Report for UNHCR Representation in Romania: Research Results on Refugee Integration and Service Access

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Executive Summary

Romania is host to nearly 620 refugees. One of the key roles played by UNHCR Romania is helping these refugees integrate into the country both economically and culturally. Due to the transitional economy and governance system as well as the new status granting asylum, refugees here face special problems.

The survey was initiated by the programme division of that office to investigate integration patterns among refugees. This report is laid out in the following sections:

Romania as a country of asylum and transit is examined with a discussion of elements of integration. Romania is a middle income country still developing a free market. With its proximity to Western Europe, many asylum seekers and refugees move on to other countries. The ability to retain and integrate asylum seekers and refugees is a challenge for the UNHCR Office in Bucharest.

This is followed by a methodological section that includes cooperation with other bodies, volunteers, and case selection information. Key research questions are enumerated including the degree of stability of the refugee population, demographics of the population, access to services and satisfaction ratings, and the extent of integration. The body of the report presents answers to these questions with statistical data compiled from survey respondents.

The survey found that the rate of instability of residence among refugees is very high. For those that are minimally stable enough to be located for this project, maintaining a valid address for a minimum of six months, survey results reported here identify several predictors of and barriers to integration.

The research also verified several demographic trends among the refugee population. Refugees are predominantly Islamic and Middle Eastern, with the largest group coming from Iraq. Many refugees are from minority populations within their countries of origin. The majority of refugees are men, and men are more likely to have arrived in Romania single and to remain single. All refugee women in Romania live in a family setting. Most refugees have children, but large families are not the norm. Average asylum seeking period is over two years.

UNHCR's programme division works with non-governmental organization partners to address the needs of refugees and to facilitate integration. The survey examines the reach of those services compared to the needs of refugees and the extent of satisfaction in services provided. Although NGO services do appear to go to the neediest refugees, the rate of access is low and the satisfaction rate is middling. Outside of refugee accommodation centers, NGO services tend to focus more on the most integrated refugees. Examination of needs distribution should enable better targeting of services.

Refugees in Romania, within the stable group responding to the survey, are fairly well integrated. Several factors that have positive and negative impact on integration opportunities have been identified by the study results.

Aids to integration include arriving in Romania with some contacts already in place, arriving with a high level of education, speaking the language, finding employment, being part of a mixed Romanian-refugee family, and the time period of residence.

Barriers to integration include being a woman, not speaking the language, being unemployed, and receiving a complementary humanitarian protection status.

Finally, problems identified are summarized, with special attention given to gender problems. Policy recommendations are presented, including increasing women's programs and NGO impact outside of Bucharest. In general, it is recommended that NGO partners take a more proactive approach in extending services to needy refugees. Thoughts on continuing research possibilities are also presented. Extending this study to multiple years could provide a deeper base of information without excessive expense or drain on human resources.

Introduction

Purpose of the survey

The purpose of the survey is to answer several key questions about refugee integration in Romania. The first is to give a demographic description of the population and a more accurate idea of the stability of the refugee population in Romania. The second is to measure the extent to which available services are being accessed and to what extent clients of governmental and non-governmental programs are satisfied with services they are accessing. Finally, the research provides an overview of the extent of refugee integration from both a social and a material point of view.

Romania as a country of asylum

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that there are currently 19.8 million refugees and other persons of concern in the world[1]. (UNHCR, 2003) UNHCR's mandate to aid these people is the 1951 Convention on Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The 1951 Convention defines a refugee as someone who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." (Article 1, A 2)

Traditionally, Romania has been a source country for refugee flows. During the second half of the twentieth century, refugees and migrants fled the communist regime, and asylum seekers have continued to leave Romania during the 1990s. In 1991 Romania ratified the 1951 Convention on Refugees and the Protocol. Since that time, the country has received 12,139 asylum applications[2] and has granted refugee or complementary humanitarian protection in 1729 cases (See Annex 1)[3]. 602 refugees are currently registered with the National Refugee Office with up to date residence.

[1] Stateless persons or disputed nationality and in certain cases internally displaced persons
[2] As of January 2003, does not include multiple applications
[3] Figure does not include temporary protection or granting of prolonged status but does include cases granted on appeal

(National Refugee Office, 2003) This number rises to 618 when including refugees from NGO active lists. The survey identified an additional individual to bring the total to 619.

As a receiver of asylum seekers and a host of refugees, Romania has the obligation under national and international law to provide refugees with certain economic and social rights on the same level as Romanian citizens. This is essentially an obligation to integrate refugees so that they can sustain themselves at a level on par with nationals and participate in the cultural life of the country. Providing international protection implies that refugees have access to a material standard that meets their needs and dignity. As a middle income transitional country, Romania has not been able to meet these standards during the entire period from 1991 to the present.

International and European instruments require that Romania provide refugees with social assistance (minimum guaranteed standards), the right to work, health care, and social security (insurance, pension, etc.) on the same level as these are provided to nationals. These standards are legally guaranteed, but in Romania there is a difference between the guarantees of the law, and what is accessible in practice. In addition, the question remains of whether the minimum guarantees of the law are sufficient to provide for integration in the context considered.

Romania is also required to provide refugees certain standards and integration services under European instruments, acceded to in the process of integrating into European structures. Romanian incorporation into Western European organizations may increase economic growth and stabilize policy making and implementation. This will increase the country's ability to integrate registered refugees and presumably the number of recognized refugees will stabilize and grow.

In addition, government, NGO, and UNHCR practice may help or hinder refugee integration. While the government has certain international standards in place in the national law, refugee integration law has never been fully implemented. Certain integration practices are inaccessible, such as Romanian language training provided by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the National Refugee Office (NRO). The material support given to refugees by the government may not be sufficient for basic needs. The minimum support granted to refugees through the social services network, on the same level with nationals, is 600,000 lei a month, roughly 20 USD. This amount is

below the international poverty standard of one dollar a day. NGO support is meant to supplement government programs for these reasons. However, the main refugee assisting NGO in Bucharest served 361 refugees in 2002, only 60% of the refugee population. Is this lack of coverage due to successful refugee integration, lack of access to NGO services (e.g. living outside of Bucharest), or a combination of the two?

Special needs of refugees given socio-economic country conditions

Romanian economic and political stability makes attaining and sustaining economic self-sufficiency difficult for nationals themselves. The gross domestic product per capita (purchasing power parity) in 2001 was 6,980 USD. (World Bank, 2003) Between 1987 and 2000, 21.5% of the population lived below the national poverty line. Between 1983 and 2000, 27.5% lived below $2 per day. (United Nations Development Programme, 2002) Potential for refugee integration into Romanian society is limited by these economic conditions. The extent to which Romania is economically able to absorb refugees and provide a structure for integration is determined to a great degree by Romania's status as a transit country.

Romania as a country of transit

Since 1991, Romania has become a corridor through which to enter Western Europe for all types of migrants. Many asylum seekers have applied for refugee status in Romania and then left, presumably for other European countries. Refugees have received status in Romania and also moved on to other countries. Therefore, between 1991 and 2002, Romania remained a country of origin for asylum seekers, became a country of asylum, and became a transit country on a longer migration to the West.

Refugee migration can be analyzed in the classic push-and-pull framework. The push of migration for asylum seekers is quite clear and is defined in the 1951 Convention. The pull to new countries may correspond with lures for all migrants: economic opportunity and social networks. Refugee migration takes place under extreme circumstances and often refugees do not have the opportunity or knowledge to act within such a rational choice framework. Nonetheless, migratory pull is at work on refugees, and therefore integration efforts have to counterbalance the perceived benefit of leaving and refugees' ability to do so.

Although Romania has granted over 1,700 asylum seekers the rights to refugee and complementary status, less than a third of those who received status are estimated to remain in Romania. This is most likely due to the push of poverty and instability in Romania and the attraction of greater economic opportunities in other Western countries.

Refugee integration as a durable solution

UNHCR facilitates three durable solutions for refugees, in order of preference: return to the refugee's country of origin if circumstances allow, integration into the country of asylum, and resettlement to a third country if such integration is impossible. (UNHCR, 2003) As a country of asylum, the UNHCR durable solution pursued in Romania is integration. UNHCR's role here since 1991 has evolved from direct support to refugees to advocacy in the evolution of government policy and supporting refugee integration through NGO partners.

The country did not have national legislation in place on the processing of asylum claims and the treatment of registered refugees until May 1996. Between 1991 and 1996, asylum procedures and refugee law operated under government Decision No.417/1991. The decision granted nine months of material support and shelter with a possibility for extension to registered refugees. This decision was never fully put into practice before it was superseded. Between 1991 and 1994, the Government of Romania hosted roughly one hundred asylum seekers and registered refugees at the Gociu accommodation center in Bucharest. In 1995, the government ended its support at Gociu, and UNHCR took over its management through 1998. The government never implemented the financial element of its package, and UNHCR provided monthly financial support of 60 USD to refugees and asylum seekers.

In 1995, an additional government decision granted registered refugees the right to the same social assistance package as Romanian citizens. This would provide minimum support to unemployed persons. Social insurance packages that include pension, disability, and health care were not available to refugees at this time because they were not receiving work permits.

The Government of Romania enacted asylum and refugee legislation in May 1996. This law placed asylum procedures under the General Directorate of Border Police, Aliens, Migration Issues and Passports in the Ministry of Interior. Refugee status

could be granted for reasons enumerated in the 1951 Convention or for other humanitarian reasons. The status was granted initially for a period of three years with a possibility of a two-year extension. The law guaranteed refugees the same social assistance programs as were available to Romanian citizens. It also provided for work permits, an integration loan, and accommodation, if needed, during the asylum process. In practice, these elements of the law did not begin to phase in until 1998.

During the period between 1996 and 1998, UNHCR maintained its cash assistance program to refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR hosted roughly 200 refugees and asylum seekers at the Gociu accommodation center. In 1998, the Ministry of Interior was supposed to take over the management of Gociu but was not able to assume this responsibility. UNHCR stepped in again with emergency food support. The Government of Romania provided at this time .30 USD per day to asylum seekers not housed in Gociu to pay for accommodation costs. In May 1999, Gociu was closed, and UNHCR provided three months of rent to vulnerable cases.

In 1998, refugees received work permits, and in July the Government of Romania disbursed reimbursable loans to half of the registered refugee families based on written applications. Loan amounts were set to equal the minimum wage. Due to budgetary constraints, the loan amounts have always been reduced from the actual minimum wage. Although a refugee can not receive social assistance and the loan at the same time, the loan provides a greater amount of support. The social assistance amount at this time was 26 USD per month for a family of four, while the loans provided 15 USD per person. The loan scheme is extra support given to refugees outside of the social support system for Romanian nationals. This is not required by the 1951 Convention, but is considered a good practice by UNHCR in the Central and Eastern European region. The problem with the program is that it is in loan form and not a grant. Although the government began informing refugees of how much they owed in 2000, no refugee has yet been billed or paid back any loan.

In 1998, anticipating the loan program, UNHCR monetary support became conditional on the length of stay in country, work status, participation in courses, etc. The work permits gave refugees who worked legally access to the social insurance system. However, access to medical insurance through this system was a problem until

1999. In 1999, refugee families began to receive a child support for children over 7 in school.

In 2000, the Government of Romania passed a new law on asylum procedures and refugee status (see Annex 2). This law assigns the responsibility for assessing asylum cases and all refugee policy to the NRO under the Ministry of Interior. The three-year time limit on refugee status was removed. Accelerated procedures were created for asylum seekers arriving in border areas without documentation or a visa. Refugee status under the 2000 law is granted for reasons outlined in the 1951 Convention. Other humanitarian cases are granted a separate status, Persons under Complementary Humanitarian Protection[4]. Persons with this status are not granted the additional considerations given to those with refugee status. Through 2002, Persons under Complementary Humanitarian Protection (PUCs) were issued the same identification documents as refugees, and so for the purposes of international travel, the split in status did not affect PUCs. Currently, PUCs are issued separate travel documents. The 2000 law also limits the time that asylum seekers may be held in a confined accommodation center. Previously, some asylum seekers were held at the Otopeni Airport center for deportations contrary to international standards. The 2000 law eliminated this practice.

In 2000, the Government of Romania opened the Gociu accommodation center for asylum seekers in a new location, refurbished with UNHCR financial support. Registered refugees received just less than one US dollar per day in social assistance. The loan scheme continued. UNHCR discontinued its direct material support to refugees and asylum seekers, and that function passed to non-governmental organization implementing partners. In 2001, the NRO opened the Stolnicu accommodation center, also refurbished with UNHCR cooperation. Stolnicu is equipped to house up to 900 refugees after they receive status for a period of nine months. The refugee housing was, until 2002, reserved for vulnerable cases: families with single parents, families with many children, people with health problems, the elderly, etc. Because Stolnicu is can not currently filled with such cases, asylum seekers are also accommodated at the center.

[4] Unless otherwise specified, the use of the term refugee here refers to both recognized refugees and persons under complementary humanitarian status.

In 2001, the government issued a decision to create an integration program through the NRO. This program should deal with language training, housing, employment, and cultural orientation. It is run in cooperation with related ministries, e.g. the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor, etc. Budgetary and bureaucratic restraints have so far minimized the impact of this program. Currently, six refugees participate. However, the government is now drafting a new law on refugee integration that will expand the role of the NRO in integration services. The new law is expected to be in place for 2004.

Several current practices have a negative impact on opportunities for refugee integration. Labor contracts have recently increased requirements for documentation on identity and education. As many refugees do not have and are not able to obtain certain documents, this limits access to the formal labor market and the social insurance system. An additional problem is the requirement of citizenship for certain professions. For instance, a doctor must be a citizen to practice medicine in Romania. Even foreign citizens trained in country are not able to practice medicine.

Refugees must update their residence registration with the authorities once every six months. Romanian citizens may register with a *commodation* contract, a legal contract without the requirement of rent. Prior to 2002, refugees could also register with this form of contract. Refugees are now required to have a rental contract for registration. This requirement is more expensive for refugees and displaced many when it was introduced.

Refugees must apply for the loan scheme within two months of receiving protected status. However, for purposes of family reunification, people may apply for refugee status at the Romanian embassy in their country of origin. UNHCR considers this a good practice, as family reunification is an important principle in refugee law. In certain cases this status has been granted and the two months passed before the refugees have arrived in Romania, thus making them ineligible for the increased financial assistance upon their arrival.

Finally, while the 1951 Convention guarantees refugees the right to access primary education at the same standards as nationals, Romania also guarantees secondary education. Refugees are, however, required to pay for university education as foreign

citizens. This cost has been prohibitive and so opportunities in higher education is limited.

UNHCR has three implementing partners in Romania, and each deals with refugee integration in some way. The primary NGO serving refugees is the Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants, ARCA. ARCA provides individual case counseling for refugees on housing, legal matters, vocational training, and employment. They also give psychological referrals and can facilitate access to a doctor. ARCA disperses additional cash support to refugees in need. In 2002, 361 refugees accessed services at ARCA.

Save the Children, Romania, *Salvați Copiii*, works with refugee children to oversee the educational mainstreaming process. Salvați Copiii also locates guardians for separated children. Romania saw an influx of such cases from Afghanistan in 2001, and Salvați Copiii has greatly increased their capacity to deal with such cases since that time. In 2002, Salvați Copiii served 55 refugee children and appointed 20 guardians for separated children. 120 children participated in recreational activities. Finally, the Romanian National Council for Refugees – CNRR deals generally with asylum seekers. However, it is also active in rural refugee integration, providing a comprehensive family settlement program in rural Romania. In 2002, seven families, 22 refugees, were settled in rural areas through this program.

What is integration?

To what end are these efforts applied? How is integration defined by practitioners? Integration is an issue of increasing importance for Europe as the European Union expands eastwards and the region attracts more migrants from around the world.

Integration is both a material and a psychological process. It refers to a migrant's ability to support him or herself materially and to feel a sense of belonging in the host society. It is often considered a multi-generational process. Integration is profoundly impacted by the refugee experience. Many refugees face additional challenges to integrate caused by the experience of forced migration. The psychological impact of being a refugee increases the difficulty of integrating into a new society. The prolonged uncertainty of the asylum seeking process can in itself form an obstacle.

The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) defines integration as "dynamic and two - way," demanding that the refugee is willing to adapt to the new society, and that the state is prepared to accept refugees on an equal footing with nationals and facilitate their integration process. Furthermore, refugee integration is "long term" and "multi-dimensional." The process begins during the asylum-seeking phase and often extends into subsequent generations. It is complete "when a refugee becomes an active member of that society from a legal, social, economic and cultural point of view." This does not mean that a refugee looses his or her own distinct cultural identity, regardless of the host country's approach to incorporating migrants. (ECRE, 2002) Important features of refugee integration are the primary responsibility of the state, the role of NGOs and IGOs, the general attitude of the society towards migrants and minorities, refugee participation in designing integration policies and practices, and the importance of age and gender perspectives. (ECRE, 2002)

Generally there have been two integration models at work within Europe: cultural pluralism and assimilation. Cultural pluralistic countries generally seek to allow cultures to co-exist. The assimilation model assumes that minorities will loose their cultural distinctiveness and blend with the majority culture.

In their policy approach to refugee integration, European Union countries have established two models that guide the emerging framework in EU accession countries. Countries with a social democratic history have often developed generous schemes for refugee assistance and integration. One study has found that this may lead to establishing refugee ghettos and a perception that refugees require the assistance due to lack of ability. The study also found that the less developed refugee integration systems of southern Europe may marginalize refugees by not providing for basic needs and increasing the trauma of the initial period after receiving status. (Mestheneos and Ioannidi, 2002 p. 314-5) An ECRE policy guideline for states with special social programs for vulnerable groups recommends mainstreaming refugees into these programs after a short initial period when receiving status. For countries without such programs, ECRE recommends providing for special needs within the mainstream system especially in legal and health issues. (ECRE, 2002)

Romania is among the few countries in the Central and Eastern European region to grant refugees increased financial support beyond what is guaranteed to citizens. Therefore, it may be said, that to the level of economic security of nationals, refugees in Romania have an opportunity to integrate. Romania is developing a social democratic integration policy, but practice is underdeveloped. Practice now resembles the Southern democratic minimalist approach.

Another element of integration is the public's attitude towards minorities and migrants. Romania has a cultural pluralistic approach to minorities, but has a mixed record in its treatment of some native ethnic groups. While certain minorities are well organized and have been granted language rights and special representation in the lower house of the parliament, the Rroma minority has been occasionally persecuted and generally economically marginalized. Rroma have been the source of Romanians seeking and receiving international protection in Western Europe during the 1990s. These attitudes towards native minorities do not seem to impact the perceptions of refugees in Romania. Generally Romanians seem to lack knowledge and interest about the refugee community. While racial stereotypes persist, a 2001 unpublished poll showed that the negative reaction towards refugees and people of other races or ethnicities was less than towards other marginalized groups within Romanian society. (SIRDO, 2001, p. 24) In the same poll, refugees reported generally positive relations with Romanians. (SIRDO, 2001, p. 10)

Methodology

Key research questions

This research attempts to answer several key questions: What is the demographic makeup of the registered refugee and PUC population in Romania? What is their general standard of living, and how does it compare to standards for Romanian nationals? What are their outstanding needs? What are their experiences accessing governmental and non-governmental services? What are their levels of satisfaction in these services? Are the services adequate to facilitate integration? Do refugees feel integrated?

This research attempted to answer the above questions by surveying refugees and persons with complementary humanitarian protection. (See Annex 3, for the survey form in Romanian and English.) The same survey form was used for every refugee contacted. The survey was limited to adults and youths over the age of fourteen. Questions were not limited to heads of households but applied to every member of a family over that age. Both refugees and PUCs were surveyed. The project results are two-fold: the first type of result returned through completed surveys. The second result is to verify refugee presence at their declared addresses. This result yields information on the stability of the refugee population and has implications for Romania as a transit country.

Survey Preparation

The survey form was written in English and translated into Romanian by a native speaker. The form was drafted after examining a similar study done in the Czech Republic (UNHCR, 2000) and a literature review on refugee integration in European countries. The language was then reviewed by the student volunteer team and their professor from the University of Bucharest. (See more below on volunteer training.)

The lead researcher, Ms. Katherine Collin, obtained the list of refugees who had renewed their identification papers with the NRO in the last six months. This document should be the complete list of refugees maintaining legal status in Romania. Addresses were verified by ARCA case workers and by the CNRR social program and phone numbers were provided when available. The NRO list included 602 individuals and the NGO client lists added sixteen individuals to this number. An additional refugee was identified during the course of the research.

UNHCR partner cooperation and consultation

The lead researcher attempted to hold meetings with each of UNHCR's implementing partners and the NRO in order to inform them of the project and ask for any methodological input. On 3 April, Ms. Collin met with Mr. Radu Mircea, of the NRO's refugee integration program at the Stolnicu accommodation center. Mr. Mircea subsequently facilitated UNHCR access to the list of refugees' contact information. The draft survey was also shared with Mr. Mircea during this period (14 April). On 11 April, the lead researcher met with Ms. Gabriela Dobru. Ms. Dobru manages the refugee programs for Salvați Copiii. Ms. Dobru suggested limiting applying the questionnaire to individuals above fourteen years old and to include certain questions on children's education as both a measurement of integration and an indication of population stability. On 15 April and again on 23 April, Ms. Collin met with Ms. Gina Ilie, head of the social and rural integration programs for CNRR. The survey was discussed and a study from CNRR on refugee women was shared for methodological consideration. Ms. Ilie subsequently facilitated the recruitment of qualified volunteers to participate in the survey through CNRR's social clinic training program with the University of Bucharest Faculty of Social Work. The CNRR social department also updated the contact information of refugees participating in the rural integration program. Although two meetings were scheduled with the acting executive director of ARCA (23 April and 13 May), due to the director's invoked scheduling conflicts, these meetings did not take place. Instead, the survey draft was shared (12 May) via e-mail with the ARCA director, and formal and informal meetings were held with the refugee counselors implementing the program. The first such scheduled meeting was on 15 April with Mr. Cristian Vasile. Further meetings were held informally with Ms. Luciana Lazarescu to discuss methodological concerns and to introduce Ms. Collin to a potential volunteer researcher during the week of 12 – 16 May. ARCA social counselors also provided updated refugee contact information requested by Ms. Collin during the week of 12 – 16 May subsequent to a telephone request from Mrs. Liliana Ionescu, the UNHCR Programme Officer, on 22 May. The aid from the NGOs and NRO was invaluable to the study. Without the cooperation and support offered the research would not have been possible.

The Volunteer Research Team

The volunteer research team applied the survey by contacting and interview refugees. Volunteers were students at CNRR's social clinic program. Every student had prior experience working with asylum seekers and had received academic training on social work with refugees. Ms. Collin trained the social work students for survey implementation on 9 May. Training emphasized the confidentiality of all information and the sensitive nature of the work and information gathered. In addition to the lead researcher, Ms. Ilie, Mrs. Ionescu, and Ms. Smaranda Witec, the social clinic professor at the University of Bucharest. The students reviewed the Romanian language translation and made several suggestions for changes which were implemented. Every student signed a confidentiality contract specific to the project (see Annex 3 for confidentiality agreement, student briefing materials, and the list of participating students).

The student volunteers worked in teams of two in order to increase their security. In addition, when selecting addresses, efforts were made to send students to areas of Bucharest known to them. Whenever possible, students made phone contact with refugees prior to visiting addresses. In certain cases, arrangements were made between the volunteers and the refugees to meet at an agreed upon location in central Bucharest.

Volunteers were reimbursed for travel expenses in the form of a monthly subscription to the public transportation system within Bucharest. Students were also provided with a phone code with which they could make calls from any location on pre-paid credit. Both of these expenses were paid from CNRR's social clinic budget. Some of the students applied their research experience toward the practicum element of their study program with the permission of Professor Witec.

Case Selection

Refugees living in Bucharest

Refugees were divided into four groups, each with a slightly different applied methodology. The first and largest group included refugees living in Bucharest. For this group, volunteer students were recruited to apply the survey.

Student volunteers were given a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers (when available) each week for four weeks from 19 May through 17 June. The lists generally included no more than twenty individuals, and were returned to the lead

researcher in order to maintain confidentiality of contact information. The volunteer teams met Ms. Collin at the UNHCR office on a weekly basis to turn in completed surveys and the previous week's contact list, provide an update of any other information, and to collect the assignment for the following week.

The results returned to Ms. Collin from these teams fell into three categories: refugees who completed surveys, refugees whose presence at their declared address could be confirmed, and refugees who were not present at their declared address or whose declared address was nonexistent. Completed surveys form the data set presented here. The second and third categories of response measure population stability.

Refugees in NRO/NGO provided housing

The second group of refugees within Bucharest is comprised of those living in housing provided by the NRO and by the Jesuit Refugee Service. JRS provides a dormitory for single men at its office site and own two apartments in which it houses families for up to a year. JRS concentrates its activities on PUCs and other categories of migrants without refugee status, while the NRO Stolnicu center is available for certain categories of recognized refugees only for up to nine months. Arrangements were made to visit the JRS dormitory and one apartment with the assistance of the accommodation manager on 14 May with one student volunteer team, Ms. Collin, and an additional UNHCR student intern, Ms. Alina Oprea. While JRS houses up to 37 migrants, a very limited number are PUCs and therefore fall into a category of concern for UNHCR Romania. Eight individuals were surveyed.

Access to refugees at Stolnicu was more limited. Initial arrangements for applying the survey at Stolnicu were postponed by the NRO on 15 May. The visit there did not take place until 4 July with the lead researcher. Four families were surveyed.

Refugees in villages

The third category of refugees surveyed were those living outside of Bucharest in villages or small cities. These refugees were sent the survey form, a return envelope with postage paid, and a letter requesting their participation and clarifying the voluntary and confidential nature of the research from Mrs. Ionescu (see Annex 4). Letters were registered with the post office and required a signature for delivery. The delivery receipt was returned to the UNHCR office in order to track the number of refugees that received

the survey and therefore whose addresses are correct. In this way, the same three categories of response are guaranteed: completed surveys, verified addresses, incorrect or non-existent addresses.

Out of Bucharest addresses were reviewed by CNRR and compared against ARCA client lists. Forty- two surveys were mailed in this case grouping. At the time of writing, forty responses were received: sixteen confirmed addresses, fourteen completed surveys, and ten incorrect or nonexistent addresses.

Refugees in Iaşi, Timişoara, and Cluj-Napoca

The fourth category of selected cases is comprised of refugees living in larger groups in cities outside of Bucharest. According to NRO and NGO information, there are eleven refugees in Timişoara, thirteen in Iaşi, and nine in Cluj-Napoca. The Ms. Collin visited these cities to apply the survey. An introductory letter was sent from Mrs. Ionescu to inform them to expect the visit. (See Annex 4) Out of thirty-four refugees, nineteen addresses were incorrect or nonexistent. Seven addresses were confirmed, and seven surveys were completed. At confirmed addresses, surveys were left for refugees to complete and return to UNHCR and contact information for Ms. Collin was included. One refugee registered in Iaşi called UNHCR in response to the introductory letter to leave an updated address in Bucharest. See Annex 4 for copies of some trip receipts.

Potential problems with methodology and solutions

Several methodological problems were anticipated by the lead researcher, and the following measures were taken in order to best insure against these problems.

Language barriers

It was an assumption at the beginning of the course of the research that many refugees would not be able to respond to questions due to limitations in Romanian language. This assumption was confirmed by Ms. Luciana Lazarescu at ARCA who informed Ms. Collin that roughly twenty percent of her clients did not speak enough Romanian to respond appropriately to such a survey.

Several solutions to this problem were considered including recruiting refugees to act as interpreters with the student volunteers or providing translations of the survey form in common refugee native languages. The problem with providing in person translation

is the violation of confidentiality. Translating the survey form would be effective for literate refugees but not for those illiterate or not literate in a dominant refugee language.

The solutions applied were to recruit student volunteers who were bilingual in at least English and Romanian to increase their ability to explain questions and interview in another language. In addition, family members were used to provide interpretation. While there is still a problem with confidentiality, it is reduced by maintaining intra-familial privacy. Most often this interpretation was provided by children for their parents, a form of translation available on a home visit but not accessible to ARCA social counselors at their office. Family members were always given a choice to not participate rather than use this style of interpretation. Student volunteers reported no problems either with parents reluctant to use children for interpretation for privacy's sake or with encounters with families in which no member could provide adequate interpretation.

Hostile refugees

Given the generally insecure backgrounds of refugees, hostility towards researchers visiting homes was expected. One solution to this problem would have been to use persons well known to refugees to apply the survey, e.g. NGO staff or volunteers. This solution was rejected in favor of more unknown researchers in order to protect confidentiality and encourage the refugees to speak freely in questions relating to NGO performance.

Several solutions were applied to this potential problem. Student volunteers always worked in teams and never visited a residence alone. Researchers also called in advance whenever a phone number was provided to establish a meeting and explain the nature of the visit. Finally, the optional nature of participation was stressed to the volunteers and in turn stressed to every individual participating in the research.

The result of these precautions was that no researcher was ever in a threatening or hostile environment. In general refugees who did not wish to participate would avoid phone calls or set meetings that they would not attend. This was a form of passive avoidance that is acceptable to the research team.

Questions to ARCA from nervous refugees

However, there were several refugees who contacted UNHCR and ARCA with questions about the survey. From the cases out of Bucharest case group, two refugees

called UNHCR for details and one wrote a letter to the lead researcher describing his situation in advance of the visit. Another man visited UNHCR and ARCA after receiving the letter to inform the research team that he was now residing in Bucharest. One refugee from the mailing group called Ms. Collin to ask questions about filling in the survey.

A small number of refugees who were contacted by the student volunteers were confused and concerned about the purpose of the research and why they had been contacted. To the knowledge of the researcher, two refugees contacted ARCA with these concerns and one took an additional step to contact UNHCR after speaking with Mr. Cristian Vasile at ARCA. In both cases, these refugees had been contacted by student volunteers to request an interview. The lead researcher consulted the volunteers about these cases on the day of their contact to ARCA. In both cases, the student had expressed the confidential and voluntary nature of the participation and that all information was gathered for research purposes only. Both individuals subsequently made appointments with the student volunteer team but did not appear at these meetings. ARCA reports up to eleven such cases, but did not bring these additional individuals to the attention of the lead researcher when each occurred.

Legal barriers with sharing contact information

These cases brought a legal concern to the attention of ARCA staff that was subsequently raised with UNHCR in an e-mail of 12 June. ARCA was apprehensive that the contact information provided by the NRO and ARCA may have been illegal for these organizations to share with UNHCR. In sensitivity to this problem, Ms. Collin suspended research in the first case group, as all individuals in other groups had been contacted already or did not have potentially confidential residency information. This was the only unforeseen methodological problem, which might have been avoided if ARCA had brought these concerns to light before the research was under way.

Results

Refugees Contacted and Survey Respondents

The list of refugees maintaining legal residency with the government contains 602 people. With NGO contacts added, this total comes to 618 registered refugees. From this number, the project contacted 320 individuals, 52%. Included in this 52% are all refugees living outside of Bucharest. Of the 320, the largest group, 35%, is Iraqi. Other large groups are from Iran, Congo[5], Palestine, Turkey, Afghanistan, and former Yugoslav countries.

[5] The National Refugee Office material provided does not make a distinction between Congo-Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of Congo. When "Congo" is used here in reference to NRO materials it applies to both countries. The distinction is made in discussion of survey respondents. "Zaire" is also included because of data of entry into Romania and the preferences of some refugees.

Figure 1: Country of origin of all contacted[6]

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Iraq	114	35.5	35.5	35.5
	Iran	25	7.8	7.8	43.3
	Congo, DRC	22	6.9	6.9	50.2
	Palestine	20	6.2	6.2	56.4
	Turkey	20	6.2	6.2	62.6
	Afghanistan	17	5.3	5.3	67.9
	Yugoslavia	16	5.0	5.0	72.9
	Somalia	16	5.0	5.0	77.9
	Sudan	14	4.4	4.4	82.2
	Sierra-Leone	11	3.4	3.4	85.7
	Cameroon	8	2.5	2.5	88.2
	Syria	6	1.9	1.9	90.0
	Egypt	5	1.6	1.6	91.6
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	4	1.2	1.2	92.8
	Sri Lanka	4	1.2	1.2	94.1
	Libya	3	.9	.9	95.0
	Rwanda	2	.6	.6	95.6
	Guinea	2	.6	.6	96.3
	Armenia	1	.3	.3	96.6
	Albania	1	.3	.3	96.9
	Congo-Brazzaville	1	.3	.3	97.2
	Cuba	1	.3	.3	97.5
	Pakistan	1	.3	.3	97.8
	Zaire	1	.3	.3	98.1
	Nigeria	1	.3	.3	98.4
	Mauritius	1	.3	.3	98.8
	Chechnya	1	.3	.3	99.1
	Israel	1	.3	.3	99.4
	Algeria	1	.3	.3	99.7
	Without citizenship	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

From this group, 56.1%, or 180 individuals were confirmed in the country. This is a representative rate, indicating that up to 4.4 in 10 of the refugee population has an unstable residence over this short period of measurement. For those that could not be located, the "not found" description applies to a number of possible circumstances: those who are registered at non-existent addresses; those registered at addresses at which they

have not been resident for a significant period of time – longer than the six month period applicable to the statistics; and those who have moved within the six month period. Therefore this includes those refugees who are intentionally registering with in-valid addresses and those who are legitimately moving and have yet to update their whereabouts to the NRO or ARCA. In addition, this number includes those who are confirmed to have left the country and those who are moving within the country. This information is gathered from neighbors, apartment bloc administrators, and others at the location of declared addresses. Because these sources of information are impossible to verify, this category has not been refined beyond "not found." Therefore, the survey confirms the view of the refugee population as unstable, but goes on to identify several factors that predict stability.

Figure 2: Case status of all contacted

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not found	141	43.9	43.9	43.9
	found, not participating	75	23.4	23.4	67.3
	complete form	72	22.4	22.4	89.7
	child	33	10.3	10.3	100.0
	Total	321	100.0	100.0	

Population Demographics

Of those confirmed at their declared addresses, 72 participated in the research. 75 chose not to participate, and 33 were children under the age of 14. This is a total of 180 individuals confirmed in the country, or 29.1% of the 618 refugees in the original list.

Of those that completed the survey, again the largest percentage, 33.3%, are from Iraq. Other well represented countries of origin are Palestine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, former Yugoslav countries, and Iran. The majority, 54.1%, of respondents are from the Middle East, including Afghanistan. 16.8% are from European countries of origin, and 27.9% are African. Religious groups are spread throughout these regions, with Christians and Muslims coming from each of these three groupings.

Figure 3: Country of origin of survey respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Iraq	24	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Palestine	7	9.7	9.7	43.1
	Congo, DRC	7	9.7	9.7	52.8
	Iran	5	6.9	6.9	59.7
	Turkey	4	5.6	5.6	65.3
	Sierra-Leone	4	5.6	5.6	70.8
	Somalia	4	5.6	5.6	76.4
	Yugoslavia	3	4.2	4.2	80.6
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3	4.2	4.2	84.7
	Cameroon	3	4.2	4.2	88.9
	Egypt	1	1.4	1.4	90.3
	Syria	1	1.4	1.4	91.7
	Afghanistan	1	1.4	1.4	93.1
	Armenia	1	1.4	1.4	94.4
	Albania	1	1.4	1.4	95.8
	Congo-Brazzaville	1	1.4	1.4	97.2
	Sudan	1	1.4	1.4	98.6
	Cuba	1	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Many refugees were minorities in their countries of origin, such as Kurdish Turks and Iraqis, and Armenian and Catholic Iraqis. A closer examination of native languages reflects the internal diversity of countries of origin, for instance the Kurdish native speakers far outnumber Turkish speakers. Kurdish is the native language of nearly 10% of the respondents.

Figure 4: Native language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Arabic	28	38.9	38.9	38.9
	French	10	13.9	13.9	52.8
	Kurdish	7	9.7	9.7	62.5
	Serbo-Croatian	6	8.3	8.3	70.8
	Other: Creole, other African, Catholic Iraqi	5	6.9	6.9	77.8
	Armenian	4	5.6	5.6	83.3
	English	3	4.2	4.2	87.5
	Somali	3	4.2	4.2	91.7
	Farsi	3	4.2	4.2	95.8
	Albanian	1	1.4	1.4	97.2
	Turkish	1	1.4	1.4	98.6
	Spanish	1	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

The majority of respondents is Islamic, but this is not an overwhelming majority.

Figure 5: Religion

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Islam	37	51.4	51.4	51.4
	Christian	30	41.7	41.7	93.1
	other: Zoroastrian, Ateu . . .	2	2.8	2.8	95.8
	no response	3	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

84.7% of respondents were registered refugees and 15.3% were persons with complementary humanitarian protection.

Family Structure

Males were a large majority of respondents: 6.5 in 10. Men are also far more likely to be separated from family groups. While many men have married Romanian women or remain single, the only two single women not living with their mothers were living with other women from their country of origin in a family-like situation. Men are also more likely to be childless.

Figure 6: Sex and marital status cross tabulation

Count

		marital status					
		single	married	divorced	widowed	no response	Total
sex	male	19	24	2	1	1	47
	female	7	14	1	3	0	25
Total		26	38	3	4	1	72

Figure 7: Sex and nationality of spouse cross tabulation

		nationality of spouse		
		same as spouse	Romanian	Total
sex	male	7	18	25
	female	17	0	17
Total		24	18	42

Average family size for Romanians is between 3 and 4 persons per household. (UNDP, 2002) Refugee families' average size is 3.8 persons per household, with and average of 1.9 children. 23.5% reporting having no children. 16.2% report a family size of 1 or 2. 23.6% reported living with members outside the nuclear family. In general this was one or two elderly family members.

Of families with school aged children, only one family refused to specify the amount of time taken to mainstream the children into Romanian schools. This case would indicate that the children may not be in school, although in this case the average mainstreaming delay had elapsed since receiving refugee status. Not mainstreaming eligible children is an impediment to the individual's and family's integration, since children are often first to master the language and culture. The choice to keep children out of school, a free and mandatory service for refugees, may indicate intention to migrate further or very poor integration.

For those families that had mainstreamed their children, many indicated no delay in integrating their children, 45.5%. These children were either born in Romania or came of school age while in country. 40.9% reported a one year delay in mainstreaming their children, and 13.6% reported more than a year delay. While this percentage is low, it is still significant and may be an area for further examination.

Education and Employment in Country of Origin

The education level among refugees is fairly high. 44.4% have university education, and only 2.8% are without any formal schooling. Iraqis tend to be the most educated, with the greatest percentage of those with university education. Those from Congo-Brazzaville and DR of Congo are also highly educated. The only respondents without formal education come from Turkey (of Kurdish ethnicity) and Sudan. 53.2% of men have a university background, compared to 28% of women. All men who responded to the survey had some level of education. There is a statistically significant correlation (Chi-Square value of 0.03) between sex and the level of education when education grouped in the manner described below. Men are likely to have a higher level of education than women within this population.

Figure 8: Education level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary	7	9.7	9.7	9.7
	Gymnasium	10	13.9	13.9	23.6
	Secondary	21	29.2	29.2	52.8
	University	32	44.4	44.4	97.2
	no schooling	2	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Figure 9: Education level and sex cross tabulation

		sex		Total
		male	female	
education recode	No schooling	0	2	2
	Primary through secondary	22	16	38
	University	25	7	32
Total		47	25	72

Education level had minimal impact on the employment status within Romania. Although none without formal education are currently working, 34.4% of those with university education were unemployed.

Prior to arrival in Romania, 45.9% of refugees were employed. This employment was overwhelmingly stable and long-term, with 73.3% of those who had worked in their

country of origin holding positions three years or longer. Only 28% of women worked prior to arrival compared to 55.3% of men.

In Romania, men are much more employed than women, with 28, or 59.6% reporting formal and informal employment. 6 women, or 24%, reported such employment. The correlation between sex and employment is very strong. The Chi-Square significance value for sex when compared with employment status is 0.039. Subsequent to arrival, men have increased their employment while women have decreased their employment rate.

Figure 10: Sex and "are you currently working?" cross tabulation

		are you currently working					
		full time	half time	under the Work Code	not under the Work Code (informal)	not working/no response	Total
sex	male	13	1	6	8	19	47
	female	3	1	0	2	19	25
Total		16	2	6	10	38	72

Household Duty Distribution

These statistics, combined with the fact that women are more often living in a family situation tends to suggest that women are spending more time on household activities. However, while this is confirmed in the survey responses, women's workload in the house has decreased in Romania compared to the countries of origin. Men are more likely to spend up to four hours in household work than women and just as likely to spend up to six hours. Women are more likely to spend seven or more hours on housework, or the equivalent of a full time job. 21.6% of men and only 5% of women reported having no household duties at all. As a group, women have neither increased nor decreased their time spent on household duties more than men.

In addition, 45.9% of men reported no change or less time spent on household duties comparing the country of origin to Romania. Women experienced greater improvement in Romania with 55% reporting no change or fewer duties. The most significant changes to household duty time and distribution are from childcare and clothes washing. Clothes-washing is not an exclusively female duty but is predominately female, especially when marriage status is accounted for. Less time is spent in Romania

on clothes-washing because of greater access to technology compared with some countries of origin in which this was a much more time consuming task. Time spent on childcare decreases for both men and women. This is despite the fact that refugee families continue to have children and it is not uncommon to find children under school age in refugee families. Men are likely to share childcare duties. Anecdotal evidence suggests that for those with increases in household duties this is often due to being cut off from larger family structures.

The Asylum Seeking Process

The average length of time for the asylum seeking procedures is 32.3 months, or nearly three years. The minimum time reported was less than one month, and the maximum time was 116 months: more than nine years. The majority of cases were handled in less than two years. 43.1% in under a year and an additional 12.1% in less than two years. However, a significant percentage of asylum seeking processes lasted much longer, with 24.1% lasting more than five years. 19.4% of refugees who responded to the survey reported coming to Romania for reasons other than seeking asylum. In these cases, the length of stay in Romania before seeking status is not included in these statistics.

Figure 11: Length of asylum seeking process

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 year or less	25	34.7	43.1	43.1
	1-2 years	7	9.7	12.1	55.2
	2-3 years	5	6.9	8.6	63.8
	3-4 years	5	6.9	8.6	72.4
	4-5 years	2	2.8	3.4	75.9
	5-6 years	7	9.7	12.1	87.9
	6-7 years	2	2.8	3.4	91.4
	7-8 years	3	4.2	5.2	96.6
	over 9 years	2	2.8	3.4	100.0
	Total	58	80.6	100.0	
Missing	no response	14	19.4		
Total		72	100.0		

The majority of asylum seekers did not benefit from government accommodation. 66.2% stayed in private accommodation, and 32.4% stayed at Gociu or Stolnicu centers.

14% stayed at Stolnicu for an additional period after receiving status. 37.5% of those who had stayed at Stolnicu are not currently accommodated there.

Figure 12: Accommodation during the asylum seeking process

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Private accommodation	47	65.3	66.2	66.2
	Gociu	15	20.8	21.1	87.3
	Stolnicu	8	11.1	11.3	98.6
	Otopeni	1	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	71	98.6	100.0	
Missing	No response	1	1.4		
Total		72	100.0		

Government and NGO financial support were more relied upon. 38.5% reported this source of support as the most significant during the asylum seeking process. Nearly as many refugees relied on personal savings or earnings. Support from outside of the country appears more significant than unofficial support from Romanian networks. Anecdotal evidence collected suggests that many asylum seekers worked informally while waiting for official status recognition. However, there is no increase in reliance on personal savings for increases in the length of the asylum seeking process.

Figure 13: Financial support during the asylum seeking process

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NRO & NGO	25	34.7	38.5	38.5
	private savings	24	33.3	36.9	75.4
	help from friends & family outside of RO	10	13.9	15.4	90.8
	help from Romanian friends & family	5	6.9	7.7	98.5
	other	1	1.4	1.5	100.0
	Total	65	90.3	100.0	
Missing	no response	7	9.7		
Total		72	100.0		

When asked why the refugee chose to come to Romania, the largest percentage gave a reply that either didn't respond to the question or was unable to be categorized.

33.8% came because of pre-existing connections to Romania through family, friends, business, or most often education. A small but significant percentage, 7.4%, reported being trafficked into the country. These cases were generally trafficked from Istanbul, Turkey. Other participating refugees reported traveling through Istanbul but did not tell a full trafficking story. Therefore, most likely the actual percentage of those trafficked into Romania is higher. Those trafficked into the country do not intend to end up in Romania. Refugees report trying to go to Germany or other countries in Western Europe and not realizing that they have not arrived at these destinations until already in Bucharest.

Most refugees, 81.4%, declared that they would not be willing to return to their countries of origin if circumstances would allow.

Figure 14: Country of origin and attitude toward return cross tabulation

		attitude toward return		Total
		positive	negative	
country of origin	Iraq	3	20	23
	Iran	1	4	5
	Palestine	1	6	7
	Egypt	0	1	1
	Syria	0	1	1
	Afghanistan	0	1	1
	Turkey	0	4	4
	Armenia	0	1	1
	Yugoslavia	2	1	3
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	2	2
	Albania	0	1	1
	Congo-Brazzaville	0	1	1
	Congo, DRC	3	4	7
	Sierra-Leone	2	2	4
	Cameroon	0	3	3
	Somalia	1	3	4
	Sudan	0	1	1
	Cuba	0	1	1
Total		13	57	70

Refugees arrived in Romania uninformed about Romanian asylum practices. 78.6% reported that they were not informed or knew nothing about Romania as a country of asylum. However, respondents now feel more educated on Romanian law, with only 10.8% reporting that they are not informed or know nothing. Respondents also feel more

informed on Romanian law and practice than on asylum and refugee related law internationally or in other European countries. 35.8% replied that they are currently not informed or know nothing about law and practice in other countries. This may be interpreted reflecting the stability of the respondents in Romania. Neither a higher level of knowledge at entry or a current higher level of knowledge correlated with increased integration.

Living Conditions in Romania

Housing

Most refugees surveyed live in a rented apartment. 87.3% live in three rooms or less, and 68.1% live with one to four people. 50.7% have a rental contract, and over a quarter, 26.1%, own their own house or apartment. 62.5% have lived at their residence for at least two years. In general, these statistics indicate that housing conditions for refugees are relatively stable and not overcrowded.

39.1% reported that rent is the largest monthly expense. An equal percent replied that food was the largest expense, and these were mostly accommodation owners and those living at NGO or NRO centers.

Refugees housed by the Jesuit Refugee Service and the NRO live in the most crowded and least secure conditions. As a group, refugees living in villages, outside of Bucharest, Iaşi, Timişoara, and Cluj-Napoca, are the most likely to own their own accommodation and are much more likely to be owners than renters. Refugees in Bucharest are twice as likely to be renters as owners.

Figure 15: Present housing condition

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	house	7	9.7	9.7	9.7
	part of a house	1	1.4	1.4	11.1
	an apartment	49	68.1	68.1	79.2
	Stolnicu	4	5.6	5.6	84.7
	other	11	15.3	15.3	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Employment

Only 47.2% of respondents reported any form of employment. As stated above, 59.6% of men and 24% of women surveyed are employed. Of those who are employed, the majority seems stable, with over half of the positions being held more than four years and only one in ten of the positions held for less than a year. In addition, half have held only one job since receiving status, also implying stability for those that are employed.

Most respondents find their work not at all compatible with their qualifications, 44.1%. A large percent reported employment very compatible with their qualifications, 29.4%. 61.9% think that there are restrictions from finding work compatible with their qualifications. Although most cited reasons such as linguistic restriction, others reported that they experienced reluctance on the part of employers to hire non-Romanians. None cited legal concerns noted in the introduction, but one refugee reported that employers were not familiar enough with refugee law to facilitate finding a position.

Refugees generally found work by themselves, without assistance. The overwhelming majority of those who were assisted to find work did so through informal networks of friends, not through formal programs.

Figure 16: Methods of finding employment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	by yourself	18	25.0	48.6	48.6
	through friends	13	18.1	35.1	83.8
	with NGO aid - ARCA	4	5.6	10.8	94.6
	with NGO aid	2	2.8	5.4	100.0
	Total	37	51.4	100.0	
Missing	no response	35	48.6		
Total		72	100.0		

Of those unemployed, most reported that this is because they simply could not find work.

Figure 17: Reasons for unemployment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	cannot find work	11	15.3	33.3	33.3
	other	10	13.9	30.3	63.6
	cannot find work for my qualifications	5	6.9	15.2	78.8
	I don't wish to work/I am not accustomed to work	4	5.6	12.1	90.9
	I stay at home to watch my children	3	4.2	9.1	100.0
	Total	33	45.8	100.0	
Missing	no response	39	54.2		
Total		72	100.0		

Of those employed, nearly half (47.2%) work informally on the so-called "grey" market. This causes problems in accessing social insurance schemes as discussed below.

Figure 18: Current employment status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not working/no response	38	52.8	52.8	52.8
	full time	16	22.2	22.2	75.0
	not under the Work Code (informal)	10	13.9	13.9	88.9
	under the Work Code	6	8.3	8.3	97.2
	half time	2	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Income

Average salary for the group is between 5 and 6 million lei per month, and average monthly household salary is between 6 and 7 million lei per month, with highs of over 15 million lei per month. Over the year, this means that the average household income for a refugee family is roughly $2,400[7]. This is greater than the Romanian average reported in 2001 at $1,710 with purchasing power parity for this income at $6,980. (World Bank, 2003) However, when taking into consideration that the

measurement for refugees is including income from informal employment, not reflected in the World Bank numbers, the income rates are probably more similar than reflected here. Those with jobs under the Work Code (legal employment) earn on average six to seven million household per month. Those not under the Work Code earn on average a million less per month per household. There is no statistically significant difference in the wage rates for women and men.

Access to Services

Government Services – Schemes for the General Population

As stated above, as a part of international law set in the 1951 Convention, Romania has an obligation to provide refugees with access to the social welfare and social insurance systems. Refugees should have access to the state payments for the unemployed and child benefit payments. Refugees who are working should also have access to the insurance providing pension, workers' compensation for injury, maternity leave, and unemployment. Access to the medical system is also a guaranteed right, and is either accessed through the social insurance system for workers or through social welfare.

Survey respondents have reported accessing some of these provisions, but at a very low rate. No refugee reported accessing insurance for on the job injury. One out of 23 women with children received maternity insurance. One respondent had received unemployment. 11% had received social welfare.

Four out of ten respondents reported problems accessing the medical care system. Half of those who reported working under the Work Code and those working half time had trouble with the medical system. Four out of ten that work full time, and legally, have the same difficulties. Those who should be automatically insured with their work card more frequently report these problems than those working informally without insurance. Seven in ten of those not under the Work Code report no problems with the medical system. The fact that this problem does not conform to expectations indicates that closer attention needs to be paid to its causes.

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[7] Assuming that 78,000,000 lei is the projected annual income and converting to USD at a rate of 32,500 lei to the dollar.

There are two general problems for refugees in accessing medical care. The first is that the government often requires back payments of insurance from refugee families to be covered by medical insurance, even while working legally and therefore paying into the insurance system. This expense is prohibitive in most cases. This may explain why those with insurance have a worse time accessing medical care than those without. The second problem is that the medical insurance system for the unemployed has limited services. Research teams spoke to several refugees who had medical conditions the treatment for which would not be insured. It should be noted that many refugees reported that the insurance system functions better for children and that while they could not access services they were able to find treatment for those under eighteen.

This is a widespread problem in the refugee community. Half of those who reported problems with medical care stated that these problems had not been resolved. 4.5% stated that ARCA had helped them to resolve such problems and 9.1% had received similar aid from CNRR. 27.3% resolved the problem with the help of friends or other informal networks.

Government Services – Refugee Specific Assistance

Romania provides a reimbursable loan to refugees with newly recognized status. As stated above, this plan was phased into practice in 1998 for unemployed or underemployed refugee families. While many refugees did reply that they began working at the same time they received status, the majority of refugees are eligible to receive the loan if they apply for it within two months of receiving refugee status. The loan is not available to persons with humanitarian protection.

71% of refugees (registered refugees only) did not receive the reimbursable loan. Of those who did receive it, the highest rate was in the collective centers. This is appropriate, because the centers also have the highest unemployment rate and the lowest income rate. The only case group that was seriously under covered for the loan was the mailing group. The mailing group has a monthly salary in the range of those for the Bucharest and out of Bucharest groups. 42.9% of the mailing group are unemployed, but only 8.3% received the loan.

The other refugee specific service provided by the NRO is accommodation of vulnerable cases at the Stolnicu center. PUCs may not access this service. 6.6% of

eligible respondents currently reside at the center. 20% stated that they had stayed there at some point. Given the fact that the center has opened only recently and is currently not at full occupancy, it seems that this service has a wide spread impact on the refugee population. However, none of the refugees living outside of Bucharest were ever accommodated at the Stolnicu center.

NGO Services – UNHCR implementing partners

UNHCR implementing partners guide asylum seekers through the legal process of status recognition, facilitate refugee access to services, and provide services themselves. This survey did not seek to identify which specific projects refugees participated in, but rather to enquire if refugees had ever received aid in certain broad categories and if so, from which organization and whether such service was to their satisfaction. These broad categories are: legal aid, material aid, medical aid, housing aid, and employment aid. Questions were also asked regarding Romanian language training, vocational training, and citizenship test preparation. There are no restrictions to accessing these services for refugees or PUCs, but refugees need to fit eligibility criteria for some available services.

42% of survey respondents had taken a Romanian language course offered by an NGO. Of those who did not take a course, one third claimed that they did not know that such a course was available. Survey respondents reported that the most effective way to learn Romanian was by communicating with Romanians, followed by school (other than NGO classes), media, and finally NGO courses.

A low number of respondents replied that they had received vocational training. 9.1% had had some form of training, 4.5% aided by CNRR.

Each of the five categories of services questions was accompanied by a degree of satisfaction question. These were identical five point scale questions with the following wording: "Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Not Very Satisfied, and Dissatisfied." In general, few respondents receive aid from NGOs. This makes the satisfaction ratings from those who did access services the least statistically representative portion of the survey results.

However, larger rates of refugees access material and legal aid services. Satisfaction ratings in these categories will be statistically reliable. 70.5% reported

themselves "Not Very Familiar" or "Not at All Familiar" with available services, and only 12.5% stated that accessing services is "Easy" or "Very Easy."

Averaged between each category, one in ten (1.03) respondents received aid from ARCA. Nearly one in ten (.96) received aid from CNRR. The Jesuit Refugee Service is also active in housing and material aid. In housing services, JRS and the NRO were more active than the UNHCR partners. The level of satisfaction in general for housing services was spread evenly at 20 – 26% for each level of satisfaction between not at all satisfied and very satisfied. Respondents for ARCA services were satisfied or somewhat satisfied. Respondents for CNRR services were placed more in the extremes. JRS also received mixed satisfaction reports, and the NRO services were well reviewed.

Figure 19: Received aid in resolving housing problems and "were you satisfied with this service?" cross tabulation

		were you satisfied with this service				
		very satisfied	satisfied	somewhat satisfied	not at all satisfied	Total
received aid in resolving housing problems	no	0	0	0	1	1
	from ARCA	0	1	1	0	2
	from CNRR	1	0	1	1	3
	from JRS	2	1	2	0	5
	from NRO	1	1	0	0	2
	no	0	0	0	2	2
Total		4	3	4	4	15

Note: the fourth degree, "not very satisfied" receives no replied and does not appear here.
Two "No" categories appear: the first signifies forms marked no service received. The second signifies form not marked.

Fewer people reported receiving aid in finding work. Satisfaction results are again spread between all categories and between ARCA and CNRR.

Figure 20: Received aid in finding work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	35	48.6	81.4	81.4
	from ARCA	4	5.6	9.3	90.7
	from CNRR	4	5.6	9.3	100.0
	Total	43	59.7	100.0	
Missing	no response	29	40.3		
Total		72	100.0		

Figure 21: Received aid in finding work and "were you satisfied with this service?" cross tabulation

		were you satisfied with this service			
		satisfied	somewhat satisfied	not at all satisfied	Total
received aid in finding work	no	0	0	1	1
	from ARCA	1	1	0	2
	from CNRR	2	1	1	4
	no	0	1	1	2
Total		3	3	3	9

30.6% of respondents received legal aid, split evenly between ARCA and CNRR. All legal aid received from CNRR should refer to the asylum seeking process. Refugees were well satisfied with the legal departments of both organizations. Five in seven gave ARCA legal services a positive review. The rate of positive review for CNRR is ten to one.

Figure 22: Received aid in resolving legal problems

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	22	30.6	48.9	48.9
	from ARCA	11	15.3	24.4	73.3
	from CNRR	11	15.3	24.4	97.8
	from other org	1	1.4	2.2	100.0
	Total	45	62.5	100.0	
Missing	no response	27	37.5		
Total		72	100.0		

Figure 23: Received aid in resolving legal problems and "were you satisfied with this service?" cross tabulation

		were you satisfied with this service					
		very satisfied	satisfied	somewhat satisfied	not very satisfied	not at all satisfied	Total
received aid in resolving legal problems	from ARCA	5	0	1	2	0	8
	from CNRR	4	6	0	1	0	11
	from other org	1	0	0	0	0	1
	no	0	0	0	1	1	2
Total		10	6	1	4	1	22

A larger portion of respondents also receive material aid: 44.5%. In this service category, more organizations were reported, including JRS and the Refugee Women's Organization. Satisfaction reviews are more scattered in this category than in the legal aid questions. ARCA's satisfaction rate is 1:2, and CNRR's is 3:5. Respondents were less satisfied with this JRS service than with their housing services.

Figure 24: Received material aid (money, food, etc.)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	17	23.6	34.7	34.7
	from ARCA	15	20.8	30.6	65.3
	from CNRR	10	13.9	20.4	85.7
	from JRS	4	5.6	8.2	93.9
	from other org	3	4.2	6.1	100.0
	Total	49	68.1	100.0	
Missing	no response	23	31.9		
Total		72	100.0		

Figure 25: Received material aid (money, food, etc.) and "were you satisfied with this service?" cross tabulation

		were you satisfied with this service					
		very satisfied	satisfied	somewhat satisfied	not very satisfied	not at all satisfied	Total
Received material aid (money, food, etc.)	from ARCA	2	4	3	1	2	12
	from CNRR	2	4	2	2	0	10
	from JRS	0	2	0	2	0	4
	from other org	0	0	1	0	0	1
	no	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total		4	10	6	5	3	28

While 32% report that they have received medical aid from an NGO, most of these are from CNRR, and therefore most likely refer to services of their doctor during the asylum seeking process and not to help in resolving medical problems of refugees. This assumption is supported by the earlier discussion of problems accessing medical insurance. Furthermore, no refugee living outside of Bucharest has reported any medical aid from ARCA, although medical access problems for the case groups were just as prevalent as those from Bucharest. However, those who did receive such help from ARCA were satisfied with the service.

Figure 26: Received aid in resolving medical care problems/medical care

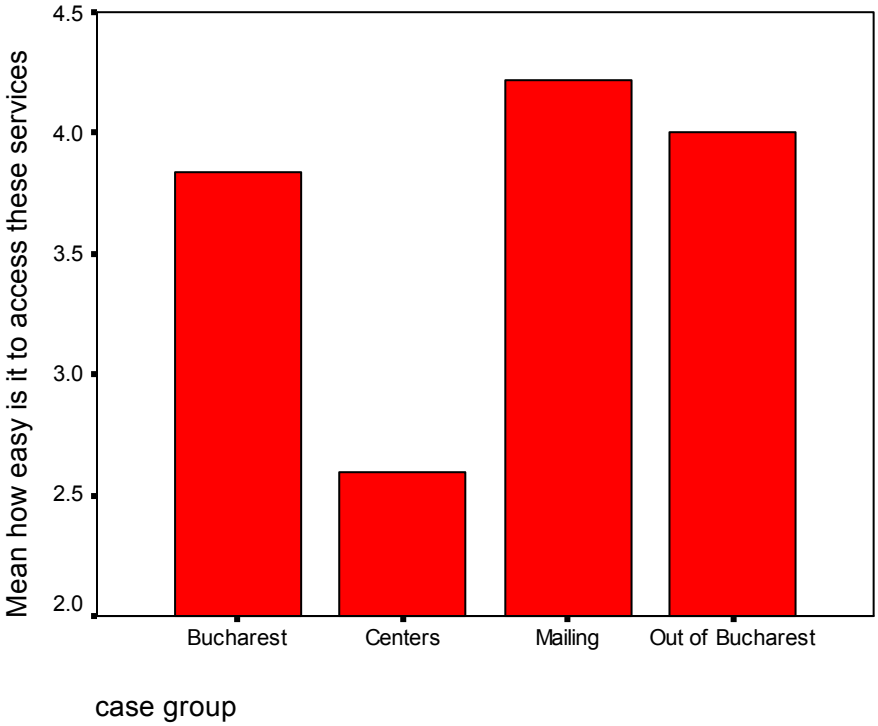
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	24	33.3	51.1	51.1
	from ARCA	4	5.6	8.5	59.6
	from CNRR	19	26.4	40.4	100.0
	Total	47	65.3	100.0	
Missing	no response	25	34.7		
Total		72	100.0		

Figure 27: Received aid in resolving medical care problems/medical care * were you satisfied with this service Cross tabulation

		were you satisfied with this service					Total
		very satisfied	satisfied	somewhat satisfied	not very satisfied	not at all satisfied	
received aid in resolving medical care problems/medical care	from ARCA	1	1	0	0	0	2
	from CNRR	1	6	5	1	2	15
	no response	0	0	0	1	1	2
Total		2	7	5	2	3	19

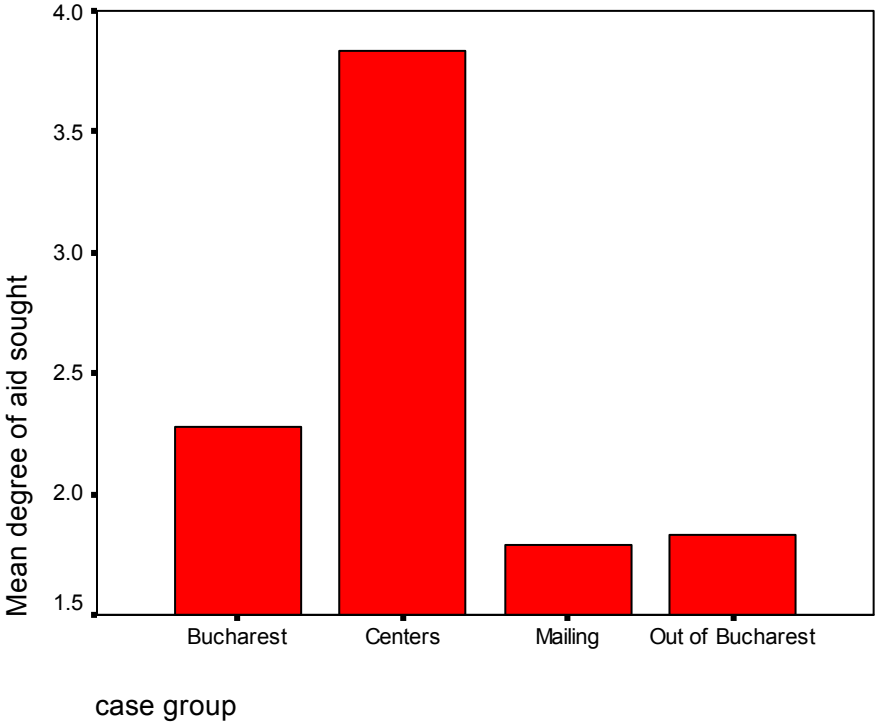
The problem of access to services outside of Bucharest is widespread. The two case groups from outside of Bucharest access services at about half of the rate of those inside Bucharest, although as stated above their living conditions are similar. Most access to services is found in the centers case group. This is appropriate as their living conditions are the least stable and the most impoverished. During the research trip to Iaşi, Timişoara, and Cluj-Napoca, researchers were repeatedly told that refugees had been totally isolated from the refugee services network. For instance, one family in Timişoara had had no contact with any NGO despite an asylum seeking process lasting over seven years. Some communication from the mailing case group indicated similar circumstances, see Annex 4. Those outside of Bucharest were less familiar with services, found them more difficult to access, and were less satisfied with their interactions with NGOs. This is confirmed in both case groups living outside of Bucharest.

Figure 28: Ease of access to services for each case group



"how easy is it to access services?" 5 = difficult, 1 = very easy

Figure 29: Degree of aid sought by case group



Chi-Square test for case group with degree of aid sought: 0.019

Integration

Integration is interpreted as a combination of psychological/cultural factors and material factors. The survey attempted to account for both elements of integration. Material factors have been discussed independently above, but have an impact on the general psychological integration condition. Psychological integration factors are difficult if not impossible to quantify. However, for this project, the problem is approached in several directions.

Refugees were asked what their experience of prejudice in Romania has been. A primary factor in integration is the host society's degree of openness to absorbing migrants. 70% reported that they had not experienced prejudice in Romania and a further 10% reported that while they had initially experienced prejudice, this hostile reception had lessened over time. This evaluation of the Romanian society's ability to culturally integrate migrants is very positive. These results reinforce the conclusion of the 2001 study referred to in the introductory section, but they are inconsistent with the reports that nationality limits employment opportunities for refugees.

Figure 30: "Have you experienced prejudice in Romania?"

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes, connected to refugee status	2	2.8	3.3	3.3
	yes, connected to race or ethnicity	6	8.3	10.0	13.3
	yes, at first but decreasing	6	8.3	10.0	23.3
	yes, all the time	4	5.6	6.7	30.0
	no, not at all	42	58.3	70.0	100.0
	Total	60	83.3	100.0	
Missing	no response	12	16.7		
Total		72	100.0		

Linguistic ability is a base for the integration process. As noted above, linguistic ability affects material stability in that those who cannot speak Romanian are much less employable. Fluent refugees are twenty-eight times more likely to be employed. No refugee who reported minimal or difficult communication in Romanian had formal

employment. There is also an obvious cultural or psychological element to linguistic ability. Those who are not able to interact with Romanians are less likely to feel at home in the culture. Refugees with some degree of fluency were eleven times more likely to report that most of their social interaction was with Romanians. Most refugees had sufficient linguistic ability to interact with the volunteers on the survey project. However, a significant portion does not speak the language fluently.

Figure 31: Romanian fluency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	professional level fluency	14	19.4	20.3	20.3
	conversational level fluency	33	45.8	47.8	68.1
	capable of managing day-to-day tasks	12	16.7	17.4	85.5
	communication is difficult	7	9.7	10.1	95.7
	minimal communication	3	4.2	4.3	100.0
	Total	69	95.8	100.0	
Missing	no response	3	4.2		
Total		72	100.0		

Linguistic ability does improve with time spent in the country. No one who had been in Romania over two years reported minimal communication skills, and no one in country longer than seven years reported that communication is difficult. However, these are long periods of language acquisition.

Ability in Romanian language also corresponds to sex[8]. 50% of women reported professional or conversational fluency, but 77.8% of men reported this level of ability. Fluency is also related to the case group. Those living in Bucharest speak less Romanian than those out of Bucharest. In the capital, those in the centers speak less than those out of centers.

The degree of social interaction with Romanians also reflects the degree of cultural integration. Responses to this question were more positive than the linguistic question. 76% of respondents replied that some or most of their friends were Romanian. However, this response was heavily sex weighted. While only half of women reported

[8] When the language fluency variable is collapsed into high function, medium function, and low function. Statistical significance Chi-Square value is 0.024.

this level of interaction with Romanians, 87% of men replied this way. Although the responses are more even (30% and 36%), men are also more likely to interact with refugees. This indicates a social exclusion of women greater than might be guessed at by examining the employment and household duty patterns. It may also explain the sex-language acquisition gap. Women are more likely to have taken a Romanian language class with an NGO or in a government center. This, and the responses that indicate courses as the least effective way to learn the language, suggest that this is not the best form of language acquisition.

Predictably, those living outside of Bucharest interact more with Romanians and less with refugees. Those living in centers interact more with refugees and less with Romanians. Strangely, there is not a strong correlation between longer time spent in Romania and predominant interaction with Romanians. Those who have been in Romania longest, over twenty years, report less interaction with Romanians than those who have been in country between two and twelve years. This is most likely a reflection of the changing way that the Romanian culture accepts foreigners. The society has become much more open since 1990.

Finally, the survey asks refugees how integrated they feel in Romania. This question is a great deal more subjective than other integration related areas of the survey. Most refugees report feeling "Integrated" or "Very Integrated." Responses to this question form a similar pattern to the question on the extent of interaction with Romanians. Refugees in country between five and twelve years are most likely to feel integrated. Those living in the centers are less likely to feel integrated. Those living out of Bucharest and in Bucharest are very similar, with 82% and 78% respectively reporting feeling integrated into society. Again there is a strong gender gap, with 50% of women and 74% of men feeling "Very Integrated" or "Integrated." The Chi-Square value for sex and level of integration is 0.002. Those from Middle Eastern countries are more likely to feel integrated than those from African countries. Among the Africans, Francophone feel more integrated than other language groups. Christians (67.9% "Integrated/Very Integrated) feel better integrated than Muslims (59.5% "Integrated/Very Integrated).

Figure 32: How integrated do you feel in Romania?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very integrated	24	33.3	34.3	34.3
	integrated	22	30.6	31.4	65.7
	somewhat integrated	12	16.7	17.1	82.9
	not very integrated	8	11.1	11.4	94.3
	not integrated at all	4	5.6	5.7	100.0
	Total	70	97.2	100.0	
Missing	no response	2	2.8		
Total		72	100.0		

Figure 33: Native language and "How integrated do you feel in Romania?" cross tabulation

		how integrated do you feel in Romania					Total
		very integrated	integrated	somewhat integrated	not very integrated	not integrated at all	
native language	Arabic	15	7	4	1	1	28
	French	2	5	0	3	0	10
	English	0	0	1	2	0	3
	Serbo-Croatian	1	2	1	1	0	5
	Albanian	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Kurdish	3	1	2	0	1	7
	Turkish	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Armenian	1	2	0	0	0	3
	Somalian	0	0	2	0	1	3
	Farsi	0	1	1	0	1	3
	Spanish	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Other: Creole, other African, Catholic Iraqian	0	3	1	1	0	5
Total		24	22	12	8	4	70

51.4% of those with education through the secondary level in their countries of origin feel integrated compared with 87.1% of those with university education[9]. This pattern does not hold for those with an employment record in their countries of origin, but it does hold strongly for the employment record within Romania. Employment is strongly correlated to integration level (Chi-Square value of 0.003). The pattern, in addition to the sex statistics discussed above, indicates that one of the best paths to integration is full and stable employment.

Finally, it has been hypothesized that the asylum seeking process can either help or hinder the integration process for recognized refugees. The longer the asylum seeking process, the more insecure the individual and the more difficult integration becomes. This supposition does not seem to hold for the length of the asylum seeking procedure in Romania. Although many had a very long process, up to more than nine years, 64.7% of those who had reported a high degree of integration had asylum seeking procedures between two and nine years, a time period significantly longer than the current legal limit. Most of those who reported a low degree of integration had an asylum seeking process of less than two years.

The impact of the asylum seeking process appears in relation to accommodation. One in ten of those who stayed in private accommodation feel "Not Very Integrated" or "Not Integrated at All." Three in ten who stayed at Gociu or Stolnicu feel a low level of integration. The difference between these groups may be their reasons for choosing Romania as a country of asylum. Those with pre-existing links to the country were much more likely to stay in private accommodation and probably began learning the language, interacting with Romanians, and possibly working during this period. This group may also have the psychological impact of the asylum seeking process lessened by having a social network in place much quicker than their counterparts without a prior connection to Romania.

Figure 34: Integration index and accommodation during asylum seeking process cross tabulation

		accommodation during AS process				Total
		Gociu	Otopeni	Private accomodation	Stolnicu	
index summary	1	1	0	0	0	1
	1-2	4	0	1	2	7
	2-3	5	0	9	4	18
	3-4	5	0	21	2	28
	4-5	0	1	16	0	17
Total		15	1	47	8	71

Chi-Square value of 0.007

[9] When education is collapsed into no schooling, schooling through secondary education, and university, Chi-Square value when compared with the integration index is 0.01.

Figure 35: Accommodation during asylum seeking process and reason for choosing Romania cross tabulation

		reason for choosing RO				Total
		pre-existing contacts: friends, family, education, business	neighboring country/easiest visa	trafficking	other	
accommodation during AS process	Gociu	0	2	3	8	13
	Otopeni	0	0	0	1	1
	Private accommodation	21	5	1	19	46
	Stolnicu	2	0	1	4	7
Total		23	7	5	32	67

Figure 36: integration index and reason for choosing Romania cross tabulation

		reason for choosing RO				
		pre-existing contacts: friends, family, education, business	neighboring country/easiest visa	trafficking	other	Total
index summary	1-2	0	1	2	2	5
	2-3	4	2	2	9	17
	3-4	12	4	0	12	28
	4-5	7	0	1	10	18
Total		23	7	5	33	68

Chi-Square value of 0.064

All of these patterns point to the fact that although the question is highly subjective, refugees have an accurate idea of how integrated they are in Romanian society.

In analyzing data, an integration index variable was created encompassing material elements: tenancy type, length of stay at present accommodation, and employment status; and cultural elements: interaction with Romanians, fluency in Romanian, and feeling of integration. Each component part was re-weighted on a five point scale to give an index score also on a five point scale. From this statistic, it can be seen that the average integration level is medium: a score of 3.33. Again, it is clear that

men are more integrated than women. 72.3% of men and 48% of women fall into the 3-5 range of the integration scale.

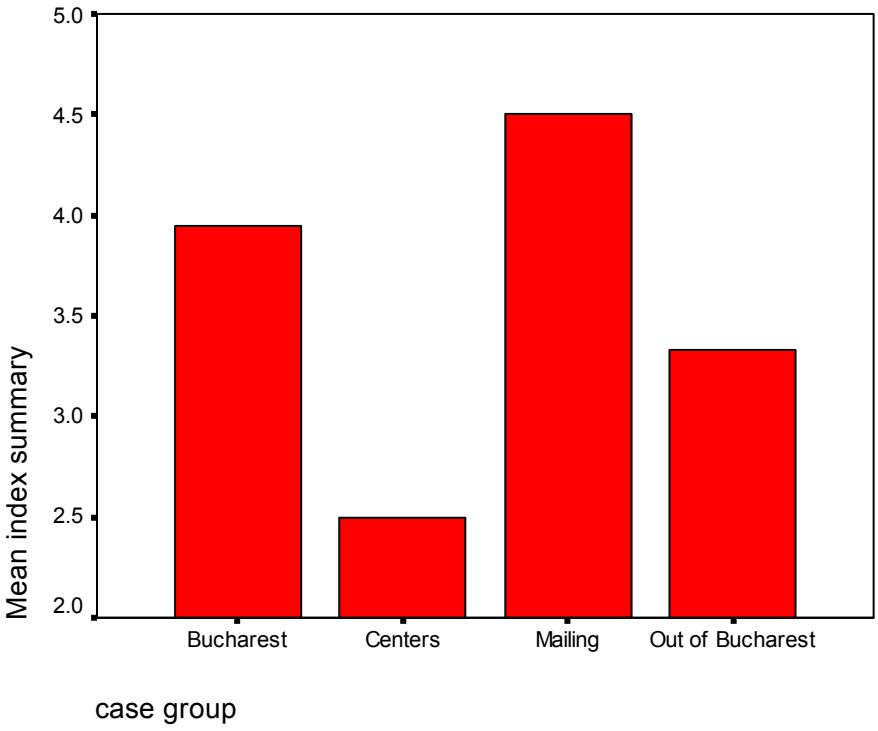
Figure 37: Sex and integration index cross tabulation

		index summary					
		1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	Total
sex	male	0	0	13	21	13	47
	female	1	7	5	7	5	25
Total		1	7	18	28	18	72

Chi-Square 0.02

Those in villages outside of Bucharest are the most integrated while those in the centers in Bucharest are the least. However, the statistical significance of the correlation is borderline, an ANOVA value of 0.051.

Figure 38: Integration index by case group

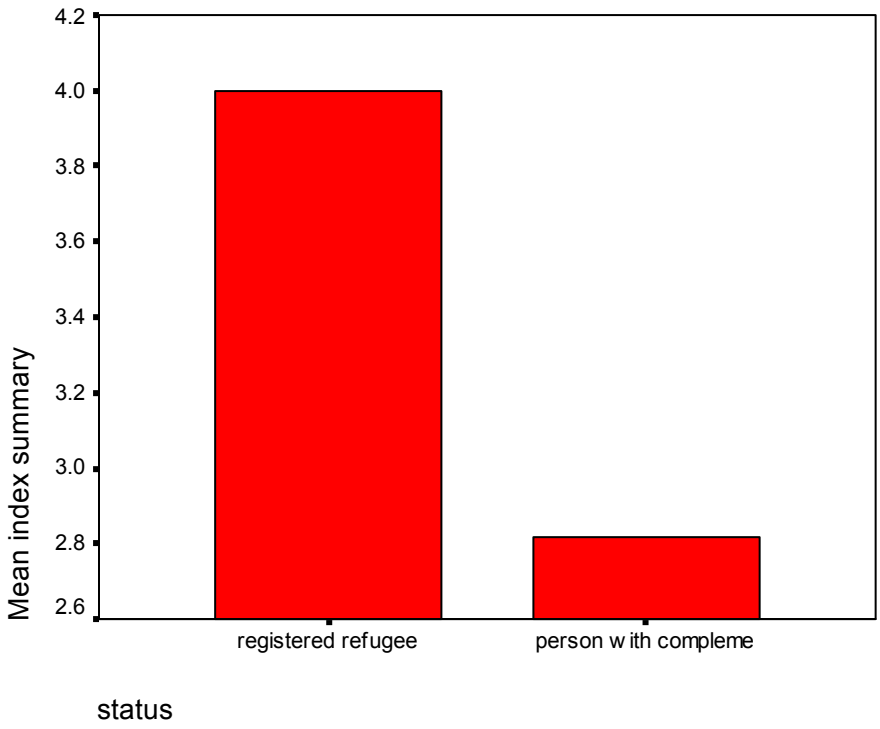


The least integrated seek out refugee services the most often. (See figure 29.) This pattern holds but is distorted for the two case groups living outside of the capital.

The refugees in Iaşi, Timişoara, and Cluj seek out services only slightly more often than the mailing case group, but are roughly half as integrated. The mailing group may have a link to programs through CNRR's rural integration program and therefore seek out NGO aid more readily. The pattern demonstrates a problem in the service coverage of UNHCR's NGO partners. Those living outside of Bucharest have restricted access to refugee services.

Registered refugees are better integrated than PUCs. This measurement is complicated by the fact that the complementary status was only initiated in 2000, and therefore PUCs have been in country a shorter average amount of time. However, the differential is still striking.

Figure 39: Integration by status

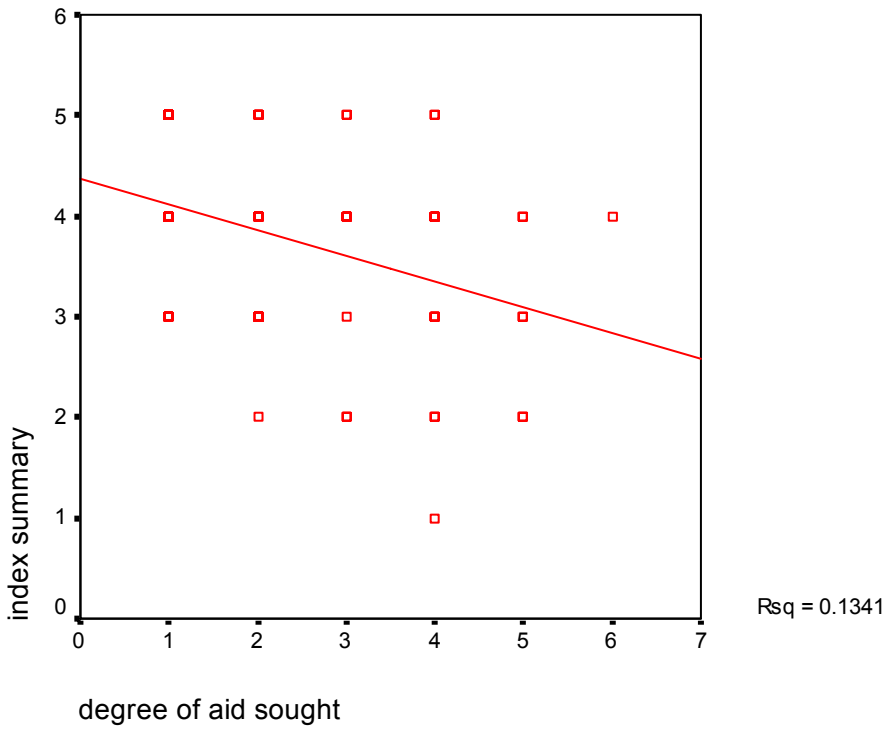


Chi-Square value of 0.001

A surprising result is that there is little correlation between the level of integration and the level of NGO services sought out by refugees. If a pattern does emerge, it is that less integrated refugees seek out more services, as would be expected. The survey

collected data from the more integrated half of the population and so this result may not reflect the norm for the entire population.

Figure 40: Linear regression, integration and degree of aid sought



Conclusions

The survey has identified many population trends, including the stability of the population, demographics, living standards, access to services, satisfaction with these services, and general levels of integration. In addition, results indicate which refugees are most in need of aid and which types of help refugees need most. Finally, results point to areas in which the refugee serving community is properly addressing efforts, and areas in which efforts need to be addressed in the future.

The fact that the refugee population is unstable has been verified. This research could confirm the residence of only slightly more than half of the group contacted. This rate of instability reflects both the westward migration of refugees registered in Romania and the in-country volatility of residence. Therefore, respondents to the survey are those with minimal stability conditions met, and in three of the four case groups the integration level of those reporting may be higher than the integration level of the entire refugee community.

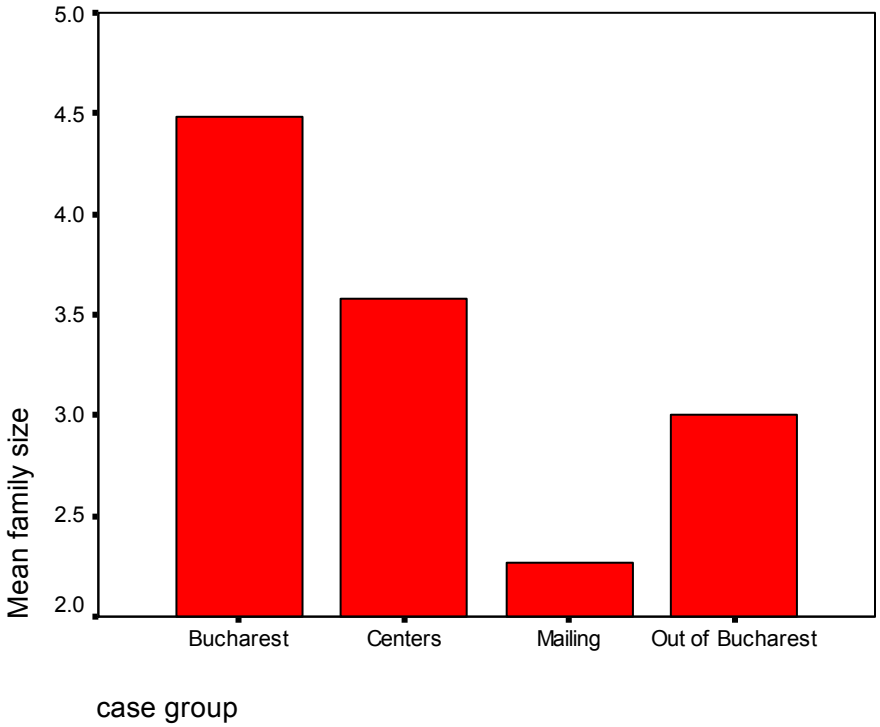
When comparing the demographic profile of the entire 320 contacted with those of confirmed residence, country of origin percentages remain fairly stable. This indicates that those "not found" apply equality to every ethnic group. The one exception to this rule is Afghanistan. Afghanis comprise 5.3% of those contacted and only 1.4% of those found.

The majority of refugees in Romania are from the Middle East, including Afghanistan, followed by African groups. European refugees are the smallest group. Half of the refugees are Muslims, and more than 40% are Christians. Arabic is the most common native language spoken, followed by French, Kurdish, and Serbo-Croatian. Stable refugees are well educated, with over half of the men having university education.

The majority of refugees are men. While the majority of men are married, some are single and living independently. None of the women live singly. Men are more likely to be married to Romanians than to women from their country of origin, indicating that men tend to arrive by themselves and then start a family. Women tend to arrive with families, accompanied by either a parent or a spouse. Nearly a quarter of refugees live with extended family units. However, large family size is not the norm. Average number

of children is 1.9. Family size is largest for the Bucharest case group and least for the mailing case group.

Figure 41: Family size by case group



84.7% or those surveyed are registered refugees, and 15.3% of respondents were PUCs. The asylum seeking period was long, with the average experience lasting over two years. During this period, more refugees (former asylum seekers) relied on private resources than government and NGO support.

When asked why the refugees chose to seek asylum in Romania as opposed to any other country, most (out of answers that could be categorized) had pre-existing connections. A significant portion had been trafficked into the country. Because trafficking has a negative affect on opportunities for integration, it can be assumed that a larger percentage of asylum seekers were trafficked into Romania and have subsequently left the country.

A large majority of refugees would not be willing to return to their country of origin.

Those refugees in private accommodation are generally in rented apartments. This housing is very expensive and is the greatest expense for those falling into this housing category. It is also fairly stable. Roughly one quarter of respondents own their own accommodation.

Over half of refugees in Romania are unemployed. 62% of respondents reported restrictions in finding work compatible with their qualifications. Most of the unemployed refugees surveyed replied that they were simply unable to find work, not that they were unemployed by choice or that they held out for better paid jobs or work more suited to their backgrounds.

Average household salary is estimated at $2,400 a month. The average for those living in collective centers is over one thousand dollars lower per month than that of other case groups.

The case group living in centers provided by the NRO and JRS is the least integrated, least well off financially, and has the least material stability. This group also accesses the most services, which indicates that to some extent refugee aid is reaching those most needy.

Access to services available to refugees as members of the Romanian society (social welfare and social insurance) was very low. Of all available services, the most used by refugees is social welfare for the poor. Unfortunately, this service is most likely underutilized at 11% access to the service compared with an unemployment rate of 52.8%. Access to medical care is a widespread problem, and in general NGO help with such problems is insufficient.

Access to refugee-specific government services is better. The most utilized service is the housing service of the Stolnicu center. The reimbursable loan has a problem in relation to access for those refugees living outside of Bucharest.

NGO services reach only a small segment, roughly 10%, of the refugee population. There is a major problem of educating refugees about available services. 70% feel uninformed on this point and almost 80% find accessing services difficult. For those that are accessing services, satisfaction levels are neither very low nor very high. Legal and material services were had the highest access rates for NGOs. Legal services had the highest rate of satisfaction. In general, CNRR was better reviewed than ARCA.

Overall, services accessed relate to material needs as opposed to integration needs. Categories of aid such as employment facilitation, housing facilitation (other than emergency shelter needs) are accessed at a lower rate. While material needs services are required, the integration services should be examined. These are the services central to the UNHCR durable solution in Romania.

NGO services did not reach those living outside of Bucharest to the extent that they reach those in Bucharest. This problem is not due to better integration in the country side but a lack of outreach by NGOs and a lack of information among refugees living isolated from other refugees.

Problems Identified By the Survey:

- Unemployment
    - Lack of access to jobs
    - Lack of employment for even the most qualified (unemployment rate of 34.4% among those with university education).
- Mainstreaming of children into the educational system
    - 13.6% of school aged children are delayed more than one year entering Romanian schools
- Trafficking of asylum seekers
- Lack of access to medical care: in general and for those with a Work Card
- Refugees are uninformed about NGO services and find them difficult to access

Integration

Refugees surveyed were fairly well integrated and Romanian society seems to be accepting of refugees. However, as indicated above, the integration level is not evenly spread throughout the refugee population. PUCs, those living in centers, those living in smaller cities, and women are less integrated than others.

A number of elements have been found to negatively affect refugee integration in Romania:

- Sex: being a woman
- Status: having humanitarian protection
- Location: living in a collective center or a city outside of Bucharest
- Asylum seeking process:

- Being trafficked into Romania
- Staying in a collective center during the asylum seeking process
- Entering Romania before 1990

A number of elements have been identified that positively impact the integration process:

- Location: living in a village or in Bucharest
- Cultural affinity: being Christian or Francophone
- Education level: having a higher level of education prior to arrival in Romania
- Having a job[10]
- Marital status: being married to a Romanian
- Language proficiency
- Social habits: having Romanian friends

An interesting pattern is that those refugees who arrived in Romania before 1990 are less likely to be integrated than those who arrived later. This contradicts the assumption that integration should be closely aligned with time spent in the country all other things being equal. The deep suspicion of foreigners under the communist government has damaged the integration process for those that arrived during Ceauşescu's regime to such an extent that the effect is still clear after thirteen years. The dynamic demonstrates the importance of reception of the native population to refugees and asylum seekers. The change in Romanian attitudes subsequent to the change in government is marked.

Gender

The most striking pattern to emerge relating to barriers to integration relates to gender. Women are less integrated than men, but the social exclusion is demonstrated in other ways by the survey results. Women always live within a family unit. No woman identified by this survey lives alone or with other single women, refugees or Romanians. Women are less educated than men when they arrive: 25% fewer women have university degrees. The only persons identified without formal schooling are women. Women also arrive in country with less work experience.

Women fair worse in Romania in terms of employment. Men improve their employment rate in Romania, but women work less often than they did in their countries

of origin. Employed women earn less than men. Women's rate of language acquisition is 23% lower than men's. Finally, women report fewer social interactions than men. This holds for interactions with both refugees and with Romanians. All of these elements indicate that women face social exclusion in Romania and more profound barriers to integration than the opposite sex.

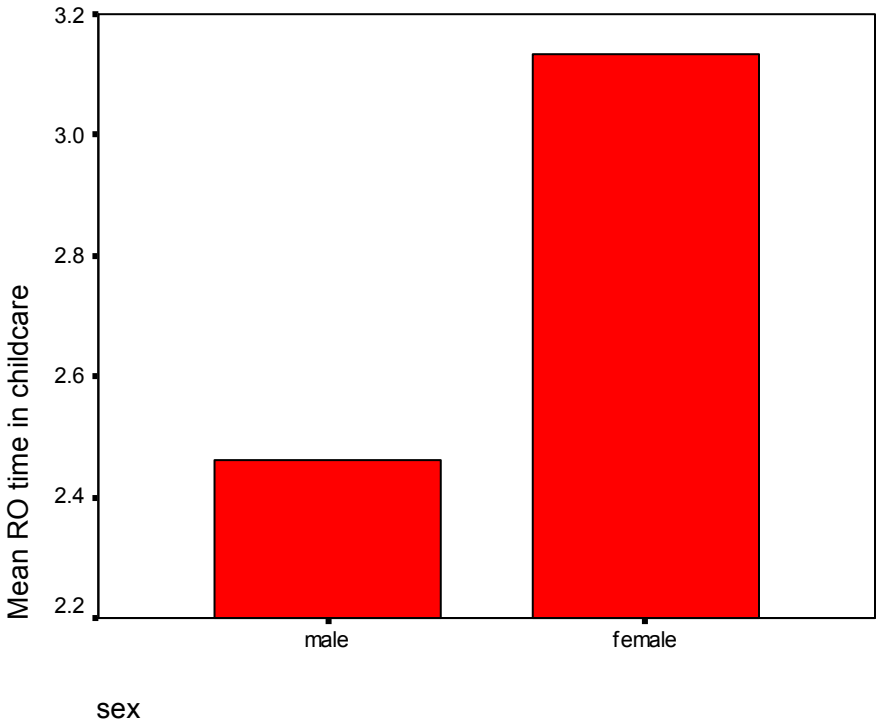
Policy Recommendations

Refugee integration in Romania seems fairly successful, but this is due mostly to individual effort and existing refugee networks. UNHCR implementing partners need to improve the consistency of their services and the knowledge level among refugees about the NGOs. Special attention should be paid to those services under-accessed and areas identified as especially problematic by refugees. These are: employment and vocational training and medical care.

In addition to this improvement in existing services, programs should take better into account gender issues and the geographical spread of refugees. Gender is not a new focus for NGOs in Romania. An NGO exists that has as its mission to facilitate women's integration: the Refugee Women's Organization. ARCA also has special programs for women including the refugee women's club. However, it is clear that these are not sufficient to compensate for the gender gap. Programs should be re-evaluated and expanded. Outreach into homes should be a primary approach to overcoming social exclusion. NGOs cannot wait for women to approach the organization. Language skills need to be addressed. Finally, because women are more often the primary childcare provider, NGOs need to provide childcare services. This is one of the only material factors keeping women home identified by this study and is easily addressed in NGO projects.

[10] Employment status, linguistic proficiency, and interaction with Romanians are all elements in the integration index and therefore are measured here against the "feeling of integration" variable for

Figure 42: Time spent on childcare in Romania and sex



Implementing partners should also focus on outreach to the countryside, especially to those refugees in small cities as opposed to villages. Mechanisms for informing refugees of their rights and responsibilities and providing access to services at the same level as those in Bucharest should be developed. These could take a variety of forms including mailings, visits, and reimbursements for travel and phone conversations. Refugee focal points with universities or NGOs already in other cities could be developed to serve as case managers for small numbers of cases. This could function as an extension of the social clinic training program for social work students. Although some refugees in these cities reported somewhat regular contact with NGOs and sought out services, others visited for this survey had never had any contact with UNHCR or its partners despite need.

In general, indications are that NGOs rely on refugees to seek out services rather than making efforts to provide outreach to the refugee population. This approach works better for refugees who are already integrated to some level and worse for those with the

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correlation to level of integration.

most needs (with the exception of the accommodation centers case group). NGOs need to develop a refugee outreach model that begins with education about rights, obligations, and available aid. A major challenge faced in this undertaking is the instability of the refugee population. However, as both the gender related and the residence related problems demonstrate, this may be the most effective way to improve services.

Recommendations for Further Study

Tracking the population stability is a relatively easy task for the UNHCR Representation in Romania. Because coordination with the NRO and with the partner NGOs is very good, both could provide the raw data of contact information once every six months or even on an annual basis. This would allow UNHCR to see from reporting period to reporting period the rate of those maintaining their residence and legal status. While the survey suggests that up to one half of the addresses provided may not be valid, over two or more tracking periods a rate of those refugees leaving the country could be established. This statistic is outside of the scope of the present survey but is equally significant to the internal stability of the population. Also, UNHCR could help to identify those individuals who are stable in the country but lack access to services and thereby improve the quality of their NGO partners' work.

The most effective and efficient methodology used was the mailing. The response rate was high, instability was measured, and refugees outside of Bucharest could be reached at a minimum of time and expense. The experience of this survey suggests that refugees do have, at least within the household, the linguistic abilities to fill in the form independently. Special arrangements could be made for those refugees in centers with lower average language skill.

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