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Dear Friends,

You may not have noticed it. World Water Day is celebrated every year in March. For most of us in the Czech Republic, water is taken for granted; you simply turn on the tap, and it flows, and in the vast majority of cases, it is safe and suitable for drinking. However, **the situation is very different in countries such as Moldova, where water shortages and poor quality negatively affect the lives of thousands of children.**

According to a 2024 UNICEF survey, which included nearly 1,000 schools (around 80 per cent in the country), 170 did not have access to drinking water. The problems do not end with availability. In almost 700 schools, toilets are not accessible to pupils with limited mobility, and approximately one quarter do not provide sufficient privacy.

Some of these challenges are being addressed through a Caritas project supported by the European Union. In a total of 25 schools, including 10 this year, **access to safe drinking water is being ensured** through the installation of filters or the repair and renovation of sanitation facilities. The project also includes practical training sessions, during which pupils learn about healthy hygiene habits.

When we mark World Water Day next year, try to remember Moldova as well as the work of Caritas, which has ensured access to safe drinking water for thousands of pupils.



Filip Tlapa

Country Programme Coordinator for Ethiopia, Georgia and Moldova

CARITAS CZECH REPUBLIC IN THE WORLD



The ageing of the population, however, is something we share with Moldova. Over three years, [we focused on developing home care services for older people and other vulnerable groups](#). We established intergenerational clubs, expanded access to occupational therapy services, trained hundreds of professionals and strengthened the capacity of local organisations. Both **the availability and the quality of care improved**, contributing to changes across the entire social services system in the country.

Rana from Syria spent her childhood on the run and withdrew into herself. **Today, she has a clear dream, she wants to become a doctor.** Thanks to a supporting programme, she has gained confidence, new friends and the motivation to study. [Caritas has been helping people cope with the long-term consequences of the Syrian civil war](#). Rana's story shows how targeted support can transform the life and future of a young generation.



Access to higher education is out of reach for many young refugees in Zambia. [For several years, the DAFI scholarship programme has been helping them, including Damien](#). He left the Democratic Republic of the Congo without his family and had to start from scratch. The scholarship enabled him to study information technology, and he now hopes to give back to his community. **It was education that opened the door to a new life perspective for him.**

An overpopulation of rodents is threatening the lives of people in the Gaza Strip.

Since the beginning of the year, more than 70,000 cases of infections have been recorded, with people, including children, often being bitten in their sleep. A collapsing healthcare system is facing a critical shortage of medicines, equipment and diagnostic capacity, severely limiting its ability to respond to growing health threats. [Read an interview with a healthcare worker directly from Gaza.](#)



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