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Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund

2022 Consolidated Annual Progress Report

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List of abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALMPs	Active Labour Market Programmes
ARV	Anti-retroviral treatment
BDS	Business Development Services
CBM	Confidence Building Measures
CCM TB/AIDS	Country Coordination Mechanism on TB/AIDS
CNAS	National Social Insurance House
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSOs	Civil society organizations
EOs	Employers' Organizations
FB	Facebook
FFUPLM	Federatia Familiilor Pentru Unificare și Pace în Lume din Moldova NGO
GFATM	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Rights
HRBA	Human Rights based Approach
HUM	Handicraft Union of Moldova
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LBA	Local Beekeepers' Association
LEA	Law-Enforcement Authority
LEP	Local Employment Partnership
LPAs	Local Public Authorities
MoLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund

MSM	Men who have sex with men
MSU	Moldova State University
NBA	National Beekeepers' Association
NEA	National Employment Agency
NEETs	(youth) not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PLWH	People living with HIV
PPE	Personal protection equipment
PrEP	Pre-exposure prophylaxis
PwDs	People with disabilities
PWUDs	People who use drugs
RAF	Results Assessment Framework
SCA	Savings and Credit Association
SCDP	Sustainable (Community) Development Platform
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SoPs	Standard operating procedures
SPs	Social Partners
SW	Sex Workers
TB	Tuberculosis
TN	Transnistrian region
TOC	Theory of change
TUs	Trade Unions
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNPF /UNDAF	United Nations - Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework
UORN	Harm reduction and drug users' rehabilitation in the North
WAD	World AIDS Day
WHO	World Health Organization
WUD	Women who use drugs

Executive Summary

This Annual Consolidated Progress Report on Programmes Implemented under the Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund (henceforth 'the Fund') covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2022 and reports on the results achieved on the approved Outcomes of the Fund. As per the provisions in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Fund and Participating United Nations Organizations (PUNOs), and the Terms of Reference of the Fund, the Annual Consolidated Progress Report is compiled based on information and data submitted in PUNOs' individual Annual Narrative Programme Reports. As of December 2022, 11 PUNOs are parties to the Fund: FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, OHCHR, UN Women, and WHO.

The "Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund" has been established for a period of five years covering the 2018-2022 of the previous UNSDPF, with an extension for two more years, until December 2024. The Fund is focusing on the five priority areas of the UN Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018-2022 that focuses on (i) Democracy, good governance, human rights and gender equality; (ii) Sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth; (iii) Environmental sustainability and resilience; (iv) Inclusive and equitable social development and (v) COVID-19 Management and Response (introduced as an addition in 2020).

Currently, three joint programmes are being implemented through the Fund – under ***Priority Area 1*** (Outcome 1 "The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, demand and benefit from democratic, transparent and accountable governance, gender-sensitive, human rights- and evidence-based public policies, equitable services, and efficient, effective and responsive public institutions"), **Priority Area 2** – Sustainable Equitable, and inclusive Economic Growth and ***Priority Area 5*** (Outcome 5 "The Government of the Republic of Moldova and its people successfully overcome the immediate and long-term adverse health, social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic".

In 2022 the Fund received contributions for of 2,003,658 US dollars from Austria only as the rest of activities were carried out from previous installments from Sweden and Switzerland. As of the end of 2022, the Fund has received contributions totaling 5,776,202 US dollars from Sweden, Switzerland and Austria. It is planned that the Fund will carry on with the current programme from Priority Area 2 and will close as planned by the end of 2024.

In 2022 the development context in Moldova deeply impacted by Russia's war against Ukraine. The huge refugee influx into Moldova was an unprecedented challenge for the country, however with an impressive response from the government. Concerns about the potentially direct security implications of the war prompted Moldova to speed up its efforts to apply for EU membership. Moldova was granted candidacy status on 23 June 2022.

With its energy security under pressure, Moldova has sought to diversify gas and electricity supplies from alternative sources in Europe, this however has come at a higher cost and Chisinau remains partly dependent on the Transnistrian region and the supply of gas from Russia.

The relationship between Chisinau and Tiraspol has also been impacted. Since March, the 5+2 format in the Transnistrian conflict settlement process has been on hold, with talks continuing only in the 1+1 format. With the energy crisis in the fall, relations deteriorated further.

The Fund's programmes, working under changed priorities and facing constraints related to the new challenges that put additional burden on logistics and delivery plans, still managed to achieve most of the set targets for the year.

Under the Outcome 1, the Fund supported and significantly improved the capacity of the rights holders and bearers on both banks of Nistru river, with a greater focus in Transnistria region. The capacities were improved at two levels- institutional and technical knowledge. Representatives of specialized NGOs, human rights activists, representatives of vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities have strengthened their capacities and learned how to develop and operate an effective and sustainable human-rights-oriented organization, as well as to communicate in an HRBA compliant manner about their activities and beneficiaries. The capacities of duty bearers to fulfil their human rights obligations were also substantially strengthened, as the work continued with the national authorities and the de facto structures from the left bank of the Nistru River in order to adjust the local normative framework to the international human rights standards.

Under Outcome 2, the Fund supported one initiative in the context of the deteriorated situation in the area of food security and increased vulnerability of farmers. The only started joint programme will help mitigate the negative impacts of the current military conflict in Ukraine, by supporting the most vulnerable small farmers (particularly women-led farms and young people) in rural areas of Moldova with inputs and improved capacities for resilient production.

Under Outcome 5, the Fund supported over 430 older women and men (368 women, 62 men) and 125 young volunteers (104 girls, 21 boys) to interact and create bonds between generations, also building digital skills for seeking social, medical, informational and psychological assistance. The elderly people received critical support in overcoming the pandemic and coping with isolation, also accessing the much-needed services and counseling in on-line mode. The initiative also created strategic partnerships with state social services and academia to ensure the integration of human rights and Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) in the initial and continuous training program of the current and future social workers.

Implemented outcomes and results achieved by the Fund

For the reporting period, the Multi-Partner Trust Fund received contributions and implemented initiatives under two of its priority areas and outcomes respectively, as follows:

***Priority Area 1*: Governance, Human Rights and Gender Equality** - Outcome 1: "The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, demand and benefit from democratic, transparent and accountable governance, gender-sensitive, human rights- and evidence-based public policies, equitable services, and efficient, effective and responsive public institutions",

Priority Area 2: Sustainable, Inclusive and Equitable Economic Growth – Outcome 2: "The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, have access to enhanced livelihood opportunities, decent work and productive employment, generated by sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth", and

***Priority Area 5:* COVID-19 Pandemic Management and Response** - Outcome 5: "The Government of the Republic of Moldova and its people successfully overcome the immediate and long-term adverse health, social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic".

Priority Area 1: Governance, Human Rights and Gender Equality

During the reporting period, the actions carried out under this priority area significantly contributed to improve the capacities of independent human rights institutions, government, CSOs and mass media to timely and strategically implement and monitor legislation, policies and budgets to advance integrity, gender equality and human rights commitments in inclusive and participatory way monitor, also report and act on systemic human

rights and gender equality issues. Youth, ethnic minorities, women and men, including from vulnerable groups, have significantly increased their capacities and skills to participate in democratic governance and claim their rights.

Under this priority area of the MPTF the joint Programme "***One UN Joint Action to Strengthen Human Rights in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova***" with funding contribution from Sweden and implemented by six UN Agencies, (IOM, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNDP and UNODC) finalized its activities in 2022. The next phase of the project is being implemented starting with 2023.

A. One UN Joint Action to Strengthen Human Rights in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova"

RESULTS OVERVIEW

The programme is grounded in the United Nations human rights-based norms and standards and pursues strengthening of the effective exercise of human rights by people residing in the Transnistrian region through fostering improvement of the regulatory and institutional frameworks in the area of disability, gender-based violence and HIV, PWUDs, Roma and children in conflict with law.

The joint programme has concluded its activities in the reporting period with a formal closure. In the reported period, the capacities of rights holders were developed in two directions: 1) institutional capacities and 2) thematic knowledge. Thus, over 74 representatives of NGOs from 13 localities from the left bank have strengthened their capacities and learned how to develop and operate an effective and sustainable human-rights-oriented organization, as well as to communicate in an HRBA compliant manner about their activities and beneficiaries. Participants included representatives of PwDs, Roma community, organizations working with PLWH, PWUDs, or victims of domestic violence, as well as media. Among them there were: 63 women and 11 men, including 10 people with disabilities and 5 representatives of the Roma community.

90 media professionals, journalists, bloggers from de-facto media, independent media and CSOs as well as students of journalism faculties increased their knowledge on human rights compliant terminology, inclusive and non-discriminatory messages with a focus on vulnerable groups, how to prevent hate speeches and promote human rights for youth in media. In the framework of two editions of Human Rights Media Academy 42 media professionals from both bank of Nistru river with a focus on participants from the Transnistrian region increased their knowledge on basic concepts and principles of human rights and human rights mechanisms, human rights at risk in the context of the pandemic, gender sensitive communications, and inclusive and non-discriminatory terminology when discussing different vulnerable groups. Human Rights Media Academies resulted in the production of 20 human rights compliant media products (2 media materials were prepared jointly by journalists from both banks) on various topics related particularly to the right on information, right to legal remedies, rights of persons with disabilities and older persons, prevention of early marriages in Roma communities, prevention of sexual harassment of minors and women's empowerment to apply for services in cases of domestic violence, youth empowerment and inclusive education for children with low vision, and child rights. In the reporting period, more than 1582 articles related to human rights were published in the left bank media. As a result, the total organic engagement on Transnistrian mass-media (5 Tv and 3 online portals) was 1 700 000 people.

Moreover, 30 human rights activists, members of civil society organizations and representatives of four underrepresented groups representing 16 left-bank CSOs developed their knowledge and capacities in the area of human rights and specific rights of the vulnerable groups, local and international human rights frameworks.

Out of the 30 above-mentioned participants, 22 human rights activists successfully completed the Program following a final testing and were awarded with diplomas of completion. As a result, four advocacy papers and one video animation product were developed and submitted to duty bearers by human rights activists and CSOs staff working with and for four underrepresented groups on human rights issues. In addition, more than 60 small-scale advocacy initiatives to promote and to advocate for the rights of vulnerable right holders (PwD, survivors of domestic violence, Roma, PLWH).

Following the commitment of the de-facto structures to support the Roma community mediators' institution, 642 Roma received 691 consultations and services from 6 Roma community mediators and improved their access to education, social assistance, labour, documentation, and health. Furthermore, the Programme contributed to establishing collaboration and partnerships with Roma mediators and local public institutions (school and pre-school institutions, outpatient services, employment centres, hospitals, offices for documentation of the population, social benefits offices, de-facto local administrations and other) in dealing with inequalities faced by Roma. Before programme intervention, Roma mediators experienced challenges in accessing public institutions (especially educational institutions) and resolving issues relevant to the Roma population.

Awareness of human rights was increased for children and youth from both banks through the participation at the 3rd edition of the Creation Contest 'Human rights are yours and mine' carried out between September-December 2021.

In line with the Programme's output of increasing the capacities of duty bearers to fulfil their human rights obligations, the first draft of the Human rights framework is being finalised and will be sent for the review and further adoption to the de-facto authorities by the end of June 2022.

Also, as a result of the Programme's interventions, the capacities of the members and partners of the Sustainable (Community) Development Platform to work together and plan joint actions was further increased through implementation of 22 joint initiatives (grants) by organizations from the left and right banks of the Nistru River.

Additionally, in the reported period representatives of vulnerable groups have improved access to community services. 597 persons have had complex support in relation to PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) on HIV, while 337 were uniquely enrolled in the service (78 on the left bank and 259 on the right bank). Over 400 police officers from both banks have been trained in friendly interaction with people from vulnerable groups, safety and security and the workplace, including mental health aspects. For 3 years, over 800 PWUD, SW and homeless people, tested for HIV, TB, STDs and viral hepatitis, were referred by police from both banks to services provided by CSOs and medical institutions. Due to this activity the dialogue and the trust between law enforcement authorities, the civil society organization and communities has considerably improved, while police is translating in practice the communitarian policing approach. Also, through the calls received at the "Trust Line 0800 99800" for victims of domestic violence, supported by the Programme, 88 SOS-cases of women and 5 SOS-cases of men, 1 SOS case of girl victims of domestic violence were opened and at the "Hotline 0800 88888" for prevention trafficking in human beings and illegal migration 107 SOS-cases of women and 15 SOS-cases of men were opened. Those cases were referred to or managed together with specialized NGOs from Transnistrian region. Around 136 persons (50 women in 2020 (a double of the target) and 37 women in 2021 and 49 women and men in 2022) infected or affected by HIV from both banks are better equipped to recognize the signs of GBV, discrimination and have strengthened abilities on topics related to self-knowledge, toxic relationships,

identification of abusive behaviours, including how to access essential services and COVID-19-preventive measures through mentoring programme.

Three crisis rooms have become operational in Ribnita, Bălți and Anenii Noi, the rooms equipped to offer a safe provisional shelter for women who use drugs, their children, but have also hosted refugees and internally displaced people. All in all, 39 WUD and 15 children and 26 refugees/IDPs and 13 refugee children/IDPs have been accommodated and provided support in the crisis rooms.

87 people released from prisons have been supported in a pilot approach to assisting former offenders with social reintegration and resocialization. 14 women and 73 men have benefited from a complex package of 6 services, including accommodation, food support, family reintegration, employment, medical and social services and deviant behaviour prevention. A halfway house in Ribnita and a Training Centre for former prisoners have been established in Ribnita and in Chisinau.

Additionally, the awareness and knowledge of the duty-bearers has been increased by developing, editing, printing, and disseminating 10,000 booklets on HIV and LEAs and guiding procedures for police officers in Russian and Romanian languages. The poster, in Romanian and in Russian, explains safety and security at the workplace and the booklet addresses the aspects of referring vulnerable people to the existing medico-social services.

In line with the Programme's output of increasing the capacities of duty bearers to fulfil their human rights obligations, 5 de facto regulatory acts with implications on the life of PLWH were adopted by the de facto structures on the left bank and 1 - has been adjusted and discussed with all stakeholders and is waiting for approval from the de-facto authorities, thus removing the discriminatory limitation in the area of HIV prevention in key population, enrolment into the armed forces and the de facto HIV prophylaxis and control normative act. Additionally, the regional programme on hepatitis C treatment, as well as all required documentation for the implementation were developed and approved. Among the normative acts, the following can be listed: the service provision algorithms and organization, treatment protocol, the M&E procedures etc. - the main developer and implementer of the programme is AIDS Centre from Tiraspol.

The findings of the Report on the de-facto normative framework in the Transnistrian region on justice for children in contact and conflict with the law led to the development of the draft amendments to the normative framework in the region, which were submitted to the de-facto structures for approval with the aim to further adjust the de facto Transnistrian "Criminal Code" and "Criminal Procedure Code". The recommendations of the Report have been incorporated in a wider, policy-level document - the "Roadmap for child rights in the Transnistrian region", validated with the de-facto structures on 30 June 2022.

Based on the Assessment of the existing training programmes for pre-service and in-service professionals that work with children in contact with the law, three curricula modules and courses support materials for pre-service training of professionals have been developed and submitted to the local universities. A pool of professionals improved their theoretical knowledge and practical skills to deliver in-service training to professionals that work with and for children, victims of violence, and child-offenders through two specialized training packages.

In order to ensure observance of the rights of children in public custody, namely children placed in A. S. "Makarenko" institution, adjustments to the Internal Regulation and a new Code of Conduct have been developed and submitted for approval. A.S "Makarenko" staff have been trained on positive interaction with children and on implementing the "Preparation for release" programme, which gives children offenders a real chance of social reintegration. The physical infrastructure and safety of children placed in A.S "Makarenko" was

improved following renovation and equipment of the training room with Programme's funds. Additional improvements related to WASH facilities, internet connection, roof renovation, and setting-up a modern fire protection system were carried out by using UNICEF and local structures' financial resources.

To enhance mass-media capacities from both banks of the Nistru river to report actively and ethically on child rights, two training packages were developed and a pool of journalists increased their knowledge and skills in applying a child-friendly approach in drafting media products, including as a precondition for complying with journalism ethics. Press clubs for journalists from both banks of the Nistru river have been organized on a regular basis and quarterly media monitoring of products related to child rights was performed throughout the last two years of Programme's implementation. With a view to elevate public discourse around children's rights, 8 media products have been developed and shared via media outlets from both banks of the Nistru river.

Increased capacities of vulnerable rights holders to exercise their human rights

The Programme consolidated the SCDP's institutional capacity, focusing on the online webinars, given the COVID-19 restrictions in place on both banks of the Nistru River. A third phase of institutional capacity building webinars were organized consisting of 38 online events. As a result, over 74 representatives of NGOs have developed their capacities in various fields. Most of the participants (over 80%) were women; other major groups were PwDs, Roma, people living with HIV and victims of domestic violence. The topics covered during the reported period included social services, social entrepreneurship, positive practices in employment for PwDs, Monitoring and Evaluation, Advocacy and partnership, Mainstreaming gender and environment approach into NGO activity, Result-Based Management or practical examples of legal approximation in the framework of HRBA. Result-Based Management.

The conducted assessment of the institutional capacity building activities has shown that most of the expectations of NGO representatives towards the organized webinars have been met. In this regard, the representatives of SDCP indicate that the webinar curriculum was practical, so that the knowledge acquired during the webinars can be applied in practice for the development and consolidation of the organization's potential. Phase III of trainings / webinars was highlighted by the participation of several experts from the right bank, who at the request of the members of the Platform shared their experience in implementing joint initiatives with organizations on the left bank, in the structure of social services at district level, in managing social enterprises and in the specific tools for employment of people with disabilities. A total of 5 phases of webinars and practical workshops were carried out.

The realization of 22 joint initiatives (grants) by organizations from the left and right banks of the Nistru River has obviously contributed to the consolidation of the institutional capacities of the members of the Platform as well. The 4 phases of the Grants Program were implemented by consortiums of NGOs on both banks of the Nistru river and aim to promote rights and develop services for young people and women in the Roma community, people with disabilities, victims of gender-based violence. Following the 1st and 2nd calls for community mobilization were implemented initiatives to promote social and economic participation of vulnerable groups on the left bank of the Nistru. The 3rd and 4th calls resulted in implementation of 8 joint initiatives (grants): 5 small grants for community mobilization and 3 grants for creating accessibility for people with disabilities.

Some initiatives implemented under the grants have laid the groundwork for sustainable services and interventions with major impact for the region. Here, it could be mentioned the promotion of the "Personal assistant" service, acquisition and introduction for the first time on the left bank of the "ADOS-2 Methodology",

"Independent living skills for youth with disabilities", "Grandmothers-online", "E-screening for monitoring services provided by organizations working with people living with HIV" and others. Our contribution has led to obtaining a further grant from another donor for piloting the "Personal assistant" service in Parcani village, in close cooperation with the local structures in the area of social assistance.

Trainings in computer literacy for elderly women, including with disabilities, and for Roma women, within the project "Grandmothers-online", @photocredit UNDP

As a result of the implemented grants specialized services were provided to 17 victims of domestic violence and 7 aggressors; 22 children victims of violence; 20 children with autism spectrum disorder. Additionally, 19 elderly women, including those with disabilities, trained in computer literacy; 18 young people with disabilities prepared to access the labour market; 15 young people with disabilities trained in independent living skills; 6 Roma women trained in computer literacy; 10 representatives of the People Living with HIV community were trained as para-legal specialists, while 532 persons from vulnerable groups questioned through the e-screening mechanism on discrimination cases. More than 1000 vulnerable people benefited from psychological and legal consultation.

Partnerships established through project consortiums can be considered as added value of the grants' implementation. Thus, sustainable cooperation relations of SCDP's members with CSOs on the right bank were established, among which: "Center for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities", "SOS Autism", "Institute for Human Rights", "Positive Initiative", "Federation of Families from Moldova", "Union for HIV prevention and risk reduction" (UORN), "Women's Law Center" and others.

Through the implementation of the small grants programme, the foundations were laid for initiatives with a major impact on the realization of the rights of vulnerable groups. Prior to the implementation of the first grant, which aimed to promote the idea of introducing the Personal Assistant service, the subject was almost non-existent on the agenda of relevant decision makers as well as of SCDP members. At the moment, there is a wide initiative to promote at a high level the approval of this service, while the consortium of 2 organizations from both banks just started implementing a 3rd grant in this regard, this time aimed at piloting the service. Many

other grants are one-of-a-kind initiatives, including Grandmothers online, Young Roma bloggers, acquisition and piloting of the ADOS methodology, independent life skills for young people with disabilities and others.

Innovations and transfer of knowledge and good practices has been largely practiced among the NGOs, members of SCDP. Thus, during April-June 2022, the groups of 8-10 people, representatives of different NGOs participated in 6 internships on the right bank of Nistru river. Such areas as inclusive education, community services for people with psycho-social disabilities, social entrepreneurship, Roma community social inclusion, assistance to victims of domestic violence and labour inclusion of people with disabilities were thoroughly studied on the spot. The internships had a major impact on the participants. During the visits participants were given the possibility to discuss with both beneficiaries and service providers as well as with representatives of local and regional related state structures. This has contributed significantly to strengthening organizational capacity and service development of the NGOs, members of SCDP. Most of the positive practices that the participants learned about are of great interest to SCDP members. Of special interest were the services that are not developed and, respectively, not institutionalized in the Transnistrian region. As a result of the visit to the Falesti and Orhei districts, SCDP members proposed to develop a new direction of work for the following years - the inclusion of people with psycho-social disabilities. In this sense, they will collaborate with partners from the right bank, among them Keystone Moldova and the Department of Social Assistance of the Falesti district. At the same time, relations were established with the Psych-pedagogical Assistance Service from Balti and the “Pro Success” lyceum from Chisinau to develop support services for inclusive education. Overall, 42 representatives of NGOs - members of the SCDP participated in the internships.

Members of SCDP at internships on inclusive education and employment of PwDs, @photocredit UNDP

In the current phase of the Programme, the thematic working groups had an intense activity, which resulted in actions of impact on the rights of vulnerable groups on the left bank of the Nistru river. At the same time, the participation of SCDP members in the activity of the groups strengthened the institutional capacities of the NGOs. Thus, the thematic group "Advocacy" developed 3 advocacy campaigns, of which: ban on parking at

ramps and sidewalks, promotion of a personal assistant service, an increase in employed PWD on the left bank. Following the implementation of the first campaign, there have been modifications in the Traffic regulations on the left bank, aimed at ensuring the access of people in wheelchairs to the ramps and sidewalks (through imposing a ban on parking in front of these places). "Social Services" thematic working group, through its activity paved the way for piloting and further applying the Personal Assistant Service on the left bank of Nistru. Particularly, an algorithm for the implementation of the Personal Assistant service has been developed, including the regulation of the service as well as the budgeting mechanism. It should be mentioned that, following the development of this social service and the process of knowledge transfer, sustainable relations were established between the NGOs on both banks, including relations with the Social Assistance Department from the Anenii Noi district. "Analysis of Legislation" working group identified gaps in the legislation of the Transnistrian region, which must be filled by amending the legislation. In total, 26 unique participants were involved in 37 meetings of working groups.

The working groups recorded increased intensity and measurable results, especially during the second half of 2021 - June 2022. This can be explained by the involvement of non-SCDP experts and the allocation of a minimum budget for logistics and organizational moments. Thus, the initiatives launched in the working groups materialized in advocacy campaigns completed with changes in the regulatory framework, as well as with concrete mechanisms for budgeting and implementation of social services at the regional level.

The Innovation component included: i.) elaboration of a database, based on 1C programme, which will include all the beneficiaries, range of services, case management and to be linked to the reports and ii.) elaboration and providing a set of tests for vocational and career guidance, addressed to people with psychosocial, sensory and locomotor disabilities. The database has proven to be very requested and popular with NGOs-members of the SCDP. By operating such a database, NGOs are exempted from a series of stocks of data on beneficiaries and the type of services. Now all the information is concentrated in one place and can be accessed even by specialists working in the field. The set of tests for vocational and career guidance, addressed to people with psychosocial, sensory and locomotor disabilities were presented to NGOs working with people with disabilities and to the representatives of Employment services from Ribnita, Bender, Slobozia and Grigoriopol. Further, in their daily activity the representatives of Employment service will follow the recommendations of the guide in facilitating the access to the labor market to people with disabilities.

Under the prison component, following Hammarberg recommendations there was a scope to pilot services of rehabilitation and social reintegration of prisoners upon their release. CSOs Triniti, Positive Initiative and CRPC/NDivetro have been subcontracted to pilot the package of services for prisoners after release. The services were developed and implemented based on UNODC 2018 specific guidance “Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders”. 87 people (including 14 women), from both banks, released from prisons have been covered with a package of 6 services within 6 months after release, including (1) 50% have been supported with job market re-entry assistance and vocational trainings; (2) 50% of all beneficiaries required lodging and 100% financial assistance (half-way or temporary accommodation, food support/parcels, basic hygiene packages, including women hygiene); (3) 80% of former offenders need accompanying and access to health care and social security; (4) 60% required mediation and family reintegration support; (5) 40% required substance abuse interventions; (6) all 87 prisoners benefited from offenders’ monitoring and supervision. In Ribnita a half-way house, a transitional house from prison into the society for 12 people has been refurbished near a local factory providing for an employment opportunity and in Chisinau a Training centre for former prisoners has been set. The training curricula includes modules on employment seeking opportunities and changing the criminal mindset. Almost half of the beneficiaries have required and

benefited from computer literacy classes. 8 project beneficiaries have benefited from ISO qualified Welder courses and have been immediately employed. After 6 months all 87 project beneficiaries remain in the community and have not returned to prison. 20% have become volunteers in the organizations. According to services providers support for women former prisoners is more complex and requires more services and especially with the psycho-emotional state, including family reintegration, yet when the psycho-emotional needs are met women show more responsibility and commitment employment and monitoring and supervision goals.

Former prisoners, trained to become ISO qualified welder @photocredit: UNODC

Training Centre for former prisoners from Chisinau, February 2022, Director of CRPC/Share, @photocredit: UNODC

Half-way home for former offenders from Ribnita, May 2022 @photocredit: UNODC

Increased capacities of duty bearers to fulfil their human rights obligations

The implementation of this component required considerable efforts from the UN agencies. As a result of numerous meetings with the de-facto structures of the Transnistrian region, during which UN advocated for the drafting of a Human Rights Framework, commitments were made by the de-facto structures for their engagement in the drafting. After the establishment by the de-facto leader of an intersectoral working group for the drafting of the Human Rights Framework, consisting of 10 representatives of de-facto structures, a roadmap for the drafting of the framework in which CSOs played a crucial role, was endorsed by de-facto authorities in 2020, expressing their commitment to its implementation. Frequent consultations with de-facto authorities were conducted to reinforce the commitment of the de-facto authorities to follow the objectives proposed under the roadmap of drafting of a Human Rights Framework and to include CSOs in the process of its drafting and during the whole process of Programme implementation. Similarly, individual and group consultations with CSOs were organised, where members of the Platform were informed about the role of CSOs in decision-making from the perspective of international standards and best practices that exist on the right bank and in other countries. During the moderated group discussions CSOs expressed their views and mentioned that the optimal model was their inclusion in the process of drafting the Framework from the very beginning, not just to provide comments to the existing draft. Following this as well as numerous discussions with the UN, de-facto authorities announced an open call for expression of interest for CSOs to join the process of drafting a HR Framework. This resulted in the submission of applications from 13 representatives of CSOs from the Transnistria region, who were all included in the process.

As part of the drafting process, 12 representatives of the intersectoral working group for the drafting of the Human Rights Framework improved their knowledge on human rights and international human rights mechanisms, recommendations received from UN Treaty Bodies, UPR, Special Procedures and Hammarberg's reports, the role of civil society in the process of drafting frameworks, and the importance of organizing public consultations and monitoring of the implementation of the framework. In line with the roadmap a matrix of clustered recommendations of Thomas Hammarberg (2013 and 2019) and of UN human rights mechanisms by thematic areas was produced including affected groups, relevant SDGs, specific SDG targets and indicators. A model of a Human Rights Framework and examples of formulating actions for implementation of two recommendations according to a results-based matrix were presented, and ultimately de-facto authorities and CSOs in a joint meeting in December 2021 agreed to work with it.

Introductory meeting on drafting Human Right Framework in the Transnistrian region for the CSOs representatives, January 2022 @photocredit: OHCHR

During the whole duration of the Programme the UN has continued its interaction with the national institutionalised human rights institution and Ombudsperson Institution through engaging them in training activities organized by the Programme (human rights media branches, field mission visits on discussion about CRPD compliance). Capacity building activities specifically tailored for the representatives of the (de facto) Ombudsperson institutions from both banks were postponed till 2022, to await the appointment of the Ombudsperson for Moldova. As a result of the capacity building activities, 22 representatives of institutionalised human rights structures increased their knowledge and skills on human rights monitoring and reporting during two capacity building trainings. Participants received practical insights and methodology on design of research in the field of human rights, ways to collect data in closed institutions and in the community, drafting thematic human rights reports and formulate recommendations to advocate for the changes in the regulatory framework to increase compliance with human rights international standards. In addition, participants actively interacted and shared the experience in conducting human rights monitoring activities according to the practices existed on both bank of Nistru river in two particular areas discussed on the trainings - residential institutions for children and women with disabilities experienced gender-based violence and the modus operandi for ombudsperson institutions and their role in ensuring respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights from both banks. To ensure further sustainability of the initiative, guidelines for human rights monitoring and reporting in the above-mentioned areas in both languages were drafted and will be presented and validated by both (including de facto) ombudsperson institutions.

Capacity building trainings for institutionalised human rights structures, May-June 2022 @photocredit: OHCHR

The process of assessing the compliance of the local regulatory framework with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the development of recommendations for three specific areas started July 2021. The 3 areas include deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities, disability determination system, and regulatory framework in the field of employment of persons with disabilities. The methodology was developed and a desk review of available documents relevant for three particular areas (primary and secondary normative documents) as well as data collection, including 8 meetings, interviews and discussions with relevant CSOs working with people with disabilities and de-facto authorities acting in the CRPD sphere were conducted in July-August 2021. A first draft of the report was prepared and is planned to be discussed with de-facto authorities and CSOs. The thematic group on the rights of PwD established under the HR Capacity Building Program for underrepresented groups will consider and base its advocacy actions for the future activities on recommendations provided in the assessment report, which creates a sustainable ground for the future phase of the Programme.

During 3 Program years, over 800 PWUD, SW and homeless people, from both banks were tested for HIV, TB, STDs and viral hepatitis, were referred by police from both banks to services provided by CSOs and medical institutions. The right bank started piloting referral schemes in Chisinau, Balti and Cahul as of September 2021, and by the end of the Program 184 people were referred by police to medico-social services. From September 2021 to June 2022, 27 joint visits police CSOs were organized to vulnerable communities and homes, a total of 98 PWUD, 37 SW, 3 MSM, 46 homeless were referred by police to CSOs and covered with a minimum of 3 essential services including HIV, TB and ITS screening. Screening shows a big concentration of communicable diseases in the vulnerable communities, including, 17 new VHC cases, 14 STDs cases, 9 new TB confirmed cases, 1 HIV positive person. Identifying these people and enrolling them into treatment and social assistance program was only possible due to police's participation. CSOs jointly with police as mapping vulnerable localities, such as abandoned buildings, stadiums, vulnerable houses and apartments and conduct joint visit with the scope of assisting these people. Due to this activity the dialogue and the trust between law enforcement authorities, the

civil society organization and communities has considerably improved, while police is translating in practice the communitarian policing approach. The CSOs involved in referral police-CSOs schemes are: Triniti (Ribnita), Miloserdie (Bender) and Alians Zdoroviya (Tiraspol), UORN (Balti), Pas cu Pas (Cahul), Positive Initiative (Chisinau), AFI (Chisinau) and Genderdoc M (Chisinau).

Referral schemes implementation: 1) picture left, homeless people tested on HIV by CSO Positive Initiative at Hotel National, June 3rd, 2022; 2) picture right, vulnerable person assisted in Balti, October 2021 @photocredit: UNODC

Enhanced human rights culture in the Transnistrian region

Recognising the important role of the media in increasing the public awareness on human rights and in exposing the identified human rights violations to the general public, during three years of its activity the Programme has developed and organized a series of media products and communication campaigns.

Media materials. According to the Communication plan, mass media remains the key partner for spreading Programme's key messages through distribution of press releases, success stories, video materials, interviews, information materials. Also, to achieve an enhanced human rights culture in the Transnistrian region, journalists and ordinary people were engaged through various awareness campaigns, to encourage them to stand up for their rights, speak up and get involved.

Media events. Within the Programme, during 2019-2022, 12 offline and online events on human rights promotion were organized.

The event „Handing of grant certificates for the human rights CSOs", on 6 September 2021, in Tiraspol, @photocredit UNDP

The online Forum on the cooperation between civil society organizations from both banks of the Nistru river, @photocredit UNDP

As a result of the Media Academies, 25 media professionals from both banks with mentoring support from media professionals produced and published 20 human rights compliant media products (2 media materials were prepared jointly by journalists from both banks, reflecting the human rights situations on both banks) on various topics related particularly to the right on information, right to legal remedies, rights of persons with disabilities and older persons, prevention of early marriages in Roma communities, prevention of sexual harassment of minors and women's empowerment to apply for services in cases of domestic violence, youth empowerment and inclusive education for children with low vision, and child rights.

Human Rights Media Academy training, in October 2021. @photocredit: OHCHR

Awareness and communication campaigns. Due to COVID-related restrictions imposed during 2020-2021, the interaction with mass-media and large public was limited mostly to online space. Thereby, eight awareness and communication campaigns in the field of human rights, carried out within the Programme, were managed on online platforms. Seven online communication campaigns were conducted on social media, using the SCDP's Facebook Page and Group, the UN page and six FB pages of the partner agencies.

Thus, during the reporting period, 31 awareness campaigns were carried out, aimed to promoting the rights of vulnerable groups. More than 1000 posts and media statements, including 58 video materials, have been published on the Platform's FB page, UN, on 6 FB pages of the Programme partner agencies and shared in Transnistrian FB groups. All the tools, available by this social media - written posts, photographs, videos and infographics - have been used to promote human-rights-related messages, to ensure the visibility of the Swedish support to the Programme's activities and the partners involved.

PWDs rights. To promote the rights of persons with disabilities, during September 2019 - June 2022, in the Transnistrian region were conducted 3 media awareness raising campaigns on human rights issues, including COVID-19 aspects.

Roma rights. To break down the stereotypes associated to the Roma community and to combat discrimination of one of the most stigmatized and rejected social groups in Transnistrian region, in the frame of the Programme were conducted 3 awareness online campaigns

Priority Area 2: Sustainable, Inclusive and Equitable Economic Growth

During the reporting period, under this priority area, the Fund supported a joint project aiming to improve the food security in the country and mitigate the negative impacts of the Russian aggression war in Ukraine, by supporting the most vulnerable small farmers (particularly women-led farms and young people) in rural areas of Moldova with inputs and improved capacities for resilient production.

B. Emergency support for agri-producers in the context of socio-economic, climate and energy crisis

The project had only been started and is being implemented jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Moldova during October 12th, 2022 – August 31st, 2024. During the reporting period, i.e. October – December 2022, both implementing agencies have focused on the activities related to the launch of the project implementation, i.e. recruiting the core staff responsible for implementing the project (Project coordinator; Project analyst, Project Financial and Administrative Assistant, Communication and Media Consultant).

RESULTS OVERVIEW

Although operational only for a short period during 2022, the project team succeeded to achieve some tangible results, specifically:

During the reported period, the project team undertook a comprehensive assessment on the immediate needs of the people living in rural areas. The assessments also analyzed and identified the most affected rayons which suffered from the drought consequences. The result of the survey was the list of regions and beneficiaries who were impacted the most by the effects of the war in Ukraine and of the drought, who should be supported within the emergency programs. In this sense, in the first stage, three rayons were identified and selected, namely Basarabeasca, Causeni and Cahul, for receiving project's support in form of animal feed for rural households who breed livestock in their backyard. In line with the „Regulation on the distribution of the compound feed offered to agricultural producers", 34 Local Working Groups were created in the selected communities and 845 smallholder farms were identified as potential beneficiaries of the project.

For the activity on distribution of agriculture inputs and connected tools – the project organized the tender for the procurement of the compound feed for milking cows. The quantity of the animal feed to be distributed under the programme is 310.632 kg for 845 smallholder farms, that will receive up to 375 kg per household.

Priority area 5: COVID-19 pandemic management and response

Under this priority area of the MPTF, in 2022 one joint programme was finalized, i.e. ***"Life-saving support to and empowerment of older women"*** implemented by UNFPA and OHCHR.

C. Life-saving support to and empowerment of older women

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the most vulnerable with a bigger impact on older persons who faced discrimination and isolation. The older persons were already socially and economically vulnerable before the pandemic occurred, and the response to the pandemic did not tackle particular needs of older persons. To address these discrepancies and gaps, the Fund supported this programme to empower and build social resilience of older persons by fostering intergenerational dialogue with young people and improve their access to quality social services, and through the employment of human rights-based approach in building the

capacities of social professionals. An innovative approach is applied in reducing the digital divide through intergenerational dialogue, by reducing the risk of infection and increasing the level of communication and socialization of older persons through digital technologies. Young people are stepping in to develop the older person's digital skills and support them to connect to the digital world. The programme also builds strong partnerships between the private sector (mobile phone companies), grassroots organizations of older persons, the Government, National Agency for Social Assistance, Academia and local authorities and platforms of older persons and people with disabilities. It also leverages domestic resources from the state budget and in-kind contributions from local CSOs. The innovative programme was implemented in partnership with Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, HelpAge International Moldcell Foundation, the National Social Insurance House and e-Government Agency with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

RESULTS OVERVIEW

In 16 localities, overall, 430 older women and men (368 women, 62 men) and 125 young volunteers (104 girls, 21 boys) were engaged during the period of 2021-2022 in creating bonds between generations and building digital skills for seeking social, medical, informational and psychological assistance. UNFPA innovative programme was implemented in partnership with Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, HelpAge International, funding from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, with in-kind support of Moldcell Foundation, National Social Insurance House and e-Government Agency. In 2021, a total number of 100 older women and men were empowered to use mobile phones as part of intergenerational dialogue programme "Digital technologies unite generations"1. This programme is empowering older people to actively engage in partnership with young people in acquiring digital skills and seeking medical, social and psychological support. The new phase of the project (2022) was launched with the aim of creating a bridge of communication between generations, especially during a pandemic period covering 200 older people. Thus, with SDC and Moldcell funding, 300 people from 15 communities from the following districts of Soldanesti, Rezina, Basarabeasca, Leova, Orhei and Straseni received mobile phones connected to the Internet and learned with the help of young volunteers how to use them. The digital skills project was extended also in Chisinau municipality, where 130 older persons received mobile phones donated by Municipality of Chisinau, General Directorate of Social Assistance and Health and were capacitated under the project to use them for accessing public services.

The National Agency for Social Assistance (NASA) and the Social Work Department of the Moldova State University (MSU) actively engaged in the process of ensuring the mainstraeming of human rights and Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) in the initial and continuous training program of the (future) social workers. To better understand the needs for capacity building, a training needs assessment was conducted among 597 out of 1110 social workers (510 social workers at community level and 87 social workers with supervision function). Based on the needs assessment the training curricula was developed and broadly consulted with up to 170

[1] In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNFPA launched an initiative to promote intergenerational dialogue for the digital inclusion of the older people, signing a Collaboration Agreement with the Moldcell Foundation. In the first phase of the project, more than 200 older people from four districts received mobile phones and were taught how to use them by a group of young volunteers.

social workers at national level. The training program (6 modules) developed are integrated in the e-learning platform of NASA.

Related to the initial training program, based on the agreement with the Sociology and Social Work Department, MSU the following options were selected: a) development of a separate course "Human Rights in Social Work", included in the compulsory training curricula, to be taught for 1st year students, beginning with September 2023 and b) analysis of 6 existing courses and proposals for mainstreaming human rights and HRBA provided. Two human rights awareness raising consultations of the Human Rights in Social Work course was conducted with participation of students from 4 Faculties of Moldova State University. using mobile phones. The civil servants helped the older people log into their personal account and learn more about the information and services, such as: amount of the salary and the social insurance premiums paid by employers to the state social insurance budget; online submission of the retirement pension review application; using the retirement age calculator; making online appointments with services provided by the territorial social insurance offices, to avoid unnecessary travel, especially amid the pandemic.

Another important result achieved was the improved psychological health of the target group. The programme organized 45 psychological sessions for the elderly on how to maintain mental health during Covid-period and isolation, information about prevention of domestic violence and protection measures and services; health of older persons during the pandemic of Covid-19, immunization, recovery post-infection and others. The informational and awareness support of the programme was ensured via a large-scale social media campaign and a conference on digitalization and intergenerational dialogue.

Acquiring digital skills. Mixed (offline and online) trainings for newly recruited young volunteers in 5 new sites and other new comers in existing 11 sites, on instructions how to guide older people to use a smartphone, Internet and applications were conductred.

Digital technologies reached out to Mitoc and Donici to foster intergenerational dialogue

During the period of 2021-2022, 15 sessions in total divided by the types of mobile phones (SamsungA01 and Xiaomi) were organized. 3 online training sessions were conducted in July 2021 in the following localities: Donici, Mitoc, Cuizauca, Samascani and Zubresti. In 2022, 6 online trainings were conducted in April in the following localities: Pohoarna, Sipca, Rogojeni, Tahnauti, Piatra, Bolohan, Pelivan, Cismea, Ghidighici, Seliste. In Chisinau municipality, a total number of 6 offline training sessions were conducted in June 2022.

Social services. The National Social Insurance House (CNAS) stepped out of its box of conventional services to teach the older people from the Republic of Moldova to use the provided public online services with their phone. Over 430 older women and men attended trainings organized in 16 localities across the districts of Șoldănești, Rezina, Basarabeasca, Leova, Orhei and Strășeni, Chisinau. The trainings were carried out in every locality by two members of the district-level Territorial Social Insurance Houses. The civil servants helped the older people log into their personal account via the website – www.cnas.gov.md, and learn more about the information and services, such as:

- amount of the salary and the social insurance premiums paid by employers to the state social insurance budget;
- online submission of the retirement pension review application;
- using the retirement age calculator;
- making online appointments with services provided by the territorial social insurance offices, to avoid unnecessary travel, especially amid the pandemic, etc.

Participants mentioned other useful information they received about submitting request to benefit for free of sanatorium treatment and about recent changes in the public pension system. Details on this intervention (including images, video and press release) are available at this link.

Public services. Five offline information sessions were held by the Moldova e-Governance Agency on 27 November 2021, 12-13 July 2022, for representatives of 16 local partner initiative groups (IG)/NGOs (135 persons). Participation was limited due to pandemic restrictions. Another 2 sessions were conducted for other volunteers and beneficiaries in online format, in January 2022 and July 2022 for empowering them to access public services (MSign, MPower, MobiSign, MCabinet etc). Participants were informed about main public services of interest for older persons available online, about the use of mobile and electronic signature, and about new amendments in the E-government from 2022. Details available at this link: https://cutt.ly/pYXpsSX

As part of the larger intergenerational dialogue programme, UNFPA conducted the Conference on ageing and digitalization, which looked at reduction of digital divide through intergenerational dialogue. The event, organized on the International Day of Older Persons, celebrated in 2021 under the theme "**Digital Equity for All Ages**", focused around three pillars:

1) **Policy dimension** - identifying policy measures that worked in other countries and which can be relevant for Moldova's context in strengthening active and healthy ageing along with building digital skills.
2) **Tech and banking sectors –** sharing existing practices of tech companies in building digital skills of older people, what role young people can play and how partnerships can be built in Moldova for reducing digital divide in a rapidly ageing country with a shrinking working-age population.

3) **People** – presenting people experience both volunteers and beneficiaries engaged in the intergenerational dialogue programme and identifying the success stories and challenges in reducing the digital divide through intergenerational dialogue.

In implementing the campaign, Moldcell Foundation conducted trainings in 16 localities on how to take photos with the mobile and how to post them on social media. Each session gathered on average 25 persons, including young volunteers, older people beneficiaries, local NGO staff, trainers of Moldcell Foundation. Additionally, an online session (repeated for two groups) was held with young volunteers to agree on their support for older people. Following the social media training, almost all beneficiaries have for the first time created an account on Facebook, they have learned how to connect with other people, how to post pictures and share posts they like. As a result, the project contributed to the production and posting of an array of pictures of older persons and their life on Facebook and promoted a positive image of older persons online. A Facebook group has been created to join all persons involved in the project and share pictures and information and these can be searched using hashtags: #DialogIntergenerational, #AbilitatiDigitale, #RezilientaDemografica, #LikeDeLaBunei. The pictures posted by older people beneficiaries and by young volunteers were distributed as part of the social media campaign "Varstnicii trec online / Older persons go online", highlighted around the date of 01 October, that marked the International Day of Older Persons. TV broadcast (TV8) on this activity https://cutt.ly/jYL6qwc.

Specific Stories

1. Support for elderly to overcome isolation in the quarantine period of the COVID-19 pandemic

Olga Carabet was born in the Republic of Moldova and spent her entire life in Cazangic village, Leova district. Aged 72, she has been living alone for the past 12 years, after her husband died and her three children have left for abroad, either to study or work and live there. In 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic started, Olga Carabet became socially isolated - starting with 25 March 2020, the Commission on Exceptional Situations prohibited older persons aged 63 and above from leaving their domicile or being in public spaces without an urgent need. Over the night, she's become isolated in her own house, without any connection to the outside world and her loved ones.

Thousands of other older people from the Republic of Moldova ended up in a similar situation as Mrs Olga. In the fall of 2020, just a few months after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fund supported an initiative that launched the Digital Skills Connect Generations project to help older people overcome social isolation and create intergenerational dialogue. As part of the project, 300 older people, including Olga Carabet, received a phone connected to the Internet and were trained by young volunteers how to use it to keep in touch with their loved ones, overcoming the isolation in which they found themselves.

Mrs. Olga confessed that thanks to the phone and interaction with the youth she received within the project, she has never again felt alone. For example, more than a year ago, she became a great-grandmother. She has never met her great-grandson, as he was born and lives in Romania. The phone and the new skills helps her to see him growing up, and she feel as if she were next to him. She now can see and hear her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren whenever she wants. She also feels connected to the world, as she has now access to the Internet, social media channels. She even seeks medical support, contacting her family doctor via her phone.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the most vulnerable groups of people, with a greater impact on older people who have experienced phenomena such as discrimination or isolation. The devastating effects of the pandemic arose due to two factors - firstly, older men and women were already socially and economically vulnerable before the

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pandemic, and secondly - the response to the pandemic did not address the special needs of these categories of people.

2. **The impact of the project interventions on the personal and professional development of the chief of the Social Work and Sociology Department of MSU, but also on the positive cooperation of UN with the Social Work Department**

Stela Milicenco, doctor in sociology, is the chief of the Social Work and Sociology Department of the Psychology and Educational Sciences, Sociology and Social Work Faculty of the Moldova State University. Besides this she is an associate professor. She has dedicated her professional career fully to the academic sector, including in leadership roles at University, as chief of Departments, but also Dean of the Faculty. Mrs. Milicenco is the author of more than 110 scientific articles and participated in a series of research and academic projects.

From the initial stage of developing the concept of the project, OHCHR in Moldova was consulting with the University, mainly with Mrs. Milicenco, with the view to mainstream human rights and Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) in the initial training of the social workers. From the beginning, Mrs. Milicenco manifested interest and openness to cooperate within the project with the remark that "any opportunities and support that would contribute to development and improvement of the training program of social workers, but also for strengthening the lecturers' knowledge and skills are very important".

Mrs. Milicenco highlighted that she very much appreciated the cooperation with UN Agencies, being one of the very positive cooperations as it contributed to improving the training program, but also the teaching process due to enhanced knowledge and skills of teachers. She also highlighted that the Department was proud to be among the first who mainstreamed human rights in the social work profession. Mrs. Milicenco stated that "the cooperation of the Department of Sociology and Social Work, Moldova State University, with OHCHR facilitated several activities with the participation of teachers and students, in which the fundamental standards and principles of human rights were promoted. Also, as a result of the collaboration and with the professional involvement of an OHCHR expert, a series of innovative elements were analyzed and proposed from the perspective of mainstreaming human rights and HRBA in the training curricula and program of students in the two specialties (Sociology and Social work). "I would like to note, in particular, the interventions that were established for specialized branch courses, as well as the initiation of a new course on "Human rights in social work", which was included in the education plan, having already been approved by the Senate of the University" mentions Ms. Milicenco. The Department's partnership with the UN is an effective and forward-looking one, given that it will ensure the training of specialists in the field of social work, who will have the skills to ensure the respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights, and act in the spirit of human rights at the workplace in solidarity with vulnerable groups".

Besides, the added value for the University, Mrs. Milicenco highlighted the importance of the project and cooperation with OHCHR for her, as a professional. She highlighted the following: "For me, in my capacity as a lecturer working in higher education and in line with my scientific interests focused on the fields of social work and sociology, the collaboration with OHCHR represented an important opportunity in terms of strengthening knowledge in the field of human rights. I believe that this collaboration in which I was involved is very significant, since the Republic of Moldova, by ratifying the majority of international treaties in the field of human rights, has assumed the obligation to respect, protect and fulfilling of human rights and also the aspect of promoting the fundamental human rights values. And the respect and promotion of these rights is ensured to the extent that they are well known, in this sense for me personally the collaboration with the UN made the integration of human right more accessible".

The UN will continue cooperation with the Sociology and Social Work Department, including through providing mentoring and coaching to lecturers in teaching human rights in social work.

Conclusions

In 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic crisis was quickly overturned by the challenges posed by the Russian aggression war in Ukraine and its implications. The Fund's and PUNOs activities were implemented at a time of big

challenges for the country posed by the unprecedented and multiple crises, i.e. refugees influx, skyrocketing energy prices, worsening security situation coupled with severe economic and social negative implications. Despite the disruptions and issues that it brought the programmes carried out under the Fund were implemented efficiently and most of the planned targets and milestones were achieved. The Fund managed to support actions that mobilized diverse actors and partners, raised the importance of a strong commitment and coordinated efforts across all stakeholders in addressing complex and multifaceted problems.

Human Rights, Economic Development and COVID-19 response areas were the focus for this year's initiatives supported by the Fund and implicitly its generous contributors, i.e., Sweden, Austria and Switzerland.

The Fund's financed programmes helped to establish strategic as well as working relations and identified synergies with other projects and programmes implemented by other UN agencies. In this context new strategic partnerships were fostered and facilitate with a wide number of human rights organizations, Government agencies, academia and the private sector. The human rights agenda implementation progressed steadily in the region, and already at this stage bringing positive impact and changes. The Fund's support contributed to the progress of improving the vulnerable rights holders to exercise their human rights, created important pre-conditions for changing and improving the enabling, policy and legal frameworks so that the duty bearers fulfil better their human rights obligations and last but not least enhanced the human rights culture. The supported initiatives in this have ended under this Fund but received support from Sweden for a next phase and will continue under the next country level MPTF.

The Fund's support also significantly improved the pandemic resilience and well-being of some of the most vulnerable groups from the country affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as isolated and lonely elderly, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and others by support to learn how to use digital technologies to connect with loved ones and receive social services and psychological advice. Due to Fund's support the future social assistance programmes in Moldova will be able use the human rights-based approaches in provision of its services.