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Ukrainian

Emergency Response

February 2022–February 2023



Background and context

Since the start of war in Ukraine, nearly **750,000 individuals have fled to the Republic of Moldova from Ukraine**. At present, **108,000 refugees remain** in the country, nearly half of them children. Most of the refugees from Ukraine are residing in private accommodation within host communities, including 41 per cent in the country's capital, Chisinau.



UNICEF programme response

- From the onset of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Moldova established itself as a trusted partner to deliver critical humanitarian support for children, including child protection; education; health and nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and social protection. This includes scaling up the UNICEF and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-supported network of Blue Dots¹ in strategic locations to provide a multisectoral humanitarian response.
- UNICEF is currently partnering with 36 organizations, including the government, local authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to deliver humanitarian response programmes for refugee children and their caregivers in Moldova.

1 More information on the Blue Dots can be found at <https://www.unicef.org/eca/what-are-blue-dots-hubs>.



To date, UNICEF and partners supported 189,650 individuals (68 per cent women and girls) with access to safe spaces, protection, humanitarian assistance and emergency supplies.



43,666 refugee and Moldovan preschool-aged children received didactic, learning and recreational materials to ensure continuity of learning and enhance social cohesion.

Child protection, GBV and prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation

- In partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and Chisinau Municipality, UNICEF strengthened national child-protection systems and refugee crisis management to develop new or improved services for children and their caregivers, including support to case management. This includes specific services to build capacity of frontline workers and local child-protection actors, strengthen systems for identification of unaccompanied and separated children and support programmes addressing gender-based violence (GBV).
- To date, UNICEF and its partners identified 953 unaccompanied and separated children and provided them with protection, assistance and referral services. These include temporary placement with foster families, family tracing and reunification and verification of documentation for children transiting Moldova.
- Through the network of 11 Blue Dots, UNICEF and partners supported 189,650 individuals (68 per cent women and girls) with access to safe spaces, protection, humanitarian assistance and emergency supplies.
- UNICEF supported a nationwide GBV safety audit to understand the specific risks for women and girls and to address their needs. GBV risk-mitigation, prevention and assistance messaging reached 144,473 individuals, while GBV-response services were accessed by 348 girls and women.
- UNICEF also strengthened child-friendly feedback and complaint mechanisms, and a total of 129,119 individuals accessed these safe and accessible mechanisms, where any incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers can also be reported.

Education and early childhood development

- UNICEF and partners reached 37,690 refugees and Moldovan children through formal and non-formal education, including early learning, while 1,867 children were enrolled in the formal education system.
- Skills-development and resilience programmes benefited 17,532 adolescents in seven youth centres, 15 play and learning hubs and two Blue Dots and youth-friendly spaces in Chisinau and Palanca.
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- UNICEF supported the provision of hot meals targeting selected preschools and primary schools attended by refugees and local children, thus far reaching a total of 10,564 children.
- Working with the Global Education Cluster and UNHCR, UNICEF supported training for local partners on Education in Emergencies, reaching 1,670 teachers, including 22 Ukrainian refugee teachers.
- UNICEF and its partners continue to advocate with the Ministry of Education and Research to increase enrolment of Ukrainian children in formal education (including school-based hybrid modalities of learning for Ukrainian students).

Health and nutrition

- UNICEF ensured free access to health care for 5,000 refugee children, collaborating closely with the National Health Insurance Company, and supported the Ministry of Health to improve the inclusion of refugee children in the maternal and child health care system, including the national immunization programme. Training for family doctors on routine child immunization reached 50 per cent of family doctors nationwide. Over 2,100 refugee children received immunization due to these efforts.
- Mother and baby corners were established at all UNICEF-supported Blue Dots, refugee accommodation centres and primary health care facilities. More than 31,000 refugee children and women were provided with primary health care services and essential medicines.
- To ensure timely access for newborns and infants to quality health services (including for refugees), UNICEF and the Ministry of Health enhanced the capacity of the neonatal care unit in the Institute of Mother and Child Health (a tertiary-level paediatric and obstetrical care facility). UNICEF procured incubators and critical medical equipment for the neonatal care unit to support refugee babies, especially those at risk, such as preterm babies and babies with low birth weight.



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WASH

- UNICEF and partners provided WASH facilities and services for 32 accommodation facilities for refugees, 41,633 refugees accessed safe and appropriate sanitation facilities and 67,167 refugees received hygiene kits.
- UNICEF and partners ensured that all Blue Dots and other child-friendly spaces are properly winterized by installing heating devices and ensuring that WASH infrastructure is protected from the winter elements.
- As part of contingency planning in case of new refugee influx, UNICEF procured 19 WASH containers. Two containers have been prepositioned with the National Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, while five containers are installed at critical border crossing points. UNICEF is coordinating with national authorities and humanitarian actors to preposition the remaining containers to cover remaining critical gaps.



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Social protection

- The joint UNHCR–UNICEF cash-assistance programme – implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) – is currently benefiting 30,326 refugee households (66,040 individual beneficiaries) with regular cash assistance, including winter top-ups. A total of 45,445 households have been reached with this assistance since the inception of the cash assistance programme.
- UNICEF has also signed a joint partnership with MLSP and United Nations agencies (including the World Food Programme, UNHCR, United Nations Population Fund and International Organization for Migration) to amplify cash-assistance programmes targeting 56,000 vulnerable Moldovan families, including refugee hosting families, during the winter period. To date, 11,145 Moldovan households targeted by the programme received cash assistance.



Social and behaviour change

- UNICEF and partners have reached 254,713 people (100 per cent of target) with key life-saving information on nutrition and breastfeeding; psychological support; education; hygiene; health services, including immunization; and prevention of GBV, child trafficking, violence and abuse.
- UNICEF established and streamlined the complaint and feedback mechanism with partners to provide an opportunity for refugees and host communities to share their concerns, questions and feedback. A total of 28,644 people (114 per cent) provided feedback through the U-report, Greenline, Multisectoral Needs Assessment, Blue Dot digital report and other activities.



Looking forward



In 2023, UNICEF will continue working on strengthening the national and localized **child protection, education, health and social protection systems** to respond to the needs of Ukrainian children and their caregivers, as well as the most vulnerable Moldovan families, making substantial investments into those sectors to bolster capacities and promote efficiencies.



The **humanitarian response strategy** will be mainstreamed in the new Country Programme Document (2023–2027) and embedded in the inter-agency Refugee Response Plan (RRP).



UNICEF and partners will support the operationalization of the recently adopted **Temporary Protection mechanism** for Ukrainian refugees. The UNICEF humanitarian response plan will also prioritize programming initiatives to address GBV and promote **social cohesion and accountability to affected populations** across all priority sectors of intervention.



To inform its overall humanitarian response strategy, UNICEF will conduct a second round of the **Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA)** which will generate evidence on the **current situation** and on the **needs of refugee families and children** in Moldova. The 2023 MSNA will be realized in close collaboration with UNHCR, all RRP-sector coordination working groups and NGO partners, REACH and ACTED.

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