

**UN REFUGEE RESPONSE COORDINATION IN ROMANIA**  
**Education Working Group meeting**  
**May 17, 2023, 9:30 – 11.00 am**  
**Venue - Online (Zoom)**

**Agenda**

1. Introduction and welcoming of new Education WG members (UNICEF)
2. Feedback from recent meetings or events: with MoE and other working groups or constituencies (UNICEF); with ISU working group on Education (JRS)
3. Thematic discussions: operationalization of the new 50/20 provisions (education-related considerations); needs assessment report of UA youth refugees
4. Updates from WG members (including on situation, needs, progress & upcoming events)
5. 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 feedback on two recent meetings held with MoE. The first meeting was with Secretary of State Mr. Lixandru focusing on the operationalization of the education provisions including conditionalities made under the new 50/20 programme, extending now the conditionality to either enrolment in Romanian schools, or to alternative education programs including hubs. Most discussions focused on the documentation required for the latter, and triggered a letter that was sent thereafter from MoE to all ISJs requesting that ISJs conduct an inventory of all non-formal education services and activities provided (mainly through local NGOs), with such lists to be made available on ISJ's websites before the implementation of the conditionality in June. A bilateral meeting between UNICEF Representative and the Minister of Education also took place last week, where it was agreed to explore the organization a joint event/workshop with MoE/ISJs and development partners to clarify the process and discuss preparations for the next academic year. UNICEF will follow up with MoE and revert to Education WG members in due course.

JRS shared the following feedback from the last Education coordination meeting organized with ISU:

- the situations and various practices throughout the country in different parts of the country discussed – these are not easy (e.g., in Sibiu they might not have enough space to accommodate requests/needs).
- different inputs on various practices throughout the country regarding registration were also discussed.

- voiced concerns on what will happen during summer holiday.
- highlighted that we should advocate for registration in formal Romanian schools (even though children may attend hubs/continue with learning by Ukrainian curriculum alongside).
- **JRS** received reports where Ukrainians were refused to be enrolled, which goes against the provisions of the law (at least in two counties, not at ISJ-level) | On registrations, they suggested enrolment with the school inspectorates in order to have a clear idea on the numbers and willingness of integration | Also shared that the instructions issued by the MoE have been treated differently in different parts of the country.

**UNICEF** also reported on recent field visits and meetings with ISJ Maramures highlighting similar issues and concerns (lack of understanding and preparation for operationalizing the new provisions at ISJ level).

### **3. Thematic discussions: operationalization of the new 50/20 provisions (education-related considerations); needs assessment report of UA youth refugees**

**Salvati Copii** shared that they are continuing the educational interventions, and reported on recent teacher training activities conducted.

**UNICEF** also shared the most recent figures on registered children – 12.453 in total (with 3.349 enrolled and 9.104 as audients) and discussed support provided to ISJs to facilitate registration process.

**JRS** shared information and raised concerns on the two main issues:

- one, the main principle being for children to enrol increasingly in Romanian schools.
- two, the sustainability of alternative/complementary activities (including hubs) must be taken into account – as many NGOs are saying they will not be able to continue their activities, so this has to be discussed.

**TdH** shared the following points:

- agreed on the issue of sustainability and supporting the efforts of the Romanian state, but we must consider the actual capacity because having children enrolled as audience will not solve much (i.e. access vs. learning).
- enrolment only on paper will not help, because the end goal is integration and enrolment is now more or less happening for the parents to receive financial benefits (as they are conditioned to do so).
- shared their perspective on further supporting the governmental efforts and providing language classes.

- raised the point of Ukrainians with higher level of vulnerabilities than average and the issue of their social inclusion in Romanian schools.

Caritas shared the results of the survey they conducted with the parents of the 100 pupils enrolled at their school - out of which 75 attend classes daily:

- 5 parents shared they will enrol their children in Romanian schools | 10 shared they will return to Ukraine | 60 registered as audience but want to have online classes and will continue going to Caritas for learning support.
- children do not attend the Romanian language classes: out of 20 enrolled, only 10-12 actually attend them | also (all below 12 years old)
- overall, in their experience, they are not interested in the Romanian schools, they are only enrolled as audience to “*tick the box*”.

FNT clarified they are working / worked on two different studies – the needs assessment report of UA youth refugees that was shared with the group<sup>1</sup>, as well as a study/mapping on university-level education which preliminary findings will be shared hopefully soon.

As for updates on university-level education, they shared the following points:

- only 6 public universities in Romania are targeting in a way or another the Ukrainian young people who want to enrol.
- there is no official regulation on enrolment in universities, as universities have autonomy - but usually they do not make decisions in the absence of guidelines from the Ministry.
- currently 4 universities in Romania offer some sort of scholarship/support to Ukrainian students, otherwise they are treated as internationals (non-EU), which means higher fees.
- under those conditions, tuition fees are around 2.500 – 5.000 euro (4-5 times bigger than what Romanian students are paying, not to mention the different types of scholarships Ro students can access).
- only a few universities have specific measures for UA refugees - Suceava, Cluj, Timisoara.
- according to their findings, more than 45 young people are willing to be enrolled, but if the taxation will be at the level now, they will not afford it (also to consider the fees for legal translations of various documents).

As for the needs assessment report of UA youth refugees, they shared the following points:

- it seems that youth centres are the most requested facilities, including need for wider access to computer labs for online learning.

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<sup>1</sup> report ‘Hope and uncertainty: A needs assessment of Ukrainian youth refugees in Romania and Moldova’ commissioned by NRC and carried out in collaboration with the National Youth Foundation in Romania and National Youth Council of Moldova.

➡ Read the Executive Summary: <https://lnkd.in/gE-kMu6H>

➡ Read the Full Report: [https://lnkd.in/gY\\_APqXj](https://lnkd.in/gY_APqXj)

- needs of UA youths for social and emotional support.
- some of them feel a bigger need of language classes, especially those over 25 years old.
- young people are also asking to have their own space.

TdH shared they might be able to help some of the young people to cover for some costs for the enrolment/translation for documentation fees (not tuition fee), if they fit the criteria after the assessment of their social workers – but this is not a sustainable solution, they cannot help many young people (in Bucharest, Brasov, and Constanta).

It was agreed to pursue the discussion once the report is available.

#### **4. Updates from WG members (including on situation, needs, progress & upcoming events)**

##### UNICEF:

- highlighted the importance of safe learning spaces with access to online and computers – UNICEF started providing laptops / installing computer labs (in schools, youth centers etc.)
- shared information on the EU funds that were accessed by MAI, 120 mil. EUR for refugees to cover expenditure already committed for the landlords as well as new commitments from Government: <https://www.mai.gov.ro/anunt-incepere-proiect-cod-smis-160004/>

##### JRS:

- shared the following information regarding the financial aspect, highlighting that it might be interesting to find out how much money have been actually used so far - <https://romanalibera.ro/international/criza-din-ucraina/ue-deconteaza-romaniei-200-de-milioane-de-euro-pentru-refugiati-ucraineni-banii-vor-fi-transferati-romanilor-care-i-au-gazduit/>
- mentioned that the strike of the teaching staff is a context that might affect our activities

FNT also mentioned that the non-used budget is accessible, but they must ask for it – since a lot of money was not used, we have to push it with the Ministry of European Funds, because they have more than 25% not used and they are allowed to use it until the end of the year. Also mentioned that big NGOs could also access it.

#### **5. AOB**

UNICEF asked the members of the WG to share their inputs for the interagency update covering their activities for the month of May **by COB on Tuesday 23 May 2023**

**Next meeting: May 31, 2023, 9:30-11:00 am, online (Zoom)**