

Keystone Moldova's Adapted Van:

Supporting Moldovans & Ukrainian Refugees with Disabilities with generous funding from MACSP

July-December 2023

Adapted Keystone transport service for persons with disabilities

Keystone Moldova recognizes the multifaceted impact of **limited transportation options** on vulnerable populations in Moldova, extending beyond Ukrainian refugees to encompass various groups of people experiencing transportation difficulties. This pervasive issue exacerbates challenges in accessing essential services, thereby impeding the overall well-being and opportunities for people with disabilities. The following impacts were made possible by a generous donation from the Maine Association of Community Services Providers (MACSP).

Understanding the urgency of the situation, Keystone Moldova has maintained a proactive approach since March 2023 to address these challenges. By acknowledging the broader implications of inadequate transportation, the organization aims to **support refugees** while also extending its **interventions to benefit a spectrum of marginalized communities facing barriers related to transportation**.

As the enhanced transportation service evolves and advances, Keystone Moldova maintains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring no person is left behind due to constrained transportation choices. The organization's resolute dedication to promptly **assisting refugees, persons with disabilities, and others with specific needs** underscores the transformative impact it can have on the lives of those who require support the most.

Persons with disabilities often face a scarcity of accessible transportation options, and when such options are available, they may not adequately address their distinct needs. This dearth of suitable transportation can significantly curtail their **ability to make choices and participate fully in various social, economic, and educational endeavors**, leaving them isolated from opportunities that others may take for granted.

Furthermore, **obtaining access to appropriate medical care** presents a challenge, particularly for refugees who may struggle with limited knowledge of the local healthcare system (*see Success story 1 and 2*) or encounter language barriers. Even within their home country, the scarcity of specialized medical services can pose difficulties, making it more challenging for them to effectively manage their health (refer to Table 1).

Table 1. Adapted transport service statistics, July - December 2023

Month	# of displacements	Average km (~miles) driven	Destinations	Assistance provided assistance
July	15	3,245km (~2,016 miles)	Chisinau, Causeni, Ocnita, Taraclia, Orhei, Ungheni, Cahul, Soldanesti, Stefan Voda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pick-up and delivery of goods: Hygiene items; Medicines; Medical equipment; Assistive devices.• Transport facilitation for the psychological sessions in the region;• Monitoring and technical assistance visits by the Keystone doctor.

August	19	1,732km (~1,076 miles)	Chisinau, Hansca, Greblesti, Balti, Suri, Gratiesti, Chirca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick-up and delivery of goods: Hygiene items; Medicines; Medical equipment; Assistive devices; • Beneficiary needs assessment in the region; • Monitoring and technical assistance visits by the Keystone doctor.
September	19	2,213km (~1,375 miles)	Chisinau, Laloveni, Cahul, Cocieri, Anenii Noi, Loganesti, Stefan Voda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick-up and delivery of goods: Hygiene items; Medicines; Medical equipment; Assistive devices; • Beneficiary needs assessment in the region.
October	19	2,473km (~1,537 miles)	Chisinau, Ciuciuleni, Telenesti, Lucaseuca, Pepeni, Cahul, Cantemir, Balti, Chirca, Stauceni, Anenii Noi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport of persons with disability from the region to Oncologic Hospital in Chisinau, for dialysis; • Pick-up and delivery of goods: Hygiene items; Medicines; Medical equipment; Assistive devices, vouchers, heaters and power banks. • Monitoring and technical assistance visits by Keystone doctor
November	21	3,852km (~2,394 miles)	Bacioi, Anenii Noi, Chisinau, Soroca, Hincesti, Briceni, Talmaza, Cricova, Ialoveni, Carpinieni, Chirca, Puhaceni, Gangura, Telenesti, Sculeni, Donduseni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport of persons with disability from the region to Oncologic Hospital in Chisinau, for dialysis; • Monitoring and technical assistance visits by Keystone doctor • Transport facilitation for the psychological sessions in the region; • Pick-up and delivery of goods: Hygiene items; Medicines; Medical equipment; Assistive devices, vouchers, heaters and power banks.
December	12	1,310km (~814 miles)	Falesti, Stauceni, Chisinau, Voloave, Molesti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport of persons with disability from the region to Oncologic Hospital in Chisinau, for dialysis; • Pick-up and delivery of goods: Hygiene items; Medicines; Medical equipment; Assistive devices, vouchers, heaters and power banks; • Monitoring and technical assistance visits by Keystone doctor
Grand total	105	14,825km (~9,212 miles)		

Source: Keystone internal data statistics

The ***impact of the adapted transport service*** provided by the 5 Keystone mobile teams has been truly transformative, leaving an indelible mark on the lives of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable populations. Over a period of more than 6 months, the unwavering dedication of these teams has not only facilitated the ***logistical aspects of pick-up and delivery*** but has also become a beacon of hope and support for those who often face numerous challenges.

In the realm of essential goods distribution, the Keystone mobile teams have played a pivotal role in ensuring that ***hygiene items*** reach those who require specialized care, particularly persons with disabilities who may have unique needs in maintaining cleanliness and sanitation. Moreover, ***the transportation of medicines to remote areas*** has been a lifeline for those in need, guaranteeing accessibility to necessary medical treatments and prescriptions. The delivery of ***medical equipment and assistive devices*** tailored to specific disabilities has not only improved healthcare access but has also enhanced the overall quality of life for persons with disabilities. Meanwhile, the delivery of ***heating devices, power banks and vouchers for clothes*** has been instrumental in helping vulnerable persons, including refugees, navigate harsh weather conditions and stay connected to essential services such as online education for refugee children.

The commitment of the Keystone mobile teams transcends mere delivery logistics; it reflects a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. By providing seamless and efficient logistics, the adapted transport service has significantly eased the burden on these individuals and their families, especially those in need of life-saving dialysis or specialist consultations.

A notable milestone achieved since July is the focused transport of persons with disabilities, with a particular emphasis on supporting Ukrainian refugees. This represents a commendable step forward in promoting inclusivity, accessibility, and social welfare for vulnerable populations. The carefully designed transport service considers various mobility challenges, ensuring that vehicles are equipped with necessary accommodations and that the mobile teams are comprised of trained personnel knowledgeable about providing appropriate assistance to passengers with diverse needs.

Beyond the tangible delivery of goods, the adapted transport service instills hope, fosters a sense of community support, and reaffirms the dignity of those who may feel marginalized or forgotten. It serves as a vital lifeline for individuals facing barriers in accessing essential resources due to disabilities or refugee status.

Another noteworthy aspect of the adapted transport service is its support for ***monitoring and technical assistance visits*** to "sheltered housing and community houses" services by Keystone's doctor. Over the past 6 months, healthcare of several beneficiaries from four community houses in Chirca, Voloave, Hansca and Mitoc as well as four sheltered housing facilities in Calarasi, Oxintea, Orhei and Lapusna have been monitored and supported, further emphasizing the comprehensive nature of Keystone's commitment to the well-being of vulnerable populations.

As this service continues to evolve and expand, it paves the way for a more inclusive and accessible future. It is a testament to the importance of upholding the rights and well-being of all individuals, regardless of their abilities or refugee status. Addressing these challenges necessitates a multi-faceted approach involving governments, non-governmental organizations, communities, and individuals. Efforts should be directed towards enhancing transportation infrastructure universally, ensuring it caters to the needs of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. Collaborative initiatives between local and

international organizations are crucial to providing necessary resources and support, creating a more inclusive environment for vulnerable populations lacking adequate access to transportation.

Impact Story 1



In the city of Chişinău, where the streets are narrow and the sidewalks are crowded and unsuited for people needing specialized support, lives Liubovi, a woman whose life was irreversibly changed by an accident. Confined to a wheelchair, Liubovi has fought a daily battle not just with her physical limitations, but also with an environment seemingly indifferent to her struggles. In a city unequipped for her needs, every day was a challenge, each journey an unwanted adventure.

Liubovi's life is governed by a strict schedule, dictated by her daily routine and the vital necessity of receiving dialysis procedures three times a week. However, the journey to the dialysis center was a significant challenge due to the unfriendly streets and a lack of accessible public transportation - turning every trip into a marathon of obstacles.

One day, Liubovi reached out to Keystone for help as the Keystone team is well-acquainted with the difficulties faced by persons with disabilities. Keystone Moldova offered her specialized transport services tailored to her needs, ensuring that Liubovi could safely and comfortably get to the dialysis center for her 7:00am appointments three days a week. Keystone's adapted vehicle, equipped to support her wheelchair, became a bridge between Liubovi and the world beyond her walls, providing simpler and safer access to vital treatments. The adapted vehicle also provided a key to freedom as Liubovi began to feel once again that she belonged to the community as an active and valuable member, rather than a passive spectator.

Through the support of donors, Keystone has come together to offer logistical assistance to people in need. Together, we continue to build a better and more accessible future for all community members.



Impact Story 2

In the continued work of supporting persons with disabilities, Keystone was contacted by a person from the Pepeni village, who requires the use of a wheelchair and is also battling an oncological illness. Additionally, he requires specialized dialysis treatments. The nearest location where these can be performed is in the city of Chisinau, which is 100 km (~ miles) away. Without regular treatment, his health is in constant risk.

Thanks to the adapted vehicle, the Keystone Moldova team was able to provide the necessary transportation for this person to safely and comfortably attend their dialysis sessions in Chisinau.

