Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation

Inter-Agency Refugee Education Working Group (IREWG)

Meeting Details	
Date	26th of March 2025
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

Agenda point	Time	Focal Point
1. MER updates regarding: • The enrollment numbers of Ukrainian children for the school year 2024/2025 in preschools and general education. • Updates on the test requirements in Romanian language for students from Ukraine. • Updates from MER on Taras Shevchenko School and its Action Plan. • Moldova MER & Ukraine MoES bilateral agreement on mutual recognition of diplomas and scientific degrees.	13:00 – 13:35	MER
2. Updates on education monitoring for children with different legal statuses learning in Moldova.	13:35 – 13:55	MER, UNICEF & UNHCR
3. Updates of the Roadmap for the inclusion of refugee children in the Education System in Moldova.	13:55 – 14:15	UNICEF

4. Updates on the Education status of children in the RACs.	14:15 – 14:20	UNHCR & Tarna ROM
4. AoB • Updates from MER and Tarna Rom on the follow-up visit to Stefan Voda. • REWG 2024 Fact sheet. • EduTech Labs Updated Mapping and schools' guidelines. • Activity Info Reporting Deadline for Q1 2025. • Summer activities.	14:20 - 14:30	UNICEF & UNHCR

Information collection and relevant links

Activity Info Platform: https://www.activityinfo.org

Participants

- Dr. Ivan Duminica - MER
- Katie Lampe- UNHCR
- Loujine Khoury - UNICEF
- Christos Martinis - Education Officer deployed at MER.
- Diana Alexei- Chisinau Municipality
- Mihail Platinda - UNICEF
- Marciuc Serghei - Secretariat of the Migration and Asylum Commission
- Cazasu Olesea – NCUM
- Tusca Tatiana –CRS
- Natalia Buga – CCR
- Roman Ceban – CCR
- Maria Pîslaraş - CCR
- Djavid Paknehad – CCR
- Marciuc Ale – American Councils
- Dmitri Surovtov – People in Need
- Evelina Mocanu – People in Need
- Tatiana Zaloi – Terres Des Hommes
- Nina Cusnir – Tarna Rom
- Natalia Balta – Pestalozzi Children's Foundation
- Olga Morozan – Pestalozzi Children's Foundation
- Maher Daboul – NRC
- Elya Cernolevschi – APSCF

Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
Welcome and presentation of the agenda.	UNICEF co-chair opened the meeting and thanked members who attended both in person and online. She invited Dr. Duminica from MER, the chair, to share the latest updates in the sector related to refugee education	
1. MER Updates	**- The enrollment numbers of Ukrainian children for the school year 2024/2025 in preschools and general education:** • Preschool: 982 children • School: 2,540 children • Total: 3,522 children Currently, 2,182 refugee children are enrolled in Russian-speaking schools and 358 in Romanian-speaking schools, with an overall gender balance among students. In terms of grade distribution, there are 1,215 students in primary school, 1,234 in gymnasium, and 113 in high school. More specifically, 255 students are in the 4th grade, 179 in the 9th grade, and 12 in the 12th grade. A key challenge remains in the 9th and 12th grades, where students are required to take written exams. The gender distribution is balanced (48.71% girls and 51.29% boys). **- Children Learning Online – EDUTech Labs:** - Online Learning: 326 children from Ukraine (171 girls, 155 boys). *The total number has decreased due to data deduplication.* - Non-Formal Education Activities: 1,682 children (896 girls and 786 boys) including: • 1,087 Moldovan children • 595 Ukrainian children	

	- **Updates on the test requirements in Romanian language for students from Ukraine:** Between February 27 and April 4, the MER, in collaboration with the National Agency for Curriculum and Evaluation, is conducting pre-tests for 9th and 12th-grade students to assess their readiness for graduation exams. These tests are not graded but provide insight into students' preparedness. The mathematics pre-test on February 27 revealed a low pass rate among 9th-grade foreign students. As an example at the "Taras Shevchenko" Gymnasium, 12 students (including seven Ukrainian refugees) participated, achieving an average score of 2.75 (passing grade is 5.0). This highlights the need for additional support, especially for refugee students. The official exam periods are set for May-June 2025, and for the first time, external monitors will oversee the 9th-grade exams to ensure fairness. Written exams will be centrally evaluated in Chisinau. A recent discussion with the Minister and State Secretary, Valentina Olaru, addressed the challenges faced by refugee and returning diaspora students. While 9th-grade students must take the Romanian language and literature exam, a Ministerial Order, for this year only, will allow them to continue their studies, even if they fail the Romanian language and literature exam, provided that by the end of the 11th grade, they pass the exam. Additionally, 9th grade students who fail the exam in June will have two additional chances to retake the tests in July and August 2025. For 12th-grade refugee and diaspora students, the situation is more complex. Moldova follows the Bologna Process, which requires passing the graduation exam, including the Romanian language and literature exam, for university admission with passing scores for the different subjects. Discussions are ongoing to find solutions that balance access to higher education with national and international educational standards. The exams will take place on the following dates: • 4th grade: May 13-22, 2025 • 9th grade: June 2-12, 2025 • 12th grade: June 3-20, 2025 Partners Remarks: UNICEF & UNHCR mentioned for the case of the 9th grade students, there is some flexibility. However, the situation for the 12th-grade students is more complex. Discussions are ongoing with the MER to determine the best approach, ensuring that students do not have to repeat an entire academic year, if they fail. A key priority is to provide additional academic support for 9th and 12th grade students. Many organizations are already involved in educational support, including in the Edutech labs and other learning spaces, but there is now an urgent need to intensify these efforts. Additionally, MER in coordination with schools is assessing the needs of 12th grade students. While some students, particularly those in Romanian-language schools, may not require extra help, others	- Action Point: REWG co-chairs to reach out to some partners for further supporting students in the 12th grade in preparing for their final exams.

	might. Once more information is available, REWG co-chairs will reach out to some partners operating in relevant regions to provide targeted support to this small but crucial group of students. - **Vocational-Technical Education** The MER worked overcoming challenges in accessing vocational and technical education for refugees, given some cases reported by Ukrainians last year. A Ministerial Order will soon be issued granting Ukrainian students access to the same tuition and enrollment conditions as Moldovan citizens. Additionally, refugees with at least one Moldovan parent can apply for financial support in vocational-technical institutions. - **Admission to Preschools and First Grade** The enrollment process for first grade has officially begun, providing families with two opportunities to register their children. The first stage, running from March 3 to April 30, 2025, allows parents to submit applications for children who will turn seven by the start of the school year. For those who miss the initial deadline or whose children will turn seven between September 1 and December 31, 2025, a second enrollment period will be held from May 19 to May 30. To support refugee families, the MER has allocated 10% of available spots for refugee children and children from ethnic minorities, who will be admitted without the need for entrance exams. This provision is outlined in the Methodology for the Admission of Children to Grade I (Order No. 1951 of December 31, 2024). A similar policy applies to high school admissions, ensuring that 10% of places in each educational profile are reserved for refugee students, as established by Order No. 190 of February 22, 2024. - **Updates from MER on Taras Shevchenko School and its Action Plan.** Currently, students are using Ukrainian textbooks, which are not aligned with the Moldovan curriculum. To address this, efforts will be made to identify and translate key textbooks from the Moldovan curriculum into Ukrainian. Following recent discussions, the MER has already assigned academic translators to perform a cost evaluation for translating key textbooks from the Moldovan curriculum (grades 1-7) into Ukrainian. Once the ministry finalizes the cost estimation, it will be shared with the REWG, enabling partners to explore potential financial support options. **Partner Remarks from PiN and CCR:** In addition to Ukrainian children, those from other countries, such as Palestine, face unique challenges. To support a group of 12 Palestinian children residing in the RACs PiN noted the need to print textbooks in their native language as they are also continuing their	

	online learning. While these students typically rely on online resources, physical copies are often necessary and are distributed accordingly. A significant challenge arises for Palestinian Moldovan and Palestinian Ukrainian students in the 12th grade who need to sit for their final high school exams in Bucharest or Kiev where the Palestinian embassies are located. The exams are paper based, monitored by a teachers committee from Palestine, and can only be conducted in countries with a Palestinian embassy or consulate. Since Moldova does not host a Palestinian embassy travel to Bucharest or Kiev is the only option. REWG asked partners to assist in mapping Palestinian children in the 11th and 12th grades to identify potential additional needs for support. - **Moldova MER & Ukraine MoES bilateral agreement on mutual recognition of diplomas and scientific degrees.** On March 5, 2025, Moldova's government approved an agreement with Ukraine on mutual recognition of educational qualifications and scientific titles. Effective in Moldova, the agreement covers all levels of education—primary, secondary, high school, vocational, higher education, master's, and doctoral degrees. It also ensures recognition of teaching degrees for educators in general and vocational-technical education. The agreement is available in Romanian, Ukrainian, and English (see attached to the minutes). - **MIA and MER data sharing agreement regarding children (0-18) with Temporary Protection (TP) and other legal status residing in Moldova.** MER, in collaboration with the MIA and IGM, is in the process of drafting an interministerial agreement to facilitate data exchange on children with Temporary Protection and other legal statuses (including refugees, asylum seekers, and those with residence permits). This agreement aims to ensure efficient cross-checking of educational enrollment status, whether students are formally enrolled in Moldovan schools or studying online.	
2. Updates on education monitoring for children with different legal	- **Standard Operating Procedures (SoP) for collecting information on the registration of the enrollment and Templates for collecting data from parents/legal guardian.** Simultaneously, MER is developing SoPs and registration templates for parents who enroll their children to be submitted to the Education Department in accordance with Article 17.1 of the Government Decision on Temporary Protection. This provision requires parents to notify the local	

statuses learning in Moldova	education department within five working days if their child enrolls in the education system, either physically or online. - **Monitoring Mechanism** By combining data from IGM and education enrollment registrations—covering both formal and online learning—MER will establish a comprehensive monitoring mechanism. This system will track, map, and monitor not only the number of children attending schools but also those studying online across Moldova. Given the complexity of the procedure and the involvement of various MER services (including Education Departments, Education Management Information System (EMIS), and other entities), coordinated efforts will be essential. MER remains committed to keeping the REWG updated about progress and developments as steps are taken.	
3. Updates of the Roadmap for the inclusion of refugee children in the Education System in Moldova.	- **Updates of the Roadmap for the inclusion of refugee children in the Education System in Moldova.** The latest updated draft of the roadmap has been shared with MER, and the Minister is expected to sign the document in the coming days/week. The updated roadmap incorporates recommendations from the MER and sets out a preparatory year for refugee children before they enroll in Romanian-speaking schools. This preparatory period will focus on Romanian language support, culture, and history, tailored to each child's grade level and proficiency. The aim is to ensure a sufficient level of Romanian language skills before formal school enrollment. For Russian-speaking schools, catch-up support programs will continue in the form of after-school sessions for the Romanian language and other subjects as needed.	
4. Updates on the Education status of children in the RAC.	In recent months, efforts have intensified to closely monitor the education enrollment of children living in RACs. While some RACs have received consistent support and monitoring for several years, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the educational status of each child, others have not been as closely observed due to various constraints. However, with the number of active RACs decreasing, it has become more feasible to monitor all centers more thoroughly. Since last month, UNHCR has conducted several visits to RACs, identifying and addressing emerging issues and making relevant referrals. A few RACs remain to be assessed, with the monitoring expected to conclude in the coming weeks. This will provide a comprehensive overview of educational needs and gaps, helping identify	

	priority locations for support. While many partners are scaling down activities, the assessment may highlight areas requiring intervention. Tarna Rom highlighted the unique educational challenges faced by Roma children in Moldova, noting that many remain unvaccinated, preventing their enrollment in preschools. Some organizations provide preschool-like services within RACs, but this leads to prolonged isolation, with children often supervised by older peers and lacking a regular educational environment. To address this, Tarna Rom proposed a coordinated plan with partners to better support preschool-aged Roma children. While some Roma children in certain regions attend preschools, a more organized response is needed. Over the past three years, partners have worked closely with RAC managers and Education Departments to enroll more Roma children in schools.	
5. AoB	- **Update from Tarna Rom: Follow-Up Visit to Stefan Voda** Tarna Rom continues to provide information sessions/trainings to schools enrolling Roma and Roma refugee children. The latest training was conducted in Stefan Voda, maintaining strong cooperation with the local Education Department. The recent training included sessions on inclusion, elimination of discrimination and bullying, along with information about protection referrals. Sessions were conducted in collaboration with UNHCR and UNICEF, with support of other partners and local education authorities. During the training, the team explored the new Edu Tech Labs. Additionally, Tarna Rom proposed organizing intercultural activities for Roma Week. Similar teacher trainings will be conducted by Tarna Rom at other schools in the future. - **REWG 2024 Fact sheet** The REWG has published the 2024 Fact Sheet, highlighting key achievements, challenges, and the impact on refugee and Moldovan children. The REWG co-chairs extend their gratitude to all partners for their dedication, coordination, and support throughout the year. The efforts of all partners have made a significant difference, and the REWG looks forward to continuing collaboration and momentum in 2025.	

	- **EduTech Labs Updated Mapping and schools' guidelines** The REWG is launching an update for the Edutech Lab mapping to determine the active labs established by partners beyond UNICEF and PIN. Last year, 98 tech labs were set up, and we now seek to identify which ones are currently functional. An Excel sheet will be shared with partners to update the status of these labs. Currently, there are 68-70 functional labs, and we aim to track the updated status of others. Additionally, a new Ministerial Order was published for schools' administration and teachers on how to manage the EduTech labs and operate the programs within these dedicated spaces to continue supporting Refugee education, social cohesion and contribute as well to the overall strategy of digitalization of the education sector. - **Activity Info Reporting Deadline for Q1 2025** As the first quarter concludes, the interagency team will soon circulate instructions on how to complete the quarterly reporting. The reporting period is expected to begin in April. If partners' activities undergo significant changes—whether in terms of location, scope, or focus—please notify REWG co-chairs promptly. This will allow REWG to update referral pathways and ensure effective coordination. If partners are phasing out any activities, REWG may be able to facilitate transitions or connections with other partners to ensure continued support. - **Summer activities** Last year, the Child Protection Sub-Working Group, with the support of the REWG, created a flyer for children's summer activities and plans to do so again this year. Two documents were prepared: one for parents and community members, listing open-registration activities such as summer camps, and another for partners to help coordinate and avoid scheduling conflicts. Carolina Sclifos is the UNHCR focal point for this initiative. UNHCR will soon circulate A Google Doc to streamline the process. The first version will be shared soon, with an updated version to follow closer to summer.	- Action Plan: EduTech Lab updated mapping to be shared with REWG partners.