



EMERGENCY APPEAL:
Russian Invasion of Ukraine



March 2023

CONTEXT

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has created a regional humanitarian crisis with over 8 million Ukrainian refugees recorded across Europe. The Republic of Moldova lies directly on Ukraine's western border. As of February 26, 2023, 780,896 people, of whom 90% are Ukrainian nationals, have entered Moldova from Ukraine since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.¹ Most have moved on to Romania and other European nations and many have returned to Ukraine, but, according to UNHCR, 109,348 remain as of February 26, 2023.² (Unofficial estimates of the current number of refugees in Moldova vary from around 60,000 to 90,000.) Despite being one of the poorest nations in Europe, and not being a member of the European Union, the people of Moldova have opened their arms to welcome Ukrainian refugees. In fact, Moldova has welcomed as many Ukrainian refugees as any of Ukraine's neighbors relative to population size, and it has done so without the same level of resources that European Union nations have had.

People who have fled to Moldova have had to face numerous challenges in rapidly establishing new lives, for an unknown period. They must try to secure safe housing, sufficient nutrition, comprehensive healthcare, stable education, and employment. Women and children, who together make up over 80% of Ukrainian refugees, often face heightened protection risks and vulnerabilities that jeopardize safety and well-being. Disruptions in social networks, increasing tensions between host and refugee communities, and the inability to cover basic needs make women and children more susceptible to gender-based violence, trafficking, and sexual exploitation and abuse. During the winter months, these issues are often exacerbated by poor mental health, social isolation, winterization costs, and an energy crisis.

The people of Moldova have shown extraordinary generosity and compassion in welcoming Ukrainian refugees. Only about 3% of refugees in Moldova are living in official Refugee Accommodation Centers (RACs).³ There are currently 66 RACs with a total capacity of 4,166 hosting approximately 2,500 people. Refugees not sheltered in RACs are living in hotels, apartments, churches, and private accommodations. CWS and its partners estimate that about one-third of Ukrainian refugees in Moldova are hosted by Moldovan families in their homes. Ukrainians who have remained in Moldova have generally stayed because they want to be close to Ukraine to make the return easier, have pre-existing connections to Moldova, and tend to be older and poorer than those who have traveled onwards.

Displacement has resulted in the loss of livelihood for many Ukrainian refugees in Moldova. Most heads of households report not working while in Moldova (72%), compared to when they were living in Ukraine (12%).⁴ Negative coping strategies employed by refugee families in Moldova include using savings, and reducing household health and education expenditures, including withdrawing children from school.⁵

The top five needs of Ukrainian refugees in Moldova are cash (71%), food assistance (66%), healthcare (43%), shelter (43%) and employment (14%).⁶ Less than half of all refugee families (43%) reported being aware of the existence of psychosocial services in the area, with awareness higher for families living in RACs (62%) as compared to families living outside RACs (41%).⁷ Encouragingly, trust in Moldovan authorities among Ukrainian refugees seems high. Most families (83%) stated that they would report any threat of violence to the police, while 14% stated they would report the threat to a government hotline.⁸

1. Retrieved from Situation Ukraine Refugee Situation (unhcr.org)

2. Retrieved from Situation Ukraine Refugee Situation (unhcr.org)

3. Retrieved from <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/93865>

4. MSNA Moldova, REACH and UNICEF, September 2022. REACH_Moldova_2022_MSNA-Report.pdf (impact-repository.org)

5. MSNA Moldova, REACH and UNICEF, September 2022. REACH_Moldova_2022_MSNA-Report.pdf (impact-repository.org)

6. MSNA Moldova, REACH and UNICEF, September 2022. REACH_Moldova_2022_MSNA-Report.pdf (impact-repository.org)

7. MSNA Moldova, REACH and UNICEF, September 2022. REACH_Moldova_2022_MSNA-Report.pdf (impact-repository.org)

8. MSNA Moldova, REACH and UNICEF, September 2022. REACH_Moldova_2022_MSNA-Report.pdf (impact-repository.org)

PAST AND CURRENT WORK IN MOLDOVA

CWS has been working in Moldova in partnership with local organizations for over 15 years focusing on sustainable livelihoods, renewable energy, and addressing rural poverty. The expanded programs that we have built in the year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine have continued that approach by working alongside host communities and local organizations such as Diaconia Social Mission, Ormax, Soarta Community Association, Roma National Center, Romni, and Zdorovii Gorod. Together, these programs have provided food, hygiene, winter, and school supplies; education, psychosocial, psychological, livelihoods, and medical support; and support to Roma refugees, including legal counsel. These programs have reached over 12,000 refugees and host community members so far and are still growing. From rapidly deploying assistance to those most in need in the first weeks of the crisis, to investments in local infrastructure, including a forklift for a food bank, modular classrooms, and photo-voltaic solar installations on public buildings hosting refugees, CWS's focus continues to be on supporting the most vulnerable and marginalized. As needs stretch from short to medium-term, livelihoods, inclusion, and social cohesion are top priorities.

To date over 12,000 Ukrainian refugees and Moldovans have been supported (1,219 Moldovans)

Cash/vouchers/food/NFI - More than 11,000 supported

- School supplies - April/May: 533 children
- Soroca District (cash/vouchers) - May/June: 785 (refugees/hosting families)
- Balti distribution (food/NFI) - June to present: Over 8,300 refugees
- Winterization (vouchers/blankets): over 2,000 refugees/Moldovans

Education

- Balti education center: 214 Children

Roma Inclusion

- Access to services, legal aid, material assistance: 918 Roma

Specialized Services

- Medical consultations: 417
- Psychological consultations: 84

Psychosocial activity participants

- Over 550 children, women, refugees and host community

Livelihoods

- Vocational training: 74
- Romanian language courses: 42

To see a complete list of the CWS projects in Moldova, with more details, please reference our [One-Year Ukraine Response Report](#).

SOCIAL COHESION

We are responding to a massive displacement crisis triggered by war, against the backdrop of increasing financial and infrastructure challenges that are affecting both Moldovans and new arrivals from Ukraine. From the earliest days of our response, CWS has kept social cohesion at the forefront of our programs. Social cohesion is the bond that holds a society together and moves towards caring for the well-being of all. It includes fighting marginalization, creating a sense of belonging, and promoting trust and opportunity. As the conflict in Ukraine continues into a second year, the needs of both Ukrainian refugees and the Moldovan communities hosting them continue to be integrated into CWS's response to help promote this bond.

CWS has worked to integrate the needs and priorities of Moldovan communities—including families who have opened their homes to Ukrainians as days turned to weeks and months—into our programs for refugees from Ukraine. Many Moldovan families are feeling a strain on their finances as a result of welcoming Ukrainians. In the Soroca district, 90% of the Ukrainian refugees initially found shelter in host families. When CWS, in partnership with the Soarta Community Association, distributed cash assistance and vouchers, both Ukrainian refugees and their Moldovan host families were included. In addition, psychological services were offered to deal with any difficulties between the refugees and host families.

To respond to the influx of refugees in 2022, Moldovan authorities set up 133 Refugee Accommodation Centers across the country to house Ukrainian refugees, of which 67 remained in use at the end of 2022. The RACs are set up in spaces like summer camps or senior centers that will return to their original use once the refugees leave. CWS has intentionally invested in the infrastructure of several RACs to meet the immediate needs of Ukrainian refugees and to support the long-term use of the space by Moldovans. At a RAC in Soroca, for example, CWS provided funds for commercial kitchen equipment that made the space more livable for the Ukrainian refugees and improves the long-term use of the space when it returns to being a summer camp.

About 60% of Moldovans face energy poverty, which means that they struggle to afford fuel and electricity. The war in Ukraine has increased the cost of fuel and electricity in Moldova, which is a burden for both Ukrainian refugees and Moldovan host communities. CWS is investing in renewable energy infrastructure to support the immediate needs of Ukrainian refugees and long-term energy independence in Moldova. Social cohesion: Supporting Ukrainian Refugees Alongside Moldovan Host Communities CWS has worked with our long-time local partner, Ormax, to install solar panels on two RACs. In the humanitarian sector, programs like these are often considered “greening the response,” which refers to integrating long-term climate and environmental initiatives into immediate relief efforts. They also position the CWS response at the humanitarian-development nexus, in which emergency response blends with bolstering long-term resilience.



Solar panels installed by Ormax at RAC

12-MONTH PLANS & FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

As we pass the one-year mark of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and our collective work in Moldova, much remains uncertain. Fighting is likely to continue for at least the medium term with long-term potential. Tens of thousands of refugees will remain in Moldova for the next year. While there is no consensus on how the war will unfold, there is the potential for additional large numbers of refugees seeking refuge in Moldova, especially if Odesa comes under sustained attack.

Moldova, one of the poorest countries in Europe, couldn't provide adequate social assistance to its population prior to the Ukraine invasion. In addition to hosting refugees comprising 2% to 4% of its population, it has experienced historic levels of inflation and unprecedented increases in energy and heating costs. Moldova will require significant assistance to address this continuing crisis in the coming year. Assistance must be delivered mindful of increasing tensions between refugees and host communities. CWS will continue to design projects in a manner that increases social cohesion, including assistance to the most vulnerable Moldovan families.



Ukrainian-Moldovan giving machine recipients

Frispa, a Roma Refugee Accommodation Center

Ukrainian family at distribution center

There are several projects beginning in March and April and include the following four projects:

- To respond to the energy crisis and continue to increase the environmental sustainability of our support to Ukrainian refugees and the local Moldovan community, CWS is partnering with Ormax to install a 30-kWh photovoltaic solar panel system at the Refugee Accommodation Center in Drochia. There are currently 20 Ukrainian refugees living at this RAC. In line with the CWS commitment to social cohesion, the solar panel system will also provide electricity for the orphanage and kindergarten that serve Moldovan children located in a facility connected to the RAC.
- CWS will partner with the Diamond Day Center in Telenesti to provide a safe and inviting space for Ukrainian refugee and Moldovan youth between 6 and 16 years old with age-specific homework assistance; psychosocial activities such as arts, crafts, and games; and meals provided by a team of attentive staff and volunteers. CWS will help the center improve the space by installing kitchen equipment and a dual air conditioner/heater and pay for additional staff to direct the children's activities, provide administrative support, and assist with meal preparation. In addition, to support Ukrainian refugee mothers, the Center will hold a biweekly support group where they can open up about the challenges that they face and receive a package of food.

12-MONTH PLANS & FUNDING REQUIREMENTS (CONT.)

- CWS is partnering with the Roma National Center, in a second project, for the next six months to support Roma refugees from Ukraine, who continue to be one of the most vulnerable populations in Moldova. The RNC expects to reach 150 Roma refugees with food, hygiene supplies, home appliances, and medicine based on their needs. To improve access to services, the RNC will offer legal consultations to 500 Roma refugees to help them navigate the legal system. With a focus on supporting Roma refugees settling into new lives in Moldovan society, the RNC plans to hold a public Roma cultural celebration for 500 participants. Finally, the RNC will hold workshops and training sessions for Roma refugees who are interested in becoming resources within their communities.
- The war in Ukraine has led to a dramatic increase in the number of traumatized Ukrainians and those at risk of human trafficking and gender-based violence, especially women and children, many of them now living in Moldova. CWS will partner with the Moldovan organization Memoria, a rehabilitation center for victims of torture, and gender-based violence, as they expand their scope of work to provide psychological and medical support and rehabilitation services to Ukrainian refugees.

In addition to the above-planned projects CWS intends to continue its core programming and partnerships referenced in the One-Year Report. When the current project cycles end, additional funding will be required for the next 12 months:

- Diaconia
 - Anastasis Educational Center
 - Children will receive education and psychosocial support at this center established in the spring of 2022 to support refugees in Balti. Women participate in evening and weekend activities at the center.
 - Winterization 2023/24
 - Families will receive winter clothing, blankets, and vouchers for hygiene and food items. The vouchers will help ease the financial burden on families during winter with increased utility and heating costs.
- Ormax
 - Renewable Energy Infrastructure Support
 - Community facilities benefitting Ukrainian refugees will be upgraded with renewable energy technologies to address the immediate needs of the refugee response while addressing the long-term needs of local communities.
- Romni
 - Roma Inclusion
 - Roma refugees will be provided material assistance, legal counsel, and support in accessing services.
- Balti Assistance Program
 - Refugees in Balti and the surrounding area will be supported in with food and NFI material assistance, MHPSS and medical support, and livelihoods training.

More detailed descriptions can be found in the [One-Year Ukraine Response Report](#)

Additional funding required through Feb 2024: \$1,540,000

