

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

<b>Time &amp; location:</b>	<b>07 June 2022, at 15:00-16:15, online</b>
<b>Participants (in order of appearance):</b>	Caroline Dulin Brass, UNHCR Sergii Lavrukhin, UNHCR Vera D. O'Donnell, UNHCR Pamela Dale, UNICEF Igor Vorontsov, UNHCR Ulrike Julia Wendt, IRC Daniel Redondo, IOM Anna Knutzen, UNICEF Celina Jensen, Better Care Network Silvia Oñate, Plan International Colleen Fitzgerald, Plan International Gatienne Jobit, TDH
<b>Agenda:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Introduction (UNHCR)</b></li> <li><b>2. Presentation by Pamela Dale, UNICEF Regional Social Policy Advisor</b></li> <li><b>3. AOB</b></li> </ol>
<b>AGENDA POINT</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>
1) Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tour de table</li> </ul>
2) Presentation by Pamela Dale, UNICEF Regional Social Policy Advisor	<p>UNICEF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting some of the work that UNICEF is doing in the social protection sphere in the regional refugee response.</li> <li>• UNICEF sees a unique situation in the region, in terms of variations in the national social protection systems, and a unique context with the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) and how it's being applied country by country.</li> <li>• Though response involves a mix of upper and middle income and high-income countries, there are a lot of variations in capacity and scale of the national social protection systems. UNICEF therefore varied the support provided to countries when it comes to financial benefits, social protection, support for children and capacity-building of national and subnational social protection systems to deliver with more direct provision.</li> <li>• <b>Poland</b> is an interesting case in the sense of full application of the TPD. Refugees there have access to all the social</li> </ul>

protection programs, and they have specific programs for children and a universal child grant, a school grant, nursery grants, foster care grants and family care grants. This extensive program is a significant part of the Polish budget, and they also have a strong digital system on the child payment side. Poland has registered over a million people (PESEL) and has supported 400,000 children with payments without external assistance. Humanitarian partners are doing complimentary humanitarian cash transfers. UNICEF is therefore looking at complementing the gaps at the municipal level (for example, to ensure that children with disabilities have access to these programmes) and providing support for transfers to foster parents and temporary carers.

- Working to set up a sort of emergency fund for municipalities for cases of persons who are forced out of current accommodation for example.
- In **Slovakia**, there is a fairly limited social protection system, low levels of coverage, low levels of benefits, and low levels of application of the TPD. The authorities seem to be deliberately, for reasons of social cohesion, keeping the benefits for refugees at a lower level, and enabling access only to a small number of programmes, resulting in a lot of gaps in the social protection system.
- Registration systems in Slovakia are not particularly up-to-date and are not networked. They are not able, for example, to link up a child with disabilities with available cash or services. Slovakia therefore needs to have supplementary registration. UNICEF is doing disability assessments and disability care allowances and working on digitalization; partnered with UNHCR already and now partnering with the IFRC and IOM as well in cash distribution (to refugee households). Ongoing discussion with child protection colleagues in Slovakia concerning the weaknesses in the referral systems and on joint identification of children in need.
- **Hungary and Czech Republic** are sort of middle ground in comparison to previous two countries. One of the challenges discussed in these two countries with cash for protection global cluster is cash for unaccompanied and separated children, since different agencies and different governments have different rules in terms of appropriate ages for children to receive cash directly without a carer (over 15, over 18, or any age), the risks of giving children access to cash, referral pathways, etc.
- Children with disabilities is one of the biggest gaps/challenges on the social protection side across all countries, due to complexity of their needs, the complexity of the disability assessment and generally very medicalized approach to disability in the countries of the region, gaps in data and gaps in planning.
- Governments are very concerned about the benefit levels for refugees not exceeding those that are given to the national population, particularly the poor, because they are worried about the fallout and the negative reactions (the social cohesion challenge).
- In other counties of the region (**Romania and Moldova** for example), UNICEF is in the early days of the discussion with the governments, who have been saying that they have the capacity within their national financial planning structures to respond to up to 500,000 refugees, and currently they are at some 380,000. Therefore, they will not be needing support until they reach the mark of half a million.
- In these two countries, registering issues with low coverage of Roma population due to, for example, inappropriate documentation, and they remain without financial support while their TP applications are being reviewed.
- In Romania, UNICEF is doing less in the social protection space in the immediate refugee response space, but rather focusing more on long-term systems building, since Romania has major gaps in their social protection system, even for the national

	<p>population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Moldova, UNICEF is working with UNHCR, WFP and IOM to provide cash transfers to refugee households. The government in Moldova refuses to provide direct support and wants all the assistance to come from international community, and sees the refugees from Ukraine mainly as a transit population. They are, therefore, currently not thinking of providing longer-term support.</li> <li>• <b>Would appreciate feedback from CP SWG members on areas where lack of cash is putting children at risk because of their specific characteristics (apart from gaps in support to foster families).</b></li> <li>• One area where cash can be an important part of the response is <b>education</b> – subject to identifying what the costs for education are and how they can be met, what is available nationally, how cash might pose an incentive in terms of enrollment, etc. At present, UNICEF is supporting school feeding and purchasing digital equipment for the children to be able to continue studying the Ukrainian curriculum online. In Poland, the Govt provides grants at the beginning of each school year. The gaps are more on the supply side than the demand side – not enough teachers (with appropriate language skills) small classroom sizes, etc. UNICEF is directing resources to the supply side at present.</li> </ul>
3) AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Next Regional CP SWG meeting will take place on 20 June 2022 at 3 PM.</b></li> </ul>

No.	Action	deadline	FP	Status
1.	Chairs of national CP SWGs to provide input to Regional CP SWG External Update	9 June CoB	Vera (UNHCR)	pending