

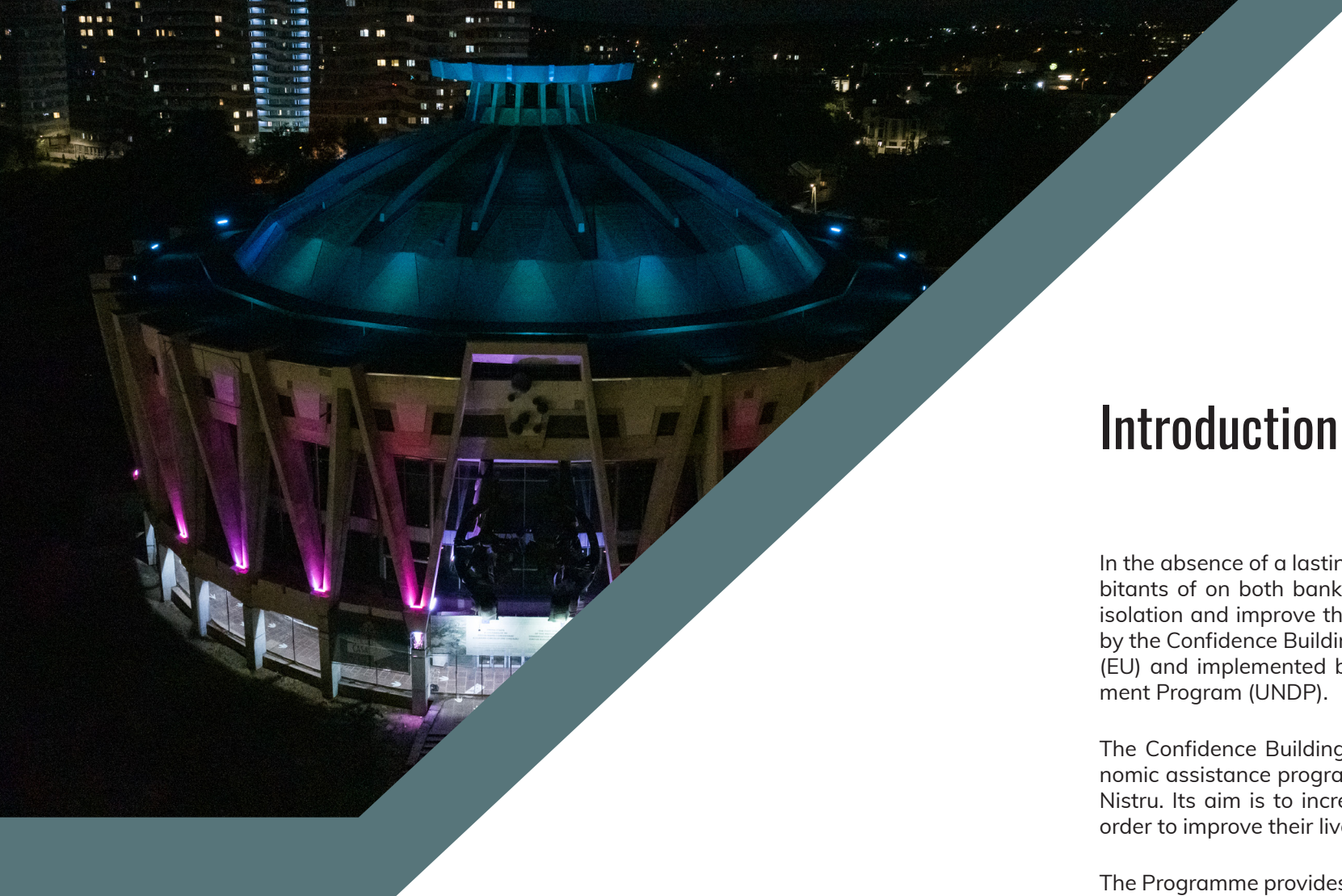


EUROPEAN UNION CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES PROGRAMME
PROGRAMUL UNIUNII EUROPENE MĂSURI DE PROMOVARE A ÎNCREDERII
ПРОГРАММА ЕВРОПЕЙСКОГО СОЮЗАМЕРЫ ПО УКРЕПЛЕНИЮ ДОВЕРИЯ



Bridges of confidence across the Nistru





Introduction

In the absence of a lasting political solution for the transnistrian region, the inhabitants of on both banks of the Nistru are looking for ways to overcome their isolation and improve their lives. Since 2009, their efforts have been supported by the Confidence Building Measures Programme funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the United Nations Development Program Development Program (UNDP).

The Confidence Building Measures Programme is a comprehensive socio-economic assistance program based on cooperation between the two banks of the Nistru. Its aim is to increase trust and cooperation between the inhabitants in order to improve their lives.

The Programme provides financial and technical support for a variety of projects, including:

- Business development: supporting entrepreneurs from both banks of the Nistru in setting up and developing their businesses;
- Civil society: Support civil society organizations to promote their activities and strengthen cooperation between them;
- Renovation of social infrastructure: Renovation of schools, hospitals and other social infrastructure of social importance;
- Cultural heritage: Promotion and preservation of common cultural heritage of the two banks of the Nistru;
- Local media cooperation.

The Confidence Building Measures Programme has had a significant positive impact on the lives of people on both banks of the Nistru. The projects financed by the Programme have contributed to job creation, improved infrastructure and strengthened people-to-people cooperation.

Duration: 2019 – 2024

Budget: 13 400 000 EUR

Beneficiaries: 164 thousand inhabitants on both banks of the Nistru River

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The 5th phase of the Confidence Building Measures Programme supports joint initiatives of people from both banks of the Nistru River in five directions of intervention:

- 1) Business and entrepreneurship development;
- 2) Community development and NGO collaboration within thematic platforms;
- 3) Preservation of cultural and historical heritage;
- 4) Local media content development;
- 5) Community infrastructure renewal.

Content

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2	Civil society collaboration	page 38
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Project impact in figures:

10.755

OF LIVELIHOODS
CONSOLIDATED

- 35% on the left bank of the Nistru;
- Realized through interventions in collaboration with business communities, civil society, budgetary institutions and local public administrations.

400

OF JOBS CREATED
AND SAVED:

- On the left bank and in the security zone;
- 55% of the beneficiaries being women, 35% young;
- 57% of the jobs were created by private companies that have benefited from EU Confidence Building Measures Programme.

4

INNOVATIVE MODELS OF
LEARNING DEVELOPED AT THE
INITIATIVE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

- Aim: closing the gap skills and alignment with labor market demand:
 1. IT Lab at the University „Nicolae Gogol” University (a course of economics of technology) within the Technovator project;
 2. Soft Skills Club for teachers, organized organized by the Education Platform;
 3. Course on teaching skills communication skills sports platform;
 4. Use of virtual reality in teaching process.

80

OF CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANIZATIONS CIVIL
ORGANIZATIONS FROM
BOTH BANKS OF THE NISTRU

164.679

OF PEOPLE

benefited as a result of the interventions EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP in the period 2019-2024

- Of which: 54% women, 12% young people, 9,048 persons with disabilities.

31

BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

on both banks have improved cooperation for capacity building and digitalization of member-enterprises and infrastructure sector.

60

ENTREPRENEURS

obtained targeted business advice to overcome the consequences of the crisis pandemic.

20

BUSINESS CONSULTANTS

on both banks have been certified, according to ISO 20700:2017 Services consultancy management.

260

m² RENOVATED

for the first entrepreneurial infrastructure object opened in Tiraspol - Business HUB.

5

DIGITAL TOOLS

developed by business associations for SMEs (barometru.md, crossnistru.md, etc).

20

SMES

have strengthened online presentation capabilities with new visual identities, websites or professional campaigns on social networks, as part of the "Go Online" activity on left bank.

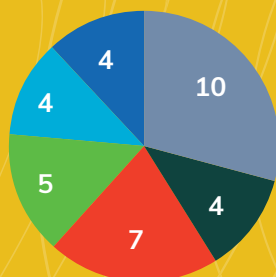
39

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

from the both banks of the Nistru launched their businesses or developed new products. They created 121 jobs for people in their community (80% women).

BUSINESS AREAS

- Food (food processing)
- Agriculture and farming livestock
- Educational services
- Industrial goods (textiles)
- HORECA and courier services
- Other services



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Young entrepreneurs from both banks of the Nistru, supported by the EU and UNDP

The final conference dedicated to the „Start for Youth” project took place on 22 May 2023 in Tiraspol, bringing together over 60 young entrepreneurs. Since 2020, the European Union, through the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, has supported 39 business ideas with over €440,000.

„Supporting young entrepreneurs from both banks of the Nistru river means not just fostering local economic growth, but also investing in the future of the business community and strengthening social cohesion.

UNDP and EU are strong believers in cross-river synergies, that are the best triggers for a common prosperous future,” noted Andrea Cuzyova, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative to the Republic of Moldova.



Magdalena Mueller-Uri,

Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova

The European Union recognizes the importance of addressing societal challenges and promoting sustainable practices. Therefore, we have encouraged young entrepreneurs to develop businesses that have a positive impact on the environment, society, and communities. It not only nurtures economic growth but also fosters a culture of responsible entrepreneurship.



choose to stay at home rather than going abroad.

One of these young individuals is Oleg Gorshenev. In 2020, he launched his own business and started producing bicycles and carbon fiber parts for them. „Due to challenging economic conditions, our fellow citizens often face the choice of staying in the country or leaving. I enjoy living in my city. I am a part of this city, of this country. I will work to improve the lives of

people in the region. With the grant I obtained, I was able to provide a few jobs, thus keeping three individuals and their families at home. I believe that without the support of my business, even I would have left,” shares the young entrepreneur.

The „Start for Youth” grant competition had two editions. In 2020, 26 young entrepreneurs received funding and in 2022, another 13 were awarded grants.

The new businesses launched or sustained with the support of the EU-UNDP cover a wide range of services and products, such as tailoring services, cooking studios, veterinary clinic, delivery, or food production (biscuits, cheese, wine, vinegar, smoked meat), and industrial manufacturing (furniture, 3D-printed items, eco-friendly bags, or toys).

During the conference, the young entrepreneurs who benefited from grants shared their experience and journey in the business world.

In the context of the new work realities imposed by the multiple crises, the EU and UNDP have supported the processes of maintaining/creating jobs in sustainable and future-ready economic sectors, while also encouraging young people to



A first Business HUB was established in Tiraspol, thanks to the financial support of the European Union

With the support of the European Union, the first entrepreneurship support and development center opened its doors in Tiraspol. So, young entrepreneurs will benefit from access to information, consultancy, and trainings. €200,000 thousand were provided by the European Union for establishing the Business HUB, through the programme „Confidence Building Measures”, implemented by UNDP Moldova.

The first entrepreneurial skills development hub on the left bank, whose community is expanding year by year. In the first 2.5 years of operation there were about 5400 visitors a year.

“We have been waiting for a long time the launch of this Centre. Here we have a wonderful infrastructure for the development of entrepreneurs, where we can offer them consultancy and other services, to unleash their full potential,” notes Zinaida Emilianova, Manager of the Business HUB.



Of the 16 places available for residents, all are occupied and so young entrepreneurs can work on their business ideas. In the same way the region's first business club with 21 current members, strengthening the self-reliance financial autonomy.

“We believe that business ideas, startups, and innovative entrepreneurial spirit are the key drivers which will develop and expand at the Business Hub opened in Tiraspol. The Business Hub will help the creative and tech community to flourish. The co-working spaces will facilitate linkages between entrepreneurs, business support organizations, academia, and consumers. The well-functioning of this Centre will enhance cooperation, so as confidence between stakeholders from both banks of the Nistru river,” declared Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.

The newly created Business HUB in Tiraspol has not only offices and workspaces for residents, but also a conference room and other infrastructure elements necessary for young entrepreneurs.



Andrea Cuzyova,

Deputy Resident Representative,
UNDP Moldova

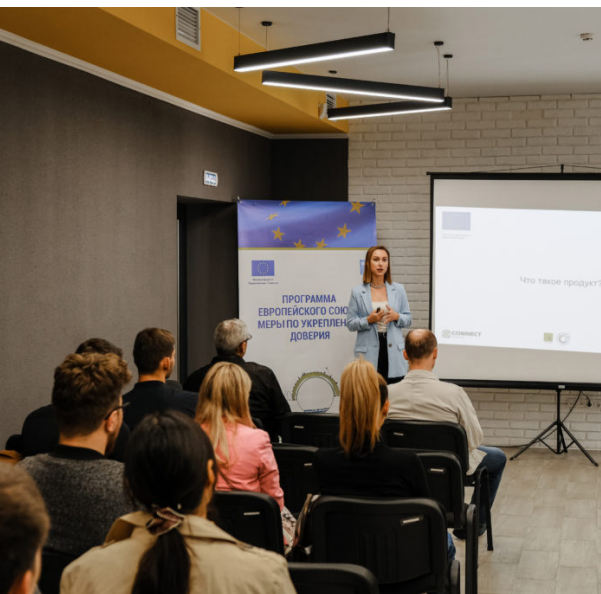
The launch of the Business HUB will contribute to the economic development of the region, by training young professionals in new skills and professions of the future. The EU programme “Confidence Building Measures”, implemented by UNDP, contributes to increasing trust between the inhabitants of both banks of the Nistru river by involving them in joint projects.

“New models of entrepreneurship and industries are in demand among young people, representing about 26% of the population on both banks. Digital, creative, tech, and green jobs are complementing or substituting traditional professions. Thus, it is our priority to support the creation of thriving youth infrastructure projects like the Business HUB by connecting them to the European network of innovation, tech, and creativity labs, that will boost common international projects that will solve beneficiaries' needs.”

First IT entrepreneurship course on the left bank of the Nistru completed

The first IT entrepreneurship accelerator program on the left bank of the Nistru has come to an end. In total, over 40 IT professionals, students and representatives of IT companies from the region took part in seminars, workshops, mentoring sessions and one-to-one sessions with mentors and business trainers. They formed 6 teams and worked developing innovative products and solutions in the areas proposed by entrepreneurs and companies from the left Nistru.

The IT entrepreneurship course on the left bank of the Nistru was held under the aegis of Technovator in partnership with the Innovation and Development Agency, with the financial support provided under the European Union Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP Moldova. It is also the first time that within an accelerator program in Moldova, a product developed by a team manages to have sales by the end of the program.



„Our business model is simple: selling services, and our revenue will come from subscriptions, one-off or additional payments offered, such as: SEO website optimization and promotion. At the moment, we have a lot of requests that we are processing and a few pages already launched. We have competition in the market, but our solution is advantageous in that we offer a range full range of services for online business development and promotion and provide technical support”, said Noros founder Dmitrii Briceag.



Dmitrii Briceag,

Noros founder

The solution that Noros proposes for small business and startups on both shores is the provision of hosting services for web sites and websites their applications: domain rental, web design, content placement, etc. Following market research, we identified about 150 clients on the left bank of the Nistru and over 1000 clients on the right bank.

The 6 teams that presented their products and solutions during the Demo Day are:

- „Zem.md” - an accounting system for farmers, which can save up to 30% resources and time researching land degradation and at the same time farmers can increase land productivity by collecting and analyzing all activities.
- „Enemo” - recording bot that allows organizing events from concept / idea to data analysis.
- „Tiras Market” - a marketplace for local producers in the region, which aims to encourage online trade in the region and promises regional coverage, minimal investment, time savings and reliable delivery to consumers.
- Cloud Kitchen - promises to change the world of commercial kitchens by offering leasing space and delivery to consumers.
- Cyber School - IT classes for students immediately after school hours in school, under professional supervision.
- „Noros” - (IT infrastructure for business) solution for small business offering domain rental, placement on the host, choice of design and content placement etc.



“Launch of the first entrepreneurship course on the left bank of the Nistru took place following research in the region, which analyzed the IT and business ecosystem by involving all stakeholders: entrepreneurs academia, students etc. This research revealed the need to launch such

program on the left bank of the Nistru participants learn from scratch how to develop products and solutions in IT sphere. Local companies have shown interest and have come with challenges for the participating teams. The project also aimed to the inclusion of the IT and business



ecosystem of the left bank in the in Moldova, creating synergies and knowledge transfer between the two banks. This methodology applied through the course, resources and experts involved, constitute a basis for replicating such programs on the left bank and further ecosystem development in the region. These have included agreements with innovation hubs in Moldova, such as iHub Chişinău, FinTech Hub, Tekwill, etc.”, said Technovator Executive Director, Mary Nemciuc.

The program ran from September 20 - November 19 2022 and included 8 course modules and 7 workshops, facilitated by 12 trainers from both banks of the Nistru. Also, 3 startup trackers (mentors) conducted sessions and monitored the progress of the 7 teams participating teams, which in turn had over 50 team meetings. Participants also had the opportunity to visit innovation hubs in Chişinău such as FinTech Hub and iHub, where they learned more details about how to support startups.

The 8 trainings included topics from product management and project management. In the same period, 7 sessions moderated by entrepreneurs from the left bank of the Nistru.

The IT entrepreneurship course took place within the Connect IT Business Program, implemented by Technovator (right bank) in partnership with the Agency for Innovation and Development (right bank left), with the financial support provided by the European Union Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The aim of the project was to contribute the development of the startups on the left bank of the Nistru and connecting it to the IT and business ecosystem on the right bank. We mention that the Program was created based on research on the IT environment in the region and the experience Technovator team in the development Startup Students program, developed in more than 6 universities in four regions of Moldova.



20 companies from the left bank of the Nistru have created websites using the GoOnline platform

All these tools, developed in less than a month, help entrepreneurs get closer to their customers and adapt to the new realities imposed by the crisis pandemic.

„It is very important for us to support entrepreneurs who are facing difficulties digitization of their businesses and to propose complex solutions for development. We are glad to partner with the GoOnline program and support business development on the left bank of the Nistru”, says Zinaida Emelianova, Director CSO Agency for Innovation and Development in Tiraspol.

Businesses specialized in: production decoration articles, winemaking, tourism, light industry, agriculture, bakery products, furniture production, wooden toys for kids, footwear manufacturing, creative services such as animation, videos, shows, events, language teaching, etc.

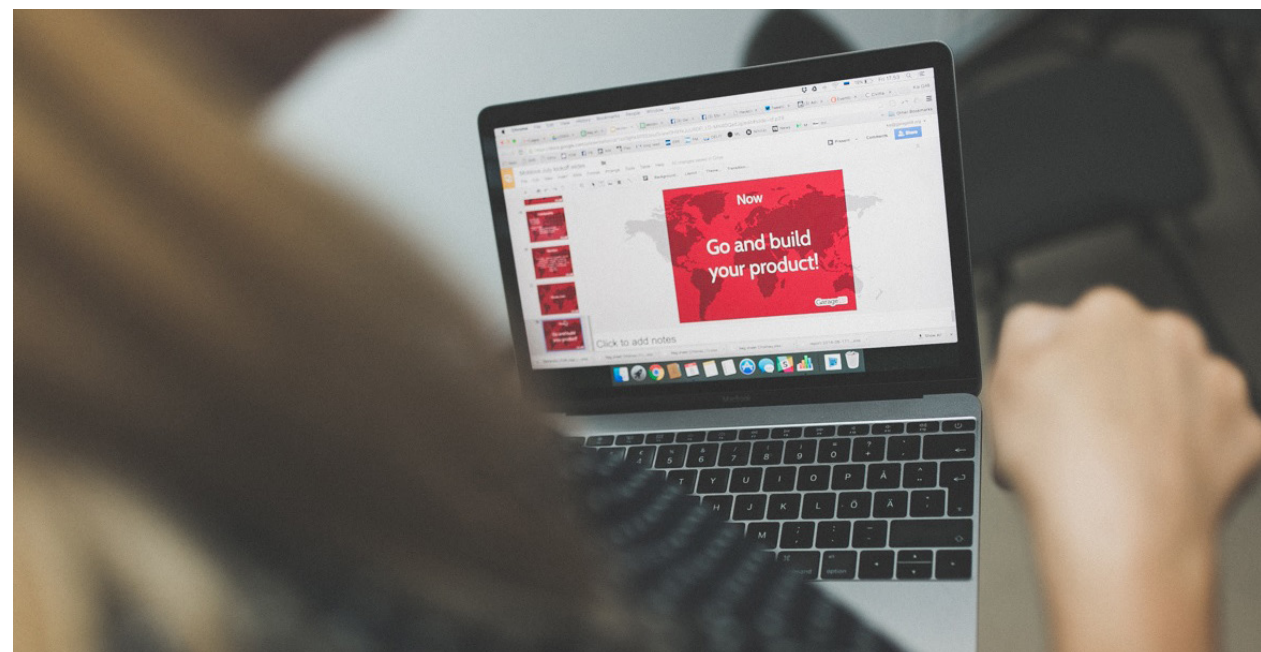
The platform services are also open to companies or freelancers in the creative industries providing digital services such as IT, marketing, communication, design, business development, payment integration, logistics and delivery.

„The EU Confidence Building Measures Programme facilitates equal and fair access to economic opportunities on both banks of the Nistru River through digital transformation of businesses, helping them to become resilient, including to the disruptions caused by the COVID crisis”, says Elena Cabac, project coordinator within the Confidence Building Measures Programme, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP.

The costs of digital services are covered by the EU Program. April - August 2020, 60 businesses benefited from support for the development of shop web storefronts, visual identities, including Facebook and Instagram or to connect to electronic payment systems.

The project also has an educational component, regularly organized webinars with e-commerce experts.

GoOnline is a project initiated by the Association of Creative Companies of Moldova and implemented by the Creative Industries Center Artcor. The platform,



Viorica Cerbușca,

Artcor Center Director and
coordinator of the GoOnline program

The GoOnline program was launched by the Artcor team in response to the COVID-19 crisis. For it was extremely important for us to provide, on the one hand digital first aid to SMEs that have been affected by the pandemic and on the other hand to create collaboration opportunities for digital agencies.

launched in April 2020, is supported by the Moldova Competitiveness Project, funded by USAID, Sweden and the UK; the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation under the „Optim - Opportunities through Technologies and Innovation in Moldova” realized by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, the partner Investment Agency of the Republic of Moldova, the Organization for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP.

The dolls inspired her to grow her own business, developed with EU support

How it feels like pursuing a childhood dream can only be understood by the ones who experienced it. This is the case of Victoria Cuciș, who turned her passion for designing and sewing clothes for dolls into something more. Victoria studied to become a fashion designer and started working in a small workshop, and now she owns a company.

When she felt the lack of professional growth at her first job, she decided it was time to start her own business. She remained in the textile manufacturing industry. Although this sector is at the core of the manufacturing industry on both banks of the Nistru river and the competition is great, Victoria, having experience in clothing design, has nevertheless found a business niche.



„I have established my own work system, which differs from other workshops, namely the design of clothes. Our masters and specialists know how to do it, which leaves us room for maneuver,” notes Victoria.

SLOWLY AND SURELY THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEUR TAKES SHAPE

She moved on from just being a designer to becoming an entrepreneur. And because she had no experience in running a company, in 2021 she participated in business mentoring courses - „BusinessUP” pilot project carried out with the EU financial support, provided in the framework of the „Confidence Building Measures” Programme, implemented by UNDP Moldova.

Thus, in 2021, Victoria benefited from mentoring from Inna Polisciuk, a business consultant from the left bank, a member of the Moldova Business Consultants Association.

“To run and grow a business, you have to grow personally. In the framework of the mentoring program, I benefited from consultations and I was guided by specialists who have experience in the field. It’s great to have such support, because you are advised properly and on time, so you avoid making mistakes,” says Victoria.

Although previously she had the possibility to go abroad for work purposes, Victoria chose to invest at home and to offer jobs, also for inexperienced people. Initially she started her business only in her hometown - Tighina (Bender), and in 2019 she commuted Tighina - Chisinau, where she opened her second workshop.





Victoria Cucos,

Entrepreneur

After the training courses, you naturally start to act differently, you know the law, you know how to work correctly with people, to engage with customers, with staff, to keep some accounting records and gradually to acquire knowledge. Such mentoring is absolutely necessary.

“It was a bit difficult at the beginning, because there were different teams, different customers. We gradually adapted and by making joint efforts we managed to strengthen both teams. Now I don’t feel any difference, even if one team is on the left bank and the other is on the right bank of the Nistru”.

In both workshops, Victoria has 16 employees and most of them are women, as this is specific to the textile sector. Both teams are growing and developing. In both Chisinau and in Tighina (Bender), Victoria is looking for talented and dedicated people. Even now she is in the process of expanding both teams.

“I learned a lot from Victoria, she has experience and she knows all the processes very well and, once she has a lot of experience, she shares it,” says Alexandra Goleac, one of the employees in the workshop in Tighina (Bender).

WITH INVESTMENTS IN QUALITY, TOMORROW’S SUCCESS STARTS TODAY

In her nearly 20 years in the textile business, Victoria has come to understand that she has to deliver quality, and a personal signature to her products. So, this taught her to pass on all her knowledge about the workshop processes to all employees. She does not see herself in other fields. If she were to start over, she would open a workshop as well.

Even the pandemic did not affect her business too much, because she adapted quite quickly to the remote work mode.

“We can design clothes remotely. It was a time when I worked more time with designers in Moscow, I developed patterns, models and even a few collections per year. Based on this collaboration, I have also gained experience in working remotely.”



MENTORING IN BUSINESS IS LIKE A SHIELD

As Victoria works in a creative field, all these years she has always been looking for growth and learning opportunities. Thus, in 2021, Victoria attended BusinessUP courses.

“After the training courses, you naturally start to act differently, you know the law, you know how to work correctly with people, to engage with customers, with staff, to keep some accounting records and gradually to acquire knowledge. Such mentoring is absolutely necessary,” mentions Victoria.

For now, the workshop services are only available to residents on both banks of the Nistru river, but Victoria wants to expand her orders area to both the West and the East.

“We work on the local market, but we have plans, we do it step by step,

which means that nothing happens chaotically. We are developing the company here so that later we can receive orders from Romania or even from Europe.”

The “BusinessUp” project, implemented by ACA in partnership with ABC Dniestr Enterprise, is carried out within the European Union Programme “Confidence-Building Measures”, implemented by UNDP Moldova. The aim of the project is to provide support to vulnerable SMEs on both banks of the Nistru river, so as to maintain optimal productivity in the context of the crisis caused by COVID-19.

During 2021, 43 micro and small businesses on both banks of the Nistru river received advice. Ten mentors provided specialized advice to entrepreneurs from 47 companies (22 – on the left bank, 25 – on the right bank) with about 500 employees.

The couple that replaced music and motorbikes with epoxy resin creations

Entrepreneurs who can turn their hobby into a business are among the happiest people. This is the case of the Gaipelis from Tighina (Bender) city. And when a dream is enabled by available funds, things go smoothly.



Elena Gaipeli is a former music teacher and Vladislav, her husband, is a former motorcyclist. In time, they started to share a hobby.

In a small, improvised workshop in their country house in the suburb of Tighina (Bender), Elena and Vladislav craft a variety of wooden items: from chopping boards and compartment platters to small dec-

orative items. They were able to acquire the necessary tools thanks to a grant provided in the framework of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP.

The passion for woodworking didn't just grow overnight – it came after exploring other occupations. While on childcare leave, Elena was look-

ing for ways to “escape” her routine. Initially the idea of a florist's workshop came up, then one day her husband showed her some items made of epoxy resin. Her first reaction was a decisive no, but then she decided to give it a try. And so, she started making from epoxy resin various jewellery and decorative items.

“Initially, I thought it wasn't for me, but producing something unique – because that's what people want, to have something no one else has – turned out to be the most exciting and creative period of my life, which lasts for five years,” says Elena.

Things took a different turn when the war in Ukraine started, because it became difficult to import raw material.

“That's when we realized we had to rethink our business and use materials we could find locally,” says Elena. That's how they ended up combining Vladislav's skills in handling technical equipment with Elena's



Elena Gaipeli,

Entrepreneur

Initially, I thought it wasn't for me, but producing something unique – because that's what people want, to have something no one else has – turned out to be the most exciting and creative period of my life, which lasts for five years.



design skills, who is good at moulding epoxy resin. “That's how our family business was reborn,” notes the entrepreneur.

Vladislav executes even the most unusual ideas Elena has.

“It's not hard for us to work together, it's really interesting. We respect and support each other's ideas,” says Elena.



“WITH EACH ADDITIONAL UPGRADE, IT GETS EASIER, AS IF WE HAD A NEW COLLEAGUE IN OUR TEAM”

Thanks to a €12,000 grant from the EU's Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, the couple has now high-performance tools in their workshop: robots, lathes, milling machines.

“The equipment saves us time. Now we can craft four compartment platters in one day, and with each additional upgrade to the wood cutting machine, it gets easier, as if we had a new colleague in our team. Productivity increases and we save time, which is very important in a business like this,” explains Vladislav.

With the EU grant, the Gaipelis will set up a sterile, well-heated room in the workshop where they can decorate wooden items with epoxy resin.

This is what they wanted from the start – to decorate wooden items with epoxy resin. “What I've noticed is that people are tired of having things that others can also have. Big companies don't offer diversity, because they work with certain models. That is why workshops that take customized orders have a great advantage: to offer something unique the customer,” says Elena.

Customized design involves, in addition to creativity and originality, certain expenses that must be borne initially by the manufacturer and then by the customer.

“If for jewellery I need five millilitres of epoxy resin, then for a decorative wooden item I would need more than a litre of resin and the cost would be about MDL400, on the top of cost of the wood,” explains Vladislav.

Only environmentally friendly raw materials are used in the Gaipeli family workshop, so that any of their products can be used with confidence in the kitchen.

“We only use certified eco-friendly materials, including the glue used to join some parts, even the pre-made parts, because most of the items we produce are for gourmets and cooking enthusiasts, so they belong in the kitchen. Our platters can hold various types of food, including hot food or baby/toddler food,” says Elena.

“FOLLOW YOUR PASSION AND FINANCIAL REWARD WILL COME LATER”

In addition to spending a lot of time in the workshop producing various wooden items, Elena and Vladislav are looking for new opportunities to promote their products not only in Tighina (Bender) or Tiraspol, but also in Chişinău.

They showcase some of their products on social media as well as on platforms dedicated to creative entrepreneurs. Now they want to increase the stock and sales, so that at some point to be able to export.

“I realized that you need to follow your passion and financial reward will come later,” concludes Elena.



Elena Gaipeli is one of the 13 entrepreneurs who obtained funding through the European Union's Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, to launch or develop a business. In addition to the financial assistance that can be used to purchase equipment, entrepreneurs receive business advice.



Butterflies flying in a boxing ring

“Butterflies flying in a boxing ring,” that’s how fighters move. Daria Cozorez from Tiraspol is convinced of that. She will soon open a modern boxing gym, with the support of the European Union through the Confidence Building Measures programme, implemented by UNDP.

Daria is 21 and she has been playing sports for as long as she can remember. At 16, she has decided to become a professional sportswoman. A boring vacation made her look for some occupation for her spare time: „I used to play basketball, but unfortunately the courses were closed. I was always more active and decided to try

something else. My coach Anatolie came and said: „Join boxing classes! I was thinking that being a girl, there was no place for me in boxing world and I would attend 2-3 classes and drop out, but I am still here.”

Daria doesn't speak much, because she prefers to demonstrate her per-



Daria Cozorez,

Boxer

Through my example, I will demonstrate to girls in particular that they should not be afraid, they just have to be open, ambitious.



formance in the ring, not through words, she says. Daria’s medal haul includes a gold medal from the European Boxing Championship, a silver medal from the World Youth Boxing Championship and four bronze med-

als. Each of these medals was obtained through hard work and two daily training sessions.

„The first international competition I participated in was in Bulgaria.



Everything was new to me, I was very excited, I was in a new country; I had never visited another foreign country before. Everything was so beautiful and green; I saw the sea for the first time then, it was amazing and in the first round, I performed very well, then the emotions overwhelmed me in the second round. That time I took third place, I got the bronze medal," recalls Daria.

„Then I went to another boxing championship in another weight class and there I took first place. I

was so determined: I wanted to be the first! So, I trained hard, I pursued this aspiration and that's how I became a champion and then I went to the world junior championship and there I got the silver medal," says Daria.

“BOXING BECAME MY FAMILY”

Daria trains at least four hours a day. Of all exercises, she most enjoys improving her defensive techniques



and fighting an imaginary competitor. After thousands of workouts, she has learned that in a boxing ring you need to “fly” so that a real or imaginary competitor cannot catch you.

„Girls are strong by their nature. Men are not the only strong ones. Women have the right to train and most importantly, to know how to defend themselves; they just should not be afraid and should try,” states Daria.

Daria belongs to the heavy weight class in boxing (81-91 kg). The young woman aims to “tame” this tough sport so that amateurs strengthen their stamina and physical energy. That is how her business idea was born.

In the spring of 2022, Daria was awarded a €15,000 grant from the

EU's Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP. With these funds, she will open a gym equipped with a boxing ring, punching bags, kettlebells, fitness equipment, etc.

In the new gym, Daria will be coaching children and teenagers, as well as other willing people.

„It's the same in life as in boxing. In the ring, we encounter problems, failures, traumas and in life, there are similar situations, like problems in the family or with friends or at work; and sport, especially boxing, helps. You punch the heavy bag and discharge emotions and then you come home with a peace of mind,” that is how Daria hopes to convince more young people to join boxing classes.

Fairytale toys are crafted in Molovata Nouă

The craftsmanship passed down from generation to generation made Maxim Alexei from the village of Molovata Nouă to open a workshop for crafting wooden toys. The folk craftsman teamed up with Irina Agafița, a marketing specialist. That's how PINO toys were born. With the support of the European Union and UNDP, provided under the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, the entrepreneurs purchased modern equipment.



"Coming from a family of woodworkers, as my great-great-grandparents were woodworkers, at first, I played with some cubes, then I started making doors, stairs, tables, like any woodworker. When my first child came along, my father said: 'Let's go into the workshop and make him some toys'. I have since then changed direction and now we produce exclusively wooden toys in this workshop," Maxim Alexei recalls of his journey into the world of toys.



A car, a dozer and a crane – these were the first toys Maxim created, with which he relaunched his woodworking business. Since then, he has made hundreds of models, turning log woods into toys. He's been doing this every day for more than 12 years.

"I don't make any drawings or sketches. I imagine what I want a toy to be like and then I take a piece of wood and transform it. If I like the result, then I continue, if not, then I put it on the shelf and leave it there. I can make several hundred toys a day, sometimes I make a toy in two days. It all depends on the model and how complex it is," says Maxim Alexei.





Maxim Alexei,

Folk craftsman

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A FRIENDSHIP TURNED INTO A BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

For many years, Maxim crafted toys and displayed them at fairs where he was invited as a folk craftsman. He didn't have a brand or a proper business until he met Irina Agafița.

"I met Maxim when he was selling his toys in the street. Even then I had the idea of making wooden toys. Then,

as now, I was in charge of organising folk craftspeople who wanted to participate in events, festivals. That's how I met him and over time we became friends."

Irina and Maxim's collaboration, but not their friendship, came to a standstill when the pandemic hit, as Maxim had only sold his toys at events until then. The uncertainty made Maxim seriously consider



settling in another country because he was unable to support his family. Irina then proposed to Maxim to launch an online shop where his toys could be displayed and sold. That's how the PINO toy brand was born.

"I find Maxim very talented. For me, his talent is something special. When he told me he wanted to leave, I was like: 'No, no, no. You're so talented, you can't just leave.' That's when I suggested we sell online, as I have a degree in management and marketing. He was very sceptical at first but accepted. I created the visual identity, and he was making the toys. I told Maxim that it would be a good idea to expand the range of toys, but he said that he didn't have the right machinery, so we thought we had to do something about it," says Irina Agafița, the administrator of the business and the online shop.

FROM SCEPTICISM TO THE EXCITEMENT OF A NEW BEGINNING

Excited about the new beginning, Irina Agafița started looking for solutions. That's how she participated in spring 2022 in the grant competition launched by the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP. The application was successful, and Irina and Maxim were awarded a grant of €15,000, with which they bought the equipment needed to manufacture wooden toys.

"Maxim was sceptical, he thought only others could get funding, not him. He was very happy when we got the first grant, then another. He understood that it's possible and, more importantly, how much easier it is to work with the new equipment. That's how we've increased produc-

tivity: now he manages to make a lot more toys and, most importantly, he works safely,” says Irina.

A CNC router and a wood planer were purchased from the grant. “Before we had a very unsafe equipment. I was nervous to work on that equipment. Now everything is safer, more efficient, the wood comes out cleaner, it doesn’t splinter as much, meaning that we now have a good and efficient equipment,” says Maxim.

THE WOODEN TOYS FROM PINO ARE AN EXAMPLE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Maxim Alexei has always opted for a sustainable way of producing toys. The wood used in the production of the toys is bought from local people

in and around Molovata Nouă. Maxim most often uses wood from fruit trees to give the toys a special texture. It’s also a way to reuse natural resources.

“People who want to get rid of a tree call us and we then go and cut it down for them or take the log. We make it into planks, we dry them, and then we make toys. Walnut, cherry, mulberry, pear – practically any type of wood growing in the area is suitable for our toys,” says Maxim.

Although he buys wood from locals, because of the war in Ukraine, the price of timber has increased.

At the same time, Maxim stopped producing tank toys, although until then, it was one of the most popular and best-selling models.

“When the war started, I simply couldn’t bring myself to make this



model anymore. I gave up, even though it’s just a toy. I gave up, even though wooden tanks sold better than cars or planes,” says Maxim.

tasks only involve sanding or joining parts.”

“We are really in demand. Very often, we sell everything we have,” says Maxim. The woodworker also organises creative sessions for children, who get to make the toy they want: “They then go home twice as happy because they have made their own toy and gained an insight into the process of making it.”

Maxim would like to have a larger workshop to host events and have more visitors of all ages.

Another idea for the future is to arrange a “fairy tale” space for children from both sides of the Nistru river.

“On the bank of the Nistru river, Maxim has a plot of land surrounded by pine trees and we are thinking of building a workshop with an open area where both children and parents can reconnect by playing in nature. It’s a grand project that we dream of,” says Irina.

APPRENTICESHIP OUT OF FASHION?!

Maxim doesn’t have enough time to both make toys and participate in fairs. The folk craftsman is keen to expand his business and employ more people in the workshop. Having learned the woodworking trade from his father, Maxim now has no one to pass on his skills to, as his children are too young. The village youth, Maxim notes, are no longer interested in apprenticeship.

“Unfortunately, it’s a bit hard now. We can’t offer young people as high salaries as they would like, plus many are leaving the country. We hire women, seniors, people with no previous experience. Some work



HEALTH PLATFORM

equipped with general medicine workstations for training family doctors on the left bank of the Nistru and trained medical staff in family medicine.

TOURISM PLATFORM

complements the five trans-river thematic platforms formed in the previous phase program - education, sport, health, culture and ecology.

80

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION

have been supported in the implementation of activities that will further improve collaboration between the two banks of the Nistru in the fields of education, culture, health protection, sports, environmental protection and others. In total, 30,000 people are expected to benefit from the small grants program.

ENVIRONMENT PLATFORM

focused on topics such as climate change, alternative energy sources, agriculture conservation and ecological sustainability in agriculture, the coverage of environmental issues in the media by organizing of capacity-building activities for over 1200 participants.

EDUCATION PLATFORM

developed guides for teachers and managers for planning an inclusive educational environment, without barriers for school children, organizing a process blended learning, making use of information technologies.

CULTURE PLATFORM

actively contributed to the development and promotion of young artists, musicians, people of culture through training, organizing cultural events.

SPORT PLATFORM

has created a dedicated website www.sportforma.md with a comprehensive database of sports organizations on both banks, services offered and events planned. A series of joint events have been organized.

COLLABORATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

2

Free Romanian language courses for CSOs from the left bank of the Nistru River, with the support of the EU and UNDP

„I realised that I was missing out on a lot professionally and personally,” says Iulia Melnicenco, one of the participants in a Romanian language course held in Tiraspol. The course is run by the Regional Development Agency from Tiraspol, in partnership with the „SMART” Educational Center, with the support of the European Union (EU) and UNDP, and offered as part of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme.



As a result, 25 representatives of civil society from the left bank of the Nistru River studied Romanian intensively.

„It is a useful and necessary process for them. The journey is challenging, but we are dedicated, and the re-

sults at the end of each level are visible and as expected. The students are interested in learning,” says Tatiana Mazepa, Romanian language lecturer.

„At the end of the course, we have 25 people – representatives of CSOs



Tatiana Yaskova,

President of the Regional Development Agency from Tiraspol

At the end of the course, we have 25 people – representatives of CSOs who have learned Romanian from scratch up to level B1, according to European standards for foreign language learning. Romanian courses are about possibilities and opportunities.



who have learned Romanian from scratch up to level B1, according to European standards for foreign language learning. Romanian courses are about possibilities and opportunities," says Tatiana Yaskova, President of the Regional Development Agency from Tiraspol.

The organisers of the Romanian language courses did not limit themselves to the traditional teaching approach. They also provided participants with alternatives such as online lessons, thematic brunches and discussion workshops outside of

classrooms focused on various topics such as history, traditions, and customs. Additionally, all the training was complemented by a glossary of terms in Romanian.

„In our work, we constantly interact with our project colleagues from the right bank of the Nistru. Therefore, for better understanding and communication, as well as for the implementation of joint projects, knowledge of the Romanian language has become a necessity. I study Romanian intensively and it's challenging because my work schedule is packed.



Alexandr Bomeșco,

Course participant

I believe every person should learn a new language, at least to enhance their skills. Furthermore, since we live in Moldova, knowledge of the Romanian language, the state language, is necessary, and to travel through the country, you really need to know this language.

I believe every person should learn a new language, at least to enhance their skills. Furthermore, since we live in Moldova, knowledge of the Romanian language, the state language, is necessary, and to travel through the country, you really need to know this language," says Alexandr Bomeșco, a course participant.

Among the students of the Romanian language courses is Ludmila Burlaciuc, Vice-President of the National Karate-Do Federation of the Republic of Moldova. „I have wanted to study Romanian for a long time, but as a karate coach, often the study schedule coincided with my work schedule. When I found out about the new opportunity for studying, especially with the option of online courses, I enrolled immediately. At the same time, the organisation of thematic brunches, where we discuss various topics in Romanian, is a new way of studying for me, and it's also convenient. I have many colleagues in Ro-

mania and Moldova. When we meet at various regional and international sports competitions, I want to be understood by them. Now I have the opportunity to learn Romanian and that's what I'm doing," she relates.

„The role of the Romanian language in project management has increased and it is good to understand our partners from the right bank. I believe that these courses will strengthen and increase the number of partnerships between organisations on both banks. Leaders will be able to participate in joint events not only in the Republic of Moldova but also in Romania," says Roman Sandu, an expert at the Social Entrepreneurs Association.

The 25 participants were part of a pilot project through which those interested in studying Romanian managed to overcome linguistic barriers on both banks of the Nistru river.

EU continues providing immediate support to Moldovan communities to help refugees from Ukraine

The European Union provides €130,000 through its Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, to support the Moldovan authorities' and local communities' response to the needs of refugees from Ukraine arriving in the Republic of Moldova.

With the support of the cross-river Health Platform created under the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, 1500 refugees that are temporarily accommodated on both banks of the Nistru River will benefit from sanitary kits including essential medicines and medication for people with diabetes, personal protective equipment, as well beds, duvets, bed linen, and pillows.

To support refugees, the Health Platform has mobilised six volunteer teams, comprising five people each. The refugees from Ukraine will also benefit from medical and psychological consultations.

From the onset of the aggression against Ukraine, 10 diesel heater fans were donated to the refugees' distribution center in Palanca on the border with Ukraine. The Regional Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Domestic Violence from Gagauz-Yeri, offering shelter to refugees, received 20 units of equipment and household appli-

ances, making accommodations more comfortable.

"We, in the European Union, are truly impressed by the overwhelming solidarity of the Republic of Moldova, from ordinary citizens to local and central authorities, with the people who fled the country as a result of the aggression against Ukraine. The European Union responded promptly by offering immediate support to the Republic of Moldova to help refugees who found shelter on both banks of the Nistru River. EU is committed to providing continuous support for the people of the Republic of Moldova, especially in this difficult time," stated Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.

"During this critical time, UNDP and the European Union stand by refugees fleeing violence and by host communities from both banks of the Nistru. We are providing immediate support and will facilitate the socio-economic inclusion of refugees going forward", said Dima Al-Khat-



Jānis Mažeiks,

Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova

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ib, UNDP Resident Representative to the Republic of Moldova.

Teachers, psychologists, and educators from the cross-river Education Platform will get involved and organ-

ize educational activities for approx. 250 children from Ukraine. In addition, the Programme delivered toys to refugees made by Igor Hîncu, who received a Programme grant to expand his business 5 years ago.

Raşcov on the left bank of the Nistru River develops its tourism potential with EU and UNDP support

A team of researchers from the Archaeological Laboratory of the Taras Shevchenko University in Tiraspol has carried out a series of archaeological investigations at the ruins of the church of Raşcov on the left bank of the Nistru. These efforts were included in an ambitious project, „Historic Raşcov: research and conservation to improve tourism potential together”. The project was supported by the European Union’s „Confidence Building Measures” programme, implemented by UNDP.

The archaeological research was carried out from 9 October to 15 November 2022. Subsequently, archaeologists, historians and architects combined field and office work to document the research in a monograph. On the occasion of the launch of this monograph, a scientific conference was organised on 28 September 2023, bringing together experts from both sides of the Nistru River.

Magdalena Mueller-Uri, Head of the Cooperation Section of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova remarked: “The conservation efforts of synagogue and Raşcov church not only breathed life into two remarkable buildings but have also enriched the cultural heritage of Raşcov. Archaeological excavations in 2022 unveiled secrets buried for centuries, fostering a sense of shared discovery within the community. The European Union firmly believes that

culture is not only a reflection of a society’s identity and history but also a powerful force that drives the harmonious development of any community. It possesses the unique ability to transcend boundaries and foster connections, regardless of political or geographical divisions. Culture is the common thread that unites us all”.

Research has been carried out both outside and inside the church, uncovering a number of fascinating facts about the construction and history of this tourist attraction. The main objectives of the research were to identify the building layers of the church and to verify the existence of older structures in the same location, as well as to culturally and chronologically attribute these findings.

Andrea Cuzyova, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative to the Republic of Moldova said: “we are glad to



see that this Scientific Conference brings together the local community, cultural and tourism institutions, and experts from both banks of the Nistru river. This is the power of cultural heritage — to build bridges, inspire cooperation, and instill confidence. Through these remarkable projects, Raşcov has the potential to become a unique tourist attraction — a place where visitors from around the world can explore the richness and cultural diversity of this exceptional community. Moreover, as tourism flourishes in Raşcov, it will bring economic opportunities to the local community. Hospitality, guided tours, artisanal crafts, and traditional cuisine are just a few of the sectors that can benefit from an influx of tourists. This, in turn, can boost the local economy, create jobs, and contribute to the overall well-being of the residents.”

During the research project, a new archaeological site belonging to the Cucuteni-Tripolia archaeological community and the oldest Christian necropolis in the region dating from the 17th-18th centuries were discovered

unexpectedly. In addition, remains were discovered - several teeth and small fragments of the lower jaw of an animal. They belonged to a young elephant of the genus *Mammuthus*, which lived in these parts about 100,000 years ago.

All the information and archaeological findings from the period of research have been included in the monograph „Historical Raşcov”. The results of this archaeological research make a significant contribution to the understanding of the history and cultural heritage of the village of Raşcov and the surrounding region. They can have a positive impact on the development of the tourism potential of the area, shedding light on the rich cultural and historical heritage of this place.

Previously, within the framework of the EU „Confidence Building Measures” programme implemented by UNDP, two local cultural heritage sites, namely the synagogue and the ruins of the church of Raşcov, were conserved and partially restored.

Athletes from both banks of the Nistru river participated in the 6th edition of the RUBICON ultramarathon

200 athletes registered for the Rubicon 2023 ultramarathon have run 540 kilometers for three days, through nine districts located along the Nistru river. Out of these, about 170 athletes from the right bank and 30 athletes from the left bank of the Nistru have participated in the various stages of the race, thanks to the support offered by the European Union, through the „Confidence Building Measures” Programme, implemented by UNDP.



“The Rubicon ultramarathon embraces perfectly the spirit of the EU ‘Confidence Building Measures’ to promote cooperation between people from communities from both banks of the Nistru River. Sport is a perfect tool for confidence building as it gathers athletes from different areas of the country, united to participate in the same initiative, promoting healthy lifestyles and positive values. Sport unites people, irrespective of nationality, language, social, gender or age differences,” mentioned Giuseppe Paglione, Programme Manager at the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova. The route was designed so that the runners could enjoy the main tourist attractions of the crossed districts.

Since 2017, more than 1000 athletes and amateur runners have joined the Rubicon Ultramarathon.

“The six-year Rubicon cycle is over. We started from Soroca Fortress not knowing what the next editions will bring. And here we are in 2023 awarding Rubicon winners: children ran 100+ km, and adults over 340 km! It’s unbelievable, but true. It’s great that the Rubicon fulfils its task, expanding the boundaries of human capabilities and self-confidence! I am grateful to the partners for their trust and to Sporter team,” said Dmitri Volosin, President of the Sports Club Sporter.



Giuseppe Paglione,

Programme Manager at the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova

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5 educational institutions on the left bank of the Nistru river will use virtual reality glasses as teaching materials

Four schools and one art college from the left bank of the Nistru will use virtual reality (VR) glasses during lessons. This is possible with the support of the European Union (EU) through Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP.

“VR glasses really involve pupils in the educational process. When a child, during a geography lesson, is simply asked, for example, to tell something about Paris, he/she will do

it, but without much interest. Instead, when he/she takes a virtual tour of the city through the VR glasses, then he/she will rely on his/her impressions,” mentions Alexandr Volskii, manager of the Digital Transformation Association in Tiraspol. The association benefited from a grant from the European Union and UNDP to promote virtual education in schools.

In addition to VR glasses, 18 teachers from the left bank of the Nistru benefited from IT courses, to later guide the students in the correct use of the latest generation equipment.

Thus, more than 500 children have used VR glasses in English, geography, history, or design lessons, and by the end of 2023, the number of students who will test the equipment will reach 2,000.

“I really enjoyed using the VR glasses, it’s incredible. I was impressed by



the presentation angle, the graphics, the sound. I was impressed by the simple fact that you jump in a new place, new atmosphere, it’s amazing. In this way you can make a tour to museum, being in your classroom,” says Ecaterina Onofrei, student of the College of Arts in Tighina (Bender).

Both students and teachers are excited about using VR glasses in classes.

“Technology is advancing. If our educational institutions raise graphic designers, then the educational system should keep up with the trends, so that our graduates are competitive not only professionally/educationally, but also personally,” says Olga Pogonenco, teacher at the College of Arts from Tighina (Bender).

The Digital Transformation Association in Tiraspol aims to purchase VR glasses for an entire classroom for one of the partner educational institutions.

Olga Pogonenco,

Teacher at the College of Arts from Tighina (Bender)

Technology is advancing. If our educational institutions raise graphic designers, then the educational system should keep up with the trends, so that our graduates are competitive not only professionally/educationally, but also personally.





Safe hikes thanks to tourist signs installed with EU and UNDP support

Six information boards and tourist signs have been placed in the nature reserves of Țîpova, Saharna and Iagorlîc. The signs were installed with the support of the EU „Confidence Building Measures” Programme, implemented by UNDP.

The information boards contain useful information for hikers, such as details about the reserve, the flora and fauna specific to the area, and signposts that guide tourists safely along the trails.

An ecotourism information centre has also been set up in the immediate vicinity of the Țîpova monastery. The centre is also open on Saturdays and Sundays and prior appointment is required for weekdays.

Signs and signposts give guides and tourists the rules of conduct in a nature reserve. It also promotes the idea of eco-friendly and sustainable tourism.

With support from the EU and UNDP, the Tourism Platform has also been set up, connecting tourism professionals on both sides of the Nistru River. Ten tour guides from both banks of the Nistru River have also been certified. A new specialization was included at the Academy of Economic Studies - related to destination management organizations.

At the same time, more than 444 tourist attractions on the left bank of the Nistru and 1060 - on the right bank of the Nistru were mapped.

“Rock at the Fortress” - the concert that brought together music enthusiasts from both banks of the Nistru River

On the occasion of celebrating the completion of the restoration and conservation works at Tighina/Bender Fortress, the „Rock at the Fortress” concert was organized. The Moldovan National Youth Orchestra (MNYO) returned to the fortress courtyard with an exceptional concert. The event took place with the financial support of the European Union through the Confidence Building Measures Programme implemented by UNDP.



Adriano Marian,

The conductor of the
Moldovan National Youth Orchestra

The magnificent Tighina/Bender Fortress is a place where we always go with great pleasure and where we meet an extraordinary audience. It is uplifting to see how people from both banks come together in a spiritual union every year. The repertoire is largely inspired by the first Symphonic Rock event, which took place 10 years ago.

60 musicians and instrumentalists from both banks of the Nistru River reinterpreted legendary rock songs. From Nirvana, AC/DC, Led Zeppelin, and Queen to Elton John, Moby, and Okean Elzy, these are just a few examples of songs that created a true sensation.

„It's a wonderful concert in a very beautiful venue, and I'm impressed by how well the fortress looks. There's a large crowd, which is splendid and I think it's a great opportunity for everyone to gather here and listen to good, dynamic music,” stated Al-exandru.



„I'm from Tiraspol, and it's my first time attending a concert here at the fortress, specifically the MNYO concerts. The atmosphere here is incredible. It's interesting to see how history intertwines with the modern at a cultural event: a fortress from the 15th century and rock music from our days,” mentioned Olesea.

„I have never taken part in such a grandiose event, everything is so captivating. Thank you for coming to our city,” said Elena.

The MNYO concerts organized at Tighina/Bender Fortress have become a beautiful tradition, and as evidence,



tickets were sold well in advance of the concert. The approximately 2000 people present at the concert had the opportunity to listen to the performances of special guests - Pasha Parfeni, Ana Cernicova, and Radu Dolgan.

by MNYO at Tighina/Bender Fortress, with the support of the EU and UNDP. Organizing cultural events at Tighina/Bender Fortress ensures the financial sustainability of this important historical monument.

„The magnificent Tighina/Bender Fortress is a place where we always go with great pleasure and where we meet an extraordinary audience. It is uplifting to see how people from both banks come together in a spiritual union every year. The repertoire is largely inspired by the first Symphonic Rock event, which took place 10 years ago,” mentioned Adriano Marian, the conductor of the Moldovan National Youth Orchestra.

The „Rock at the Fortress” concert on 10 June is the 5th event organized



The “Moldova Has a Voice” camps brought together young music enthusiasts from both banks of the Nistru river

„It was such a synergy!” That’s what the 24 young people from both banks of the Nistru river, participants in the two editions of the „Moldova Has a Voice” camp, say in unison. The art camps were organized by Pasha Parfeni with the support of USAID Moldova, the European Union, and UNDP.

„The basic requirement in our art camps is that participants should be music creators, not just singers. When we say music creator, we mean a versatile person who can write lyrics, compose a melody, and perform it. We were surprised by the talents of our participants,” says Pasha Parfeni.



On both „Moldova Has a Voice” camps, professional music creators shared their experiences and knowledge with young participants. Guided by three mentors – Pasha Parfeni, Dara, and Iuliana Parfeni – along with three other music producers, camp participants discovered the entire process of producing a song: how to convey a social message in a song, tips for the recording process, how to write lyrics when you miss inspiration.

„I have always believed in artistic communities and have always believed that we can create something interesting when we have a team. Only when there is an exchange of ideas, values, and visions, when energies come together, the result is worthy,” says Ioana Isac, a lyricist.

„I put into practice what inspired me in discussions with Iuliana, my

mentor. I came up with an idea, and then I tried to involve the people around me. Acron wrote the first part a bit, then I communicated with Anastasia and composed the bridge,” says Lavinia, a participant from Chişinău.

Born in Chişinău, Vlada Neagu, another participant, has been living in Romania for seven years, and this year she graduated from the National University of Music in Bucharest: „At the artistic moment I am in now, I need to overcome some barriers and open up even more to who I am and what I want to create, and this art camp provided exactly what I needed. I was used to my slower ballad-pop songs, with a lot of introspection, sometimes painful, and here I do absolutely everything – I sing any style, without barriers, without expectations, which is wonderful.”



Dara,

Singer

Moldova needs a lot more music, considering how many talents it has. There are many more people who can launch into music; they just need a bit of confidence.



Artiom and Maxim are two young people from Tiraspol. Although Artiom is an actor, and Maxim is studying journalism, they both came to the art camp because they share the same hobby – music.

„We came to the art camp to step out of our comfort zone and create a friendly, creative atmosphere to gen-

erate songs. We divided into groups, and with the help of a producer, we create music – either all together, separately, or in duets. As this is a creative process, you can't fit it into a template. For example, on the first evening, our group created a song in three languages – Romanian, Russian, and English,” says Artiom excitedly.

Maxim says he studies journalism just to have more time to write and compose lyrics or music: „I was missing something. I felt like my emotions and thoughts had run out, and here I had the chance to be selected for this camp. Everyone here is talented in their own way, and someone can inspire you in a certain way. It's important not to lose all the creative energy accumulated after this camp and to continue composing music and lyrics.”

Dara is a mentor at the „Moldova Has a Voice” camps: „That's how I work. I create music in teams, and I do it practically every day. Such an art camp would have helped me a lot at the beginning of my career.”

Even the creative camps have ended, the mentors continue to support the participants with recommendations.

„Moldova needs a lot more music, considering how many talents it has. There are many more people who can launch into music; they just need a bit of confidence,” says Dara.

During the two „Moldova Has a Voice” art camps, approximately 30 songs were recorded. These will go through the post-production and mastering process to reach a wider audience later on.



5

EDUCATION

- 2 renovated kindergartens in Cocieri and Teiul;
- 3 Gymnasiums/schools renovated: Roșcani, Mălăiești, and carting school in Grigoriopol.

4

SPORT AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

- 4 new sports fields have been set up in Sănătăuca, Camenca, Tiraspol, Corotna.

4

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

- New road: Varnița - Severnâi - Gura Bâcului;
- Street lighting: Rezina Bridge - Râbnița;
- 2 Feasibility studies: Bacul Molovata, Trolleybus Line Tighina (Bender) - Varnița - Severnâi.

3

CULTURE

- 2 cultural houses have been renovated in Holercani and Tîrnăuca;
- Rodin Park was restored in Cioburciu.

1

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- In Speia and Telița have been modernized selective waste collection.

3

HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Rehabilitated and modernized:

- Center for palliative patients: Dnestrovsc;
- Radiology and medical imaging laboratory: Criuleni;
- Social House: Mălăieștii Vechi.

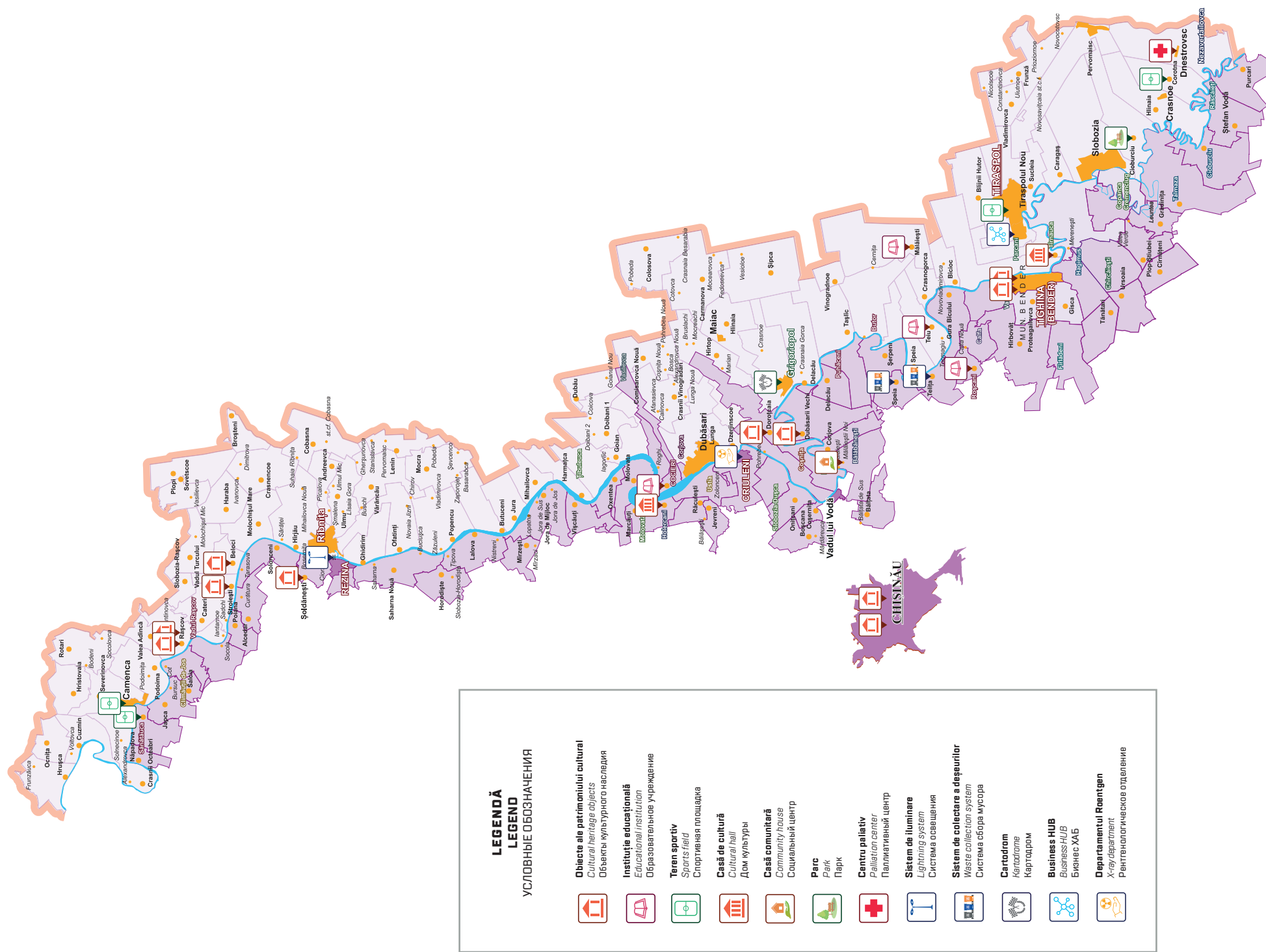
Quality of life has been improved in 23 localities on both banks of the Nistru:

As a result, over 100 thousand women and men benefit better social services.

3

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE RENOVATION

Map of community infrastructure renovation projects and restoration of cultural heritage objects



170 children benefit from better conditions at the “Garofița” kindergarten in Cocieri village

The „Garofița” kindergarten in Cocieri village, Dubăsari district was renovated and modernised according to the best educational practices, with the support of the European Union and the UNDP. Thus, all kindergarten’s children, including nursery school children, will benefit from better conditions for early education. To carry out all these works, approximately 173 thousand euros were invested during 2019-2022, through the EU „Confidence Building Measures” Programme, implemented by UNDP.



Andrea Cuzyova,

UNDP Resident Representative a.i.
to the Republic of Moldova

We are pleased to learn that due to improved conditions of the kindergarten, the capacity of this educational institution has doubled and children from neighbouring villages have access to quality early childhood education. Parents are able to pursue their professional paths while their children are looked after in this establishment.



“These projects reflect the real help that our Western partners offer us in this sensitive area. Their help translates into new infrastructure projects, new cultural projects, also education projects,” said Oleg Serebrian, Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration.

„The European Union is proud to contribute to improved access to quality and inclusive early education for children on both banks of the Nistru river. The renovation of the Cocieri kindergarten provides the necessary learning environment and more com-



fortable conditions for the children and the teachers who now benefit of modern classrooms, new furniture, repaired sanitary facilities etc. The kindergarten from Cocieri is a perfect example of the values that the European Union is promoting through the Confidence Building Measures: cooperation between the communities along the Nistru river, united to bring concrete solutions to common needs,” mentioned Jānis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.

The block four of the pre-school institution benefited from the capital repair



of the roof. Two classrooms for children including the access spaces to them and the sanitary facilities were also repaired. The classrooms were equipped with furniture and bed linen.

The improved conditions in the kindergarten made possible the opening of three additional classes and created new job opportunities.

„We are pleased to learn that due to improved conditions of the kindergarten, the capacity of this educational institution has doubled and children from neighbouring villages have access to quality early childhood education. Parents are able to pursue their professional paths while their children are looked after in this establishment,” said Andrea Cuzyova, UNDP Resident Representative a.i. to the Republic of Moldova.

The „Garofița” kindergarten from Cocieri is attended by approximately 170 children, who also come from nearby communities - Dubăsari, Corjova and Roghi.

At the same time, dance, judo, Romanian and English courses are conducted at the kindergarten.



“Thanks to long-term investments, the kindergarten has become more attractive both for the children from the community and for those from the neighboring localities. The kindergarten has practically become a small community center where children can also attend various courses,” said Tatiana Nirca, director of the „Garofița” kindergarten in Cocieri.

During 2017-2018, also with the support of the EU „Confidence Building Measures” Programme, more than 83 thousand euros were allocated for repair works of block three of the kindergarten: changing the networks (electricity, ventilation, heating), building a new roof, repairing the festivities hall, modernisation of the rainwater drainage system etc.



The school in Mălăiești and the kindergarten in the village of Teiul, on the left bank of the Nistru, have been rehabilitated with the support of the EU and UNDP

The children of Teiul kindergarten and the students from Mălăiești school now benefit from improved conditions in their institutions. With the support of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, a series of repair works have been carried out to ensure a quality educational process.



On 22 May 2023, during a working visit, Magdalena Mueller-Uri, Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation in the Republic of Moldova, and Andrea Cuzyova, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative to the Republic of Moldova, met with representatives of both institutions, including children, students, and their parents.

In its 50 years of existence, the Teiul kindergarten had never undergone major repairs. In 2020, with the support of the EU and UNDP, renovations were done on the facade, the construction and repair of 5 summer pavilions, the installation of a rainwater drainage system, and the rehabilitation of gallery-type hall, including



interior stairs. In 2022, the renovation process continued with the furnishing of classrooms, the transformation of a shed into a sports hall, and the refurbishment of the festive hall. Now, 65 children can enjoy the new conditions created in the preschool institution.

Magdalena Mueller-Uri, Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation in the Republic of Moldova, emphasized that „social infrastructure projects within the framework of EU

Confidence Building Measures Programme are like a call to action, urging us to continue our unwavering commitment to education. The European Union, together with UNDP, will continue to strive for excellence, to provide an educational experience that empowers our students to reach for the stars, and to build a brighter future for generations to come.”

„We are delighted with the investments made in the kindergarten. Now children come with pleasure,



Svetlana Tofan,

The director of the Teiul kindergarten

We are delighted with the investments made in the kindergarten. Now children come with pleasure, and I think that's the most important thing.

and I think that's the most important thing," said Svetlana Tofan, the director of the Teiul kindergarten.

Mălăiești school, attended by over 250 students, also underwent a se-

ries of renovations. The school canteen was repaired, the sports field was modernized and equipped for basketball, and two workshop classes were created for girls and boys. All of this was made possible with the



support of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP.

„We at UNDP support social infrastructure initiatives on both banks of Nistru river, particularly those centered on education. Children have the right to enjoy comfortable conditions to play, learn and develop, while teachers and educators – to have better working conditions, helping them to guide younger generation on the pathway to a better future. UNDP and EU will continue to invest in so-

cial institutions, that bring people together,” mentioned Andrea Cuzyova, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative to the Republic of Moldova.

„The cafeteria was not functional and has not been repaired since the school was inaugurated in 1982. The stadium was not arranged, and children could not enjoy proper sports lessons and activities. Now everything looks different thanks to the support provided by the European Union and UNDP,” stated Tatiana Poian, the director of Mălăiești school.



People from Tiraspol can lead a healthy lifestyle thanks to a sports field reconstructed with the help of European Union

A sports field in a living area of Tiraspol has been reconstructed with the financial support of the European Union. Almost 18 000 people, including 3000 children, will have access to a mini-football field and outdoor fitness equipment.

Also, on the field could be organized competitions between local teams, as well as with participation of children and adults from other localities, including from the right bank of Nistru river.

The sports field, reconstructed within the European Union Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, was inaugurated on 26 August.

“Sports is an activity that has always connected young people, their families and communities. It fosters mutual respect and friendships by playing, spectating and volunteering. During these challenge period due to Covid 19, we are glad to be able to bring to children in Tiraspol an opportunity to find close to the place they live in an area where they can socialize through sport while re-



Peter Michalko,

Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova

Sports is an activity that has always connected young people, their families and communities. It fosters mutual respect and friendships by playing, spectating and volunteering.

specting social distance,” said Peter Michalko, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, at the opening ceremony.

The project was coordinated by Anatoli Kovalsky, 47, a former sportsperson. He has been practicing kayaking in Ukraine since he was 13 years old. He came back to Tiraspol, and decided to inspire young people, by his own example, to have a healthy lifestyle and choose sports.

“Statistics show that in recent years up to 35% of children who go to school already have chronic diseases. That is why it is important to promote the healthy lifestyle,” says Anatoli Terzi, manager of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP.

The project, with a budget of more than 50 000 euros, has been implemented during October 2019 and July 2020, aiming to stimulate social interaction among neighbourhood, create enhanced opportunities for physical and social activities for peo-



ple on both banks of Nistru river and ensure better social atmosphere for young people to choose a healthy lifestyle, excluding tobacco and alcohol.

The reconstruction of the sports field in Tiraspol is one of 16 social infrastructure projects, implemented since 2019 on both banks. The projects were selected through a public call.

Young people in Camenca starting from 2021 benefit from new sports fields, one for mini-football and another for volleyball

The sportfields were rebuilt with the support of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP.

On a visit to the left bank of the Nistru, Magdalena Mueller-Uri, Head of the Cooperation Section of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova and Andrea Cuzyova, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in the Republic of Moldova went to see the sports club in Camenca.



The sports fields in Camenca benefit young people on both banks, especially those from Sănătăuca. In spring 2019, the localities of Camenca (left bank) and Sănătăuca (right bank) decided to participate together in the grant competition, to receive financial support for modernization of sports fields in their communities.

The application project, which links the two localities Camenca and Sănătăuca has been selected for funding under the EU Confidence Building Measures,

implemented by UNDP. And in the fall of 2022 the sports club in Camenca, in collaboration with four other partners on both shores, received a grant of over 19 thousand euros.

As a result, over 1000 young people from the north of the country have participated in sports competitions organized in Sănătăuca and Camenca. Such projects contribute directly to supporting and building trust between the communities Camenca and Sănătăuca.



10
OBJECTIVES

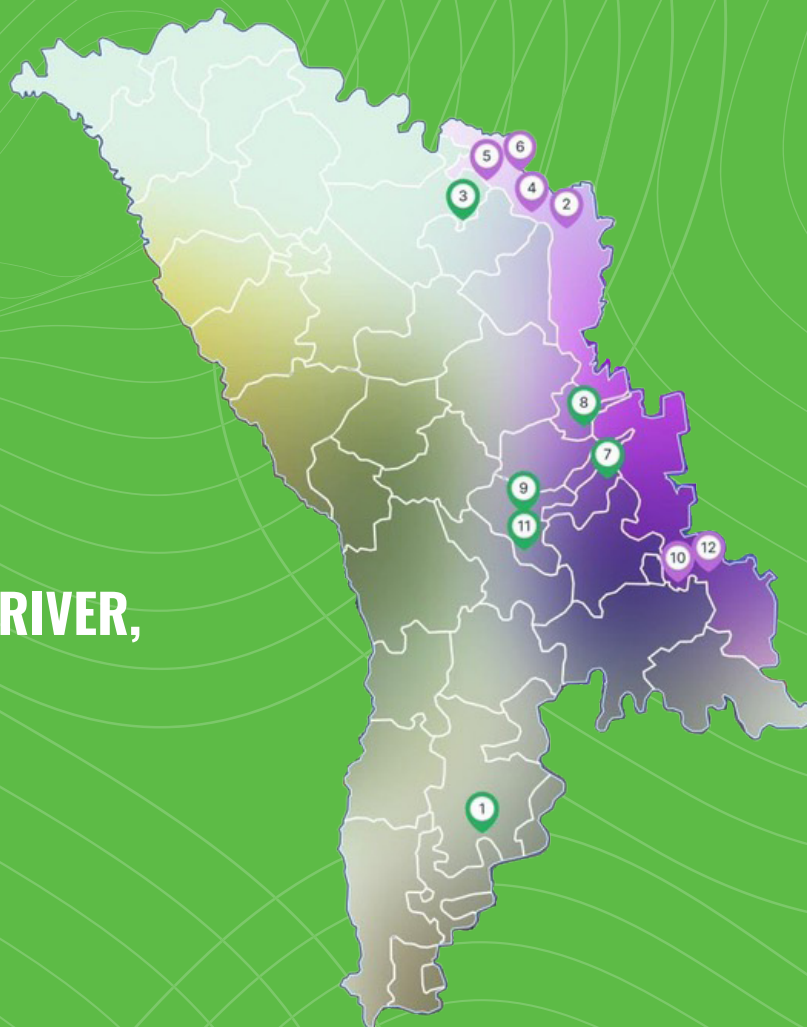
small cultural
heritage
objectives
have been
restored

ON THE RIGHT BANK OF THE NISTRU RIVER, THE SELECTED OBJECTIVES ARE

- Gaidar ① Windmill
- Șoldănești ③ Water tower
- Dubăsarii Vechi ⑦ Macri-Donici families' cave
- Dorotcaia ⑧ Museum
- Chișinău ⑨ Digitalization of cartoons from Moldova Film archive
- Chișinău ⑪ Circus

ON THE LEFT BANK OF THE NISTRU RIVER, THE SELECTED OBJECTIVES ARE:

- Gaidar ② Water Mill
- Stroinești ④ Wind Tower
- Râșcov ⑤ Synagogue
- Râșcov ⑥ Church ruins in Râșcov
- Tighina (Bender) ⑩ Art College Hall
- Tighina (Bender) ⑫ Tighina Fortress (Bender)



4

RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The first stage of the conservation and restoration works of the State Circus in Chişinău has been completed

With an investment of more than 2.2 million euros from the European Union through the „Confidence Building Measures” Programme implemented by UNDP, the first stage of the conservation and restoration works of the State Circus in Chişinău was completed.

At the event on 23 May 2024 marking the completion of the first stage of works, the President of the Republic of Moldova, Maia Sandu said: “I was pleased to return today to the circus in Chişinău, where the first

stage of restoration was completed. For many of us, the circus means magic and the joy of childhood, and we would very much like today’s children to be able to enjoy the performances. Since 1982, when it was



built, this building has been a source of pride for the people of Chişinău, because it was a true architectural masterpiece. Unfortunately, for a long time the doors of the circus were closed. In recent years, however, with the support of development partners, we have managed to take the first step towards reopening them. We are grateful to the European Union, which provided over 2 million euros for the immediate work repairs to the dome and roof and reinforcement of the curtain walls - and to the United Nations Development Programme for carrying it out. We look forward to the day when this building will once again shine in the heart of the capital and in the hearts of the little ones.”

After more than a year of works, the circus roof has been repaired and regained its former grandeur. Today, 100% of the dome has been completely replaced with a European-made galvanised steel roofing with a 50-year guarantee. The flat roof surface is also completely rehabilitated and a new rain drainage

system installed. The old insulation material under the roof has been replaced with new water and heat resistant mineral material. This will align the Circus roof structure with energy efficiency requirements, and the new materials will provide better fire protection.

“We hope that the completion of the first phase of works will be able to catalyse resources from national and international partners to continue the rehabilitation and breathe new life into this iconic monument, which is not only a “postcard” of Chişinău but also a vivid memory from the childhood of many Moldovan citizens. The restoration of national cultural heritage is not only a way to valorise the country’s history, but also is a symbol of unity and inclusive identity, which contributes to peace within and between the nations. Culture transcends boundaries, fosters connections, and unites us all, regardless of political or geographical divisions,” said Janis Mažeiks, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.



More than 60 engineers, architects, and construction workers took part in the first phase of the conservation and restoration works. In this phase, the glazed facade of the main building was replaced and tempered glass doors and windows with high-quality heat-resistant profiles were installed. After completion of the European Union-funded works, the interiors of the Chişinău Circus are protected from the action of weather.

„This edifice has both an important sentimental and architectural value for Chişinău inhabitants and beyond. For generations, the Chişinău Circus has captivated audiences serving as a stage for boundless creativity, laughter, and wonder – creating shared moments, positive emotions and bonds among people going beyond one single performance and shared by communities on both



banks of Nistru river. Despite multiple crises that Moldova has recently faced, we can proudly assert now that the Chişinău Circus building is fully conserved and protected from adverse weather conditions, while safeguarding its historical character,”

said Daniela Gasparikova, UNDP Resident Representative to the Republic of Moldova.

The funds granted by the European Union through the UNDP-implemented „Confidence Building Measures” Programme covered the costs for detailed technical expertise, technical design, and conservation and restoration works of roof/dome and glass windows.

For the next phases, the Moldovan authorities are expected to attract funding from national resources and from international development partners.

The Circus of Chişinău is a building of outstanding architectural val-

ue, one of the highest examples of modern “brutalist” style world-wide, and since May 2022, the building has been included in the Register of State Protected Monuments. The restoration and conservation of the Circus is carried out in accordance with national and international standards.

Within the framework of the European Union Programme „Confidence Building Measures”, implemented by UNDP Moldova, restoration and conservation works are being carried out on 12 cultural-historical sites on both sides of the Nistru river, including two major flagship projects: the Circus in Chişinău and the Tighina (Bender) Fortress.



EU and UNDP announce the completion of the first stage of restoration works at Tighina/Bender Fortress

The first stage of conservation works carried out between 2021 and 2023 at Tighina/Bender Fortress have been completed. The total amount of investment for conservation was over 1.4 million euros, from the European Union through the Confidence Building Measures Programme implemented by UNDP.

„Over the past few years, we have witnessed a remarkable journey of intense work here. Despite all the obstacles, such as the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine, today we see these efforts materialized. By restoring the Tighina/Bender Fortress, we preserve its physical structure. At the same time, we revitalize its historical significance and cultural value. This monument will become a living testament to the rich traditions, history, and experiences

that have shaped the communities on both banks of the Nistru River,” mentioned Janis Mažeiks, the Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova.

The technologies used for the conservation works in the first stage, including the reinforcement of the most critical areas of the Upper and Lower Citadel, comply with international standards and practices. For exam-



ple, chemical and petrographic tests were conducted in Istanbul, Turkey, to determine the historical mortar, as such tests cannot be carried out in the Republic of Moldova. Over 127.2 cubic meters of historical mortar, manufactured according to historical recipes, were used for the restoration and reinforcement works.

The works carried out in the first stage included:

- Consolidation of all construction areas/elements at risk of collapse in both the Upper Citadel and the Lower Citadel;



- Complete conservation of the Eastern wall of Tighina/Bender Fortress;
- Full restoration of the three wall towers in the eastern area of the fortress, including the roofs, which were reproduced exactly as per the original version;
- Modernization of the rainwater drainage system;
- Securing the stairs and passages in accordance with international standards.

The restoration of Tighina/Bender Fortress, dating back to the 15th century, will increase the tourism potential of this historical site, which will further benefit the local economy.

During the event dedicated to the completion of the restoration works at Tighina/Bender Fortress, Daniela Gasparikova, UNDP Resident Representative to the Republic of Moldova, said: „The restoration of the fortress holds immense prom-

ise and potential. We are already witnessing how this historical landmark becomes a captivating and sought-after destination for tourists. The economic, social, and cultural benefits that will emanate from its renovation are expected to be far-reaching, advancing prosperity in the entire region.”

During 2019-2021, the technical expertise and detailed design of the fortress were conducted, serving as a roadmap for the launch of the conservation works in the first stage. Additionally, a detailed plan

was developed for future stages of work, as well as ensuring the financial sustainability of the historical monument through the organization of various events such as fairs, concerts, or sports activities for visitors from both banks of the Nistru River and abroad.

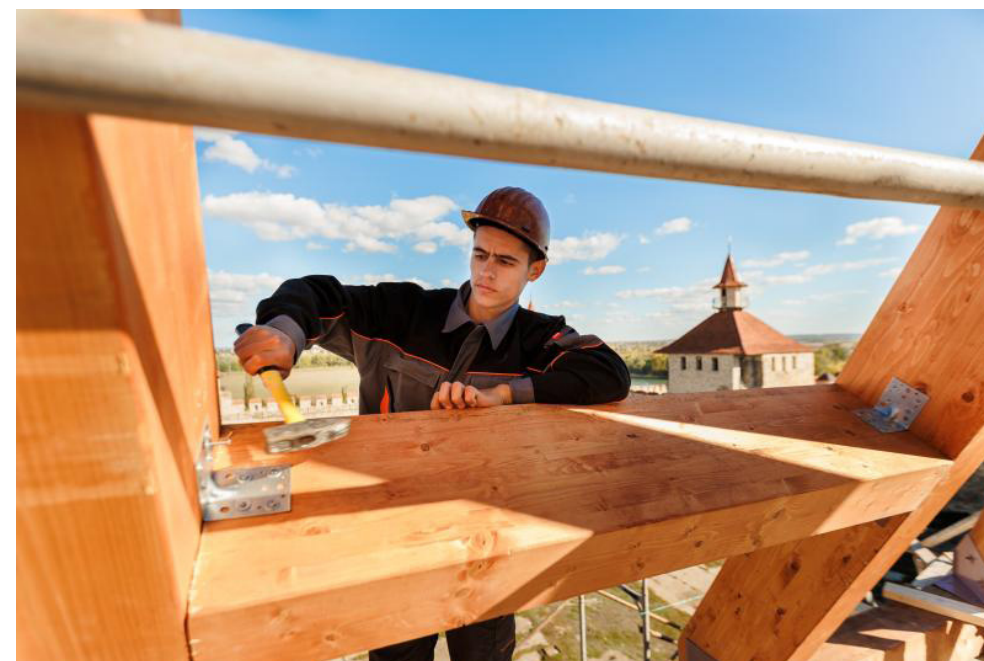
The conservation and restoration of Tighina/Bender Fortress, along with the Chişinău Circus, are two emblematic cultural heritage sites restored with the support of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme.



Young people from both banks of the Nistru river build their career in constructions field

A first apprenticeship for young people in restoration and conservation works took place at the Tighina (Bender) fortress, with the financial support of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP Moldova.

Eight young people from both banks of the Nistru River participated during 3-14 October at a first apprenticeship in restoration and conservation at the Tighina Fortress (Bender).

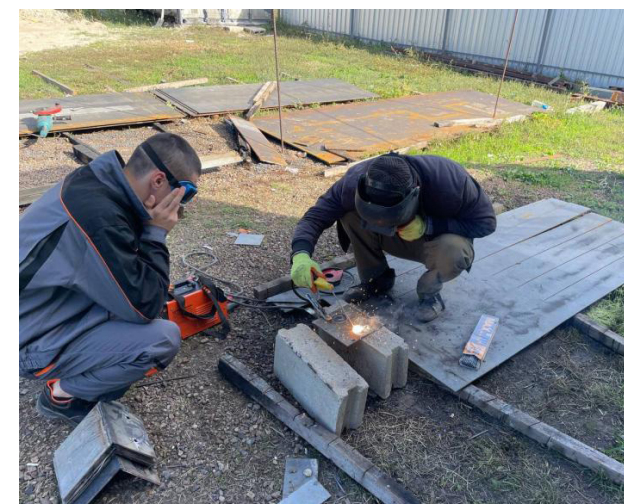


The programme started with an introduction to the history of the fortress of Tighina (Bender) and theoretical lessons which set the essential basis for the practical work.

"It's very interesting to see how such constructions were made in the old days. It's impressive. At the college we took theory courses, but to indeed participate in the restoration process is a whole different thing," says Iulia Răilean, a student at the Center of Excellence in Construction.

The young people learned from experts what practical restoration and conservation methods are used internationally. They also had the rare opportunity to participate in some of the conservation work carried out at the Tighina fortress.

"In reality, it's much more difficult to restore a building than to build a new one. The responsibility of the site su-



pervisor is enormous, because the building's durability in the future will depend on the quality of the works carried out. This way we can preserve history and our descendants will be able to admire buildings, constructions made centuries ago," says Ruslan Amoașii, a student at the Centre of Excellence in Construction.

THE FUTURE RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION SPECIALISTS, EAGER TO SAVE THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ON BOTH BANKS OF THE NISTRU RIVER

“We teamed up with colleagues from Chişinău, so this apprenticeship was a unique experience. We learned about engineering curiosities and how this fortress was built in the old days. Analysing the fortress’s architecture, you get an idea not only of how the fortress was designed and built, but also of the way our ancestors were thinking. The thickness of the fortress walls is incredible: about three metres. It’s curious to find out how the passageways and tunnels were built,” says Alexandra Codrul, a student at Tiraspol Construction College.

During two weeks, the students were involved in masonry restoration work, using the same types of

local building materials used in the fortress construction – observing, in particular, their chemical and structural composition, for a good bond between the existing masonry.

At the same time, they learned about the roofing of a tower, where wood was used and fixed to the masonry wall by metal elements.

“I live in Tighina and I remember seeing the fortress in ruins. Perhaps not everyone knows about and understands the grandeur of the restoration works that are now being carried out at the fortress – this is absolutely unlike anything that has ever been done to the fortress. The specialists show us all the drawings, they practically demonstrate various restoration procedures, so that in the future we could become restoration specialists and we could even participate in the restoration of other historical sites in Moldova,



Ruslan Amoasii,

Student at the Centre of Excellence in Construction

In reality, it’s much more difficult to restore a building than to build a new one. The responsibility of the site supervisor is enormous, because the building’s durability in the future will depend on the quality of the works carried out. This way we can preserve history and our descendants will be able to admire buildings, constructions made centuries ago.



as there are other fortresses, manor houses or other valuable historical buildings that deserve attention. It is important to pass on this knowledge to the younger generation, as this is the only way to save our historical cultural heritage,” says Alexander Subotin, a student at the Polytechnic College of Tighina (Bender).

The students would like to get more involved in restoration projects in the future.

“I would like the restoration process to continue, so that the fortress will look beautiful and various events, historical quests can be organised here and the fortress will be included in the UNESCO heritage list,” Alexander Subotin added.

In the Republic of Moldova, young people cannot yet study to become specialist in restoration and conservation of architectural monuments.

They can study abroad, the nearest place of study being Romania.

Between 2017 and 2019, the EU twinning project “Support for the promotion of cultural heritage in the Republic of Moldova through its preservation and protection” was carried out, with the participation of two teachers from the Center of Excellence in Construction. Inspired by the exchange of experience, they proposed to modify the curriculum.

Thus, a theoretical course on the restoration and conservation of monuments was included in the curriculum of the Construction and Operation of Buildings and Structures. The apprenticeship organised at the initiative of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, made the participating students more interested in the field of restoration of historical monuments.

Beloci water mill restored with EU and UNDP support

A water mill dating from the late 19th century has been restored with the support of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP Moldova. Selected through a public competition conducted by the EU and UNDP in 2020, the mill is one of the 10 cultural historical sites on both banks of the Nistru river that benefit from restoration and conservation works.



While there are only ruins of water mills left in Moldova, the longstanding Beloci mill is still holding by the Beloci river. This is the biggest mill in the region, which has been preserved fairly well over the years. When it was in operation, the Beloci water mill produced several types of flour.

“Last time the mill was running was in 2000, when because of the frosts we

had no power, no heat, not even water. That is why we put the mill into operation to produce flour. Today, if we put enough effort and resources into it, it could be restored both architectural and operationally. This is what we intend to do,” says Alexander Maleandra, owner of the water mill.

The construction of the Beloci mill was started by a villager, then after



Alexandru Maleandra,

The owner of the water mill

We could attract tourists to come here. The mill is intriguing, since it was built without any metal or cement, any nails, just stone on stone. For that period, it's a great construction. The original equipment is still in place and serves as museum exhibits.

it had been bought by a Polish manufacturer, the works continued and were completed. The mill's equipment was brought from Zürich, Switzerland; it remains in its original form, but needs repair and parts' replacement to make the mill operational again.

“The mill is crafted of a wooden frame, which basically holds the entire construction. The real difficulty was to replace the basic elements and restore them to their previous condition. We follow all

the rules of restoration, i.e. the wood that was used was cut in the same way and we tried to use the same joint elements that were used before,” says Iurii Krikliveț, deputy director of the construction company.

Thanks to restoration and conservation works, the mill will be protected from adverse weather conditions and will last for at least another 20-30 years. The area around the mill, by the Beloci river, has also been landscaped.



More than 1,600 films from Moldova Film archive will be digitized, with the support of the European Union and the U.S. Government

State-of-the-art equipment will ensure the transfer of films from Moldova Film archive on digital media. Thus, over 1,600 films have the chance to return on TV and the big screens.

With the support of the European Union, an ultrasonic film washer has been purchased. The U.S. Embassy in Chisinau equipped in 2021 a digitization laboratory to restore and preserve its archive feature and documentary films, representing an important part of Moldova's historical, cultural, and artistic heritage. At the same time, the technicians were trained to ensure smooth transfer of films from the archive into digital format.

"For almost 70 years, Moldova Film has produced outstanding cinematographic works that represent the rich narrative tradition of Moldova and give us an idea of the way Moldovans lived, worked and dreamed years ago," stated Kent D. Logsdon, the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova.

The initiative to digitize films of the Moldova Film archive was selected for funding following a competition conducted by the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP, which included a consultative vote from the public.

The digitization process has begun in 2021 with 10 fiction and 20 documentaries that have been presented on Moldova 1 and Moldova 2 TV stations. The first animation film to undergo digitization is „Haiducul”, the winning film at the 1986 Cannes Film Festival, the short film section.

"Unfortunately, the current conditions of keeping the films on film stock could no longer ensure their longevi-

ty. We believe that the support of the EU and U.S. is opportune and thanks to this significant support, the un-archiving and digitizing equipment provided to Moldova Film, the older movies, those that are considered the golden archive, will be brought to light again. Thus, the new generations will be able to see the movies with which their grandparents and parents grew up," said Alisa Grecu, Deputy Director of Moldova Film.

The digitized movies from the Moldova Film archive were broadcast at the Odeon cinema in Chisinau, but also in other localities in the country.

"Locally produced movies and animations are a wealth and an integral element of cultural heritage. Safekeeping them through their digitization is essential for maintaining this heritage and for inspiring the new generations to learn about the past generations as well sustain this important creative



Jānis Mažeiks,

Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova

Promoting culture as a tool for peaceful inter-community relations is a key-element of the EU Confidence Building Measure programme, implemented in collaboration with UNDP, to strengthen people-to-people relations and cooperation between the two banks of the Nistru River. We are glad that we, the European Union, are able to contribute to harnessing the golden archives of the cinema of the Republic of Moldova, for the benefit of its citizens!



industry," mentioned Dima Al-Khatib, UNDP Resident Representative to the Republic of Moldova.

Moldova Film Studio has a cinematographic collection which is considered national heritage comprising over 1,600 films, of which 180 - fiction movies, 1050 - documentaries, 109 - animation movies, 231 - „Sovietscaia Moldavia” newsreels, all accumulated during almost 70 years.

The water tower in Șoldănești has been restored with the support of the EU and UNDP

The water tower in Șoldănești has regained its former glory. Built in 1893 with red bricks, the tower used to supply all the water needs for the railway in Șoldănești. After over a century, the monument has been restored, thanks to the support provided by the European Union under the Confidence Building Measures Programme implemented by UNDP.

The water tower in Șoldănești is not just a simple historical monument; it has remained functional to this day. The 50-ton capacity reservoir provides drinking water to the entire historic center of Șoldănești, serving approximately 400 beneficiaries from commercial units to 100 households.

„We have many historical monuments in the Șoldănești district – Stefan the Great's oak tree, monasteries, the Jewish cemetery, etc. But I find the water tower the most interesting because it was a utility object that later transformed into a historical monument,” says Bogdan, an eighth-grade student.

The restoration of the water tower in Șoldănești was a complex process, ensuring its functionality while preserving all its historical and architectural value. The conservation/restoration work focused on reinforcing the tower, repairing the roof and joinery, and completely replacing the water reservoir and internal pipelines.

As a result, the water tower is divided into three levels: the upper-level housing a 50-ton water tank, the second level containing the technical department, and the ground floor which accommodates the boiler room to ensure water-system function during the winter. After the complete restoration of the water tower, the ground floor and the area surrounding the monument will be transformed into an industrial museum.

The water tower in Șoldănești is one of the ten cultural-historical landmarks on both banks of the Nistru River that underwent restoration works during the period of 2020-2022.



Vadim Groza,

Deputy mayor of Șoldănești

We also aim to open a water museum, which will be visited by locals and guests who come here. We will arrange this area in front of the water tower so that those arriving at the bus station can visit the water tower, the train station, and perhaps take a break here.

The monumental vault of the Macri-Donici families, restored with the support of the European Union

The conservation and restoration of the monumental vault of the Macri-Donici families are in full swing, thanks to the European Union's Confidence Building Measures Programme (EU-CBM), implemented by UNDP. The vault is one of the 10 cultural-historical sites from both banks of the Nistru river selected for restoration and conservation, under the cultural heritage component of the EU-CBM programme.



Located in the courtyard of the church "St. Archangel Michael" in Dubăsarii Vechi, the Macri-Donici family vault was designed by the architect Alexander Bernardazzi and made of marble and granite by the craftsman A. Tuzini from Odessa, between 1882-1883, which is confirmed by the ar-

chitect's signature on one of the side walls of the vault.

The biggest challenge for the team involved in the restoration process is to preserve the authenticity of the monument and restore it to its former glory. During the restoration work

two unknown tombs were discovered in the monument. One of them is believed to belong to Limonia Donici, the wife of Nicolae Donici. A team of archaeologists was called in to confirm and document the findings. To truthfully restore the two newly discovered tombs, an appeal for financial support will be launched.

"We are extremely happy. I cannot put it into words. We believed that these two tombs were destroyed between 1960 and 1961. We will try to mobilize financial solutions, so that the archaeological team can investigate to whom the two copper coffins belong. What has now been discovered is something unique for our country," says Teodor Pelin, parish priest of the church "St. Archangel Michael" from Dubăsarii Vechi.

"I believe it is our duty to preserve such sites included in the country's architectural heritage, which are unique for the region. We would like all these attractions to be included in a tourist route so that people can come to Dubăsarii Vechi and spend at least one day exploring



them," says Vitalie Casian, mayor of Dubăsarii Vechi.

The Macri-Donici vault can be of interest to those who either want to discover the works of the architect Bernardazzi or who are interested in the life of the astronomer Nicolae Donici. In Dubăsarii Vechi there are several historical monuments listed in the state register: the church and the vault located in the same courtyard, the mansion where the astronomer Nicolae Donici lived and the grove of ancient oaks.



Raşcov synagogue and church were conserved, thanks to EU and UNDP support

The conservation works of the synagogue and church from Raşcov village, located on the left bank of the Nistru river, have been completed. This was possible thanks to the support of the EU Confidence Building Measures Programme, implemented by UNDP Moldova.

The village of Raşcov, located on the left bank of the Nistru river, is known for its picturesque landscapes and ethnic diversity. Polish, Armenians, Ukrainians, Moldovans, and Russians have been living there for years and Jews constitute more than half of the population.

Seven places of worship are documented in the archives of Raşcov, of

which only four have been preserved until today. These include the synagogue and church's ruins.

**THE SYNAGOGUE OF RAŞCOV:
"THERE AREN'T ANY OTHER
CONSTRUCTIONS OF THIS TYPE
IN MOLDOVA"**

The synagogue of Raşcov dates back to 1749 and is considered as one of



the 20 most beautiful buildings in Europe.

"There aren't any other constructions of this type in Moldova. The stone décor, built in the Baroque and Rococo styles, has been preserved. The building is outstanding and has a lot of visitors," says Olga Slivca, director of the Raşcov museum.

In addition to various places of worship, there are several cemeteries, two of which being Jewish.

"After visiting the synagogue, people go to visit the cemeteries, as well. In such a way the grave of the Rabin Shabtai, the founder of the Hasidic movement in this region, was discovered at one of the cemeteries," says local councillor Alla Lopatin.

Pilgrims both from Moldova, and from the international Jewish community come to visit Raşcov.





Oleg Bersadschii,

Mayor of Rașcov village

People are living in peace here. The village of Rașcov demonstrates that people of different religion, speaking different languages, having different cultural traditions can live together in a multi-ethnic and compact community.

THE RUINS OF RAȘCOV CHURCH – A HERITAGE REQUIRING PROTECTION

Locals tell that the Rașcov church was built in 1740. According to some other writings, Ruxandra, the daughter of Voivode of Moldova Vasile Lupu, was exiled to this community. She used to come to the church and admire Moldova's landscapes over the

Nistru river. In the 18th century, the church was considered Greek-Russian and in 1894 it became Christian Orthodox. In the 1930s it was turned into a grain barn and was heavily damaged.

The conservation works lasted for several months and follow the national and international standards of heritage preservation.



"No standard consolidation works are allowed on such historic buildings; interventions should be minimal, therefore we use a special diamond drilling at a certain humidity, as it is essential that these walls are reinforced. We should preserve the existing historical heritage. We cannot change these walls and this plaster in order not to affect the building's exterior and interior aspect," explains Iurii Kriklivets, deputy director of the company that carried out the conservation works.

Local public authorities are planning to attract tourists to visit Rașcov.

"Tourism will help us to develop the local infrastructure, which is very important. Demand also generates supply. We hope that small hotels or guesthouses will open and this will encourage young people to stay in the village," says Oleg Bersadschii, mayor of Rașcov.

7

DOCUMENTARIES / SERIES

presenting the life of people from both banks, the common challenges and similar dreams.

1

REALITY SHOW

covering the activity of emergency service, the emergency medical assistance and police during the pandemic.

2

PROJECTS

of fairy tale animations.

3

TALK-SHOWS

to promote women's participation in decision-making local level, involvement young people in development business, inclusion the agenda of left bank in the information flow of right bank

5

TRAVEL SHOWS

promoting common tourist locations on the right bank and left bank, participation of a group of people from Chisinau and Tiraspol in extreme trekking in Mera Peak, Nepal, or life of people from both banks settled in EU countries.

2

AUDIO PODCAST

on sex education, video on raising awareness of the benefits of agricultural business

3

ACTION MOVIES

covering the work emergency service, the emergency healthcare and police during the pandemic

5

MEDIA SUPPORT

The feature film “VARVARA” will be screened in cinemas

On June 6th, the premiere of the feature film “VARVARA”, produced by Sergiu Cumatrenco and directed by Anatol Durbală, took place. The film has been produced with the support of several development partners, including the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme.

The premiere of the film “VARVARA” was held at the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova. From 7 June, the production will be screened in cinemas across the country. The film is also scheduled to be presented in Tiraspol.

In 2020, the producers of the film „VARVARA” received a grant of over €35,000 within the framework of the EU „Confidence Building Measures” Programme, implemented by UNDP. The filming took place during 2021-2022 and the cast includes over 30 actors, including six from the left bank of the Nistru river. The production team consisted of professionals from both banks.

The feature film „VARVARA” focuses on Saşa, an ordinary plumber, who is struggling to live an honest life and the film revolves around the important choices the protagonist must make.

The Confidence Building Measures Programme, financed by the European Union and implemented by UNDP, contributes to the strengthening of trust between the inhabitants of both banks of the Nistru river, by involving them in joint development projects.



Cinematic symphony “Odyssey MD” in its first screening in Chişinău

On 15 November 2023, the first screening of the film “Odyssey MD” took place. In front of a limited audience, the protagonist of the film was presented—Moldova, the homeland of director Pavel Brăila. The documentary portrays the chronicle of daily life throughout the four seasons across the entire country, without narration.



from the daily lives of people to solemn events, etc.

“The first idea that came to my mind was that in over 100 years, if someone wants to find something about Moldova, that person will find nothing, and I realised that the city where I live is, in fact, a black hole,” says Pavel. This convinced him to start working on “Odyssey MD”.

In 2020, the director received a grant of over 47,000 euros under the EU Confidence Measures Building Programme, implemented by UNDP.

The shootings took place in 2020 and 2021 in over 100 locations on both banks of the Nistru River. After the post-production stage, the documentary was presented at several international festivals, including Krakow Film-Fest (Best Pitch Prize), Leipzig Filmfest 2022, Where East Meets West Trieste Filmfest 2023 and Thessaloniki Film Fest 2023.

The documentary “Odyssey MD” is set to be presented to the general public in 2024.

“Odyssey MD is a cinematic symphony, an essay, a journey in which the camera monitors how life unfolds in different locations, cities, and villages along both banks of the Nistru River,” says Pavel Brăila, the director of the documentary.

The motivation to make this film grew a few years ago when Pavel was working in the National Archive and discovered that in the last three decades, there have been no visual updates regarding life in Moldovan cities and villages. Up until 1986, documentation had been carried out periodically. Thus, a lot of filmed materials could easily be found, ranging

Ion Creanga's fairy tales animated in 2D

A new “life” has been given to the characters of Ion Creanga's fairy tales, a digital one, in 2D format. “Kreyon” animation studio obtained financial support from the EU for the project “Fairytale of Ion Creanga in 2D”. Now, the Old Man's Daughter and the Old Woman's Daughter, the Woman with Three Daughters-in-Law, as well as characters of other stories are talking to the kids not only in Romanian, but also in Russian and even in English. The project was carried out with the financial support of the European Union, offered within the EU “Confidence Building Measures” Programme, implemented by UNDP.

A team of 20 people, among which designers, illustrators, a sound director and a musician, translators and actors worked together for three months to animate the masterpieces of the beloved writer. The following fairy tales were animated in 2D: “The Old Man's Daughter and the Old Woman's Daughter”, “Five Loaves of Bread”, “Two Coin Purse”, “The Woman with Three Daughters-in-Law”, “The Bear Tricked by the Fox”, and “The Goat with Three Kids”.



and understand them,” Ion Savin adds.

The fairy tales were broadcast on Moldova 1 and Bendery TV. In addition to the publication on the Diez website, they will also be published on a YouTube channel to allow parents from all over the world to comfort their kids with Ion Creanga's fairy tales.

Five fairy tales were animated in 2D with European funding, and one fairy tale – from “Kreyon” team sources.

RIVERBANKS. The emotion of people who will never be able to accept the separation from their beloved ones on the other side of the river

“Best Feature Documentary” and “Best Cinematography” are the first two awards received by the documentary “Riverbanks” produced by Telefilm Chişinău.

The film “Riverbanks” was produced with the support of the EU's “Confidence Building Measures” Programme, implemented by the UNDP, along with five other films. We asked Lucia Taut what inspired her to develop the script of this film and direct it.

Lucia, please tell us what the film “Riverbanks” is about. How would you describe it to those who haven't seen it yet?

In the documentary “Riverbanks” you will see and feel emotion. A lot of emotions. It is the emotion of people who live on the banks of the Nistru river, who will never be able to accept the separation from their beloved ones on the other side of the river. The film also tells the story of the villages that were the largest Jewish marketplace in Moldova — Rascov and Vadul-Rascov. It is a documentary that reflects the life of people as it flows, people that regardless



of political impediments, continue to communicate, even by shouting across the river. These shouts that cannot be forbidden by politics.

What motivated you to work on this film? How did you craft the script?



I fell in love with this village from my first visit to the region. Not only nature is fantastically beautiful there, but it also has a very interesting history. Settlements with a common past. The legend says that both villages were founded by a landlord, Rascov, whose estate stretched on both banks of the Nistru. Then the Jews set up a market that became famous throughout Moldova. There are many “stories” and life stories in these villages known too little by the general public. The original script of the film was to show both villages through a hero who takes people with the boat from one shore to another. Due to the pandemic, we had to change the scenario. That’s how we came to watch the life of both villages from one bank only.

While making the film, you traveled, like the heroes of the film, the same route — from the right bank to the left bank of the Nistru river, and back. How is life like between these two banks? What other stories could be screened?

I like people's life stories. And in such multiethnic villages as Rascov and Vadul-Rascov, you will find many incredible life stories. Especially since these villages is the homeland to many outstanding personalities. I think that from a cultural point of view, a very interesting documentary could be produced. I would also be interested in a documentary about the fate of the Jews who lived there. People say that Jews still come to the graves in the Jewish cemetery nowadays. They either have relatives buried there, or they have lived in these villages.

How did “Riverbanks” get nominated for the Toronto Film Festival? What award did it get?

The value of a documentary film grows along with the awards it collects from documentary film festivals. Thus, after launching it in Vadul-Rascov, I participated in several international festivals. For now, we have the results from a festival in Italy where we received the award in the category “Best Cinematogra-

phy”, and respectively, from the Toronto festival which is dedicated to women in cinematography around the world. There I received the “Best Feature Documentary” award.

How did the team you worked with on the film react to the good news?

It was a big surprise, when I received the message that the film was first selected for the festival, and the news that the film was also awarded the nomination in the best film category, was fascinating. The reactions, obviously, were very positive.

What does this award mean to you, but also to those who supported you in making the film?

The Toronto Award has given us hope and confidence in what we do. It encouraged both me and my colleagues to persevere and continue making documentaries about Moldova, about the people here.

Moldova has as well the potential to shine on the international film market, especially through documentaries.

Where else will the film be shown?

I have proposed the film for several international documentary film festivals, such as: ArtDoc, goEast, European Cinematography AWARDS (ECA), Atlanta Docust, and other festivals in Italy, France, etc. We





will receive the results from many of these festivals during the next year.

Would you like this film to reach a specific festival?

I would very much like to be selected, at least, at one of the festivals that take place in Cannes. We follow the events that take place there, and maybe we will have the chance to be among some nominations.

Why the success of a film is associated with the awards/mentions received at a film festival such as Cannes or Berlinale?

The international acknowledgement of the work, of a documentary or artistic film, is very important. It helps you work harder on its quality, to want to do better, to be more creative. The awards of such festivals as Cannes or Berlinale help you understand how important and good the subject line was, the approach, the quality of the images. The competition at these festivals is very high and the higher the competition, the better the quality of the product you made. Therefore, we, our creative team is very proud of the success we achieve at international festivals. Thus, we



manage to make ourselves known abroad and in the cinema world.

Is there artistic potential in our country? Is it possible to produce films that reach even the top film festivals?

Of course, there is a great artistic potential in our country as well. This is also demonstrated by the awards received by directors, producers or filmmakers in our country at international festivals such as Cannes, Berlinale, TIFF. I think that our filmmakers should have more confidence in what they do and have the courage to compete at famous festivals.

Are you working on another film now? Are you looking for a story or maybe the story of a future movie is looking for you?

I am now working on a new documentary film project. It will be a film by which I want to show the beauty of Moldovan traditions, in parallel with the Nepalese ones. The main protagonists will be a Moldovan-Nepalese couple. A Moldovan married to a girl of noble birth from Nepal. The project is in process and I hope to find the necessary financial resources to start filming soon.