



SOCIAL POLICY

PAYING IT FORWARD

Main Challenges

- 1 One quarter of all children in Moldova are poor. Poverty in childhood can have life-long consequences, with the poorest children less likely to access health care or complete their education and more likely to suffer from poor nutrition.
- 2 More than 10% of children in Moldova are extremely poor, being deprived of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, and education.
- 3 A child who lives in a village is three times more likely to be poor. Poverty rates are higher in rural areas, with more than one third of children living in poverty compared to 13% in urban areas.
- 4 The social protection system in Moldova is fragmented, with limited coverage of social cash assistance: only about 1/5th of the poorest quintile benefit from 'Ajutor Social'.
- 5 Both the incidence and the depth of poverty are twice as high among Roma children as among non-Roma children.
- 6 Formal and informal out-of-pocket payments increase inequity in access to services, exacerbating poverty.
- 7 Around 40,000 children are currently estimated to have sought refuge in Moldova because of the Ukraine crisis, with a total estimated number of 80,000 – 100,000 refugees remaining in Moldova.

Proposed Solutions

Improving Social Sector Budgeting and Financing: We aim to improve social sector budgeting and financing through evidence generation and active engagement in budgeting processes by advocating for protected social spending on children in unfavourable fiscal contexts and humanitarian emergencies.

Protecting every child at risk of poverty: Provide access to critical services such as free early education and social care, free education, free healthcare, and at least one healthy meal each day at school. We will consider in-kind assistance forms to reduce child poverty and pilot a universal child grant scheme to provide more targeted support to children and their families.

Supporting Child/Gender-Responsive Social Protection: We aim to support planning and adequate budgeting capacities for child/gender-responsive social protection delivered by government, CSOs, and businesses, especially at the local level.

Facilitating Intersectoral Linkages: We plan to facilitate intersectoral linkages between social protection and other social sectors to reach and assist the most vulnerable and/or excluded. This will enable us to overcome fragmentation and provide more integrated support to children and their families.

Building a Shock-Responsive Social Protection System: Finally, we plan to build a more shock-responsive social protection system that is sensitive to the fragility of the country's economic model and adequately addresses humanitarian or environmental crises risks. This will enable us to better support children and their families during times of crisis and ensure that their needs are not overlooked.

Why UNICEF



Child poverty is neither inevitable nor immune to efforts to address it: it can be reduced and even eradicated through continued attention and action. Since 2014, UNICEF has played an instrumental role in directing global attention to child poverty.

The SDGs call for multidimensional child poverty – a measure of poverty that goes beyond income – to be halved by 2030. UNICEF mobilizes actors at the national, regional, and global levels to help countries measure and address child poverty in all its dimensions. With the World Bank, we produce global statistics on extreme child poverty that help guide policymakers. In Moldova, we developed and tested a multi-deprivation measurement tool at the district level and strengthened the capacity of local public authorities on Public Financial Management.

We also work with the Governments of Moldova on integrated policies and programmes: an analysis of different costed models and schemes of 'Ajutor Social' using 'micro simulation' will inform social assistance reform processes.

In line with our global efforts to support the expansion of child-sensitive social protection programmes, including universal child benefits, UNICEF increased social assistance coverage for Moldovan families with children through evidence-based advocacy from analyses of social protection systems. These have been shown to positively impact children's health, education, and nutrition.

Funding Gaps, USD

Activity	Total	Funded	Unfunded
Support to MLSP for the ongoing social assistance reform	6,000,000	300,000	5,700,000
Implementation of temporary protection measures for refugees and access to social assistance	6,000,000	2,300,000	3,700,000
Improving Social Sector Budgeting and Financing at national and local levels	1,000,000	300,000	700,000
Building a Shock-Responsive Social Protection System	3,000,000	0,000	3,000,000
Designing and piloting a universal child grant	6,000,000	0,000	6,000,000
Total	22,000,000	2,900,000	19,100,000

