

Mid-year review of education
for children displaced

by the conflict in Ukraine
at the start of the 2023-2024

academic year

Executive Summary

The mid-year review of the 2023-24 academic year on school enrolment of displaced Ukrainian children shows a mixed picture. In Ukraine, the education system has demonstrated remarkable resilience, thanks in part to close coordination and cooperation with humanitarian and development actors. Some progress has also been made in host countries toward enrolling these children into educational systems. But there are real challenges to reaching full enrollment in some countries more than others. While all governments demonstrate a clear commitment to children's education, whether in person or online, the former approach must remain a priority. In a shrinking funding environment, education must be adequately funded to support children's resilience, as well as promote integration and social cohesion in host countries.

This education brief is a collaboration by World Vision UCR (Ukraine, Moldova), Word Vision Georgia and World Vision Romania Foundation.

Glossary

HNRP 2024 – Humanitarian Needs Report Plan 2024

MHPSS – Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support

MoE – Ministry of Education

UNOCHA – United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

WV – World Vision International

WVG – World Vision Georgia

WVR – World Vision Romania

WVUCR – World Vision Ukraine Response



Introduction



In September 2023 at the start of the 2023-2024 academic year, WV Ukraine Response (UCR) produced a brief on Education in Emergencies (EiE) in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and Romania. The brief outlined school enrollment levels among displaced Ukrainian children in these countries, barriers to quality education and contribution of humanitarian actors in addressing learning gaps.

Education is a key vehicle for not only enabling children to experience some degree of normalcy, but also crucial for integration into their new communities and wider social cohesion. However, in September most displaced children were relying on online schooling. This mid-academic year brief provides an update on progress in school enrollment and highlights EiE's contribution, as the crisis moves to the recovery phase.



Country Situations

Ukraine



General Situation

On the second-year mark since the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine the Deputy Minister Education, Minister Yevhen Kudriavets, reported that approximately 14% of educational institutions have sustained damage. Approximately four hundred schools were destroyed, and an estimated 3,500 damaged. The estimated financial costs for restoring these institutions are \$14 billion¹. In the Kyiv oblast 244 educational institutions were damaged since the start of the conflict and 198 have been fully or partially restored, as reported by the regional Governor, Ruslan Kravchenko, to the media on February 18². In addition, over 1,200 shelters have thus far been equipped in schools and kindergartens. As many aspects of the response moves into the recovery phase, Ukraine government along with its allies, are looking for innovative ways to restoring the county's physical assets.

In January OCHA unveiled its 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP). It estimated that 1.2 million Ukrainians need educational support of which 989,000 will receive aid at an estimated cost of \$98.3 million. Ninety-seven partner organizations including World Vision, are mobilized through clusters, across the country to provide access to quality in-person, online and blended (mixed methods of in-person and online) learning formats in safe and inclusive learning environments for war-affected children³.

Ongoing Challenges

WVUCR is concerned that continuous missile attacks, shelling of bombs and alarms, seriously affect teachers and students alike, thereby compromising the quality of education. Frequent cuts in electricity and internet access at school or at home cause significant disruptions to classes. In Ukraine Education Cluster members report that pervasive security risks at or near homes, pose major challenges leading to cancelation of online and in-person classes. Lack of face-to-face learning and interaction with peers and teachers could cause mental health issues among children, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. These may result in detrimental emotional and physical symptoms and pose serious risks to children's overall development and socialization.

WVUCR Education response

World Vision International has been implementing Education in Emergencies Projects in 20 regions of Ukraine with 7 local Partners (Youth Movement be Free, Save Ukraine, Teach for Ukraine, Way home Odesa, Responsible Citizens, Health Right and Unity for the future).

Leading up to the beginning of this academic year, more than 221,056 children benefited from educational services through summer camp, provision of educational materials and supplies, English language, and other life skills training. More than 1,500 teachers received laptops and attended various trainings designed to improve their capacities in protection and psycho-social support. In addition, more than 100 education partner staff supported and trained in INEE minimum standards, Teacher's wellbeing, Catch Up approach Mentoring and quality education.

1 [Russian invasion damages 1 in 7 Ukrainian schools \(kyivdependent.com\)](https://www.kyivdependent.com/russian-invasion-damages-1-in-7-ukrainian-schools/)

2 [Nearly 200 schools destroyed by Russia restored in Kyiv Oblast \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/nearly-200-schools-destroyed-by-russia-restored-in-kyiv-oblast/)

3 [Ukraine HNRP 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan EN 20240110.pdf Page 55](#)



In collaboration with War Child Holland, the UCR developed online Math and literacy curriculum applications for lower primary school students, which over 40,000 children benefited. Literacy and numeracy skills gap assessments were conducted with 410 children aged 6 to 9 years directly impacted by war. The assessments revealed that 60% of these children had deficiencies in literacy and numeracy skills.

Ukraine is severely contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) from the armed conflict that began in 2014 and surged with the full-scale war in February 2022. In June 2023 landmines have been documented in 11 of Ukraine's 24 regions: Chernihivska, Dnipropetrovska, Donetsk, Kharkivska, Khersonska, Kyivska, Luhanska, Mykolaivska, Odeska, Sumska, and Zaporizka⁴. For this reason, WVUCR will include landmine awareness as a key component of its EiE sector services.

The UCR is an active member of the National Education Cluster and co-leads the ECCD Working Group. The UCR also contributed to the Education Cluster National Strategy 2024.

Testimonies

Impact of the Child Friendly Approach for children and their families in Dnipro:

<https://www.wvi.org/stories/ukraine/child-friendly-spaces-serve-well-being-haven-displaced-ukrainian-children-and>

4 [UkraineLM_Briefing_June2023.pdf](#)





General Situations

The situation regarding displaced Ukrainian children's access to quality education in Georgia has seen a mix of positive developments and persistent challenges, according to the WVG's Third GESI Sensitive Needs and Intentions Assessment proactive measures implemented by the government of Georgia. The assessment indicates that 90% of children experienced a smooth registration process in local educational institutions. Around 55% of the school-age children are registered at Ukrainian sector schools. Russian-language education is attended by 16% of children, while 5% are learning in Georgian language schools. Half of those children live outside Tbilisi and Batumi.

Regarding language sectors, the assessment provides insights into a distinct preference for Ukrainian and Russian sector schools over Georgian counterparts, especially among school-age children. This inclination has led to decrease in enrollment rates in Georgian language schools. Despite the availability of complimentary language courses at the municipal level in major cities like Tbilisi and Batumi, for Ukrainian students who wish to join Georgian schools, the overall trend still leans towards Ukrainian and Russian language education.

However, a notable challenge highlighted in the assessment is a limited availability of Ukrainian sector schools in Georgia. With only three Ukrainian sector schools, one in Batumi and two in Tbilisi, there are constraints in enrollment spaces, leading to overcrowded classrooms. This scarcity of Ukrainian sector schools poses difficulties for parents, particularly those residing in towns where no Ukrainian schools are available.

The assessment indicates that some parents choose online schooling, due to the geographical inaccessibility of Ukrainian sector schools. In cases where Ukrainian schools are not present in their towns or the commute is impractical, parents prefer to continue online education for their children. Based on the assessment, 17% of children are engaged in online learning, with 66% of parents expressing satisfaction with this modality.

In terms of kindergartens, the experience of parents with enrolled children provides valuable insights. Of the 19% of children enrolled in local kindergartens, parents have observed that preschool-age children tend to thrive well in Georgian-language kindergartens, effortlessly picking up the language. As a strategic choice, families intending to settle in Georgia often opt for Georgian kindergartens to ensure their children become fluent in the language before starting formal schooling. Additionally, some parents choose Georgian kindergartens due to their convenient locations.

The government of Georgia has been proactive to removing barriers to education for Ukrainian students. For instance, Ukrainian students who wish to enroll in Georgian schools are offered free

language courses at the municipal level in major cities, such as Tbilisi and Batumi. During the academic year students, up to grade 11 could be enrolled in schools, while continuing their studies in Ukrainian schools remotely and take end of year exams line. These facilities were the outcome of agreements between the governments of Ukraine and Georgia to ensure continued education for Ukrainian students.



Ongoing Challenges

Majority of mid and higher-grade students living in Georgia prefer online education. Some opted to combine attending Ukrainian sector in Georgia and continue with online education back in Ukraine. Online education was first been introduced with COVID 19 and happened to continue with war in Ukraine. Therefore, there are real concerns surrounding the quality of education and learning, socialization and developing life skills that are attained through physical engagement into academic or other school activities. The education system in Georgia offers access to education for all children, however, there are certain challenges for Ukrainian citizens.

The GESI Assessment found that while satisfaction with Ukrainian sector schools is evident, the issue of limited availability and subsequent challenges in enrolment spaces and overcrowding must be addressed. The trend of transferring primary school-age children to Russian or Georgian schools, influenced by relocation and language adaptability considerations, highlights the dynamic nature of educational choices among displaced Ukrainian families in Georgia. Efforts to alleviate transportation challenges and enhance the accessibility of Ukrainian sector schools are crucial to ensuring a well-rounded and accessible education for these children.

The assessment also revealed a considerable proportion of parents in the focused groups (81%) have not yet enrolled their children in local kindergartens, cited specific reasons for this decision. Language barrier accounts for 52% of these cases, emphasizing the importance of addressing linguistic challenges. Additionally, 21% mentioned the cost of private kindergartens as a factor, indicating financial considerations, and 7% identified the lack of spaces in state kindergartens as a constraint.

The insights from parents' experiences with kindergartens underscore the multifaceted considerations influencing enrollment choices. While positive perceptions of local kindergartens exist, addressing concerns such as overcrowding and providing solutions to language barriers and financial considerations are crucial for ensuring inclusive and accessible early childhood education for displaced Ukrainian families in Georgia.

Support to the Ministry of Education to strengthen the system for refugee children, including appropriate language and psychosocial support, would particularly benefit children from Ukraine living far from the Ukrainian sector schools in central Tbilisi and Batumi.

WV Georgia response

Education and protection support for Ukrainian children and their families by humanitarian organizations is a bridge to enabling integration into Georgian society. From the outset of the crisis, World Vision Georgia (WVG) has been at the forefront of giving life-saving support to over 17,000 Ukrainian refugees. Access to quality education is fundamental to the response, to this end WV has given educational materials to educational institutions that cater to Ukrainian children. The Happy Centers in Tbilisi and Batumi offer children and their parents safe places to receive educational, recreational, protection and mental health support. WVG, in collaboration with UNHCR, has joined forces with the National Center for Teacher Professional Development (TPDC), to spearhead the development of a curriculum tailored for teaching the Georgian language to refugee children. As part of this comprehensive initiative 5-month duration catch-up classes specifically designed for Ukrainian children and others holding refugee status are being organized. The commitment to sustainability, TPDC will further enhance the capacity of teachers from 125 schools where refugee children are enrolled, aiming to institutionalize this innovative language education approach.





General Situation

Online learning continues to be preferred learning option among displaced Ukrainian children living in Moldova. In December 120,600 Ukrainians were in Moldova with 44% being children. According to the Moldova Ministry of Education and Research (MER), as of January 2024, 717 children (369 girls and 348 boys) were enrolled in 200 preschools, while 1,603 (800 girls and 803 boys) were enrolled in primary and secondary schools. Of those enrolled in primary and secondary schools, 174 are studying in Romanian, and 1,429 are studying in Russian. 7 Roma refugee children are recorded by MER as enrolled in schools in Moldova, and 89 Ukrainian children are studying the Ukrainian curriculum online from EdTech Labs within schools.

Ongoing Challenges

MER attributes the low enrollment of Ukrainian children to their caregivers' preference for online learning and language barriers. The latter is by far the biggest barrier since children from Ukraine do not speak Romanian and schools are not resourced for this purpose. They noted that some children who were enrolled at the beginning of the school year have since been disenrolled, as their families move out of Moldova.⁵ These challenges have also been observed by UCR's Education team and partners. In addition, awareness raising and information on how to enroll children in schools are not sufficiently reaching parents. Despite a formal agreement between both Ukraine and Moldova ministries of Education, the difference in school curricula remains a major obstacle to Ukrainian children transitioning to Moldovan schools.

WVUCR Education response

UCR has been implementing education projects with 6 partners, namely WeWorld, Child Rights Information Center (CRIC), Ave Copii, Comunitas and Step by Step, in 32 districts and supported 8,656 children through Catchup, summer camp and after school program.

In addition to after school activities like Catchup, UCR education projects also include language classes both in Ukrainian, English and Romanian, math, financial literacy, and craft. Art therapy is the preferred approach for children to interact with each other, communicate in their own language and express their feelings.

UCR contextualized and adapted IMPACT + for Ukraine and Moldova contexts and will continue to train and support adolescents through language, basic communication, life skills and soft skills.

In collaboration with Plan International, Save the Children International, Norwegian Refugee Council, WVI organized back to school campaign on the inclusion of Ukrainian refugee Children into Local education system. Training on IMPACT+ has also been given to partners, UCR staff and youth clubs from partner organizations in Ukrainian, Romanian and Russian languages.

5 [IREWG Minutes January 2023 \(1\).pdf](#)



Romania

(By WV Romania Technical Advisor on Education)



General Situation

According to the Romania Ministry of Education statistics in June 2023 27,662 children from Ukraine were enrolled in schools. By January 2024 that number rose to 37,856, representing an increase of approximately 10,000 since the start of the current academic year. These numbers were supported by UNHCR report in December 2023, which stated 73% of Ukrainian families living in Romania registered for Temporary Protection and children (90%) enrolled in schools.⁶

Besides registration of Temporary Protection being a motivator for parents to have their children enrolled in schools, the Governments of Ukraine and Romania have a formal agreement on education. This bilateral agreement on the mutual recognition of educational documents was ratified by the Government of Romania and published on February 26, this year.

There is a good level of information exchange and coordination between national and regional authorities, with the UN and Civil Society organizations including WV Romania. Coordination takes place in several areas, including school enrollment and transfers, awareness raising and information for parents on school registration, employment and eligibility for financial assistance, organization of Romanian language and other specialized courses.

Ongoing Challenges

Unpacking the enrollment figures reveal the challenges that the Romania's education system must tackle to achieve full enrollment for displaced children from Ukraine.

Ukrainian children enrolled in the Romanian education system – 19 January 2024	Enrolled	Audients	Extra-curricular activities	Total
Preschool	2,958	5,865		8,823
Primary School	3,191	6,869		10,060
Lower secondary	2,641	4,991		7,632
Upper Secondary	10,683	21,079	476	32,238
Children registered at ante-preschool level				5,618
Grand Total				37,856

Source: UNICEF – the latest received from the Ministry of Education on February 23, 2024

6 [Document - Ukraine Situation Inter-Agency Operational Update Romania December 2023 \(unhcr.org\)](#)



For the current year, the number of available pre-school places is insufficient, resulting in a disparity between the number of audients and pre-school children registered officially in the system. Although parents can theoretically enroll their children in nursery or kindergarten at this stage, a lack of vacancies remains the main issue in the pre-school system.

Integrating Ukrainian educators into the Romanian education system remains difficult, since certain regulated professions have specific conditions (by law) that they do not meet. Related to this challenge is the ongoing policy discussions around establishing systems whereby Ukrainian children can study the Romanian curriculum in their first language, with this. the integration of UA teaching staff as auxiliary staff in the formal education system as a transitional solution.

New benchmarking tools are urgently needed to evaluate the impact and educational progress of Ukrainian refugee children by the Romania Assessment and Review Centre.

The Temporary Protection integration program from which Ukrainian children receive benefits ends this month, March 2024. The authorities are currently seeking ways to extend this financial support. What happens after and how a likely cessation of Government funding might affect Ukrainian children's education is not clear.

WV Romania response

The socio-educational centers (Happy Bubble) run by World Vision Romania provide information for enrolling and assistance with state schools. All eight centers are registered under Local School Inspectorates. They provide after-school programs, as well as pre-school programs for 1,300 children. The aim is to promote access to classroom-based education and to encourage face-to-face learning. Additionally, Romanian language courses, MHPSS and integration activities for both Ukrainian and Romanian children. World Vision continues to provide support for formal Romanian educational activities, including preschool, primary, and secondary education, dedicated to 60 displaced Ukrainian children enrolled at the Romanian Finnish School in Bucharest through partner Christian Bucharest Association Centre. In addition, they participated in integration-related events during the months.

World Vision Romania conducted the 'Back to School' national campaign between the start of the current school year till February. Titled 'Your Child Has the Right to Education,' materials were disseminated in both Romanian and Ukrainian to reach a wide audience. Additionally, 1500 educational kits are distributed to support children in being fully prepared for school. More recently, other awareness raising materials produced in both languages to promote enrollment in the formal school system.

In collaboration with local partner Jesuit Refugee Service and Constanta School Inspectorate, WV continues to provide inclusive education to children from Ukraine and the host community. Three educational teams are established for inclusion and active participation of Ukrainian children in formal education. These children from both communities receive support in Romanian language and mathematics to address specific learning needs and enhance their integration into the local educational environment.

Externally World Vision Romania actively participated in the Education Working Group to coordinate with other key stakeholders including NGOs, Ministry of Education, regional authorities, and the UN, at a national level.

Testimonies

[Happy Bubble serves as a lifeline for the education of Ukrainian children in Romania | Ukraine | World Vision International \(wvi.org\)](#)



Priorities for Action



Learning within a school environment must remain a priority, not an option, although achieving this is not always possible in Ukraine. However, in host countries efforts must be redoubled for every displaced Ukrainian child is not deprived of a place in the formal school system. More effort must be devoted to removing the main barriers to access, notably language and parents' perceptions.



The education sector is among the least funded sectors by donors in Ukraine and host countries. While the cost of education is comparatively lower than other sectors, it is in danger of being further neglected as funding for humanitarian response is declining. Yet education is crucial not only for immediate protection needs amid the crisis, but also for early recovery and reconstruction in Ukraine. In host countries it is equally crucial for social integration and cohesion. Funding to ensure that parents can buy school materials, teachers equipped, schools reconstructed and refurbished must be guaranteed by the donor community.



International organizations, including Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and its funding mechanism the Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP), as well as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) are important drivers for ensuring that education goals in both Ukraine and host countries achieved. They, in coordination with state authorities, the UN and humanitarian actors must find solutions to eliminate learning losses among displaced Ukrainian children.

World Vision⁷ and the wider humanitarian community have demonstrated their capacity to address educational needs of children and young people through direct services with partners, as well as build capacities of educational institutions in coordination with national and local authorities. With no immediate end in sight of the war in Ukraine, World Vision will continue to stay the course to ensure that children are safe, receive quality education and psycho-social support through its education programs.

March 2024

7 [UCR January 2024 Factsheet.pdf \(wvrelief.net\)](#) Since the start of the conflict in 2022 World Vision has given education al support to 254, 113 beneficiaries.





World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. Inspired by our Christian values, we are dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. We serve all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

We believe a world without violence against children is possible, and World Vision's global campaign It takes a world to end violence against children is igniting movements of people committed to making this happen. No one person, group or organisation can solve this problem alone, it will take the world to end violence against children.

For more information regarding World Vision's Ukraine Crisis Response, please go to:
<https://www.wvi.org/emergencies/ukraine>

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 Emergencies/Ukraine

For more information, please email
Cecil Laguardia
UCR Communications Director
cecil_laguardia@wvi.org