

NEEDS ASSESSMENT UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN GEORGIA

People in Need (PIN) Georgia

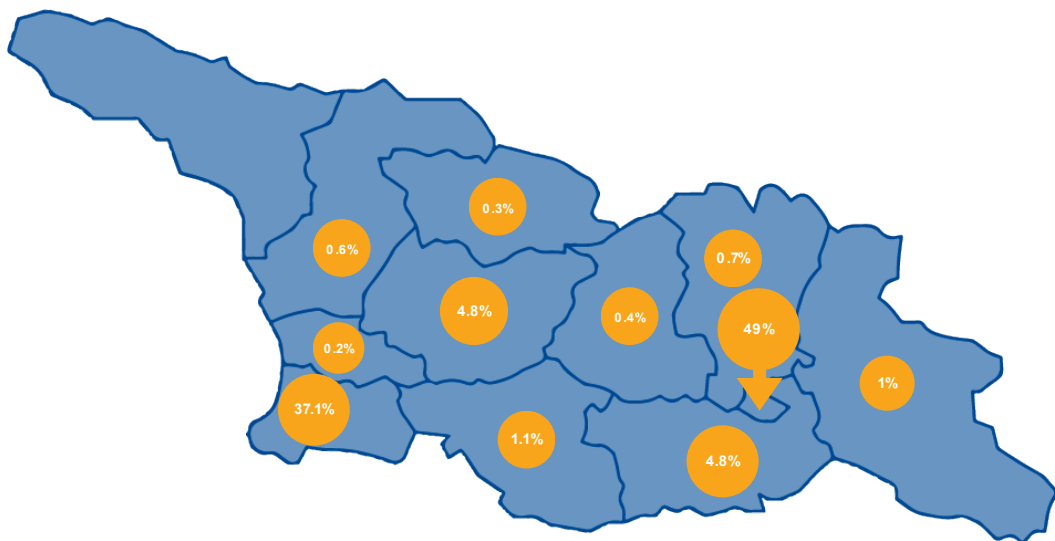
THE RESULTS OF SURVEY 2023



INTERVIEWED

850 HOUSEHOLDS

GEOGRAPHICAL DISAGGREGATION



TBILISI - 49 % (1256)

SAMTSKHE-JAVAKHETI - 1.1% (29)

SHIDA KARTLI - 0.4% (9)

ADJARA - 37.1% (952)

KAKHETI - 1% (26)

RACHA-LECKHUMI-KVEMO SVANETI - 0.3% (7)

IMERETI - 4.8% (123)

MTSKHETA-MTIANETI - 0.7% (18)

GURIA - 0.2% (5)

KVEMO KARTLI - 4.8% (123)

SAMEGRELO-ZEMO SVANETI 0.6% (15)

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	4
1.1	Context and objectives	5
1.2	Methodology and data collection	5
1.3	Demographics	5
1.4	Access to school	7
1.5	Accommodation	8
1.6	Socioeconomic conditions and needs of the refugee HHs	12
1.7	Underlying vulnerabilities among the refugee HHs	18
2	Key Findings	22
	Summary and recommendations	23

Table of figures

Figure 1 Family composition of Ukrainian refugee HHs (no. of members per HH)	5
Figure 2 Percentage of children per HH	6
Figure 3 Age and gender division of the family members of HHs	6
Figure 4 Percentage of family members aged over 60 per HH	7
Figure 5 Percentage of school-age children	7
Figure 6 Access to school among children of refugee HHs	9
Figure 7 Accommodation plans of the responding HHs	9
Figure 8 Sufficient financial resources for the next three months	10
Figure 9 Terms of housing conditions	10
Figure 10 Terms of payment for housing conditions	11
Figure 11 Support to pay for collective accommodation	11
Figure 12 Salary range of HHs with employed family members paying for own accommodation	12
Figure 13 main needs over next three months	12
Figure 14 Enough money for three meals per day	12
Figure 15 Percentage of HHs having enough financial resources to support themselves and their families	13
Figure 16 The main needs of the HHs for the next 3 months	14
Figure 17 At least one member of HH is employed	14
Figure 18 Number of family members employed in the household	15
Figure 19 Monthly salary ranges of working individual family members presented in Georgian Lari (GEL)	15
Figure 20 Working conditions of the working members of the family	16
Figure 21 Reasons for not having a working family member	17
Figure 22 Employment problems faced by the responding HHs	17
Figure 23 Receiving humanitarian support from humanitarian organisations	18
Figure 24 Breakdown of Ukrainians who have received/are receiving external assistance	19
Figure 25 Percentage of family members with chronic diseases	19
Figure 26 Access to medical care among those who have chronic diseases and illnesses	20
Figure 27 Reasons for family members with chronic diseases and illnesses not having access to medical care	20
Figure 28 the percentage of victims/injured family members	21
Figure 29 the percentage of victims/injured family members' access to medical care	21
Figure 30 Familiarity with the rules for free access to state medical services in Georgia for Ukrainians	22

1 Introduction

1.1 Context and objectives

The military action launched by the Russian Federation on the 24th of February 2022 resulted in a rapid deterioration of the security situation in Ukraine resulting in massive displacement. Over a quarter of Ukraine's population have fled their homes, including more than 7.7 million people now estimated to be internally displaced and over 5.2 million people, who have crossed borders to seek security and safety in other countries, most of them women and children. Since the end of February 2022, there has been a constant flow of Ukrainians into Georgia from the aforementioned areas in particular, as they often have no other option to seek safety other than fleeing through Russia to Georgia. Georgia is one of the only international locations where Ukrainians, who are fleeing war can cross the border from Russia without a valid international passport. A large number of Ukrainians were forced to flee rapidly, having left possessions such as personal documentation or birth certificates for children. According to data provided by the Government of Georgia to UNHCR, between February and December 2022, 189,777 Ukrainian sought refuge in Georgia, out of whom 85% have transited onwards to other locations. Data provided before the beginning of the Christmas period as well as continuous attacks inside Ukraine suggests that approximately 25,000 Ukrainians remain in Georgia. It should be noted that this figure may now be higher as anecdotal evidence from Ukrainians currently here suggests that they know other family members and friends who are making their way to Georgia.

The following needs assessment was conducted in December 2022, following PIN's initial cooperation with various CSOs in Georgia who are providing assistance to Ukrainians, in and around Tbilisi. The objectives of the assessment were first and foremost, to understand in more depth, the demographic make-up of Ukrainian refugees in Georgia, as well as where they are located. Secondly, PIN wanted to ascertain an overview of the existing and impending needs of Ukrainian refugees in Georgia (Tbilisi 49%, Batumi 33%, other areas 18%), to determine the gaps in terms of meeting even the most basic needs, particularly in terms of access to shelter, food and healthcare, first and foremost for those with chronic health issues. This is particularly pertinent information, given that some of the questioning centred around plans over the next three months, which will be a period when many Ukrainian refugees will have been in Georgia for a year or almost a year. Finally, the assessment data will be used both by PIN and shared with other organizations in order to inform a more efficient humanitarian response for Ukrainians in Georgia, particularly those who are more vulnerable or part of a household with vulnerable individuals.

1.2 Methodology and data collection

The following assessment was carried out by the Ukrainian CSO, 'Unite Together', with support from PIN, covering 850 households (HHs) from all regions of Georgia, in total, 36 settlements. Unite Together is a registered entity in Georgia, founded by Ukrainians to support other Ukrainians after the start of Russian aggression on 24th February 2022. Households were selected using a randomised approach, calculating the survey sample with a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence interval.

PIN's Emergency Coordinator in Georgia designed the survey template, which was subsequently translated into Ukrainian. Data was collected by google forms; 25% of forms were filled through face-to-face interviews by enumerators. A link to the online survey was posted in several information channels popular among Ukrainians, both on Facebook and on Telegram. All the data was collected between November 30th and 12th December 2022. Data was then analysed with descriptive analysis methods.

1.3 Demographics

The average household size of Ukrainian refugees surveyed in Georgia was 3 individuals per household. As noted earlier on, the majority of those interviewed were in Tbilisi and Batumi, with smaller percentages in Imereti and other smaller towns scattered throughout the country.

Approximately 33.4% of the HHs comprised of 2 members, followed by HHs with 3 members (26.7%) and 4 members (17.2%), respectively, as described in the figures below:

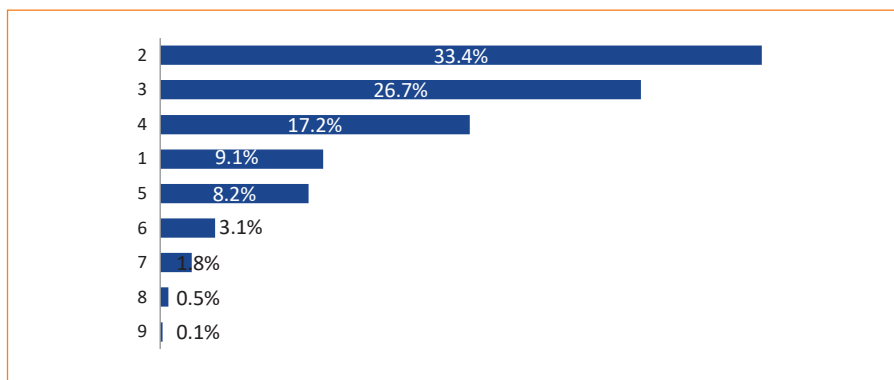


Figure 1 Family composition of Ukrainian refugee HHs (no. of members per HH)

There is a fairly large presence (35% of the assessed group) of elderly household members (between 1 and 4 individuals) and also a significant presence (28%) of people with disabilities.

Nearly 3/4 of the HHs (600) are in Georgia with children, approximately 55.4% (331 HHs) of which with one child, 35.8% (214 HHs) with 2 children, meanwhile, the remaining HHs (8.71%) are accompanied by more than 2 children, as is described in the figure below¹:

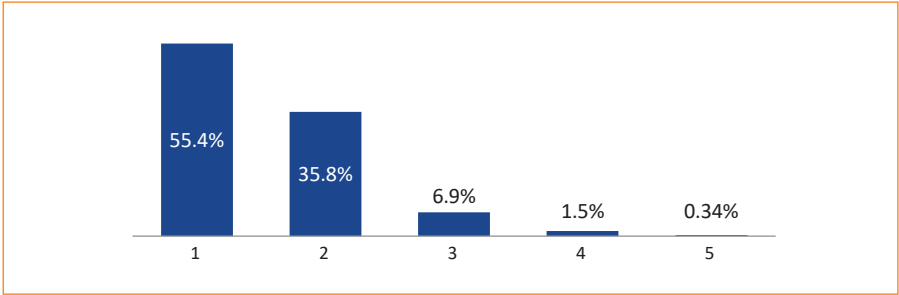


Figure 2 Percentage of children per HH

In terms of gender and age breakdown, 18% (468 individuals) are girls, 18% (468 individuals) are boys, 33% (844 individuals) are women of working age (18 to 60), 15% (382 individuals) are men of working age (18 to 60), 11% (286 individuals) are women 60 or over, and 5% (122 individuals) are men 60 or over.

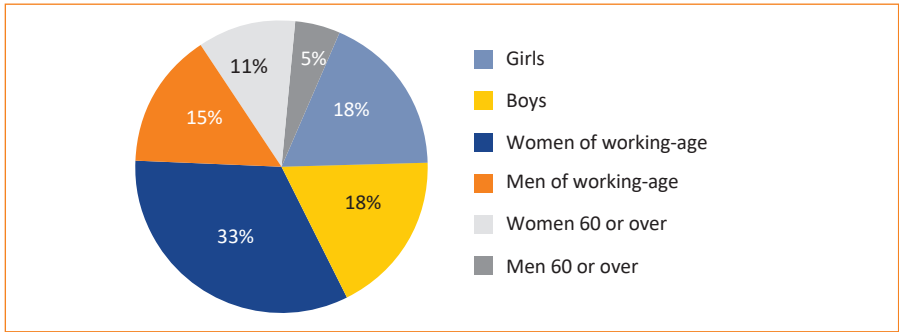


Figure 3 Age and gender division of the family members of HHs

1 3 respondents out of 600 stating that they have minors in their HHs did not specify the total number or the gender of their minors.

Regarding the number of elderly people per HH, 35.1% (300 HHs) said they have at least 1 family member aged above 60 y/o. It is worth noting that out of 300 households which declared the presence of an elderly family member(s) 107 households are elderly-headed, i.e. have no working-age family member with them in Georgia.

The majority 67.3% of the HHs have 1 family member aged over 60, followed by those (90) with 2 such family members, as reflected in the figure below:

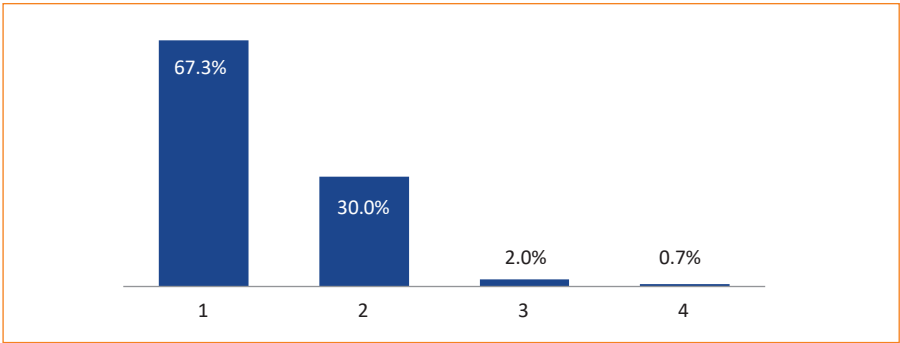


Figure 4 Percentage of family members aged over 60 per HH

1.4 Access to school

Since the outbreak of the war, access to education has been disrupted, affecting thousands of displaced Ukrainian children. The survey results indicate that out of 600 HHs stating that they have minors in their HHs, the majority of 71% (428 HHs) reported having children of school age. Information is illustrated below in figure 5:

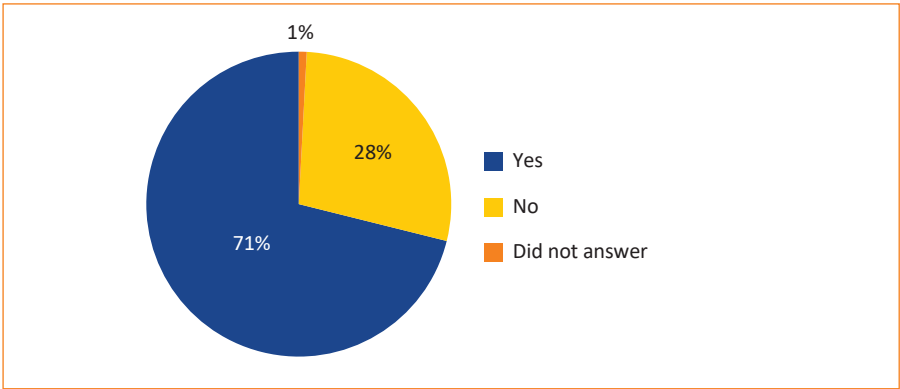


Figure 5 Percentage of school-age children

Overall, in terms of access to education, out of 428 HHs that reported having at least 1 child of school age, 97% (408 HHs) claimed that their children have some type of access to education, whilst 3% stated that their child does not attend school (Figure 6). The reasons ranged from not having a school nearby to not having access to a device for online learning, where families preferred their children to continue with online schooling in connection with their Ukrainian schools.

The following figure illustrates the types of schools that refugee children are attending in Georgia, with half of the school-aged children attending a school in the Ukrainian sector:

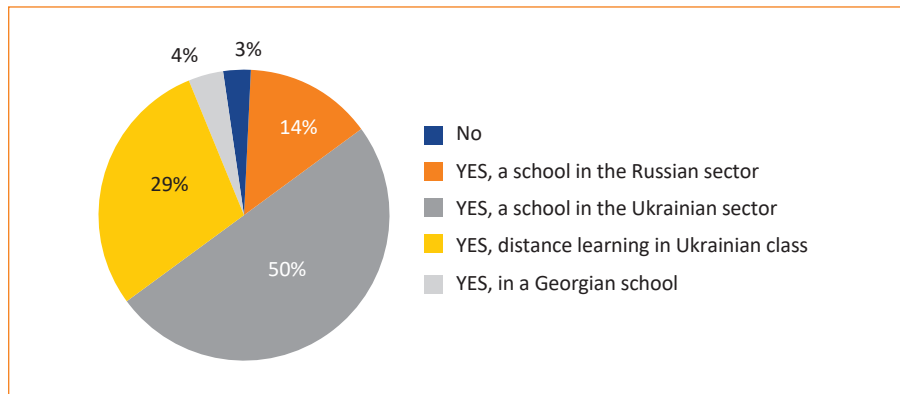


Figure 6 Access to school among children of refugee HHs

1.5 Accommodation

Regarding the current accommodation situation of the HHs, respondents were asked to specify how long they planned to stay in their current location. Overall, 847 responses were collected.

The results indicate that more than half of the responding HHs intend to remain at their current location for three to six months or more than six months. It is uncertain whether they will leave Georgia or move to another town as the question pertains only to the ‘current location’. The information is illustrated below in figure 7:

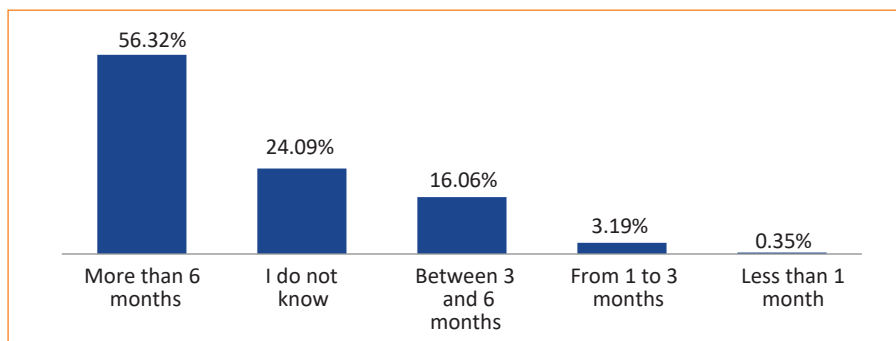


Figure 7 Accommodation plans of the responding HHs

The results indicated that of 477 HHs planning to stay in Georgia more than 6 months, 419 HH (88%) do not have enough financial resources to support themselves for the next 3 months (Figure 8). It is, therefore, possible that these HHs may not be able to pay for their individual housing in the near future.

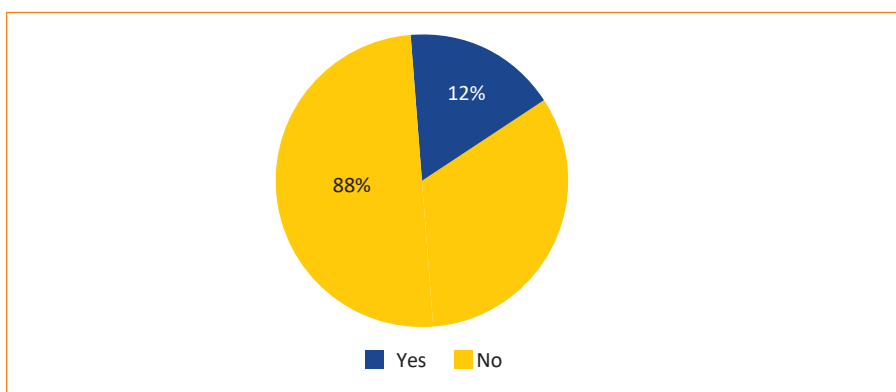


Figure 8 Sufficient financial resources for the next three months

The vast majority of respondents, 82% (694 HH), were residing in individual housing, whilst 18% (156 HH) surveyed lived in some type of collective accommodation facilities (Figure 9). Among those living in collective shelters, some pay partially, whilst some do not pay any rent at all and are supported by the local community, international organizations, both Georgian and Ukrainian CSOs, as well as the Georgian government.

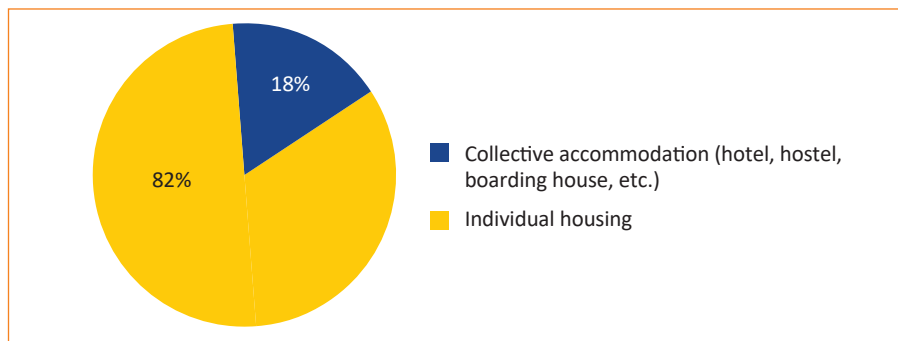


Figure 9 Terms of housing conditions

Results indicate that the majority, 77%, provided full payment for accommodation. 15 % of HH pay only for utilities, 7 % live in houses provided free of charge, and Georgian families host 1 %. Information is illustrated in figure 10 below:

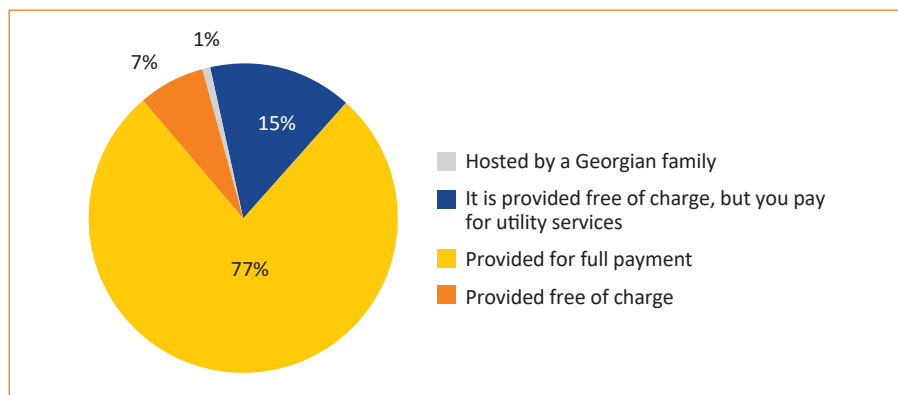


Figure 10 Terms of payment for housing conditions

Among those who are provided accommodation, 66% are supported financially by international organizations and Georgian and Ukrainian CSOs. Only 34% percentage pay by themselves (Figure 11).

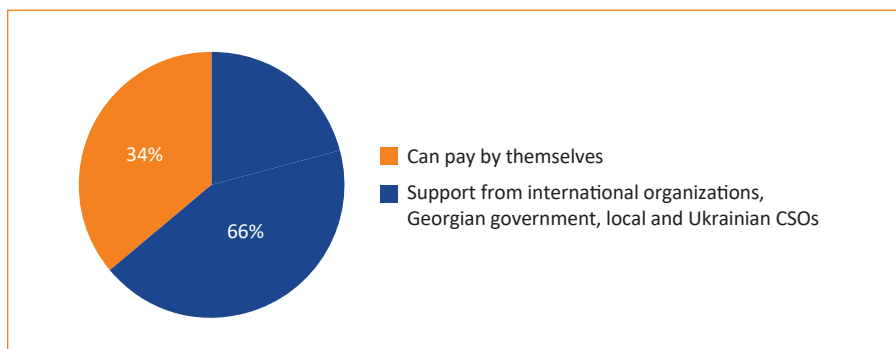


Figure 11 Support to pay for collective accommodation

Of this 34% (219HH), only 17% (37 HHs) can afford accommodation for the next three months as their salaries are more than 700 GEL (Figure 12).

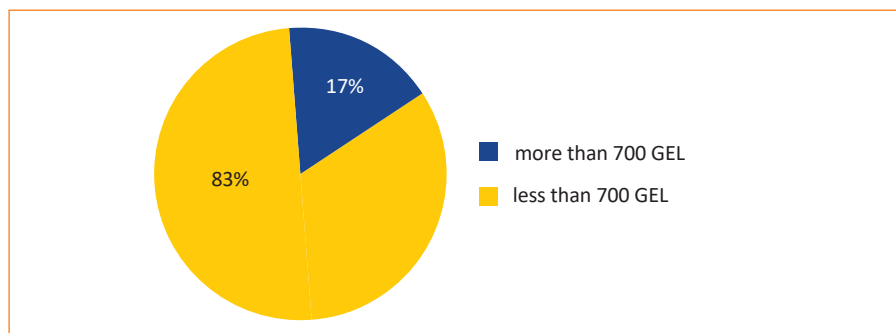


Figure 12 Salary range of HHs with employed family members paying for own accommodation

However, it is important to note that whilst a certain number of respondents said they were currently paying for their accommodation in full, 37% of these households also cited food as their top need. A further 26% of these families stated not having enough for three meals daily.

See the results below in figure 13 and 14:

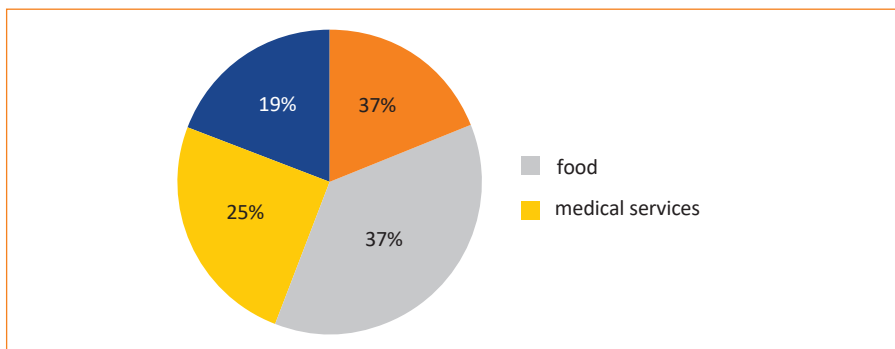


Figure 13 main needs over next three months

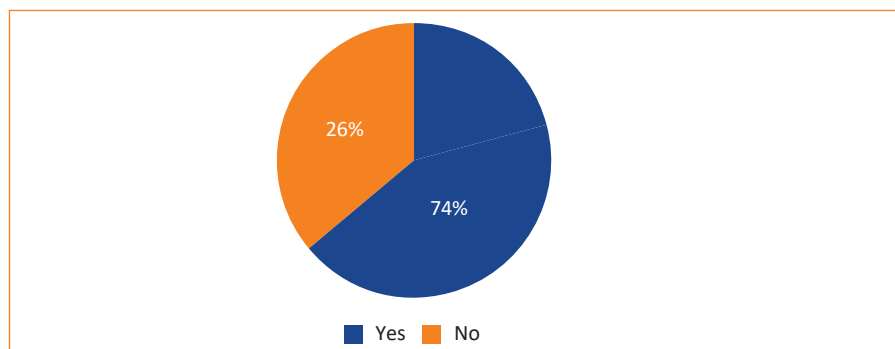


Figure 14 Enough money for three meals per day

1.6 Socioeconomic conditions and needs of the refugee HHs

To understand the socioeconomic status and the availability of resources of the refugee HHs, they were asked whether they had enough financial resources to support themselves and their family for the next 3 months.

Based on the responses of 849 HHs³ it was evident that the majority, 88% (745 HHs) of them do not possess enough financial resources for the ensuing three months, and only 12% (104 HHs) were certain to be able to support themselves and their families during this period (Figure 15). This is indeed a cause for concern, particularly when understood to the opportunities to find long-term employment.

³ 1 respondent did not provide an answer on this

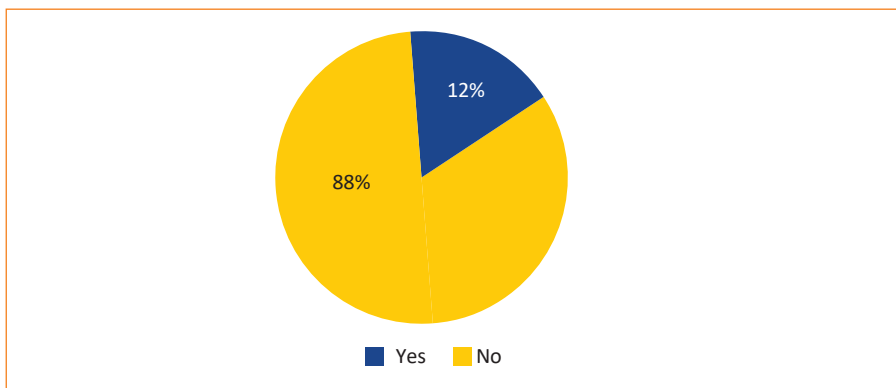


Figure 15 Percentage of HHs having enough financial resources to support themselves and their families

In terms of top needs, food, 38.40% (326 HHs), medical services, 25.91% (220 HHs) and heating, 17.31% (147 HHs) were the top 3 responses in the main needs among the 849 respondents for the next 3 months (Figure 16).

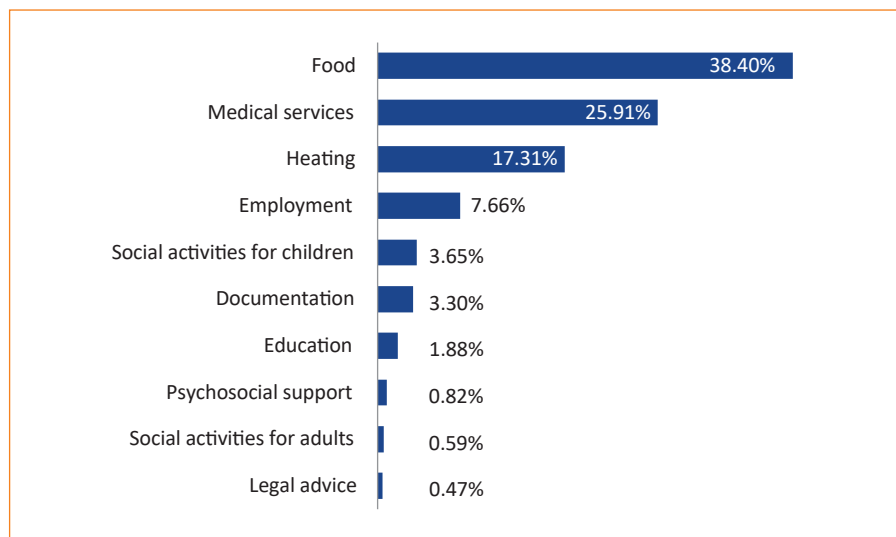


Figure 16 The main needs of the HHs for the next 3 months

Employment

When answering about employment among the respondent HHs, out of 850 HHs, only 30% (252 HHs) reported someone employed in their household. However, the majority of 70% (598 HHs) did not have such a family member (Figure 17).

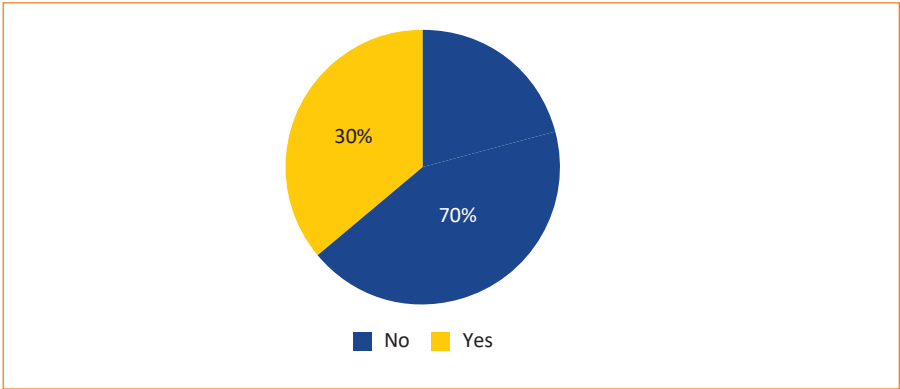


Figure 17 At least one member of HH is employed

A significant majority 90.5% (228 HHs) out of the 30% (252 HHs) that have an employed family member claimed to have only 1 such family member; only 20 HHs reported to have 2 working family members and 4 HHs had 3 such family members (Figure 18).

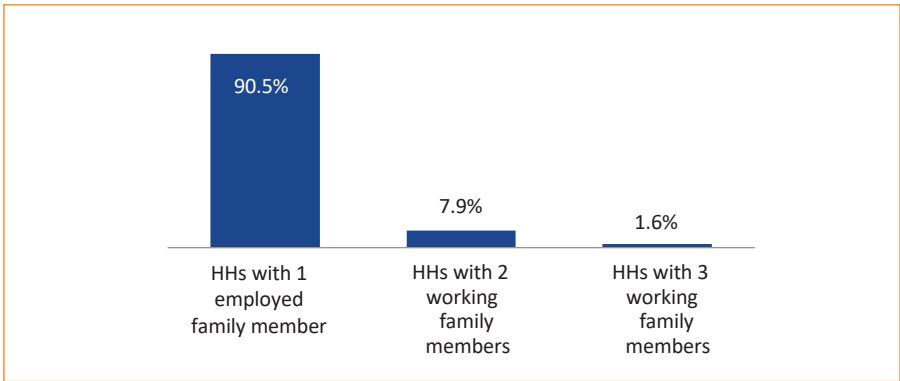


Figure 18 Number of family members employed in the household

The monthly salary ranges of working individual family members are presented in Georgia in the figure below:

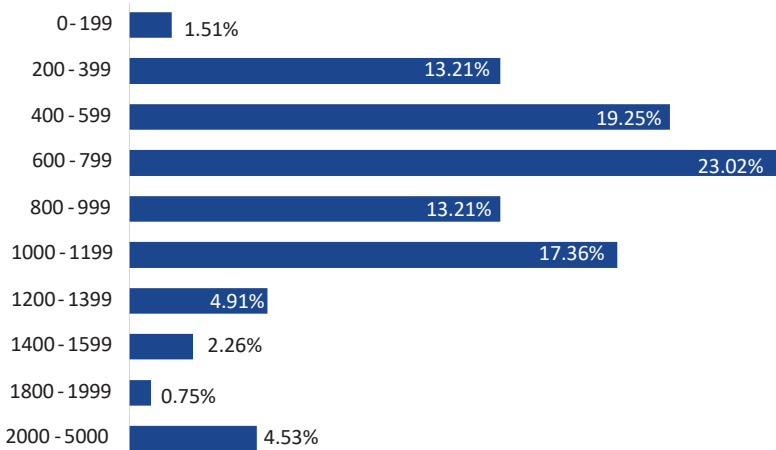


Figure 19 Monthly salary ranges of working individual family members presented in Georgian Lari (GEL)

118 individuals, which is 43% of those 276 employed, were working in a fixed place of work with a verbal agreement (informal), 99(36%) were engaged in remote work, and only 59(21%) individuals were working in a fixed place with a written employment contract (Figure 20).

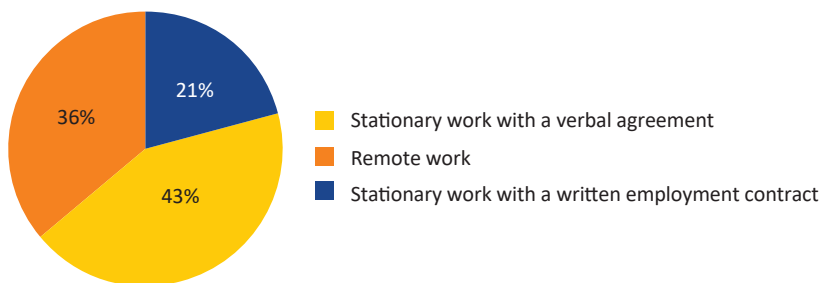


Figure 20 Working conditions of the working members of the family

The average salary of those employed is 810 GEL. There is a strong correlation between the type of employment and salaries. Those who have employment contracts also receive higher salaries. The average salary of those having stationary work based on verbal agreements is 676 GEL, the average salary of those having remote work is 875 GEL and average salary of those with stationary work based on written employment agreements 953 GEL.

In terms of meeting the subsistence minimum (253 GEL as of November 2022), 55% (238 households) have an income of below the subsistence minimum per person per month, while 45% reported income per person higher than the subsistence minimum. It is important to note though that subsistence minimum covers only the cost of food and does not include costs of housing, clothing, education, health-care, transportation, and other needs.

Furthermore, the 598 households that did not have an employed family member were asked to specify the reasons behind it. The top 3 reasons were: problems with finding employment (217 HHs which is 36%), caring for other family members (209 HHs which is 35%) and not having a family member of working age (68 HHs which is 11%) (Figure 21).

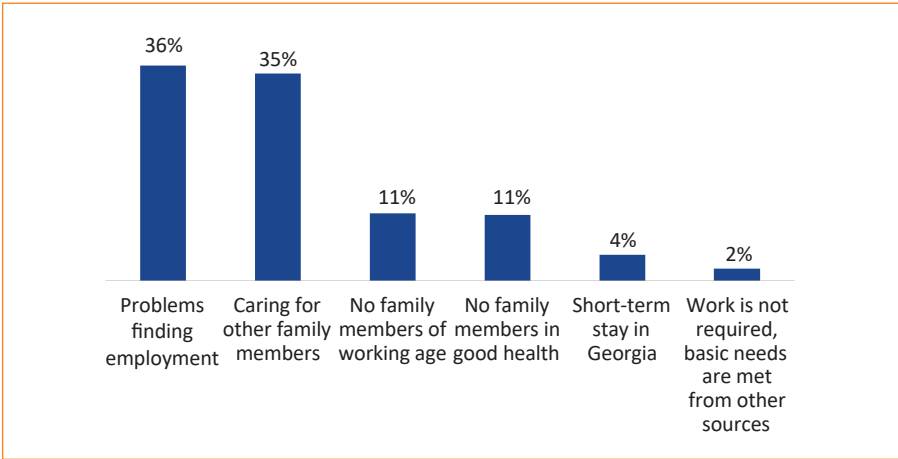


Figure 21 Reasons for not having a working family member

Overall, the language barrier for 322 HHs (53.85%), the high level of unemployment in the district for 139 HHs (23.24%) and low salaries for 137 HHs (22.91%) were the principal employment problems faced by the responding HHs (Figure 22).

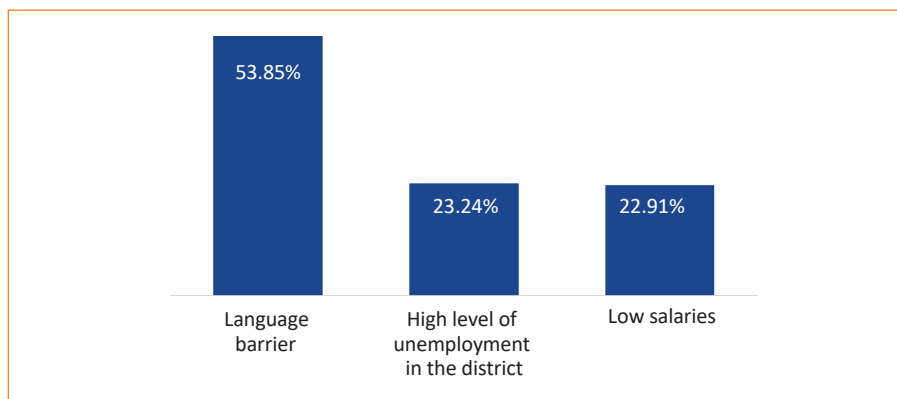


Figure 22 Employment problems faced by the responding HHs

Over one-third, 339 HHs (40%), of the responding HHs received no humanitarian support (Figure 23). On the other hand, 305 (59.69%) HHs out of the remaining 511 HHs reported expecting support from international organizations (Figure 24).

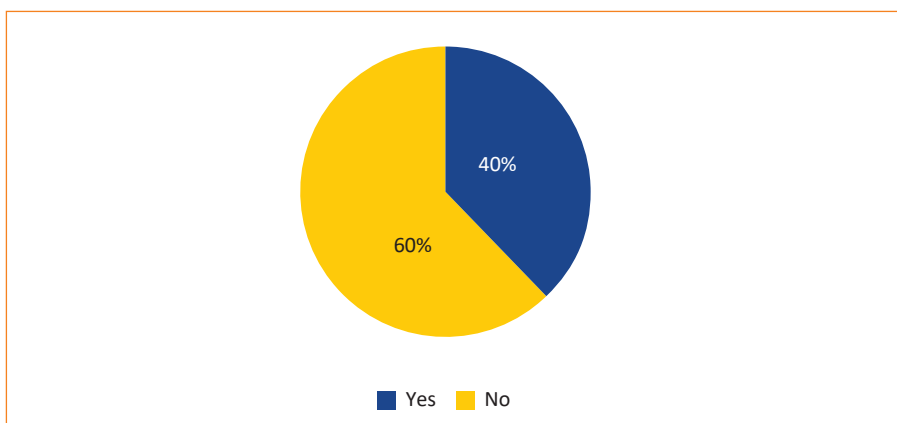


Figure 23 Receiving humanitarian support from humanitarian organisations

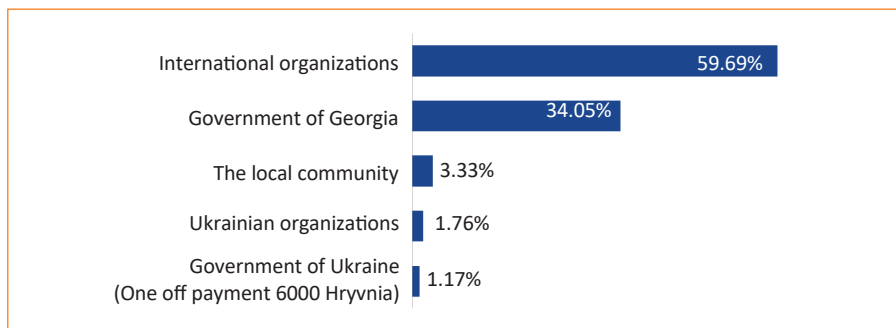


Figure 24 Breakdown of Ukrainians who have received/are receiving external assistance

In terms of dependency, i.e. the ratio of working-age adults vs dependent minors and elderly, 31% (266 households) have a dependency ratio of 1 (meaning an equal number of working-age adults vs minors and elders), 15% (126 households) have a dependency ratio below 1 (meaning the higher number of working age adults vs minors and elders), while 54% (458 households) have a dependency ratio higher than 1 (meaning the lower number of working age adults vs minors and elders) - it is worth noting that the category of high dependency includes 107 households without working-age adults at all.

1.7 Underlying vulnerabilities among the refugee HHs

To identify, understand and estimate the multiple needs of the affected population, the HHs were asked to indicate whether there are family members with health issues in their HHs. It became apparent that 507 HHs had such a family member with chronic diseases or other illnesses. This is 59.6% of the total HHs. The information is illustrated below:

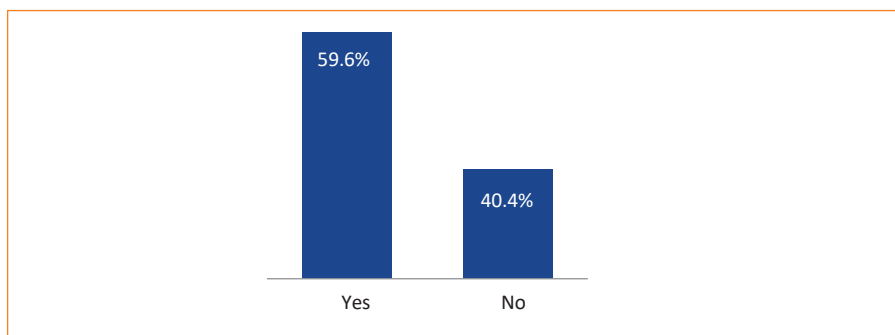


Figure 25 Percentage of family members with chronic diseases

Among the respondents (59.6%) with a family member with chronic disease or other illness, 358 HHs (71%) reported not having access to relevant health care (Figure 26).

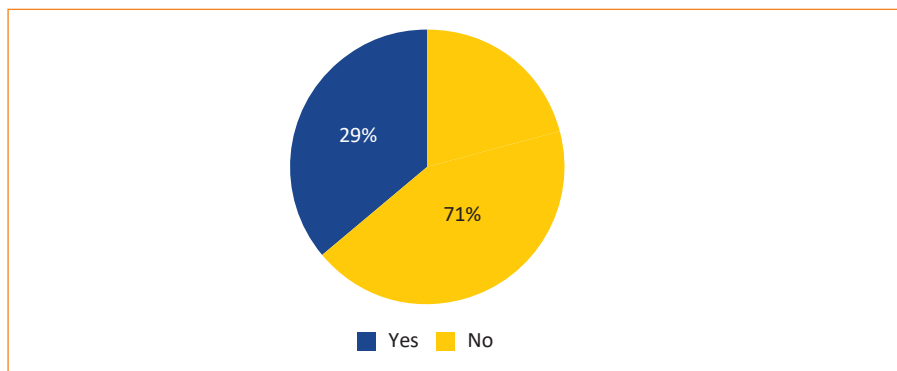


Figure 26 Access to medical care among those who have chronic diseases and illnesses

The main reason behind the lack of access to health care was the lack of financial resources, a report by 310 HHs (83.72%). Furthermore, they revealed other reasons, including mobility limitations and lack of appropriate services, illustrated in Figure 27. Additionally, 16% of respondents reported having a family member injured due to the conflict (Figure 27). Among those, 62% reported not having access to relevant health care (Figure 29).

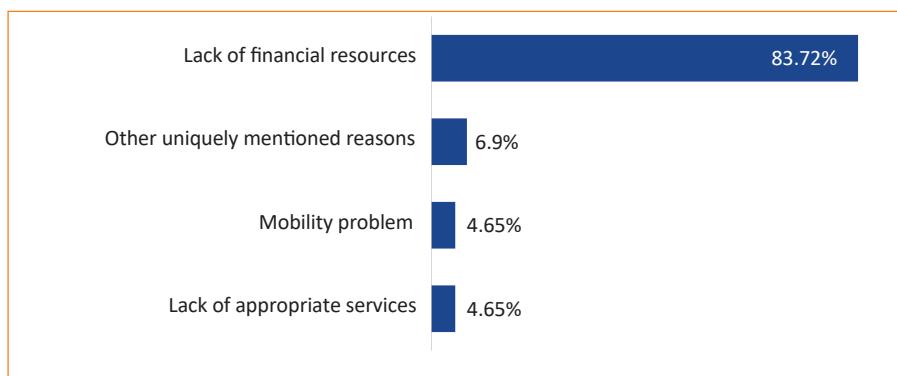


Figure 27 Reasons for family members with chronic diseases and illnesses not having access to medical care

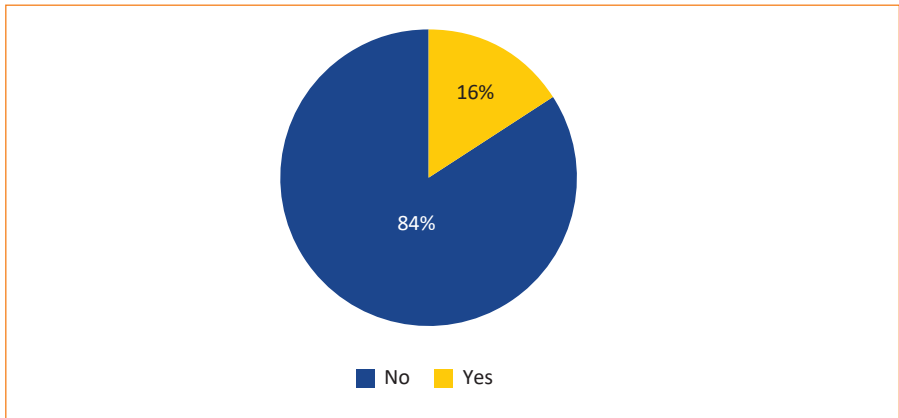


Figure 28 The percentage of victims/injured family members

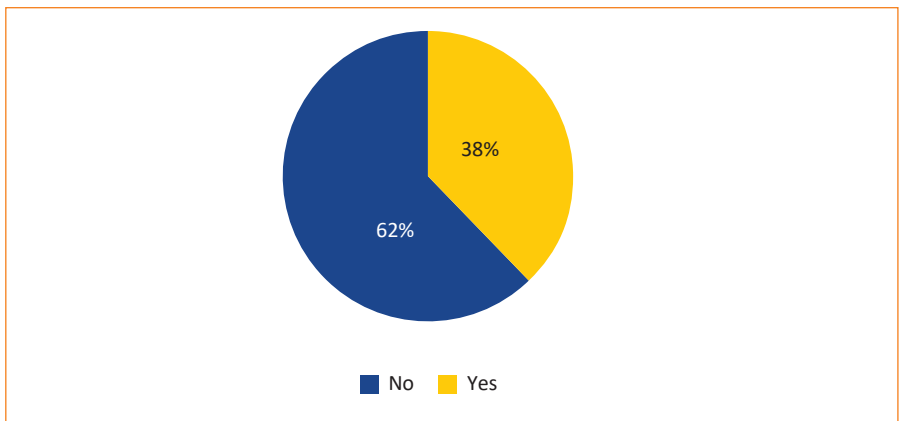


Figure 29 The percentage of victims/injured family members' access to medical care

There appears to be limited understanding of the availability of Georgian health care for Ukrainian refugees in Georgia, with 77%, in total 655 HHs, stating that they are unfamiliar with available services and rules of access. The information is illustrated in figure 30 below:

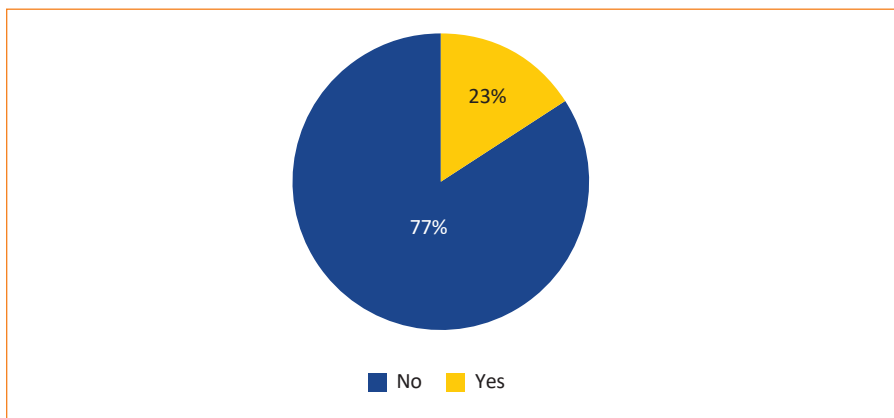


Figure 30 Familiarity with the rules for free access to state medical services in Georgia for Ukrainians

2 Key Findings

- Out of 428 HHs that reported to have at least 1 child of school age, 97% (408 HHs) claimed that their children have some access to education, whilst 3% stated that their child does not attend school;
- The reasons ranged from not having a school nearby to not having access to a device for online learning;
- The results emphasized that of 477 HHs planning to stay in Georgia more than 6 months, 419 HH (88%) do not have enough financial resources to support themselves for next month;
- The majority of respondents, 82%, reported living in individual accommodation, while 18% reported living in different kinds of collective shelters;
- only 17% which is 37 HH can afford their accommodation next three months;
- Based on the responses of 849 HHs it was evident that the majority 88% (745 HHs) of them do not possess enough financial resources for the ensuing three months and only 12% (104 HHs) were certain to be able to support themselves and their families during this period;
- In terms of top needs, food 38.40% (326 HHs), medical services 25.91% (220 HHs) and heating 17.31% (147 HHs) were the top 3 responses in the main needs among the 849 respondents for the next 3 months;
- Out of 850 HHs, only 29.6% (252 HHs) reported having an employed family member, however the majority of 70.4% (598 HHs) did not;
- 90.5% of the HHs having an employed family member reported having 1, 7.9% reported to have 2 working family members and 1.6% 3 working family members;
- Overall, language barrier (322 HHs/53.8%), high level of unemployment in the district (139 HHs/23.2%) and low salaries (137 HHs/22.9%) were the principal employment problems faced by the responding 598 HHs;
- 16% of respondents reported having a family member injured due to the conflict. Among those, 62% reported not having access to relevant health care;
- More than half of 59.6% (507 HHs) of the responding HHs reported to have at least 1 family member with chronic diseases or other illnesses with only 29% of them having access to medical care;
- There appears to be limited understanding of availability of Georgian health-care for Ukrainian refugees in Georgia, with 77% stating that they are not familiar with available services and rules of access.

Summary and recommendations

The key findings illustrate that there are a multitude of factors which are increasing the vulnerability of Ukrainians in Georgia at the moment, including inability to find work due to the language barrier, having to care for children and/or family members with illnesses and chronic diseases and a general lack of sustainable funding. This lack of financial stability affects the ability of Ukrainian refugees to sufficiently provide for their basic needs in the long term, including food, accommodation and essential healthcare. It is clear that organizations who are providing humanitarian assistance need to focus on supporting vulnerable Ukrainians to cover those needs in the upcoming period, particularly when a majority of Ukrainians in Georgia appear to be planning to remain in the country. This ties in closely with the current situation inside Ukraine where ongoing active conflict means that Ukrainian families in Georgia, many of whom come from occupied territories inside Ukraine, can not realistically return to their place of origin any time soon. Clearly, this also points to a serious need to consult further with Ukrainian refugees in Georgia on how they intend to support themselves with regards to accommodation. Prices for rental accommodation continue to rise and this will affect where households decide to stay within Georgia, as the highest prices are found in urban locations, such as Tbilisi and Batumi.

Access to employment continues to be a major challenge for Ukrainians in Georgia, with barely 30% of survey respondents being able to find employment. Even those who are employed are not able to reach minimum subsistence levels with their salaries. The number of employed Ukrainians who are working without contracts is also concerning and the trend should be further analysed as it could lead to various problems, such as exploitation and poor working conditions. Whilst there are a significant number of households who have working age family members, it is clear that opportunities to find employment in Georgia are limited and are impacted by issues such as the ability to understand and speak Georgian, as well as the need to care for family members who are minors or have medical conditions.

The humanitarian community can assess further the possibility to provide income generation opportunities, either through job placement schemes or start-up businesses which do not require participants to commute to a place of work far from their accommodation. In tandem, organizations who provide assistance can consider tailored longer term support for families who are extremely vulnerable and will not be able to become self-reliant any time soon. This kind of support should take into account households who have additional vulnerabilities and costs related to healthcare. The government of Georgia does offer a level of support in terms of accessing free healthcare, however, more needs to be done in order to raise awareness amongst Ukrainians as to how they can access such government-run assistance.

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