

Youth employment promotion in Moldova

Improving job opportunities and life perspectives of young people

The challenge

Russia's war on Ukraine has severely impacted Moldova, resulting in increased regional insecurity, economic downturn, and the influx of more than 100,000 refugees from Ukraine. As a consequence, the labour market situation in Moldova has worsened, especially affecting youth, and young women in particular. Statistics illustrate the evident challenge: Every fourth young person in Moldova in the age group 15 – 34 is not in employment, education, or training (NEET). Among young women, the percentage of NEETs reaches even 35 %.

At the same time, companies face difficulties in finding qualified workforce. National job portals constantly list up to 10.000 vacancies. There is a shortage of labour at all qualification levels across most economic sectors. To address the issues of labour shortage and unemployment, Moldova has integrated a "National Employment Programme" and other labour market-related reforms into its national development strategy "European Moldova 2030".

However, the effectiveness of these reforms is hampered by low wages and, therefore, persistently high labour migration – especially to the EU. Other constraints are the lack of funds for active labour market measures, limited organizational capacities of the National Employment Agency, and a lack of collaboration with business and relevant local stakeholders – such as municipalities, youth organizations – to identify, inform and prepare young job seekers for their successful (re-)integration into the national labour market.



The project aims to bring more young people which are not in education, employment or training (NEET) into decent jobs in Moldova.

Project name	Youth employment promotion in Moldova
Commissioned by	Federal German Ministry for Economic Cooperation Development (BMZ)
Project region	Republic of Moldova
Duration	January 2024 – December 2026

Approach

The project pursues a multi-stakeholder approach. It strengthens the capacities of and fosters collaboration between the National



Employment Agency (ANOFM), employers, training providers, local authorities and youth-related NGOs to foster the employment of NEETs, particularly young women and those living in rural areas. The project's interventions concentrate on six rayons in Moldova: Bălți, Chișinău, Edinet, Orhei, Soroca, and Ungheni.

One focus of the project is to identify employment opportunities for NEETs (**Output 1**). To this end, the capacities of ANOFM to collect and analyze labour market information are developed. Intensified collaboration between ANOFM and employers leads to a better understanding of local

labour demands, more targeted labour market measures and improved job placements. Employers, especially small receive support to their human resources management to enhance recruitment and retention of semi-skilled workers, which corresponds to the qualification level of most NEETs in Moldova.



Another priority area is to improve the range and quality of gender-responsive short-term trainings and counselling services (**Output 2**). Training providers are supported in developing and implementing labour market-relevant reskilling offers in close cooperation with employers. These trainings receive state recognition to be eligible for the educational voucher system offered by ANOFM. Additionally, ANOFM and selected youth organizations in the six project regions will be involved in establishing NEET-specific career guidance services, designed to address the unique needs and barriers faced by the target group.

Identifying and activating young NEETs through targeted local outreach strategies is another focus of the project (**Output 3**). It supports the creation of outreach networks in the six selected project regions, involving municipal authorities, regional employment offices, youth centres, NGOs, local businesses, and other community stakeholders. Collaboration among these actors is facilitated, so that the local networks can develop and implement their own outreach strategies and activities.

An example from the field – Selected Results

- 17 in-demand job profiles for NEETs were identified, based on a comprehensive labour market study focusing on employment opportunities for young NEETs.
- More than 200 ANOFM employees were trained on “gender-equitable and inclusive labour market measures” and customer management
- 6 short-term trainings for young NEETs were piloted: barista, façade insulator, office manager, social media manager
- 2 in-company short-term trainings at Draexlmaier Moldova were prepared for national accreditation.
- 31 outreach activities (skills & employment camps, youth festivals, job fairs, etc.) reaching 1055 young NEETs, were implemented.
- A national PR campaign on youth employment under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection was launched.



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