

REFUGEE EDUCATION WORKING GROUP FACT SHEET

The Refugee Education Working Group (REWG) aims to strengthen coordination among education stakeholders in Moldova to support the Government in providing quality, inclusive education in safe and protective environments for refugee children. Led by the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), co-led by UNICEF and UNHCR, the group offers technical support, strategic policy guidance, and capacity development to education stakeholders.



BACKGROUND



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Ten-year-old Darya from Odesa, Ukraine, participates actively during a lesson in a Moldovan school. Darya is one of the beneficiaries of non-formal education activities supported by UNICEF for the integration of refugee children into Moldovan schools.

Since late February 2022, a large influx of refugees has entered Moldova due to the conflict in Ukraine. According to the UNHCR Data Portal, between March 2022 and December 2024, a total of over 1.2 million people from Ukraine crossed the borders from Ukraine to the Republic of Moldova. Many of them continued their journey to other European countries, but about 135,000 refugees remain in Moldova, of whom 42% are children. A small number of non-Ukrainian asylum seeking, and refugee children also reside in Moldova.

The Ministry of Education and Research (MER) has taken an open and active role in addressing the education needs of the refugee children. MER issued an Instruction in September 2023, followed by several amendments in 2023 and 2024, easing requirements for enrollment in Moldovan schools. All children from Ukraine who arrived after the 24th February 2022 can enroll in Moldovan schools regardless of their legal status. However, many families have chosen to keep their children enrolled in Ukrainian schools and attending online classes.

KEY INDICATORS



66,600 of children reached in non-formal education, language and life skills programs in 2024.



3,314 refugee children enrolled in formal education by December 2024.



479 refugee children continued to learn online in EduTech Labs inside schools.



237 Roma individuals supported in education programming, including **163** children enrolled in schools.



710 education personnel trained or received support to better respond to the needs of refugee learners.



688 children and adolescents benefited from MHPSS support within educational institutions.



7 partners provided Romanian Language Support for children in schools: Charity Center for Refugees (CCR), People in Need, WeWorld, Caritas Moldova, Institutul de Instruire în Dezvoltare „MilleniuM”, Norwegian Refugee Council.

KEY RESULTS 2024

With MER's support, **3,314** refugee children were enrolled in educational institutions in December 2024, including **835** in preschools. This represents an increase of over **1000** children since the end of 2023. Revised ministerial orders easing the school enrolment process, as well as a Back-to-School campaign which helped reach refugee parents and children, encouraging physical enrollment in schools, supported this increase.

In 2024, REWG partners provided non-formal education to around **66,600** refugee and Moldovan children, including Romanian language classes, catch-up lessons, STEAM trainings, sports programs, and social cohesion activities like festivals and summer camps. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services were integrated into educational institutions, benefiting both Moldovan and Ukrainian students.

Field visits by the REWG chairs identified remaining barriers to accessing schools, leading to targeted support for Roma refugee children in RACs and children with disabilities. **710** teachers received trainings on topics including Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Psychological First Aid (PFA), inclusive education as well as on best practices for working with students lacking formal schooling.

Additionally, **237** Roma individuals supported in education programming, including **163** children enrolled in schools.

In Chişinău, together with the collaborative work of the REWG partners, “Taras Shevchenko” Gymnasium, which has begun offering classes in Ukrainian, following the Moldovan curriculum, was renovated and expanded access for **290** students.

To support Ukrainian refugees, REWG established more than **90** EduTech Labs, helping **479** students connect to the online Ukrainian curriculum and engaging **990** children in non-formal education, as reported in December 2024.

UNICEF and UNHCR, in collaboration with the MER, developed a draft Roadmap and accompanying Action Plan to ensure the inclusion of refugee children in Moldova's formal education system by 2026. The roadmap outlines the identified needs, including cost estimations and addresses critical areas for strengthening the resilience of Moldova's education system and promoting the seamless integration of refugee children.

REMAINING CHALLENGES

- Despite an increase in school enrolment compared to previous years, the enrollment rate of Ukrainian refugee children in Moldova remains one of the lowest in the region.
- In addition to the preference for online learning, significant barriers to accessing education still persist, including language, frequent movement between Ukraine and Moldova, uncertainty regarding the duration of stay in Moldova, and limited physical capacity in schools and preschools, particularly in Chisinau.
- Lack of a monitoring mechanism in place to track the number of Ukrainian children in Moldova connected to the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science online platforms or to assess the quality of their learning.
- Persistent challenges to online learning include interruptions to online classes, high cost and limited availability of internet access, limited availability of high-quality devices, and irregular and inconsistent quality of online lessons.
- Refugee Children With Disabilities (CWDs) face additional barriers: increased self-isolation, lack of assistive technologies and limited access to mental health and psychosocial support.
- Roma refugee children with limited or no educational background face challenges in enrolling in mainstream education due to the lack of specialized programs to support their transitional enrollment.

Partners Reported Education Activities in RRP 2024:

- Amici Dei Bambini Moldova
- AO Asociația pentru Dezvoltarea Tehnologiilor Informaționale EDUCAT
- AO Programul Educațional Pas cu Pas
- Asociația pentru Drepturile Omului Lex XXI
- Centrul National pentru Educație Timpurie și Informare a Familiei
- Charity Centre for Refugees
- Centrul de Informare și Resurse "PRO BONO"
- Child and Family Empowerment Association "AVE Copiii"
- Child Community Family
- Diaconia
- Dorcas
- Football Federation of the Republic of Moldova
- Humanitarian Aid Center of the Jewish Community of Moldova
- National Congress of Ukrainians in Moldova
- Norwegian Refugee Council
- Partnership for Every Child
- People In Need
- The Moldovan Association of ICT Companies
- Catholic Relief Services
- ChildFund Deutschland e.V.
- Church World Service
- DEC
- Lumos Foundation
- PLAN International
- Terre des hommes Moldova
- United Nations Children's Fund
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- WeWorld
- World Vision International.



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In the preschool in Palanca village, Stefan Vodă, Moldovan and Ukrainian children participate in educational activities using LEGO, provided by UNICEF.

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