

Moldova

Update on the context and situation of children

At the end of February, the war in Ukraine triggered the largest population displacement since the Second World War. Close to 700,000 refugees crossed the border from Ukraine to Moldova, requiring immediate humanitarian assistance in the form of critical supplies and services. The country was still experiencing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (the country's economy shrank by 7 percentage points in 2020), and recovery had barely begun when the war in Ukraine broke out. In addition to the influx of the largest number of refugees per capita in the region, Moldova was affected by the socio-economic shock that followed as a result of the disrupted economic activities.

The country has had to deal with a sharp increase in consumer prices, particularly those of food and energy that disproportionately affect the poor who spend more of their income on these goods and services. According to Moldova National Statistical Office analysis, between February and October of 2022, the aggregate price of cereals surged by 24.8 per cent, other food items increased by 26.35 per cent, while electricity increased by 75 per cent. It is highly probable that inflation will exacerbate the already high levels of poverty in 2022, the data for which is not yet available. In 2021, one in four children in Moldova lived in poverty, while over a third of families with three or more children live in poverty. In rural areas, poverty rates are even higher. Around 9.5 per cent of the population lives in extreme poverty (defined as living on under 1,843 Lei/\$US 96 per month), a rate which is nearly three times higher in rural (12.7 per cent) than in urban areas (4.6 per cent). (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021)

As a response to these price hikes the Moldovan government, supported by UNICEF and other partners, took several steps to support the population including the expansion of social assistance coverage and introduction of energy subsidies for the most vulnerable. The Ukraine emergency mobilized considerable international financial assistance for Moldova that will help fund these measures, but questions regarding their sustainability in case of a protracted crisis remain.

The country continued to be negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic placed enormous pressure on the country's health system, which registered over 598,000 COVID-19 cases and over 11,940 deaths. The national vaccination rate of 32.3 per cent is well below the 70 per cent target for 2022, largely because of vaccine hesitancy caused by misinformation, the war in Ukraine and other factors. Coverage among healthcare workers is high (93 per cent), it is at 65 per cent among people aged 70-79, and 58 per cent among people aged 60-69, however it is only 34 per cent among those aged 80 and higher. Routine vaccination coverage rates have continued to decline, and on average, remains below the 95 per cent target for all antigens.

Over the past five years, the gross enrollment rate in pre-primary education has steadily increased and reached 90.3 per cent, up from 86.7 percent in 2018. However, rates for preschool attendance among Roma and children with disabilities are 12 and 11 per cent, respectively. Pre-school facilities are more accessible in rural areas, which have a decreasing population, than in urban settings. The integration of refugee children from Ukraine is low and will require additional investments.

Real progress was noted in lower secondary education completion rates which increased from 82 percent in 2018 to 97 per cent in 2021. However, the quality of teaching and learning outcomes remains a serious concern, especially in rural schools where more than half the students do not reach minimum levels of proficiency in science, reading and mathematics, according to the 2018 Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA).

Children with special educational needs or with disabilities enrolled in regular schools registered

significant progress over the last decade. Children with more complex needs remain segregated, and most parents still have to overcome negative attitudes towards children with special educational needs in general education, including preschools.

The country's commitment to inclusive education requires more capacity building, school accessibility upgrades, and age-appropriate assistive technologies. Individualized support is required to help about 10,000 school-age children with disabilities in mainstream education, and an estimated 1,000 Ukrainian refugee children. The Ukrainian emergency response provided through the national education system supports strengthening of the system to be more shock responsive, but also more inclusive.

Violence against children and youth, including sexual abuse and severe physical violence, remains a major issue. In 2021, around 8,252 children (4,227 girls) were registered as children at-risk. Out of those, about 172 were CWD, 724 were children below 2 years, and the majority (circa 6,094) were from rural areas. Although the numbers are slightly lower than in 2020, the Ukraine refugee crisis in 2022 is likely to put a strain on protection services that may be unable to respond to the needs of children-at-risk, further aggravating the situation.

Three out of four women in Moldova experienced some form of partner abuse or violence (EU&NIRAS, 2021); 71 per cent of women experience psychological abuse, compared to the European Union (EU) rate of 43 per cent, and about 30 per cent of women in Moldova experience physical violence compared to around 20 per cent in the EU.

Moldova is highly vulnerable to various climate related hazards (droughts, floods, severe weather events) and disasters (earthquakes). Moldova ranks 125th of 17216 countries in the country disaster risk profile (World Bank, 2021). Around 77% of young people polled through a 2022 U-Report Poll said they had already been impacted by climate change, and experienced health impacts, food security issues and access to safe water. More than 90% of respondents said they worried about climate change impacting their futures.

A major positive development for the country has been the granting of the EU Candidate Status in June 2022. This presents an opportunity to accelerate Moldova's development and with that, strengthen the capacities of national institutions and civil society to advance the child rights agenda.

Major contributions and drivers of results

With the onset of the Ukraine emergency, the programme priorities shifted to providing urgent and critical support and services to refugees from Ukraine. The negative effects of the war were felt by the host population as well through the negative socio-economic trends and energy vulnerability. This necessitated a humanitarian-development nexus approach to programming, targeting both the refugees and the host communities with the long-term view of strengthening the system to be shock responsive and resilient.

Child Protection and Child Justice

In 2022, UNICEF invested over USD16.5 million in child and family protection services systems as well as in emergency programs for refugees with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and the Municipality of Chisinau. The interventions focused on developing and strengthening services for refugee and vulnerable Moldovan children and their caregivers, in response to the increased pressure on the child and social protection systems as a result of the Ukraine emergency. These services included Family Support and Personal Assistance services, Foster Care and Family type homes, Maternal Center service, Kindergarten Social Service; Day centers for children and families at risk and Supervised Independent Living.

Since the start of war in Ukraine, a total of 166,454 refugee children, women and caregivers (68% women and girls) accessed child protection services supported by UNICEF governmental and NGO partners. A total of 126,466 women, girls and boys were reached through GBV risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions. Over 900 unaccompanied and separated children (of whom around 88% were separated) received assistance through referral to social and protection services. UNICEF has also proposed a fully tested and mature digital solution for case management (CPIMS +/Primer) that is configurable, user-friendly, and fit-for-purpose.

UNICEF worked with partners and local public authorities to effectively prevent and respond to violence against children, including Gender Based Violence, by developing policy documents, building professional knowledge and skills, promoting nonviolent parenting, reinforcing data collection, empowering adolescents, improving local media capacities (100 journalist were trained to ethically report on violence against children and women). A set of programmes and tools has been developed which will serve as good practices at national level for replication across the country. 200 members of multidisciplinary teams (mayors, community social workers and police officers) from Cahul and Ungheni received gender sensitive training in preventing and addressing violence against children, and increased cooperation in cases of violence against children. 20 child protection specialists and community social workers were trained as trainers in strengthening the capacities to prevent and address family violence and protect the victims. More than 80 adolescents were trained on preventing violence against children, reporting mechanisms and participation in order to empower them to act as agents of change in their schools. As a result, 40 child-led campaigns were conducted in schools for promoting the Child Helpline and non-violence messages.

Child victims or witnesses of crime from the north region of the country now have access to qualified assistance in the first Barnahus-type service in Balti. Alternatives to detention for child offenders were improved thanks to the probation programmes developed or adjusted with UNICEF's support. In addition, children in detention have greater chances to be successfully reintegrated in the society thanks to the behavior change programmes developed and adjusted with UNICEF's support (Resocialization of children that committed sexual crimes; sexual education; non-violent behavior; social rehabilitation of drug-addicted children; preparation for release). 362 probation counsellors, psychologists and penitentiary staff were trained, including via e-learning courses and face-to-face training, to better work with and for children in conflict with the law.

Health services and WASH

UNICEF continued to provide technical support to Ministry of Health (MoH) on strengthening health services for pregnant women, newborns, children and adolescents and building the resilience of the health system to respond to emergencies, specifically the COVID-19 pandemic and Ukraine refugee crisis.

UNICEF signed a partnership agreement with the National Health Insurance Company, ensuring that at least 5,000 refugee children had free access to high-quality health care. In collaboration with the MOH, UNICEF provided training to family doctors on routine child immunization, reaching 50 per cent of family doctors in the country, with over 2,071 refugee children receiving immunization. Support was provided to primary health care services for over 31,000 refugee children and women, while essential medicines were provided to all refugee accommodation centres and host communities through primary health care facilities. In addition, 40,224 parents and child guardians received health promotion and information services.

UNICEF supported the drafting of the National Health Strategy 2022–2032, the draft National Immunization Programme 2023-2027 and its implementation plan, while continuing to provide support

to vaccine procurement, capacity building of health service providers and demand generation for routine and COVID19 immunization.

To inform decision makers on the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on adolescent health and wellbeing, UNICEF supported the 3rd round of the gender sensitive Health Behaviour Survey among School-aged Children. Data was collected nationally, covering 7,552 respondents. Preliminary results were disseminated at national and subregional events dedicated to adolescent's health and wellbeing.

The HPV vaccination promotion campaign was carried out by the Youth Friendly Health Services Network. Video stories and written materials with adolescents vaccinated against HPV, with parents who vaccinated their children and with medical workers were distributed through social media reaching over 400,000 people

With UNICEF support, 16 YFHS specialists from 4 pilot YFHS are able to provide PrEP and PEP package of services for most at risk adolescents. During the reporting period over, 600 adolescent boys and girls were counselled on HIV testing and PrEP

Antenatal care standards and childcare and development standards were adjusted with UNICEF support. Additionally, UNICEF helped develop the regulations on a universal progressive home visiting programme. Over 30 percent of family doctors and nurses were trained to apply the adjusted standards and implement the home visiting programme. Medical Colleges and Medical University curricula were adjusted to include the home visiting programme. In addition, UNICEF provided equipment for the offices for antenatal care classes and child development in rural localities in two targeted districts. This was identified as a means to improve U5 mortality rates.

In the area of WASH, UNICEF and partners provided support to 32 accommodation facilities for refugees to ensure appropriate access to WASH facilities and services, while providing direct assistance to 29,874 refugees with safe and appropriate sanitation facilities and 67,167 refugees with hygiene kits. In preparation for new refugee arrivals, UNICEF procured and installed 19 sanitary containers at border crossings in coordination with UNHCR and the border police.

Education, ECE and Youth Programmes

UNICEF continued to support the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) to finalize the new Education Sector Plan (ESP) which includes a long-term Education Strategy 2030, mid-term Programme and Action Plan (2021-2025) and accompanying Financing Simulation Models. ESP adoption is expected in 2023. Linked to the ESP, UNICEF successfully leveraged US\$5 million through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Multiplier Fund. As grant agent, UNICEF will be responsible for implementing activities that are part of the ESP, specifically linked to the digital transformation of the education sector.

UNICEF supported the development of the National Programme on Inclusive Education, 2023–2027, which has been consulted with national stakeholders, and successfully advocated with the Government to double its financial support to Inclusive Education.

In response to the Ukraine emergency, UNICEF as a key partner to the MER, implemented a number of activities to ensure continuity of learning for refugee children from Ukraine through their integration in the Moldovan education system, and through provision of non-formal learning opportunities. The system strengthening approach, refugee integration and promotion of social cohesion, ensured that both refugee and Moldovan children benefitted from interventions in education, ECE and youth.

Specifically, UNICEF helped to build the capacity of 50 per cent of didactical cadre to apply and

monitor quality teaching and learning, address violence, drop-outs and absenteeism, digital skills and prevention of infectious diseases. 10 per cent of beneficiaries included Ukrainian teachers, increasing their knowledge and skills on social cohesion, peace building, Education in Emergencies and MHPSS. The indirect beneficiaries of these actions included 137,113 Moldovan preschoolers and 336,713 school children, 668 Ukrainian young children and 29,332 school children nationwide.

Over 38,000 preschool-aged children benefitted from learning materials, including didactical materials, ECE kits, DUPLO/LEGO systems and emotional bricks to enhance “learn through play” approach as a key element of the child-centred methodology, along with access to quality ECE learning.

In the area of youth, UNICEF and its partners supported setting up two mobile teams of youth workers, strengthening their outreach capacities, enabling them to reach, inform and refer 9,000 refugee and Moldovan adolescents to existing youth-friendly services and programs.

A mobile STEAM classroom delivered ICT training to 6,000 Moldovan and refugee young people, including those residing in 25 Refugee Accommodation Centers (RACs). The GirlsGoIT summer camp engaged 3,600 adolescent girls in life skills development and social engagement activities, along with 1,400 UPSHIFT social innovation projects led by adolescents that have been implemented in 32 localities, including two RACs in Chisinau. Adolescents benefited from a full cycle training on local mobilization, business development, startup management and implementation.

10,000 refugee children and youth benefited from two youth-friendly spaces within Blue Dots in Palanca and ARTICO (Chisinau). Additionally, working directly with 9 youth centers, UNICEF engaged 1,000 young volunteers in capacity building, outreach and peer to peer support reaching 35,000 Moldovan and refugee adolescents and youth.

Social Protection & Public Financing for Children

As part of the support to the Ukraine emergency, UNICEF partnered with UNHCR to enroll 29,755 refugee households (65,492 individual beneficiaries) in the joint UNICEF-UNHCR cash assistance programme, implemented in close collaboration with the MLSP. In total, the programme reached 51,000 households, exceeding originally planned targets.

UNICEF continued to support the social protection system by contributing to the development of social assistance programmes, their coverage and targeting to ensure children and their caregivers a guaranteed support. UNICEF provides cash assistance to the most vulnerable families with children during the winter period. This cash assistance consists of a top up of 700 Moldovan Lei to the already existing governmental winter assistance for families with three or more children, single parent households, and households with a person with disabilities, who are already benefiting from the national social assistance, for a period of 6 months. Approximately 80,000 households should benefit from this cash assistance.

UNICEF supported a number of budget analyses to improve the link between social policies for children and youth and public budgets and budgeting processes, namely on foster care vs. residential costs and on the cross-cutting nature of disability related interventions. These analyses specifically tracked related budget lines to identify the actual size of public investments in programmes and interventions supporting the de-institutionalization of children and the services for people with disabilities.

An analysis of the impact of increasing price crisis on government revenues, and consequently, on the ability to finance social expenditure (education, social protection, health, child protection/ justice) is nearly completed. The results and recommendations of this analysis (due in January 2023) will anticipate possible budget cuts on social expenditures related to children and offer options to local

authorities to mitigate the negative impacts of any possible upcoming austerity measures decided by the Government.

Capacity building for youth organizations in participatory child rights strategic planning and social budget monitoring was organized in the municipalities and districts of Cahul and Ungheni, within the framework of the EU4Moldova initiative. The objective of this initiative was to develop capacities of youth organizations to better understand the budget cycle, processes, and possible entry points for defending their proposals for improved public services at the local level.

Child Rights Monitoring

In 2022, UNICEF generated evidence and provided technical support to the central and local public authorities, leading to progress in implementation of some of the Committee on the Rights of the Child concluding observations, bringing overall implementation rate to 75 per cent. Availability of disaggregated data on children improved to serve planning and monitoring of national policies, SDG and other international commitments.

Continuous support provided to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) during the current country programme resulted in further enhancement of availability and dissemination of disaggregated data on children. These child focused statistical data are updated on an annual basis with data publicly available through the NBS and the National Council for Child Rights Protection webpages.

In December, the Government approved the Strategy for the Development of the National Statistical System for 2023-2030, developed with the support of UN agencies, including UNICEF. It lays the ground for producing high-quality data to support effective decision-making to implement evidence-based child-related policies. The national framework for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was also approved

UNICEF also supported the Child Rights Ombudsperson to generate evidence around emerging child rights issues i.e., children in street situations, mental health, education and WASH and others, as well as development of regular Annual reports on the observance of the rights of children in Moldova that are discussed at the Parliament, with the central and local authorities, children and representatives of the CSOs, to address existing barriers.

Communication, Advocacy, Partnerships and External Relations

UNICEF partnered with the Centre for Health Strategies and Policy to strengthen health worker communication skills, sensitize local authorities, pre-school and schoolteachers, and inform the population on routine and COVID-19 vaccination. Almost 10,000 people, including 1,116 Ukrainian refugees, have been reached through this initiative and the coverage of COVID-19 vaccines. A total of 218,000 people were reached with messages on prevention and access to services and 11,184 people were engaged in social and behaviour change activities at UNICEF-UNHCR Blue Dots, RACs, and youth centres as well as through social media.

In early 2022, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova with support from UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women, launched the Platform of Women MPs, a new framework for intra-institutional cooperation aiming to promote equity and equal rights for women and family-friendly policies through initiative and legislative support. Later in 2022, the Parliament voted in the first reading legislation that would let employers provide their employees with childcare services.

With more than 69,000 active followers, UNICEF Moldova's Facebook page had a reach of more than

4 million, a 200 per cent increase compared to the previous year (1.38M people).

More than 70 press releases, blog posts, articles and human interest stories were published developed by the country office, which resulted in external media coverage of nearly 900 articles and stories.

More than 47 per cent of the external media coverage was positive and 53 per cent was neutral.

The UNICEF Moldova website attracted more than 355,000 users in 2022, which is slightly less than it had in 2021 (368K). However, the number of users from Ukraine has increased twofold – from 4,000 in 2021 to 8,000 in 2022, having provided helpful information for support services for refugees.

A brand awareness survey was conducted in 2022, where 62% of the general population sample and 74% of the youth sample were fully aware about UNICEF and our mission in Moldova compared to 39% for each group in 2018.

UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

It goes without saying that our achievements are not purely our own. Apart from government, development and donor partners, NGO partners were invaluable in implementing joint solutions to the problems affecting the Moldovan families and children in the context affected by the two emergencies: the Ukraine refugee response and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strong partnerships with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), UNHCR and WFP resulted in the largest cash assistance programmes for refugees and host families from Moldova, worth over \$US50 million. The programmes will contribute to developing an integrated and more shock-responsive social protection system, that will result in improved targeting and coverage of social protection and cash benefits in the long run.

UNICEF continued its partnership with Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Ministry of Education and Research (MER), Ministry of Finance (MF) and Institute of Public Policies to finalize the new Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2030. In close collaboration with the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Moldova, UNICEF contributed to identifying the key development priorities that will benefit from additional funding in 2023 and beyond, and improve the education system in the country.

UNICEF succeeded in mobilizing new donors and developed new partnerships for Moldova, such as LEGO Foundation, FCDO, Education Cannot Wait and others, which will contribute to a higher enrollment of refugee and local children into formal and non-formal education activities.

UNICEF continued its collaboration with the EU through the EU4Moldova Focal Regions Programme benefiting young children with access to inclusive early education services, adolescent programming, improved health service governance and planning delivery in two pilot rayons. The EU funded EVA project, in partnership with UNWomen, developed key gender equality promotion models in child protection for wider replication.

UNICEF jointly with WHO continued the support strengthening the supply chain and demand generation for COVID19 and routine immunization services through local and regional communication campaigns reaching population from the less coverage rate with routine and COVID-19 vaccines with the generous support of USAID.

In order to strengthen the child protection system and provide critical protection services for refugees, UNICEF signed partnership agreements with MLSP and with Chisinau Municipality. This enabled us to provide direct, on-budget financial assistance to the state and local budgets, coupled with technical assistance and capacity building for social and child protection workers supporting the humanitarian effort.

Additionally, UNICEF increased the number of civil society partnership from 17 in 2021, to more than 35 in 2022, including many first time national partners, and international CSOs who were previously not present in the country, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council, World Vision, Solidarité International, ACTED and others.

Lastly, UNICEF Moldova would like to express its gratitude to the generous bilateral and multilateral donors that helped fund its refugee response activities, namely the governments of Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, as well as the European Union, the National Committees for UNICEF from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

The Ukraine emergency overshadowed the Covid-19 pandemic

The uptake of vaccines by the general population has been slowing down since the epidemiological situation improved in February 2022 and as the government relaxed COVID-19 related restrictions. Against that backdrop, the war in Ukraine and the ensuing refugee crisis shifted the public attention away from the pandemic. Moreover, the uptake of vaccines among certain groups (adolescents, pregnant and breastfeeding women, young parents) remained low, as it was before the Ukraine emergency.

To find out what are the prevailing demand-side barriers to vaccination, UNICEF conducted a qualitative study on "Perceptions, Attitudes and Beliefs on the acceptance of COVID-19 vaccine in the Republic of Moldova". The findings revealed that misinformation and disinformation spread primarily through social media caused vaccine hesitancy by spreading unscientific and unsubstantiated information about the effects of the vaccine. The study also revealed that medical professionals were trusted but unable to convey the information in a proper way.

UNICEF supported the development of clear and concise information leaflets and brochures, and engaged in trainings for health professionals to be able to inform various groups of people such as those with certain chronic diseases, teenagers and their parents, etc. To tackle vaccine hesitancy, UNICEF addresses the rumors, fake news and vaccine scares through innovative social listening and myth debunking methods. The presence of a high number of Ukrainian refugees in Moldova required that informational materials be adjusted and translated into Ukrainian and disseminated through the Blue Dots, Refugee Accommodation Centers, and social media.

Considering that the pandemic is likely to continue well into 2023, UNICEF will continue to implement innovative activities to address vaccine hesitancy, building on the experiences and lessons learned from its programmes and those of our partners.

Human resources management in Emergency

The Ukraine refugee crisis triggering the relevant L3/L2 simplified procedures, along with experience gained during the COVID-19 pandemic, have allowed the office to quickly adapt the existing HR practices and leverage the organizational tools both in programmes and operations. Operating for the first time under an L3 humanitarian emergency, the office moved quickly and timely to identify human resources gaps and needed skill sets to ensure immediate launch and further scaling-up of humanitarian action in response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. The office received substantial and highly appreciated support from the Regional Office in this regard, which was especially relevant with the approval of the proposed emergency human resources structure completed in a record time, with wide application of L2/L3 procedures and simplifications. While the recruitments for the new human resources structure have been underway, the office significantly benefited from surge deployments from NYHQ, Regional and Country offices, which has been an essential tool to ensure the immediate 'gear-shift' for the office and immediate launch of the humanitarian response activities at scale, as well as establishment of the related inter-agency coordination from the onset of the crisis.

Two important lessons were noted; critical to effective management of surge deployments and subsequent change in the human resources structure of the office, required for planning, coordination and implementation of the emergency response – which occur at the same time – have been immediate availability of experienced staff and their expertise and skills relevant to the programmatic context of Moldova. On both fronts, the office has been able to benefit well with most of the deployments. This has been particularly relevant when it comes to having sufficient number of staff at senior level with the requisite experience and it proved to be essential to position UNICEF as a lead agency in child protection, education and WASH very early on. To facilitate and expedite onboarding, a 'Country

Specific Guide' was developed and shared in advance with surge and IP staff, providing information and instructions in support of their deployment and reassignment arrangements. To support the integration process of new recruits into the office, an Induction Portal was launched – the page includes useful instructions, documents and links providing guidance for first months of service, and beyond.

Working along the Humanitarian-Development Nexus

At the onset of the Ukraine war, UNICEF Moldova was finalizing the preparation of the new Country Programme of Cooperation 2023-2027 (CPD 2023-2027). The document was about to be consulted with national stakeholders when the refugee crisis derailed the plans and required rethinking of the programme approach to ensure that humanitarian action for children is strengthened and mainstreamed in the document.

Rather than opting for an extension of the old Country Programme, UNICEF Moldova agreed with the Regional Office, in close consultations and partnership with other UN agencies, to include the humanitarian action for children into the structure of the 2023-2027 CPD, focusing on enabling delivery of humanitarian action for Ukrainian refugees, including life-saving supplies and essential protection and humanitarian assistance, through national systems, while at the same time working to strengthen the system capacities for improved quality of services as well as its resilience and shock-responsiveness.

The already existing internal structure and coordination within the office reflected this approach, fostering and adhering to the principle of one programme and one operations, under the overall leadership of the Country Representative - instead of establishing separate humanitarian and development programme and operations structures. The expanded programme and operations teams were unified under the leadership of section chiefs, with clear accountabilities for planning and implementing activities that address the needs of refugees while continuously strengthening national system capacities for inclusive and effective delivery of services. This approach has been also reflected in the office communication, advocacy and fundraising activities.

This approach has ensured that the delivery of UNICEF Programme in Moldova is at the humanitarian-development nexus from the onset of the crisis, enabling that UNICEF primary role in delivering on its humanitarian action for children is performed through national systems for children and that national systems capacity development is at the center of UNICEF humanitarian response strategy. The effectiveness of the MLSP MoU that embodies this approach became a model touted by the minister at high-level meetings and adopted by other UN agencies.