

UN REFUGEE RESPONSE COORDINATION IN ROMANIA
Education Sub-Working Group meeting
April 5, 2023, 9:00 – 10.30 am
Venue - Online (Zoom)

Agenda

1. Introduction and welcoming of new Education SWG 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. Updates from SWG members (including on situation, needs, progress & upcoming events) (All)
4. Discussion on key advocacy messages on education (as a joint contribution to the paper initiated by the Protection sector WG – draft was shared with the SWG members)
5. AOB

Participants: WV, JRS, TdH, NRC, SCI, Plan International, CNRR, IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR

2. Feedback from recent meetings or events: with MoE and other working groups or constituencies (UNICEF); with ISU working group on Education (JRS)

Feedback from the meeting with MoE and other working groups or constituencies (UNICEF):

- Discussions on the 50/20 programme - nothing new as far as education is concerned, waiting for the final decisions. According to info available now, education (mandatory enrolment) as a condition for the program is still being considered.
- UNICEF shared their concern for the funding of education hubs beyond the end of this academic year. Given that the hubs have been reducing the pressure on schools, MoE is sharing this concern and agreed on exploring joint options for funding (for example, EU funds at country level).
- MoE agreed to organise a joint follow-up session also with the Ukrainian teachers to explain the procedure for local accreditation.

Feedback from the meeting with ISU working group on Education (JRS) on 29/03:

- Participation from the following county school inspectorates (ISJ): Bistrița-Năsăud, Bihor, Covasna.

- The discussion focused on the specific situations related to the Romanian language courses in these counties, where the number of Ukrainian refugees is not that large. For example, in Bihor, there was confusion of the type of language courses that could be organized for foreigners – with adults having to pay for language courses, while children can attend for free.
- Before this meeting, [JRS](#) also requested from MoE to provide the figures for enrolled children as audience in all the counties; the data provided (which did not exactly match [JRS](#)' request) showed that the top 3 counties with children registered as audience are: Bucharest, Arad, Timișoara.

3. Updates from SWG members (including on situation, needs, progress & upcoming events)

- [JRS](#) shared that there is a new Ordinance on the Government agenda to be approved today; if approved, it will enter into force in ~3 days (the new OUG would modify art. 1 of OUG no. 15/2022, regarding the granting of humanitarian support and assistance by the Romanian state to foreign citizens or stateless persons in special situations, coming from the area of the armed conflict in Ukraine).
- [JRS](#) also shared that they had a meeting with the Bucharest ISJ, focused on the registration of Ukrainians in schools. Given that Bucharest has almost half of the audience registered in the entire country, ISJ asked for support from the NGOs to help provide with lists of children in the educational hubs. To be noted that registrations with ISJ can be done for the following categories: as audience, as pupils, for extracurricular activities only (mainly education hubs), for enrolment in private schools, for Romanian language courses only.
 - those wanting to help with lists can contact Stefan Leonescu at 0732129236 and/or leonescustefan@yahoo.com
 - another POC regarding school registrations: the Education desk at Romexpo - Maricica Ciubara | office.maricica@gmail.com | +40 799 626 330 (she is hired by UNICEF and seconded to the Bucharest ISJ)
- With regards to the enrolment certificate for children to have access to public transportation (In Bucharest as per order issued by ISJ Bucharest in March), it has been clarified that it only applies to children registered as audience in schools, not applicable for education hubs.

Documents shared / brought into discussion:

- **Ordinance no. 44/29.01.2004**, regarding the social integration of foreigners who have acquired international protection or a right of residence in Romania, as well as citizens of the member states of the European Union, the European Economic Area and citizens of the Swiss Confederation - <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/218224>
- **Order no. 6,391/12.12.2022**, regarding the approval of the amount of the participation fee for the introductory course in Romanian, respectively for the assessment session of linguistic skills in Romanian for foreign adults who have acquired the right of residence in Romania, as well as for citizens of the Union member states of the European Union and of the European Economic Area and citizens of the Swiss Confederation – *for information on the level of payment that needs to be done for the Romanian language course*

4. Discussion on key advocacy messages on education (as a joint contribution to the paper initiated by the Protection sector WG – draft was shared with the SWG members)

- With regards to the 2nd point - *making the enrolment of school-age children in local schools obligatory in line with as of the 2023-24 academic year* - UNICEF advocated for a transition period / a more progressive approach, opinion shared by the other members of the SWG.
- With regards to the 4th point - *developing an induction/welcome program for refugee children enrolled in Romanian schools focusing on the acquisition of linguistic and socio-cultural competences* - SCI mentioned that the induction program should be more defined and act as a bridging program.
- It was suggested that for the 5th point, the mention regarding the provision of *vaccination records* be eliminated from the document.
- TdH raised the point that MoE included some incentives for teachers who include Ukrainian students in their classes.
- UNICEF also raised the point that kindergartens and nurseries be included separately from schools, in order to be prioritized.
- Given that there might be legal restrictions on having Ukrainian teachers enrolled in the system, JRS raised the point of coming up with alternatives – one such alternative would

be having them work together with the Romanian teachers (giving the example of Constanta). They further advocated for the urgent need for the authorities to have a dialogue with the Ukrainian counterparts, as well as consider discussing with the Government to have a centralised approach on the issue.

- With regards to the Ukrainian teachers and the legal requirements to have them enrolled in the system, [UNHCR](#) proposed as an alternative to have them as auxiliary/ non-teaching staff. It was noted that there could be the issue of funding from the MoE's side, as well as difficulties in implementing such a separation of duties.
- On the source of financing, [UNICEF](#) mentioned it would be difficult to finance the salaries of Ukrainian staff from the state's budget, given that the budgets are approved a year in advance and suggested to approach the local authorities for this, given they have higher flexibility in terms of funding - [UNICEF](#) intends to open discussions with local authorities in this sense.
- As a solution for the limited space in schools, it was proposed that the MoE partnered with the child protection system (the relevant Ministries and institutions, DGASPC), as they are aware of those children not in the evidence of the MoE and set up day activity centres – to take into consideration whether this option is sustainable for the long run, given there would be no formal education involved.

Other relevant information discussed / shared:

- [JSR](#) shared that there are currently 525 students enrolled in Romanian universities (source - <https://ziarulargesul.ro/peste-500-de-studenti-ucraineni-invata-acum-in-romania-fara-a-plati-taxe-ce-alte-beneficii-au/>)
- In April, May, June – we have registrations for the kindergartens and the 0 class, so we should take into consideration running a public campaign of enrolment once information is clear – to have the children registered just in case in September they are still in Romania.
- For an official decision on audience children having the same rights as children enrolled in schools, the relevant information can be found in Article 10 of OUG 20/2022.

AOB

- Starting with the next meeting, the Education SWG meetings will start at 9.30 am

Next meeting: April 19, 2023, 9:30-11:00 am, online (Zoom)