UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair

2025 Year End Report

Republic of Moldova

Member Universities

Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chișinău

Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy

Comrat State University

Ștefan cel Mare Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova

Moldova State University

Key figures

6
leading universities across Moldova contributing to the network

USD 34K
Total funding provided for university-led projects

12
Academic & student-led projects Implemented in teaching, reserch and community outreach

150
Participants from universities, civil society, and refugee communities at the national scientific conference

250+
Refugees and Moldovans involved in implementing network activities

70+
Law enforcement and public officials trained to better protect refugees

150+
Youth engaged in research & digital literacy activities

60
Refugee women receiving medical and psychological support

Impact

Support provided to national systems

- Supported law enforcement and migration officials better protect refugees.
- Developed practical tools to help refugees access economic opportunities.
- Strengthened cooperation between universities and public institutions supporting refugee inclusion.

Improved Access to Services and Rights

- Expanded access to health and mental health support through services linked to existing systems.
- Produced multilingual information materials to help refugees better understand their rights.
- Strengthened trust and connections between refugees and service providers.

Informed future policy and planning

- Generated applied research on legal and institutional readiness post 2022.
- Produced evidence on social cohesion, digital well-being, and gender-responsive services.
- Contributed to the shift toward durable refugee inclusion.

Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation

CDA
Centrul de Drept al Avocaților

Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair

2025 Year End Report

Republic of Moldova

Background

The Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair Network (SVMAC) is a UNHCR-supported academic partnership established in honour of Sérgio Vieira de Mello, a Brazilian United Nations diplomat and former UNHCR official who dedicated more than three decades to humanitarian action, human rights, and refugee protection. The Network reflects his lasting commitment to the protection of forcibly displaced and stateless people, and advances the role of academia as a strategic partner in the global response to forced displacement. The Network is structured around three mutually reinforcing pillars: teaching, research, and community outreach. Through these pillars, it supports the development and expansion of academic curricula on forced displacement, human rights, and statelessness.

It also promotes applied research and knowledge production relevant to protection and durable solutions, and strengthens collaborative engagement between universities, refugees, and host communities.

Since its establishment, the Network has grown across multiple national and regional contexts and is now recognised as an integral part of the broader academic engagement architecture linked to the Global Compact on Refugees.

SVMAC network in Moldova

The Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair Network was extended to the Republic of Moldova in 2024 with the support of UNHCR, in partnership with the Law Centre of Advocates. The initiative was introduced in a context where Moldovan universities were already actively contributing to the refugee response, including through support to displaced communities, engagement in coordination processes, and growing academic interest in refugee inclusion, rights, and access to services.

Following the the network establishement with Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chișinău and Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy in 2024, the network expanded further in 2025 with the accession of Comrat State University, the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, and Ștefan cel Mare Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Moldova State University, bringing total membership to six leading institutions. During the same period, the Network advanced its work at the national level through grant-supported academic and student-led initiatives, and held its first national scientific conference on inclusive academic environments for displaced people.

Regional Refugee Respons for the Ukraine Situation

CDA Centrul de Drept al Avocaților

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair

2025 Year End Report

Republic of Moldova

SVMAC Grant Program

In 2025, UNHCR in partnership with the Law Centre of Advocates launched the Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair Grant Programme, through which 12 projects were selected for implementation between September and November 2025, supported through a total grant envelope of 593,708 MDL.

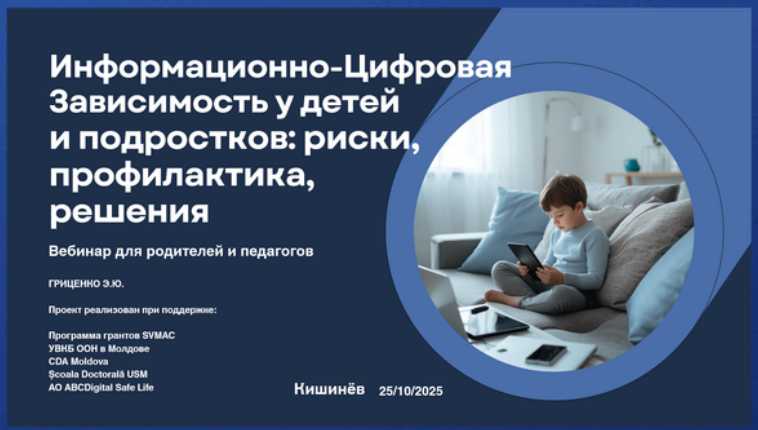
The projects spanned health and psychosocial support, legal research, digital literacy, economic rights, and intercultural inclusion, directly engaging more than 250 refugees and host community members, over 150 adolescents and youth, more than 70 law enforcement and institutional actors, and 60 refugee women receiving medical and psychological support. The programme strengthened protection-sensitive institutional capacity, improved access to rights and services, and generated applied evidence on legal preparedness, social cohesion, and gender-responsive support.

SVMAC Network Projects

Prevalence of Info-Digital Addiction and Associated Health Indicators among Refugee and Local Youth in Moldova

September – November 2025

Project Manager: Ella Gritenco, PhD Student, Moldova State University



The project "Prevalence of Info-Digital Addiction and Associated Health Indicators among Refugee and Local Youth in Moldova", implemented by Moldova State University under the Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair Network, aims to examine the prevalence of Info-Digital Addiction among refugee and local adolescents and its correlation with psychophysiological health indicators. The project supports both refugee and host-community youth, offering an online survey, targeted awareness-raising, and webinars on digital hygiene and mindful technology use.

The initiative strengthens academic research by generating evidence on an emerging behavioral health challenge that affects young people's adaptation, wellbeing, and learning environments, contributing to the development of preventive and educational programs. Through its activities, the project advances one of the first interdisciplinary studies on Info-Digital Addiction among refugee adolescents in Eastern Europe, laying the foundation for further research and institutional engagement in promoting responsible digital behavior.

Regional Refugee Respons for the Ukraine Situation

CDA
Centrul de Drept al Avocaților

Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair

2025 Year End Report

Republic of Moldova

Empowering Young Refugees and Stateless People Through Dialogue, Culture and Friendship

September – November 2025

Project Manager: Efrosinia Haheu-Munteanu, PhD, Associate Professor, "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University of Chișinău

The project aimed to create inclusive intercultural spaces that strengthen dialogue and mutual understanding between refugee, stateless, and local youth. The project supported young members of displaced and host communities through creative workshops, thematic evenings, advocacy activities, and a dialogue club focused on interpersonal connection and cultural exchange. Activities were co-developed with participants, encouraging the active involvement and leadership of refugees and stateless persons. This participatory approach contributed to reducing stigma, building trust, and fostering a more inclusive university environment where diverse identities are recognised and valued.

Healthy Women, Strong Communities: Medical and Psychological Support for Ukrainian Refugees in the Republic of Moldova

September – 30 November 2025

Project Manager: Corina Iliadi-Tulbure, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Nicolae Testemițanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy

The project aimed to enhance access to rights, services, and community-based support for Ukrainian refugee women in Moldova. Through medical and psychosocial training sessions delivered in Bălți, Chișinău, and Cahul, the project reached 60 refugee women across areas including sexual and reproductive health, perimenopausal changes, STI prevention, cancer screening, and the identification of stress and trauma symptoms. The sessions promoted health education, preventive practices, and psychological wellbeing, improving access to local health services and encouraging informed health-seeking behaviour. Through these activities, the project contributed to building personal coping resources and strengthening community resilience among refugee women.

Regional Refugee Respons for the Ukraine Situation

CDA Centrul de Drept al Avocaților

Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair

2025 Year End Report

Republic of Moldova

Strengthening Intercultural Dialogue and Inclusion in the University Environment of the Republic of Moldova

September – November 2025

Project Manager: Prof. Dr. Habil. Alla Levitskaia, Comrat State University, Director of the Institute for Regional Economic Development (REDI)

The project supported the development of intercultural dialogue and social inclusion among students in southern Moldova. Through thematic cafés focused on refugee rights and intercultural understanding, it contributed to creating university environments that are safe, inclusive, and conducive to dialogue. The project also strengthened the academic dimension by generating evidence on the integration of young refugees and formulating policy recommendations for higher education institutions. Through these activities, the project reinforced the role of universities as key actors in promoting social cohesion and mutual understanding.

Echoes of Armed Conflicts in the Context of Forced Migration and Refugee Inclusion through the Training of Law Enforcement Personnel

September – November 2025

Project Manager: Andrei Lungu, "Ștefan cel Mare" Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

The project supported the strengthening of institutional capacity in addressing the needs of refugees in Moldova. Through an operational gap analysis, a structured methodological guide, and an 8-hour training module, it equipped law enforcement personnel with knowledge and tools covering refugee rights, behavioural interaction, intercommunity dynamics, and the prevention of criminogenic risks. The training integrated behavioral analysis and international best practices, contributing to improved institutional responses to forced displacement. Through these activities, the project promoted evidence-based training, reinforced social cohesion, and strengthened the role of law enforcement institutions in ensuring protection-sensitive interaction with displaced communities.

Regional Refugee Respons for the Ukraine Situation

CDA Centrul de Drept al Avocaților

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair

2025 Year End Report

Republic of Moldova

B.R.A.I.N. – EmpowerAI: Artificial Intelligence and Citizen Science for Inclusion and Participation

15 September – 30 November 2025
Project Manager: Vitalie Mamot, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chișinău (UPSC)

The project supported refugees in building digital literacy and foundational knowledge of artificial intelligence through an accessible and participatory approach. Initially designed for refugee high-school students, it was adapted to an adult cohort, ensuring that learning materials, pace, and practical examples remained relevant and inclusive. Through six interactive AI workshops, psychological counselling, a trilingual digital guide, and field training sessions on citizen science for urban-environment observation, the project provided practical support to refugee parents. The research component explored mobility dynamics along the R30 Palanca–Chișinău corridor, generating operational insights relevant to humanitarian response planning.

Refugee Health Connect – “Belonging Begins Here”

September – November 2025
Project Manager: Student team from USMF “Nicolae Testemițanu,” coordinated under faculty mentorship

The project supported inclusive academic engagement by creating safe spaces where refugees and asylum seekers feel welcomed, respected, and supported. Through community-based health camps, it provided free consultations, basic medical screenings, and health education sessions delivered by medical students and faculty, fostering interaction between future healthcare professionals and persons affected by forced displacement. The project contributed to reducing health inequalities and improving access to health information, while building trust between the medical community and refugee communities. Through this approach it cultivated empathy-driven learning and promoted socially responsible medical practice within the university environment.

Regional Refugee Respons for the Ukraine Situation

CDA
Centrul de Drept al Avocaților

Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair

2025 Year End Report

Republic of Moldova

From Theory to Practice: Moldova's Legal and Institutional Readiness to Host Refugees After 2022

1 September – 30 November 2025
Project Manager: Igor Ianac, Doctor of Law, Professor, Comrat State University.
)

The project supported a comprehensive assessment of Moldova's refugee protection system in the context of the displacement crisis triggered by the war in Ukraine. Through in-depth research, consultations, and comparative analysis, it examined the effectiveness of current legal, procedural, and institutional mechanisms and identified existing regulatory and operational gaps. The project contributed to strengthening academic knowledge on protection systems and enhanced teaching on migration governance. Its findings informed concrete recommendations to improve the sustainability, responsiveness, and human-centred character of Moldova's refugee protection framework.

Fostering the Social Integration of Ukrainian Refugees via Resilience Building and Scientific Thinking Development (FSI-UR)

September – November 2025
Project Manager: Assoc. Prof. Sergiu Sanduleac, PhD Habil., "Ion Creangă" State Pedagogical University of Chișinău

The project supported the social integration of refugee students through an innovative psycho-pedagogical module connecting scientific thinking with psychological security. Through ten interactive workshops, a methodological guide, and a dissemination roundtable, it encouraged reflective reasoning, adaptive coping, and intercultural dialogue among refugee and host community students. The project contributed to academic research by piloting and evaluating an original educational model, while strengthening teaching practices and community outreach within the university environment. Through these activities, it advanced the development of socially cohesive and academically supportive environments for students affected by displacement.

Regional Refugee Respons for the Ukraine Situation

CDA Centrul de Drept al Avocaților

Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair

2025 Year End Report

Republic of Moldova

Inclusion and Economic Rights of Refugees in the Republic of Moldova

15 September – 30 November 2025
Project Manager: Alexandra Tighineanu, PhD, Associate Professor, Director of the Legal Clinic for Business Consulting, Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova (ASEM)

The project supported the protection and socio-economic inclusion of refugees by improving access to education, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Through free legal assistance, a practical entrepreneurial guide tailored to refugee needs, and informational workshops on economic rights and available services, the project equipped refugees with tools to navigate and participate in Moldova's economic life. The initiative has contributed to academic research and teaching through the publication of scholarly articles and the integration of real-world casework into the university's Legal Clinic for Business Consulting. Through these activities, the project promoted informed decision-making and self-reliance.

Bridges of Understanding: Information and Support for Refugees

September – November 2025
Project Manager: Laura Tugarev, PhD in Communication Sciences, Associate Professor, Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences, Moldova State University

The project supported refugees' access to rights, services, and community support through clear, accessible, and multilingual communication. Through the production of four podcasts and a series of social media reels with Ukrainian subtitles, broadcast in partnership with regional television channel, it promoted accurate information, community engagement, and public dialogue. The initiative strengthened academic research by advancing communication studies on displacement and social inclusion, while enriching teaching practices through students' direct involvement in applied social journalism and media production. Through these activities, the project contributed to improving integration processes and fostering social cohesiom across Moldova.

Regional Refugee Respons for the Ukraine Situation

CDA Centrul de Drept al Avocaților

Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair

2025 Year End Report

Republic of Moldova

MoldovaREconnect Women – A Space for Psycho-Emotional Support for Refugee and Local Women

September – November 2025
Project Manager: Dr. Mădălina Valache, psychiatry resident and mental health trainer

The project supported the strengthening of resilience, emotional wellbeing, and social connection among refugee and host-community women in Moldova. Through psycho-educational sessions delivered in partnership with local CSOs, it provided interactive workshops focused on emotional awareness, stress management, and coping strategies adapted to the realities of forced displacement. The project contributed to advocacy in the field of mental health by promoting inclusive practices and fostering safe spaces for women's empowerment. Through its applied methodology, it offered a replicable model of psycho-emotional intervention that supports integration and reinforces mutual support.

SVMAC Scientific Conference

On 25 November2025, the SVMAC Network convened its inaugural scientific conference under the title Inclusive Academic Environments: Futures for Displaced in Moldova. Hosted at Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chișinău, the conference brought together 150 participants from academia, public institutions, civil society, and refugee communities. It served as the first national platform dedicated specifically to the role of academia in refugee inclusion and displacement-related knowledge production in Moldova.

The programme included, thematic presentations, and discussion panels focused on gaps in inclusive academic environments, lessons from the first year of implementation of the network in Moldova, and forward-looking approaches to integrating displaced communities more fully into academic and social life. All 12 grant-supported projects were presented through an exhibition and project summaries, allowing participants to engage directly with the work undertaken by universities and researchers over the year.

For more information, please contact:
Monica Vazquez, UNHCR External Relations Officer at vazquezm@unhcr.org
Kyrylo Prykhodko, UNHCR Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Associate at prykhodk@unhcr.com

Regional Refugee Respons for the Ukraine Situation

CDA Centrul de Drept al Avocaților