ISWG
Inclusion & Solutions
Working Group Moldova

Regional Refugee Response
for the Ukraine Situation

Inclusion & Solutions

Working Group Moldova

February 17, 2026
Chisinau
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MINISTERUL MUNCII ȘI PROTECȚIEI SOCIALE

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

unicef

UNDP

WFP
World Food Programme

Agenda

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- **MLSP Presentation:** *Employment and Labor Reform Priorities*
- **ISWG Presentation:** *Activating Refugee Workforce Potential*
- **AOB**

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Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation

MLSP Presentation

Employment and Labor Reform Priorities

Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

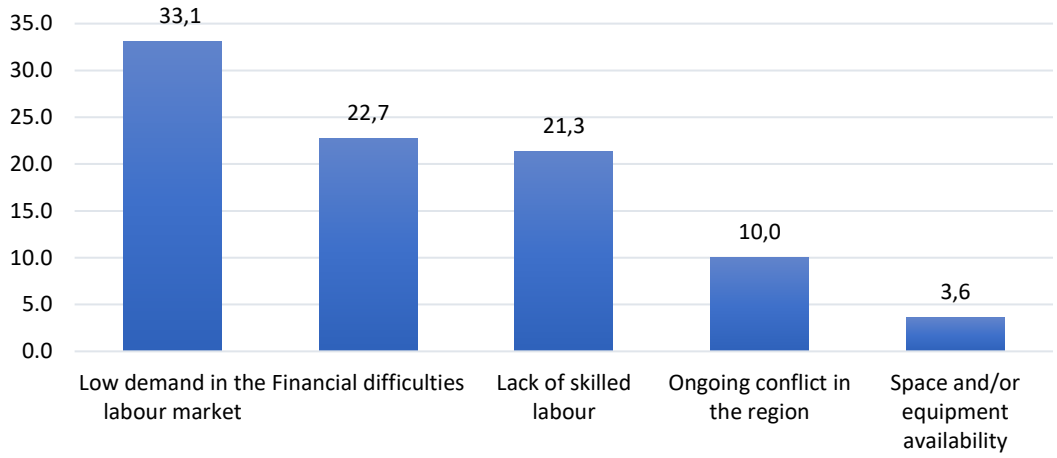
Labour priorities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection for 2026

February 2026

Labour market challenges

- High rate of **inactive population**
- **Mismatch** between workforce **skills** and labor market **requirements**
- **Migration**, particularly among the working-age population
- **Regional imbalance**: labor shortages in urban areas and lack of opportunities in the rest of the country
- High level of **informal employment**: 1 in 5 employed persons work informally

Main factors limiting the economic activity of enterprises



Source: National Bureau of statistics

Key Points in the Field of Employment

- 👩‍💼 **20 733** people employed in **2025** (**+20%,** ⬆️3 325 people).

- 📈 **Increase in the budget allocated to active labour market measures** implemented by the National Employment Agency (from MDL 34 million to MDL 196 million **for 2026 only**).

- 📊 A **400% increase in the number of beneficiaries of active labour market measures in 2026** compared to 2024.

- 🚚 Intensify efforts to **activate the inactive population**, including expanding mobile outreach teams and strengthening cooperation with local public authorities.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Active labour market measures

- 📖 **Vouchers for vocational training courses** (scholarship – MDL 4,933)

🏢 **Professional internships** (scholarships for interns – MDL 4,933; subsidies for employers)

🏢 **On-the-job training** (scholarship – MDL 4,933; subsidies for employers)

💰 **Subsidies for employers** for hiring persons without a profession, persons with disabilities, persons aged 50 and over, victims of domestic violence, young people aged 16–18 who have lost parental care, long-term unemployed persons, persons released from detention, victims of human trafficking, etc.

♿ **Subsidies for creating or adapting workplaces for persons with disabilities**

🚌 **One-time transportation allowance** for persons who accept a job in a locality other than their place of residence (MDL 14,096)

🚌 **Monthly transportation allowance for persons with disabilities** working in a locality other than their place of residence

📜 **Certification of knowledge and** skills acquired informally

💰 **Grants for starting a business**

💰 **Grants for expanding local projects**

♿ **Vocational rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities**

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

National Employment Agency

•**Mission of the National Employment Agency (ANOFM):** to enhance employment opportunities for jobseekers and to support employers in identifying the workforce and creating new jobs.

•ANOFM carries out its activities at the territorial level through **35 territorial subdivisions for employment services** [(link)](#).

•Each territorial subdivision has appointed a dedicated contact person responsible for ensuring communication with displaced persons.

Services Provided by National Employment Agency to Refugees

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

- ℹ️ Information on available job vacancies
- 📄 Information on the conditions of employment
- 🧭 Career guidance
- 💬 Counseling and guidance on addressing issues other than employment-related matters
- 📄 Job placement and intermediation services, including cooperation with employers
- 🎓 Identification of training needs through courses supported by donors
- 👥 Informational seminars and group counseling sessions for refugees
- 🏢 Job fairs with the participation of refugees
- 💬 Information on services provided by development partners and on-going projects at the local level
- 📧 Support for employers regarding notification of ANOFM on the employment of refugees via the email: **angajare_ua@anofm.md**

Results recorded

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

2022	2023	2024	2025
• Number of displaced persons registered with ANOFM – 573 • Number of displaced persons employed – 181 • Number of displaced persons trained (with support) – 21	• Number of displaced persons registered with ANOFM – 844 • Number of displaced persons employed – 236 • Number of visits to placement centers – 10 • Number of people informed during visits – 185 • Number of displaced persons trained (with support) – 79	• Number of displaced persons registered with ANOFM – 539 • Number of displaced persons employed – 272 • Number of visits to placement centers – 81 • Number of people informed during visits – more than 700 • Number of displaced persons trained (with support) – 322	• Number of displaced persons registered with ANOFM – 540 • Number of displaced persons employed – 193 • Number of visits to placement centers – 25 • Number of people informed during visits – 405 • Number of displaced persons trained (with support) – 198

Results recorded in 2025

The number of Ukrainian citizens for whom mandatory state social insurance contributions were declared

2022	2023	2024	Trim. I 2025	Trim. II 2025	Trim. III 2025
3131	3158	2735	2140	2180	2215

Source: National Office of Social Insurance

Barriers to integration into the labour market

- Language barriers, particularly limited proficiency in the Romanian language;
- Family responsibilities, as the majority of refugees are mothers accompanied by children;
- Relatively lower wage levels in the Republic of Moldova compared to Western countries;
- Uncertainty regarding the duration of stay and future prospects.

Thank you for your attention

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ISWG Presentation

Activating Refugee Workforce Potential

A Unique Opportunity Window in 2026

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Humanitarian Cash Phasing Out

MPCA reduced 26%
(2,200 → 1,625 MDL per person, April 2025)

Eligibility tightening
via scorecard-based targeting + further caseload reductions anticipated in 2026 due to funding constraints

Financial disincentive to work largely removed
Previously, assistance at minimum-wage levels reduced motivation for formal employment

ALMP Scale-Up Under EU Growth Plan

~400% increase in NEA ALM measures
At least 60% of beneficiaries are women. At least 10% of beneficiaries are persons with disabilities.

EUR 1.9 billion EU Growth Plan
Vehicle 10: workforce expansion as a critical GDP growth vehicle

Freelancer regime launching
New formalization pathway

Refugees are now financially motivated to work, and the instruments to support them are being scaled.

Source: UNHCR Moldova, Feb 2026; EU Growth Plan / Government Growth Dashboard

A Skilled, Resident Workforce

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32% population decline since 2014: With one of the highest out-migration rates globally, Moldova faces a structural human capital deficit that constrains growth — making labor activation an economic imperative.

81%

of working-age refugee respondents have prior work experience

35%

have had paid work since arriving in Moldova

24%

of refugees hold tertiary degrees (vs. 16% host community)

63%

of self-employed respondents would join a support programme

Unlike diaspora or foreign workers, refugees are already here: they consume, they rent, their children attend Moldovan schools.

Source: UNHCR Socio-Economic Assessment (World Bank–UNHCR JDC survey, Q3 2024; n=926 refugee HH)

The Legal Access Gap

Under Law 105/2018, TP holders can register as Job Seekers but cannot obtain Registered Unemployed status.

ACCESSIBLE (Job Seeker Status)

- Labor market information

Vacancies, occupational trends, labor rights via 35 STOFM offices and angajat.md portal

- Career guidance and counseling

Skills assessment, Ukrainian qualification mapping

- Labor mediation (job matching)

Active matching with employers via referral slips

BLOCKED (Requires Unemployed Status)

- Vocational training vouchers
- Professional internships
- On-the-job training subsidies
- Transport allowances
- Wage subsidies for employers
- Business start-up and expansion grants
- Certification of informally acquired skills
- Professional rehabilitation services
- Workplace adaptation subsidies (for PwDs)

TP grants a right to stay (drept de ședere), not a residence permit (permis de ședere). This documentation gap is the main barrier.

Source: Law No. 105/2018 on Employment Promotion and Unemployment Insurance; UNHCR Moldova technical note, Feb 2026

ALM Demand Estimate

Tier-based activation model

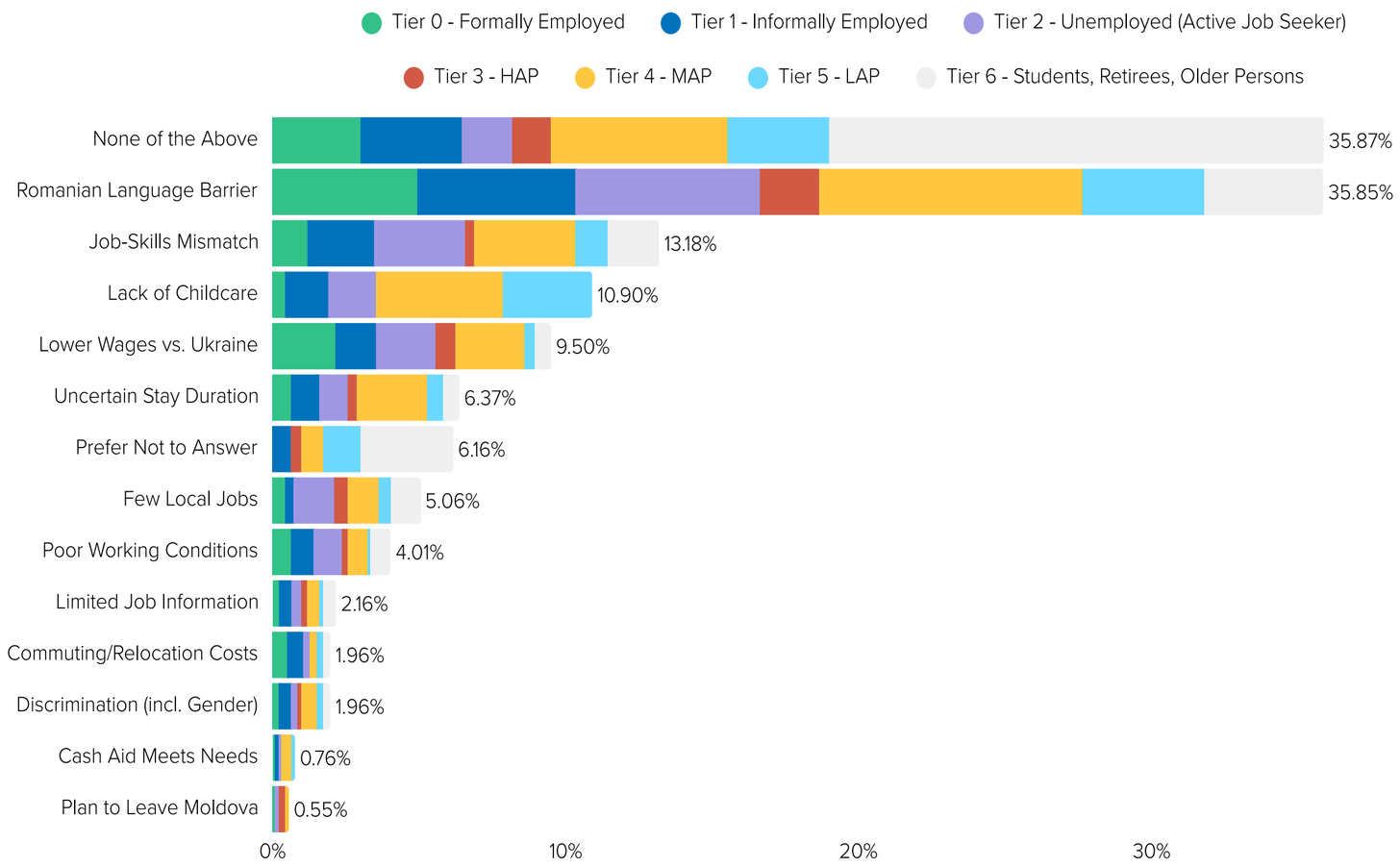
Two datasets, same methodology:

- JDC survey (World Bank–UNHCR, Q3 2024; n=926 refugee households)
- MPCA Household Vulnerability Assessment (HVA) (Q4 2025; n=5,086 eligible households)

A tier-based activation model classifies households by labor status and applies barrier-adjusted probabilities, accounting for language constraints, skills mismatch, childcare limitations, overlapping barriers, and the declining MPCA incentive structure.

Applied to the broader TP population, this produces **a projection of overall activation potential**. Applied to the MPCA caseload, it yields an **absolute, operational figure** representing the most actionable cohort for priority referral and pilot inclusion.

+ barrier corrections



Source: UNHCR Socio-Economic Assessment (JDC, Q3 2024; n=926 HH) & Household Vulnerability Assessment (Q4 2025; n=5,086 HH)

Tier-Based Activation Model

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HH classified by activity status, caregiving, and demographics; each assigned a realistic activation probability based on empirical barrier profiles.

Tier	Description	Act. %	Key Rationale	# of HH (JDC)	# of HH (MPCA)	Total JDC %	Total MPCA %
0	Formally employed	**0%**	Already in formal employment	97	312	0%	0%
1	Informally employed	**75%**	Already working; 29% zero barriers; formalization candidates	112	203	9%	3%
2	Unemployed (active job seekers)	**70%**	Primary ALMP target; heaviest barriers (52% language, 26% skills)	111	611	8%	8%
3	High Activation Potential	**40%**	Few constraints; inactivity reflects disruption, not non-participation	45	201	2%	2%
4	Medium Activation Potential	**25%**	Caregivers w/ school-age children; 55% single-adult HH	203	123	6%	1%
5	Lower Activation Potential	**12%**	Young children (0-5) or severe care needs; structurally constrained	109	120	1%	0%
6	Students, retirees, 65+	**5%**	Limited re-entry potential; mainly younger retirees (55-64)	249	3516	1%	3%
	TOTAL:			**926**	**5,086**	**27.6%**	**17.3%**

Barrier corrections applied: Romanian language (36%), skills mismatch (13%), childcare access (11%), compounding effects (barrier density 0.46–1.45 per HH), and MPCA financial incentive shift.

Source: UNHCR Socio-Economic Assessment (JDC, Q3 2024; n=926 HH) & Household Vulnerability Assessment (Q4 2025; n=5,086 HH)

Two Realistic Estimates

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ESTIMATE 1: Broader TP Population

~9,200

individuals with activation potential

(range: 7,390 – 11,176)

Data: JDC survey (Q3 2024; n=926 HH)
Base: ~61,800 TP holders est. physically present (70%)
Rate: 27.6% of households
Multiplier: 1.33 working-age adults (18-64) per HH
Type: Projection to 70% of current total # of TP holders

ESTIMATE 2: MPCA Actionable Cohort

~700

immediately deployable individuals

from current MPCA caseload

Data: HVA (Q4 2025; n=5,086 HH)
Rate: 17.3% of eligible MPCA households
Multiplier: 0.77 working-age adults (18-64) per HH
Type: Absolute, caseload-based figure
Note: Most actionable cohort for near-term referrals

Source: UNHCR Moldova technical note, Feb 2026; IGM TP registry (Feb 2, 2026): 88,285 registered, est. 70% physically present

Demographic Profile Comparison

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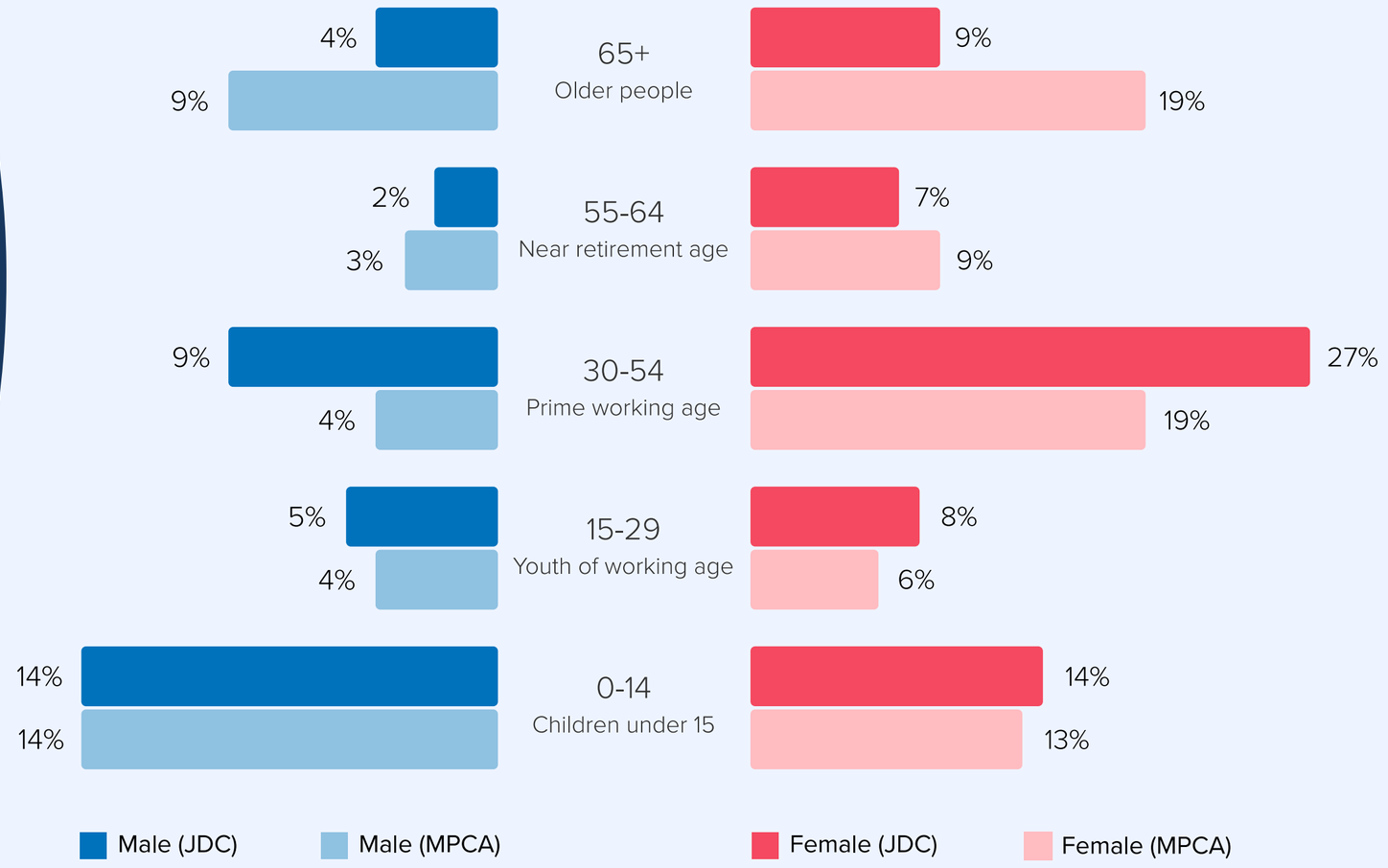
	JDC	MPCA
male	35%	31%
female	65%	69%
children	33%	32%
elderly	19%	28%
PWD	8%	15%



Source: UNHCR Socio-Economic Assessment (JDC, Q3 2024; n=926 HH) & Household Vulnerability Assessment (Q4 2025; n=5,086 HH)

The Fiscal Arithmetic

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	Not employed / informal	Freelancer (independent)	Formal employee (local contract)
Gross annual income	26,400 MDL	120,000 MDL	156,000 MDL
Income tax	0	~1,200	~18,720
Social contributions (BASS)	0	~14,000	~37,440
Health insurance (CNAM)	0	~12,600	~14,040
Indirect revenue (VAT + excise)	~15,480	~29,760	~37,560
TOTAL STATE REVENUE	**~15,480 MDL**	**~57,560 MDL**	**~107,760 MDL**

7x
return per person

539M MDL
annual revenue from activating 5,000 in industrial sector

Equivalent to roughly 75–80% of ODA's 2025 SME grants and tax incentives envelope

Source: UNHCR Moldova MEDD Briefing Note, Feb 2026

Advocacy Points

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Advocate for ALMM Access via MLSP

Support TP holder access to EU Growth Plan–financed active labor market measures through the necessary legislative amendment.

If 2027 financing decisions change, the approach can be adjusted before creating structural commitments.

Extend Freelancer Regime to TP Holders

Formalize refugee participation in the new freelancer regime, broadening the tax base.

A low-risk pathway to formalize independent/remote work and generate near-term fiscal returns without creating open-ended expenditure commitments.

Inclusive Hiring Criteria in MEDD Programmes

Embed inclusive hiring criteria in MEDD investment programmes to align enterprise support with labor activation.

Link MEDD support to activation: prioritize/ advantage firms that hire TP holders (alongside vulnerable Moldovans) through scoring criteria or targeted incentives.

Source: UNHCR Moldova MEDD Briefing Note, Feb 2026; UNHCR Moldova technical note, Feb 2026

AOB?

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