
Development of Human Rights Education at the **Moldova State University**

Global Campus of Human Rights
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Development of Human Rights Education at the **Moldova State University**

2023 – 2025

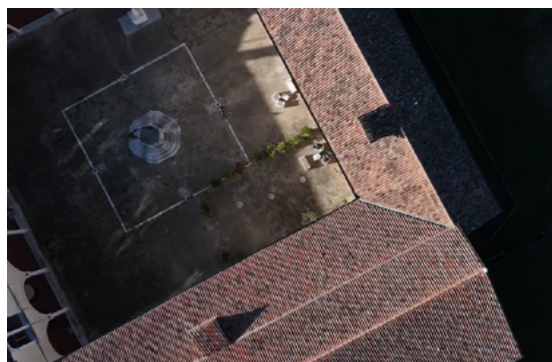
Our Network



The Global Campus of Human Rights is the world's largest network of universities specialized in democracy and human rights education, with over 100 members on all continents.

Through education and research, the Global Campus works across eight regional hubs and is committed to fostering new generations of human rights defenders able to contribute to a world in which all human rights are realized.

Through its **Capacity Development programme**, the Global Campus increasingly works at the intersection between academia and the development cooperation sector to promote the affirmation of human rights and democracy in developing countries, countries in transition, and emerging democracies under pressure, by supporting the establishment or strengthening of human rights education activities in emerging universities worldwide.



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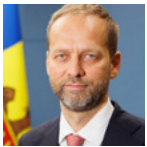
Testimonies



Iwona Piórko

**Ambassador of the European Union
to the Republic of Moldova**

Human rights education lies at the heart of the EU's collaboration with the Republic of Moldova, with a growing focus on integrating human rights with environmental protection and climate justice to foster sustainable development and EU integration. Through the creation of an interdisciplinary Lab for Climate Justice and Human Rights, along with innovative academic programmes and the Spring School, this partnership has not only driven meaningful change but also empowered young Moldovan scholars and professionals. By advancing environmental rights, these efforts contribute to building a more just, resilient, and sustainable society.



Jānis Mažeiks

**Ambassador of the European Union
to the Republic of Moldova (2021–2025)**

I am glad to see that the project “Development of Climate Justice and Human Rights Education at Moldova State University” has come to fruition. For Republic of Moldova as a future EU member state, it is particularly important that its young people and future leaders have strong understanding of human rights. I am certain that the project will have a lasting impact on teaching – and learning – human rights in Moldova. This project and its successful conclusion is heart-warming for two personal reasons. For one, I was glad to support the project, as it started with EU support during my term as the EU Ambassador in Moldova when the country started its rapid movement to becoming a Member State of the Union. For another, as I myself had gained my Masters degree from the GC Europe/EMA programme that has in the past almost 30 years grown to an impressive range of programmes and projects, this project is a testimony to the importance of human rights to modern higher education.



Igor Sarov

Rector of Moldova State University

The need to strengthen democracy and protect human rights remains a global priority. Success in this exercise of commitment, responsibility, and humanism can only be achieved through consolidated efforts. From this perspective, the partnership between the Global Campus, the GC Caucasus programme, and Moldova State University (USM) stands as proof of our ability to connect and create synergies for a better society, one capable of addressing both the present and future challenges. This collaboration has been a valuable experience and a constant source of support in developing competencies and enhancing the expertise of USM professors in areas of child rights, IT regulation and human rights, and climate justice. I greatly appreciate the openness shown by the Global Campus toward the institution I represent and the fruitful cooperation we have built. I am convinced that only through such partnerships we can contribute to a better present and future, where democracy and human rights remain essential pillars of our societies.



Kristine Gevorgyan

GC Caucasus Programme coordinator,
Yerevan State University

The Cooperation with the Moldova State University has opened a new chapter for the Global Campus Caucasus programme, as it has given us the opportunity not only to support our partners in Moldova through capacity building activities, but also to expand the GC Caucasus consortium and offer our students a new destination for their mobility semester. In just three years, two courses were developed and implemented, and a unique Spring School was launched, deepening collaboration among GC Caucasus, GC Europe and GC South-East Europe through the exchange of professors and involvement of participants from different states. Launch of the JurisLab added additional impetus to further expand our collaboration, create new synergies and develop new projects. Seeing two cohorts of students already benefiting from this exchange has been one of the clear signs of the impact this partnership has created.

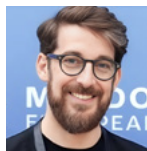
Welcome



Manfred Novak — Secretary General,
Global Campus of Human Rights
(Headquarters)

Over the past few years, I have watched with appreciation the strong commitment shown by the Moldova State University (USM) to advancing human rights education. From the very beginning, USM demonstrated a clear vision fully aligned with the mission and strategic enlargement objectives of the Global Campus of Human Rights. In less than three years, the University has progressed from a promising partner to a full member of our network and a key partner in the regional Master's programme, contributing with expertise, energy, and a deep sense of responsibility. Much has already been accomplished, yet the end of this first chapter of our cooperation presents an important opportunity to consolidate progress, ensure sustainability, and expand our common objectives. The Human Rights Education Lab established at USM is especially promising in this regard, serving as an incubator for innovative research, learning, and collaboration. It will provide precisely the platform needed to nurture new ideas and empower students and scholars. By strengthening and formalising our partnership, we can build on the significant results already accomplished and continue developing a resilient, forward-looking partnership that meaningfully contributes to the promotion and protection of human rights in the region and beyond.

Preface



Adriano Remiddi — Projects Manager,
Head of Capacity Development
Global Campus of Human Rights
(Headquarters)

In recent years, the promotion of human rights education and the integration of emerging topics such as children's, digital, and climate related rights into higher education curricula have increasingly become central priorities for the Global Campus and its member universities. Within this landscape, Moldova State University (USM), one of the youngest members of our network, quickly emerged as an institution strongly committed to and capable of advancing interdisciplinary teaching, research, and advocacy in such key human rights areas, making it a trusted ally for the Global Campus and its GC Caucasus Hub.

The collaboration between Global Campus and USM resulted from an extensive mapping and consultation process carried out in 2021–22 as part of the conceptualization of the **GC Capacity Development Programme**. Building on nearly thirty years of leading experience in the sector, inspired by capacity building efforts in Timor-Leste and following the recommendations from the 2019 external independent evaluation commissioned by the EU, this programme aims to identify universities committed to human rights education and in need of infrastructural, technical, academic, or methodological support to establish or expand initiatives in this field. During this mapping exercise, USM rapidly emerged as a promising partner, committed and capable of significantly strengthening human rights education in Moldova and contributing to the strategic expansion of the GC Caucasus network.

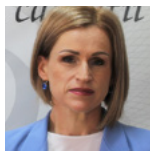
The mapping phase involved a multi-stakeholder needs assessment with USM leadership, the Faculty of Law, local human rights experts, alumni, government institutions, the EU and Moldova's diplomatic representations. This consultation process provided a comprehensive understanding of the local potential and challenges, institutional priorities, and opportunities for academic development. At the same time, the GC monitored the long-awaited higher education reforms in Moldova—strongly encouraged by the EU—which created more favourable conditions for investing in a capacity-building trajectory.

The projects “**Promoting Human and Children's Rights Education**” and “**Development of Climate Justice and Human Rights Education**” grew out of this process, reflecting shared values, common priorities, and a genuinely collaborative effort aimed at strengthening all partners involved. Guided by the GC's triadic methodology for capacity development initiatives involving Headquarters, the GC Caucasus hub, and USM, the projects fostered operational efficiency, co-ownership, and sustainability. A highlight of this participatory approach was the collaboration among trainers and academic staff in the co-design of curricula, teaching tools, and methodologies, ensuring that the outputs were contextually relevant and learner centred.

The importance of this collaboration became increasingly clear as concerns for children's rights, environmental challenges, and digital rights intensified, particularly in the context of regional conflicts and online disinformation campaigns that threaten Moldova's democratic processes. Integrating and expanding such areas into USM's education programming allows addressing these challenges through an academic, rights-based approach that reinforces the valuable role universities play in informing public debate, guiding policy development, and supporting social resilience.

This booklet celebrates the achievements of the excellent GC-USM cooperation. It documents the activities implemented, the innovations introduced, and the partnerships cultivated. Above all, it reflects a shared conviction that human and children's rights, environmental protection, and climate justice are interconnected pillars of Europe's and Moldova's future. As the country continues its path toward European integration, the foundations established through these projects will continue to support USM's growth, visibility, and contribution to national and regional academic development.

Foreward



Rodica Ciobanu,
Projects Focal Point,
Head of Public Law Department
Faculty of Law, Moldova State University

Looking back on the journey that began in 2023 with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between USM, Global Campus, and GC Caucasus, we can clearly see a path marked by achievements on multiple levels. This partnership introduced a new framework for collaboration, advancing professional training, facilitating knowledge dissemination, and expanding opportunities for the internationalization of USM's study programmes. The shared commitment to exchanging knowledge, good practices, and expertise has fostered significant professional growth and has strengthened USM's connection with the universities within the wider GCHR family.

Reflecting on the importance of implementing projects dedicated to human rights education, children's rights, climate change, and related areas, I would emphasize that these initiatives, on the one hand, demonstrate a strong commitment to equipping our society to face emerging challenges. On the other hand, they have served as valuable learning experiences and have opened new avenues for professional development. As the representative of Moldova State University, I consider it essential to highlight the strategic and academic significance of the two major projects implemented with the support of the Global Campus of Human Rights: "Promoting Human and Children's Rights Education at the Moldova State University" and "Development of Climate Justice and Human Rights Education at the Moldova State University." These projects align perfectly with our institutional priorities while also complementing, in a distinct and meaningful way, earlier initiatives in the field of human rights. They respond to pressing societal needs and reinforce the university's role as a promoter of democratic values, social responsibility, and academic excellence.

The successful implementation of both projects has been made possible by the continuous support of the GCHR and GC Caucasus teams. On behalf of all those involved, I would like to

express our sincere gratitude to Professor Manfred Nowak and to Adriano Remiddi, capacity development manager, for their dedication, sustained effort, and invaluable contribution. The first project, dedicated to strengthening education in human rights and children's rights, has contributed to fostering an institutional culture grounded in respect, inclusion, and the protection of fundamental rights. At a time when social challenges are intensifying and increasing numbers of children and young people face various vulnerabilities, universities have a responsibility to equip future professionals with the knowledge, ethical sensitivity, and tools needed to act responsibly and with informed judgment. The project facilitated curriculum modernization, enhanced the professional capacities of teaching staff, supported mobility opportunities for master's students enrolled in the Democratization and Human Rights programme, and expanded partnerships with national and international institutions focused on children's rights and IT regulation.

The second project, centred on developing education in climate justice and human rights, opens for USM an innovative and urgently needed direction within the European academic landscape. The climate crisis is no longer solely an environmental issue; it is also a matter of equity, legal protection, and intergenerational responsibility. By integrating climate justice into university curricula, we aim to cultivate a new generation of specialists capable of addressing the complexities of ecological transition and contributing to the formulation of sustainable public policies. This project underlines the importance of understanding these challenges through multidisciplinary collaboration and through deep, competent, and responsible academic approaches. Moreover, it represents a strong commitment to the future of our societies, fully aligned with international sustainable development goals and with placing human rights at the center of global priorities.



Kick-off of the Cooperation



Bea Ferenci
Head of UN Human
Rights Office
in Moldova

“The Plan of Action for the Fifth Phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education is dedicated to children and youth, with special emphasis on human rights, digital technologies, environment and climate change, and gender quality. This aligns of course very clearly with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which has as one of its core components human rights education. States, including the Republic of Moldova, have a fundamental role in implementing these commitments within their formal and non-formal education systems.”

In 2023, the Global Campus of Human Rights, together with its Caucasus regional network, launched a promising cooperation with Moldova State University (USM) under the Global Campus Capacity Development Programme. The partnership was formally launched in Chisinau on 1 February with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, marking a shared commitment to advance human rights, democracy, and sustainable development in the Republic of Moldova. Special attention was placed on strengthening the rights and well-being of children, youth, and future generations through innovative and practice-oriented human rights education. The first step of this cooperation was the project “Promoting Human and Children’s Rights Education at Moldova State University”, which focused on the regional standards of child rights protection and on the impact of emerging technologies on the rights of children and young people. The initiative represented an important milestone in USM’s path toward full integration into the Global Campus of Human Rights as part of the GC Caucasus regional hub coordinated by Yerevan State University, envisaged for the 2024/25 academic year.

The launch event brought together a broad community: USM leadership, academic staff, and students from the Faculty of Law and its

Scientific Research Laboratory “Comparative Public Law and e-Government,” alongside representatives from key ministries and public institutions, including the Ministry of Environment, the Ministries of Education and Research, Justice, and Social Protection, Health and Family, and the Office of the People’s Advocate. The event was also attended by representatives of the EU Delegation to Moldova, the Embassy of Italy, and civil society organisations active in human and children’s rights, such as the National Center for State Courts, and the National Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

Throughout the discussions, USM partners expressed strong support for the cooperation. Rector Igor Sarov highlighted the importance of investing in human resources—both staff and students—to build a skilled pool of professionals capable of navigating rapidly evolving global realities. Dean Serghei Brinza underlined that the project offered valuable new opportunities for partnership and alignment with the Global Campus’s values and activities. Rodica Ciobanu, Head of the Public Law Department, emphasised both the responsibility and potential inherent in the Memorandum, noting that internationalisation is attainable through shared efforts and collaboration.



The **Moldova State University (USM)**, located in Chişinău, was founded on 1 October 1946 as the first public higher education institution in Moldova. Since then, it has grown into one of the country's leading centres of academic excellence and research. Today, USM enrolls more than 20,500 students and employs over 1,100 academic staff across 14 faculties, including Biology and Soil Science, Chemistry, Law, Physics and Engineering, History and Philosophy, Journalism, Mathematics and Informatics, Psychology and Education, International Relations and Political Science, and Economic Sciences,

among others. USM also maintains a dynamic research profile. During the 2023–2024 academic year, the university published 705 scientific articles, implemented 34 international research projects, and hosted 37 national and international scientific events. Internationalisation remains a strategic priority: in 2023–2024, USM signed 74 cooperation agreements with institutions in 17 countries and welcomed 198 international students from 15 nations. In terms of global engagement, USM is also an active member of the UNICA network, joining leading universities from Europe's capital cities.



Child Rights Focus



Olga Baciu
Lecturer at the USM
Faculty of Law

“This project has offered a unique environment where human rights education is approached with depth, sincerity, and an authentic desire to cultivate understanding. It has allowed me not only to teach but also to reflect, to question, and to grow as an educator.”

The child rights component of the project played a central role in advancing human rights education at USM. The initiative introduced innovative teaching and training activities in areas that had previously received limited academic attention in Moldova. A key outcome was the formal inclusion of child rights as a new subject within the Faculty of Law, establishing a lasting curriculum reform that will shape future cohorts of graduates and anchor the topic in the country’s leading public university.

Integrating child rights into the curriculum also enhanced the professional skills of participating academics. Through collaboration with UNICEF, OHCHR, the Council of Europe, and national authorities such as the Ministry of Justice and the General Prosecutor’s Office, USM lecturers gained expertise in digital-age child protection, European standards, and contemporary

safeguarding mechanisms. These exchanges enriched teaching capacities and increased interest in the field among master’s students and university leadership.

The project’s relevance grew further in light of Moldova’s EU accession process, as strengthened academic competence in child rights contributes directly to aligning national legal frameworks with European protection standards.

Cooperation with the Child Leadership Team and the GC Caucasus Child Rights Officer also allowed that child participation—both theoretical and practical—was included in training activities. Consultations with children and adolescents, co-organised with UNICEF Moldova and the UN Youth Advisory Board, provided valuable input for curriculum and tool development, keeping the project grounded in young people’s perspectives and experiences.



Training of Trainers



Wiebke Lamer
Project's Key
Thematic Expert

“Working with the lecturers at Moldova State University to develop the course on Human Rights and IT Regulation was a truly rewarding experience. It was exciting to see local lecturers embrace a forward-looking approach to Human Rights Education, linking digital regulation with children’s rights. The process was not without challenges, such as navigating a hybrid setup and language barriers, but it demonstrated how collaboration and shared curiosity can lead to lasting change in teaching practice.”

A key pillar of the project was an extensive Training of Trainers (ToT) to support USM's Faculty of Law for the new human rights and child rights courses. A tailored training pathway brought together Global Campus experts and USM academics over several months, combining conceptual grounding, practical skill-building, and collaborative curriculum co-design.

From April 2023 to February 2024, two parallel training tracks ran both in Chisinau and online, led by international specialists—Chiara Altafin's group on Child Rights and Protection and Wiebke Lamer's team on Child Rights in the Digital Age. Working hand in hand with USM lecturers, they formed a community of practice committed to developing the university's expertise in this field.

The ToT began with a preparatory phase, ensuring all participants shared a common foundation in human rights. Trainees completed introductory online modules and provided input via questionnaires that shaped

upcoming training phases and preparation of the course syllabi.

The core of the training unfolded across three intensive clusters. The initial in-person workshop in Chisinau focused on building trust, clarifying expectations, and establishing collaborative methods to ensure the co-ownership of the process. Subsequent sessions addressed the right to human rights education, key child rights principles, and emerging challenges in the digital environment. Later clusters deepened knowledge of international protection mechanisms, national case studies, digital-age risks, deprivation of liberty, and meaningful child participation.

By the end of the process, USM lecturers had the knowledge, tools, and confidence to pilot the new courses during the 2023/24 academic year, laying the foundation for lasting change in child rights education.



“It has been a truly rewarding experience to contribute to the GC Capacity Development project on *Promoting Human Rights and Children’s Rights Education at the State University of Moldova*. As chief trainer of trainers, I had the great opportunity to support local academics in designing and leading the module on ‘European Standards and Practices of Family and Child’s Rights Protection’, with meaningful exchanges to

develop context-specific syllabi and teaching materials, structure the pedagogical framework, and promote a conducive learning environment. My subsequent support as visiting lecturer for the consolidation of the new course, by joining in-person and on-line the USM academics during its first two editions, along with the involvement of guest lecturers for certain units, have provided further opportunities for

knowledge sharing and engagement with collaborative academics and committed students in insightful discussions and exercises, as well as reflections on key aspects of human rights education to encourage students’ agency and better understand areas for improvement.”

Chiara Altafin
GC Research Manager
and Project’s Key Thematic Expert

Curriculum Development



Lilia Chirtoaca
Professor at the USM
Faculty of Law

“The course promoted values such as respect, solidarity, and equality through lecture slides as well as in-class discussions; finally, through various hands-on assignments, students acquired useful skills, including the ability to identify human rights issues and take effective action.”

The project’s curriculum revision led to the creation of two entirely new courses within the Master’s Program in Public Law and Electronic Government. The process combined online workshops, collaborative desk work, and close interaction between USM academics and Global Campus experts, ensuring the courses addressed both local priorities and international standards.

The newly developed syllabi were formally adopted by academic authorities at both USM and Yerevan State University (YSU), marking the first agreement enabling credit recognition and transfer between Moldova and Armenia. This milestone strengthened institutional cooperation within the GC Caucasus network and allowed GC students to integrate the courses into their mobility periods in Chisinau from 2024 onwards.

The first course, **“European Standards and Practices of Family and Child Rights Protection”** (5 ECTS), introduced a child-centred perspective into the curriculum and highlighted the regional dimension of child rights protection. Students are prepared to analyse and apply European standards in practical contexts.

The second course, **“Human Rights and IT Regulation”** (5 ECTS), evolved from the existing Data Protection Law subject and now incorporates the impact of new technologies on children’s rights, blending legal theory with practical insights on digital-age challenges. These courses represent a significant step in embedding human and child rights education at USM. The initiative also supported Moldova’s European integration efforts by strengthening the alignment of national legal frameworks with European protection standards, where the expertise of academics and early-career professionals is crucial. USM leadership noted that the project generated strong interest in a subject that had previously received limited attention.

The project’s international dimension further enriched the academic experience, fostering intercultural understanding, diversity management in the classroom, and awareness of human and children’s rights across different legal and socio-political systems. By combining curriculum innovation, professional development, and international collaboration, the initiative reinforced USM as a forward-looking and globally connected hub for human rights education.



“I had the privilege of participating in the Training of Trainers “Promoting Human Rights and Children’s Rights Education at the USM,” which has been one of the most enriching experiences of my professional career. Being part of this collaboration allowed me not only to deepen my understanding of human rights education but also to contribute meaningfully to a project that has a triple impact on students, faculty, and the wider Moldovan community. On a personal level, the program offered me valuable insights

into the conceptualization and design of a new course, as well as skills and tools essential for curriculum development. This enabled the successful introduction of the “Human Rights and IT Regulations” course at the Law Faculty of USM. It also exposed me to innovative teaching practices and the benefits of cross-regional cooperation. Professionally, it strengthened my commitment to advancing human rights through education and provided me with new knowledge, methodologies, and partnerships that continue

to inform my work. Last but not least, the involvement of Global Campus experts together with local specialists played a crucial role in both piloting and implementing the new course. I believe this cooperation has enhanced the visibility of human rights in Moldova. I am proud to have been part of this journey, and I am very much looking forward to seeing the long-term impact it will continue to generate.”

Mariana Rosca
Lecturer at the Faculty of Law,
Moldova State University

The Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation in the Caucasus

CES



Global Campus
Caucasus

People

Artur Ghazinyan
Vladimir Martirosyan
Kristine Gevorgyan
Lilit Mirzoyan
Arusyak Aleksanyan
Lilit Karapetyan
Mariam Muradyan

Yerevan State
University

Regional Network

Yerevan State University,
Armenia — *coordinator*

Ivane Javakhishvili
Tbilisi State University,
Georgia

American University
of Central Asia,
Kyrgyzstan

Moldova State University,
Moldova

Taras Shevchenko National
University of Kyiv,
Ukraine

Associate partner:

Belarusian State University,
Belarus

GC Membership

GC Caucasus/CES is an intensive, interdisciplinary program with a focus on the post-Soviet space. It offers a robust theoretical foundation and three specialised tracks—legal, political, and interdisciplinary—allowing students to tailor their studies to their interests.

The programme emphasises both research and practical skills development, including hands-on experiences such as fact-finding mission interviews and policy paper writing, preparing graduates for impactful careers in human rights and democratisation.

Despite operating under extraordinarily challenging circumstances—including the ongoing war in Ukraine, the post-conflict situation in Armenia, economic and political instability, restrictive foreign agent laws in Kyrgyzstan and Georgia, and tightened visa regulations for international students in Armenia—the GC Caucasus programme has continued to foster resilience and innovation in human rights education.



On 22 September, on the occasion of the General Assembly of its over 100 participating universities, the Global Campus of Human Rights positively reviewed and unanimously accepted the membership request by the Moldova State University to become the newest member of the network, anchored to the GC Caucasus regional programme.

This important recognition bears high significance in light of the great progress made by the University since the kick-off of the cooperation and underscored the adaptability and commitment to academic excellence despite regional challenges.



Franciska
Kirkegaard Flugt
Programme Officer
for Green Transition
and Environment
EU Delegation to the
Republic of Moldova

“This project has shown how much can be achieved when academia, civil society, and the EU work together around shared priorities. By connecting human rights and climate action, the team at Global Campus of Human Rights and Moldova State University has helped bring a fresh and much-needed perspective to Moldova’s green transition.”

Building on the successful first phase of cooperation and the development of new curricular courses, SM and Global Campus agreed on expanding the partnership to include a thematic specialisation in environmental rights and climate justice from a human rights perspective.

Thanks to the support received by the Delegation of the European Union to Moldova, the action “Development of Climate Justice and Human Rights Education at Moldova State University (USM)” could be launched. The project focused on creating an interdisciplinary lab across the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Biology and Geosciences, to serve as an incubator of innovative training, research, and networking opportunities.

The project was formally launched at a public event on 1 March 2024 at the Faculty of Law in Chisinau. Attendees included Minister of the Environment Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov, USM leadership, representatives of the EU Delegation, Global Campus delegates, and the project team.

The flagship activity of the initiative was an annual cross-regional Spring School. This event was designed as an accelerator for USM’s specialization in human rights and climate justice and as a vehicle for internationalization. It brought together lecturers and students from Moldova and other countries engaged in the EU integration process.

The new project recognised the systemic and structural factors contributing to climate change and social injustice. It represented a first step toward identifying solutions that address these root causes, particularly in developing countries of South-eastern and Caucasian Europe, such as Moldova, where effective, rights-based environmental policies are still emerging.

Through its outputs, like the strengthening of qualified academic, educational skills and tools, and a network of spaces to deliver national and international education in these fields, the action successfully expanded USM capacities for the promotion and protection of the most urgent global and regional human rights issues.



“Climate justice is a moral imperative, essential for making the world a better place for all its inhabitants, and embodies the principle of equity, requiring everyone to contribute according to their abilities.”

Hewan
School participant

Training of Trainers



Irina Punga
Lecturer at Faculty
of Law, Moldova State
University

“As a teaching staff member, this cooperation has confirmed how essential it is to integrate environmental rights and climate justice into legal education and to create spaces where students can experiment, question, and co-create solutions.”

A key component of the action was the training of six faculty members from the Faculties of Law and Biology and Geosciences, which ran from October 2024 to June 2025. The programme aimed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to integrate climate justice and human rights into their teaching.

The customized Training of Trainers (ToT) supported the joint conceptualization and co-design of climate justice-oriented interdisciplinary courses and activities, with the application of innovative teaching tools and methods.

The training covered key human rights concepts and explored the links between the climate crisis and social justice through workshops, case studies, role-plays, gamification, and e-learning sessions. Participants engaged in group discussions, reflective exercises, and practical activities to learn how to effectively embed human rights education with a climate justice focus across their faculties.

Specifically, the training enabled the faculty to:

- Update the existing environmental rights curriculum, introducing a climate justice perspective and highlighting the regional dimension of the subject.

- Design new and interdisciplinary learning opportunities to engage Biology students in human rights and climate justice topics.
- Conceptualize the vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the new Human Rights Education Lab at USM.

In this process, a new pedagogical tool was introduced during the training: the **Climate FRESK** board game, which provided a hands-on, interactive approach to sensitizing students to environmental and climate issues.

As part of capacity-building, selected professors also attended a specialized English course at the USM Resource Centre for Continuing Education, also focusing on human rights and climate terminology. This strengthened their ability to contribute to curriculum development, lecture at the Spring School, and engage in international collaboration within the Global Campus network, particularly in the Caucasus and Eastern Partnership regions.

Throughout the process, faculty members worked closely with GC-affiliated experts—chief trainer Zoi Aliozi, Samentha Goethals and Pim Martins—to tailor the new activities and content with locally and regionally relevant case studies, enhancing their practical value for USM students.



Cross-Regional Spring School

“For me, the Spring School underscored that climate justice must be grounded in fairness; without this foundation, efforts to address the climate crisis risk reproducing existing social inequalities.”

Marina
School participant

An annual European Cross-Regional Spring School on Climate Justice and Human Rights was established to accelerate the University’s specialization in human rights and climate justice and to support its internationalization. The School was conceived as a pioneering, multidisciplinary academic initiative—the first of its kind in the region—focused on the intersection of human rights, climate justice, sustainable development, and the well-being of children, youth, and future generations, with particular attention to the South-Eastern Europe and Caucasus regions.

By integrating theoretical insights with practical skills, the Spring School equipped participants to navigate complex climate justice challenges effectively, fostering their ability to contribute to environmental advocacy and social justice in meaningful ways.

Two editions of the School were organized in 2024 and 2025, bringing together international experts and practitioners who taught alongside trained USM faculty, as well as students, civil servants, and activists from countries engaged in the EU integration process and beyond. Activities included participatory lectures, workshops, simulations,

gamification exercises, field visits, and panel discussions featuring guest speakers from Moldovan civil society and state institutions.

The School was structured as a residential, intensive course taking place in the scenic village of Orhei, on the outskirts of Chisinau, providing an ideal setting for immersive learning and networking. Participants followed a full-time schedule that combined daily classes and workshops with an opening expert panel, a field visit, a film screening, and social activities.

The curriculum combined a robust theoretical framework with a practical skills-building approach, exploring key aspects of climate justice education to ensure participants developed a comprehensive understanding and applied knowledge of the subject.

All participants who successfully attended the full School received a certificate of completion jointly issued by the Global Campus and USM. MA-level or postgraduate students who wished to earn 5 ECTS were required to pass a final examination, held remotely after the conclusion of the School.



3
GC regional programmes involved



10
International experts



6
Local experts



41
Participants

from **12** countries



“I have seen first-hand how transformative this experience has been for our students and for our faculty. One of the most powerful components has been the use of the Climate FRESK game, which I have facilitated with several groups of students. Its methodology –

participatory, visual, co-creative – enables students to reconstruct the scientific and systemic logic of climate change before we even begin to discuss legal norms. This shift in sequence is crucial: by first understanding the causal chains and human impacts, students

become more receptive, critical and engaged when we turn to questions of state responsibility, separation of powers, access to justice and the positive obligations arising under human rights law”.

Doina Cuciurca
Lecturer at the USM Faculty of Law

“It was inspiring to see young students and activists from across Europe and beyond come together with local peers to learn, reflect, and engage with pressing issues such as climate change, human agency, and its impact on their—

on all of our—lives. They can be the next policymakers driving the transformative changes our societies urgently need. I believe this initiative is especially important for Moldova, given the strong momentum in its EU

accession process. It supports the country’s internationalisation efforts and places Moldova at the centre of a highly relevant global discussion.”

Vukašin Pajović
GC Capacity Development Officer

Creation of the Interdisciplinary Lab



Zoi Aliozi
Project Key Thematic
Expert

“Seeing education turn into empowerment, and empowerment into advocacy, is why this work matters. This initiative has laid strong foundations for future-focused Human Rights Education and reaffirmed my belief that education is a powerful catalyst for justice and systemic transformation.”

A significant accomplishment of action is the physical and conceptual establishment of the **JURIS Lab – Research and Education on Human Rights and Sustainable Development**.

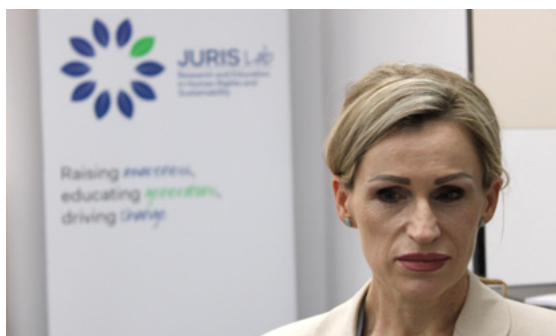
Conceived as an academic unit bridging disciplines and approaches, the JURIS Lab is intended to serve as an incubator for innovative pedagogy and interdisciplinary research, contributing to Moldova’s democratic values, the rule of law, and human rights protection, sustainable and green transition.

The Lab’s mission is to foster a fair and sustainable society by integrating research, education, and professional training. It supports capacity-building, promotes legal innovation and critical thinking, and encourages active engagement with contemporary global challenges. The JurisLAB will facilitates dialogue and collaboration among academic institutions, civil society organizations, and policy-makers, creating a platform for knowledge exchange and the development of innovative approaches to human rights education.

Through its work, JurisLAB will seeks to align research, expertise, and teaching with European standards while promoting an environment conducive to innovation in education, sustainable development, and human rights.

Future activities

- Develop and deliver formal and non-formal education programs, including workshops, courses, summer schools, and professional training.
- Conduct interdisciplinary research on human rights, climate change, social equity, children’s rights, global justice, and related fields.
- Produce scientific publications, disseminate research findings, and actively engage in conferences, public events, and debates to promote informed dialogue.
- Foster national and international collaborations through research projects, academic exchanges, institutional development, and knowledge-sharing initiatives.



The establishment of the Lab involved significant investments in the renovation and modernization of USM premises. Following extensive refurbishment, the Lab was furnished with functional work and meeting spaces, fully equipped with advanced ICT infrastructure and video conferencing systems to support distance learning, online

collaboration, and international partnerships.

In addition, a curated collection of over 50 specialized volumes on climate justice, human rights, and environmental protection was donated to the UMS central library, providing resources for the wider student community.



“This new institutional space stands as one of the most tangible results of our joint efforts. It has already begun hosting research seminars, student debates, and collaborative projects that bridge theory and practice, and it is helping us to build a culture of critical inquiry around climate-

related legal issues. We are working to position this laboratory as a national hub for critical thinking and innovation in a field that is rapidly growing in complexity and importance. Through its activities, we aim to support evidence-based policymaking, to encourage

student and staff research, and to consolidate Moldova’s contribution to regional and international debates on climate justice and human rights”.

Iordanca Rodica Iordanov
Associate Professor, USM Faculty of Law

“Participating in the creation of JURIS Lab has been a deeply meaningful experience. Creating this space to provide students with a dedicated environment where they can explore, discuss,

and develop their understanding of human rights and climate justice is incredibly rewarding. I believe this initiative offers a unique opportunity for students and scholars to engage critically,

exchange ideas, and shape innovative approaches to human rights and sustainable development”.

Larisa Barbu
GC Capacity Development Officer

Outreach Activities



“Human rights education and training comprise all educational, training, information, awareness-raising and learning activities aimed at promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights.”

Art. 2(1), UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011)

Alongside capacity-building and curriculum development, the collaboration included a series of outreach events aimed at promoting discussion and awareness on key human and child rights issues. These activities provided a platform to engage the wider academic community, public authorities, civil society, and international partners, while also promoting the Global Campus locally, especially in year one of the cooperation.

Three major events were co-organized or supported as part of the outreach strategy:

01 Scientific Conference: *Ensuring the Right to a Healthy Environment and the Challenges of the EU Transition*, 12 May 2023

Organized by USM's Faculty of Law in collaboration with the Global Campus, the Ministry of the Environment, EcoContact, the Academy “Ștefan cel Mare” of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and universities from Romania and Poland, the conference brought together participants from Moldova, Romania, Italy, Ukraine, Poland, and Lithuania. The event gathered representatives from public authorities, academia, the business sector, civil society, and students. Dr Zoi Aliozi represented the Global Campus, addressing the topic of Climate Justice: Ensuring the Right to a Healthy Environment. In the opening session, Prof. Rodica Ciobanu announced the upcoming Spring School on environmental education, scheduled for spring 2024.

02 Country Presentation: *United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty*, 9 June 2023

This event, co-organized by USM Faculty of Law, the Global Campus, and UNICEF Moldova, featured presentations by GC's Manfred Nowak and Manu Krishan. Around 50 participants, including experts, representatives of international organizations, NGOs, professors, and students, attended discussions on the study's findings and implications for child rights in Moldova.

03 International Scientific-Practical Conference: *State, Security, and Human Rights in the Digital Age*, 14–15 December 2023

Held in its eighth edition, this conference provided a platform for dialogue on fundamental rights in the context of digital transformation. It emphasized the protection of children's rights and the promotion of human rights education, reinforcing commitments to safeguard the rights of today's and future generations. The event was organized within the Project Modernization of Governance Mechanisms Focused on the Protection of Human Rights.

Through these outreach initiatives, the cooperations strengthened their visibility, fostered multi-stakeholder dialogue, and promoted awareness of human rights in Moldova and the region.



Partnerships



Tatiana Cernomorit
Officer - UN Human
Rights in Moldova

“Universities hold the power to shape the future grounded in human rights. Integrating human rights education into university curricula is fundamental for shaping professionals who uphold dignity, equality, and justice. By embedding human rights and human rights education in initial training across different professions, we foster a culture of respect for human rights in workplaces and ensure that policies, practices, and institutional cultures reflect a human rights-based approach. We celebrate Moldova State University for opening its doors to this vision and for championing a generation that will build a world grounded in human rights.”

Both projects relied on a multi-stakeholder approach, bringing together local, regional, and international actors to create strategic synergies, ensure the achievement of their objectives, and promote shared ownership of the initiative. Implementation was carried out in close collaboration with the European Union Delegation in Chisinau, whose support went beyond technical guidance. The EUDEL played a key role in fostering dialogue with national and international institutions, facilitating outreach events and campaigns, and shaping strategies for the project’s visibility and long-term sustainability.

Academic aspects of the project were developed in coordination with the GC Caucasus network. Selected GCHR lecturers and experts actively contributed by teaching and mentoring staff, students and trainees, supporting the internationalization of the newly established courses and activities, and facilitating USM integration into the GC and its regional network.

The United Nations system in Moldova, with the OHCHR Human Rights Advisor’s Office, UNICEF, and also the Council of Europe Ombudsperson Office, provided crucial support from the outset. Their engagement helped strengthen project implementation, establish links with key domestic and international stakeholders, and support the organization of local events and training activities. They also contributed valuable expertise, helping to incorporate Moldova’s experience in human rights and democratization into both the training programmes and the revised curriculum.

The implementation of the child rights dimension in the early stages of the cooperation was made possible thanks to the support received by **Right Livelihood**.



Looking forward



Iordanca Rodica
Iordanov
Associate professor,
Moldova State
University

“Looking ahead, I am confident that our cooperation with Global Campus will continue to generate long-term benefits: modernized curricula, empowered students, and a stronger, more responsive legal community capable of addressing the human rights implications of climate change.”

In just a few years, Moldova State University has established itself as a vibrant and committed member of the Global Campus network, making a meaningful contribution to the promotion of human rights, environmental protection, and democracy—both within Moldova and across the region.

Through three years of intensive collaboration, the University has followed in the footsteps of leading public universities in Eastern and Southeast Europe, successfully integrating into the Global Campus while advancing its EU integration process.

As the first cycle of projects concludes, a new chapter opens for the GC-USM cooperation, full of opportunities and stimulating challenges alike. The interdisciplinary Lab will continue to drive innovation in human rights and climate justice education, with the Spring

School as its flagship initiative. It will also play a central role in consolidating the three newly developed courses and strengthening the University’s engagement within the GC Caucasus regional network.

Building on this success, the Global Campus will continue to support USM and other emerging universities and new partners, working together to establish high-quality human rights education and foster international collaboration, capacity-building, and sustainable impact.

Together, these efforts will ensure that Moldova State University remains a forward-looking, regionally and globally connected hub for education, research, and advocacy at the intersection of democracy, human rights and sustainable development





Timeline

2023

- **January:** signing of MoU between GC and USM and kick-start of the “Development of Human and Children Rights Education at USM” project
- **February-June:** Training of Trainers and curriculum development work
- **July:** adoption of the two new courses “European Standards of Children's Rights Protection” and “Human Rights and IT Regulation”.
- **September:** USM is accepted as a new GC member by the General Assembly

2024

- **January:** Kick-off of the EU-supported project “Development of Climate Justice and Human Rights Education at the Moldova State University”
- **February-April:** course piloting and first batch of GC Caucasus exchange students
- **May:** Running of the first edition of the “European Cross-Regional Spring School on Climate Justice & Human Rights.”
- **October:** Phase 1 of the Training of Trainers: backgrounder on human rights and fundamentals of climate justice education
- **November:** start of the specialised English language course
- **December:** Phase 2 of the Training of Trainers

2025

- **February:** Kick-start of Phase 3 of the Training of Trainers: USM faculty , in consultation with GC experts, start developing the new Climate Justice and Human Rights curriculum and the Mission and Vision of the nascent Interfaculty LAB.
- **May:** Running of the second edition of the “European Cross-Regional Spring School on Climate Justice & Human Rights.” The USM faculty team pilots the Climate FRESK in class. Start of the refurbishment works of the nascent Interfaculty LAB.
- **July:** Project closing: inauguration of the “JURIS Lab – Research and Education on Human Rights and Sustainable Development.” Roundtable and workshop on the future of the achieved curricular revision and closing ceremony.

Acknowledgements

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For more information visit:

gchumanrights.org/thematic-areas/capacity-development/

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The Global Campus of Human Rights

is an international association of over 100 universities organised in eight regional hubs and dedicated to the promotion and advancement of human rights education, research, outreach and advocacy.

Established on the foundation of the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation (founded in 2002), the Global Campus has evolved into a network of academic institutions committed to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect human rights and democratisation across the globe.

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