



Inter-Agency Refugee Education Working Group (IREWG)

Meeting Details	
Date	28 March 2024
Time	1:00-2:30pm
Chair	Dr. Ivan Duminica, Head of the Policy Service for Interethnic Relations, Ministry of Education and Research (MER), Co-Chairs: Loujine Khoury, Education Specialist, UNICEF Katie Lampe, Child Protection Officer, UNHCR
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Agenda	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. MER updates regarding:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The enrollment numbers of Ukrainian children for the school year 2023/2024 in preschools and general education disaggregated by school level, sex, and directorate.• Updates from MER on the session with Ukrainian caregivers and the enrollment process for Ukrainian children in Moldovan schools.• MER updates on the upcoming parliamentary debate regarding the revision/amendment of the Education Code.2. Presentation on the the mapping for the Romanian language classes3. Updates on Roma Refugee children inclusion in the Education system4. Partners Presentation (Ukrainian Women Refugee Network Female Support Force)5. AOB	
Information collection and relevant links	
Activity Info Platform: https://www.activityinfo.org	
Participants	



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| - Dr. Ivan Duminica , MER | - Maher Daboul, NRC | - Eugeniu Popescu, UNHCR |
| - Katie Lampe, UNHCR | - Iulia Gheorghies, CNPAC | - Olesea Cotiujanu, Centrul de Informare si Documentare privind Derpturile Copilului |
| - Loujine Khoury, UNICEF | - Andrei Esanu, Federatia Familiilor | - Hanna Ursol, People in Need |
| - Diana Alexei, Chisinau Municipality | - Natalia Balta, Pestalozzi Children’s Foundation | - Mihail Platinda, UNICEF |
| - Tatiana Pusca, CRS | - Tatiana Lungu, Centrul Republican de Asistenta Psihopedagogica | - Berfu Nisan Gur, WeWorld |
| - Martha Glover-Short, CRS | - Ion Duminica- Roma Task Force | - Djavid Paknehad, CCR |
| - Yulia Zenchenko, Ukrainian Women Refugee Network | - Vera Gurievschi, World Vision | |
| - Olha Stus, Ukrainian Women Refugee Network | | |

Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
Welcome Endorsement of the previous meeting minutes Agenda	UNHCR co-chair opened the meeting and asked those attending in person to present themselves.	Agenda agreed.
1. MER updates	<p>MER chair, Dr. Duminica shared the latest enrollment data of refugee children in the Moldovan school system as of 27 March:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 703 children are enrolled in kindergartens (compared to 632 in February) • 1,611 children (801 girls, 810 boys) are enrolled in 229 schools (185 studying in Romanian, and the others in Russian). The March school enrolment numbers show a decrease of 21 students compared to February 2023. Reasons for leaving the schools were followed-up on by MER, who noted that they were mainly related to moving to another European country or moving back to Ukraine. • In total, 2,314 Ukrainian children are enrolled in kindergartens and schools in Moldova. <p>MER mentioned that they have data from IGM that 8,921 refugee children are benefitting from social protection and shared data from IGM from 25 March showing that 11,905 children have Temporary Protection (TP). It was noted that the number of refugee children enrolled in Moldovan schools is much</p>	



	<p>lower than the number of children who have TP, and the education status of the other children is unknown.</p> <p>MER also shared enrollment data disaggregated by municipality, highlighting that in Chisinau and Taraclia there were small decreases in enrollment in schools from February to March, and small increases in Gagauzia and Cahul. It was noted that sometimes family depart from Moldova without informing their children's school of their plans. MER also highlighted that in some districts, there continue to be issues with some students not having medical certificates and/or vaccination records.</p> <p>Regarding the enrollment of Roma children in Moldovan schools, MER noted that there are currently 7 children enrolled in Chisinau, 2 Ungheni, 2 in Cahul, 1 in Gagauzia. It was noted that MER is also aware of 4 children from Palestine.</p> <p>MER also shared an update about a meeting that took place on 25 March with the Association of Women Refugees from Ukraine to understand the main challenges facing Ukrainian children enrolled in Moldovan schools. The main discussion points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exams in 9th and 12th grades: for children finishing high school, it was mentioned that they will have the possibility to take exams in line with the Ukrainian curriculum. For 9th grade exams, two possibilities were discussed a) a certificate that doesn't mention the Romanian language course and b) issue an Order from MER that will allow children to advance to 10th grade (high school), as they don't want to prevent students from advancing to 10th grade only due to not passing the Romanian language exams. The details are still under discussion. It was noted that it's important that students' need to take Romanian language classes to facilitate their integration.• Romanian language classes for adults: 12,000 people have registered (10% of which are Ukrainian) although initially it was planned to have 5000 slots. MER is exploring how to create additional classes and prepare teachers. The classes will start in May 2024.• Admission of young people into professional education institutions (colleges): MER translated the admission eligibility requirements into Ukrainian and shared them on the MER website.• Admission in technical/professional institutions: This topic was discussed by MER yesterday with the Secretary of State. Ukrainian students will be able to be admitted on the same basis (same cost) as Moldovans, without paying the fee that other foreigners pay. There is also an amendment in the legislation to provide 100 scholarships for Ukrainian students.	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diplomas: Information was shared about the website with information, including about the steps to be taken so that diplomas will be recognized. Relevant information will be translated to Ukrainian.• Questions about educational system in Chisinau: MER prepared a request to Chisinau Municipality to organize a meeting with parents to answer their questions.• MER will continue organizing similar meetings with Ukrainian parents to hear their problems and opinions. <p>MER noted that an issue observed during a visit to Pushkin Theoretical High School in Anenii Noi about students who are studying online from inside schools (EduTech labs). It was noted that some students were not participating in their lessons, and the environment seemed to be distracting with many students studying different subjects at once. MER noted that, these spaces should be monitored if the children studying online from TechLabs, or elsewhere, are really attending their lessons, and also how they're interacting with other students.</p> <p>MER shared an update on the proposed changes to the Education Code which will be debated in Parliament on Friday, 29 March 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools will be allowed to organize lunches for children; the government will establish the way the lunches can be offered.• Teachers can teach for two years before being required to pass the psycho-pedagogical learning module.• Establish a list of categories of children who will benefit from free lunches.• Sanctions for children breaking the rules; different steps depending on the severity.• Pupils in small schools (<50 children) will be motivated to be transferred to bigger schools; their parents will be paid 1000 lei ; smaller schools will eventually be closed. <p>Mr. Ion Duminica of the Roma Task Force, asked about the children who are not enrolled in school and suggested that MER should take measures to address this. He suggested that locations where children are not enrolled should be shared, including in RACs, and that more proactive support is needed to help enroll Roma children in schools.</p> <p>UNHCR co-chair suggested that the EWG could ask IGM for disaggregated data of the locations of refugee children with Temporary Protection and compare it to the disaggregated data already shared by MER, to identify locations where there are larger numbers of children with TP but not enrolled in school. UNHCR co-chair also requested partners support in helping to identify, in different locations,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- EWG co-chairs to follow up with PWG to see if disaggregated data on the location of children with TP is available.- Partners working in locations with
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	<p>specific challenges preventing Roma children from enrolling in schools. If the challenges are shared with the EWG, they can then help address them, together with MER.</p> <p>NRC asked a question on whether MER needs support with Romanian classes. MER noted that partners are always welcome to support but clarified that the classes are only for adults. MER stressed the need for support from partners for Romanian classes for children, and thanked CCR, who gave an update about their initiative in supporting 5 schools in the provision of Romanian classes.</p> <p>World Vision shared an update that a group of 15 national and international NGOs have launched an appeal to stop the changes to the education code because they feel they are in conflict with the national legislation that offers education to all children.</p> <p>CNPAC gave further updates on the letter related to the amendment of the Education Code, noting that actually 19 organizations have already signed. As the topic will be discussed on Friday, 29 March in Parliament, organizations who are still interested in signing should contact CNPAC asap. CNPAC noted that the Ombudsman for Children has written two opinions related to the proposed changes but has not yet received a reply from MER or Parliament. CNPAC highlighted that the letter suggests that reforms are needed to the system of rewards and punishments, as they don't think the proposed changes are in the best interests of children, as they feel they are punitive instead of restorative. They feel that teachers do not have the right tools currently to address behavior issues. They worry that the proposed changes will disproportionately affect children from vulnerable families. The suggestion is for Parliament to withdraw the proposed measure for now and do more research and pilot alternate options.</p>	<p>Roma children to support in identifying specific challenges to enrollment, and share findings with EWG co-chairs.</p>
<p>2. Romanian language class mapping</p>	<p>UNICEF EWG co-chair shared a visualization of the Romanian language classes based on the data provided by 12 organizations. Partners data shows 42 different classes conducted/to be conducted in 11 different locations. Here is the link to the mapping: Romanian Classes by UNICEF Moldova - Infogram</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Organizations offering Romanian language classes who have not yet filled out the mapping, to reach out to the EWG co-chairs.- An updated visualization will be shared if further partners are going



		to deliver Romanian language classes.
3. Updates on Roma Refugee children inclusion in the Education system	<p>The EWG and Roma TF continue to collaborate to support the educational inclusion of Roma children. A short update was shared on the situation in the Testimianu 6 RAC, where there is currently a measles outbreak. The RAC is currently in quarantine. Once the quarantine is over, a vaccination campaign will be undertaken.</p> <p>WHO, in collaboration with health authorities, will be undertaking awareness raising and vaccination campaigns in RACs around the country, especially those known to have low vaccination rates amongst residents. Partners are requested to support with awareness raising on the importance of vaccines, both for health reasons, and to support school enrollment.</p>	
4. Ukrainian Women Refugee Network Female Support Force presentation	<p>The Ukrainian Women Refugee Network shared a presentation of their activities. They currently have over 100 active women activities, and work on projects in a variety of sectors. They are interested in engaging more in the education sector and are in need of support. Please see their presentation for additional details. FSF slides.pptx - Google Slides</p>	
5. AOB	<p>UNICEF co-chair shared an update on ActivityInfo, including upcoming trainings being conducted by the IM/Interagency team on changes to the reporting platform for 2024. Partners are encouraged to participate in a training and ensure to report their Q1 activities. EWG co-chairs will share indicator reporting guidance soon.</p> <p>UNICEF co-chair shared an update on Education Week, which will take place from 25-28 April. A breakout session/ technical roundtable on refugee inclusion in the Moldovan Education system will take place on 26 April. More details will be shared as they're available.</p> <p>UNICEF co-chair shared a request for support received from Chisinau Municipality for a summer school that needs rehabilitation. If any partners can support, kindly reach out for more details.</p> <p>PiN asked if it is possible to compile a list of summer activities. EWG and CP SWG will jointly work on this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Co-chairs to share Education Sector indicator guidance.- Partners to report Q1 activities.- Partners to contact co-chairs if they have the possibility to support this.- EWG and CP SWG to compile list of summer activities.