FEASIBILITY STUDY

- EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
- SOCIAL COHESION

Andreas Müller, 24.05.2023
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• **Timeframe:** Nov. 22 – Feb 23
• **Focus:** Employment Opportunities, Skills Development and Social Cohesion
• **Target Group:** Ukrainian Refugees and Vulnerable Moldovans in the Republic of Moldova (50:50)
Background - Objectives

• Assessment of
  o **access** to high quality TVET
  o existing micro **entrepreneurship schemes** for the target groups

• Identification of **constraints** for the target groups to make use of existing employment opportunities/in-demand skills

• **Social cohesion assessment** to
  o verify feasibility conditions to **improve decent living/coexisting**
  o **Include** the vulnerable Moldovan population and the Ukrainian refugees **economically** by respecting their **psychosocial well-(or ill-)being**

→ Concrete evidence to contribute to the operationalization of the **Nexus**
Background - Collaboration

- Cost sharing of the quantitative data collection
- Similar target groups
- Draw on complementary expertise
  - HELVETAS: Skills development & economic integration (MSD)
  - HEKS/EPER: Social cohesion & psycho-social support
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH
Methodology – Mixed-Method Approach

- Desk research
- Primary (qualitative) data – 16 Semi-structured key informant interview
- Primary (quantitative) data – Survey amongst target groups
  - Sample Size: 495 (70:30 women/men)
  - Distribution = 50:50 between both target groups – reason for that are:
    - Local population is suffering from various crises such as inflation, post-covid, security threats etc.)
    - To strengthen social integration and avoid tensions, both groups are represented equally
Methodology – Quantitative Data Collection

- **Target Group 1: Ukrainian Refugees** (mainly women and children), youth (below 30), people with disabilities, elderly (above 65)

- **Target Group 2: Vulnerable Moldovans**: people from rural areas, women, youth (below 30), people with disabilities, elderly (above 65), unemployed, minorities (clustered)
Methodology – Limitations

• Size and distribution of the sample
  o Sample size not representative (but targeted)
  o Limitation in size and access - not all (minority) groups were equally included

• Geographical constraints
  o Geographical distribution might exclude certain regions

• Fast changing environment
  o Needs might change along circumstances
  o Conflict makes situation volatile and unpredictable
STAKEHOLDER MAPPING
Stakeholder Mapping – Overview

VULNERABLE MOLDOVANS & REFUGEES

MoE
MoHLSP
MoECR
NEA
TS
ANACEC
Business Associations
INGOs (GIZ, DRC, NRC, UN, Helvetas, HEKS, SKAT, AAH etc.)
Local public Administration
Accredited Training Providers
Bureau for Migration and Asylum
Chamber of Commerce
Non-accredited Training Providers
Local NGOs
MHPSS Providers (UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR, Worldvision, MdM etc.)
The NEA is a central stakeholder in terms of skills. It offers services as:

- Selection of Skills Development providers through public tenders
- Information about job market and vacancies (no. of unemployed, barometer, career counselling..)
- Entrepreneurship support
- Organization of job- and recruiting fairs
- Employment assistance for people with disabilities & Reintegration and rehabilitation of unemployed people with disabilities
- People with training but no experience (mostly young graduates) and vice versa, receive support from NEA through internship possibilities

→ The NEA struggles with its capacity to efficiently provide all services and to align the curricula of training providers to the needs of the market
Stakeholder Mapping – Others

ANACEC
- Training providers need to be accredited by ANACEC to be open to unemployed
- Accreditation is long and costly and hinders the evolution/ transformation of the skills development market
- Private training providers offer courses without accreditation (excludes the most vulnerable due to costs)

Training Providers
- Many training providers exist in Moldova (Public, Associations, Chambers, NGOs etc.)
- Trainings offered by business associations seem to be more market-oriented (often not accredited)

(I)NGOs
- Many (I)NGOs in the country (AAH, DRC, GIZ, UN etc.) - coordination is necessary!
- MSD practice is rare / many shorter-term (humanitarian) interventions

Providers of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services
- Local NGOs (WLC, Home Care, CCF, etc.) are lacking capacity.
- Local stakeholders need to be included to achieve systemic and sustainable change
Labor Market Assessment – Overview

- Only 40% of the labor force was active in 2021
- Low unemployment rate / low labor market participation. Many seasonally employed
- Remittances / Brain Drain
- Aging population / Shrinking youth population
- Inflation
- Insufficient public childcare
- Continuing education and LLL is underdeveloped
- Educational structures are rigid and not aligned to market needs
- Unproductive and informal sectors with manual and repetitive tasks and low value added
- Financial & Insurance, Electricity and Gas, Transportation and Logistics and ICT are the most attractive sectors
- Young and rural population is left behind
- Legal status of refugees: Currently temporary protection scheme

→ Need for skills development (re- and upskilling) → structural issue with a shortage of qualified teacher
SURVEY FINDINGS
Household Information

- More children under the age of 18 in Moldovan households
- More single caregivers amongst refugees
- Higher number of people with mental/psychosocial challenges among refugees
- Higher number of elderlies in refugee households
Income Information

- Refugees live of **savings, social welfare**, or other sources
- Moldovans live of regular income, savings, family support or pensions
- Almost all respondents **can only partially or not cover their basic needs**
- To compensate the expenditure-gap most people engage in **negative coping strategies** (cutting down on their expenses - partially with drastic measures)
Mobility

- 82 out of 256 Moldovans want to move to another country
- 53 of the Ukrainian refugees want to stay in Moldova and 56 undecided (close to 80 refugees do not want to stay)
- Moldovans want to leave the country for economic reasons, Ukrainians mostly to reunite with family members
Out of the 495 people interviewed 135 are employed (4 self-employed)
Out of 230 refugees only 14 were employed - in different sectors
Most refugees (and many Moldovans) are seeking employment!
Preferred sectors for **women**: service sector (accounting, consulting services, clerical work, etc.) trade and education.

Preferred sectors for **men**: construction, transportation & logistics and agriculture. ICT is in higher demand by Moldovans.

The most desired skill by far is to learn Romanian (for refugees).

Other desired skills are technical, literacy, ICT and other language skills.
Trainings and Support

- Only few have attended trainings in the last two years
- Women were trained in service activities, health and social work, education or other fields. Men in IT, construction or other fields
- Quality of the secondary or tertiary education seems to be poor
- **Lack of financial support** major constraint for people attending training
- Non-availability of childcare is a **bigger obstacle for women**
Childcare

• More than 50% (271 of 495) live in hh with children
• Both groups rely mainly on relatives to look after their children
• General lack of public (quality) childcare services and
• Existing (private) childcare services of better quality, are not affordable for refugees and vulnerable people
• Many refugee children still follow Ukrainian online classes - impeding the economic inclusion of their mothers
# Social Cohesion

More “connecting factors” between hosts and refugees than “dividers” were mentioned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connectors</th>
<th>Dividers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similar values / worldview</td>
<td>Scarce resources / economic factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common traditions / culture</td>
<td>Different languages / lack of language skills (Romanian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same language (Russian)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common interest in family/children</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wish for peace and decent living</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Most (75% Moldovans, 84% refugees) state that the relationship between hosts and refugees is positive or normal.

However societal tensions (e.g. Pro-Russian vs. Pro-Western population, linguistic cleavages) have also been reported and tensions between host and refugees are increasing over time.

Some hosts demur that refugees receive more support than vulnerable Moldovans.

Regular contact, dialog and friendship between hosts and refugees are not yet consolidated (with only 16% of hosts have UKR friends, and less than half refugees have MOL friends).
THANK YOU!
BACK-UP
Areas of intervention

- Access to relevant services (admin, legal etc.)
- Capacity of and access to training (Technical & Soft Skills)
- Romanian language
- Entrepreneurship as a career choice
- Capacity building of NEA, TS, ANACEC
- Attractiveness of teacher profiles
- Access to and capacity of (community-based) childcare
- Foster social cohesion (awareness, positive narratives, relationships etc.)
- Access to and capacity of MHPSS
- Humanitarian Assistance
Further Research

• Further research needed?
  o Support on entrepreneurship programs (rural / start-up funding etc.)
  o Existing and emerging community led groups /structures (of the Ukrainian refugees and Moldovans) and their capacities?
  o Humanitarian assistance, what capacity building is needed?
  o What are the current gaps in the MHPSS cooperation and referral system in Moldova?
  o Evidence on nepotism and clientelism regarding the distribution of jobs along ethnic and linguistic lines
  o More detailed and sector specific data on “unattractive sectors” (construction, agriculture, industry, manufacturing etc.)
  o Increased sample size (Including minorities, Transnistria)
  o Coordination of donor activities