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Youth participants in discussions on future and possible programme improvement with volunteers of the Speranta Tinerilor Youth Friendly Health Centre in Dondusani, Moldova.

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Enhancing health and wellbeing for Moldovan youth before and during COVID-19

Volunteer work is key in helping adolescents to understand that this world can be more supportive than it may seem, especially in times of crisis. UN Volunteer Polina Lipostad (Russian Federation) serves with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Moldova, and reaches out to vulnerable young people to promote health and wellbeing in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Youth Friendly Health Services were established in Moldova by the Government, in partnership with UNICEF. The initiative engaged more than 45,000 young people in the promotion of Agenda 2030 and volunteerism, while also giving them a chance to become more aware of healthcare and their wellbeing. Vulnerable groups like those who suffer from drug addiction or commercial sex also had the opportunity to take an HIV test, visit doctors and consult psychologists confidentially

“ With the help of UN Volunteers we succeeded in connecting with the hardest to reach, most vulnerable adolescents, to show what possibilities they have in their homeland. UN Volunteers play a key role, as they can be emotionally trustworthy for 14-18-year old mentees. --Angela Capcelea, Health Officer with UNICEF in Moldova

To build awareness about the 2030 Agenda and promote volunteerism among a young audience, Polina and her colleagues organized awareness-raising sessions and consultations in 22 youth centres, as well as through online platforms [U-report](#) and social media campaigns. "As a UN Volunteer, I engaged with volunteers who could reach out to the most vulnerable young people in the north Moldova," Polina shares.

UNICEF creates programmes for young people with young people. More than 50 youth volunteers in the North region of Moldova were interviewed, and their feedback will support decision-making in UNICEF and the government of Moldova in building health-related programmes with a stronger focus and stronger evidence base.



Polina Listopad (back row, third from left) conducting consultations with youth volunteers at

the Viitorul Youth-Friendly Health Centre in Singerei, Moldova. ©Vitorul Youth Friendly Health Centre, 2020

Pandemic response through the U-Report

Now, in time of the crisis, these mechanisms support youth and adolescence and continue to strengthen young people's awareness in matters of health and well-being. Polina is now contributing to developing the U-Report in Moldova, a global virtual instrument for monitoring and collecting youth and adolescent feedback on various health and wellbeing issues, lately related to COVID-19.

Moldova has the third largest community of U-Reporters in the Europe and Central Asia region, which amounts to 25 thousand young people and adolescents. Recently, UNICEF launched a virtual chatbot to provide speedy answers to questions that young people might have about the COVID-19 disease, also to raise their awareness about the harmful effects of fake news, myths and associated stigma.

[Polina Listopad about COVID-19 response actions](#)

 Europe and the CIS

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