



59 child friendly spaces in Ukraine and Moldova at risk of closure as funding declines

The estimated cost for running such CFS is USD 100,000 per center per annum.

CONTINUED SERVICE OF CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES

Concept Note

Background

A child friendly space (CSF) is an inclusive safe place where children and adolescents (6 to 17 years) can meet their peers to socialize, play, relax, express themselves, learn and develop skills to improve resilience and increase their wellbeing while involved in child friendly activities. Child Friendly Spaces serve as a key entry point for identification of child protection concerns and provision of protection services and are part of integrated programming in emergencies.

Since the beginning of the response to date, a total of 37 CFS are operational in Moldova and 22 in Ukraine implemented by trained partners.

In CFS, children are involved in a great variety of activities, including art and crafts, art therapy, breathing and relaxation techniques, team building games, sports, traditional and cultural dances and songs, cooking classes, as well as outdoors activities including walks in the park, visit to museums and entertainment centers (for example puppet shows).

Children attending the CFS have reported enjoying their time in the CFSs, returning home happy and sharing with their parents the activities they have been engaged with, their new friendships, and the attention, love and care received by the facilitators in the centers.

Facilitators and parents/caregivers have observed positive changes in children attending the sessions, including improvement in communication and interaction among peers and with adults, increased social skills in building relationships and friendships, increased self-confidence in showing their talents and their creativity, and improved concentration not only in the CFS but also at home and school.

Overall, it was observed that children were allowing themselves to feel and embrace different emotions and manage them in a more controlled and positive way, feeling more comfortable and less stressed.

Problem Statement

The funding in early emergency onset context is often of short-term nature due to the rapid dynamics of developments on the ground. Similarly, the funding for the currently operational 59 CFS in Ukraine and Moldova received from a range of donors is coming to an end. Some will close starting from May 2024.

However, unlike other emergency response interventions, such as meeting the basic needs of the affected population that require various and evolving modalities, the CFS are the intervention that is and will be highly needed for a long-time perspective helping children and their families overcome the atrocities of the war. The impact that CFS brings is sustainable in terms of the psychosocial support that it offers.

Proposed Action

World Vision Ukraine Crisis Response (UCR) Phase 2 Strategy Objective 2, through its Protection Sector, continues seeing CFS as one of the major interventions serving children directly. At the same time, the Strategy focuses on growing impact for each child by a stronger and intentional integrated programming. This will also contribute to better cost-efficiency of our activities.

It is planned that the CFS as a facility will be utilized for more activities involving other sectors as well. Specifically:

- Education in Emergencies modules will be integrated into the activity list.
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) will be offered to the parents using the waiting time for their children; and
- Vocational skills training will be made available to the parents in the same facility.

Such approach links the UCR's efforts in protection, education, and livelihood development growing the impact over each child. Once the skills training coupled with financial literacy and business management courses (to be defined for each CFS based on the initial need and interest assessment among the parents' groups) is completed, the participants will become beneficiaries of enhanced employability and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) development activities to be undertaken by UCR (and Vision Fund).

The estimated cost for running such CFS is USD 100,000 per center per annum. The average annual serving capacity of each center is:

- 150 children in psychosocial and education activities.
- 200 parents/caregivers in MHPSS.
- Need-based referrals to other service providers (psychiatrists, legal, etc.).
- 100 parents in skills development, financial literacy, and business management.

The privilege of annual budgeting for running such centers will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the outcomes.

It is well-acknowledged that a single donor or funding source will not cover continuity of all 59 CFS. Each new amount will be allocated to the centers that will close the soonest (in case of no further funding) and based on the magnitude of the need.

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