



**United Nations Trust Fund
for Human Security**

MOLDOVA

Protecting and Empowering Victims of Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence in Moldova



UN Implementing Agencies:
UNDP, UNFPA

In partnership with:
IOM, OSCE, NGOs,
National Ministries
Community-Based Organizations
Local Authorities

Duration October 2008 - December 2011	Total Budget \$3,451,764	Beneficiaries 810,000
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Background Information

At the outset of this programme, Moldova was a major source country for human trafficking. Pervasive poverty, inadequate social services, unemployment and gender-based inequalities were some of the factors fuelling human trafficking in Moldova. Moreover, in many economically challenged areas, large portions of the population migrated in search of decent work, breaking family structures and undermining community support mechanisms. In their desperation, many young women turned to traffickers as their only hope for employment. Men were also at risk of being trafficked for forced work in labour-intensive industries. The children of migrating or trafficked parents were frequently abandoned and exposed to neglect and psychological stress, as well as risk of human trafficking themselves. At the same time, Moldova exhibited a high incidence of domestic violence. Deterred by social stigma, most victims did not report the abuse and did not seek medical help. While the Government of Moldova's efforts to prevent human trafficking and domestic violence resulted in the successful reinforcement of national legislation and victim protection programmes, translating these new policies to varying local conditions across the country required support from a diverse range of national and international partners.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the programme was to prevent human trafficking and domestic violence, and to protect survivors and people at risk through improved social services and empowered communities. This was to be achieved by: (i) improving the capacity of government agencies and civil society organizations to provide legal, medical, psychosocial, employment and housing services to survivors and people at risk; and (ii) empowering individuals, communities and civil society organizations to address the root causes of human trafficking and domestic violence and provide community-based services for survivors and people at risk.

Beneficiaries

The ultimate beneficiaries of the programme were survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence, as well as people at risk of trafficking and violence in the future. In addition, public service staff and civil society organizations benefited from capacity building, providing improved and integrated support to survivors and people at risk.

Notable Achievements

(i) The programme launched the Moldovan Centre for Protection and Prevention, which offers comprehensive assistance to survivors and people at risk of domestic violence and human trafficking. Through the centre, survivors and people at risk benefit from safe accommodation, legal aid, psychological counselling, urgent medical care, long-term rehabilitation therapy and successful reintegration services. At the same time, the programme provided training to bolster institutional capacities and upgrade existing local legislation in line with national legal frameworks on human trafficking and domestic violence. The full implementation of the national legal framework was ensured, and necessary social services were provided so that survivors and people at risk in Moldova's most vulnerable rural communities could obtain the protections and assistance provided by the national Government.

(ii) Communities and individuals were empowered to engage in local initiatives to mitigate the risk of human trafficking. Through community-based advocacy and awareness-raising activities, the programme generated public support to address gender-based discrimination and inequality and stigma against survivors. In this way, disadvantaged rural communities increased their understanding of the realities of human trafficking and became cognisant of national legislation to prevent trafficking and domestic violence. As a result, community participation in local solutions to address these issues and their underlying causes was greatly enhanced.

(iii) The joint programme between United Nations agencies, in partnership with the Government of Moldova and local stakeholders, generated synergies between local, national and international expertise, while avoiding duplication of practices. To ensure coherence between the many actors needed to address the complex issues of human trafficking and domestic violence, implementing partners outlined clear guidelines that built on a common understanding of their goals. At the community level, coordination mechanisms were facilitated through multidisciplinary teams comprising social workers, police officers, physicians, psychologists and policymakers. This integrated strategy guaranteed the cross-sectoral partnerships between professionals needed to implement a comprehensive response to the multiple needs of survivors and people at risk.

Lessons Learned

The programme demonstrated the considerable benefits of context-specific and comprehensive solutions in combating human trafficking and domestic violence. With the participation of district authorities, civil society organizations and the affected communities, the programme was able to identify the real needs of Moldova's vulnerable rural communities and the specific assistance required by survivors and people at risk.

Consequently, national legislation could be tailored to local realities which gave rise to more preventative solutions and generated immediate changes in the lives of victims. The programme institutionalized a practice of multidisciplinary assistance and coordination at the local level. This strategy enabled the programme to combine protection measures for individuals with community empowerment activities in a systematic and sustainable manner. Accordingly, gaps in existing social protection programmes were identified and addressed, and a comprehensive package of support was developed that exceeded the capacity of any one single institution.

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