



International
Labour
Organization

Mapping and needs assessment of demand and supply of childcare services in Ungheni

Terms of Reference

ILO CO-Moldova

12/11/24

Background

Women in Moldova face significant gender inequalities, particularly in labour force participation, decision-making, and access to economic opportunities. The gender wage gap in Moldova persists, with women underrepresented in high-paying sectors and facing barriers to entrepreneurship. Unpaid care work remains undervalued and invisible, infused with patriarchal gender norms that view it as women's nature and duty. According to ILO global estimates from 2018, women perform 62.3 per cent of unpaid care work, compared to 37.7 per cent performed by men.¹ This daily discrepancy between women's and men's unpaid care work significantly impacts women's opportunities to enter and engage in decent employment. In 2018, the value of unpaid care work in Moldova was estimated to be 20.3 per cent of GDP² (measured in 2011 US dollars PPP). Of this, the value of women's unpaid care work represents 13.1 per cent of GDP and men 7.1 per cent.³ Additionally, *childcare services* are underdeveloped, with targeted services starting at age 3, but with sparse to no coverage for children until the starting age of free and universal education at age 7.⁴ This limits women and workers with family responsibilities' abilities to participate in the labour market.

Since 2022, the ILO has actively worked on bolstering the childcare sector in Moldova, striving to provide more affordable services while promoting job quality and creation in caregiving and related sectors. Guided by the [Market System Analysis of the childcare sector in Moldova](#), the ILO piloted three childcare models: home-based nurseries, onsite childcare services, and individual nannies. In 2023, the ILO launched a comprehensive program to address childcare needs through these innovative approaches.

The current challenge is to systematically document successful pilots and identify areas for improvement, seeking practical solutions to scale them up. This effort aims to maximise their potential impact by expanding childcare coverage, enhancing working conditions for care workers, and boosting women's participation in the labour market, including through entrepreneurship. This initiative aligns with the **National Employment Program 2022-2026** and the **National Program for childcare services for children aged 0-3**.

As part of the *Enhance Peace and Prosperity through Women's Leadership and Inclusion (Women for Peace & Prosperity) project*, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the ILO supports the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, local governments, and social partners in building multi-actor partnerships to implement integrated childcare

¹ ILO. 2018. Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work, p. 370.

² This estimate is based on assigning a monetary value to the hours spent on unpaid care work, using the hourly minimum wage as a benchmark.

³ ILO. 2018. Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work, p. 49.

⁴ ILO. n.d. ILO Global Care Policy Portal: [Republic of Moldova](#).

programs in specific localities, particularly in regions identified as key centers of economic development and activity (growth poles). This effort also complements the [National Program for the Development of Growth Pole Cities in the Republic of Moldova](#) (2021-2027), approved in 2020, which aims to support the development of six key growth pole cities: Edineț, Soroca, Ungheni, Orhei, Cahul, and Comrat, along with the surrounding rural areas.

The Assignment

The ILO DWT/CO-Budapest seeks to select a service provider responsible for developing a **mapping and needs assessment of the demand and supply of childcare services** (number of women and men on childcare leave, number of entities providing childcare services and their capacity, type of childcare services (public, private), number of women entrepreneurs engaged in providing childcare services, availability, cost and quality of childcare services for children below 3 years of age, hours of services, availability of meals programmes during service hours, etc) in Ungheni and creating a roadmap that includes various models, including costings and impact of alternative service provision. The same type of activities under the current assignment will also be implemented in other growth poles, specifically Soroca, Edineț, Orhei, Cahul, and Comrat.

Objective

This consultancy's objectives are two-fold: i) to develop a methodology to map and assess the demand and supply of childcare services and apply it in Ungheni; ii) to develop 1 roadmap with different models of care service provision and their costings.

The **mapping and needs assessment** will analyse the current and future demand for these services, identifying gaps between demand and supply to enhance service provision and address unmet local care needs. A key component of this analysis will involve mapping and assessing the needs and capacities of key actors, including women entrepreneurs and women-led enterprises, employers and member-based organizations, care workers, workers with family responsibilities, unpaid carers, care recipients, and the public sector, to offer affordable, high-quality childcare services.

Data for the analysis will be collected through surveys and interviews with key actors in childcare services, including both parents who use these services and those who do not, care workers, businesses, and local public authorities. The assessment will focus on understanding their care needs, current childcare solutions (accessibility, affordability, service quality, provider type, availability of school meals, hours of operation, etc.), preferences in childcare options (including cost, hours of operation, location, provider type, school meal needs, etc.), and any challenges they face. Focus groups with diverse demographic profiles may also be conducted to gather qualitative insights into specific needs and expectations.

The supply side encompasses the volume, types, content, quality, and flexibility of available childcare services. This analysis aims to increase service availability and strengthen provider capacity. To support this, a detailed inventory of existing childcare providers will be created, including information on service types, capacities, locations, service offerings, and operating hours. By gaining a clearer understanding of these dynamics, the analysis will identify local actors with the incentives and potential to meet current needs and improve childcare service delivery.

Based on the mapping and needs assessment findings, 1 roadmap will be developed to include various promising models of alternative service provision, such as employer-driven services, home-based nurseries run by women entrepreneurs, women-led care cooperatives, public-private partnerships, and alternative private-driven approaches. To ensure these models are realistic and sustainable, detailed costings and business plans will also be prepared for each one.

Deliverables

The service provider will be responsible to submit the following deliverables to the satisfaction of the ILO:

1. Methodology to map and assess the demand and supply of childcare services:
 - Task 1: Conduct a desk review of similar exercises undertaken in EU member states and neighboring countries.
 - Task 2: Put together a list of official sources of information, including administrative and statistical data and information gaps to be filled in using alternative sources.
 - Task 3: Put together a list of potential tools to fill in the information gaps.
 - Task 4: Develop a draft methodology for collecting quantitative and qualitative data.
 - Task 5: Review the methodology after the piloting in Ungheni and develop the final methodology.

2. Draft report with the findings of the mapping and needs assessment:
 - Task 1: Develop a plan of activities and timeframe.
 - Task 2: Systematize the steps taken to apply the methodology and recommend amendments if necessary.
 - Task 3: Pilot the data collection in Ungheni and keep track of any issues in capturing the information the methodology aims to address.
 - Task 4: Adapt the methodology based on the findings from the pilot.

3. Final report with the findings of the mapping and needs assessment and final roadmap for Ungheni:

- Task 1: Draft the final report on the findings.
- Task 2: Using the final report and collected data, draft a roadmap for Ungheni outlining various models of alternative care services, including the costings and business plans for each proposed model.
- Task 3: Organize a tripartite validation workshop to review and refine the draft roadmap for Ungheni.
- Task 4: Finalize the report, incorporating feedback and recommendations from the tripartite validation workshop.

Management Arrangements

The ILO expects regular contacts and information exchanges between the contractor and Ms María José Chamorro, the ILO's senior gender specialist, and Ms Nelea Rusu, the ILO's Project Coordinator in Moldova, during the execution of the contract.

All the materials will be developed in Romanian and English and the report shall be provided in English.

Application Requirements

Application Process

Interested service providers are invited to submit the following documents to rusu@ilo.org by November 30, with the subject line Childcare_LocalAssessment_LASTNAME:

1. CV highlighting relevant experience
2. Technical proposal (max 5 pages)
3. Financial proposal
4. Sample of written work

Service provider Profile

The Service Provider should have prior experience in running assessment, providing consultancy, designing and developing action plans related to public service delivery.

The ILO is looking for service providers with the following profile:

- Education: First-level university degree in economics, social sciences, gender studies, or related field.
- Experience in conducting research and similar assignments, including quantitative and qualitative research. particularly research on gender related issues.

- Demonstrated ability in applying gender-sensitive approaches to research, and particularly in conducting qualitative research and in drafting quality reports.
- A good understanding of the childcare sector, ideally with employer-provided care and/or home-based nurseries.
- A willingness to be innovative and apply systemic approaches.
- Ability to meet deadlines and work independently with minimum supervision.