



### Inter-Agency Refugee Education Working Group (IREWG)

Meeting Details	
Date	22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2024
Time	1:00-2:30pm
Chair	Chair: Dr. Ivan Duminica, Head of the Policy Service for Interethnic Relations, Ministry of Education and Research (MER) Co- chairs: Katie Lampe, Child Protection Officer, UNHCR; Galina Bulat, Education Specialist, UNICEF
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Agenda	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Update from MER<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Revised school enrollment Instruction</li><li>b) Updates on recent school visits<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Popeasca Gymnasium in Stefan Voda district</li><li>○ Gloria Lyceum in Chisinau</li></ul></li><li>c) Update on Taras Shevchenko Gymnasium</li><li>d) Update on Romanian language exams for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.</li><li>e) Update on higher education for refugee students.</li></ol></li><li>2. Back to school Campaign<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Update from NCUM</li><li>b) Update from PiN on EduTech Labs</li></ol></li><li>3. Update on school supplies' distributions.</li><li>4. Interagency updates<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Winterization</li><li>b) Contingency planning</li><li>c) RRP</li></ol></li><li>5. Carpineni RAC-Current school enrolment issues of refugee children (Ukrainian, Roma, Palestinian) from the RAC Carpineni, Hincesti district.</li><li>6. Additional partner updates/ AOB.</li></ol>	
Information collection and relevant links	
Activity Info Platform: <a href="https://www.activityinfo.org">https://www.activityinfo.org</a>	



## Participants

- Dr. Ivan Duminica - MER
- Alisia Parfentieva - MER
- Katie Lampe- UNHCR
- Galina Bulat – UNICEF
- Diana Alexei, Chisinau Municipality
- Mary Ombaka, UNHCR
- Radica Jardan – CNPAC
- Lilia Gantatuc – Comisia Migratie
- Natalia Balta – Pestalozzi Children’s Foundation
- Maher Daboul – NRC
- Hanna Ursol – PiN
- Carolina Grosu - Laolalta
- Carmelia Corbu – ICRC
- Valentina Ungureanu – Secreteriat Comisiei Migratie
- Catarev Cristina – IGM
- Diana Antir – Caritas Moldova
- Liban Roman - CCR
- Ion Duminica- Roma Task Force
- Vlad Oleatovschi- WeWorld
- Vera Gurievschi, World Vision
- Maria Pislaraş - Charity Centre for Refugees
- Tabuncic Iurie, US Embassy.
- Mihail Platinda – UNICEF
- Cicale Liliene – AiBi
- Suroutou Dmitri- Peope In Need
- Irina Basiye- National Congress of Ukrainians in Moldova (NCUM)
- Olesia Cazasu- National Congress of Ukrainians in Moldova (NCUM)
- Olga Moroza – Pestalozzi Children’s Foundation
- Victor Rotaras – APSCF
- Nina Cuznir – Tarna Rom
- Normand Levesque – BSF
- Pinzari Olga – CRS
- Tusca Tatiana – CRS



**Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points**

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
Welcome and presentation of agenda	UNHCR co-chair Katie Lampe opened the meeting and thanked members who had attended both in person and online. She invited Dr. Duminica the chair to share the latest updates in the sector.	
1. MER Updates	<p><b>1.Update from MER</b></p> <p>a) <u>Revised school enrollment Instruction:</u></p> <p>Upon feedback from Ukrainian parents, as well as feedback from the Roma Task Force, MER issued an update to the school enrollment Instruction on 8 August 2024 Order 1126. This ministerial instruction was shared with all educational institutions. Schools are therefore requested to enrol children with a scanned copy of their documents without asking for an original document or notarized copy. Secondly, for those parents that are illiterate, particularly Roma parents, a school assistant shall be designated to assist parents to fill form, and parents shall only sign the form. The local public authorities and local social authorities and health centres shall conduct their monitoring activities to identify the unenrolled children and provide figures to institutions accordingly.</p> <p>c) <u>Meetings with Ukrainian parents:</u></p> <p>MER conducted several meetings with parents in March 2024 and July 2024. Questions received mainly focused on the enrolment process. In these meetings, relevant public officials and personalities from government ministries addressed questions accordingly.</p> <p>d) <u>Updates on recent study (school) visits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Popeasca RAC</li> </ul> <p>On 18th July 2024, the Roma Voice Coalition requested to conduct a study visit to Popeasca RAC in Stefan Voda district where there are Roma and non-Roma Ukrainian refugees. The RAC is at the gymnasium where Roma children also attend Romanian language lessons. Visit participants attended a Romanian language session and noted thanks for the partners who organize these courses and provide them as they are essential for integration of refugee children in schools. The</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dr Duminica had requested schools visited including Leo Tolstoy in Glodeni to share names of Roma children that were enrolled in school with his office.</li> </ul>



delegation also visited Popeasca secondary school and discussed with teachers and managers about the integration of Ukrainian refugee children in education. As a result of the study visit, on 2nd August 2024, MER issued a request to Stefan Voda general education department for the list of children enrolled in the Popeasca gymnasium which, Stefan Voda education management consequently shared with MER.

- Cojusna RAC

In Cojusna village refugee parents do not want to enrol children in the local Moldovan school. MER is in contact with the Cojusna local education management and was planning a visit by the joint IREWG education co-leads, to understand better the problem.

- Visit to Gloria school.

MER also made a study visit to Gloria school on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024. 36 Ukrainian refugee children are studying in the schools and the study visit was conducted based on requests by refugee parents. The school highlighted the needs, including new furniture. On 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024, MER submitted a proposal to partners for support to Gloria school and was grateful to UNHCR for offering to donate 60 tables and chairs for two classrooms. PiN has also offered some support.

- e) Higher Education for refugee students.



According to MER's requirements for Ukrainian students aspiring to join university, MER highlighted that Ukrainian students needing to be enrolled at university must present themselves in person to the higher learning institutions of their interest to submit the relevant documents. This was based on point #3 of the document that MER released, highlighting this. Enrolment for university students started on 18<sup>th</sup> July and ended on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024. MER was actively involved at all stages and issued an order to highlight how international students would be enrolled. According to a guidance that MER released, Ukrainian refugee students pay the same registration and tuition fees as those paid by Moldovan students and not those for international students.

On 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024, MER, UNHCR and INGO partners conducted a meeting with representatives from universities in Moldova where Ukrainian refugee students were invited for information and questions on enrolment procedures. University representatives presented the courses and opportunities that were available for students.



	<p>On 21<sup>st</sup> August 2024, MER conducted a monitoring visit to assess the enrolment process of Ukrainian refugee students at the State Pedagogical University in Chisinau.</p> <p>The figures related to the enrolment process in higher education institutions will be presented at the next IREWG meeting.</p> <p>f) <u>Taras Shevchenko Gymnasium</u></p> <p>This year, the gymnasium will conduct some selected lessons and classes in Ukrainian language of instruction. To support the opening of additional classes in the school, MER has been working with partners to seek support. On 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024, at MER's initiative, and with the participation of NCUM, 900 textbooks were donated to the school. On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024, MER conducted a briefing with 5-6 embassies including France, Bulgaria, Italy, Japan, and representatives from UNHCR and IOM at the gymnasium. In addition, on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024, MER identified a need for textbooks and Ukrainian literature and sent an official letter to the supreme council of Ukraine, requesting for the same.</p> <p>MER has confirmed the following enrolment details for Ukrainian students at the gymnasium as at reporting period on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Grade 1 – 31 students</li><li>Grade 3- 9 students</li><li>Grade 4- 27 students</li><li>Grade 5 – 29 students</li><li>Grade 6 – 19 students.</li></ul> <p>Unfortunately, Ukrainian teachers had not yet been identified for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades, and a physics teacher was yet to be identified for 6<sup>th</sup> grade.</p> <p>A recent visit to the gymnasium confirmed that renovations were almost complete and received assurances from the contractors that renovations will have been completed by 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024. MER expressed thanks to UNHCR, UNICEF and other partners and donors who contributed to supporting the project.</p> <p>In a question on how the number (percentage) of children not enrolled in schools can be identified, the chair noted that it is important to frequently conduct monitoring and study visits, and the current monitoring trend will be continued. He further noted that currently, the number of unenrolled children is not known, but he had issued instructions to local education authorities to frequently provide MER</p>	
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	<p>with the number of refugee children not in school at any given time in their respective districts.</p> <p> Presentation on Taras Shevchenko.zip</p> <p> <a href="#">refugiati iulie-august 2024.pptx</a></p> <p><b>2. Back to School Campaign (NIUM)</b></p> <p>The co-chair mentioned that these campaigns were divided into two components as follows:</p> <p>a) <u>Back to school Campaign by NCUM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Advocacy on school enrolment at Taras Shevchenko</li></ul> <p>In the first component, NCUM undertook campaigns centred around advocacy with Ukrainian refugee parents to enrol their children at Taras Shevchenko Gymnasium, which MER had identified as a pilot school for implementation of classes taught in the Ukrainian language but following the Moldovan curriculum in selected classes. NCUM further helped to identify Ukrainian teachers that were recruited at the school. While initially it was difficult to identify Ukrainian teachers willing to work for the salary being offered, after a meeting with relevant partners in which several solutions were identified, five teachers were identified by NCUM to work in the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Back to School Campaign with UNICEF</li></ul> <p>NCUM started their campaigns on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and is continuing until 1<sup>st</sup> September, when schools open for the new school year. They disseminated key messages by MER and UNICEF through various media including videos, Instagram, and traditional media such as the road network transport system in Chisinau.</p> <p>The agency also conducted a survey that highlighted reasons that parents gave for not enrolling their children into Moldovan schools. Preference for online learning was given by parents as the major reason for not enrolling children to school. In addition, parents mentioned the language of instruction barrier. <a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1sdHBSQMffpAXSo8EmYc1E_VJd-o_nckB?usp=drive_link">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1sdHBSQMffpAXSo8EmYc1E_VJd-o_nckB?usp=drive_link</a></p>	<p>NCUM to share key messages for partners to help wider dissemination.</p>
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	<p>b) <u>EduTech Labs activities by PiN</u></p> <p>PiN is implementing the project jointly with MER and UNICEF and it has enrolled a total of 228 students so far. They have trained specialists who support the learning process. Daily learning activities within the EduTech Labs are divided into two sessions, the first session being in the mornings when children study the Ukrainian curriculum online. The second session in the afternoons is used for catch-up classes, robotics and other non-formal education activities.</p> <p>c) <u>Challenges</u></p> <p>Although all schools have spaces dedicated for EduTech labs some schools used these spaces for regular formal classrooms resulting into lack of space for EduTech labs. In some schools, children were not registered whereas in others, there were no facilitators for online classes.</p> <p>In Carpineni, BSF is phasing out of its child friendly spaces in September and so PiN will take over, and will operate both the CFS, as well as opening an EduTech lab in the school. BSF's facilitator who speaks Arabic will continue working in the CFS. However, a challenge was noted for children with no educational background who cannot easily study online. A specialized approach is needed for this group of children.</p> <p>MER noted that they have received letters from refugees in the Carpeneni RAC, saying that BSF's project was ending, and children were left without education, so PiN's timely intervention was appreciated. For Roma children, MER suggested that Tarna Rom should be involved because they had experience working with Roma children.</p> <p>At question time, partners wanted to know whether children in EduTech labs can be enrolled formally in formal Moldovan schools and were informed that yes, this is of course possible and this is the long-term objective.</p> <p>It was also confirmed that it is possible to recruit Ukrainian teachers who work in the Edu Tech Labs to work in Moldovan schools. On how long EduTech labs are likely to be operational, it was noted that they will operate for the whole school year.</p>	<p>A separate meeting will be organized with organizations working in Carpineni to identify the best way to support each group of children.</p>
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Once Romanian language classes fill the gap on proficiency in the language of instruction, they could be phased out gradually.

UNICEF clarified that EduTech labs are spaces for non-formal learning, and they also support Ukrainian refugee children to access the Ukrainian online curriculum. They are not part of the formal education system.

d) Presentation on Carpineni by ION Dominica

Mr. Ion Dominica noted that the Carpineni RAC has a variety of children including Roma children, children evacuated from Gaza, non-Roma Ukrainian children, as well as children with special needs. All these groups need special intervention. Children from Gaza are studying online in Arabic, but Roma children do not have access to online learning as they never had this experience back home in Ukraine. They, therefore, need a different learning approach, such as enrolling in local schools (with specialized support). On the other hand, children in secondary school have different needs, and will need Romanian language classes and after school catch up classes. Also, Roma teenage children not literate cannot be enrolled in first grade with younger ones. Other challenges include cultural practices such as early marriage. It was noted that parents should be consulted at every stage, including on decisions regarding schools that children should attend, so that they do not travel long distances if there are options of schools closer to the RAC.

Engaging Roma parents in joint activities and discussions with parents from other refugee communities can help in supporting parents in decisions that they make regarding their children's education.

All in all, it would not be easy to find a common solution for all three groups of children in Carpineni. There are children from different age group and some with special education needs, all of whom would need varied solutions. The major problem at the RAC was access to proper space for learning. Nonetheless, meetings with parents on their needs for children's education would go a long way in resolving some of the problems at the RAC. Initiating more extra curricula activities could also help to bring more children with varied profiles together for enhanced integration and social cohesion.

**3. School Supplies**

The co-chair expressed appreciation for all partners who submitted information regarding school supplies that they will be distributing. She urged any partners who had not shared information with





the sector but planned to distribute school supplies to get in touch with REWG co-leads for proper coordination and to avoid duplication and gaps.

**4. Updates.**

a) Winterization

Partners were informed that the Education sector is not very involved in winterization activities. Therefore, not much is expected of them in this regard.

b) Contingency planning

Planning is already ongoing for contingency planning as the workshop was in session at the time of this meeting. The planning is in case of a new influx of refugees from Ukraine and will consider several different contingency scenarios. The education sector needs would be very specific based on educational needs of the profile of children who would be part of the influx. As partners have already submitted their contingency capacities/inputs, the next step will be for the sector to review what was submitted for purposes of identifying gaps and for uniformity of implementation.

c) RRP

The co-chair informed partners the new planning for Refugee Response Plan 2025 - 2026, a fundraising tool for refugee emergencies. At the regional level and for this year there will be another RRP covering 2 years this time compared to the previous one that covered one year. Soon, agencies will be requested to submit inputs for the RRP. The next REWG meeting will focus on RRP planning. Partners will be later asked to provide their projects for RRP, highlighting the importance of activities for the integration and inclusion of refugee children.

**5. AOB**

Members were notified that the sector lead and co leads will communicate the date for next meeting date for September 2024 EWG. There being no other issues, the co-chair called the meeting to an end.