semionov Deputy Head, Committee on Labour, Employment and Social Protection, Gomel Regional Executive Committee
Svetlana Ivanova Head, Department for Employment, Committee on Labour, Employment and Social Protection, Gomel Regional Executive Committee
Margarita Khodichenko Head of Gomel City Center of Social Assistance for Family and Children

Scientific Research Institute of Labour of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

Svetlana Shevchenko Director
Natalia Avseenko Head of Analytical Centre of Monitoring of Social and Labour Sphere
Irina Kuropatenkova Head of Sector, Sector of Insurance System and Social Protection Development
Eduard Skorobogaty Senior Scientific Worker
Tatiana Shelekhova Senior Scientific Worker

International Organisation for Migration

Tatiana Orange Coordinator of Operations Department

NGOs

Vladimir Kravchenko Head, Refugee Counselling Service of the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers, Deputy of Minsk City Soviet of Deputies
Timofey Solodkov Legal Consultant, Refugee Counselling Service of the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers (Minsk)
Sona Gevorgyan Legal Consultant, Refugee Counselling Service of the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers (Minsk)
Olga Shutova Legal Consultant, Refugee Counselling Service of the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers (Vitebsk)
Viktor Kolbanov Secretary General, Belarusian Red Cross
Inna Lemeshevskaya Deputy Secretary General on Youth and Programme Activities, Belarusian Red Cross, Manager of the Joint UNHCR-Belarusian Red Cross Project “Local Integration of Refugees in Belarus”
Pavel Lozovsky Councillor for Integration, Joint UNHCR-Belarusian Red Cross Project “Local Integration of Refugees in Belarus”
Valentina Mostovlyanskaya Deputy Head, Centre for Children and Adolescents “Evrika” of Frunzensky District of Minsk City, Manager of the Joint UNHCR-“Evrika” Project “Socialization and Adaptation of Refugee Children in the Republic of Belarus”,
Svetlana Shiryakova Cultural Organizer, Centre for Children and Adolescents “Evrika” of Frunzensky District of Minsk City

Refugee communities

Name withheld Head and Representatives of the International Charitable Public Association “Afghan Community”
Name withheld Head and Representatives of the International Public Association “Afghan Community, Fellowship, Refugees”

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Name withheld | Head and Representatives of the Fund for Support of Forced Migrants and Refugees “Integration-A” |
| Name withheld | Head and Representatives of Grodno Public Association of Georgians |
| Name withheld | Staff of an integration project - Billiards Club “Zolotoj Shar” (Gomel) |
| Name withheld | Staff of an integration project - Bakery “BelaGruzia” (Grodno) |

The Republic of Moldova

Officials

bold designates members of the Inter-ministerial Work Group on Local Integration

Ministry of Interior

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Veaceslav Binzari | Director of the Bureau for Asylum and Migration |
| Ecaterina Silvestru | Deputy Director of the Bureau for Asylum and Migration and Director of the Refugee Directorate |
| Sergiu Visterniceanu | Deputy Director of the Refugee Directorate, Bureau for Asylum and Migration |
| Constantin Cojocaru | Deputy Director of the Accommodation center for refugees |
| Evelina Osoianu | Principal Specialist/Social issues, Directorate for Refugees, Bureau for Asylum and Migration |

Presidential Office

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Ion Morei | Head of the Supreme Security Service Council |
| Alexander Ochotnikov | Head of Acts Service |

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Oxana Borta | Attaché, Section for Political Dialogue |
| Oleg Botnari | Deputy Chief of Direction, General Consular Department |

Ministry of Informational Development

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Vladimir Molojen | Minister |
| Lyudmila Paskaru | Deputy Head of the Main Department of Documentation of the Population |
| Arcadie Bostan | Chief, Section for documentation of foreign citizens and stateless persons temporarily on the territory of the Republic of Moldova |
| Elena Horoshih | Chief of Foreign Relations Department |

Ministry of Local Public Administration

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Valentin Guznac | Minister |
| Vladimir Rusnac | Deputy Chief of Department |

Ministry of Economy and Trade

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Nina Turcanu | National Agency for Employment |
| Ala Supac | Municipal Agency for Employment |
| Tatiana Udrea | Deputy Chief of Department |
| Mihail Olaru | Consultant |
| Sergiu Pruteanu | Consultant, Direction for Labour Migration, National Agency for Employment |

Ministry of Finance

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Nina Cernautanu | Deputy Chief of Department |
|------------------------|----------------------------|

Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Angela Caitaz | Consultant |
| Corneliu Tarus | Principal Consultant, Department for Family and Child Protection |

Laura Grecu Chief of Section, Department for Social Insurance

Ministry of Health

Tatiana Zatic Deputy Chief of Department

Ministry of Education and Youth

Victor Tvircun Minister

Nadejda Velisco Head of Pre-University Education Department

Galina Bulat Head of Higher Education Department

Alla Nikitcenko Deputy Chief of Department

Victoria Isac Principal Consultant

Victor Paginu Consultant, Department of Pre-University Education

The International Independent University of Moldova (ULIM)

Andrei Galben Rector, ULIM University

Ala Mindicanu Dean of the Journalism and Communication Department, ULIM

Local authorities

Grigore Policinschi President of Dubasari Region

NGOs

Alexei Barbaneagra Director of NGO Law Centre of Advocates

Irina Bobeico Project Coordinator/Legal Counsellor, NGO Law Centre of Advocates

Oleg Palii Advocate, NGO Law Centre of Advocates

Vasile Batcu President of NGO Save the Children

Ahmad Djavaid Paknehad Project Coordinator of Charity Center for Refugees

Ludmila Popovici Director, Memoria

International organizations

Martin Wyss Representative, IOM Moldova

Gottfried Hanne Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission

Bo Westman Representative, SIDA

Ion Russu Director, Consolidated Programme Implementation Unit,
International Fund for Agricultural Development (CPIU, IFAD)

Ukraine

Officials

bold designates members of the Inter-ministerial Working Group on Local Integration

State Committee for Nationalities and Religions

Nikolay Yerukh Director of the Department of Migration Service and Prospective Planning

Natalya Naumenko Deputy Director of the Department of Migration Service and Prospective Planning

Volodymyr Halamon Chief Specialist of the Department of Migration Service and Prospective Planning

Viktoria Shmidt Head of the Division of Migration Policies

Kyiv Migration Service

Aleksandr Dergach Director

Vladimir Zhuk Deputy Director

Kristina Zaplatsynskaya Chief specialist

Odesa Regional Migration Service and TAC

Ivan Suprunovskiy Director
Olga Ritchenko Deputy Director
Vadim Veprikov Director, Temporary Accommodation Centre
Maria Fetisova Chief Specialist of the Refugee Department, Temporary Accommodation Centre

Kharkiv Regional Migration Service

Natalya Shtyh Head, Migration Unit
Elena Smolyaninova Chief Specialist, Migration Unit

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Vladislav Bogorad Consular Service Department

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Tatyana Petrova Head, Department of Employment Policy and Labour Migration
Taras Simak Chief specialist, Department of Employment and labour migration

Employment Centres (Kyiv and Odesa)

Marina Yegorova Head, Department of Labour Migration and International Cooperation, State Employment Centre, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies
Valentina Plachinda Deputy Head, Department of Employment bodies and service provision to employers, State Employment Centre, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies
Oleksandr Melnyk Director, Kyiv Municipal Employment Centre
Lina Borymska First Deputy Director, Kyiv Municipal Employment Centre
Leonid Shayan Deputy Director, Kyiv Municipal Employment Centre
Mikhail Tsymbalyuk Head, Unit of employment permissions for foreigners, Kyiv Municipal Employment Center
Olga Shevchuk Deputy Head, Desnyanskiy District Employment Center, Kyiv
Irina Muravina Director, Odesa Regional Employment Centre
Stepan Budzar Deputy Director, Odesa Regional Employment Centre
Tatyana Kanava Head, Employment Unit, Odesa Regional Employment Centre

Pension Fund

Anatoliy Soloviev Director, Main Office of the Pension Fund of Ukraine in Odesa Region

Hospital

Elena Slesareva Chief Doctor, Hospital having an agreement for treatment of refugees in Odesa

Ministry of Justice

Olga Yakovleva Ministry of Justice
Oleg Rybitzky Head, Unit of the Constitutional and Administrative Law

Ministry of Education

Hennadiy Kolesnik Chief Specialist, Higher Education Department
Zhanna Koshkina Chief Specialist, Department of secondary school and pre-school education

Ministry of Interior

Mikhail Rusinskiy Head, State Department of citizenship, Immigration and registration
Igor Morinets Head, Kyiv Department of citizenship, Immigration and registration
Nelya Sachik Chief Inspector, Immigration and illegal migration prevention Department
Oleg Pavlenko Director, Odesa Department of citizenship, Immigration and registration
Anatoliy Vintserskiy Deputy Director, Odesa Department of citizenship, Immigration and registration

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Tatyana Surkan | Head, Citizenship Department, Odesa Department of citizenship, Immigration and registration |
| Irina Barannik | Acting Head, Kharkiv MOI SDCIRNP |
| Elena Chyryk | Head, Citizenship Department, Kharkiv Regional MOI SDCIRNP |
| Igor Tokarev | Head, Kharkiv Regional MOI SDCIRNP |

Presidential Secretariat

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Raisa Olentsevych | Head, Citizenship Department |
| Fandykova Tatyana | Deputy Head, Citizenship Department |

NGOs

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Dina Gud | Director, ROKADA Charitable Foundation (Kyiv) |
| Aleksandr Makarevich | Lawyer on social issues, ROKADA Charitable Foundation (Kyiv) |
| Olga Nezhynets | ROKADA Charitable Foundation (Kyiv), Former employment officer |
| Julia Zelvenskaya | NGO support officer, ECRE |
| Victoria Timofeeva | Director, SYMPATHY Charitable Foundation (Odesa) |
| Name withheld | Social Counsellor, SYMPATHY Charitable Foundation (Odesa) |
| Name withheld | Senior social counsellor, SYMPATHY Charitable Foundation (Odesa) |
| Elvira Zeitulaeva | Director, Foundation for Naturalization and Human Rights “Assistance” (Crimea) |
| Mykola Pakhalyuk | Director, South-Ukrainian Centre of Young Lawyers (Odesa) |
| Marina Kurochkina | Lawyer, South-Ukrainian Centre of Young Lawyers (Odesa) |
| Leonard Terlitsky | HIAS Kyiv Director, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, INC Legal Protection Services Program (Kyiv) |
| Aleksandr Galkin | Project co-ordinator, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, INC Legal Protection Services Program (Kyiv) |
| Yaroslav Pilinskiy | Kennan Society Institute, Head |
| Viktor Gritsai | Vice-President, Social Assistance Service (Kharkiv) |
| Valeriy Zadorenko | Counsellor, Social Assistance Service (Kharkiv) |
| Eugenia Smirnova | Lawyer, Social Assistance Service (Kharkiv) |
| Shamla Margend | IOM Project on improvement of migration flows management, Social Assistance Service (Kharkiv) |
| Voitech Honig | Assistant Program Manager, Caritas Czech Republic |
| Tetyana Anisimova | Donetsk Fund of Social Security and Charity (Donetsk) |

Refugee communities

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Name withheld | Head and Deputy, NGO “Afghan motherland” (Afghan refugee and asylum-seeker community) |
| Name withheld | President, Community of Angolan Refugees in Ukraine (SABU) |
| Name withheld | First leader, Somali Community in Ukraine |
| Name withheld | President, Chechen refugee community (Charity Foundation Berkat) |
| Name withheld | Head, Kyiv refugee women committee |
| Name withheld | Administrator, Integration Centre for refugees in Kyiv |
| Name withheld | President, National cultural union “Afghan community” |
| Name withheld | President and General Secretary, the Odesa Association of African Refugees |
| Name withheld | Head and Deputy of Refugee women club “Beregynya” (Odesa Refugee Women Committee) |
| Name withheld | President, Community of African Refugees and Immigrants in Odesa |
| Name withheld | President and vice-president, Public organization of Immigrants and Refugees of Afghanistan “Khurasan” |
| Name withheld | Leader, Sierra Leone refugee community in Kharkiv |
| Name withheld | Leader, Ethiopia refugee community in Kharkiv |
| Name withheld | Leader, Cote d’Ivoire refugee community in Kharkiv |

The Experts' LIP team work-programme⁷⁴

(Mr. Oldrich Andrysek – OA, Ms. Tarja Rantala – TR,
Ms. Anna Lukinova – AL, Mr. Andrei Krasnyansky – AK,
Ms. Diana Ciubotaru – DC, Mr. Viacheslav Zhakevich – VZ)

| Date | Time | Activity |
|--------------------|------|---|
| April, 2007 | | |
| 20 | Fri | OA Interviews with potential LIP Assistants in Kyiv |
| May, 2007 | | |
| 14 | Mon | 11.00 1st meeting with the Gvt representatives on Local Integration Study in the State Committee for Nationalities and Religions (SCNR). It was arranged to create an Inter-ministerial Group. Simone Wolken (SW), Isabelle Mihoubi (IM), Gaspar Bergman (GB), Anna Lukinova (AL), Olena Gorova (OG) (without OA and TR) |
| 21 | Mon | 16.30 OA arrival to Chisinau |
| | | 17.00-18.30 OA Meeting with Peter Wijninga, Representative, UNHCR Office in Moldova |
| 22 | Tue | 9.00-9.30 OA Meeting with Ion Russu, CPIU/ IFAD |
| | | 11.00-12.30 OA Meeting with Gvt representatives |
| | | 15.30-16.30 OA Meeting with Ion Morei, Head of the Supreme Security Council |
| | | 16.45-17.30 OA Meeting with representatives of the Law Centre of Advocates |
| 23 | Wed | 9.30-10.15 OA Meeting with Bo Westman, Representative of SIDA |
| | | 10.30-11.30 OA Meeting with NGOs representatives |
| | | 12.00-14.00 OA Meeting with Veaceslav Binzari and Ecaterina Silvestru, Directors of the Bureau for Asylum and Migration, Ministry of Interior |
| | | 23.10 OA arrival to Kyiv |
| 24 | Thu | 10.45 OA, AL, SW, IM, GB Meeting |
| 25 | Fri | 10.00 1st meeting of the Inter-ministerial Group on Local Integration Project |
| | | 11.30 Meeting with Natalya Naumenko, SCNR |
| 29 | Tue | 9.00 Meeting of the Steering Committee, Jeffrey Labovitz, Chief of IOM mission in Ukraine, Bernhard Bogensperger, EC representative |
| | | 17.20 OA departure to Minsk |
| 30 | Wed | 10.00 OA Meeting at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus with Tatiana Tumashik, Sergei Kasinsky, Nataliya Sokolovskaya, Edita Fedosova and UNHCR Office in Belarus participants Ilija Todorovic, Ivan Saleyeu and Aliaksandr Velikarodnau |
| | | 14.00 OA Meeting at the UNHCR Office in Belarus with potential researchers/ interviewers for LIP in Belarus (Scientific Research Institute of Labour of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and Political and Social Studies Research Center of the Belarusian State University) |
| | | 16.00 OA Meeting at the UNHCR Office in Belarus with representatives of refugee communities residing in Belarus |
| 31 | Thu | 10.00 OA Meeting at the UNHCR Office in Belarus with representatives of the state bodies that will facilitate LIP process (please refer to phone list of contacts for more details) |
| | | 23.00 OA arrival to Kyiv |

⁷⁴ The list of meetings is not necessarily exhaustive and some names have been withheld for privacy reasons.

June, 2007

| | | | |
|----|-----|--------------|---|
| 1 | Fri | 10.00 | OA, AL Meeting in the SCNR with Nikolay Yerukh and representatives of the Ministry of Justice |
| 4 | Mon | 15.00 | OA Meeting with potential intern |
| | | 16.00 | OA Meeting with AL |
| 5 | Tue | 10.55 | TR arrival, OA to meet at the airport |
| | | 15.00 | OA, TR, SW Meeting |
| | | 16.00 | OA, TR, AL, GB Meeting |
| 6 | Wed | 11.25-16.30 | OA & TR Travel to Moldova |
| | | 17.00-18.00 | OA, TR, DC Meeting with Peter Wijninga, Representative, UNHCR Office in Moldova |
| 7 | Thu | 9.00-11.00 | OA, TR, DC Preparatory meeting with Ecaterina Silvestru and Veaceslav Binzari, MoI |
| | | 11.15-12.15 | OA, TR Meeting with Alexander Ochotnikov, Head of Acts Service, Presidential Office |
| | | 14.30-15.30 | OA, TR, DC Meeting with Martin Wyss, Representative, IOM Moldova |
| | | 15.45-18.00 | OA, TR, DC Meeting with a recognized refugee, visiting his enterprise |
| 8 | Fri | 9.00-11.00 | Meeting with the Working Group/1st session |
| | | 11.30-12.30 | OA, TR Meeting with Victor Tvircun, Minister, Ministry of Education and Youth |
| | | 16.00-18.00 | OA Meeting with Grigore Policinschi, President of Dubasari Region |
| 9 | Sat | 9.00 - 18.00 | TR Visiting cases in the countryside, Moldova. Places visited and interviews conducted: Drochia, Paladia & Ocnita |
| 10 | Sun | 9.00 - 18.00 | TR Visiting cases in the countryside, Moldova. Places visited and interviews conducted: Logofteni, Falesti & Causani |
| 11 | Mon | 09.30-10.30 | OA, TR, DC Meeting with Gottfried Hanne, Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission in Moldova |
| | | 10.45-11.45 | OA, TR Meeting with Vladimir Molojen, Minister of Informational Development |
| | | 14.30-15.30 | OA, TR, DC Meeting with MK and AM (recognized refugees) at the Reception Centre |
| 12 | Tue | 9.00-11.00 | Meeting with the LIP Working Group/2nd session |
| | | 10.15-18.00 | OA, TR, DC Interviews with refugees |
| 13 | Wed | 9.00-18.00 | OA, TR, DC Interviews with refugees |
| 14 | Thu | 23.00 | OA, TR Return from Moldova to Kyiv |
| 15 | Fri | 10.00 | OA, TR Meeting with Sergei Lavrukhin, Programme Officer, UNHCR Office in Ukraine |
| 18 | Mon | 15.00 | Meeting OA, TR, AL with Aleksandr Galkin (HIAS), TL (President of the Community of Angolan Refugees in Ukraine) |
| 19 | Tue | 10.00 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with Dina Good, Director, NGO ROKADA |
| | | 13.00 | OA, TR, AL Visiting Integration Centre run by NGO ROKADA |
| | | 15.00 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with Aleksandr Dergach, Director, Kyiv Migration Service |
| 20 | Wed | 10.00 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with TB (Chechen refugee community - Charity Foundation Berkat), KA (Kyiv Refugee Women Center) and MS (Afghan Motherland) |
| | | 15.00-23.10 | OA, TR Travel to Minsk |
| 21 | Thu | 13.00-14.30 | OA, TR, AK Meeting with Vladimir Kravchenko, Head of Refugee Counselling Service of the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers, Deputy of Minsk City Soviet of Deputies |
| | | 15.00-16.30 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with SS, Charitable Public Associate of Afghans "Afghan Community" |

| | | | |
|----|-----|---------------|---|
| 22 | Fri | 10.00-12.00 | OA, TR, AK Meeting with Svetlana Shevchenko, the Head of Scientific Research Institute of Labour of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection |
| | | 15.00-17.00 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with JK, IPA "Afghan Community and Refugees" |
| 23 | Sat | 11.00-15.30 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Interviews with Afghan refugee family |
| 25 | Mon | 11.00-12.30 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Victor Kolbanov, Chairman of Belarusian Red Cross |
| | | 14.30-17.30 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Interviews with refugees |
| 26 | Tue | 10.30-12.00 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Valentina Mostovlyanskaya, Project Manager of "Socialization and Adaptation of Refugee Children in the Republic of Belarus", Deputy Head of CCA "Evriska" |
| | | 13.00-14.00 | OA, TR, AK Meeting with Vladimir Kravchenko, Head of Refugee Counselling Service of the Belarusian Movement of Medical Workers, Deputy of Minsk City Soviet of Deputies |
| | | 14.30-17.30 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Interviews with refugees |
| | | 10.00 - 18.00 | AL Interviews with Afghan refugees at Troeshina Market |
| 27 | Wed | 10.00-11.30 | OA, TR, AK Meeting with Tatiana Tumashik, the Head of Section for Refugees and Asylum, Department on Citizenship and Migration of MOI |
| | | 16.00-17.30 | Meeting with Lyudmila Kaidashova, EC TACIS Monitor (cancelled by Lyudmila Kaidashova) |
| | | 16.00-17.30 | OA, TR, AK Meeting with Svetlana Shevchenko, Head of Scientific Research Institute of Labour of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection |
| | | | Meeting with Dejan Keserovic, Head of Mission of MOI in the Republic of Belarus (cancelled due to the absence of Mr. Keserovic) |
| 28 | Thu | 8.30-9.30 | OA,TR, AK,VZ Meeting of project staff |
| | | 10.30-11.30 | TR, AK Visit in Employment Centre of Frunzensky District of Minsk City |
| | | 11.00-12.00 | OA Meeting with Vladimir Kravchenko, Head of Refugee Counselling Service |
| | | 12.00-13.00 | OA Meeting with Sergei Kasinsky, Deputy Head of Sector for Refugees and Asylum, Department on Citizenship and Migration, Ministry of Interior |
| | | 14.00-15.30 | TR, AK Meeting with Galina Romanovets, Senior Inspector, Department of Secondary Education, Ministry of Education (Postponed) |
| | | 16.30-23.10 | OA, TR Return from Minsk to Kyiv |
| 29 | Fri | 10.00 | OA, TR Interviews with refugees at HIAS |
| | | 16.00 | OA, TR Briefing on LIP in UNHCR Office in Ukraine with Simone Wolken, Roland Weil, Surendra Panday, Viktoria Sukhanova etc. |

July, 2007

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| 2 | Mon | 10.00 | TR, AL Consultation |
| | | 11.00 | TR, AL Meeting with Yulia Zelvenskaya, NGO support officer, ECRE |
| | | 16.00 | OA, TR, AL Consultation |
| 3 | Tue | 13.00 | OA, TR, AL Interviews with Afghans at Troeshina market |
| | | 17.00 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with TL, Perlyna Dnipra Hotel |
| 4 | Wed | 12.00 | OA, TR, AL Interviews in Integration Centre |
| | | 15.30 | OA leaves to Geneva |
| 5 | Thu | 14.00 | TR Interviews with Angolan refugees |
| 6 | Fri | 17.00-18.00 | AL Meeting with Angolan refugees |
| 9 | Mon | 10.00 | TR Interviews with refugees |
| | | 12.00-15.00 | TR, AL Interviews with refugees from Africa |
| 10 | Tue | 13.30 | OA, TR Briefing preliminary LIP findings to Bernhard Bogensperger, EC Representative |
| | | 16.00 | TR, AL Meeting with the representatives of the Ministry of Labour |

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| 11 | Wed | 10.00 | OA, TR, AL, Tanya Kyriy (intern) Interviews in Integration Centre. Meeting with Olga Nezhynets, former Project Manager of Employment Project of refugees by ROKADA |
| | | 11.00-16.00 | OA, TR, AL, Tanya Kyriy Interviews in Integration Centre |
| 12 | Thu | 9.00 | AL Interview with African refugee |
| | | 15.00 | SW, TR, AL Meeting with Finnish Ambassador Laura Reinilä |
| 13 | Fri | 10.00-12.00 | TR, AL Visit in Desnyanskiy Employment Centre, meeting with Olga Shevchuk |
| | | 13.00 | OA Lunch with HK |
| 16 | Mon | 9.30 | OA Belarussian Embassy |
| | | 15.30 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with Yaroslav Pilinskiy, Kennan Society Institute |
| | | 17.00 | OA meeting with IM |
| 17 | Tue | 11.00 | OA Meeting at the Presidential Secretariat with Tatyana Fandikova |
| | | 12.45 | OA, AL Meeting with IM |
| | | 17.00 | TR arrival to Gomel |
| | | 17.00-18.30 | TR, AK, VZ Meeting with DA, Head of the Fund for Support of Forced Migrants and Refugees “Integration-A” |
| | | 15.05 | OA leaves to Geneva |
| 18 | Wed | 10.00-11.30 | TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Anatoly Suomalainen, Deputy Head of the Department on Citizenship and Migration of Gomel Region, Natalia Korkutj, Head of Section for Refugees and Asylum Issues, Elena Kondratova, Head of the Section for Work with Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons Department on Citizenship and Migration of Gomel Region |
| | | 12.00-13.30 | TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Svetlana Ivanova, Head of the Department on Employment of Population, Committee on Labour, Employment and Social Protection of Gomel Regional Executive Committee |
| | | 16.00-17.30 | TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Margarita Khodichenko, Head of Gomel City Center of Social Assistance for Families and Children |
| 19 | Thu | 13.35 | OA back from Geneva to Gomel |
| | | 10.00-11.30 | TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Sergei Poroshin, Deputy Chairman of Gomel City Executive Committee |
| | | 14.30-18.00 | TR, AK, VZ Interviews with refugees |
| | | 18.00 | OA Arrival to Gomel |
| | | 18.30-20.00 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with DA, Fund for Support of Forced Migrants and Refugees “Integration-A” |
| 20 | Fri | 9.00-14.00 | OA, TR, AK Interviews in Svetlogorsk |
| | | 14.30-18.00 | TR, AK, VZ Interviews |
| | | 19.30-21.00 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Andrei Smalyuga, Head of Section on Citizenship and Migration of Sovetsky District of Gomel City, and Natalia Korkutj, Head of Section for Refugees and Asylum Issues of the Department on Citizenship and Migration of Gomel Region |
| 21 | Sat | 10.00-13.00 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Interviews with refugees |
| | | 15.00-23.20 | OA, TR Return from Minsk to Kyiv |
| 22 | Sun | 7.00-13.00 | OA, TR, AL Travel to Odesa |
| 23 | Mon | 9.30-10.30 | OA, TR, AL Odesa Migration Service & Temporary Accommodation Centre (TAC), meeting with Ivan Suprunovskiy |
| | | 10.30-13.30 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with refugee communities leaders at the TAC, Zoi Kosmodemyanskoy 7. AM (National cultural union “Afghan community”, President); IM (Community of African Refugees and Immigrants in Odesa, President); FS G (Vita - Integration Centre); MA (The Odesa Association of African Refugees, President) |
| | | 15.00-17.00 | OA, TR, AL Meeting at NGO Sympathy with Director Victoria Timofeyeva |

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| 24 | Tue | 10.00-11.30 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with NGO South-Ukrainian Center of Young Lawyers, Mykola Pakhalyuk, Marina Kurochkina etc. |
| | | 12.00-13.30 | TR, AL Meeting with Elena Slesareva, Doctor, Hospital No12 |
| | | 15.00-16.00 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with Tatyana Surkan, Head of the Citizenship Department, Odesa Regional SDCIRNP |
| | | 17.00-18.30 | OA, TR, AL Interviews with refugees and naturalized persons |
| 25 | Wed | 9.00-10.00 | TR, AL Meeting with Anatoliy Soloviev and Tatyana Yavorskaya, Odesa Pension Fund |
| | | 11.00-12.30 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with Stepan Budzar, Deputy Director of the Odesa Regional Employment Centre, Tatyana Kanava, Head of the Employment Department, Odesa Regional Employment Centre |
| | | 15.00-18.00 | OA, TR, AL Interviews with recognized refugees and naturalized persons in TAC |
| 26 | Thu | 8.45-10.00 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with Elena Ivashenko, Chief Specialist of the Social services department Kyiv District Employment Centre |
| | | 10.30-12.00 | TR, AL Meeting with NH and MM, social workers, NGO Sympathy |
| | | 12.00-13.00 | TR, AL Interviews with refugees in TAC |
| | | 13.30-14.30 | OA, TR, AL Lunch with Vadim Veprikov, Director, TAC |
| | | 15.00-18.00 | OA, TR, AL Interviews with refugees in TAC |
| 27 | Fri | 7.45 | TR Leaves Odesa |
| | | 9.30-13.00 | AL Interviews in TAC |
| | | 9.30-11.00 | AK, VZ Meeting with Svetlana Shevchenko, Head of Scientific Research Institute of Labour of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection |
| | | 10.00 | OA Meeting with a recognized refugee |
| | | 13.00-15.00 | OA Lunch with Ivan Suprunovskiy, Director, Odesa Migration Service and Viktoria Timofeeva, Director, Sympathy Foundation |
| | | 15.00-18.00 | OA, AL Interviews in TAC |
| 28 | Sat | 10.00-16.00 | AL Interviews at the 7km market |
| | | 13.30-15.00 | OA Lunch with Odesa Afghan community leader |
| | | 16.00-17.30 | AL Lunch with Odesa Afghan community |
| | | 16.00-17.30 | OA Meeting with a recognized refugee |
| | | 20.00-22.00 | OA, AL Concert of the African band "UN" (recognized refugees and asylum seekers from Africa) |
| 29 | Sun | 9.00-15.00 | AL Interviews at the TAC |
| | | 12.00-14.00 | OA Lunch with a recognized refugee |
| | | 16.55-18.05 | OA, AL Travel to Kyiv |
| 31 | Tue | 10.00-11.30 | TR, AL Meeting with Zhanna Koshkina, Chief Specialist of the Department of secondary school and pre-school education, Ministry of Education |
| | | 12.00-13.00 | OA, TR, AL, SW, GB, IM Briefing on the mission to Odesa with UNHCR Office staff |

August, 2007

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| 1 | Wed | 9.30 - 12.00 | AL and Tanya Kyriy Interviews at HIAS |
| | | 11.25-16.30 | OA, TR Travel to Chisinau |
| | | 17.00-18.00 | OA, TR, DC Internal meeting of project staff |
| 2 | Thu | 9.00-10.00 | OA, TR, DC Meeting with Peter Wijninga, Representative, UNHCR Office in Moldova |
| | | 10.00-11.30 | TR Meeting with Cecilia Chirila, Admin./Programme Officer, UNHCR Office in Moldova |
| | | | OA Meeting with Peter Wijninga, Representative, UNHCR Office in Moldova |
| | | 12.00-14.00 | OA, TR, DC Preparatory meeting followed by lunch with Ecaterina Silvestru, Bureau for Asylum and Migration, Refugee Directorate |
| | | 14.30-15.30 | OA; TR, DC Internal working meeting |
| | | 14.30-16.00 | AK, VZ Meeting with Olga Lazareva, Senior Specialist of External Labour Migration and Refugees Department of Vitebsk Department for Citizenship and Migration, Vitebsk City |
| | | 16.00-17.40 | OA, TR, DC Meeting with Ludmila Popovici, Director, NGO Memoria |
| | | 17.00-18.00 | AK, VZ Meeting with Olga Shutova, Legal Consultant, Vitebsk City Refugee Counselling Service, Vitebsk City |
| | 18.00-19.00 | OA Meeting with Victor Tvircun, Minister of Education, Moldova | |
| 3 | Fri | 08.00-09.30 | TR, DC Meeting with Ecaterina Silvestru, Bureau for Asylum and Migration, Refugee Directorate |
| | | 10.00-10.50 | OA, DC Meeting with Irina Bobeico & Alexei Barbaneagra, Director, Law Centre of Advocates |
| | | 11.00-12.40 | TR, DC Meeting with Nadejda Velisco, Chief of Department for Pre-University Education |
| | | 13.00-14.00 | OA Lunch with Vasile Batcu, Managing Director, NGO Save the Children |
| | | 15.00-16.00 | OA, DC Meeting with Alexander Ochotnikov, Head of Acts Service, Presidential Office |
| | | 16.30-17.00 | OA Meeting with TV refugee |
| | | 17.00-18.30 | TR, DC Meeting with Evelina Osoianu, Specialist/Social issues, Directorate for Refugees |
| | | | 17.00-17.30 |
| 4 | Sat | 11.00-12.30 | OA, TR, DC Meeting with Ala Mindcanu, Chair of Journalism Department, ULIM University |
| 5 | Sun | 13.00-14.00 | OA Lunch with Alexander Ochotnikov, Head of Acts Service, Presidential Office |
| 6 | Mon | 09.30-10.30 | TR, DC Meeting with Galina Bulat, Chief of Department for Higher Education, Research and Doctorate |
| | | 11.00-13.00 | Meeting of the Working Group/2nd session |
| | | 13.00-14.00 | OA Lunch with Law Centre of Advocates |
| | | 14.30-15.30 | OA, TR, DC Meeting with Andrei Galben, Head of ULIM University |
| | | 16.00-17.30 | TR, DC Meeting with Ala Şupac, Director, Agency for Employment of Chisinau Municipality |
| 7 | Tue | 10.00-11.30 | AL meeting with Krista Zongolovich, Adviser, Danish Refugee Council |
| | | 11.45-13.00 | AL interview with a refugee |
| | | 09.00-10.00 | OA, TR, DC Meeting with Valentin Guznac, Minister of Local Public Administration |
| | | 10.30-12.45 | TR, DC Interviews / Charity Centre for Refugees |
| | | 13.00-14.00 | OA Lunch with Gottfried Hanne, Deputy Head, OSCE Moldova |
| | | 14.30-15.30 | TR, DC Meeting with Nina Turcanu, Head of National Agency for Employment |
| | | 16.00-17.30 | OA, TR, DC Summary of the mission with UNHCR Office staff |
| | | | 18.00-19.00 |

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| 8 | Wed | 10.00-11.30 | TR, DC Meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Social Protection |
| | | 12.00-13.00 | OA, TR, DC Wrap-up meeting of project staff |
| | | 17.45-23.10 | OA, TR Return from Chisinau to Kyiv |
| 9 | Thu | 11.30-12.00 | OA, TR, AL Consultation |
| | | 12.00-13.15 | AL, OA, TR, GB, TS Meeting to discuss LIP budget |
| 10 | Fri | 11.00-12.20 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with Natalya Naumenko |
| | | 12.30-14.00 | OA, TR, AL Lunch with Krista Zongolovich, Adviser, Danish Refugee Council |
| 11 | Sat | 15.05 - 23.00 | OA, TR Travel to Minsk |
| 12 | Sun | 16.00-18.00 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Discussion of the situation in Belarus, meeting of project staff |
| 13 | Mon | 10.00-12.30 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with staff and Ilija Todorovich, Representative, UNHCR Office in Belarus |
| | | 14.00-15.30 | TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Nikolai Kokhanov, Head of the Department on Employment and Population, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection |
| | | | OA Meeting with Peter Kozelets, Protection Officer, UNHCR in Belarus |
| | | 16.00-17.30 | OA Meeting with Sona Gevorgyan, Legal Consultant, Refugee Counselling Service |
| 14 | Tue | 10.00-13.00 | AL visit to Troeshina, meeting with former Afghan refugee, now citizen, interviews with refugee youngsters |
| | | 10.00-11.30 | OA, TR, AK Meeting within Minsk Regional Department for Citizenship and Migration, Alexander Zelenkevich, Head of the Department, Sergei Suboch, Deputy Head, Alla Zgurskaya, Head of Section for External Labour Migration, Refugees and Asylum |
| | | 14.00-15.30 | OA, TR, AK Meeting within Minsk City Department for Citizenship and Migration, Alexander Sherbach, Deputy Head of the Department, Ekaterina Shidlovaskaya, Specialist of the Section for External Labour Migration, Refugees and Asylum |
| | | 16.00-17.30 | OA, AK Meeting with Tatiana Orange, Officer in Charge of IOM Mission in Belarus |
| 15 | Wed | 10.00-11.30 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Svetlana Shevchenko, Head of Scientific Research Institute of Labour of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection |
| | | 12.30-13.30 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Pavel Lozovsky, Councillor for Integration of the Joint UNHCR and Belarusian Red Cross Project |
| | | 14.00-15.30 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Tatiana Tumashik and Sergei Kasinsky, Representatives of Department on Citizenship and Migration |
| | | 16.00-17.30 | TR, AK, VZ Meeting of TR with Galina Romanovets, Senior Inspector, Department of Secondary Education, Ministry of Education |
| 16 | Thu | 10.00-12.00 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting at the UNHCR Office in Belarus with Task Force (representatives of Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Labour Research Institute, Belarusian Red Cross) |
| | | 14.00-15.30 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with staff and Ilija Todorovich, Representative, UNHCR in Belarus |
| | | 17.25-23.10 | OA Return from Minsk to Kyiv |
| 17 | Fri | 11.00-13.00 | OA, AL Consultation |
| | | 10.00-10.30 | TR, AK Meeting with Cheslav Rovba, Head of the Department of the Population Employment of Minsk City, Alla Puchko, Head of Section of Organisation of Work on Assistance of Population Employment |
| | | 11.00-12.30 | TR, AK Visit to the Employment Office of Oktyabrsky District of Minsk (meeting with Valentina Ivanova, Deputy Head of the Office) and Informational Sector of the Department of the Population Employment of Minsk City |
| | | 14.00-15.30 | TR Meeting with Tatiana Selivanova, Programme Officer, UNHCR Office in Belarus |
| | | 17.25-23.10 | TR Return from Minsk to Kyiv |

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| 20 | Mon | 9.30-12.30 | AL Interviews with Iraki and Sudanese refugees |
| | | 15.00-16.00 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with UNHCR staff to discuss resettlement issues |
| 21 | Tue | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting preliminary report/ gathering comments |
| 22 | Wed | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting preliminary report/ gathering comments |
| 23 | Thu | | OA, TR, AL , AK, DC Consultation/ drafting preliminary report/ gathering comments |
| | | 14.00-16.30 | AK, VZ Meeting with Valentina Shulyak, Senior Specialist of External Labour Migration and Refugees Department of Grodno Department for Citizenship and Migration, Grodno City |
| 24 | Fri | | OA, TR, AL Consultation/ drafting preliminary report/ gathering comments |
| | | 11.00-12.30 | AK, VZ Meeting with EM, Grodno Public Association of Georgians |
| 27 | Mon | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting preliminary report/ gathering comments |
| 28 | Tue | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting preliminary report/ gathering comments |
| 29 | Wed | 11.00-12.00 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with CBCP Secretariat, UNHCR Office in Ukraine |
| | | 12.00-12.30 | Teleconference with UNHCR Office in Belarus |
| | | 12.30-13.00 | Teleconference with Chisinau UNHCR Office in Moldova |
| 30 | Thu | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting preliminary report/ gathering comments |
| 31 | Fri | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting preliminary report/ gathering comments |

September, 2007

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|----|-----|-------------|--|
| 3 | Mon | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting preliminary report/ gathering comments |
| 4 | Tue | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting preliminary report/ gathering comments |
| 5 | Wed | 17.20 | OA, TR Departure to Stockholm |
| 6 | Thu | | Senior Level Review Meeting/ CBCP |
| 7 | Fri | | OA, TR Presentation of the LIP interim report |
| 8 | Sat | 13.35 | OA back from Stockholm to Kyiv |
| 10 | Mon | 14.00 | AL Interview with Afghan refugee |
| 11 | Tue | 16.00 | TR, AL Meeting with Aleksandr Makarevich, Lawyer, NGO ROKADA |
| 12 | Wed | 8.00-15.00 | OA, TR, AL Travel from Kyiv to Kharkiv |
| | | 17.00-18.00 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with Kharkiv Afghan community leader and other refugee communities leaders |
| 13 | Thu | 9.00-11.15 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with Natalya Shtyh (Head of the Migration Department, Kharkiv RMS) |
| | | 14.00-15.00 | OA Meeting with Irina Barannik (acting Head of Kharkiv Regional MOI SDCIRNP), Elena Chyrik (Head of the Citizenship Department, Kharkiv Regional MOI SDCIRNP), Igor Tokarev (Head of Kharkiv Regional MOI SDCIRNP) |
| | | 14.30-16.00 | TR, AL Meeting with Viktor Gritsay, Vice President of the Social Assistance Service), Valeriy Zadorenko, Counsellor, SAS |
| | | 16.00-17.30 | OA, AL Meeting with Eugenia Smirnova, Lawyer, SAS |
| | | 16.00-18.00 | TR Interviews with refugees |
| 14 | Fri | 9.30-13.30 | TR, AL Interviews with refugees at the market |
| | | 15.00-18.00 | OA, TR, AL Consultation, drafting the report |

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| 15 | Sat | 9.30-14.00 | TR, AL Interviews with refugees at the market |
| | | 14.00-15.00 | OA Meeting with Afghan Community Leader |
| 16 | Sun | 7.05-13.40 | OA, TR, AL Return Kyiv |
| 17 | Mon | 11.00-12.00 | OA meeting with TB (Chechen community leader) |
| 18 | Tue | 15.00 | OA, TR Presentation of the LIP preliminary findings at the Regional IP meeting |
| 19 | Wed | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting tables of problems/ recommendations per country/ gathering comments |
| 20 | Thu | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting tables of problems/ recommendations per country/ gathering comments |
| 21 | Fri | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting tables of problems/ recommendations per country/ gathering comments |
| 24 | Mon | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting tables of problems/ recommendations per country/ gathering comments |
| 25 | Tue | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting tables of problems/ recommendations per country/ gathering comments |
| 26 | Wed | 15.00-16.30 | OA, AL, TR Meeting with Julia Zelvenskaya, NGO support officer, ECRE |
| 27 | Thu | 10.00-11.30 | OA, TR, AL, GB Meeting with Yaroslav Pilinskiy and Renata Harmatiy, Kennan Society Institute |
| | | 14.30-15.30 | OA, AL meeting with IM to discuss citizenship issues |
| 28 | Fri | 10.30-11.30 | OA, TR, AL Meeting with UNHCR Office staff to gather comments on Ukrainian table of problem issues/ recommendations |
| | | 15.00-16.30 | OA, TR Meeting with representatives of Danish Refugee Council |

October, 2007

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|----|-----|-------------|---|
| 1 | Mon | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting tables of problems/ recommendations per country/ gathering comments |
| 2 | Tue | | OA, TR, AL, AK, DC Consultation/ drafting tables of problems/ recommendations per country/ gathering comments |
| 3 | Wed | | OA, TR, AL Meeting with Nikolay Yerukh and Natalya Naumenko, SCNR |
| 4 | Thu | 17.20 | OA, TR Departure to Minsk |
| 5 | Fri | 15.00 | OA, TR Arrival to Minsk OA, TR, AK, VZ Internal meeting of project staff |
| 6 | Sat | | OA, AK, VZ Preparing materials for Final LIP Seminar |
| 8 | Mon | 10.00-11.30 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Meeting with Sergei Matus, Deputy Head of the Department for Citizenship and Migration, and Tatiana Tumashik, the Head of Section for Refugees and Asylum, Department on Citizenship and Migration, Ministry of Interior |
| | | 14.00 | OA, TR, AK, VZ Departure to Gomel |
| 9 | Tue | 19.00 | Arrival of participants of LIP Final Seminar to Gomel Dinner together with participants Meeting of project staff and UNHCR representatives |
| 10 | Wed | | LIP Final Seminar in Gomel |
| 11 | Thu | | LIP Final Seminar in Gomel, departure of participants |
| 12 | Fri | 9.00-11.00 | OA, TR Final meeting with Bernhard Bogensperger, Simone Wolken, Gaspar Bergman, and Surendra Panday |
| | | 14.00-15.00 | OA, TR Departures to Geneva & Helsinki |
| 23 | Tue | | Comments from the Moldovan Government on the LIP Report received. |

November, 2007

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| 8 | Thu | | Comments from the Belarusian Government on the LIP Report received |
| 19 | Mon | 15.00-17.00 | AK and Tatiana Selivanova, UNHCR Belarus Programme Officer Meeting with Svetlana Shevchenko, Head of Scientific Research Institute of Labour of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and Institute's Staff working on the Report |
| | | | OA and TR finalizing the LIP Report. AL working on the statistical analysis. |

December, 2007

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| 6 | Thu | | Report from Scientific Research Institute of Labour of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection received |
| | | | OA and TR finalizing the LIP Report. AL working on the statistical analysis. Editor identified and received texts |

January, 2008

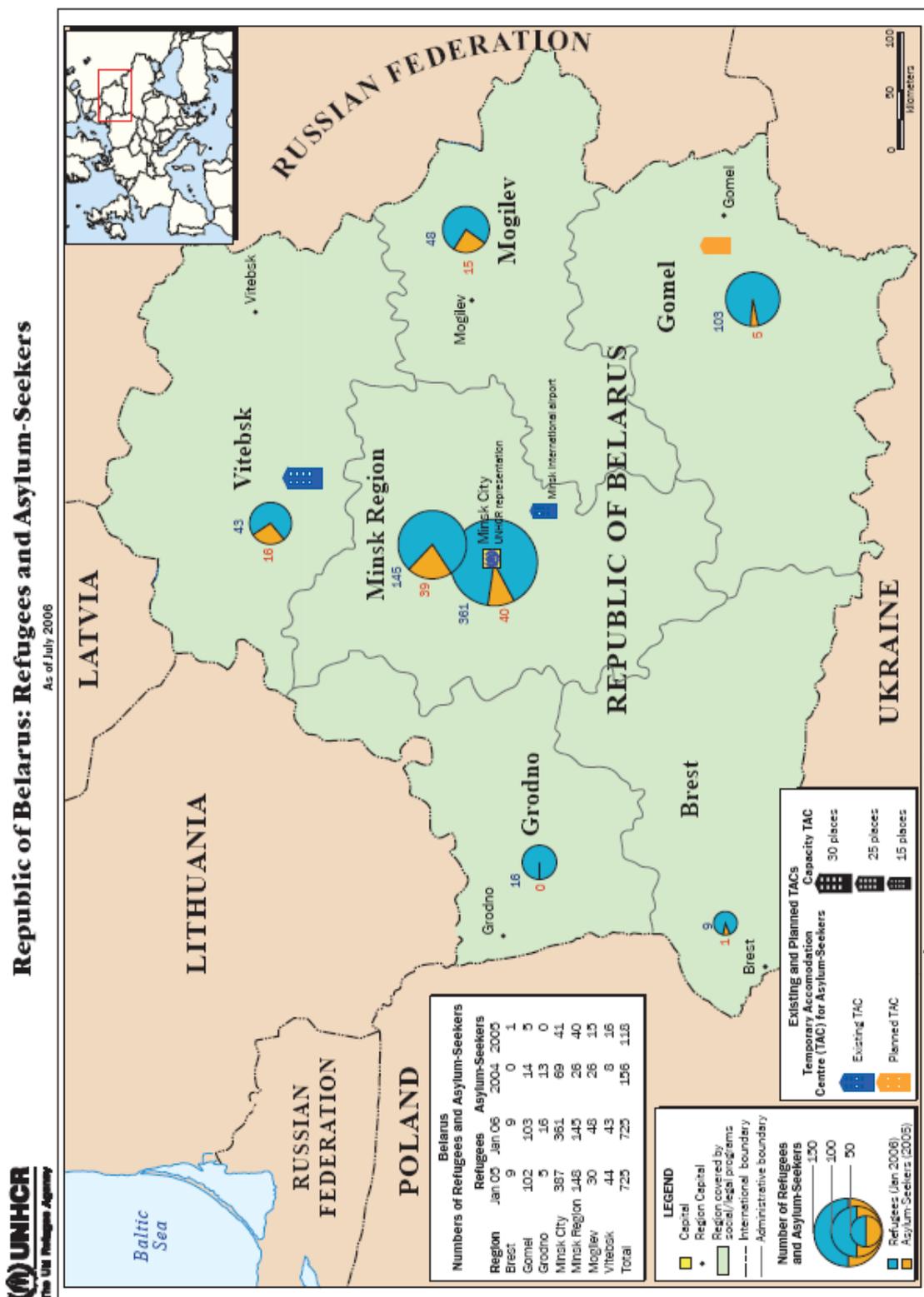
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| 18 | Fri | | Comments from the SCNR on the LIP Report received |
| | | | OA and TR finalizing the LIP Report. Translation into Russian, proof reading English. |

February, 2008

OA and TR finalizing the LIP Report.
Report is translated into Russian, AL editing the Russian text.
Ready version for website publication and transfer to printer.

Maps⁷⁵

a) Belarus



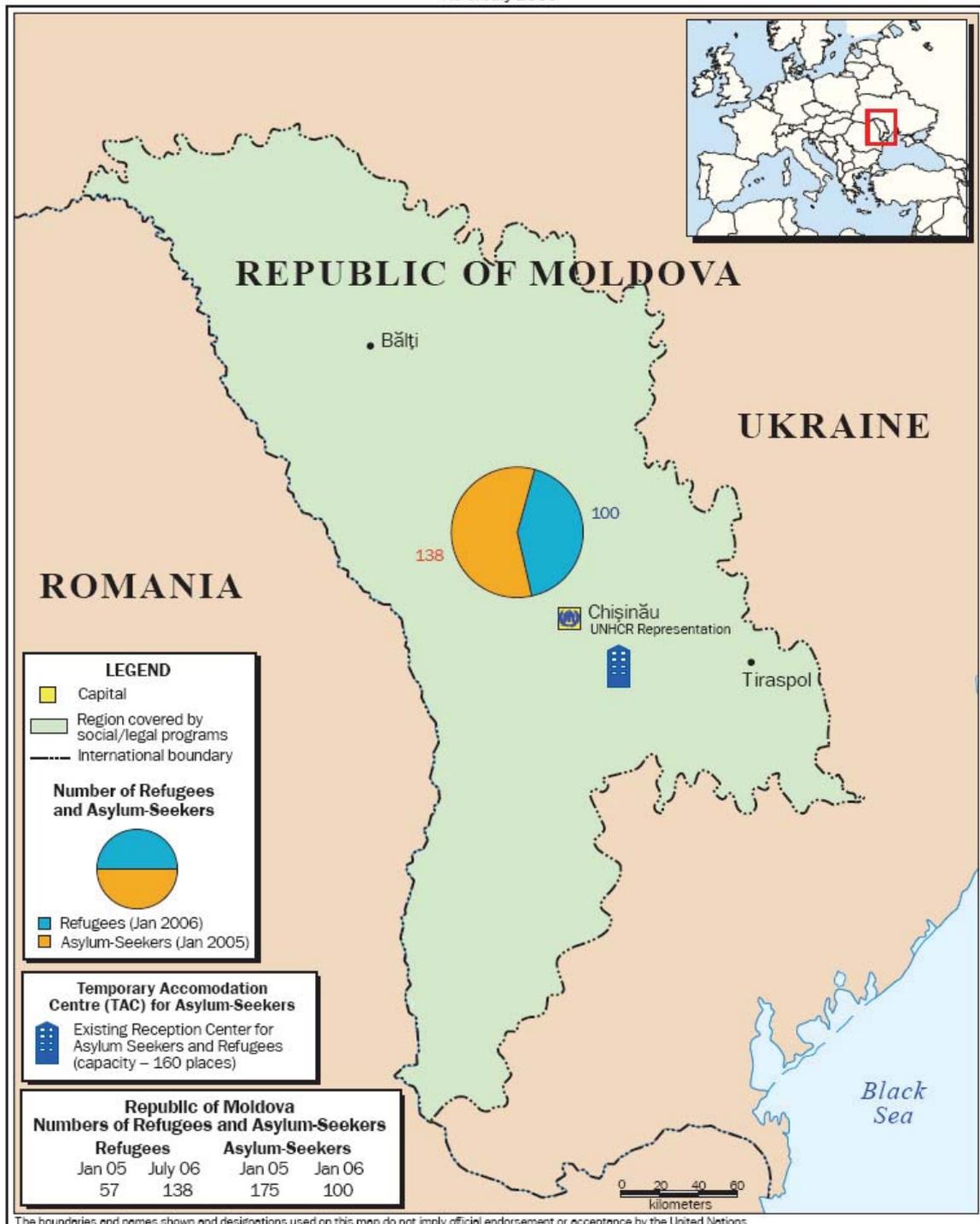
75 Source: http://unhcr.org.ua/main.php?article_id=98&view=full

b) Moldova

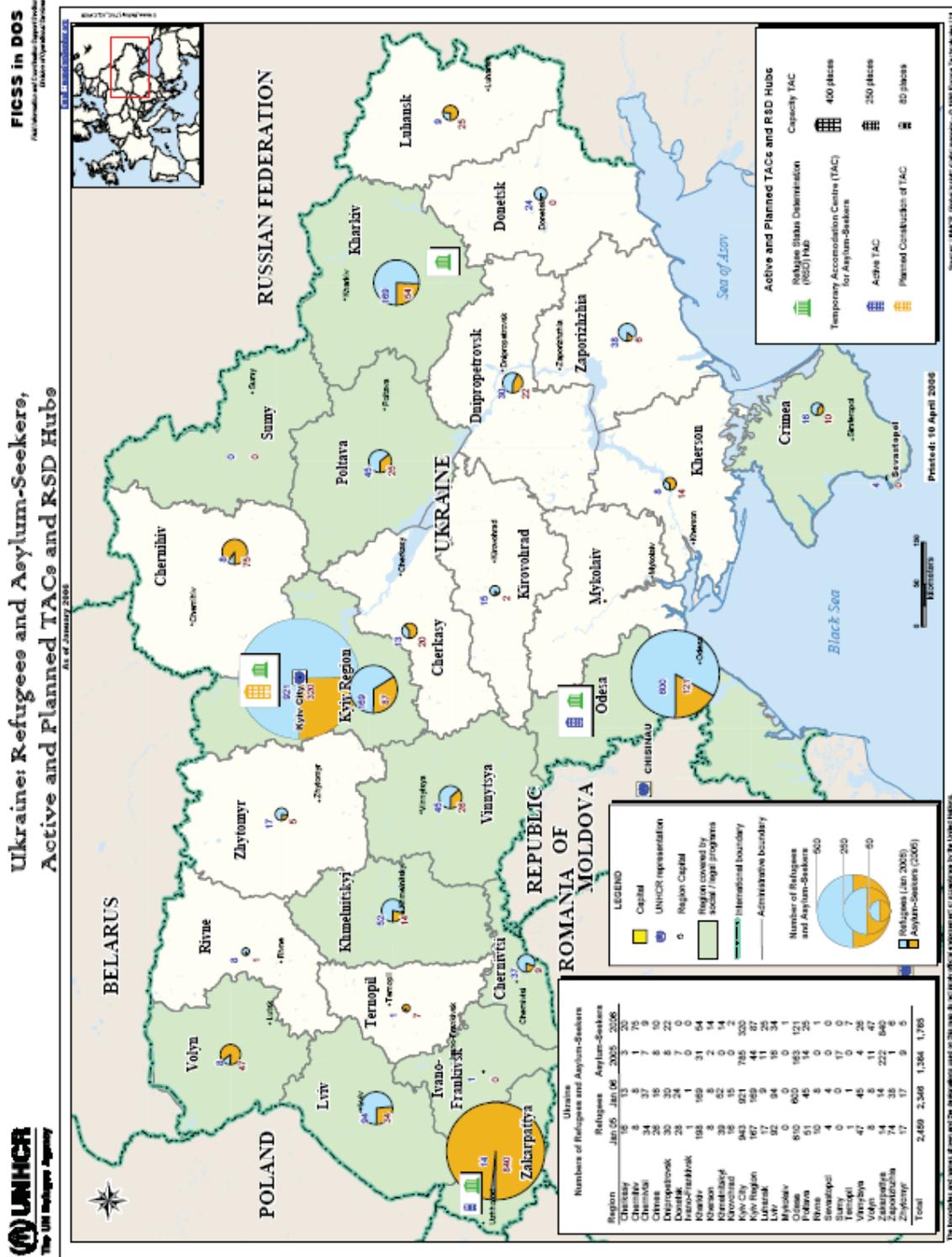


Republic of Moldova: Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

As of July 2006



c) Ukraine



Bibliography

(List of the documents consulted in the course of the LI Project)

A. Belarus

1. AENEAS Grant Application Form for Belarus (2006) (internal document);
2. Belarus 2006 Annual Protection Report (internal document);
3. Belarus: Assessing Social Tolerance and Attitudes to Refugee Integration (by Antoine-Philippe Boo);
4. Constitution of the Republic of Belarus of 1994 (as amended, adopted by the referendum of 24 November 1996);
5. Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus on the Approval of Status Concerning Permission for Permanent Living for Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons (3 February 2005; №144);
6. Decision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the Approval of the Directions for Issuing of Special Permit for Business Activity in the Republic of Belarus for Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons, Temporary Arriving and Residing in the Republic of Belarus (24 December 2002, № 289);
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