

MOLDOVA



UNICEF helps create healthy lives for children by focusing on the wellbeing and safe delivery of pregnant women, increased knowledge of child health care and improved access to health services.

Child mortality in Moldova has reduced remarkably, but the rate of under-five deaths remains four times higher than in many European countries. Poverty and social exclusion are often at the root. A poor child or a Roma child is less likely to have access to health services and more likely to die young. Disabilities are detected late and opportunities to help are missed.

Nutrition is also linked to poverty and the lack of knowledge. The poorest families struggle to provide sufficient nutritious food. A third of children under the age of five and half of pregnant women suffer from anemia, particularly in rural and poor families.

Only 27% of the rural population has access to improved source of water. Children from rural and poor families are more likely to get sicker than rich and urban children, because they drink unsafe water and do not have access to proper sanitation, including at school.

Moldova ranks second in Europe in prevalence of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS among young people. Every third new HIV/AIDS case occurs among 15-24 year olds. Girls aged 15-19 are four times more likely than boys of the same age to get infected.



NEXT STEPS

Promote early detection and intervention for children with disabilities: UNICEF will strengthen the system of early detection and intervention for children with disabilities, and focus on developing services for children with disabilities and improving the legislative framework;

Improve parent's health knowledge: UNICEF will increase efforts to educate parents about preventing illness and seeking help for their sick children, including promotion of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and good nutrition practices;

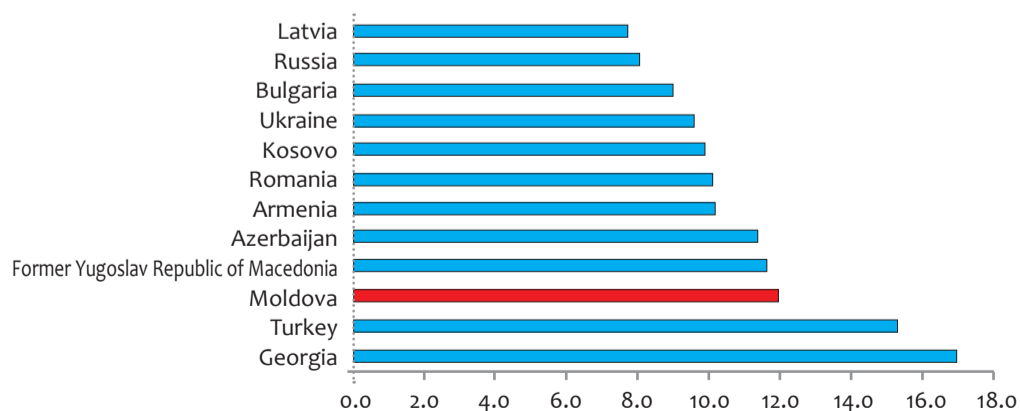
Expand Youth-Friendly Health Services and reach out to the most at risk adolescents: UNICEF aims to include

awareness and prevention of risky behaviours and HIV/AIDS into all areas of health programming. This will be linked to child protection efforts;

Eradicate micronutrient deficiencies: The programme will further promote iodized salt use and flour fortification and the dissemination of information;

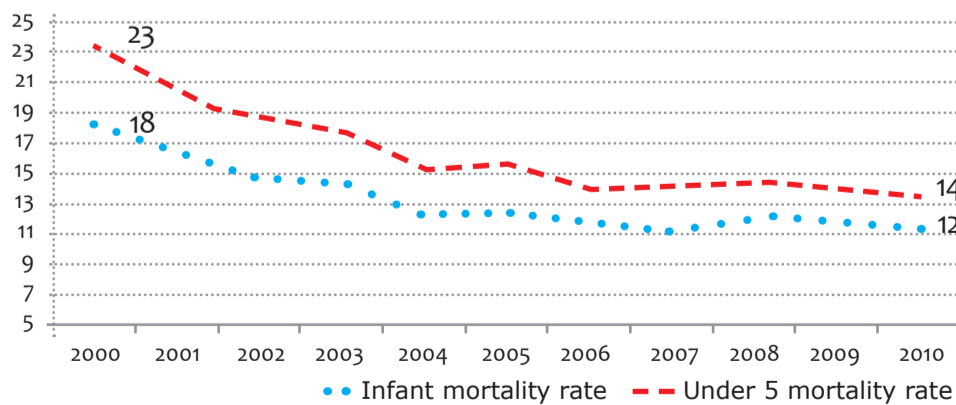
Strengthen child and family health policy: UNICEF will continue to provide evidence-based policy advice to the Government and the Parliament to ensure a more equitable access to health services for mothers and children.

Infant Mortality rates per country, 2009 (%)



Data source: Eurostat database

Infant and Child Mortality rates (per 1,000 live births)



Data source: National Bureau of Statistics

WHAT UNICEF DOES

Better health services and access for all

UNICEF contributed to the training of health workers on child and maternal health care nationwide. They are now able to provide better quality services and communicate with parents about danger signs in pregnancy and child health, and development milestones.

UNICEF is supporting social and health workers to motivate them to work together to identify and provide additional services to vulnerable children and pregnant women.

Developing Youth-Friendly Health Services and preventing HIV

UNICEF supports the development of Youth-Friendly Health Services Centres where young people access advice, information and appropriate services. The Organisation works with the Ministry of Health and NGOs to make these services available nationally, including in Transnistria, and to introduce parenting for young people.

Fighting for the survival of premature babies

UNICEF is providing technical support and equipment to ensure better survival of premature babies in maternities. It includes support and information for the parents of these fragile babies, an approach piloted by UNICEF and expanding at the national level.

Keeping vaccination high

While the vaccination has reached 90 percent in Moldova, there are signs of decrease among urban families. The immunization rate of Roma children and children in Transnistria is similar to Burundi's. UNICEF continues to support communication on and to monitor immunization.

Promoting good nutrition practices at home and policies nationwide

UNICEF strongly promotes breastfeeding and other good nutrition practices, such as salt iodization and appropriate diets for children. One of the priorities is eradicating anemia, focusing on flour fortification with iron and folic acid. As child malnutrition is one of the highest in Europe, UNICEF promotes cooperation between social, health and local representatives to identify and support vulnerable families, especially in times of crisis.

Advocating for family-friendly health policies

UNICEF supports the Government in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and strategies aimed to reduce the number of maternal deaths, deaths of infants and children under five years of age and HIV/AIDS cases.

KEY RESULTS

- Child mortality has declined from 23.3 to 13.6 since 2000;
- Over ninety per cent of children are vaccinated;
- Ninety nine per cent of births are attended by qualified medical staff;
- All children and pregnant women receive free health care;
- Children up to five years of age receive free medication and pregnant women receive free iron and folic acid supplements;
- 67 per cent of households are using iodized salt;
- Mother-to-child transmission of HIV has declined by 80% since 2004;
- Over 50,000 adolescents and youth receive friendly health services every year.

GIVING ALL BABIES A CHANCE TO LIVE



"Before receiving these incubators, there were cases when we had to place two children at a time in one bassinet", doctors say.

Hundreds of babies are born each month at the Maternity Hospital in Chisinau. This institution specializes in assisting preterm births and delivering babies after high-risk pregnancies. Doctors say they wouldn't be able to handle all the critical cases if it weren't for the advanced equipment installed here.

Of the eight incubators available at the maternity unit today, six were donated by UNICEF to help save the lives of the babies who rushed into this world earlier than expected.

A miracle of life weighing just about 800 grams – that is how Victor, a boy from Chisinau, looked at birth.

Born prematurely, even the tiniest baby clothes were too large for him. However the team of doctors at the intensive care unit, the advanced equipment, and the baby's will to live did wonders. Almost two months after birth, the baby was sent home with his family.

Today, at his four months of age, Victor is the greatest joy of his older brother and a reason for pride for his parents.

Margareta Saub, or Thumbelina as her parents nicknamed her, was born almost two months early. She weighed around 1.5 kilogram at birth. When she found out that the condition of her newborn girl was critical, her mother prayed day and night to see her baby survive.

In the days that followed, she observed the girl anxiously through the glass door of the intensive care unit to make sure her baby was breathing and moving.

"I have to say that I was really panicked to see my baby so small being connected to so many wires and apparatuses. The first few days I was very uneasy. But now when I see my girl healthy and smiling to me, I know that placing her into the incubator was the only way for her to develop, gain weight and become stronger", says Irina, Margareta's mother.

UNICEF is committed to provide assistance to health authorities in making sure such children are given better survival chances, as stated by Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is a challenging objective, as the infant mortality in Moldova remains high.