Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation

Meeting Details	
Date	*14.06.2024. Next meeting – August 2024 (specific date – tbc)*
Time	*13:00 – 14:30*
Chair	*Felicia Bechtold, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection* *Andrea Cuzyova, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP*
Reporting	*Zinaida Adam, Livelihoods and Inclusion Sector Lead, UNDP, zinaida.adam@undp.org* *Ion Mihalas, MLSP, ion.mihalas@social.gov.md*
Email	*felicia.bechtoldt@social.gov.md ; Andrea.cuzyova@undp.org;*

Agenda

- Welcoming remarks and updates from LI WG co-chair Felicia Bechtold, Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
- Presentation of LI activities of WeWorld Moldova, Berfu Nisan Gur, Multi-Project Manager
- Introduction of REACH's upcoming Entrepreneurship assessment – Raluca Stoican, senior assessment officer
- Updates from LI WG member groups

Information collection and relevant links

1. Presentation of 2024 Livelihoods Activities of WeWorld Moldova
2. Presentation of Entrepreneurship assessment of REACH.
3. Invitation from the Refugee Coordination Forum to the World Refugee Day celebrations.

Participants: members of the LI WG

Agenda	*Discussion*	Agreements/ Actions
Agenda Point 1	• **Ms. Bechtold welcomed the participants and provided several updates:** **Childcare Expansion:** Ms. Bechtoldt mentioned that the 10 million MDL allocated last year through the state "Satul European" (European Village) program for expanding childcare services in public kindergartens resulted in the creation of 220 new creche	• A request was made by Ms. Bechtold for the partners to support the creation of new creche

Agenda	*Discussion*	Agreements/ Actions
Welcome remarks and updates	groups for children up to three years old. Collaborations with other organizations facilitated the extension of seven additional childcare groups in various locations (Street Child – 5 groups, UN Women – 2 groups, and UNHCR – 1 group). Additionally, with the support of UNICEF (6), UN Women (5) and UNHCR (1), 12 creche groups were equipped with furniture and other items for childcare. This year the Government allocated an additional 20 million MDL for creating new creche groups in public kindergartens in communities around the country, including communes that are part of Chisinau municipality, and the call of applications will be announced in June, but a shortage of funding is expected. **Employment Statistics:** The creation of new creche places is corelated with the increase in the number of employed women. 23,000 more women were employed in 2023 compared to 2022, representing a 5.5% rise - 8.8 percentage point increase in urban areas and a 2.7 percentage point growth in rural areas. In contrast, men's employment saw a minimal 0.3% increase. Additionally, there was a significant decrease in the number of individuals, notably women, undertaking family care responsibilities compared to the previous year. Many of these women are working part-time, signaling a need to further invest in childcare facilities in Moldova. **Local Employment Offices**: Discussing improvements in local employment offices, Ms. Bechtold highlighted ongoing efforts to enhance services for job seekers. The focus was on renovating the offices and ensuring accessibility, especially for individuals with disabilities. Plans included creating self-service spaces and increasing the numbers of mobile teams to provide services in remote villages. Currently there are 17 mobiles teams out of the 35 local employment offices.	groups in Moldova, to facilitate the return of mothers to work. • Attendees were urged to support the renovation of the offices and facilities of the Local Employment Offices, as well as the creation and equipping of new mobile teams to reach remote villages. • Focal point for childcare services related requests: Mihaela Iurascu, mihaela.iurascu@social.gov.md
Agenda Point 2 **Presentation of LI activities of WeWorld Moldova, Berfu Nisan**	• The ongoing WeWorld project implemented in collaboration with World Vision and funded by ADH, introduced a childcare professional course designed in partnership with *Alexei Matevici* College in Chisinau, providing participants with an accredited certification. The graduates are eligible to open an alternative childcare business and can access the patenta (for Moldovan citizens only). 56 beneficiaries graduated during	• Members of the LI WG were informed about the new web page developed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection related to alternative care

Agenda	*Discussion*	Agreements/ Actions
Gur, Multi-Project Manager	phase one of the project, and 50 other beneficiaries are expected to graduate in July 2024. • Additional components of WeWorld's existing and upcoming projects include small business management training for the graduates of the accredited childcare course, vocational skills development, language classes catering to both Moldovan and Ukrainian participants and career counseling services at the WeWorld Community Center, aiming to guide individuals aged 15 and above in exploring potential career pathways. Details can be found in the attached presentation.	services for young children Servicii alternative (gov.md) with the support of UNDP, and were encouraged to share their activities in this area with the Ministry, to be promoted via this information source as well. • PPP shared with the members of the working group via email.
Agenda Point 3 **Introduction of REACH's upcoming Entrepreneurship assessment – Raluca Stoican, senior assessment officer**	• Raluca Stoian introduced the study, co-conducted with UNHCR, focusing on the entrepreneurship landscape in Moldova, targeting Moldovan and Ukrainian refugee entrepreneurs. • The study aims to explore durable solutions due to the potentially prolonged crisis, highlighting the significant economic and integration roles of refugee entrepreneurs. The study will assess profiles, motivations, challenges, coping mechanisms, and support opportunities for both established and aspiring entrepreneurs, using a gendered lens. • A mixed methods approach will be used, including 150 surveys, individual interviews with established entrepreneurs, focus group discussions with aspiring refugee entrepreneurs, and key informant interviews with experts. • Research design is nearly complete, data collection begins in June, lasting through July, with analysis planned to be conducted in August, and findings dissemination - in September-October.	• REACH seeks help in disseminating the survey and the LI WG members were encouraged to participate in the data collection and survey dissemination to ensure robust and significant data. • PPP shared via email to the working group members

Agenda	*Discussion*	Agreements/ Actions
Agenda Point 4 **Updates from LI WG member groups**	Members of the LI WG working group discussed and were informed about the following issues: • Zinaida Adam mentioned the forthcoming accreditation procedures for two additional education institutions in Soroca and Cahul to provide similar courses for childcare professionals. • Natalia Hadei/HEKS EPER informed about the upcoming social cohesion event (a football competition) on 16 June, and asked members of the LI WG to share the information to potential interested parties (information also shared via email to the LI WG members • Constantin Vlas/HIAS informed members of the working group about their activity of promoting entrepreneurship of refugees' part of the EcoLocal Farmers Market starting 22 June 2024, and invited members of the LI WG to spread the information to potential beneficiaries. • Mrs Valentin Ungureanu commented on the Government's initiative of designing a mechanism for ensuring the integration of foreigners, including refugees, and urged members of the LI WG to plan and share their analytical research accordingly in order to support the evidence-based design on the said mechanism. She also informed about the current work on updating of the IGM's website. • Carolina Untila/Helvetas provided details on the local coordination platform initiated in Balti in June and agreed to follow-up with more details about it post meeting via email. • Upon the inquiry of WG members, Mrs Bechtold informed that participants about the short-term labour market forecast produced by the National Employment Agency on a yearly basis and is available on the Agency's website. Members of the LI WG were encouraged to take it into consideration when designing and delivering livelihoods and inclusion related interventions for the refugees.	• Short-term Labour Market Forecast produced by the National Employment Agency was shared via email. Members of the LI WG were encouraged to consider it when designing their livelihoods interventions. • Brief information about the local coordination platform in Balti was shared with LI WG via email. • Members of the LI WG were encouraged to participate in the next meetings and share their experience on issues relevant to the group