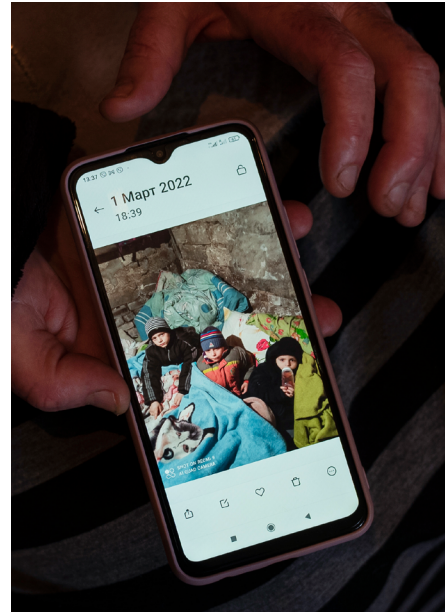


The state of communication, community engagement and accountability across the Ukraine response

Second edition. 30 September 2022



# Contents

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<b>List of acronyms</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
Progress since May 2022, remaining gaps and new opportunities	4
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Overview of humanitarian situation</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CCEA commitments and coordination structures</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Key findings and recommendations on CCEA barriers and gaps</b>	<b>12</b>
Finding 1: Communication and community engagement is overlooked in AAP coordination structures	12
Finding 2: Critical barriers remain to local and national participation in international coordination	13
Finding 3: Critical information gaps remain: when it comes to understanding where and how to get assistance, communities are confused	14
Finding 4: The response is struggling to meet high demand for information on cash assistance; more focus needed	15
Finding 5: Digital outreach is still dominated by one-way communication initiatives	16
Finding 6: Language and translation needs must be prioritised	18
Finding 7: Marginalised groups need specific, tailored CCE initiatives	19
Finding 8: Engagement with host communities will support refugee integration	20
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix: Organisations consulted for this report</b>	<b>22</b>
CDAC members	22
Local and national actors	22
Coordination structures	22

# List of acronyms

<b>AAP</b>	accountability to affected people
<b>CCEA</b>	communication, community engagement and accountability
<b>CDAC</b>	Communicating with Disaster-Affected Communities
<b>CoP</b>	community of practice
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organisation
<b>CwC</b>	communication with communities
<b>DEC</b>	Disasters Emergency Committee
<b>ETC</b>	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>IDP</b>	internally displaced person
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IFRC</b>	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>LGBTQI</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex
<b>MSNA</b>	multi-sector needs assessment
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PSEA</b>	protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
<b>SEA</b>	sexual exploitation and abuse
<b>SOGIESC</b>	sexual orientations, gender identities and sex characteristics
<b>SOP</b>	standard operating procedure
<b>ToR</b>	term of reference
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations Refugee Agency
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WG</b>	working group

# Summary

Since the first edition of the [CDAC snapshot of communication, community engagement and accountability \(CCEA\) across the Ukraine response](#) was published in May 2022, a conscious effort has been made by international, national and local responders to ramp up CCEA action. Progress has been made in establishing coordination mechanisms and launching activities, particularly around accountability to affected people (AAP). As CCEA work continues to scale up on the ground, a greater focus and more effort are still needed on community-facing information and two-way communication; this should be accorded a higher priority than at present.

## Progress since May 2022, remaining gaps and new opportunities

- **There has been a good effort to coordinate AAP mechanisms among actors participating in AAP working groups and task forces, but coordination on communication and community engagement (CCE) that drive the eventual success of these processes remains overlooked.** Coordination structures must address this gap and prioritise robust links between the needs of communities, as identified through feedback, and the provision of two-way communication to allow people to make informed decisions. Coordination of information, sharing of two-way communication channels and the engagement of diverse CCE stakeholders, including local media actors and media development organisations, can support this process.
- **International response actors and established national and local networks and organisations continue to take different approaches to communicating and engaging with affected people.** While efforts have been made to bridge these gaps and encourage local participation in international systems, progress has stalled. Barriers around language and terminology and establishing a common understanding of CCEA continue to challenge collaborative ways of working. Notably, during this review period, response actors have observed changes in local actors' expectations and perceptions around the value of international coordination, further constraining engagement and coordination among CCEA responders.
- **There remain urgent information needs, increasingly on cash assistance and topics related to support for longer-term integration of refugees.** There is a particular gap in information provision in Russian and Romani dialects. In response to the identified preferences of affected people, digital communication and social media have been prioritised – but these have primarily been used as one-way methods of communication and two-way digital outreach is still lacking. This has resulted in low uptake of information, frustration among affected people trying to get in touch with aid providers and potential for misinformation. Greater use of digital communication and technologies to communicate with communities has opened opportunities, but it has also created access barriers for older people, people with disabilities and minority Roma refugees.
- **The first report noted that the response had been led by the efforts and generosity of host communities, volunteers and local responders to help and accommodate refugees.** While the generosity of host communities continues, there is a growing need for greater host community engagement by response actors so as to mitigate tensions, misinformation and rumours in order to support the long-term integration of refugees. This is especially the case as fatigue is starting to set in among host communities and local actors that have been active throughout the response.

# Introduction

This report is the second edition of [Communication, community engagement and accountability across the Ukraine response: a snapshot](#), which was first published in May 2022. This report is published quarterly and gives an overview of key CCEA barriers and gaps across the Ukraine response, as well as recommendations for practitioners and responders to improve the use of CCEA for those affected by the crisis. The report is accompanied by a [supplementary annex document](#) on current CCEA activities in Ukraine and border countries.

Since the first report, and now seven months into the crisis, the humanitarian needs of affected people continue to grow. To date, 580 humanitarian partners have provided assistance to 13.3 million people within Ukraine,<sup>1</sup> as well as more than 7 million refugees across Europe.<sup>2</sup> Ensuring all affected people have the information they need to make decisions and access humanitarian assistance continues to be of critical importance. In the early stages of the crisis, people in Ukraine reported that access to information was a greater priority than food or shelter,<sup>3</sup> and for many refugees this remains the case.<sup>4</sup> Yet there is significant evidence that two-way communication and engagement with communities can be the weakest link in complex humanitarian responses.<sup>5</sup>

This report is part of the UK Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)-funded CDAC project, 'Collective action on CCEA in the Ukraine response' – an initiative that aims to ensure predictable and coherent CCEA and bridge capacities to drive change at the system level. The information contained in this report is informed by continuous engagement with CDAC members and the CDAC Community of Practice (CoP) calls on in-country coordination and collaboration since February 2022; key informant interviews and other member engagement in August and September 2022 (see Appendix); and desk research of publicly available information.

The report has been compiled by Alyssa Thurston, FanMan Tsang and Alex Horowitz (CDAC Expert Pool member). For feedback or suggestions, please contact the CDAC Network Secretariat:

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1 OCHA (2022) [Ukraine: situation report, 14 Sep 2022](#).

2 UNHCR (2022) [Ukraine situation flash update #30](#).

3 REACH (2022) Focus on AAP and information needs. Briefing note, March.

4 IOM (2022) Ukraine response 2022 – Romania: profiles and inclusion survey (25 March–28 June); Slovakia displacement surveys – Ukrainian refugees and third-country nationals: displacement patterns, needs and intentions surveys.

5 CDAC Network, ODI/HPG, IASC Peer-to-Peer, among many other references.

## Overview of humanitarian situation

The humanitarian situation inside Ukraine continues to deteriorate, with 7 million people internally displaced.<sup>6</sup> In August 2022 alone, more than 60,000 people were evacuated from oblasts<sup>7</sup> in the south and south-east – the majority being children, women, people with low mobility and older people.<sup>8</sup> Displacement and refugee movements are complex, with 9.8 million border crossings leaving Ukraine and 5.6 million border crossings back into Ukraine recorded. The main factors driving refugees to go back to Ukraine include family reunification and the desire to return to their home country. Of those contacted after reaching their homes in Ukraine, 65% reported not feeling safe.<sup>9</sup> It is anticipated that displacement and refugee flows will remain dynamic.

There are currently 1.7 million refugees from Ukraine recorded in Poland, Romania, Moldova, Hungary and Slovakia, and a further 3 million refugees in other European countries (Table 1).<sup>10</sup> The majority of current refugees continue to be women, children and older people, with implications for protection and safeguarding risks.

Table 1 **Numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees and refugee movements as of 13 September 2022**

	Number of IDPs/refugees	Border crossings from Ukraine	Border crossings to Ukraine
<b>Ukraine</b>	6,975,000	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Poland</b>	1,379,470	6,114,787	4,158,929
<b>Moldova</b>	90,745	606,707	250,341
<b>Romania</b>	81,158	1,169,027	830,890
<b>Slovakia</b>	93,384	778,335	515,810
<b>Hungary</b>	29,170	1,381,738	Data not available

Sources: IOM (n.d.) [Displacement Tracking Matrix: Ukraine](#); UNHCR (n.d.) [Operational Data Portal: Ukraine refugee situation](#) (accessed 20 September 2022).

6 OCHA (n.d.) [Ukraine situation reports](#).

7 Oblasts: administrative boundaries in Ukraine.

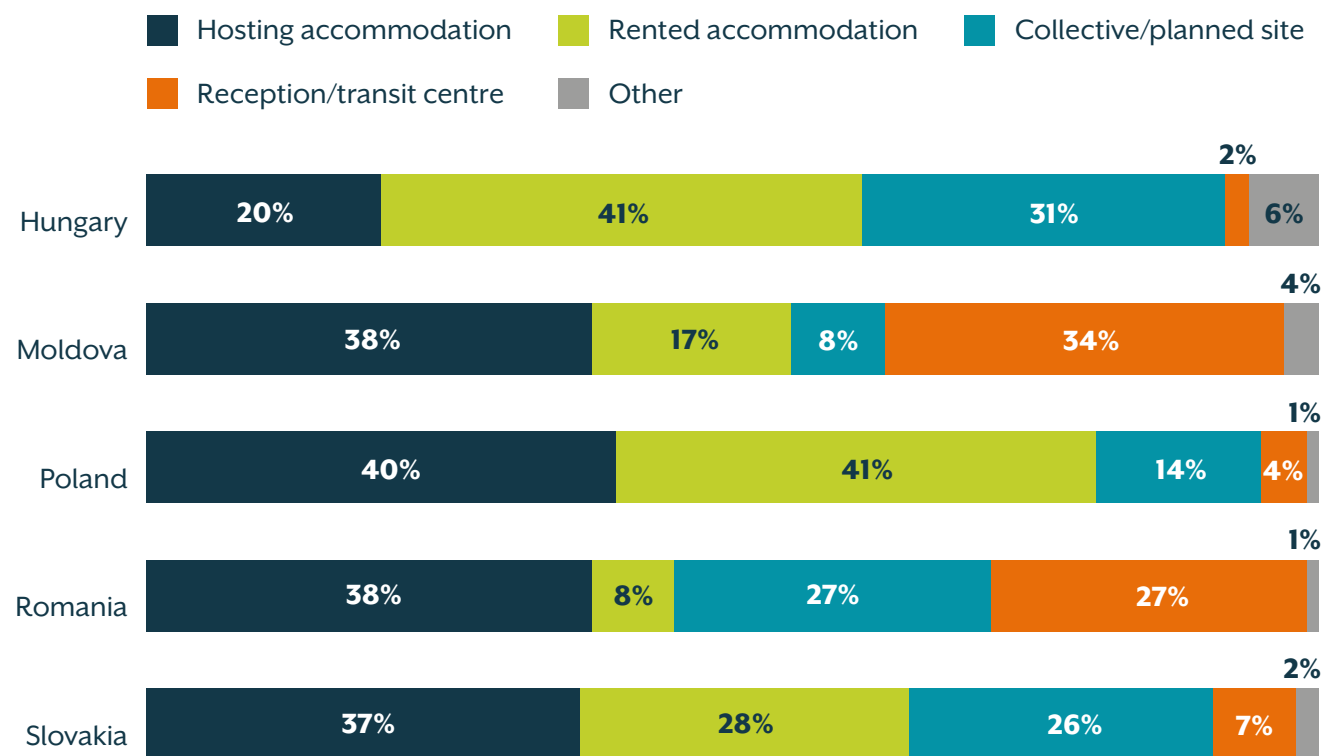
8 OCHA (2022) [Ukraine: situation report, 7 Sep 2022](#).

9 Norwegian Refugee Council (2022) [Ukrainian homecoming: a study of refugee returns from Poland \(July–August 2022\)](#).

10 UNHCR (n.d.) [Operational Data Portal: Ukraine refugee situation](#).

Most refugees in all border countries are living in hosted and rented accommodation, while a significant portion are living in collective sites or reception centres.<sup>11</sup> In Poland, the majority of refugees are staying in hosted or rented accommodation, and most live in large urban centres, driven by employment opportunities and ties to existing family networks and communities of refugees. A higher proportion of refugees in Moldova and Romania are staying in collective sites and reception/transit centres (Figure 1).

Figure 1

**Current accommodation of refugees by host country**

Note: collective sites: existing buildings that are used as temporary living accommodation for hosting displaced populations. Reception centres: facilities dedicated to the management of reception arrangements for asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants. Transit centres: used as temporary shelters for new arrivals and to provide short-term temporary accommodation for displaced populations.

Source: adapted from UNHCR (2022) [Lives on hold: profiles and intentions of refugees from Ukraine](#).

11 UNHCR (2022) [Lives on hold: profiles and intentions of refugees from Ukraine](#).

## CCEA commitments and coordination structures

Existing coordination structures and networks of local and national authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs) and volunteer groups vary by country. For example, there are prominent local NGO actors in Poland that work closely with international actors, with the Polish NGO Forum providing coordination support to local actors. In Moldova, there are local refugee coordination forum meetings co-led by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNCHR) and local authorities, intending to bring together government, local actors and CSOs. In Romania, there are strong existing links between NGO networks and authorities (see Table 2 for details). There remain significant gaps in understanding the complexity of local coordination structures and networks.

Overall, the response plans by the international humanitarian community continue to prioritise AAP, though its effectiveness varies on implementation. The Regional Refugee Response Plan includes AAP as a cross-cutting priority, with two-way communication, feedback mechanisms, participation and inclusion noted as key commitments. In the early phase of the response, the joint UNHCR– United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) ‘Blue Dot’ hubs were established as ‘one-stop shops’ for information, assistance and referral for women, children and families, with ‘digital blue dots’ being established to provide information for people on the move.<sup>12</sup>

The Ukraine Flash Appeal echoes the AAP commitment and puts people, gender equality and protection at the centre of the response, including protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). It further commits to scaling up ‘logistics and telecommunications to allow for an efficient and effective response and communication with affected communities’ to ensure AAP.<sup>13</sup> As part of its efforts to strengthen Ukrainian institutions and civil society, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has committed to strengthening ‘social bonds by engaging civil society in humanitarian and recovery efforts, community-level dialogue and conflict resolution activities’.<sup>14</sup>

International coordination mechanisms for CCEA have largely been established across response countries (see Table 3). Within Ukraine, OCHA leads on coordination of humanitarian assistance,<sup>15</sup> with AAP coordinated through a dedicated working group.<sup>16</sup> In countries bordering Ukraine, UNHCR, following the Refugee Coordination Model<sup>17</sup> for the response, leads on coordination of relief efforts including AAP.

12 UNHCR (2022) [Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plan and Flash Appeal summary, April](#); UNICEF Europe and Central Asia (n.d.) [What are the Blue Dots Hubs?](#)

13 OCHA Financial Tracking Service (2022) [Ukraine Flash Appeal 2022](#).

14 UNDP (2022) [Resilience building and recovery programme for Ukraine](#).

15 OCHA Ukraine (2022) [Ukraine: Humanitarian Response Plan 2022 \(February\)](#).

16 OCHA (2020) [Strengthening the system-wide accountability to affected people \(AAP\) in Ukraine framework: report on enhancing AAP in Ukraine](#).

17 UNHCR (n.d.) [Refugee Coordination Model](#).



Table 2 **Local and national coordination and key entities by country**

Country	Local and national coordination and key entities
<b>Ukraine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Network for the Development of Local Philanthropy</b></li> <li>• <b>NGO Resource Center (NGORC)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NGORC, in partnership with ICVA, supports coordination of NGOs and CSOs in Ukraine through engagement with networks of local and national NGO actors</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Poland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Polish NGO Forum</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Established to support organisations working on refugee response and with host communities</li> <li>- Meeting documentation: <a href="#">Announcements – Forum Razem</a></li> <li>- Key contact: Joanna Kucharczyk – <a href="mailto:jkucharczyk@ashoka.org">jkucharczyk@ashoka.org</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>OpenKrakowCoalition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local authorities and local NGOs coordinating activities in Kraków</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Moldova</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local Refugee Coordination Forum</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forum co-led by UNHCR and local authorities to bring together government, local actors and CSOs to actively engage on decision-making processes</li> <li>- Meeting documentation: <a href="#">Working Group: Moldova: Local Refugee Coordination Forum</a></li> <li>- Key contacts: Diego Nardi – <a href="mailto:mdachrcf@unhcr.org">mdachrcf@unhcr.org</a>; Catalina Sampaio – <a href="mailto:sampaio@unhcr.org">sampaio@unhcr.org</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Moldova for Peace</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consortium of several NGOs</li> <li>- Works with national and local authorities to provide consular, legal and psychosocial support, medical- and education-related information, assistance and referrals to relevant institutions</li> <li>- Moderates a Facebook group and operates <a href="http://dopomoha.md">dopomoha.md</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Romania</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Government of Romania</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Romania has established multiple levels of decision-making and coordination structures, with an operational task force called the Ukraine Commission</li> <li>- Response coordination structure: <a href="#">Romania’s response to the humanitarian refugees crisis</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supports transnational cooperation between public authorities, CSOs and international agencies</li> <li>- Supports information provision</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Federation of Non-governmental Organizations for Social Services (FONSS)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Hungary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Government of Hungary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government supports member organisations of the Charity Council to provide aid through the <a href="#">Hungary Helps</a> humanitarian scheme<sup>18</sup></li> <li>- Partnerships and coordination with international actors occurs primarily through Charity Council members, as administrative burdens continue to restrict NGO activities in Hungary<sup>19</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Charity Council</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Charity Council consists of the following members mandated to provide assistance to refugees: Catholic Caritas, Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, Hungarian Interchurch Aid, Hungarian Baptist Aid and Hungarian Red Cross</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

18 Daily News Hungary (2022) [Hungarian govt supports Charity Council with €7.8m to aid Ukraine](#), 5 March.

19 ACAPS (2022) [Hungary: Ukrainian refugees](#), 1 April.

Country	Local and national coordination and key entities
<b>Slovakia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Government of Slovakia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Slovakia has adopted a legislative package, <a href="#">Lex Ukrajina</a>, that facilitates integration of refugees and response coordination</li> <li>- At the municipal level, there are several government-led platforms and information services set up to help refugees</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Slovak Humanitarian Council</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National volunteer centre that brings together 116 humanitarian and charitable organisations, CSOs and foundations. Operational since 1990</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Note: the information contained in this table is not exhaustive and should only be considered as an indication of local and national coordination in response countries. See also the [accompanying annex](#) to this report.

Table 3 **Overview of international CCEA coordination mechanism by country**

Country	Coordination mechanism
<b>Regional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regional Protection Working Group led by UNHCR</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting frequency: every 2–4 weeks</li> <li>- Key contacts: Valeriia Cherednichenko – <a href="mailto:cheredni@unhcr.org">cheredni@unhcr.org</a>; Geraldine Salducci Petrucci – <a href="mailto:salducci@unhcr.org">salducci@unhcr.org</a></li> <li>- Meeting documentation: <a href="#">Regional Protection Working Group: Ukraine Refugee Situation</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Ukraine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AAP Working Group led by OCHA. The WG reports to the Humanitarian Country Team and closely collaborates with the Inter-cluster Coordination Group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting frequency: every 3 weeks</li> <li>- Key contact: Yuliya Pyrig – <a href="mailto:pyrig@un.org">pyrig@un.org</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Cash Working Group led by ACTED and OCHA, with a Cash AAP Task Force led by OCHA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting frequency: every 2–3 weeks</li> <li>- Key contacts: Nataliya Chervinska – <a href="mailto:nataliya.chervinska@acted.org">nataliya.chervinska@acted.org</a>; Paul de Carvalho-Pointillart – <a href="mailto:pointillart@un.org">pointillart@un.org</a>; Shrouq Fayiz Jamil Almanaseer – <a href="mailto:shrouq.almanaseer@un.org">shrouq.almanaseer@un.org</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Poland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AAP Working Group led by UNHCR</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting frequency: every 2 weeks</li> <li>- Key contacts: Irina Isomova – <a href="mailto:isomova@unhcr.org">isomova@unhcr.org</a>; Speciose Kampire – <a href="mailto:kampire@unhcr.org">kampire@unhcr.org</a></li> <li>- Meeting documentation: <a href="#">Poland Accountability to Affected People Working Group</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Moldova</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AAP Task Force led by UNCHR</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting frequency: every 2 weeks</li> <li>- Key contacts: Natalia Kropivka – <a href="mailto:kropivka@unhcr.org">kropivka@unhcr.org</a>; Monica Vasquez – <a href="mailto:vasquezm@unhcr.org">vasquezm@unhcr.org</a></li> <li>- Meeting documentation: <a href="#">Moldova: Accountability to Affected Population Task Force</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Cash Working Group co-led by Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and UNHCR</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting frequency: every week</li> <li>- Key contacts: Tudor Mancas – <a href="mailto:tudor.mancas@social.gov.md">tudor.mancas@social.gov.md</a>; Hanna Mattinen – <a href="mailto:mattinen@unhcr.org">mattinen@unhcr.org</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Romania</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protection Working Group led by UNHCR</b></li> <li>• <b>AAP CwC Task Force (newly established under Protection WG)</b></li> <li>• <b>Cash Technical Working Group led by UNHCR.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting documentation: <a href="#">Romania: Cash Technical Working Group</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Country	Coordination mechanism
<b>Hungary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protection Working Group led by UNHCR</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting frequency: every 2 weeks</li> <li>- Key contact: Stephanie Woldenberg – <a href="mailto:woldenbe@unhcr.org">woldenbe@unhcr.org</a></li> <li>- Meeting documentation: <a href="#">Hungary: Protection Working Group</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>National Protection Working Group led by Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior and UNHCR</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting documentation: <a href="#">Slovakia: Terms of Reference National Protection Working Group</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Slovakia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cash Working Group led by UNHCR and Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key contacts: Thais Severo – <a href="mailto:severo@unhcr.org">severo@unhcr.org</a>; Eirini Gkatsi – <a href="mailto:gkatsi@unhcr.org">gkatsi@unhcr.org</a>; Katarina Fedorova – <a href="mailto:katarina.fedorova@employment.gov.sk">katarina.fedorova@employment.gov.sk</a></li> <li>- Meeting documentation: <a href="#">Slovakia: Cash Working Group</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Note: the information contained in this table is accurate as of 10 September 2022. Please contact the authors for any corrections.

# Key findings and recommendations on CCEA barriers and gaps

This section details key findings on CCEA barriers and gaps. It outlines recommendations for CCEA practitioners and responders, with focus on CCEA coordination structures, two-way communication and other activities to meet the CCEA needs of affected people.

## Finding 1: Communication and community engagement is overlooked in AAP coordination structures

AAP coordination remains heavily focused on mechanisms for feedback and data sharing, while communication and community engagement that drive the eventual success of these processes are often overlooked. Coordination structures that are mandated to cover CCEA in the response – namely AAP, protection and cash working groups (and some subgroups for communicating with communities) – must urgently address this gap as a CCEA priority, and systematically integrate CCE into their agendas and ways of working.

Additionally, many key CCE stakeholders, including smaller local and diaspora organisations that could share valuable information on current communication needs, are not well integrated into these existing coordination mechanisms. Notably, local media actors and media development organisations are rarely engaged in the existing coordination mechanisms. Media plays a critical role in CCE response – they often provide a bridge between communities; have existing relationships of trust with their audience; have access to and the skills to harness mass communication networks and technologies; and are able to assist the coordination of various aspects of the response.

### Recommendations

- Consider integrating CCE as a standing agenda item in AAP and protection working groups and task forces. Prioritise action to develop proactive community-facing communication and collaborate with diverse actors to develop and socialise it.
- Establish a forum or pathway for media actors and local communication sectors to better engage with coordination in the response.
- Encourage dialogue on CCE topics and issues through interagency forums that are open and inclusive of international, national and local actors, as well as multisector stakeholders.

## Finding 2: Critical barriers remain to local and national participation in international coordination

More than seven months into the response, progress on strengthening local and national participation in international coordination has often fallen short of its good intentions across response countries. This is due to the following gaps.<sup>20</sup>

### Language and terminology

There have been significant efforts at the country level to increase participation in working group meetings through interpretation and translation services – for example, the AAP Task Force in Moldova has made meetings available variously in English, Romanian, Russian and Ukrainian. However, generally across the response, efforts have been largely ad hoc and not systematic enough to encourage regular participation by local and national actors. Most working group meetings are still run in English only, with translated documents often being of poor quality. In some cases, interpretation into the local language is provided, but interpreters are not prepared to translate acronyms and jargon from the aid sector. Translating technical terminology and concepts around AAP to be understandable in local language and cultural contexts has been particularly challenging, with some direct translations of AAP deemed ‘offensive’<sup>21</sup> or incomprehensible.

### Common understanding and perceptions around CCEA

There remain gaps between international and local/national understanding of CCEA, and the related skills and capacities that are required. Some local and national actors also do not perceive CCEA to be a priority or specific area of humanitarian action, making it difficult to encourage participation in related coordination. Some working groups and agency-led capacity-bridging efforts have been organised to promote a common understanding around AAP but have struggled to encourage local and national attendance. Many international and local actors that were consulted spoke of the limited appetite of local and national actors to participate in more trainings.

### Expectations and perceptions around the value of international coordination

There appears to be a growing mismatch in the expectations and perceptions around the value of engaging in international coordination. Local actors have reported losing trust in international organisations and coordination structures. The high turnover of international surge staff limits meaningful engagement, with local actors expected to repeatedly explain the context to new staff. The value of engaging in international coordination is also questioned by some local actors, particularly in contexts with strong existing networks. Local engagement or willingness to engage with international coordination is largely due to expectations that participation will increase opportunities for and access to funding.

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20 Based on key stakeholder interviews conducted in August 2022 with local, national and international responders, and in-country and regional working groups.

21 Key informants felt that some transliterations of terms were confusing, if not outright patronising, as well as giving unintended meanings to ideas such as ‘accountable’ that suggested local actors were not acting in beneficiaries’ best interests.

## Recommendations

- Get input from local and national actors on how to translate the concepts and principles around technical terminology – i.e. not translating just the phrase ‘accountability to affected people’, but also the explanation of the concept.
- Consider forging or fortifying pathways between local/national and international coordination mechanisms without requiring national actors to commit the time and resources required to fully participate in UN-led working groups.
- Invest in high-quality translation of documentation to encourage better participation of local and national actors.
- Where working groups are in practice led by international actors, consider supporting interested local actors by providing mentoring and training on international ways of working so that they can eventually become full co-leads.

## Finding 3: Critical information gaps remain: when it comes to understanding where and how to get assistance, communities are confused

There remain critical information needs within Ukraine and in border countries. Within Ukraine, the most frequently reported information needs are:<sup>22</sup>

- How to register for assistance and financial support
- News on available resources in settlement
- Information on humanitarian assistance and agencies more broadly.

As refugees integrate in host communities, much of the current information needs in neighbouring countries are related to:<sup>23</sup>

- Accommodation and risk of eviction
- Support to get work and employment rights
- Legal assistance (legal stay, permits, applying for social security number, claiming asylum)
- Education systems
- Cash assistance
- Accessing medical care, counselling services and psychosocial support
- Support to communicate with family and friends in Ukraine and elsewhere.

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22 REACH (2022) Focus on AAP and information needs. Briefing note, July.

23 IOM displacement surveys of Ukrainian refugees and third-country nationals in Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia; REACH (2022) Assessment: Ukraine, July; UNHCR (2022) [Hungary: protection profiling & monitoring factsheet](#); consultations with UNHCR, in-country and regional working groups and CDAC members operational in border countries.

Information needs are particularly high in Romania and Slovakia. Assessments conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in July 2022 showed that general information is reported as the highest priority need among refugees in Romania (55% of surveyed refugees) and in Slovakia (70%).<sup>24</sup> In Romania, more than a third of refugees reported not knowing where to obtain information on assistance and safeguarding concerns,<sup>25</sup> with huge demands for information about how long they will be able to access support (e.g. accommodation or cash) for mid–longer-term planning.<sup>26</sup>

As CCEA work ramps up in the Ukraine response, practitioners need more detailed, up-to-date information on people's information needs and preferences. Future assessments should favour methodologies that illuminate not only which channels and sources people prefer, but why they prefer them. Assessments should also identify the information they need to solve problems, not just the general topics. However, actors taking feedback and questions from IDPs and refugees from Ukraine have identified certain priority topics, like financial assistance, where more investment is needed in creating proactive communications that answer pressing questions and address common issues.

## Recommendations

- Invest in creating proactive, regular communications on the most in-demand topics (most often financial assistance) that answer frequently asked questions in enough detail to be actionable for individuals.
- To meet information needs, conduct more focused, up-to-date information needs assessments and/or information ecosystem assessments to capture people's emerging priorities and preferences.
- Collaborate with local media and social media actors to more widely disseminate information through trusted channels and to better understand affected people's needs and perspectives.

## Finding 4: The response is struggling to meet high demand for information on cash assistance; more focus needed

Both in Ukraine and in border countries, assessments show that information about cash and other financial assistance is often the top priority among aid recipients. People have struggled to get timely, relevant information about their eligibility for cash, or whether their application for assistance has been accepted. This is particularly prevalent in Ukraine, where there are many agencies working on multipurpose cash, each with its own procedures and hotlines. The cash and AAP working groups are coordinating with other related groups to create more community-facing information products, such as a webpage answering frequently asked questions that can help people understand selection criteria and address issues related to registration. However, continued focus and effort is needed on collective, proactive communications to keep up with cash recipients' and applicants' demand for clarifications and general information.

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24 IOM (2022) [Ukraine response 2022 – Romania: profiles and inclusion survey \(25 March–28 June 2022\)](#); [Slovakia displacement surveys – Ukrainian refugees and third-country nationals: displacement patterns, needs and intentions](#).

25 IOM (2022) [Ukraine response 2022 – Romania: profiles and inclusion survey](#).

26 Internews (2022) [Barriers and bridges: communication and information exchange with Ukrainian refugees in Romania](#).

The perceived lack of transparency from cash providers poses a reputational risk to organisations that may affect other areas of programming. Ukrainians have responded with frustrated comments online and a high volume of calls to overwhelmed hotlines.

## Recommendations

- Coordinate information dissemination on cash more closely with local and national organisations and government actors to reach more people in public spaces and forums with information; provide these actors with consistent messaging they can share.
- Share and cross-check information between each agency-specific hotline and compare feedback and questions, in part by adopting universal taxonomies for tagging complaints and feedback.
- Ensure all hotlines and frontline responders have verified, clear and timely information that can help address cash-related complaints and feedback, to avoid overwhelming cash teams.
- Mitigate any loss of trust in cash providers by initiating more proactive communications, both at the individual agency level and at a sector-wide level. Be transparent about what's working and what isn't (e.g. 'We don't know yet but we hope to have more information in December') and be open about any missteps in the process.

## Finding 5: Digital outreach is still dominated by one-way communication initiatives

While online engagement and social media cannot reach, nor are accessible by, all affected people, they are heavily used by a majority of Ukrainians, both to get information about humanitarian aid and to share experiences with each other. Within Ukraine, people most frequently access information on humanitarian assistance through word of mouth, social media (TikTok, Instagram and Facebook) and messaging apps (Telegram and Viber).<sup>27</sup> Similarly, in border countries, a recent protection profiling activity showed that 57% of respondents listed social media as a preferred information channel (Figure 2).<sup>28</sup> Refugee-to-refugee information and online spaces free of aid workers and government are most trusted, which makes assessing the quality of the information being shared a challenge. An information ecosystem assessment in Romania conducted by Internews found that, regardless of the channel, refugees are more likely to trust information if it is based on another Ukrainian's lived experience.<sup>29</sup>

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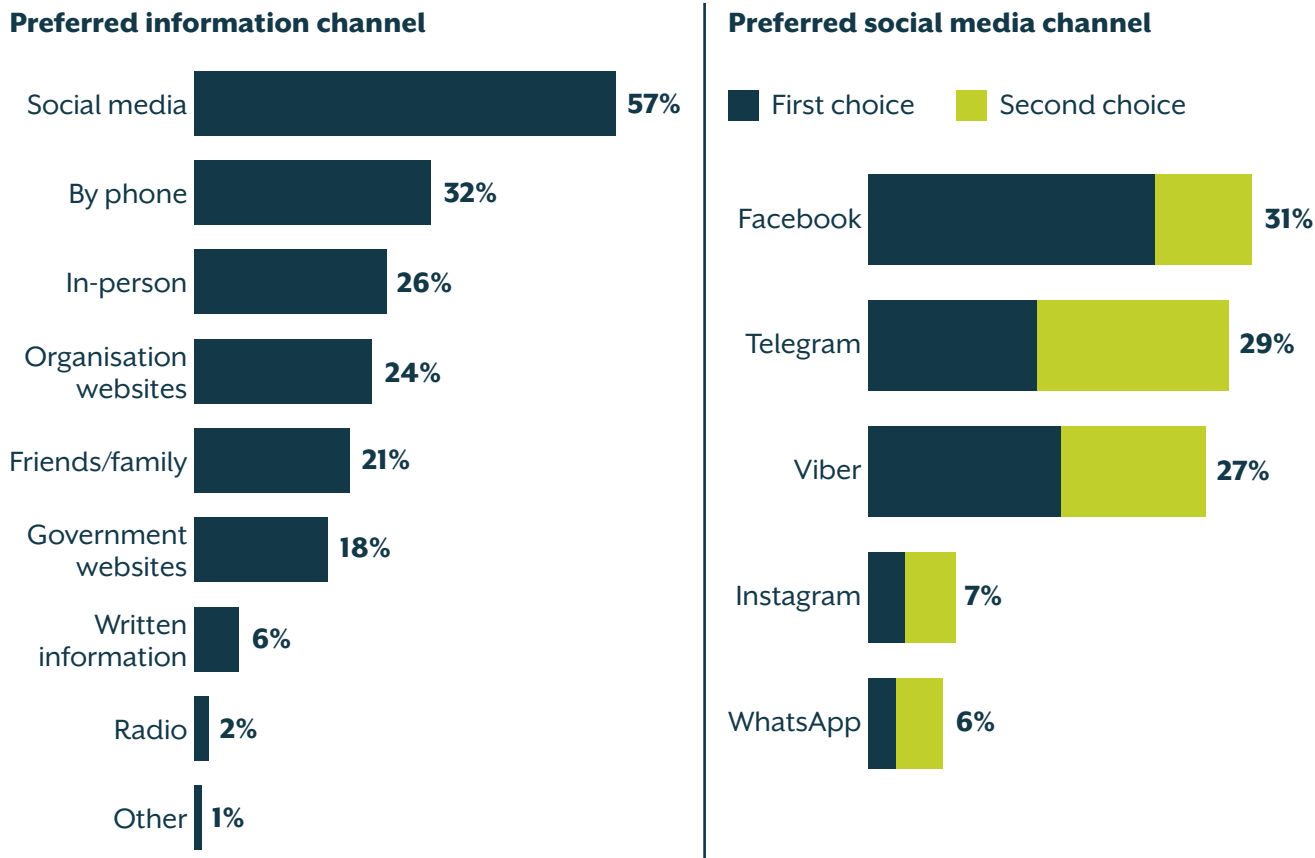
27 There are slight variations in preferred channels by country. For example, in Poland, 43% of refugees rely on volunteers for information, followed by family and friends outside of Ukraine (40%) and official news Telegram channels (34%). About a quarter of refugees receive information they trust from social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc). In Hungary, people reported that they prefer social media and messaging apps including Facebook, Telegram and Viber; in-person communication; and information from friends and family.

28 UNHCR (2022) [Ukraine situation: regional protection profiling and monitoring factsheet](#).

29 Internews (2022) [Barriers and bridges: communication and information exchange with Ukrainian refugees in Romania](#).



Figure 2 Preferred information channels of refugees



Note: multiple responses were possible, so percentages can go over 100% when added.

Source: adapted from UNHCR (2022) [Ukraine situation: regional protection profiling and monitoring factsheet](#).

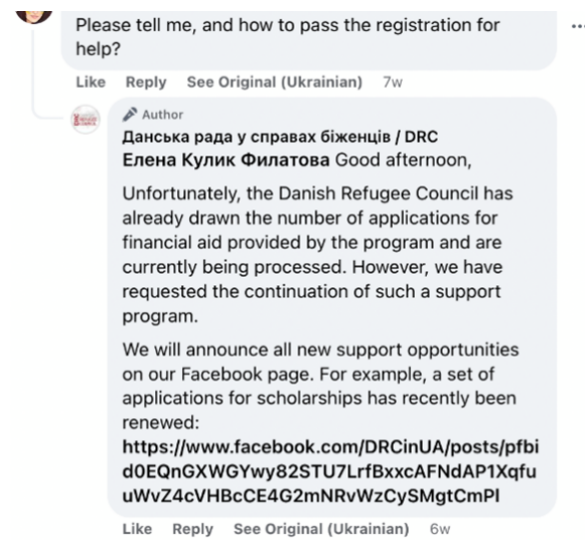
One key gap is sufficient digital two-way communication. Although social media is designed for interaction, many organisations use the medium for one-way information provision, such as through Telegram channels or unmoderated Facebook pages. Some international actors have noted that they use these channels to send one-way messages because they are unfamiliar with new platforms like Telegram.<sup>30</sup> Ukrainian IDPs and refugees are using organisations’ public social media pages to attempt to get in touch, asking for help or leaving messages of frustration. But most international organisations do not respond to comments – leaving space, in many cases, for other frustrated people to respond in commiseration and for bad actors to identify people in need. It may also push people to seek information from more responsive but less verified sources, such as TikTok accounts. Moving towards two-way communication in digital spaces represents a chance to increase CCE, help protect aid recipients online and reduce reputational risks.

30 Consultation with CDAC members.

## Recommendations

- The response should take digital initiatives one step further and strive to meet Ukrainians where they are online, ensuring vetted information provided on websites is well socialised, whether that is through Google Ads, repackaging content for social media sharing, or posting links to important new information in existing digital spaces, including Ukrainian social media groups.
- Consider using social platforms for their intended purpose: interaction. Organisations can amplify key, in-demand information, foster feedback and dialogue, and build trust by responding to public comments, like the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) did after they had to close registration for financial assistance (Figure 3).
- Offer training to CCEA practitioners and responders on how to effectively use digital platforms for two-way engagement with communities.

Figure 3 **DRC Ukraine responds to comments on its Facebook page, a practice that promotes trust and engagement with aid organisations**



Source: [DRC Facebook page](#) post from 12 July 2022.

## Finding 6: Language and translation needs must be prioritised

While Ukrainian is Ukraine's official language, a third of people in Ukraine in a 2021 survey listed Russian as their first language.<sup>31</sup> With many refugees coming from areas near the Russian border, a large proportion are in fact more comfortable communicating in Russian. For example, 72% of refugees in Romania report speaking Russian at home.<sup>32</sup> Ukrainian Roma refugees may not be comfortable speaking Russian or Ukrainian and may need to communicate in one of several Romani dialects or Hungarian.<sup>33</sup>

Despite this, information provision and many online resources targeted to refugees are often available only in Ukrainian, English and/or the local language of the host country – with a notable absence of Russian translation even on government websites and help pages from international organisations. This may be due to sensitivities around use of the Russian language, with some refugees themselves reportedly feeling social pressure to use Ukrainian in public places both online and offline.<sup>34</sup> One government platform that

31 CDAC Network (2022) [Ukraine media landscape guide](#).

32 Internews (2022) [Barriers and bridges: communication and information exchange with Ukrainian refugees in Romania](#).

33 CLEAR Global (2022) [Language factsheet: Romani language in the Ukraine response](#).

34 Internews (2022).

does have Russian language translation has reported an overwhelming majority of users accessing the site in Russian, compared to Ukrainian or English.<sup>35</sup> The lack of Russian translation, and translation into marginalised languages, risks missing vast numbers of refugees.

## Recommendations

- Include Russian and Ukrainian translation of official information, with other information services and online platforms directing refugees to those sources.
- Make sure that translations are accurate through use of professional translation services and consulting refugees themselves on how complex information (e.g. legal advice) can be better communicated and understood.
- Ensure both Ukrainian and Russian interpreters are available at information points.

## Finding 7: Marginalised groups need specific, tailored CCE initiatives

The heavy emphasis on digital communication and the use of technologies like smartphones to communicate with communities has reportedly created significant barriers for older people and people with disabilities to access information on available humanitarian assistance. For example, 92% of settlements within Ukraine reported that older people are less able to access information on humanitarian assistance, followed by 57% of settlements for people with disabilities.<sup>36</sup>

There are gaps in information provision for other marginalised groups. Ukrainian Roma refugees have reportedly faced discrimination and significant challenges in accessing aid and information.<sup>37</sup> Recent research conducted by Internews indicates critical information needs related to education, health services and legal information, and challenges in accessing information due to language, illiteracy and cultural barriers as well as limited access to and use of information shared via TV, radio and official channels.<sup>38</sup> People with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and sex characteristics (SOGIESC, or LGBTIQ+ people) may also struggle to find information relevant for them in border countries.

## Recommendations

- Include marginalised groups in information and communication needs assessments.
- Provide two-way communication in a variety of online and offline formats and languages to better include marginalised groups. Ensure those working directly with marginalised groups have up-to-date information to provide.

35 Presentation by Dopomoga.gov.md at Moldova AAP Working Group meeting, 2 September 2022.

36 REACH (2022) Assessment: Ukraine, July.

37 The Guardian (2022) '[Meet us before you reject us': Ukraine's Roma refugees face closed doors in Poland](#), 10 May; Human Rights Watch (2022) [Moldova: Romani refugees from Ukraine face segregation](#), 25 May; UN Women (2022) [From where I stand: Svetlana Baba, Ukrainian Roma refugee](#), 21 April.

38 Internews, ROMNI and IRC (2022) Understanding information preferences, barriers, and needs of Roma refugees in Moldova (unpublished presentation).

- Provide information and PSEA materials in plain language and translated into relevant languages. Consult people from marginalised communities on how complex information can be better communicated and understood.
- Clear and safe feedback mechanisms should be made accessible.

## Finding 8: Engagement with host communities will support refugee integration

Host communities of countries neighbouring Ukraine have shown unprecedented efforts and generosity to help and accommodate refugees, with many individuals and families hosting refugees in their homes.<sup>39</sup> But seven months into the crisis, and with no end in sight, the increasing cost of living, governments rolling back emergency packages and the uncertainty of the duration of stay, social tensions are starting to arise.<sup>40</sup> Even in Poland, where host communities have been particularly welcoming of refugees, many feel the strain of having refugees living in their homes,<sup>41</sup> with 62% of surveyed Poles reporting that it has become too costly to support refugees.<sup>42</sup>

### Recommendations

- Engage local authorities and media to prioritise consistent and accurate information to mitigate tensions, misinformation and rumours in order to support the long-term integration of refugees.
- Provide accessible information on how host communities can receive compensation for hosting; support refugees in accessing social services and pensions; and provide information on when refugees can expect to be resettled.

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39 UNHCR (2022) [Lives on hold: profiles and intentions of refugees from Ukraine](#).

40 The Guardian (2022) [Europe's Ukraine refugees fear falling through the cracks as winter looms](#), 11 September.

41 OKO.press (2022) [Długa kolejka uchodźców po walizke. Polacy, czy to już koniec waszej pomocy?](#), 12 August.

42 The Guardian (2022), 11 September.

## Conclusion

Despite the many CCEA-related activities happening on the ground, there are still critical gaps related to: information provision on priority topics; addressing language and translation concerns; two-way digital outreach; and CCE for marginalised groups and host communities. Many of these gaps could be addressed, and CCEA activities more effectively scaled, through a collaborative approach among international aid organisations and local media, CSOs, and diaspora- and refugee-led organisations, formal and informal.

To more effectively collaborate across diverse actors, aid providers must better recognise and bridge local, national and international CCEA-related skills, knowledge and capacities. While gaps in local and international understanding and approaches to CCEA may remain, many local organisations have longstanding and road-tested ways of working with communities that promote accountability. International actors should recognise that complaints and feedback mechanisms and other humanitarian accountability systems are designed as minimum standards, but they need to be combined with other ways of working that hold aid providers accountable. Where possible, focus on outcomes rather than knowledge of humanitarian accountability systems.

As a way forward, it is important to prioritise open dialogue between international, national and local actors to share CCEA best practices, rather than a focus on an international-to-local ‘capacity building’ approach, which often also has very little local engagement.<sup>43</sup> Emphasise building a better understanding of local ways of working to better support a locally driven CCEA response that bridges local-to-international expertise.

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43 Often due to local actors’ limited time, resources and willingness to participate in ‘capacity bridging’, as noted in this excerpt from a [widely read letter](#) to international NGOs (INGOs) and international donors, published by the National Network of Local Philanthropy Development in Ukraine and signed by numerous Ukrainian CSOs and allies: ‘We understand that a significant amount of funding that multiple INGOs have secured is being used to “build capacity”. This is nonsense. As stated earlier, we are rooted in our communities and have the historical, cultural, linguistic and contextual knowledge and understanding of local realities to respond effectively. Many of us have organised and led civic action and community development long before the war. We think it is INGOs that often need to build their own organisational capacity and knowledge about our context, our networks and what a locally rooted civil society looks like long term. Maybe you can translate some of our resources into English to better understand our knowledge and existing approaches.’

# Appendix: Organisations consulted for this report

## CDAC members

- ActionAid\*
- BBC Media Action
- CLEAR Global
- Ground Truth Solutions
- IFRC
- Internews
- IRC\*
- IOM
- Plan International\*
- Save the Children\*
- UNHCR
- UN OCHA
- UNICEF
- WHO
- World Vision\*

\*CDAC **and** DEC members

## Local and national actors

- CultureLab
- Dopomoga.gov.md (Government of Moldova)
- Moldova for Peace
- Polish Humanitarian Action
- Polish NGO Forum
- Ukrainian House

## Coordination structures

- AAP Task Force Moldova
- AAP Working Group Poland
- AAP Working Group Ukraine
- Cash Working Group Ukraine
- Cash AAP Task Team Ukraine
- Regional Protection Working Group



CDAC is a network of more than 35 of the largest humanitarian, media development and social innovation actors – including UN agencies, RCRC, NGOs, media and communications actors – working together to shift the dial on humanitarian and development decision-making – moving from global to local.

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