



World Food Programme

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LIVES

## WFP Moldova Country Brief September 2023

### Operational Context

The onset of the conflict in Ukraine in February 2022 has led to the displacement of millions of people both in and outside of Ukraine. Since then, more than 875,000 Ukrainians crossed into the Republic of Moldova, of whom 106,317 still remain, according to UNHCR. In response, the Government of Moldova, with the support of international and local entities, has stepped up and provided life-saving support to those people fleeing the conflict.

Moldova is one of the countries most affected by the war in Ukraine, not only due to its physical proximity but also because of its inherent vulnerabilities as a small, landlocked economy with close linkages to both Ukraine and Russia. The influx of refugees to Moldova has resulted in additional fiscal costs, squeezing resources for long-term development priorities. The large influx of refugees has also created a challenging socioeconomic environment in the medium term, especially if many migrants remain but fail to find employment opportunities.

Heavy reliance on imports to meet food and energy needs has left Moldova vulnerable to disruptions in the supply of food, energy, and commodity imports from Ukraine and Russia. Additionally, Moldova continues to rely substantially on natural gas imported from Russia for powering its energy needs. Import disruptions are expected to further increase price pressures, in turn eroding the competitiveness of firms and household incomes, especially for the poor.

WFP has been present in Moldova since March 2022 to deliver life-saving assistance to more than 3,000 refugees and 6,000 vulnerable Moldovan households hosting refugees. In September 2022, WFP Moldova launched its Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (T-ICSP) 2022-2023, followed by a Budget Revision that was approved in July 2023 for extending the duration until February 2024. The T-ICSP focused on assisting the Government of Moldova in supporting refugee and host communities while strengthening the country's local social protection systems and capacities.

Population: **2.6 million**

Income Level: **upper-middle- income**

Inequality Index: **0.205, ranking it 51 out of 170**

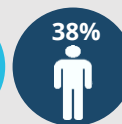
2021 Human Development Index: **80 out of 191**



### In Numbers

15,481 people assisted

in September 2023



USD 1,838,763 cash-based transfers made

USD 22.5 m six months net funding requirements (October 2023 - March 2024)

### Operational Updates

- WFP continues to provide three hot meals daily to refugees in Refugee Accommodation Centres (RAC) in Moldova. **In September 2,794 refugees in 47 RACs received support through WFP's cooperating partners.** Where government-approved kitchen facilities are available, WFP offers commodity vouchers worth 100 Moldovan Leu (MDL) per person (approximately USD 5). In addition, 262 people received snacks at the border.
- WFP continues its cash-based assistance to aid Moldovan households hosting refugees to help offset the costs of accommodation. The ninth round of cash-based transfers included **4,615 households hosting Ukrainian refugees (12,245 individuals). The value of payment is equivalent to USD 1,035,550.**

### WFP Technical Support on Cash-Assured Payments to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP)

In light of the MLSP reforms, the Minister requested WFP's support to identify the main risk areas in the existing national social cash-assistance programmes, with a focus on 'Ajutor Social' which is the social assistance payment for vulnerable Moldovans living below or at the poverty line.

WFP initiated a review, leveraging its existing tools and expertise. WFP's developed assured cash payment analysis methodology based on WFP's corporate cash assurance framework, complemented with information from MLSP.

The findings are cross-cutting and will support more detailed planning and reform work planned through MLSP's RESTART thematic working groups, namely: Human Resources, Performance Management; Digitalisation (specific to business processes and secure data management for ajutor social); vulnerability and inclusion. As well as providing analysis on how MLSP might strengthen its overall risk compliance and due diligence of inclusive social cash assistance provision.

WFP Country Strategy

Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan  
(September 2022 – February 2024)

Total Requirements (USD)	Total Received (USD)
86 m	51 m
2023 Requirements (USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (October 2023- March 2024)
36.1 m	22.5 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Crisis-affected populations in Moldova can meet their food and other essential needs throughout the year.

**Focus area:** Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide emergency cash and voucher transfers to crisis-affected populations

Strategic Result 2: Capacity strengthening

**Strategic Outcome 2:** The Government of Moldova has enhanced social protection and food security capacities and systems to support vulnerable populations by 2023.

**Focus area:** Resilience

Activities:

- Provide technical assistance to the Government to enhance shock-responsive social protection and food security systems and capacities

Strategic Result 3: Enhance Global Partnerships

**Strategic Outcome 3:** Humanitarian and Development partners benefit from services provided to support vulnerable populations in Moldova throughout the year.

**Focus area:** Crisis Response

Activities:

- Provide on-demand services to partners

Moldova a safe home for the Polovich family

Dmitro Polovich, a 23-year-old powerlifting champion from Mykolaiv, Ukraine, now resides in Moldova. Despite living with a disability, Dmitro is a fighter. From a less than 1% chance of walking when he was a child, he achieved the extraordinary. And even though he couldn't lift more than 2 kilos just a few years ago, he can now lift up to 90 kilos. Dmitro continues his training in Moldova, actively competing in powerlifting events.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the support of his mother, Ianina Polovich (45). In March 2022, she left behind her life in Ukraine, arriving at the RAC in Chisinau with Dmitro and her two younger children, Maxim (6 years old) and Anastasia (13 years old). Her primary motivation was to ensure her children's safety.



The Polovich family benefits from three hot meals per day made available by the World Food Programme.

Ianina finds the food assistance provided by WFP essential for her family, especially due to the high cost of nutritional supplements for Dmitro. With her husband still in Ukraine and her inability to work for extra income, this support is invaluable. Ianina remains hopeful about reuniting with her husband after the conflict despite their separation, as their bond and love remain strong.

Donors

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Republic of Korea, Romania, Total Energies Foundation

Photo Caption: Dmitro Polovich (23) and his mother Ianina (45)  
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Monitoring and evaluation

- In September, monthly spot check visits were conducted in 15 Refugee Accommodation Centers (RACs) to assess the beneficiary satisfaction with provided hot meals; 52 refugees were interviewed.
- From 30 August to 15 September, WFP conducted a post-distribution monitoring round among 250 refugee-hosting households who received multi-purpose cash assistance in July 2023. Most of the beneficiaries use the assistance for utilities and food. Satisfaction with the assistance remains high: 9.1 scores on a 1-10 scale.
- Around 60 percent of the beneficiaries are women, and 62 percent of the households are women headed. Food consumption remains at acceptable levels, both for female and male-headed households. Every other (54 percent) household fears it would not have enough money to cover their basic needs. Around half of the households have adopted some levels of consumption-based coping strategies to bridge the gap, mainly purchasing less preferred but cheaper food. Two-thirds use livelihood-based coping strategies, and most of them are using savings to cover their essential needs.