

Wings4 Youth of Moldova

Inclusive employability, peace and security among disadvantaged youth on both sides of the Nistru River

Project duration: 1 July 2021 - 30 June 2024

Country: Republic of Moldova

Localities: Chisinau, Congaz, Cosăuți, Nisporeni

Funded by: Austrian Development Agency

SDGs: 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17 (for logos and link see: <https://www.sdgwatch.at/en/about-sdgs/>)

In cooperation with: Caritas Vienna

Pathway: Employment and Social Business

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Short description

Wings4Youth is a project promoting employment prospects of young care leavers – persons who have grown up in alternative care – on their way towards an independent, self-determined life. The project is implemented for a period of 36 months and can build on experiences and results of a predecessor project that was also funded by the Austrian Development Agency. While the previous project activities had been limited to the Moldovan capital Chisinau, they are now expanded to three more localities: Cosăuți, Nisporeni and Congaz. A series of capacity-building measures will improve the employability of young care leavers and increase their competences for independent living, with a particular focus on young women. Moreover, care professionals will also benefit from this project – through trainings and supervision services they will be equipped with a set of tools and methods to address care leavers, hence improving their daily work. Advocacy activities will raise public awareness about the needs of care leavers and will enhance the improvement of legal provisions. Project participants will also be connected with the business sector and gain practical experiences, possibly also getting permanent employment contracts. Last but not least, thanks to a strategic partnership with Caritas Vienna who runs similar activities in Transnistria, the project also has a peace-building component – through joint summer camps, study trips and youth exchanges, dialogue and tolerance will be fostered among youth from both sides of the Nistru river.

With the planned activities the project strives to achieve the following **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**:

(1) No poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

(4) Quality education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

(5) Gender equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

(8) Decent work and economic growth: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

(10) Reduced Inequalities: Reduce inequality within and among countries

(16) Peace, justice and strong institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions

(17) Partnerships for the goals: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Initial situation

The Republic of Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe and the country with the highest labour migration. Overall, about one third of the rural population (31.6%) lives below the poverty line and even more among households with three or more children (42%).¹ The state faces enormous economic and social challenges due to massive brain drain combined with a lack of jobs and training positions in the country.

One in three young people in the Republic of Moldova are either unemployed or not enrolled in education or in any formal training, young women being even more affected than young men (34.8% and 23.2%, respectively). At the age of 18, care leavers are more likely than other young people not to be in employment, education or training. As a consequence, they are socially excluded or even homeless.

Wings4Youth tackles four underlying causes leading to this condition: (1) the mismatch of skills between businesses and youth; (2) high skilled labour migration/brain drain; (3) the gap between policy and practice to support the “out-of-care” transition period of young care leavers and (4) the limited resources and capacities of employers to support care leavers in the job market.

¹ World Bank: <https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/185631608708604109/Moldova-Economic-Update-Special-Focus-Dec-22.pdf>

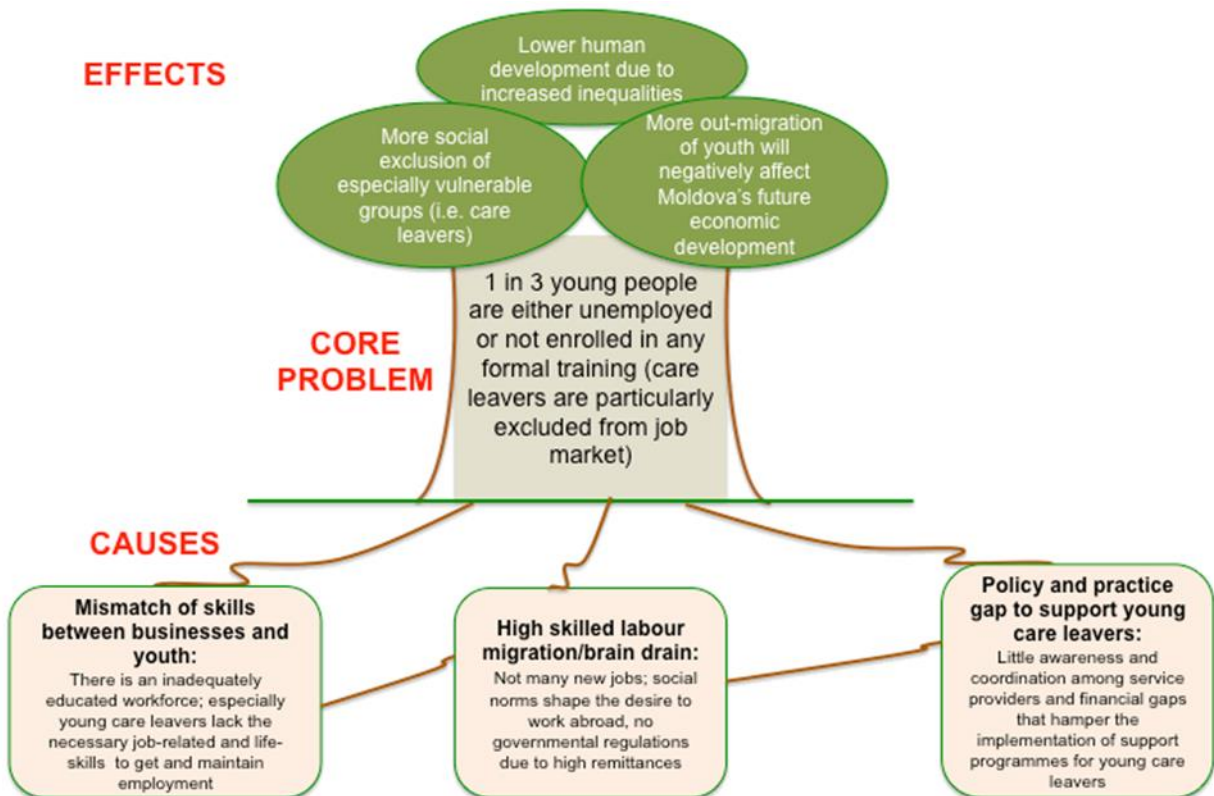


Figure 1: illustration of the core problem and underlying causes

Implementation

Wings4Youth builds on the experiences and results of a predecessor project – “YES – Youth empowerment for sustainable development” – that was also funded by the Austrian Development Agency as well as by a private foundation. One highlight of this project was the official formation of a **National Care Leavers Network in 2020** made up of young care leavers who are in projects run by approximately 20 NGOs. Among others, care leavers are lobbying for better provisions of scholarships, access to practical courses and well-paid jobs. Furthermore, young people are supported by experts of the CONCORDIA Youth Club in developing knowledge and abilities in public speaking, lobbying and advocacy as well as project writing.

At the heart of the project Wings4Youth are **capacity-building measures** for **80 care leavers** and at least **30 care professionals**. Care leavers participate at a range of employability related trainings and courses, job fairs, youth exchange programs, summer camps and study trips and receive entrepreneurial and personal coaching as well as legal and psychological assistance. They get connected with the business sector and gain first practical experiences through internships and employment contracts. Care professionals also participate at study trips and youth exchanges and receive training and supervision that will improve their daily work with care leavers. Activities within Wings4Youth are spread across the country in the following four localities: **Chisinau, Congaz, Cosăuți** and **Nisporeni**.



Figure 2: project

localities

Moreover, thanks to a strategic partnership with Caritas Vienna who implements

similar activities in Transnistria, the project also has a peace-building component. Care leavers and care professionals of both sides of the Nistru river will participate at joint summer camps, study trips and youth exchange programs – measures that foster dialogue and tolerance among the young people.

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Last but not least, the project is embedded in numerous partnerships and networks with public and private stakeholders, local and international organisations as well as cooperation agreements with public authorities and ministries which will safeguard the long-term sustainability of the project’s activities. By cooperating with so many partners, apart from improving the socio-economic situation of the projects’ beneficiaries, also a positive change at systemic level in favour of young care leavers will be triggered.

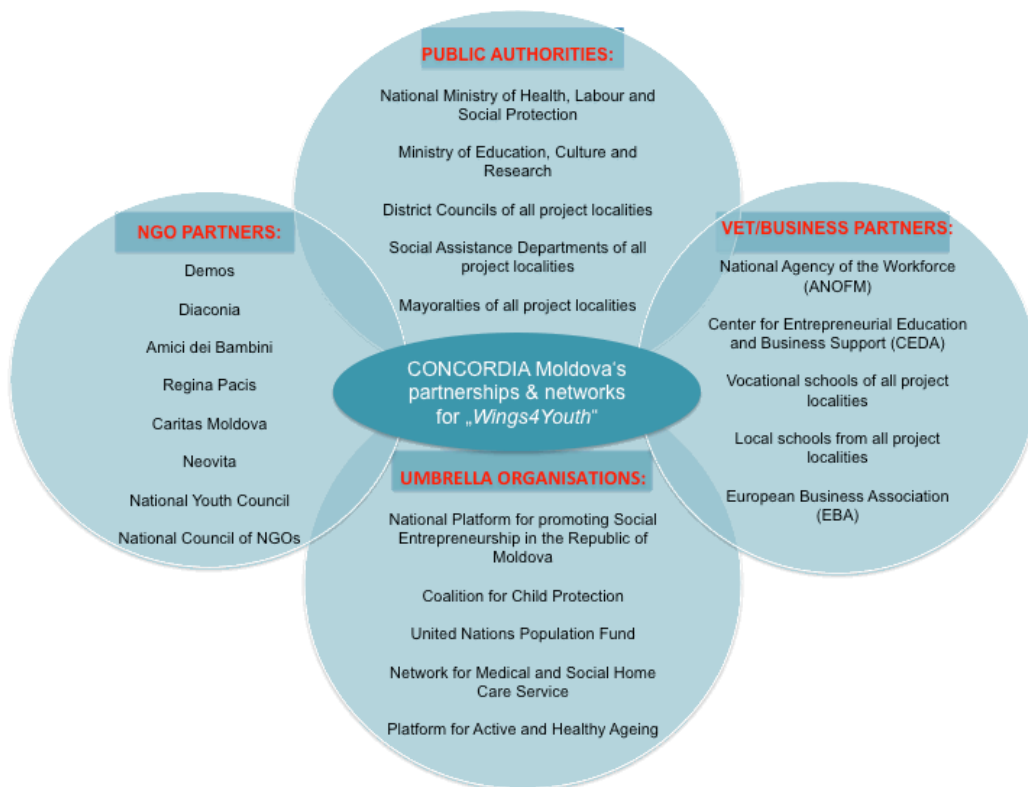


Figure 3: Active partnerships and networks for the Wings4Youth-project

Target groups

Care leavers: 80 young care leavers with increased vulnerability will be directly targeted and addressed by the project activities.

Care professionals: At least 30 care professionals will also directly benefit from the project through various capacity-building measures that will improve their daily work with care leavers.

On top of that, other care leavers, marginalised families, NGOs as well as public authorities and the business sector will benefit from the project as well.