

# HEALTH

AN INVESTMENT WITH  
LIFELONG BENEFITS

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## Main Challenges

- 1 Moldova's under-five and infant mortality rates are more than twice as high as the European average.
- 2 Moldova's maternal mortality rate has more than doubled since 2020, partly due to challenges faced by the health system during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3 Early intervention services for children with disabilities are insufficient to meet the actual demand, estimated to be at only one-tenth of what is required. Young children account for less than one third of first disability determinations, which signals systemic weaknesses in the early detection of disability or developmental delays.
- 4 Routine vaccination coverage has been on a negative trend for the past 15 years, largely due to the spread of misconceptions related to vaccine safety: coverage of the diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP3) vaccination fell to 86 per cent in 2020.
- 5 The adolescent fertility rate in Moldova remains three times higher than the European Union average, and the risks to adolescent mental health and psychosocial well-being are on the rise.
- 6 The health insurance system is overburdened due to the high number of refugees fleeing neighbouring Ukraine. Formal and informal out-of-pocket payments account for an estimated 45% of total health expenditure.
- 7 A shortage of human resources has slowed the perinatal and primary health-care provision, especially in rural areas. Public investment in health, reported at 4.4 per cent of GDP in 2020, does not match the scope of the sector's reorganization and its need to improve its infrastructure.

## Proposed Solutions

### Healthier Futures:

Enhancing high-quality service delivery to vulnerable pregnant women, mothers, and young children, by supporting health care policies and standards.

### Protecting Childhood:

Procurement of cold chain equipment to facilitate access to high-quality vaccines and generating demand for essential health services through behaviour change communication activities.

### Empowering Health Workers:

Equipping health workers with knowledge and skills in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and COVID-19 vaccination.

### Nurturing Development:

Expanding universal home-visiting programs to strengthen parenting skills and provide specialized support for young children with developmental risks and disabilities.

### Lifeline of Care:

Supporting Moldova's youth-friendly health service network as a vital support system for vulnerable adolescents, particularly young mothers, promoting gender-responsive care and mental health initiatives.

### Building Resilient Systems:

Planning for the continuity of health care services during emergencies, informed by valuable lessons from navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Why UNICEF



With its partners, UNICEF reaches almost half of the world's children every year with lifesaving vaccines. In more than 190 countries, we work to ensure affordable access for even the hardest-to-reach families. Procuring and distributing vaccines is just one aspect of our work in Moldova.

Making sure doses reach children requires strong health systems: UNICEF is also investing in capacity building, supply chains, data systems and disease surveillance. We have procured and distributed more than 900 refrigerators, 1,800 vaccine carriers, and 4 million syringes to maternity wards, primary health care facilities, and public health facilities, including those in the Transnistrian region. In 2022, more than 1,800 Moldovan health workers were trained in the provision of COVID-19 vaccination to children aged 12-18 based on WHO protocols.

UNICEF is committed to helping children and adolescents build a solid foundation for adulthood. In 2001, UNICEF pioneered a programme to protect young people's health and development, with a particular emphasis on the needs of the most-at-risk adolescents. This programme began with the establishment of three Youth-Friendly Health Centres.

Since 2007, when they became part of primary health care, the National Health Insurance Fund covers for these services, which are now available in all districts in Moldova. We continue to support national plans on adolescent health: UNICEF developed a 24/7 helpline at the premises of the Youth Friendly Health services network.

UNICEF supports primary health care, especially at the community level, to help achieve universal health coverage. The home visiting services is a model now included in the National Standard of Child development.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in 2022, UNICEF addressed health challenges related to the refugee crisis Moldova was facing by supporting direct responses to emergencies and helping to further build resilient health systems that can withstand crises.

## Funding Gaps, USD

Activity	Total	Funded	Unfunded
Strengthening perinatal care	620,000	120,000	500,000
Strengthening primary health care	605,000	105,000	500,000
Supply and demand for vaccination services	2,000,000	1,400,000	600,000
Early detection and early intervention services	1,000,000	390,000	610,000
Strengthening youth friendly health services	1,400,000	740,000	660,000
Provision of health services to refugee children	4,500,000	1,500,000	3,000,000

