Republic of Moldova

Education
January- June 2024

UNHCR advocates for the **inclusion of refugee children into the national education system** to ensure access to quality education and higher education opportunities.

UNHCR works to ensure that children from specific groups, including Roma children and children with disabilities, have **inclusive access to education**

Only 16% of school-age Ukrainian children with Temporary Protection in Moldova are enrolled in schools, a concerningly low rate. Other Ukrainian children are believed to be studying online, though there is no tracking system.

Population figures

~122,600 refugees from Ukraine in Moldova:

58% female

44% children (52% boys, 48% girls)

2,325 children (1176 girls, 1149 boys) were enrolled in Moldovan schools (727 in kindergartens and 1598 in primary and secondary schools). The raions of Chișinău, Bălți, Gagauzia, Ştefan Vodă and Cahul have the largest numbers of Ukrainian children enrolled in local schools.Of the children studying in primary and secondary schools, 11% were studying in Romanian and 89% in Russian.

Highlights

Taras Shevchenko School: UNHCR is providing support to the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) and Chișinău Municipality to establish classes in a public school where the Moldovan curriculum will be taught in the Ukrainian language. The school has previously offered classes in Ukrainian history and culture. UNHCR is rehabilitating four classrooms and providing targeted infrastructure support, while other partners are supporting furniture and other needs.

Literacy Classes: UNHCR partner Tarna Rom conducts literacy classes for Roma children in six locations around the country and is simultaneously working to support the children to enroll in local schools.

Higher Education: UNHCR has supported MER with information dissemination on higher education opportunities for Ukrainian students. Ukrainian refugee students pay the same tuition fee as Moldovan students and have access to scholarships provided through the government.

Roadmap and Action Plan: UNHCR and UNICEF finalized a draft of the roadmap and action plan that will support MER in working toward the full enrollment of all Ukrainian children in Moldovan schools. The document has been reviewed by Education Working Group partners, and once finalized and endorsed by MER, will be shared with donors.

Key figures

- **Romanian language classes:** 288 people (92 adults, 196 children) benefited from Romanian language classes offered by UNHCR partner Charity Centre for Refugees.
- **School visits:** UNHCR conducted 11 school and community visits, many jointly with MER, to explore barriers to school enrolment, discuss education issues with families, and identify solutions to increase school enrolment of Ukrainian students in Moldovan schools for the upcoming school year.
- **School furniture distribution:** UNHCR donated 246 desks and chairs to seven (7) schools around the country to improve learning conditions, both for Moldovan and Ukrainian students.
- As of June 2024, **only 2,325 Ukrainian children** were enrolled in Moldovan schools, constituting **only 16% of school-age children** granted Temporary Protection and only 4% of all Ukrainian children reportedly present in the country. Other Ukrainian children are believed to be studying online, though there is no system in place to monitor their studies.

Dr. Duminica from the Ministry of Education observes children at the Glodeni Refugee Accommodation Centre as they proudly demonstrate their Romanian language skills during a literacy class led by Tarna Rom. This initiative not only helps refugee children gain essential language proficiency but also fosters their inclusion and integration into the Moldovan society, offering them a foundation for future educational success.

Operational Response

■ **Advocacy:** UNHCR advocates with the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) on the inclusion of refugee students in the national education system. UNHCR has supported with raising community level challenges with MER, resulting in the issuance of updated guidance for schools and universities on eligibility and enrolment of Ukrainian students.

■ **Access to Education:** UNHCR supports the enrollment of Ukrainian children in Moldovan schools through awareness raising, meetings with parents, and provision of material support.

■ **Support to Children with Specific Needs:** UNHCR partner Tarna Rom provides specialized support to children with no educational background who need basic literacy and numeracy skills and UNHCR is exploring how to further support children with disabilities in school settings.

■ **Higher Education:** UNHCR is engaged in the higher education sector and works on increasing access to free or affordable higher education for Ukrainian students and in sharing information on available opportunities. UNHCR partner CCR supports refugee students of all nationalities with university access. UNHCR is also collaborating with universities under the international framework of Sergio Vieira de Mello's academic network.

Refugee Coordination Forum

■ The Refugee Education Working Group (REWG) meets regularly to enhance coordination and provide technical expertise. The REWG is chaired by MER and co-chaired by UNHCR and UNICEF. In the first half of 2024, the REWG prioritized school visits, meetings with parents, and other initiatives to further identify barriers to enrolment and work toward significantly higher school enrolment numbers for the upcoming school year.

Working with Partners

■ In the education sector, UNHCR works in close collaboration with the **Ministry of Education and Research (MER)**, local **Directorates of Education**, and **UNICEF** to ensure that refugee children have access to quality education. These partnerships focus on integrating refugee students into the national education system, improving their learning outcomes, and providing them with the necessary resources and support to succeed academically and socially in Moldova.

■ UNHCR in collaboration with partners **Charity Centre for Refugees** and **Laolalta** offer free Romanian language classes for refugees in several locations. CCR also supports collaboration with Moldovan universities for the enrollment of refugee students of all nationalities. **Tarna Rom**, UNHCR partner, holds literacy classes for Roma refugee children in six locations throughout Moldova and supports their enrollment in local schools. UNHCR also collaborates with the Moldovan National Youth Council to share youth friendly information, including on topics related to education.

©Courtesy of Tarna Rom/ Elena Ursu

Young Roma refugee proudly displays her Romanian writing skills. With support from UNHCR, Romanian language classes help refugee children integrate and thrive in their new communities.

UNHCR is grateful for the support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to global UNHCR programmes.

Austria | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Iceland | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Liechtenstein | Norway | Netherlands | Spain | Switzerland | Sweden | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | United States of America | Private donors.

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UNHCR Moldova is also thankful for the cooperation of Moldovan authorities at all levels, other UN agencies, the private sector and civil society organizations.

For more information, please visit the Operational Data Portal for Moldova or the Global Focus page for Moldova.

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