

UN REFUGEE RESPONSE COORDINATION IN ROMANIA
Education Working Group meeting
May 31, 2023, 9:30 – 11.00 am
Venue - Online (Zoom)

Agenda

- Introduction and welcoming of new Education WG members (UNICEF)
- Feedback from recent meetings or events: with MoE and other working groups or constituencies (UNICEF); with ISU working group on Education (JRS)
- Thematic discussions: discussing difficulties, issues, and messages to be conveyed to MoE and ISJs with regards to the operationalization of the new 50/20 provisions on education (in preparation for today's extraordinary meeting of ISU working group on education)
- Any update from WG members (including on situation, needs, progress & upcoming events)
- AOB

Participants: WV, JRS, TdH, NRC, SCI, Plan International, CNRR, IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR, Fundația Națională pentru Tineret (FNT)

2. Feedback from recent meetings or events: with MoE and other working groups or constituencies (UNICEF); with ISU working group on Education (JRS)

UNICEF shared that given the context (national teachers' strikes), the MoE's attention is very much focused on this specific situation; nonetheless, there is still a commitment from the MoE to move forward with the joint event agreed to be convened with MoE/ISJs and UNICEF/Education WG members to review the education sector's response and prepare for the next academic year, once the teachers' strikes are over / the situation is stabilized. UNICEF will keep Education WG members updated on this.

JRS shared the following updates from the last ISU working group on Education:

- The meeting last week was an extraordinary one, attended by MoE and all county school inspectorates (ISJs).
- The main goal was to discuss about practices at the local level implemented by ISJs and operationalization of the new 50/20 programme (especially the conditionality on education), including coordination with NGOs (which are supposed to issue certificates of enrolment in non-formal education programmes) and ISJs (which are expected to register NGOs/programmes).
- The conclusion was that there is no unity in practice across counties and there are different issues encountered at local levels.
- ISJs tried to explain the process of registration, also mentioning that for kindergarten children should be enrolled (on this, there are specific problems with counties like

Bucharest and Constanta, where there is a large nb of Ukrainians children and limited absorption capacity at kindergarten level).

- It is not clear for many on how to implement the audience system.
- The Ministry requested a follow-up meeting to take place on May 31 (i.e. today).

3. Thematic discussions: discussing difficulties, issues and messages to be conveyed to MoE and ISJs with regards to the operationalization of the new 50/20 provisions on education (in preparation for today's extraordinary meeting of ISU working group on education)

The WG members shared the following issues / questions / messages:

- **UNICEF** shared some questions prepared to be raised during the meeting with the MoE. With regards to organizing summer schools, UNICEF also mentioned that given that schools are under the management of local authorities, for discussions in this sense the local authorities have to be involved as well.
- **Plan International** added the request of asking for updated data segregated by age, sex, and disability. They also suggested the Ministry / authorities elaborated more on their communication strategy.
- **JRS** suggested clarifying some issues observed during implementation of the new mechanism. They also raised the issue of Ukrainian teenagers aged 16-18, who had already graduated in Ukraine and want to work in Romania, not continue education/be enrolled in schools. They also shared concerns on capacity to absorb the increasing number of enrolment requests. **JRS** further mentioned that there will also be a meeting organized by HIAS to discuss the about enrolment in Bucharest (also on May 31). As for the education hubs in Bucharest and Constanta, there are discussions with the schools management on how to keep them.
- **Caritas** proposed that for schools where a minimum of 10 Ukrainian students are enrolled, after schools be setup so that they could be helped with Romanian language learning.
- On Romanian language courses during the summer holiday, **IOM** shared that this is a case by case situation, as some schools will close for the summer, others will not. For schools that will close, there is the issue of finding spaces where to hold the classes.
- **World Vision** raised the question of providing training for Romanian students to help their teachers better adapt to working with Ukrainian students who do not understand Romanian, as well as training for the Romanian students themselves so as to prevent and avoid conflicts with the Ukrainian students.
- **TdH** added that a main concern is that of what is defined as an educational program according to the MoE – *this concern was agreed by all WG members*. For example, they are preparing an after school program using the Ukrainian curricula, that will be both recreational and educational – the question is if such programs are covered by those envisioned by the Ministry.

It was agreed that the following compilation of issues/questions raised during the meeting are to be convened during the extraordinary meeting of the ISU working group on education, with MoE and ISJs, on May 31¹:

For Q&A (immediate issues re operationalization)

1. Can ISJ appreciate what type of programmes can qualify under 50/20 (programmes delivered in clubs, community centers, cultural centers...) some ISJs are reluctant sometimes arguing these are more 'recreational' than 'educational'
2. Some ISJs seem reluctant to publish the list of NGOs/programmes/hubs on their website
3. What happens during summer holidays (e.g. new comers)
4. Will beneficiaries have to register again for the next academic year?
5. Documentation required for audients: Certificate to be issued by school. But can the letter issued by ISJ confirming registration as audient do instead of certificate issued by school?
6. What about children aged 16-18 who want to work instead of learning?

Other concerns/questions

7. MoE communication strategy/arrangements? Especially as the academic year is about to end.
8. Update on Data: disaggregation by sex, disability, county...
9. No per capita funding for schools having children as audients. Any reform foreseen to incentivize schools / help cover associated costs for schools?
10. Concerns on capacity to absorb increasing nb of enrolment requests
11. Beyond enrolment and capacity issues: importance of retention and effective learning. What support measures considered (language training arrangements for audients / bridging programme for audients not speaking Romanian language, after school support and tutoring, having UA speaking mediators/teaching support staff in schools, etc.)
12. Language courses during summer holidays? National campaign? Especially for children newly registered as audients to prepare for next academic year (availability of schools and teachers? Possibility to tap into retiree teachers, university students?)
13. How to prepare teachers also for the next academic year (not just children)?

4. Any update from WG members (including on situation, needs, progress & upcoming events)

- **JRS** shared (as a last minute information just received) that there will be a separate meeting with State Secretary Florin Lixandru later, as he will not be able to attend the meeting on May 31 (i.e. today) due to the teachers' strikes.

¹ This final list was circulated by **UNICEF** by email to all WG members at the end of the meeting

- **Caritas** suggested to have a joint database for the NGOs which would include all planned summer activities for the Ukrainian children, so there is better coordination among the NGOs on this.

It was agreed to discuss joint programming for the summer holiday period at the next Education WG meeting. In that respect, **UNICEF** kindly asked all WG members to update the mapping matrix (5Ws) in the shared folder/SharePoint before the next meeting.

All Education WG members were also invited to make sure that they report on ActivityInfo in a timely manner.

Next meeting: June 14, 2023, 9:30-11:00 am, online (Zoom)