

Guidance Note on support in the identification of alternative housing solutions for IDPs living in educational facilities

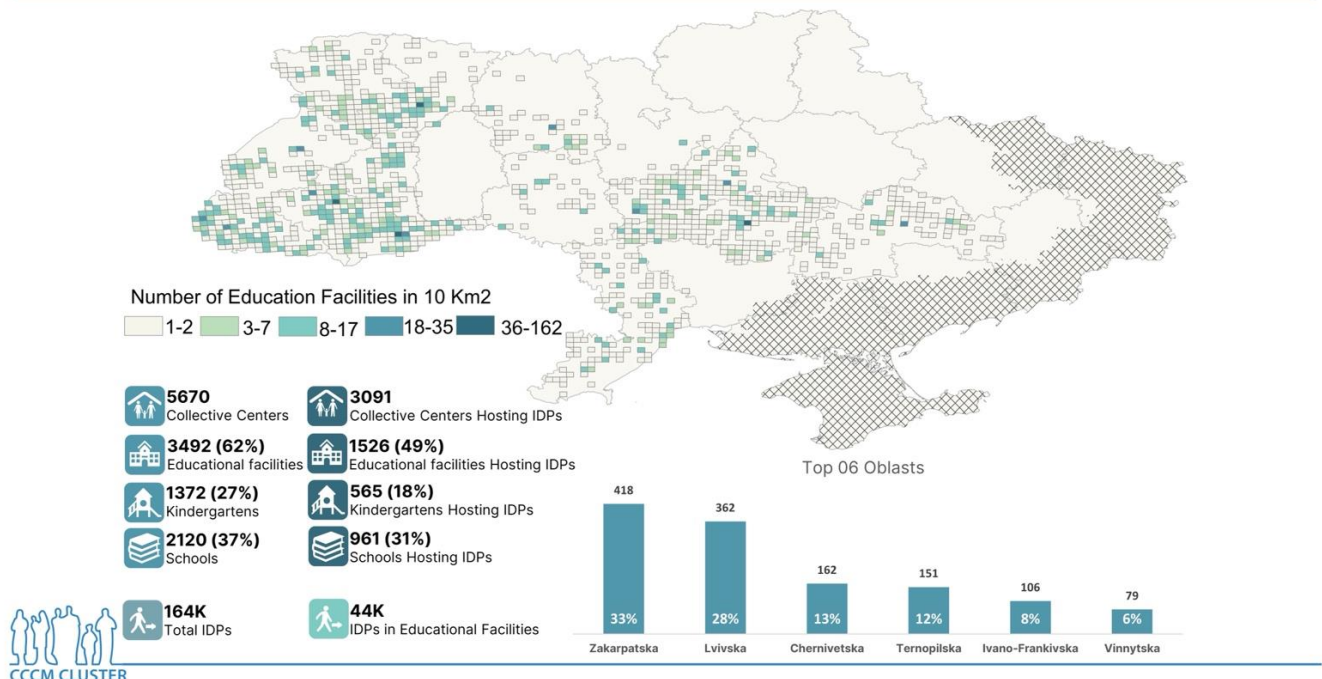
Ukraine, June 2022

The unprecedented speed and scale of displacement in Ukraine, with over 6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), has resulted in the establishment of over 5,670 collective sites around the country, where 1.1 million IDPs live. Collective sites were established in different types of public and private buildings, including in educational facilities (schools, kindergartens, university dormitories, etc.). It is estimated that at least 62% of existing collective centers are located in educational facilities. Most of the IDPs living in collective sites are families in a situation of socioeconomic or other form of vulnerability, with high numbers of children and elderly.

With the school year beginning on 1 September 2022, the Ministry of Education has announced that all schools should reopen and be ready to receive students. Return to schools is a pressing need, not least since children’s right to learn has been impacted significantly, first by COVID and then by the massive displacement and destruction caused by the international armed conflict. Moreover, providing children with a safe and protected learning environment is important for their psychological wellbeing and recovery. Resuming in-person education is, however, challenged by the presence of over 164,000 IDPs hosted in educational facilities who now need to find alternative accommodation places.

Regional and local authorities are now involved in determining how in-person educational activities can be resumed, balancing the presence of IDPs in many educational facilities. Decommissioning education facilities being used as collective centers, preparation of alternative accommodation options for the IDPs and starting consultation processes with the affected IDPs to determine the most suitable solution is therefore urgent.

Initial analysis for the educational facilities used as collective centers



The Guidance outlined below is a multi-cluster initiative (CCCM, Education, Protection and Shelter/NFI Clusters), and is intended to support authorities and partners in applying a protection-oriented and participatory approach to solutions for IDPs living in communal sites, including in cases of relocation.

Guiding Principles and Minimum Actions

1) Coordination and leadership of State authorities: The primary responsibility for the identification of alternative housing solutions for displaced people lies with the Government authorities. Clusters will support authorities to ensure the relocation of IDPs according to these guiding principles. Key activities recommended to be conducted, under the leadership of the Government, with the support of humanitarian partners, include: i) organizing IDP community meetings in each collective center to inform them of the government decision to relocate IDPs to alternative housing to allow resumption of school activities; ii) develop clear key messages to be disseminated in all collective centers, with lists of alternative accommodation along with services available to IDP communities; iii) organize and communicate the logistics prior to the movement in case voluntary relocation to another collective center is decided by IDPs – including arrangements for the transportation.

2) Identification of Alternative Housing: For the decongestion of educational facilities, Clusters recommend considering the housing alternatives listed below for relocation, in order of priority:

1. **Allow affected individuals to find accommodation with families and friends or facilitating accommodation with the host family support program (“Prykhystok”).**
2. **Cash for rent programs;**
3. **Relocation into existing collective centers (non-educational),** where capacity exists. While other accommodation options exist, including renovation and refurbishment of existing unoccupied collective centers as per the approved Winterization Plan 2022 and installation of limited new modular temporary housing, these options might not be viable in the short term in all affected areas due to extended preparation time and site preparation considerations.

Currently, many IDPs are unable to return to their place of origin due to the volatile security situation, destruction of their homes, high levels of Explosive Ordnance contamination, disruption of transportation and utilities, and challenges to access livelihoods. IDPs who voluntarily decide to return to their original homes may be provided with shelter assistance where their homes have been damaged, if required and feasible based upon humanitarian and government housing assistance programs.

Alternative options to housing may vary at local level and due consideration should be given to choices of IDPs themselves.

3) Profiling and matching IDPs with the alternative housing options: It is important to understand the profile of IDPs living in collective centers (numbers, ages, gender, specific protection needs, place of origin) and to map in advance the alternative means of accommodation and assistance that could be offered to IDPs needing to relocate from facilities that need to go back to being used as schools. Gathering the necessary information on IDPs being relocated should be conducted in the strictest respect of data protection policies.

4) Community engagement: IDPs should be informed of all aspects of the relocation process, including why there is a need to relocate; from the educational facility, the options in terms of alternative housing and assistance available; as well as their rights throughout the process to be able to make an informed decision. Appropriate community feedback mechanisms should be established and made operational throughout the process, and adaptive measures should be put in place as necessary. Authorities and partners are encouraged to monitor the movements of IDPs leaving the collective centers and conduct exit surveys as appropriate.

5) Once relocation/decongestion is completed: The Government authorities will ensure that the vacated educational facilities are in a good enough condition to resume their original functions. If assistance is needed, Clusters and their partners will be on stand-by to support. Clusters and humanitarian partners should support authorities to carry out final checks and ensure no one is left behind without proposed alternative accommodation.