



Inter-Agency Refugee Education Working Group (IREWG)

Meeting Details																				
Date	28 th October 2024																			
Time	1:00-2:30pm																			
Chair	Chair: Dr. Ivan Duminica, Head of the Policy Service for Interethnic Relations, Ministry of Education and Research (MER) Co- chairs: Katie Lampe, Child Protection Officer, UNHCR; Loujine Khoury, Education Specialist, UNICEF																			
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Agenda																				
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Information collection and relevant links		
Activity Info Platform: https://www.activityinfo.org		
Participants		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Ivan Duminica - MER - Katie Lampe- UNHCR - Loujine Khoury – UNICEF - Diana Alexei- Chisinau Municipality - Mary Ombaka- UNHCR - Mihail Platinda - UNICEF - Alexandra Daru – MER - Andrea Vremis – MER/UNHCR/UNICEF - Djavid Paknehad – CCR - Angela Cutasevici – Deputy Mayor- Chisinau - Laurel Jansory – People in Need - Tatiana Zaloi – Terres Des Hommes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andrei Bolocan – Don Bosco - Dimitri Suroutou– People in Need - Vlad Oleatovschi - WeWorld - Olesea Cazasu – NCUM - Irene Amoroso – WeWorld - Jeyna Vitioglu – Female Support Force - Irina Basiul – NCUM - Tatiana Tusca - CRS - Olga Pinzari - CRS - Liban Roman - CCR - Vera Gurievschi, World Vision - Felicia Bulat - IMPACT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nina Cusnir – Tarna Rom - Maria Pislaras - CCR - Olga Morozan – Pestalozzi Children’s Foundation - Maher Daboul – NRC - Yuliia Zenchenko – Female Support Force - Valentina Ghenciu – Lumos Foundation - Alexandrina Trofin- Amici Bambini - Carolina Scrifos - UNHCR

Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
Welcome and presentation of agenda	UNHCR co-chair Katie Lampe opened the meeting and thanked members who had attended both in person and online. She invited Dr. Duminica, the chair, to share the latest updates in the sector.	
1. MER Updates	<p>1. Update from MER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment Data for Ukrainian children enrolled in Moldovan schools. 	



MER noted that they continue to support Ukrainian children’s integration into Moldovan schools. The enrolment numbers of Ukrainian children for the school year 2024/2025 in preschool and general education increased in the month of October.

There are currently 2,393 Ukrainian children (1,229 boys and 1,164 girls) enrolled in Moldovan schools. In kindergartens, it was reported that there are 350 children enrolled, a significant reduction from September, though after discussion with meeting participants, it was noted that this is due to missing data from Chisinau Municipality, which will be corrected as soon as possible.

Of the children enrolled in Moldova schools, 86 percent studies in schools with the Russian language of instruction whereas 14 percent studied in schools with Romanian language of instruction. Enrolment in Romanian schools has gone up by 3 percent, compared to September 2024, when enrolment in Romanian schools was 11 percent.

- **Updates from MER on the visits to Sorooca and Balti**

The chair reported that the Education working group continued with monitoring visits in October 2024. One of these visits took place on 2nd October when the team conducted a meeting with Ukrainian mothers in Balti district at Anastasis centre managed by Diakonia, where 55 Ukrainian refugee children are registered. The second meeting on the same day was conducted at a Refugee Accommodation Center (RAC) in one of the dormitories of Alecu State University in Balti. The team had a meeting with refugee parents and discussed key issues, including opening a school with classes in the Ukrainian language of instruction, similar to Taras Shevchenko in Chisinau.

Following the request, MER identified B.P. Hasdeu Theoretical High school in Balti to offer Ukrainian and Romanian language courses for Ukrainian students, starting September 2025.

On 22nd October 2024, MER convened a working visit to further discuss the possibility of opening classes taught in the Ukrainian and Romanian languages for Ukrainian students at the school. Present at the visit were UNHCR, pedagogical department of Alecu Russo State University in Balti, NCUM and CCR. Also present were the Balti district education and psychopedagogical authorities and the management of B.P. Hasdeu Theoretical High school where the meeting was conducted.

MER reiterated their commitment to facilitating the integration of Ukrainian refugee teachers with pedagogical background into the Moldovan teaching workforce. MER will soon be starting translation of curriculum manuals for primary school with the Alecu Russo university’s pedagogical college



department of languages. MER has opened budget groups for teachers of the Ukrainian language and urged partners to support this important project of integrating Ukrainian children into Moldovan education system. MER further planned to open language courses for parents at Anastasis centre in Balti, to facilitate efficient integration of refugees and therefore was appealing to partners who would be willing to support this initiative.

Regarding the Roma community, MER noted that a total of 92 Roma refugee children are officially enrolled in Moldovan schools. On 14th October 2024, the IREWG made a visit to Soroca district. The team comprising MER, UNHCR, UNICEF, Ave Copiii and Roma Task Force, jointly with the education department of the district of Soroca, discussed with parents issues concerning their children's education. Interactions with Roma parents included presentations of success stories from the Roma community. The team further informed parents about various scholarship opportunities that were available to Roma children in Moldova.

MER also assisted a refugee woman to enroll in the Chisinau Pedagogical university teachers' training department. MER expressed gratitude to the University for accepting the documents after the deadline.

On Taras Shevchenko school updates, MER noted that the school was very strategic for the integration of refugee children as it offers the Moldovan curriculum in the Ukrainian language of instruction, while at the same time offering mandatory Romanian language lessons.

MER supported the paperwork of a Ukrainian teacher last month, who has now been deployed to the school. The school however still needs teachers for Romanian language for 6th grade. MER appreciated and encouraged support provided by international partners and thanked a private company for a donation of headsets and interactive blackboards to the school.

- **Families arriving to Moldova from Palestine and Lebanon**

MER reported that Palestinians from Gaza Strip have been arriving in Moldova since October 2023 (some of whom have Moldovan or Ukrainian nationalities but lived many years in Gaza). CCR arranged for a meeting of MER with the families, during which challenges facing the families were highlighted. So far, their major educational challenge was the language barrier, as some children speak only Arabic. MER provided support on an individual basis to families facing complex education challenges, and supported a teacher's application to teach at Taras Shevchenko, where she has since been hired.

Additionally, since the crisis started in Lebanon in September 2024, the Government of Moldova has evacuated 29 Moldovans from Lebanon. Some children from Lebanon have therefore already been admitted to a school in Chisinau. MER had information that 50 more Moldovans from Lebanon who



will soon arrive, and they are therefore making necessary arrangements to prepare for the children's integration in schools.

2. Updates from Chisinau municipality on enrolment rates of Ukrainian children and funding gaps

The Chisinau Municipality Deputy Mayor was welcomed to discuss the education situation of Ukrainian children in Chisinau and needs of the Municipality, which has the largest number of refugees attending school. She noted that as of October 2024, 34,981 Ukrainians with Temporary Protection live in Chisinau, of whom 8,271 are children. These numbers are increasing each week. The number of refugees with Temporary Protection (TP) is growing by an average of 300 persons per day. The Deputy Mayor noted that the total number of refugee children without TP is much higher. She said that presently, 1391 Ukrainian children are enrolled in schools in Chisinau, and 403 in kindergartens.

Over 4000 refugee children and youth have attended extra curricula activities, including summer camps. The major need for these children is to learn the Romanian language. In five schools, with CCR's support, the municipality is implementing a project of advanced and intense Romanian language courses where 280 refugee children are enrolled.

The municipality further has a programme of young activists with 52,000 youth involved in various activities and clubs for career guidance and personal development, out of whom 2,300 are refugees. The Deputy Mayor also reported on a startup project for youth within the municipality noting that refugee youth were eligible as beneficiaries and out of 3100 participants in this project 10 percent of the beneficiaries were Ukrainian refugees. Recently, 15 investment projects were selected to provide a grant of up to 10,000 euros, and out of these, one project was selected to start up activities for refugee and migrant youth.

In terms of health, 15,520 refugees received services in all municipal primary medical facilities.

Challenges for Municipality- Primary and preschool education

The municipality noted that they have experienced increased pressure on their schools' infrastructure in the past 6 years. For example, there are currently 13,327 children aged between 0-2 years old on the waiting list to be enrolled in KGs. Additionally, there has been an increase in over 20,000 children in Chisinau schools over the past 6 years, including an increase of over 3000 children for the current school year. To accommodate this increase in enrollment, the Municipality needs significant financial resources to expand and renovate its schools and KGs infrastructure.

REWG co-chairs to circulate information on current



	<p>The municipality is requesting partners' support in the expansion of learning infrastructure as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gymnasium # 52 –was closed for some time and has a capacity of 800. The municipality needs 70m MDL for rehabilitation and renovation of infrastructure.• Kindergarten #28- has a capacity of 180 children. Repairs are currently ongoing and so far, 11m MDL have been invested. The municipality requires an additional 38m MDL to complete the works and 10m MDL for equipment.• Gymnasium # 6 – Has capacity of more than 1500 children with very generous space. The Municipality has invested over 13m MDL but to complete renovations, needs an additional 82m MDL.• STEAM Educational Complex (KG building): It has a capacity of 300 children requires a total investment of 100m MDL. <p>If all renovations are completed, the impact will be access to education for more than 3000 additional children. To ensure quality, in addition to infrastructure expansion, the municipality will need trained teachers and equipment for schools.</p> <p>Don Bosco noted that they are open to discussions with the municipality on kindergarten #52, for which they had expressed initial interest. The co-chairs appreciated the gaps identified, which they reiterated that had been also highlighted in the "Roadmap for full Inclusion of Refugee children in Moldovan Schools" document. They added that REWG partners could co-share costs of school needs the same way they had collaborated during the rehabilitation of Taras Shevchenko gymnasium.</p> <p>3. Joint Trainings for Teachers on Roma Inclusion</p> <p>Three trainings were conducted jointly through collaboration of IREWG partners including MER, UNHCR, UNICEF, Ave Copiii, Tarna Rom and the Roma Task Force. Teachers who participated in these trainings are from the three schools that have integrated children from the Roma community from nearby RACs. The schools were Vasile Lupu from Chisinau municipality, Leo Tolstoy Lyceum from Glodeni and Popeasca Gymnasium from Stefan Voda district. A total of 94 teachers received training from the three schools. The objective of the training was to ensure teachers' awareness of Roma history and culture to ably support Roma children for enhancement of children's enrolment, regular school attendance and completion. Aside from Roma culture, teachers were also trained in child rights, psychosocial support, and inclusive education components. Since the training was a pilot, it was recommended that future trainings should be organized for teachers from other schools that have</p>	<p>needs for partners to identify where they can add additional support.</p>
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	<p>integrated Roma children, while applying best practices from the initial trainings. It was further noted that robust monitoring mechanisms should be established for informing on the extent to which trained teachers were applying practices learnt during the trainings and for potentially provide follow-up training, if needed based on findings from monitoring activities. Additional point highlighted was the need for allocation of longer training time to cover the planned content effectively and adequately.</p> <p>On comments, Tarna Rom expressed their appreciation for the support received in organizing the trainings. The co-chair noted that other partners planning to conduct similar training for teachers in schools integrating Roma children should share plans with IREWG coordination team to avoid possible duplication and ensure uniformity in delivery of training content. WeWorld shared that they had plans to open language courses in three centres, some of which had Roma community.</p> <p>CCR thanked MER and the Chisinau Deputy Mayor for the excellent collaboration with the organization. The organization has organized five (5) Romanian language centres in Chisinau and one in Comrat and one in Aneni Noi. CCR also expressed gratitude to MER for the prompt and positive support in solving problems with Palestinian refugees.</p> <p>4. Any Other Business (AOB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roadmap and Action Plan for Integration of Refugee Children in Moldovan Schools <p>UNICEF co-chair gave an update on the roadmap and action plan for the eventual full integration of all Ukrainian children Moldovan schools. The document has been under development for some time, and the co-chair noted that the costing of the document was being finalized by a consultant who is currently reviewing feedback and once done, the document will be shared with MER for review. Co-chair thanked the partners for their earlier input into the document, noting that after MER reviews the final draft, the document will be shared with the partners, for a final round of comments before official endorsement by MER.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RRP 2025-2026 <p>The co-chairs thanked partners for submission of their projects. Inter-agency team is consolidating them, and co-chairs will review and contact partners bilaterally if any changes are needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Mapping of Romanian Language Courses	<p>- Co-chairs to contact partners if</p>
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	<p>The co-chairs noted that the last time the Romanian language classes were mapped was in April 2024, and there is a need for review, as some information could have changed. The co-chairs will coordinate with IM colleagues to reopen the mapping Kobo and will share details with partners once ready.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introducing Andrea, MER Communications consultant <p>Andrea, jointly hired by UNHCR and UNICEF and deployed to MER, is working at MER on communications, including related to refugee education issues. Amongst other activities, Andrea will be updating the MER website and developing a newsletter. Any ideas to support her work are welcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Romanian as second language <p>UNICEF published a ToR for institutional consultancy to assess current Romanian language courses available for school-students, develop a consolidated curriculum for an intensive Romanian as a second language course and provide recommendations regarding rolling out an intensive program in schools where the language of instruction is Romanian.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publishing ToR on qualitative education assessment related to refugee children with children with special education needs in the Transnistria region. <p>The co-chair noted that UNICEF had advertised an institutional consultancy to conduct a qualitative assessment regarding the education needs of refugee children and children with special education needs in the Transnistrian Region. In addition, partners who have conducted assessments in the Transnistria region that are relevant for the desk review of the assessment, are kindly asked to share it with UNICEF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NRC Courses <p>NRC mentioned that they have developed posters for language and IT courses for children and youth. Partners were asked to share widely so that NRC can do meaningful programming in the same.</p> <p>The meeting was then called to a close.</p>	<p>modifications are needed to the submitted RRP activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Revised Kobo for mapping Romanian classes to be shared with partners soon.
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