



Delivering Comprehensive Sexuality  
Education for Out-of-school Young People

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## COUNTRY CASE STUDIES ON UNFPA'S GLOBAL PROGRAMME ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL CSE

# Moldova

**The Country Case studies series is developed by UNFPA based on outcomes of the Global Programme on Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).**

UNFPA has since 2019 led the programme “Comprehensive Sexuality Education for Out-of-school Young People: Reaching Those Most Left Behind”, with the aim of empowering adolescents and youth from specific groups left behind with the information and skills they need to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The programme is funded by the governments of Norway and Spain, and started its second phase in 2022. The programme implementation takes place in a total of 12 countries – Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran, Malawi, Moldova, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Palestine, Philippines and Tunisia.

Out-of-school CSE holds the promise of reaching those left behind. In each of the countries, locally adapted interventions consider the needs, life experiences and vulnerabilities of left-behind groups of young people. This includes young people who are vulnerable either because they cannot attend school, or because the sexuality education curriculum offered in school does not adequately address their identity, whether that be as a girl, a young person with a disability, a young person living with HIV, an LGBTQ+ young person, or a migrant or young person displaced by conflict or humanitarian crisis. The initiative reaches out to young people from left-behind populations using the specially developed UN *International Technical and Programmatic Guidance on Out-of-school Comprehensive Sexuality Education*. Youth engagement is an integral part of the programme, and young people are themselves meaningfully included and engaged in the design and implementation of the activities.

In this Country Case studies series we present the experiences and lessons learned from UNFPA’s work at the country level implementing CSE to meet the needs of young people most left behind.



Moldova

# BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CRISIS: PROVIDING CSE TO REFUGEE YOUTH FROM UKRAINE



## TARGET GROUP:

Youth refugees from Ukraine, including Roma youth



## GOVERNMENT PARTNER:

Ministry of Education and Research



## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

Educational Centre Pro Didactica, Youth Media Centre, MilleniuM Training and Development Institute

During times of crisis, the needs of youth are often overlooked. Young people on the move, particularly those fleeing armed conflict and seeking protection and asylum, have a heightened need for comprehensive sexuality education. It helps them navigate the challenges they face and provides them with tools to build healthy and fulfilling lives. CSE protects them from sexual and gender-based violence, provides them with knowledge and skills for reproductive health, promotes gender equality, empowers them to make informed decisions and provides them with life skills such as critical thinking and effective communication.

To address these needs, UNFPA is working with the Government of Moldova and partners to support the estimated 100,000 refugees from Ukraine who have fled their country since Russia's invasion in February 2022, including around 16,500 young people aged 10-25. UNFPA established 28 static and mobile Safe Spaces across Moldova, with eight specifically designed to meet the unique needs of adolescent refugees. The spaces provide CSE programmes including life skills and resilience-

building sessions, mental health counselling, sexual and reproductive health referrals and information, and personal development. They also connect young refugees with relevant services from host communities. At the Safe Spaces, young refugees can obtain menstrual hygiene products and have condoms. Most of the spaces have a separate room for psychologists to support refugees with their mental health struggles as they deal with the trauma, stress and homesickness of having their lives upended by the war. During 2022, 1,500 refugee boys and girls (153 from the Roma community) received CSE in Safe Spaces.

To reach out to refugee youth from hosting communities, UNFPA supports two mobile Safe Spaces for young people, as well as the National Network of Youth Friendly Health Centres, to increase its capacity to address refugees' needs. All 41 centres were equipped with modern contraceptives, and kits for post-rape treatment. The centres also reached out to 3,728 refugee adolescents and youth with information on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## Successes

More than 5,000 young male and female refugees received CSE with UNFPA support in 2022. The Safe Spaces established by UNFPA have been successful in providing a safe and nurturing environment, addressing their specific needs and providing them with the necessary support and resources. These services include:

- Access to age-appropriate information and knowledge on hygiene, mental health, non-violent relationships, sexuality, gender-based violence prevention, sexual abuse, trafficking and other risks
- Access to reproductive health commodities, contraceptives and menstrual health products
- Access to safe and non-stigmatized counselling and referral services for gender-based violence
- Youth-designed activities, building social networks, and adolescent peer education activities
- Connection with youth-friendly health clinics and youth centres supported by UNFPA

— Additionally, the Safe Spaces promote a culture of peace and social cohesion by integrating youth refugees into the communities and fostering intercultural dialogue between Moldovan and Ukrainian young people.





## Challenges

Despite the successes, the programme has faced some challenges. Funding and resources can be limited, making it difficult to provide the needed services to young refugees. Addressing the specific needs of young refugees is challenging because they often face additional discrimination and marginalization – both from decision-makers and within their own community – on account of their age, and because of patriarchal norms and taboos around sexual and reproductive health. Another challenge the programme faces is the lack of access to comprehensive services in the young refugees' home country, which makes it difficult to ensure continuity of services after they return.

Despite these challenges, UNFPA continues to work towards providing comprehensive support to young refugees in crisis-affected areas. Ensuring they continue a safe transition to adulthood – by being informed about their sexual and reproductive health and rights, connected to services, and empowered to address gender-based violence – has proved to be an important support in building their resilience to the war that has forced them to leave their homes.



## Context

In Moldova the legal framework provides strong support for the right to sexuality education. However, sexuality education is not a stand-alone subject, but is taught as part of health education integrated into the compulsory and optional school curricula. With UNFPA's support, since 2018 sexuality education has gradually been integrated into the mandatory

curriculum, and the country was in 54 per cent compliance with the international standards for CSE in 2021 (good progress compared with 34 per cent compliance in 2017). In addition, more than 25,000 adolescents and youth receive out-of-school CSE every year with UNFPA's support.



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