


UKRAINE REFUGEE RESPONSE
Regional Sub-Working Group on Child Protection
Meeting Minutes

Time & location:	18 July 2022, at 15:00-16:15, online
Participants:	European Guardianship Network, IOM, IsraAid, Plan International, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO
Agenda:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction (UNICEF) 2. “Assessing UASC groups from Ukraine in Hungary: phenomenon of athletic teams and circus performers through Child Protection lens” – presentation (UNHCR) 3. “Back to school in exile: Challenges in bringing Ukrainian children and youth into education in the new school year” – presentation (UNHCR) 4. AOB
AGENDA POINT	DISCUSSION
1. Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the agenda and speakers
2. “Assessing UASC groups from Ukraine in Hungary: phenomenon of athletic teams and circus performers through child protection lens” – presentation (UNHCR)	<p>UNHCR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR briefed on protection assessments of certain sites accommodating refugee children in neighboring countries in the context of pre-arrangements such as sports clubs, athletic competitions, even circus troupes. The assessments include 3-4 hours ‘monitoring per location, dedicated solely to child protection. This involves talking to management, talking to staff, FGDs with caregivers with whom the children had travelled with, and finally talking to children in smaller groups (groups of 9-11, 12-14 and finally 15–17-year-old; boys and girls in separate FGDs) through child participation and listening. • Thus far, the UNHCR has assessed three locations in Hungary (encompassing 86 children, 14 caregivers/parents, 8 members of management staff). Designed the assessment as qualitative rather than quantitative. • Wanted to elucidate the care arrangements and protection of the children. Overall, this model when sport federations from one country readily accept, in a matter of hours, delegations from another country, on humanitarian grounds, seems to have worked quite well. In addition, Hungarian and international associations of performing artists have reached out to Ukrainian ones with readiness to evacuate children enrolled in schools for performing artists. • However, some of these groups have not been in touch with social protection workers. The children’s groups who arrived in March and April were organized by parents as summer trips, with very little accompanying paperwork, bar permission to coaches to take the children with them, for periods up to 12 months, in accordance with Ukrainian law. Authorities in one city complained that children arrive with some sort of authorization, and then parents show up without proper notice and take them away. In some cases, the arrangement had been intended to last a short while (in hope that the war would be over in a matter of weeks). Some children require a proper BIA.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR will share the questionnaire and the methodology applied for this exercise; three more locations to be covered in the coming week. <p>Plan International:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Romania, found several cases of children who had arrived under similar arrangements and with similar challenges. • Linking up with CP departments to follow-up and discuss in the CP SWG in Romania at the next meeting. • The situation has changed for the children since they had arrived, and so has the situation of their parents back in Ukraine. • Shared Laughter and Play Manual Plan International (plan-international.org) - games and creative exercises for adolescents in crisis settings developed in collaboration with Clowns without Borders, translated into Ukrainian, Romanian, Russian and Polish in addition to EN, FR, SP, AR. <p>UNICEF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested that these children may be separated rather than unaccompanied; UNICEF’s understanding is that these talent sponsorship schemes include legal guardianship procedures. • A lot of questions to be asked about these schemes, but they predate the last war, though they do change the status of children. Happy to have a further discussion on that. <p>UNHCR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar groups in Poland, with permission from the parents, and with coaches who have processed their authorizations, making them legal guardians in the Polish legal system; the children have approached UNHCR for cash assistance, and UNHCR asked them to first undergo BIAs; only four BIAs could be implemented, other children went back to Ukraine or informed the UNHCR that they would be going back to Ukraine in August. • The question remains whether (some of) the children are unaccompanied, since the coach’s legal guardianship is temporary; the papers simply legalize the temporary arrangement of these unaccompanied children, until they are reunited with parents. • In Slovakia, no BIAs have been performed with these children, and it remains to be assessed if it is in the best interest of the children to be in this temporary arrangement.
<p>3. “Back to school in exile: Challenges in bringing Ukrainian children and youth into education in the new school year” – presentation (UNHCR)</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>2022_18_07%20UNHCR%20CP%20SWG%2</p> </div> <p>UNHCR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an emergency that will require from all hosting states unprecedented response regarding education. • 1,5 million children are now hosted in countries neighboring Ukraine; 90% of those arriving are women and children of school age are estimated to be around 40-60%. • In Germany and Czech Republic, refugee children already reached high numbers. High pressure on the public schools in Prague and other urban areas in the Czech Republic has already been noted. • Big data challenge: 100s of thousands of schoolchildren are in unknown locations. Some do not have residency status in host countries, making it more difficult to enroll in schools and/or assess their numbers. • The neighboring countries to Ukraine have functioning school systems, but their capacity is already a challenge, esp. in Poland. In

Denmark and the Netherlands, they also expect strains on their educational systems.

- A good deal of children suffers from stress, PTSD, and double displacement consequences.
- UNHCR is already seeing a couple of potential legal and administrative gaps and barriers in access to education: 1) Temporary Protection (TP) holders in some countries do not get permanent residency permits, e.g., in Slovakia. 2) For TP holders, the EUMS do not have the obligation to enroll them in schools within the period of three months upon their arrival. 3) EU MS are not obliged to organize preparatory language classes for TP holders.
- Ukrainian MoEdu has offered the children the option to study online (middle and high school) and option to graduate from high school online, but the remaining issue is that not all children are able to access online learning. There is pressure from MoEdu of Ukraine on children to continue learning online, and the message is that they need not enroll in national systems of host countries. Consequently, the Ukrainian parents have insufficient options for education in host countries and are reluctant to enroll their children in local schools, the preparatory language classes, the MHPSS support, et al.
- Analysis showed that actual enrollment of children in Poland is very low; PESEL registrations are at 528,549 in Poland in the 0–17-year-old category. We can assume that only 40-43% of school-age children are enrolled to start school in Poland in September. Another worrisome fact is that 80% of those enrolled had not received preparatory classes or language classes. As mentioned, the Polish law does not enforce the compulsory education for Ukrainian children.
- An additional challenge is the limited capacity of online schools, and the problems of connectivity and sustainability. On the other hand, if parents opt for Polish national education, it remains unclear whether the issued diplomas would be recognized in Ukraine.
- A Rapid Needs Assessment performed by IsraAid and UNICEF in Moldova showed that a lot of parents (75%) are still in “wait and see” mode, hoping that they would be able to return to Ukraine soon. 60% want to continue with online learning provided by Ukraine authorities. The boys tend to drop out of the educational system in higher grades of secondary school.
- Most of the challenges stem from the expectation on the part of the refugees that the war would soon be over. The coming six weeks are critical in terms of the refugees deciding on staying where they are/returning to Ukraine/moving onwards.
- The EC produced a whole set of guidance on inclusion of Ukrainian children into national education systems available at [LINK](#).

IOM:

- Any findings on Roma children?
- IOM is working on determining the status of enrollment in the national education in host countries and would welcome working together with the UNHCR on that.
- Ukrainian diaspora would be important to engage with.

UNHCR:

- The EC is working on gathering enrollment data for all EUMS. They have not yet received data from all MoEdu, and some were reluctant to share. Expecting the first publications of these figures in a few weeks and looking forward to seeing where the gaps are and where humanitarian partners can work with the EU to bridge them.
- When it comes to data sharing and sharing of guidance, forums like CP SWG are ideal for the purpose.
- UNHCR automatically integrates the data on enrollment (from Poland for example) and the data on qualitative assessments on the web pages of Education WGs on the UNHCR data portal.
- Concerned partners (UNICEF, UNESCO, IOM, UNHCR etc.) need to make sure that we do not overflow refugees with surveys. For the time being, coordination seems to be going very well, but at some point, for education, all the data would need to be

	<p>centralized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roma children: there is a lack of data concerning this group, and there are issues with bringing these communities into the education systems. They often do not have Ukrainian nationalities, but some form of residency permits, which still make them eligible for TP in some countries. There are also challenges with providing Roma communities with information on education, there is the language barrier, the issue of vacancies and accessibility of schools, lack of previous learning (no prior certificates), etc. In conclusion, there are no big data on Roma on education, but UNHCR is aware of the issues that need to be addressed.
4. AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next Regional CP SWG meeting will take place on 2 August 2022 at 3 PM.

No.	Action	Who	Status
1.	Organize a separate, bilateral discussion on unaccompanied young athletes and other such categories.	UNHCR & UNICEF	pending
2.	Organize a follow-up discussion on the Roma.	CP SWG Chairs	pending