

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING
THE NATIONAL
PROGRAMME FOR
CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF
PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS &
REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND
WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

Moldova's National Programme for Childcare Services – Paving the Way for Early Childhood Development, Economic Inclusion, and Refugee Integration



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CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

Executive Summary

In 2023–2026, the Government of Moldova launched the National Programme for Child Care Services for Children Aged 0 to 3 (hereon referred to as The National Programme). This is the country's first large-scale effort to deliver accessible, quality childcare for children under three - an age group historically overlooked.

The National Programme is **a strategic response to a set of interlinked structural challenges** that risk undermining Moldova's social and economic progress. These include persistently high child poverty, low enrolment in early childhood education for children under three —currently reaching only 15 percent — and limited avenues for women to re-enter the workforce. These pressures have been further intensified by the ongoing Russia–Ukraine war, with Moldova now hosting the world's highest per capita population of Ukrainian refugees-most of them women and children.

The National Programme positions **childcare as a key lever for advancing various interconnected policy objectives**, including gender equality, early childhood development, economic inclusion, and social cohesion. It supports the rollout of public, private, and alternative childcare models — including family-based, employer-supported, and individual caregiver services — underpinned by a clear regulatory framework and coordinated through a multi-stakeholder National Steering Committee.

It marks a decisive shift from — informal, unregulated care to structured, quality-assured services — positioning childcare as a national development priority embedded within Moldova's broader legal, financial, and social

reform agenda. **In under 18 months, the National Programme has delivered impressive system-level results.** 38 public crèches have been renovated or established; 19 family-type crèches have been launched — including **Moldova's first refugee— and male-led centre**; and the **country's first employer-supported childcare service** has been piloted at Orange Moldova. These services now benefit over 2,500 children across Moldova and offer care models responsive to diverse family needs.

The National programme **has also played a pivotal role in promoting employment and entrepreneurship, particularly among refugee and rural women.** Through start-up grants, business planning support, and over 300 hours of certified caregiver training, the initiative has created pathways for economic empowerment. By mid-2023, following the rollout of subsidised childcare services and alternative provision, UN Women and other partners reported a 3.8 percentage point increase in women's labour force participation, from 38 to 41.8 percent.

A key differentiator of Moldova's approach lies in the strength of its enabling ecosystem. **At the centre is the cross-sectoral National Steering Committee** — anchored by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection — which has facilitated alignment between ministries of education, finance, infrastructure, and health. It has also enabled coordination with civil society, international organisations, and donors, helping to rapidly move from legislation to implementation. Moldova's Minister of Labour and Social Protection and other senior officials

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

have also publicly championed the initiative, while national partners have launched extensive media campaigns, branded provider profiles, and educational videos to raise public awareness.

Financially, the initiative has demonstrated catalytic impact: **an initial USD 1.75 million investment has mobilised over USD 12.5 million in additional funding, achieving a leverage ratio of 1:6.5.** The Government of Moldova has also now invested MDL 30 million (~USD 1.65 million), which signals strong political ownership and sustained commitment to childcare.

Today, the National Programme is **fully embedded within Moldova's long-term policy architecture, which includes the Moldova Growth Plan and the Moldova 2030 Strategy.** The Growth Plan, supported by the EU's €1.9 billion Reform and Growth Facility, sets a target of creating 5,000 new childcare placements over the next two years, positioning childcare as a core pillar of Moldova's post-crisis recovery and economic modernisation. In 2025, the programme is set to train 500 early educators and continue expanding services with support from the World Bank and Global Partnership for Education. Parallely, the Moldova 2030 Strategy commits to raising early childhood education access for children under three, aligning with the EU's revised Barcelona Targets (45% coverage by 2030) and Moldova's broader accession roadmap.

The next phase focuses on institutionalising childcare policy through a cross-ministerial government decree, scaling nationally accredited training systems

to build a qualified and diversified early years workforce, and conducting a social return on investment (SROI) assessment to generate robust multidimensional impact data.

For other countries seeking to invest in childcare — especially in contexts affected by crisis or displacement — Moldova's experience offers a practical and adaptable blueprint. It shows how integrating childcare into national policy priorities, backed by legal reform and strong multi-sector partnerships, can deliver far-reaching social and economic dividends.

We encourage a wide range of stakeholders working to strengthen childcare systems to engage with this case study—particularly those working in crisis-affected or resource-constrained settings.

- *For policymakers:* It highlights Moldova's strong governance architecture, including cross-ministerial coordination and a rapid transition from legislation to implementation.
- *For funders:* It provides clear evidence of catalytic impact, showing how strategic, early-stage investment can unlock broader system reform and national commitment.
- *For practitioners:* It shares practical insights on designing and delivering childcare models that are context-responsive, equity-driven, and scalable.

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

Context

Moldova, a small country with a complex socio-economic landscape, has long faced challenges related to governance, institutional capacity, and economic development. As one of the poorest countries in Europe, Moldova's poverty levels worsened further due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Child poverty rates in Moldova are also very high. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, in 2023, approximately 30% of children in Moldova were living in poverty, representing a nearly two percentage point increase since 2022.

In recent years, challenges have been compounded by the refugee crisis triggered by the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine. As a neighbouring country, Moldova has become a **key host and transit point for displaced individuals from Ukraine**. Since 2022, almost 2 million Ukrainians have crossed into the country. Currently, over 127,000 remain, accounting for around 5% of Moldova's total population – the highest Ukrainian refugee population per capita in the world.

Women and children constitute a vast majority of these displaced individuals. In Moldova, they receive temporary protection which grants them access to employment, housing, healthcare, education, and social support. However, despite broad support for refugee families and children, early learning opportunities remain notably limited, with only 15 percent of children under three being enrolled in preschool. Where opportunities exist, access and quality vary widely. For example, in urban centres like Chisinau, occupancy rates in centres are over 100%, and in rural areas, teacher shortages are acute [Step by Step Moldova, 2022].

As refugee families stay for prolonged periods in Moldova, this gap in early education stands to have negative effects on a child's long-term development. The impact is not confined to the youngest children alone. The lack of access to quality early learning services creates barriers for mothers to enter the labour force, hampering their long-term integration in these communities.

In light of this, Moldova faces an urgent need to develop comprehensive early childhood care services and create a wide range of positive outcomes for both children and their parents and caregivers.

Understanding the National Programme for Childcare Services

a) The evolution

The Government of the Republic of Moldova **first recognised early education as a priority in its 2002 Education for All strategy**. While this led to increased financial investment and improved enrollment, the focus was primarily on children aged three and older, leaving children under three largely unaddressed.

Over time, the importance of early childhood education for **children under three has gained greater attention, particularly through the Moldova 2030 National Development Strategy**. This strategy aligns with the European Union's framework for measuring the quality

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

of life across ten key dimensions, including “Barcelona Targets”- a **critical condition for European Union membership for Moldova**. Originally set in 2002, the Barcelona targets aim to ensure that 33% of children under the age of 3 have access to quality care, and by 2022, this target was expanded to at least 45% by 2030.

The need to **prioritise access to early education under three had a dual objective** of ensuring children are supported in their development, while also supporting families, particularly women - in returning to work and reducing the financial burden on families.

In response to these priorities, Moldova has made **a series of progressive reforms to its legal framework**, gradually positioning itself among the more supportive countries in the region when it comes to early childhood and family policies. One of the most notable features is the generously paid childcare leave available to both parents for up to three years—a duration and level of support that is rare across Europe. For comparison, Sweden offers up to 16 months of paid parental leave, and Denmark offers up to 52 weeks often with lower or capped salary replacement rates (the percentage of salary paid during leave), particularly for extended durations. What’s also particularly unique is that parents can receive childcare benefits while also returning to work, allowing them to maintain both income and professional continuity—an option not commonly available, even in many higher-income countries in Europe. Some key changes include:



Since 2018, the Government of Moldova has introduced flexible, paid childcare leave options: leave is paid at 90% of the average salary if taken for 1 year, 60% of the average salary if taken for 2 years, and 30% of the average salary if taken for 3 years.



Since 2022, parents can alternate leave, providing greater flexibility, enabling shared caregiving responsibilities and improving women’s workforce participation.



Employed fathers can request paternity leave of 14 calendar days during the first 12 months after the birth of the child, paid in full from the state budget.



Pregnant women who choose to continue working can benefit from both their salary and a maternity allowance.



As of October 2022, all children under two receive a monthly allowance of 1,000 lei, regardless of their parents’ insurance status.



Parents with young children have the opportunity to negotiate flexible work arrangements helping them better balance family and professional responsibilities.

Most recently, the **Parliament adopted a special law (7) to increase alternative childcare services for children under the age of three**, addressing the current challenges related to the limited availability of public childcare and the informal nature of private provision.

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

b) About the regulation

The National Programme was designed to provide **accessible and affordable childcare in Moldova for children under three years old, with a focus on integrating Ukrainian refugee children**. Until recently, Moldova's childcare system was largely underdeveloped, relying heavily on informal, often unregulated solutions that were either insufficient or inaccessible to the poorest families, including refugees. Public childcare centres are present but extremely limited. The bulk of the services are provided by private childcare services that are expensive for families to afford and often lack the oversight and quality control needed to ensure safety and effectiveness.



Image 1: A caregiver engages with a young child at a newly established public crèche in Moldova

The National Programme which is **anchored by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection** aims to advance several interconnected social goals through this policy which includes promoting early education, facilitating early intervention for children with disability, promoting women economic empowerment and gender equality within household, reducing gender-based violence within families, and addressing declining fertility rates.

The programme is organised as follows:

- **Expansion of public crèche service:** Public crèches are state-run childcare centres that provide free services, with a focus on children from lower-income families.
- **Creation of 3 types of alternative childcare services:**



Family-type crèches: These are small-scale, community-based childcare services, often home-based, providing more personalised care for a limited number of children.



Employer-type crèches: These are work-based childcare services, offering employees the option of on-site care, thus promoting gender equality in the workforce.



Individual caregivers: These are childcare services offered by individual caregivers, commonly known as “nanny services” with flexible, in-home care for children often in one-to-one settings.

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES



Expansion of private crèches: These are institutions started by private companies to provide high-quality and more specialised care, often to children from higher-income families, due to their typical higher costs.

A detailed logical framework for the programme can be found in Annexure 1.

c) Development of the regulation

In 2022, the Law on Alternative Services was enacted and approved in the Parliament. This was followed by the development of regulation on alternative services by the Government which was approved in 2023. The regulatory framework, focused on alternative childcare services, is outlined in Annexure 2.

The development of the regulation was led by a National Steering Committee, which **brought together key stakeholders** — including government agencies, international organisations, donors, and national and local NGOs — to ensure effective coordination of efforts aimed at advancing interconnected policy objectives.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection anchored the programme as the lead agency. Street Child — with support from UBS's Ukraine Relief Fund and Global Schools Forum — played a critical facilitative role in supporting the coordination of the National Programme and enabling collaboration across partners and priorities. Street Child also contributed to the design, monitoring, and evaluation of the National Programme;

supported the development of legal and regulatory frameworks; led advocacy efforts to mobilise greater investment in early childhood education and care and led capacity building of educators. Annexure 3 provides further details of all key partners involved in the National Programme and their roles.



Image 2: Minister Alexei Buzu, Member of Parliament Marina Morozova, and representatives from UN Women, UNICEF, Street Child, and local authorities at the opening of a newly renovated public crèche. Renovation was supported by UBS Optimus Foundation, with equipment and furnishing provided by UN Women and UNICEF.

The National Steering Committee is **supported by subcommittees**, each aligned to a specific service model:

- (i) Public services,
- (ii) Private services,
- (iii) Employer-based care,
- (iv) Family-type services, and
- (v) Individualised care.

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

Recognising that childcare is a cross-cutting issue, the programme formalised mechanisms for inter-ministerial collaboration as well, bringing together the Ministries of Education, Finance, Health, Infrastructure, and Labour.

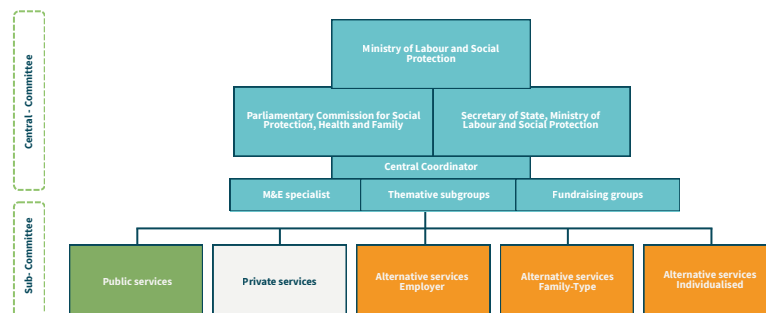


Image 3: Governance Structure of Moldova's National Programme for Childcare Services

The power of partnerships

A central driver of the National Programme has been the strength of its partnerships, rooted in a shared commitment to policy coherence, service innovation, and collective accountability. From the outset, the programme was designed and implemented through a **coordinated, multi-actor approach** as outlined above that brought together government ministries, donor agencies, international organisations, and civil society actors in a unified effort.

The National Steering Committee served as the core decision-making platform, ensuring alignment across sectors and enabling partners to contribute meaningfully

to legal reform, regulatory development, and implementation strategy. This structure allowed Moldova to transition from legislation to service delivery **in less than 18 months**—an exceptional outcome that reflects the efficiency and trust fostered through institutional collaboration.

Visible **political leadership** further strengthened the reform. Senior government figures—including the Minister of Labour and Members of Parliament—publicly championed the reforms, visiting crèches, engaging media, and signalling high-level endorsement. This galvanised bureaucratic momentum, accelerated inter-ministerial buy-in, and encouraged donor confidence. Annexure 4.1 provides videos showcasing direct government engagement and political endorsement of Moldova's childcare reform.

Partnerships were also instrumental in operational delivery. In the case of family-type crèches, for example, the government provided the enabling regulatory framework, while implementation partners such as Street Child and Centrul Parteneriat pentru Dezvoltare (CPD) led the recruitment and training of caregivers, delivered over 300 hours of accredited instruction, and supported public communication to promote uptake. This coordinated approach resulted in the launch of 19 fully operational centres within one year—including Moldova's first male-led and refugee-led facilities.

As the initiative enters its next phase, this collaborative governance model remains essential to embed childcare into Moldova's broader development agenda.

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

Implementation of the regulation

The rollout of childcare service models under the new regulation is designed to support **both Moldovan children and Ukrainian refugees**. As of early 2025, over 2,500 children have benefited from the new regulation, reflecting significant progress in expanding and enhancing early childcare services across Moldova.

Annexure 4.2 provides examples of field-based videos and guides illustrating how these models were operationalised in practice:



Public crèches: A total of **38 public childcare** centres have been expanded and enhanced catering to approximately **2,350 children** (90% Moldovan and 10% Ukrainian). In addition, 74 educators working across public crèches have been given training in early childhood care, early education, and early intervention using accredited methods from International Child Development Programme



(ICDP) and the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) and facilitated by Centrul Voinicel (National Institute for Early Intervention) and Programul Educational Pas cu Pas (Step by Step Moldova).

Alternative Childcare Services: The programme has established **19 family-type crèches**, led by a mix of Moldovan and refugee caregivers serving **78 children** (92% Moldovan and 8% Ukrainian). The primary focus has been on improving women's entrepreneurship, particularly among refugees by offering initial grants to set up infrastructure and providing business planning support. This is done in partnership with the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Moldova (AFAM), CPD, and International Labour Organisation (ILO).



Image 4: Transformation of a public crèche under The National Programme

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

Box 1: Why vouchers matter for refugee families

During a visit to a family-type crèche, Member of Parliament, Marina Morozova met a Ukrainian mother who spoke about the transformative impact of voucher-supported childcare. While older children often have access to play spaces in refugee centres, mothers with infants are left without safe options.

"This crèche is the only place I feel safe enough to leave my child—even for a short shower or grocery trip. Access through the voucher scheme is like air—absolutely vital."



Member of Parliament Marina Morozova's visits a family-type crèches and speaks to a Ukrainian mother

A key feature to highlight under alternative childcare services is the **childcare voucher scheme for Ukrainian children**. These vouchers provide essential financial support, helping to remove cost barriers and enabling refugee families to access safe, consistent early childhood care.

In addition to the public crèches, **25 early education entrepreneurs received structured training** as part of a Moldovan-accredited and mandatory 300-hour course delivered by the "Alexei Mateevici" State Pedagogical College. This was complemented by approximately 100 hours of specialised instruction in ISSA and ICDP child-centred approaches, accredited both internationally and locally. The training included practical modules on child safety, well-being, crisis management, and adapting learning environments to meet individual needs, alongside the provision of educational materials for use by educators, parents, and children.

One key success has been the **opening of the first family-based crèche by a Ukrainian mother**, signalling that refugee families can be integrated into the childcare sector as a means to earn a livelihood. Another significant milestone has been the **opening of the first childcare centre by two male caregivers**, breaking traditional gender norms and contributing to a broader understanding of the childcare sector as an inclusive space. These innovations are profiled in Annexure 4.3, which showcases on-the-ground stories from Moldova's growing ecosystem of childcare service providers.

In addition, under alternative childcare services, the programme has established, **for the first time ever, an employer-based crèche catering to 600 children of employees at Orange Moldova**. A second employer crèche is planned at the Universitatea de Stat din Moldova (USM), with an expected capacity of about 20 children.

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES



Image 5: Training of a family-type crèche model



Private childcare: A normative mapping has been conducted to understand the current regulations. Street Child has developed a paper outlining proposed policies. The next step is to facilitate a dialogue with the Ministry of Education, as they are the authority responsible for overseeing private sector kindergartens.

Learnings and reflections

The rollout of the National Programme has surfaced critical lessons across both public and alternative childcare models. These insights reflect what has worked, where gaps remain, and how implementation approaches can be strengthened going forward.

While the learning process is ongoing, the following reflections capture the most salient challenges and achievements to date, grounded in on-the-ground experience and stakeholder feedback.

a) Lessons from public childcare provision

1

Infrastructure alone is not enough - building a diverse workforce pipeline and strengthening training systems is critical to meet rising demand: While the National Programme has significantly expanded public childcare infrastructure — enhancing 38 centres and reaching over 2,300 children — these efforts must be matched by robust investment in workforce development and operational systems. To date, 74 educators have received ICDP and ISSA-accredited training. However, with early childhood care increasingly embedded in Moldova's national policy agenda, the country now requires a substantial scale-up in service capacity. Projections indicate that up to 300 additional early years educators will need to be recruited and trained in the coming year alone. Meeting this target will require the establishment of a dedicated national pipeline for early childhood professionals, coupled with sustained operational financing to ensure consistent, high-quality service delivery across regions. Moreover, balancing capacity between urban and rural areas remains an ongoing challenge, necessitating differentiated planning approaches.

2

A streamlined regulatory framework is needed to support scale in public childcare provision: Public crèches in Moldova are currently subject to rigorous infrastructure, staffing, and safety requirements. While these standards help safeguard quality, they also create a high entry

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

barriers, particularly for local governments in rural areas facing educator shortages, fiscal constraints, and high administrative turnover. As demand for childcare grows, these regulatory complexities risk creating “qualification bottlenecks,” where municipalities delay or abandon plans to expand provision due to the difficulty of meeting all requirements. This can slow down progress toward national targets for equitable access. To enable more responsive and equitable expansion, the Programme would benefit from a dedicated regulatory framework for public provision, similar in clarity and usability to the Law on Alternative Forms of Childcare as articulated in Annexure 2.

b) Lessons from alternative childcare provision

1 Strong incentives and tech-enabled platforms act as enablers for formalisation of childcare provision: Moldova’s childcare sector has historically operated informally, with many providers working outside regulatory frameworks. Common barriers to formalisation include complex bureaucratic processes, fear of increased scrutiny, taxation concerns, and the financial burden of meeting formal standards.

The National Programme offers a range of incentives to encourage formalisation—including start-up grants, operational subsidies, and professional development. To further ease the transition, the government launched a centralised platform Serviciialternative.gov.md which offers clear guidance on registration and centre setup for service providers, while simplifying enrolment and eligibility

families. Though currently limited to alternative services, the platform has already improved accessibility and efficiency. Ongoing updates including a dedicated help desk, aiming to further improve usability and expand reach. Additional strategies — such as peer mentorship, and public recognition— could further accelerate and deepen the formalisation process.

2 Operationalising minimum standards requires practical and on-the-ground support: The National Programme has set clear minimum standards —covering caregiver qualifications, child-to-caregiver ratios, and facility safety requirements — to ensure consistent and reliable service delivery. However, to navigate the complexities of registration, setup, and long-term operations, providers need additional support. To bridge this, the National Programme offers targeted support including mentorship and networking. This support is especially critical for expanding access in rural and underserved areas where providers often face greater barriers.

3 A diverse range of childcare models is useful to meet varying needs of families: Relying on a single model for childcare can limit accessibility and fail to account for the diverse preferences, working patterns, and socioeconomic realities of caregivers. The alternative provision integrates multiple childcare options such as employer-supported childcare, family-based care, and

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

individualised childcare services. This diversified approach allows expansion of access to quality care for children while enabling caregivers to pursue education and employment opportunities by selecting a model that best suits their needs.

As Moldova's childcare reform evolves, two system-level insights have emerged with relevance across both public and alternative provision.



First, integrating refugee families into national care systems strengthens shared infrastructure and promotes social cohesion. However, integrating services at the system level does not automatically ensure access for all. To reach dispersed refugee populations, system-level inclusion must be paired with deliberate outreach, including community liaisons, refugee information systems, and partnerships with grassroots actors.



Second, childcare reform cannot succeed without gender-responsive labour and leave policies. Moldova's provisions—such as paid parental leave, paternity entitlements, and flexible work—have helped redistribute caregiving responsibilities and enabled women's continued participation in the workforce. For countries pursuing childcare reform, especially in crisis or displacement-affected contexts, Moldova's experience offers a compelling model of how to structure policy choices to advance both equity and sustainability.

Future plans and way forward

The National Programme has demonstrated both reach and results through its influence on policymaking and innovative piloting that have delivered tangible benefits

for children and caregivers. To sustain and build on this momentum, the following actions are recommended:

1

Formalise and scale the 2023–2026 National Programme with cross-ministerial oversight:

To improve sustainability and coordination, the 2023–2026 National Programme of Child Care Services for Children Aged 0 to 3 should transition from the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection to joint oversight. This should include the Ministries of Education and Research, Finance, Infrastructure and Regional Development, and Labor and Social Protection. A cross-ministerial National Steering Committee should continue to anchor implementation, shape evolving childcare policy, and ensure alignment with broader national priorities, such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Multiplier Grant and the Moldova Growth Plan.

2

Conduct a Social Return On Investment (SROI) assessment to evaluate the long-term impact of the programme:

A comprehensive SROI assessment will provide critical insights into the programme's long-term value and effectiveness across interconnected outcomes, including early learning gains, increased women's workforce participation, higher household income, and reduced unpaid caregiving burdens. This evidence will help strengthen the case for sustained public investment, attract donor and private capital, and help sustain political commitment to early childhood care.

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

3

Increase public investment and unlock innovative financing to reach equitable scale:

To sustain and expand the reach of Moldova's childcare reforms, greater public investment is essential. Building on initial programme funding, the Government of Moldova should prioritise long-term budget allocations to expand coverage, particularly for underserved areas and populations. Alongside, the government should explore innovative financing approaches—such as outcome-based funding or social impact bonds—to attract private and philanthropic investment and drive greater access.

4

Test variations of family-based crèches to identify cost-effective models for scale:

Moldova's childcare programme currently supports family-based crèches through a bundled package of start-up grants, accredited three-month training, and ongoing technical mentorship to promote formalisation and ensure quality. To build on this foundation and explore more cost-efficient delivery mechanisms, the National Programme now aims to pilot a leaner model that removes direct financial incentives while retaining non-financial supports such as training, supervision, and regulatory guidance. This approach will help assess the feasibility of lower-cost models and inform scalable strategies for expanding access to childcare.

Conclusion

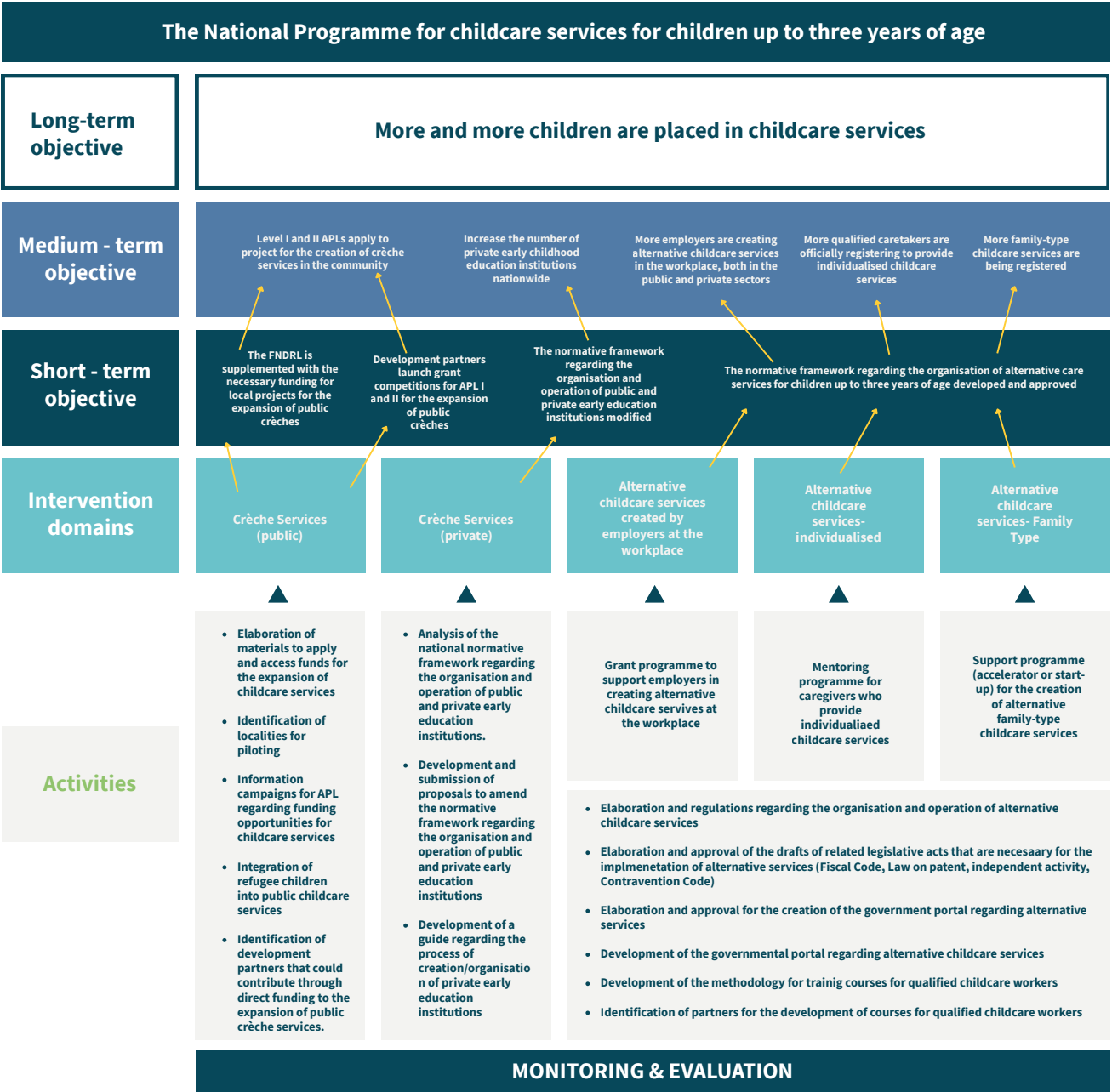
The National Programme marks a significant shift in Moldova's approach to early childhood care—moving from fragmented, informal provision to a coordinated, regulated system—that advances national priorities. Through deliberate policy design, cross-sector governance, and targeted investments, the programme has expanded access, strengthened quality, and demonstrated early gains in women's workforce participation and refugee inclusion.

As implementation enters its next phase, sustained political commitment, institutional consolidation, and financing mechanisms will be critical to ensure long-term impact. Moldova's experience offers a compelling model for other countries—particularly those with significant refugee populations—seeking to implement scalable, equitable childcare reforms under complex socio-economic conditions.

CASE STUDY

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- CONTEXT
- UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDCARE SERVICES
- THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS
- IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION
- LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS
- FUTURE PLANS AND WAY FORWARD
- CONCLUSION
- ANNEXES

Annexure 1: The Logic Model for the National Programme



APLs are local public authorities

FNDRL is National Fund for Regional and Local Development (Fondului Național pentru Dezvoltare Regională și Locală)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING
THE NATIONAL
PROGRAMME FOR
CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF
PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS &
REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND
WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

Annexure 2: Law on Alternative Forms of Childcare

Regulation on work-based childcare	Regulation on individualised childcare	Regulation on home-based nurseries	Regulation on sanitary standards (for work-based and home-based childcare)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provisions on dedicated rooms• Provisions on noise, pollution, light, etc.• Provisions on activity plans, tailored activities and programmes• Provisions on group sizes• Provisions on qualified staff• Provisions on tax, contracts, and remuneration• Allocation of responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provisions on qualifications• Provisions on the childcare license, registration as an entrepreneur, enrolment in insurance plans• Provisions on activity plans, tailored activities and programmes• Provisions on contracts with parents and remuneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provisions on dedicated rooms• Provisions on group sizes• Provisions on qualifications• Provisions on the childcare license, registration as an entrepreneur, enrolment in insurance plans• Provisions on activity plans, tailored activities and programmes• Provisions on contracts with parents and remuneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provisions on necessary facilities• Provisions on room organisation• Provisions for dedicated spaces• Provisions on furniture• Provisions on toys• Provisions on hygiene• Provisions on food storing, serving and dietary plans

Source: [International Labour Organisation, 2023](#)

Annexure 3: Key partners involved in the National Programme along with brief descriptions of their roles

 <p>Government partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ministry of Education and Research oversees public crèches, including the development of sanitary regulations, and supports the accreditation of educational programmes for both the public sector and alternative services.• Ministry of Finance oversees the resource allocation for the public crèches. In Moldova, public services are free of charge and covered from the state budget.• Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development manages the public funds available for expanding public services through open calls for local public authorities.• Ministry of Health oversees the sanitation requirements for childcare centres.• Ministry of Economy oversees the legislation around the service providers for family-type crèches and individual caregivers.
 <p>International Organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit [GIZ] developed a costing tool for setting up childcare programmes, with a focus on family-type crèches. As part of its commitment, GIZ will invest in establishing two family-style crèches in 2025.• International Labour Organisation [ILO] invested in all 3 types of alternative services, provides technical assistance to service providers, and researches the regulatory framework of alternative services.• United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] supports the expansion of public services and ensures Ukrainian populations have access to these services.• United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA] promotes alternative services for employers.• United Nations Women [UN Women] works on the public sector side of childcare services, including setting up the informational systems and providing normative support.• United Nations Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] invests only in public services.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING
THE NATIONAL
PROGRAMME FOR
CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF
PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS &
REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND
WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

Annexure 3: Key partners involved in the National Programme along with brief descriptions of their roles



National and local NGOs

- Centrul Parteneriat pentru Dezvoltare [CPD] provides implementation support, policy development, and legal consultancy for childcare in Moldova.
- Step by Step Moldova is a local partner of Street Child and UNICEF Moldova and supports with equipment of public crèches and education programmes for all educators in the newly expanded public crèches.
- Voinicel Moldova [NIECE] is a local partner of Street Child and supported the expansion of 5 public crèches in 2024 and education programmes for educators working on early interventions.
- Association of Female Entrepreneurs from Moldova [AFAM] is a local partner of Street Child and ILO who supported with the pilot of 9 family-type crèches (ILO-funded - 3, Street Child-funded - 6)



Non govt funding partners

- UBS Optimus Foundation has allocated funds for financing childcare services to Local Public Authorities [LPA], and the creation of family-type and home-based crèches.
- Global Partnership for Education [GPE] has allocated funds for financing child services to LPAs.

Annexure 4: Stories and Evidence from the Field

The resources in this section showcase how political leadership, community innovation, and implementation experience have shaped the programme's rollout.

4.1. Government leadership driving childcare reform: These short videos highlight the role of political champions in advancing Moldova's childcare reform. The resources are particularly relevant for policymakers, funders, and advocates interested in how systemic buy-in can legitimise new models, mobilise resources, and accelerate scale.

- **Alexei Buzu, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection**, visits family-type crèches, signaling strong government endorsement for community-based childcare. [Watch here](#).
- **Member of Parliament Marina Morozova** lends public backing to early childhood care services, reinforcing cross-party commitment. [View the endorsement here](#).

4.2. From policy to practice: These resources offer a view on how the National Programme has been translated into implementation at the local level, highlighting key processes such as licensing and training processes. They offer practical guidance for implementers, technical partners, and local authorities interested in adapting similar models in other contexts.

- **An overview of the family-type crèche initiative** by Centrul Parteneriat pentru Dezvoltare (CPD). [Watch the video here](#).
- **An explanatory guide helping new service providers navigate setup, licensing, and day-to-day operations** of family-type crèches. [Watch the video guide here](#).
- **A video to strengthen public understanding of the value of early childhood care** particularly the critical developmental window within the first 1,000 days of a child's life. The resource communicates essential messages on responsive parenting, early stimulation, and the long-term benefits of investing in young children. [Watch the video here](#).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

UNDERSTANDING
THE NATIONAL
PROGRAMME FOR
CHILDCARE SERVICES

THE POWER OF
PARTNERSHIPS

IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE REGULATION

LEARNINGS &
REFLECTIONS

FUTURE PLANS AND
WAY FORWARD

CONCLUSION

ANNEXES

Annexure 4: Stories and Evidence from the Field

4.3. Spotlighting local innovation:

Moldova's family-type crèches are being run by a diverse set of community leaders—including refugee mothers and male caregivers—who are reshaping what childcare looks like in their communities. These videos are particularly relevant for implementers designing family- or community-based childcare models in refugee or low-resource settings to build a vision of what's possible. Below are a few examples:

- “Odorașii” – Moldova's first male-led crèche challenging gender norms in caregiving. [Watch the primary video here.](#) [View additional footage here.](#)
- “Maniunea” – A refugee-run crèche supporting both refugee integration and economic empowerment of women. [Watch the video here.](#)
- “Bebeluș Deceluș” – A nurturing community-based crèche focused on the youngest children. [Watch the video here.](#)
- “Happy Tom” – Child-centred routines and joyful learning environments in action. [Watch the video here.](#)
- “Micii Cărturari” – Supporting early literacy and language development in home settings. [Watch the video here.](#)