



Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnerships Fund Phase II

2023 Consolidated Annual Progress Report

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List of abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV	Anti-retroviral treatment
CBM	Confidence Building Measures
CCM TB/AIDS	Country Coordination Mechanism on TB/AIDS
CLM	Community-Led Monitoring
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSOs	Civil society organizations
DV	Domestic Violence
FB	Facebook
GFATM	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRBA	Human Rights based Approach
HR	Human Rights
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LEA	Law-Enforcement Authority
LPAs	Local Public Authorities
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

PLWH	People living with HIV
PrEP	Pre-exposure prophylaxis
PwDs	People with disabilities
PWUDs	People who use drugs
RAF	Results Assessment Framework
SCDP	Sustainable (Community) Development Platform
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SoPs	Standard operating procedures
SW	Sex Workers
TB	Tuberculosis
TN	Transnistrian region
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
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 2023 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 2023, 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- Phase II” has been established for a period of five years covering the 2023-2027. The Fund is focusing on the three out of four priority areas of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027 that focuses on (i) *Just and inclusive institutions and equal opportunities for Human Development*; (ii) *Participatory Governance and Social Cohesion*, and (iii) *Enhanced shared prosperity in a sustainable economy*.

Currently, one joint programme is being implemented through the Fund – under **Priority Area 1** – Just and inclusive institutions and equal opportunities for Human Development.

In 2023 the Fund received contributions in the amount of \$ 1,844,833 from Sweden, with a total contribution from Sweden amounting to \$ 2,542,147, including commitments for future years. According to the Fund’s policy a minimum of 15 % of total resources need to be allocated to gender equality and empowerment of women. In 2023, estimates show a strong gender component in the implemented projects and activities dedicated to mainstream gender equality and empowerment of women with more than 30% of budget allocated to this purpose.

In 2023 the development context in Moldova remained deeply impacted by the war in Ukraine. The refugee influx into Moldova was maintained at the same level and still poses unprecedented challenges for the country, however with an impressive response from the government and the public. In 2023 Moldova continued to push for reforms in the areas of EU accession with a formal opening of negotiations at the technical level for EU acquis chapters. 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 Outcome 1, the Fund continued to provide support to the country in the context of the deteriorated situation in the areas of Human Rights focusing on the Transnistrian region. The Fund continued to support and significantly improve 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. Despite the complex conditions it has to operate, the Programme has successfully adapted its activities, ensured environmental sustainability, and established synergies with other projects. Significant progress was made in domestic violence prevention, human rights advocacy, capacity-building for CSOs, comprehensive sexuality education, HIV support, child rights, and media engagement.

Implemented outcomes and results achieved by the Fund

For the reporting period, the Multi-Partner Trust Fund received contributions and implemented initiatives under one priority area respectively:

Priority Area 1: Just and inclusive institutions and equal opportunities for Human Development – Outcome 1: “By 2027, institutions deliver human rights-based, evidence-informed and gender-responsive services for all with the focus on those who are left behind”.

Priority Area 1: Just and inclusive institutions and equal opportunities for Human Development

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.

Fund Output A: Joint Action to Strengthen Human Rights in the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova

The project 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 Programme established working relations and identified synergies with other projects, especially in confidence-building activities implemented by UNDP and UN. This collaboration included the participation of projects' beneficiaries in each other's activities and the provision of advice on HRBA and vulnerability aspects. Additionally, cooperation with OSCE in capacity-building for CSOs and duty-bearers ensured no overlap in activities.

The Programme's initiatives in domestic violence (DV) complemented ongoing projects by IOM, such as “Enhancing confidence building across the Nistru River through combating domestic violence and gender-based violence” and its Phase II. These efforts focused on improving prevention and response mechanisms to DV, enhancing the protection of victims' rights, and aligning with international obligations and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A subsequent support in line of the above-mentioned efforts was provided from October 2022 to March 2023, with a financial contribution from the Government of Italy.

From April to December 2023, the Interaction NGO, operated a trust line in the Transnistrian region, receiving 306 domestic violence calls and opening 18 SOS cases for women. They provided comprehensive support, developed guidelines for sexual violence support, and held a workshop in October 2023. Advocacy efforts, including the "16 Days of Activism" campaign, raised awareness of DV issues. IOM provided burnout prevention training to NGO staff, enhancing their ability to assist those in need.

The Programme supported human rights defenders and activists despite procurement delays. Activities included capacity-building for disability rights, creating a cross-river referral pathway for refugees with disabilities, and strengthening partnerships to aid Roma communities. Awareness sessions on gender-based violence for Roma women were also conducted.

The Programme supported the institutionalization of the Roma community mediators' network in the Transnistrian region, including consultations and renewing support through the Roma CSO "Shatior over Nistru." Cross-river cooperation with mediators from the right bank was strengthened, and the network received positive feedback at a national forum. "Shatior over Nistru" underwent a PSEA assessment to enhance its capacity and align with UN standards.

The three Crisis Rooms were established to provide temporary shelter and support for women who use drugs (WUD) and their children, facing domestic violence. These rooms also accommodated refugee women and children from Ukraine. Discussions on continuing these services and transferring documentation to local administration took place in November 2023. CSOs were supported through the application process, with applications to be assessed in 2024 under a new subcontracting method through UNODC, Austria.

To ensure the continuation of the efforts initialised in the first phase of the Programme, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Justice an Informative Note on community reintegration for people released from detention in Moldova was finalised and disseminated. This document outlines six key interventions: family support, housing and financial assistance, health and social services access, substance abuse and behaviour change programs, job placement assistance, and monitoring of ex-prisoners.

An out-of-school comprehensive sexuality education program for 59 young people from the Transnistrian region was developed and implemented. This initiative addressed misinformation and promoted informed decisions about sexual and reproductive health. Feedback indicated increased awareness and confidence among participants. Additionally, a Facilitator's Manual was translated into Russian language.

The Programme facilitated the development of a Human Rights Framework (HRF) with local CSOs and human rights defenders. The draft HRF, reviewed by de facto authorities, is under consideration and will be finalized in early 2024. Concurrently, CSOs from both sides of the Nistru River contributed to creating a new human rights framework for Moldova.

In the area of HIV/AIDS, during the reporting period, the Programme focused on enhancing the environment for people living with HIV (PLHIV) on the left bank of the Nistru River. Key activities included training sessions for NGOs and beneficiaries on community-led monitoring (CLM) principles, developing a targeted questionnaire to assess awareness among PLHIV, and introducing new human rights education curricula in collaboration with the State University of Medicine and Pharmacy.

Four training sessions for doctors and nurses in Tiraspol and Ungheni improved their communication skills and promoted non-discriminatory practices. The "Vocea comunităților contează" campaign involved 14 organizations, amplifying voices of those affected by HIV. The HIV OFF campaign used digital tools and live events to promote HIV testing and fight discrimination, involving 20 NGOs and 18 governmental institutions, and distributing over 4,000 informational materials.

The Roadmap for Child Rights in the Transnistrian region, developed during the previous phase, faces challenges in approval and implementation. Despite participatory development process, de facto structures are reluctant to lead the process. The implementation requires significant amendments to the de facto normative frameworks, shifting towards gender-sensitive and child-friendly justice. Additional advocacy efforts, including roundtable discussions and capacity-building activities, are planned.

The Programme organized human rights media brunches to build the capacity of media representatives from both banks of the Nistru River. These events covered topics such as healthcare access for Ukrainian refugees with disabilities and the human rights of older persons, enhancing media representatives' understanding of marginalized groups' challenges.

The approved budget for this output in 2023 was \$ 1,084,097.00 implemented by IOM, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNODC. UNDP is acting as the Lead Agency of the Joint Programme.

RESULTS OVERVIEW by Results of the Joint Project

Project Result 1 - Increased capacities of vulnerable rights holders to exercise their human rights

Throughout the reporting period the Programme has continued the cooperation with the Sustainable (Community) Development Platform (SCDP or Platform) with the aim of developing its capacity in advocating for and defending the rights of the most vulnerable. New members were accepted into the Platform, making it more comprehensive and expanding its membership to new target vulnerable groups: people living with HIV/AIDS, people using drugs, Roma, survivors of domestic violence etc.

Support cross-river exchanges and contacts via various thematic groups of CSOs and individuals vulnerable to human rights violations

The interaction with the Sustainable (Community) Development Platform (SCDP) was reactivated, expanding its membership and outlining future activities. An important change was the reduction of Thematic Working Groups number from three to two due to overlapping membership and complementary activities of the “Adjustment of the Normative Framework” and “Advocacy” groups.

The awareness of the members of the Sustainable (Community) Development Platform’s members was raised in the area of human-rights-compliant community-based services, by organising a roundtable in Tiraspol on “Human Rights and Social Services” with the participants from both banks of the Nistru River. Over 60 participants, including representatives of CSOs, UN agencies and programmes and Swedish Embassy, have discussed existing and piloted social services in the Transnistrian region, as well as the experience of the right bank in implementing “Personal Assistant” and “Roma Community Mediator” social services.

Support advocacy initiatives of human rights defenders to claim human rights and promote international HR standards

The Programme supported human rights defenders and activists from civil society organizations, as well as alumni and participants of the long-term Human Rights Capacity Building Program, in their ongoing commitment to human rights education and advocacy. These efforts focus on promoting social and economic human rights in the Transnistrian region.

The introduction of the new UNDP-run procurement system “Quantum” in the first half of the year and the transition of OHCHR to the UN secretariat-led “Umoja” system in the second half caused delays in contracting a civil society consultant. This consultant was expected to draft activity concepts and support advocacy initiatives. Despite these delays, human rights trainings and initiatives were initiated by thematic working groups.

In collaboration with other OHCHR-led projects (UNPRPD, UN PBF), capacity-building activities were organized for human rights defenders, particularly those working on disability rights. These activities focused on international human rights standards for persons with disabilities, their practical implementation on the right bank of the Nistru River, and alternative reporting to UN Treaty Bodies. A list of organizations for persons with disabilities in the Transnistrian region was developed and validated among local CSOs, marking a step toward a cross-river referral pathway for refugees with disabilities.

The Roma thematic group, comprising Roma human rights activists and community mediators from the left bank of the Nistru River, strengthened partnerships with local educational, social protection, and employment agencies. As a result of advocacy actions initiated in 2022, Roma mediators were recognized as trusted partners by local civic status offices, facilitating access to identification documents for Roma individuals. For the first time, Roma mediator contacts were publicly displayed at the Civic Status Registry Office in Slobodzia, helping several Roma community members obtain civic status documents and IDs.



*Two awareness raising sessions for Roma women and girls in the Transnistrian region, December 2023
@photocredit: OHCHR Moldova*

During the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, Roma activists conducted two informational sessions with Roma women in the Transnistrian region. These sessions, attended by about 30 Roma women and community mediators, raised awareness about domestic violence, available support services, and the impact of gender stereotypes on seeking assistance. These were the first local-level events organized by Roma activists and will be replicated in 2024.

Increase the capacity of CSOs to address the sexual and reproductive rights of their young beneficiaries.

Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as fundamental human rights requires their realization across all demographics, especially for vulnerable groups such as adolescents, youth with disabilities, Roma youth, and those living with HIV. These groups face significant obstacles to their SRHR due to stigma, discrimination, and insufficient knowledge among stakeholders.

Addressing these issues demands comprehensive understanding and advocacy from rights defenders. Families, caregivers, and civil society organizations (CSOs) play pivotal roles as allies, guiding vulnerable youth toward professional health and family planning services. Despite pervasive stigma and stereotypes, it is essential to equip these groups with the necessary knowledge and skills.

In response to the identified issues, the Programme, in partnership with NGO “Motivatie”, organized learning programs for CSOs and informal groups. These programs focused on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people, including the healthy and safe development of boys and girls at different stages of their physical and psycho-emotional development. This initiative built connections with successful experiences from the rights bank of the Nistru River, empowering members of 10 CSOs from the Transnistrian region on SRHR.



14 November 2023, Learning program for CSOs and informal groups on sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people

On November 14, 2023, a learning program was held for CSOs and informal groups, addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people. Representatives from the Transnistrian region showed keen interest, noting the limited promotion and advocacy for SRHR on the left side of the Nistru River. During the training, participants discussed communication strategies for different age groups and approaches to sensitive topics.

Recognizing the persistence of misconceptions about SRHR and the need for improved approaches, additional capacity-building programs for specialists are necessary to address these issues effectively.

For more information, visit: <https://motivatie.md/ro/motivatie-a-capacitat-reprezentantii-ong-urilor-din-regiunea-transnistreana-privind-sanatatea-reproductiva-a-tinerilor/341>

Support institutionalisation of Roma community mediators' network in the Transnistrian region and extend cooperation of community mediators on both banks of Nistru river

In March 2023, the Programme held an initial meeting to present its component on facilitating and supporting the institutionalization of the Roma community mediators' network on the left bank of the Nistru River. Inclusive and meaningful consultations were conducted with five Roma community mediators (3 women and 2 men) and the management of several Roma CSOs in the region. These meetings identified successful lessons learned and strategies for expanding the services of Roma community mediators in the Transnistrian region.

From September 2023, the Programme renewed support for the Roma community mediators in the Transnistrian region by contracting the Roma CSO "Shatiar over Nistru" to facilitate and strengthen the network. Roma community mediators provided access to education, social protection, health, employment, housing, ID documents, and other human rights for 529 Roma individuals. Unlike the previous cycle, the mediators now also serve Roma refugees in five densely populated localities in the Transnistrian region. This has enabled these refugees to access humanitarian assistance, cash support, education, employment, and legal status in Moldova. Notably, 11 out of 183 Roma refugees from Ukraine were registered for temporary protection status with the help of Roma mediators.

Roma community mediators also continued cross-river engagement with mediators from the right bank of the Nistru River, participating in cross-river capacity-building events, conferences, and forums. The left-bank Roma community institution was positively received at the National Forum of Community Mediators, held on December 5, 2023, with the participation of the Moldovan Parliament and representatives from various ministries.

To further strengthen the institutional capacity of the Roma CSO “Shatior over Nistru” and to meet UN partner requirements, the organization was included in the 2023 list for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) assessment and capacity building. By the end of the year, the organization completed a PSEA self-assessment, enhancing the knowledge of Roma mediators and activists about PSEA, including victim-oriented approaches and the roles and responsibilities of CSO staff and volunteers in addressing sexual misconduct. The next step will be ensuring that the organization's rules, policies, and provisions comply with UN PSEA standards and procedures, with continued support from OHCHR Moldova and UNHCR in the upcoming year. This will help meet the minimum requirements for UN partners and bolster the Roma community's potential in this area.

Scale through NGOs gender specific services for women who use drugs, refugees and IDPs and children on both banks

Under the ONE UN Swedish program's first phase (2019-2022), a new service was established through civil society organizations (CSOs) to provide temporary shelter for women who use drugs (WUD) and their children facing domestic violence. Three Crisis Rooms were refurbished and equipped in Ribnita (left bank), Balti, and Anenii Noi. These rooms also began accommodating refugee women and children following the onset of the war in Ukraine, as regular maternal centers or other shelters often do not accept women actively using drugs or alcohol. CSOs Trinita, Positive Initiative, and Union for Equity and Health were subcontracted to manage these shelters and offer comprehensive support services, including shelter, nutrition, hygiene, medical, and psycho-social support for up to 10 days.

In November 2023, a meeting with CSOs UORN, Positive Initiative, and Trinita discussed the subcontracting process to continue providing support services for WUD. It was proposed to create a document detailing these services, aiming to eventually transfer the responsibility to Local Public Administration for sustainability. The CSOs were provided with model documents, including an application form, budget model, and registration instructions for the "Quantum" online portal. NGOs received support throughout the application process. In December, all three NGOs submitted their applications for subcontracting. However, the subcontracting method shifted from the local UNDP method to the "External Party Engagement Unit" (UNODC, Austria). Currently, the applications are under assessment.

Counselling and protection services for victims of domestic violence, sexual violence and victims of trafficking in human beings and migrants in difficult situation

With the support of the One UN JA, the Interaction NGO launched a trust line on April 1, 2023, to enhance service delivery for survivors of domestic violence (DV) in the Transnistrian region. From April 1 to December 31, 2023, the "Trust line 0 800 99800" received 306 calls related to domestic violence, including 18 SOS calls from women, leading to the opening of 18 new SOS cases. These cases received material, legal, psychological, and social support from qualified consultants or were referred to specialized organizations for further assistance. Survivors were directed to various support centers based on their needs, including the Centre for Psychological Support “Lada” and the Charitable Foundation “Childhood for Children,” among others.

Despite the rarity of discussing sexual violence in the Transnistrian region, specialists from Interaction studied examples of urgent and long-term assistance to survivors of sexual violence and began developing recommendations and guidelines for relevant entities. They organized a workshop on developing recommendations for NGOs and social services as part of a two-day conference on October 17-18, 2023, in Tiraspol. The workshop gathered feedback from specialists and assisted individuals, which will be used to refine the guidelines.

Sustained communication and advocacy efforts, such as the "16 Days of Activism" campaign, contributed to increased awareness of domestic violence and available support services in the Transnistrian Region. Trust line staff participated in the campaign's events from November 25 to December 10.

The Ukraine war and the influx of refugees with heightened protection risks increased the workload for NGO staff. To address this, IOM provided capacity-building activities, including a training session on preventing burnout syndrome on December 28-29, 2023, for 14 specialists (13 women, 1 man) from Interaction NGO. The training focused on preventing domestic violence, family and team interaction, conflict resolution, and coping strategies. Participants

found the training beneficial for enhancing their ability to assist those in need and improve collaboration with colleagues.

Support scaling-up of HIV, TB and drug dependency services for prisoners and people after release from prisons

In 2023, the Programme continued to strengthen human rights efforts by finalizing and disseminating the Informative Note titled "Community Integration of People Released from Detention in the Republic of Moldova," available in both Romanian and Russian languages. The ultimate aim is to develop and implement a comprehensive mechanism comprising six recommended interventions for the community reintegration of former detainees. These interventions include family support; assistance in finding housing and financial support; access to health and social services; substance abuse interventions and programs to change criminal behavior and attitudes; job placement assistance and reintegration into the labor market; and monitoring and supervision of ex-prisoners. The Ministry of Justice will coordinate the activities, which will be executed at intra-institutional, inter-sectoral, and inter-institutional levels by relevant institutions.

Please follow <https://moldova.un.org/ro/259917-integrarea-%C3%AEn-comunitate-persoanelor-eliberate-din-detenen%C8%9Bie-%C3%AEn-republica-moldova> for more details.

Support the development and implementation of out of school comprehensive sexuality education programmes for adolescents and youth

Access to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) provides young individuals with essential tools for maintaining healthy lives and relationships, enabling informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health. However, many youths receive scientifically incorrect, conflicting, and confusing messages about sexuality and gender, posing significant risks to their health, well-being, and dignity. This misinformation leads to poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes among young people.

Addressing this issue requires ensuring widespread access to comprehensive sexuality education in both formal school curricula and out-of-school settings. While both formal and non-formal programs complement each other, the lack of comprehensive sexuality education in schools highlights the crucial role of out-of-school programs.

In this context, 59 young people (39 girls and 20 boys) from the Transnistrian region, aged 16-26, participated in an out-of-school comprehensive sexuality education program. This CSE program was developed and implemented following the UNFPA International Technical and Programmatic Guidance and the UN International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education. Experts covered topics such as puberty, sexual health, rights of people with disabilities, private sexual relations, reproductive health, family planning, communication, and challenging stereotypes. Feedback from participants indicated increased awareness and confidence in making informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health.



18 October 2023, Out of school comprehensive sexuality education program for young people

On October 18, 2023, the out-of-school comprehensive sexuality education program engaged young individuals from vulnerable backgrounds, including those with disabilities and without parental support. This program emphasized the importance of ongoing education to foster accurate understanding and holistic development. Additionally, to support the program's implementation, the Facilitator's Manual on comprehensive sexuality education for out-of-school young people was translated into Russian and distributed to specialists and facilitators.

For more information, visit: [MOTIVATIE's CSE Program](#)

Project Result 2: Improved systems and mechanisms for the respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights of vulnerable groups

Facilitate inclusive and meaningful participation of CSOs in development and provide support to CSOs advocacy initiatives to ensure participation at implementation of the Human Rights Framework (HRF)

In the previous phase of the Programme, significant progress was made on drafting a Human Rights Framework (HRF), which is an action plan for implementing recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms, including treaty bodies, Special Procedures, and the Universal Periodic Review, as well as from Thomas Hammarberg's reports. This draft HRF, consisting of six thematic chapters, was developed with the inclusive and meaningful participation of CSOs and human rights defenders from the region. The first draft was submitted for review to duty-bearers from the left bank of the Nistru River before the current phase of the Programme began.

Throughout 2023, the Programme continued its dialogue with de facto authorities to reinforce their commitment to finalizing the review process and to continue working on the HRF's finalization with CSO participation. In October 2023, the reviewed draft, which included six thematic tables with comments and justifications for amending certain actions or timeframes, was shared with OHCHR Moldova. Most comments focused on civic and political human rights, with proposals to exclude some recommendations or actions. OHCHR Moldova is currently reviewing these comments. The HRF is expected to be finalized after consultations with CSOs in the first half of 2024, provided there are no prolonged delays by the de facto authorities.

Simultaneously, CSOs and human rights defenders from both the Transnistrian region and the right bank of the Nistru River participated in constructive dialogues to establish priorities and develop the new human rights framework for

Moldova for 2024-2027. This new framework includes a special chapter addressing human rights issues in the Transnistrian region.

Support in developing a human rights compliant HIV regulatory framework

In the first phase of the Programme (2019-2022), substantial policy changes in HIV and human rights on the left bank of the Nistru River significantly improved the environment for people living with HIV (PLHIV). Building on these achievements, the second phase, led by UNAIDS Moldova, aimed to further strengthen community monitoring efforts to ensure the proper implementation of these policy changes and the fulfillment of rights for people living and affected by HIV.

To initiate this phase, an information and training session on community-led monitoring (CLM) was organized for service provider NGOs and the active beneficiary community. This session covered the 10 priority areas of CLM, addressing service approachability, acceptability, affordability, and human rights considerations. As a result, three NGOs on the left bank of the Nistru River became well-versed in CLM principles, providing qualitative definitions and practical examples of successful CLM implementation at the regional level. These organizations identified key CLM focus areas in the Transnistrian region, including the improvement of HIV prevention services, medical services, human rights, and gender-related issues.

The second focus involved developing and implementing a community-led monitoring tool using a targeted questionnaire to assess awareness levels among PLHIV and those at increased risk regarding policy changes. The target group comprised 150 individuals receiving NGO HIV prevention and support services, including PLHIV aged 18 and above and individuals belonging to high-risk vulnerability groups, such as users of harm reduction programs.

However, the 2023 monitoring findings revealed persistent challenges in crucial areas. Disclosure of an HIV diagnosis remains a significant obstacle, impacting guardianship, custody, adoption, and employment. PLHIV encounter difficulties in securing work due to concerns about revealing their health status, despite legal provisions permitting employment in medical settings. Deficiencies in HIV testing procedures in medical and correctional facilities were also identified, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions. These results underscore the importance of destigmatizing HIV, enhancing legal awareness, and implementing improvements in guardianship, employment, and HIV testing practices across medical and correctional domains for a more inclusive and informed societal environment.

Significant accomplishments have been achieved through the development of three new Human Rights in Health curricula for the Faculty of Pharmacy, General Medicine, and Dentistry as part of a collaborative initiative with the State University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Nicolae Testemițanu" (USMF). This collaboration aimed at fostering respect for human rights and combating stigma and discrimination among future medical specialists. The integration of human rights education and assertive communication into the core of academic training for future doctors, dentists, and pharmacists reflects a noteworthy achievement. Moreover, the collaborative effort led to the thorough review, update, and refinement of the existing curricular contents of six courses from these faculties. These enhancements were strategically implemented to ensure a comprehensive and contemporary integration of Human Rights in Health principles throughout academic programs, equipping students with a robust understanding of the ethical and legal dimensions within the healthcare context.

Additionally, 149 doctors and nurses from both banks of the Nistru River acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to create a supportive and non-discriminatory environment for individuals affected by HIV. Four training sessions (two in Tiraspol and two in Ungheni) were conducted in October and November in two medical institutions, one in Ungheni and the other in Tiraspol, highlighting the commitment of healthcare professionals to strengthening human rights, combating stigma, and fostering assertive communication in the context of HIV infection.

These training sessions responded to findings from the Stigma Index 2022 study, which highlighted the infringement of the right to health among individuals living with HIV. The goal was to equip medical professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to foster a supportive and non-discriminatory environment for individuals affected by HIV.

In Tiraspol, 75 participants attended the training program. Ivan Pereli and Nadejda Jebţova, doctors from Tiraspol, emphasized the significance of the training in enhancing communication skills and promoting assertive communication with patients.

- "The doctor heals through words. It is crucial to know how to communicate with the patient. Until now, we only knew about being aggressive and passive. Now, I will communicate assertively," said Ivan Pereli.

- Nadejda Jebţova added, "It is important to pay more attention to tense situations that arise between the doctor and the patient. Sometimes these misunderstandings stem from a lack of knowledge about our rights and communication techniques. I will pay attention to how I communicate with the patient."

In Ungheni, 26 medical assistants and 21 doctors participated in the activities. Elvira Stati, Deputy Director of Ungheni District Hospital, emphasized the commitment to improving medical services and respecting patient rights, particularly for those affected by HIV.

- "This initiative reflects Ungheni District Hospital's commitment to continuous improvement of medical services and respect for patient rights. It is a significant step towards more humane and patient-sensitive healthcare, with a particular focus on those affected by HIV," said Elvira Stati.

The final session, involving 27 nurses, added a valuable dimension to the learning process by highlighting the specific needs of patients and emphasizing the essential role of nurses in care and support. One participant noted, "Very necessary and useful information. I have never attended such training before, and I learned many useful things for my interaction with patients."

Participants across the board acknowledged the significance of the training, expressing appreciation for the necessary and useful information acquired.

[UNAIDS Moldova Facebook Post]

(<https://www.facebook.com/UNAIDSmd/posts/pfbid02uv6dgccVdQgEByJ3unjsB1b9h2LFA8c7HudFtcn4LNNdTuLvqP5LBJ5HHHFVcjrwI>)

[UNAIDS Moldova Facebook Post]

(<https://www.facebook.com/UNAIDSmd/posts/pfbid02U8aHZHGkXrVvxQwyVZzwauy6oSwY4XZMX1k6q5SRxpPrktXNtLyqCmo5We7Z6NfwI>)

Increase children's access to more friendly, effective, gender-equitable justice system

The Roadmap for Child Rights in the Transnistrian region, developed in the previous phase of One UN JA, was validated by de facto structures. Advocacy activities were conducted to promote the approval and implementation of the Roadmap, including field visits and bilateral meetings with de facto structures in the field of internal affairs, foreign affairs, and coordination of humanitarian and technical aid. Despite the participatory development process and validation by the de facto structures, they local duty-bearers are currently reluctant to lead this process.

The approval and further implementation of the Roadmap require consistent amendments to the de facto normative frameworks, which would change the approach towards gender-sensitive and child-friendly justice and the entire paradigm of working with children. Consequently, this will significantly impact the practical arrangements for front-line workers, including justice sector professionals. To advance the child rights agenda in the region, additional advocacy efforts are required. Planned activities include roundtable discussions on child rights, capacity-building for stakeholders, and empowerment activities for CSOs in the region.

The previously developed curriculum and course support on child rights are being used by academia in the Transnistrian region, specifically in three universities. Based on this curriculum and course support, public lectures on Child Protection and Justice for Children were scheduled in cooperation with local academia. The first event on the theme of Child Rights – International Standards and Norms took place on December 19, 2023, attended by 44 law

students and justice professionals. Additionally, logistical activities have been initiated for the capacity building of in-service professionals.

Improve access to essential, inclusive and gender-sensitive services for children at risk or experiencing violence

To assess and improve intersectoral frameworks for identification, referral, investigation, and follow-up for children who experience violence, the ToRs for selection of two national consultants was developed. Also, the selection process of local coordinator for cross-sectorial teams was finalized and the supervision activities started.

Barnahus type service for children victims/ witnesses of crimes is a novation not only for the left Bank of the Nistru river but for the right bank, too. In this context, vast advocacy and preparatory works have been conducted for both Tiraspol and Cahul Barnahus, including coordination with line ministries (MLSP, MJ).

As a results, the premises for Tiraspol Barnahus and co-founding for set-up were identified: German Cooperation Fund (KfW) is to cover the refurbishment and OSCE will provide support for the furniture, specialized equipment, and elevator. The ToRs for selection of designing company is developed and in house engineer to support this work was selected.

To promote the Barnahus type service in the Transnistrian region and familiarized the professionals from the region with this concept, the first exchange of experience between both banks of the Nistru river professionals is planned for the end of April. The visit will be organized in the only functional Barnahus in Balti. The selection of the participants of the training course for interviewers was finalized, three participants are from Transnistrian region. The course was already started and will be completed by the end of June 2024.

Advancing multidisciplinary-policing approach while ensuring referral of PWUD and PLWH to harm reduction services on both banks

Two expert meetings were held with Ms. Svetlana Doltu, Ala Iațco, and Mr. Iurie Climașevschi to plan training sessions for local law enforcement authorities from both banks and to develop referral schemes. In the first phase of the project (2019-2022), a total of 414 police officers, 22% of whom were women, from various regions including Chisinau, Balti, Cahul, Drochia, Glodeni, Rezina, Anenii Noi, Dubasari, Ribnita, Camenca, Tiraspol, Slobozia, Grigoriopol, and Bender, enhanced their awareness of TB and HIV and improved their ability to refer vulnerable groups to medical and psychosocial services.

The latest version of the Methodical Instruction for police officers has been revised and adapted. Training sessions based on this updated instruction are scheduled for September 2024. The purpose of the Methodical Instruction is to enhance the occupational security of employees within administrative authorities and institutions under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and to establish mechanisms for referring high-risk groups (HIV, hepatitis B and C, and tuberculosis) to treatment, support, and rehabilitation services.

Increasing knowledge of health care providers on delivering youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services for all young people, including those vulnerable

Due to some challenges encountered, this activity has been postponed for the second year of the of implementation. The Programme, in partnership with NGO "Health for Youth" will train healthcare providers from the Centre of Reproductive Health from Tiraspol and rayonal primary health facilities on delivering youth-friendly health services, based on Moldova (right side) extensive experience¹. Cross-river exchange will be ensured by applying right bank's experience in delivering similar services through the National Network of 41 Youth-Friendly Health Centres funded from the public budget. Study visits will be organized for the left-right bank specialists for better learning outcomes.

¹ In the Republic of Moldova, for 20 years already is functioning the National Network of Youth Friendly Health Centres (41 Youth Klinics based in all districts of the country)

Project Result 3. Enhanced human rights culture in the Transnistrian region

Human rights capacity building for media representatives from both banks of the Nistru river

The Programme organized thematic human rights media brunches for journalists, media specialists from CSOs, bloggers, and influencers from both banks of the Nistru River. These events aimed to enhance their knowledge about the human rights of marginalized groups. More than 25 journalists and media professionals participated, increasing their understanding of these critical issues.

The first event, held on July 12, 2023, focused on “Access of Refugees with Disabilities and High Care Needs from Ukraine to Health Services, Rehabilitation, and Assistive Devices - Between Needs and Current Reality.” About 20 journalists and media professionals attended. Displaced persons with disabilities from Ukraine and organizations of persons with disabilities from both banks of the Nistru River shared their achievements, ongoing challenges, and essential needs in registering for the Temporary Protection Mechanism and accessing healthcare and rehabilitation services, including medicines and assistive devices.

On November 16, 2023, the second media brunch addressed the topic of a human rights-based approach and intergenerational solidarity for the full enjoyment of human rights by older persons. This event enhanced the media's knowledge about older persons, ageism, active aging, and human rights-compliant communications. The Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons, following a 10-day visit to Moldova, presented her initial findings and engaged in a dialogue with journalists. Additionally, journalists had the opportunity to interact with older persons from both banks of the Nistru River, who discussed their human rights concerns and expressed their desire to actively participate in decision-making and other aspects of life. The shift from a care/social approach to a human rights-based approach to aging was illustrated through personal stories.

Support human rights awareness raising initiatives on both banks of Nistru river

To enhance the human rights culture in the Transnistrian region and promote the rights of marginalized groups, the Programme supported several awareness-raising activities and campaigns:

Refugees' Human Rights in the Transnistrian Region: On September 26 and November 29, the Programme, in collaboration with UN Sister Agencies and international and national CSOs, organized public events to raise awareness about the “temporary protection” status for refugees from Ukraine residing in the Transnistrian region. These events addressed the low level of information among refugees and attracted around 200 participants, 70% of whom were women. The Programme increased refugees' knowledge about temporary protection, particularly benefiting vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, Roma, individuals with disabilities, older persons, and those with reduced mobility. The events also provided legal counseling and assistance during the pre-enrollment process for obtaining temporary protection status.



First Temporary Protection Fair in Tiraspol, organised jointly by UN Agencies on 26 September 2024 @photocredit: OHCHR Moldova

Human Rights for Ethnic Minorities on Both Banks of the Nistru River: Continuing its efforts to promote Roma rights, the Programme marked International Roma Day as part of the UDHR 75 initiative. In cooperation with other UN Agencies and international NGOs, the Programme organized an awareness-raising event titled “Amare Amale.” This event highlighted the human rights of Roma and promoted Roma community mediators on both banks of the Nistru River. It gathered over 500 participants from across the country, including the Transnistrian region. The Programme developed a thematic quiz and organized an exhibition of promotional materials and video stories showcasing the achievements of Roma community mediators.



Joint action on International Roma Day, Chisinau, 8 April 2023 @photocredit: OHCHR Moldova

Human Rights Awareness for Youth and Children: In synergy with another OHCHR-led project on human rights and social cohesion supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, the Programme facilitated cross-river engagement of two artists who produced human rights murals symbolizing social cohesion between the right and left banks of the Nistru River. To celebrate Human Rights Day, a greeting card displaying the murals was widely distributed among stakeholders, including CSOs, NHRIs, HRDs, duty bearers, and right holders.

Support for the development and the implementation of a behaviour change communication campaign for people living and affected by HIV, health staff and general population

The mentoring program empowered 36 women and 5 men with essential psycho-social skills and knowledge about their rights, enabling them to live free from stigma and violence. The program included monthly training sessions covering various themes such as mental health, codependency, and violence metamorphosis. Participants actively engaged in discussions and exercises, with real-life stories shared during sessions having a consistently positive impact.

One notable success story is Linda Anataciuc, who overcame violence and discrimination, regained self-confidence, started a new life, and became a mother again, demonstrating the program's transformative power.

The "Vocea comunităților contează" campaign featured 14 organizations using conceptual photography to amplify the voices of those directly impacted by HIV. The visual narratives, created in collaboration with skilled photographers, highlighted the resilience and diversity within these communities, serving as both a celebration and an informative tool for the public and various stakeholders.



A significant campaign event brought together over 50 representatives from communities and development partners, showcasing their commitment to fighting HIV and AIDS. The International AIDS Candlelight Memorial catalyzed the "HIV OFF" social campaign, which ran from May 15 to June 15, 2023. This campaign aimed to inform, educate, and mobilize communities on HIV testing, knowing one's status, and combating discrimination.

The campaign effectively combined digital tools and live events to reach a broad audience. Social media platforms and websites engaged online participants, while workshops, seminars, and community gatherings provided direct interaction and deeper engagement.

Overall, the campaign successfully used digital tools and live events to make a significant impact, fostering meaningful connections and raising awareness about HIV prevention and testing.

Conclusions

In 2023, the landscape of global challenges continued to evolve. While the COVID-19 pandemic had significantly abated, new obstacles emerged, particularly from the ongoing war in Ukraine and its widespread repercussions. The Fund and its Partner United Nations Organizations (PUNOs) implemented their activities amidst significant national and international crises, including a continued influx of refugees, surging energy prices, a deteriorating security situation, and severe economic and social impacts.

Despite these disruptions, the activities under the Fund were executed efficiently, achieving most of their planned targets and milestones. The Fund successfully supported initiatives that brought together diverse actors and partners, emphasizing the critical need for strong commitment and coordinated efforts among all stakeholders to tackle complex and multifaceted challenges. In 2023 one joint project was supported through the Fund with financing from its generous contributor - Sweden.

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.

The main highlight of the reporting period was the readjustment of the Programme's activities in line with the new geopolitical and security challenges. Implementing UN agencies and their partners had to rethink their approaches to ensure the safety of staff and beneficiaries. Occasionally, restrictions travel to the Transnistrian region were imposed, as a result of security incidents occurring in the region. Also, it became problematic to recruit personell able and willing to work in the Transnistrian region. Despite these challenges, the Programme continued its activities, though not always at the efficiency levels, expected under normal circumstances.

Efforts were made to ensure environmental sustainability, indirectly contributing to transforming local enterprises into environmentally friendly entities. The Programme raised public awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals and provided recommendations to local partners on reducing waste. A refresher sessions were conducted with the local partners, building on the previous capacity building efforts from the previous phase of the One UN JA.

Overall, the supported project has made substantial progress towards its goals, demonstrating the critical role of coordinated, multi-faceted interventions in supporting vulnerable communities and fostering sustainable development in challenging contexts. The lessons learned and best practices identified during this period will continue to guide future initiatives aimed at strengthening the resilience of all actors in the human rights defending areas.

Annex A Specific Story

Problem / Challenge faced: *A woman, 36-year-old, suffered from domestic violence for several years*

Programme Interventions:

The trust line received a call from a woman, 36 years old, a graduate of a correctional boarding school, and mother of four children asking for support in preventing domestic violence. The woman reported a difficult relationship with her husband, during her six-year marriage. For some time, she and her children have been living separately from her husband in her grandmother's flat. However, the husband comes and beats her, forces her to have sexual relations and threatens to take away the children, and in the state of highest aggression can break furniture and appliances. Her four-year-old daughter is diagnosed with insulin-corrected diabetes mellitus. All scandals and even issues of sexual nature are discussed in front of the children. The woman repeatedly applied for divorce, but her husband blackmailed her to withdraw the applications, threatening to take away the children.

Result:

The woman received comprehensive legal assistance in the divorce process, psychological counseling and advice on quick response measures in case of her husband's aggressive behavior. The beneficiary received professional requalification courses in manicure, complemented by the provision of professional equipment. Moreover, she received dedicated assistance in securing suitable employment aligned with their newly acquired skills. The beneficiary regularly participates in information-awareness events.

Lessons Learned:

The local CSOs are often ahead of de facto state structures in providing necessary and comprehensive support to survivors of violence in the Transnistrian region. The CSOs in the Transnistria region are flexible to protect beneficiaries, as they have access and cooperation established with authorities of the Republic of Moldova and CSOs on the right bank of the Nistru River. This serves as a basis for referrals from the de facto Transnistrian local authorities to CSOs in case the beneficiary needs to receive any services from organizations operating on the right bank of Nistru.

In the Transnistrian region, comprehensive assistance and protection for survivors of domestic and sexual violence are provided mostly by CSOs since survivors of domestic violence are not yet fully recognized as a group in vulnerable situations. Moreover, the survivors of sexual violence are treated by the de-facto state system as victims of crimes, with no need for psychological and social assistance and rehabilitation. Therefore, both survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence do not receive any special assistance from the de facto authorities. Consequently, in the implementation of a beneficiary's plan of assistance, the CSOs apply for welfare benefits based on the rights provided to orphans, the poor, the unemployed, large families, or single parents. If the beneficiary does not fit into one of the categories, there is no other available support.

This case offered a few lessons learned:

- the successful resolution requires a logically constructed plan for the collection of documentation regarding the survivor, her children and her daughter's children.
- psychological support is especially important in crises when the person assisted and her children live in fear after being subjected to violence for many years.
- each case could mean supporting between two to eight persons: mostly children or other people dependent on the survivor.
- survivors of domestic violence cannot obtain protection because the law for the prevention of domestic violence has not been adopted in the Transnistrian region.
- special assistance for survivors of sexual violence is not presumed by any legal framework in the Transnistria region.

- there are no practical cases when sexual violence in the domestic environment was recognized by police in the Transnistria Region.
- to ensure the sustainability of the support provided to the survivors of domestic and sexual violence, plans of their individual assistance (in addition to legal, social and psychological assistance) shall include professional education and employment which leads to the survivor's financial independence and security.
- involvement of the survivors of domestic and sexual violence in educational activities, creative events and public actions serves as preventive measures against social marginalization and supports their efficient integration into the community/society.

Source: IOM