

Malopolska Coordination Group Meeting

Meeting Minutes – 25 August

Meeting subject:	Małopolska Coordination Group Meeting
Time & location:	9 am – UNHCR Krakow Sub-Office
Chaired by:	VOICE Amplified; UNHCR; Open Krakow Coalition
Minutes prepared by:	UNHCR
Participants:	Malopolski Urzad Wojewodzki; CLEAR Global; Faros Elpidas; French General Consulate; Fundacja Kocham Debniki; Fundacja Zrodlo Zycia; Halina Niec Leal Aid Center; IOM; Misja Slowanska; OWiM; Polski Czerwony Krzyz; Project Hope; UNICEF; UNHCR; VOICE Amplified; Wolontariat 4 Peron;
Agenda:	<p>Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction from the co-chairs and update on the points decided on the last Coordination meeting. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Updates from the refugee community and the UA-led organizations 2) Education: Update following meeting with Ministry of Education (UNICEF) 3) Education: Presentation of challenges observed on the ground 4) Winter preparedness: Presentation of the current situation based on available data analysis and possible scenarios (OWiM and partners) 5) Winter preparedness: Summary of participants’ submissions on their winter preparedness and challenges observed 6) AOB
AGENDA POINT	DISCUSSION
Introduction and update on points from last meeting	<p>Participants were welcomed to the second Małopolska Coordination Group meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOICE Amplified shared that the next meeting of the Task Group on Women, Children and At-Risk Groups Protection will take place on Tuesday, 30 August from 14.00 to 16.00. The meeting will be held at the offices of Women’s Right’s Center (Centrum Praw Kobiet) and will take place in both Polish and English. The meeting will include discussion on how to proceed in cases where someone discloses having been a victim of violence, and discussion on safe accommodation, how to find it, and what happens when it cannot be found. Partners interested in participating should contact Aska Warchal-Beneschi (aska@voiceamplified.org).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation Institute Poland Ukraine shared that since the week of 15 August, Communication Group meetings have been taking place. Meetings are expected to continue taking place once a week going forward. The goal of the meetings is to exchange information about what information is most necessary for Ukrainian refugees. Organizations which share information with Ukrainian refugees are invited to contact Olha Menko (olha.menko@uainkrakow.pl) for more information. • UNHCR provided updates about activities in Malopolska. Since mid-August UNHCR has introduced protection monitoring activities in the region. UNHCR protection monitors are traveling to locations where refugees are present to speak with them and better understand their needs and current trends. Protection monitors are all Ukrainian nationals. All information collected will be made public once analyzed. UNHCR also shared that the Blue Dot and Cash Enrolment Center located at Tauron Arena have closed. The Blue Dot has temporarily moved to the Multicultural Center at Galeria Kazimierz. In addition, a transition to targeted cash assistance for the most vulnerable individuals remains underway.
<p>Agenda point 1</p>	<p>Foundation Institute Poland Ukraine introduced the refugee-led organizations which expressed a desire to provide updates during the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission-U highlighted that Ukrainians are facing problems with translation in Poland. However, a positive of this is the fact that Ukrainians who already speak some Polish can help those who do not. This may help with integration of new arrivals. Mission-U also noted that, although the organization wants to continue to grow and help Ukrainians in Poland, there is currently no clear system for organizations to apply for financial support from the municipality. As such, there needs to be clear guidance and an application system to obtain such financial support. • Misja Slowianska shared that the organization has a shelter with a capacity of 100 beds. Every month between 1500 and 2000 people come to the organization for humanitarian aid. Around 3000 people have passed through the shelter. The majority of these people have been relocated to other countries. The organization is also making efforts to relocate people for six-month periods. This is with the understanding that space is needed to prepare for the upcoming winter period. In addition, when the crisis began individuals were staying in the shelter for 3-5 days. Now, individuals are staying for longer periods. The organization has shifted its focus to talking with refugees about how they must find jobs and integrate into Polish society. About 55% of the individuals staying in the shelter have already found jobs. This is the basic starting capital for these individuals to find their own housing and further integrate into Polish society. However, there is also a need for remaining individuals to obtain employment. The biggest challenge remains the language barrier. The number of free language courses available is not sufficient. Finally, as an organization Misja Slowianska would like to see more interaction and communication with municipalities, as they are all working towards a common goal.
<p>Agenda point 2</p>	

It was noted that the Education Coordination meeting proposed during the last Inter-Sector Coordination meeting did not take place.

- UNICEF provided an update about recent activities. At the national level, UNICEF has established a working group to discuss educational issues. Meetings take place in both Polish and English. Interested partners should email UNICEF for inclusion on the mailing list. UNICEF has also started a back-to-school campaign. The campaign includes three main activities. The first is supporting implementation of a learning passport for online learning at the national level. The second is support for teacher training on how to navigate the current situation. The third encompasses policy work with the Ministry of Education on digital education.

Agenda point 3

- The M. Reja Foundation highlighted that education touches not just children, but also entire families – both Ukrainian and Polish. Furthermore, education can be looked at structurally at the micro, meso, and macro levels. At the meso level it is important to note that in Krakow and the surrounding areas, administrative borders are not the borders of educational mobility. Furthermore, there is still a lack of guidance and coordination at the local level. As such, different municipalities and their self-governments will take different approaches on issues, such as the policy for hiring Ukrainian cultural assistants and teachers. A further deficit is the lack of information sharing on sensitive issues such as open places in school and information about education options beyond high schools. It is possible an application can be created to better facilitate the process of identifying open places. However, this would require the cooperation of City authorities. At the micro level there needs to be a discussion about what kinds of individuals will be present in schools. A key role in this respect could be filled by cultural assistants.
- The M. Reja Foundation summarized the areas in which improvements can be made. First, this includes an application to keep track of free places in schools, as well as identify in which schools cultural assistants are employed and which languages they speak. This also includes facilitating access of Polish-speaking Ukrainian teachers to the job market amid the current nation-wide teacher shortage. Finally, it includes policy makers and educators taking responsibility for creating systems that contribute to student success. Ukrainian children in the Polish system, even those without Polish language skills, are required to take steps, such as sit the 8-grade exam, which determine their career futures. For this reason, a hybrid system is necessary. In such a system children could attend in-person classes in the Polish system, as well as some online classes in the Ukrainian system and ultimately obtain two certificates.
- VOICE Amplified asked UNICEF about whether the Agency’s policy work on digital education encompasses the hybrid model mentioned by the M. Reja Foundation.
- UNICEF responded that the idea behind the work is not to create new systems, but ensure that the quality of learning is adequate in both systems. This is in tandem with efforts to support children and families from all sides, making sure they

make decisions in their best interest and have the resources to feel safe, supported and integrated. UNICEF further noted that some neighboring countries have mandated children enroll in school if they want to remain in the country. UNICEF sees that there is room for better regulation in this front which ensures policies are in the best interest of children.

- M. Reja Foundation noted that all of the proposed digital solutions may be helpful. However, it also cannot be forgotten that children need in-person relationships and social time. Additionally, education is not national and online learning further highlights the point that education can be global. Many Ukrainian families do not know where they will live mid- to long- terms. As such, for the time being, such hybrid solutions that allow children to obtain two certificates remain the best option.
- Foundation Institute Poland Ukraine noted that Ukrainian mothers have autonomously already tried to create such hybrid solutions by sending children to Polish schools while keeping them enrolled online in Ukrainian schools. This highlights that Ukrainian mothers want their children to participate in such a hybrid system. Additionally, the Foundation asked if any partners have been assessing whether children have access to WiFi and laptops, as these are essential to digital education.
- Another participant highlighted that it is necessary to talk about ideal learning modality solutions. However, it is more urgent to talk about the actual situation and the most urgent problems. For example, in practice the information about free places in shared online by the schools themselves has often been incorrect. Other times it changes at the last minute. This leaves Ukrainian parents confused. It also leaves children out of school places they were counting on and without an alternative.
- Zustricz Foundation further highlighted the need for discussion on the most urgent problems and concrete steps that can be taken to find solutions. In the previous week, six schools announced free places in preparatory courses. However, parents were told they could only enroll children in person. This is a process that is difficult for refugees who are not familiar with the schools and with the city. There must also be solutions regarding employment of cultural assistants. In the spring the possibility of hiring cultural assistants on external contacts was discussed, as this would allow them to work part time at two different schools. However, recently no progress has been made on this front.
- Multicultural Center Krakow noted that the Migrant InfoPoint employs an assistant whom refugees may call to ask about free spots in school and help with the enrolment process. The assistant can also act as an intermediary to specific schools with which refugees have been having problems. The Multicultural Center has also signed a letter of understanding with UNICEF which includes 6 points. While they will not solve systemic problems, they include the purchase of laptops, integration activities, and language courses, and are a start to helping families.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I Love Debniki Foundation shared that from July, together with Let's Help Together Foundation and Unity Foundation, the Foundation has been working on providing activities for older children and teenagers following a modern approach to education. In September, these activities will continue as after school sessions targeting about 150 children. It is planned that the space used for these sessions will remain open during the day as a place for children to attend remote learning classes. These are the Foundation's first steps in opening an alternative international school. Multicultural Center Krakow shared that such a center for remote education had been prepared in Warsaw. The center includes all the necessary equipment and a well-arranged space. Perhaps this is something that is lacking in Krakow and could be considered.
Agenda Point 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OWiM presented about the Observatory's three ongoing projects. A full report of the first of these projects will be available on the Observatory's website in September. The remaining two projects have deadlines in December and it is hoped that preliminary data will be available at that time. A subsequent OWiM presentation on possible population movements scenarios was moved to the next meeting due to time constraints.
Agenda Point 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The given agenda point was shifted to next meeting due to time constraints. UNHCR encouraged partners to continue to fill out the activity reporting form. Partners who have any questions or require help filling out the document can contact Natalia Solarz (solarz@unhcr.org).

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY				
No.	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status (as of)
1.	Spreadsheet on how each participant is preparing for winter, and what information participants are lacking.	Co-chairs	8 Sept.	Ongoing
2	Survey on winter preparedness information needs	Co-chairs	8 Sept.	Ongoing

3.	Organize a meeting with Education actors.	UNICEF, UNHCR, Reja Foundation	Week of 8 Sept.	Ongoing
4.	Work on how the information of the updates from the local authorities can be circulated among participants.	City of Krakow, UNHCR, VOICE Amplified	Week of 8 Sept.	Ongoing