

# Research Terms of Reference

Sectoral assessment, Education

MDA 2303

Moldova

May 2023

Version 1

**REACH** Informing  
more effective  
humanitarian action

## 1. Executive Summary

<b>Country of intervention</b>	Republic of Moldova				
<b>Type of Emergency</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Natural disaster	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conflict	<input type="checkbox"/> Other ( <i>specify</i> )
<b>Type of Crisis</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sudden onset	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slow onset	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protracted
<b>Mandating Body/ Agency</b>	UNHCR				
<b>IMPACT Project Code</b>	67AYH				
<b>Overall Research Timeframe</b> ( <i>from research design to final outputs / M&amp;E</i> )	01/03/2023 to 30/09/2023				
<b>Research Timeframe</b> <i>Add planned deadlines (for first cycle if more than 1)</i>	1. Pilot/ training: 30/05/2023		6. Preliminary presentation: 30/08/2023		
	2. Start collect data: 01/06/2023		7. Outputs sent for validation: 01/09/2023		
	3. Data collected: 10/07/2023		8. Outputs published: 29/09/2023		
	4. Data analysed: 15/08/2023		9. Final presentation: 30/09/2023		
	5. Data sent for validation: 20/08/2023				
<b>Number of assessments</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Single assessment (one cycle)			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multi assessment (more than one cycle) <i>[Describe here the frequency of the cycle]</i>			

<b>Humanitarian milestones</b> Specify <b>what</b> will the assessment inform and <b>when</b> e.g. The shelter cluster will use this data to draft its Revised Flash Appeal;	<b>Milestone</b>		<b>Deadline</b>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Donor plan/strategy	30/09/2023	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inter-cluster plan/strategy	_ _ / _ _ / _ _ _ _	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cluster plan/strategy	30/09/2023	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	NGO platform plan/strategy	_ _ / _ _ / _ _ _ _	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify):	_ _ / _ _ / _ _ _ _	
<b>Audience Type &amp; Dissemination</b> Specify <b>who</b> will the assessment inform and <b>how</b> you will disseminate to inform the audience	<b>Audience type</b>		<b>Dissemination</b>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic <input type="checkbox"/> Programmatic <input type="checkbox"/> Operational <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input type="checkbox"/> General Product Mailing (e.g. mail to NGO consortium; HCT participants; Donors) <input type="checkbox"/> Cluster Mailing (Education, Shelter and WASH) and presentation of findings at next cluster meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation of findings (e.g. at HCT meeting; Cluster meeting) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Website Dissemination (Relief Web & REACH Resource Centre) <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]	
<b>Detailed dissemination plan required</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
<b>General Objective</b>	The assessment seeks to understand the education experiences and learning conditions <sup>1</sup> of refugee children ages 6-17 years following Ukrainian online schooling and in-person schooling in Moldova, from the perspectives of children, caregivers, and teachers, and provide insight into any policies to improve access to education for refugees and any current/future consideration for the education system. Findings from these interviews/consultations will inform existing and future education programming implemented by government and humanitarian actors.			

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, perceptions of barriers and facilitators to education enrolment, integration, needs of refugee children and caregivers as well as teachers.

<b>Specific Objective(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To understand the factors influencing the choice of education modality by caregivers (Ukrainian online schooling or in -person schooling in Moldova)</li> <li>2. To explore the perception of barriers and facilitators to enrollment for in-person schooling in Moldova for Ukrainian refugee children aged 6-17 years</li> <li>3. To understand the learning conditions and challenges of following Ukrainian online learning from teacher and student's perspectives</li> <li>4. To understand the perceived quality of Ukrainian online learning and in-person schooling in Moldova among the refugee children and their caregivers</li> <li>5. To obtain a general sense of the social and emotional well-being of refugee children<sup>2</sup> following Ukrainian online learning as well as those attending in-person schooling in Moldova</li> <li>6. To understand the needs of Moldovan teachers to cope with the influx of refugee students</li> <li>7. To provide perspectives on what future education policies, opportunities, prerequisite/ conditions etc could assist refugees in accessing Moldovan in-person schooling</li> <li>8. To assess the level of social cohesion between refugee and Moldovan children following both learning modalities (online and in-person)</li> <li>9. To understand how children perceive their education since their displacement</li> </ol>
<b>Research Questions</b>	<p><b><u>For Ukrainian refugee children and caregivers following online Ukrainian schooling:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the perceived advantages and disadvantages of enrolment in Ukrainian online schooling influencing caregivers' decisions regarding children's learning modality?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 What are the barriers to enrolment and continuous attendance in Moldovan schools and the perceived advantages and disadvantages compared to Ukrainian online schooling?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/media/114636/file/SOWC-2021-full-report-English.pdf>

Social and Emotional well-being can be described as the ability to have meaningful interaction with others in society as well as a personal sense of value; being calm, peaceful and interested in life. In general well-being involves multiple elements and contributes to the functional well-being of a person (the ability to develop skills and knowledge that will help them in decision making).

2. What are the conditions in which refugee children access online Ukrainian schooling e.g. (availability of equipment, physical environment, potential support from caregivers/others, etc.)?
3. What challenges and difficulties are faced by refugee children attending Ukrainian online schooling regarding learning and integration?
  - 3.1. What coping measures are adopted by caregivers/children when faced with disruptions to access to online learning?
4. What is the level of satisfaction of Ukrainian children and caregivers with the quality of Ukrainian online learning platforms?
5. What is caregivers' perception of the impact of continuous online learning on Ukrainian refugee children's social and emotional well-being?

**For Ukrainian refugee children and caregivers enrolled in Moldovan schools:**

1. What are the factors influencing Ukrainian refugee caregivers' decisions regarding children's enrollment in Moldovan schools?
  - 1.1. What are the perceived advantages and disadvantages compared to enrolment in Ukrainian online education platforms?
2. In the perception of the caregivers, what are the barriers to enrollment and continuous attendance and learning (if any) for children in Moldovans schools?
  - 2.1. What measures did parents adopt to overcome the barriers to enrollment (if any)?
  - 2.2 What is the process that caregivers went through to enrol their children in schools?
  - 2.3. What advice do refugee caregivers whose children are attending Moldovan schools have for other Ukrainian caregivers wanting / or unsure about enrolling their children in Moldovan schools to facilitate the process of enrollment?
3. What barriers are faced by children to continuous attendance and learning in Moldovan schools?
4. What are caregivers' perceptions of social cohesion between refugee and Moldovan children in schools?

5. What is caregivers' perceived impact of in-person schooling in Moldova on Ukrainian refugee children's social and emotional well-being?
6. What can local or national authorities as well as humanitarian actors do to support Ukrainian refugee children in enrolment and their learning in schools?

**For Ukrainian online school teachers:**

1. Have primary and secondary school teachers in Ukraine had to change the delivery of instruction since the start of the escalation? If yes:
  - 1.2. How have teachers adapted to this change?
  - 1.3 Have students with disabilities been impacted by the change in teaching modality?
  - 1.4 Do refugee students continuing their education online have specific difficulties related to their gender or age?
2. What daily challenges do school teachers face in delivering education?
  - 2.1. What are coping mechanisms they use to deal with these challenges?
  - 2.2. Have teachers' personal experiences in the escalation affected their ability to teach?
3. What are, in their opinion, the incentives for parents/caregivers to keep children in Ukrainian online schooling?
4. How has attending online education affected students' learning?
5. How has attending online education affected students' social and emotional well being?
6. What can be done by NGOs, government, or other agencies to support Ukrainian online school teachers and students?
7. What are future considerations for the sustainability of online schooling in Ukraine?
8. Are there any further steps or actions that need to be taken forward by the MoE of Ukraine regarding the online learning of children outside Ukraine?

**For Moldovan school teachers:**

1. What are, in their opinion, the incentives/barriers for parents/caregivers to enrol their children in in-person schooling in Moldova?

1.2 What other education options are available in Moldova for students apart from enrolling children officially in Moldovan schools?

2. What are the main integration challenges for Ukrainian refugee students in Moldovan schools, if any? What integration strategies adopted by teachers or school management that have been successful?
3. What do Moldovan school teachers need to provide quality education to refugee students?
  - 3.1. What is the capacity of schools to adapt to the needs of refugees students?
4. Do refugee students with disabilities face any learning challenges in Moldovan schools?
5. Do refugee students enrolled in the schools have specific difficulties related to their gender or age?
6. How do the teachers assess the social and emotional well-being of students attending in-person schooling?
7. How have the local or national education authorities as well as humanitarian and development partners assisted teachers and schools with enrolled refugee students?

**For Local and National Authorities:**

1. What education services are available for Ukrainian refugee children?
  - 1.2. What education services are available for students with disabilities (physical, mental, intellectual, sensory)?
2. What are the barriers to accessing in-person education in Moldovan schools for Ukrainian refugee children and caregivers?
  - 2.1. How has the government facilitated access to education services?
3. What are the most pressing needs for the education system in Chisinau Municipality and Moldova since the influx of refugees began?
4. How can your office help with integration challenges of refugee children in schools in Moldova?
5. What are the priorities for the coming school year regarding education?

	6. What are future considerations for the sustainability of in-person schooling for refugee children?
<b>Geographic Coverage</b>	Chisinau locality in Moldova (highest number of refugee children)
<b>Secondary data sources</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UNHCR's data on the location of refugees, (directly provided)</li> <li>2. Directorate of General Education-Chisinau Municipality, (data on school-aged refugee children attending schools in Moldova, provided directly)</li> <li>3. UNICEF, IsraAid, Ministry of Education and Research of Moldova, "Education Rapid Needs Assessment", June 2022, <a href="#">Education Rapid Needs Assessment</a></li> <li>4. Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova, <a href="https://mecc.gov.md/ro">https://mecc.gov.md/ro</a></li> <li>5. Inter-Agency network for education in emergencies, <a href="https://inee.org/measurement-library/international-social-and-emotional-learning-assessment-isela">https://inee.org/measurement-library/international-social-and-emotional-learning-assessment-isela</a></li> <li>6. UNHCR Moldova operational dashboard, <a href="https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/MDA">https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/MDA</a></li> <li>7. UNHCR Moldova daily population trends dashboard, <a href="https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/248?sv=0&amp;geo=680">https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/248?sv=0&amp;geo=680</a></li> <li>8. Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, <a href="https://mon.gov.ua/eng">https://mon.gov.ua/eng</a></li> <li>9. Unesco article, <a href="https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/moldovas-education-responses-influx-ukrainian-students">https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/moldovas-education-responses-influx-ukrainian-students</a></li> <li>9. The Palladium Group report, <a href="https://thepalladiumgroup.com/news/Education-for-Moldovas-Refugee-Children-Putting-Data-at-the-Heart-of-Decision-Making">https://thepalladiumgroup.com/news/Education-for-Moldovas-Refugee-Children-Putting-Data-at-the-Heart-of-Decision-Making</a></li> <li>11. MSNA 2022 Moldova, <a href="https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/f2f13659/REACH_Moldova_2022_MSNA-Report.pdf">https://www.impact-repository.org/document/reach/f2f13659/REACH_Moldova_2022_MSNA-Report.pdf</a></li> <li>12. Ukrainian education system, <a href="https://assets.gov.ie/222828/a4b04455-50c4-4cda-915f-250ced871b87.pdf">https://assets.gov.ie/222828/a4b04455-50c4-4cda-915f-250ced871b87.pdf</a></li> <li>13. Save the Children Child Consultation Resources <a href="https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/kit-of-tools_1.pdf/">https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/kit-of-tools_1.pdf/</a></li> <li>14. Unicef, "The state of the world's children" report <a href="https://www.unicef.org/media/114636/file/SOWC-2021-full-report-English.pdf">https://www.unicef.org/media/114636/file/SOWC-2021-full-report-English.pdf</a></li> </ol>

<b>Population(s)</b> <i>Select all that apply</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in informal sites		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs in host communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDPs [Other, Specify]		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in informal sites		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees in host communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Refugees (school-aged children and their caregivers)		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Host communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ukrainian teachers, Moldovan teachers, Moldovan local authorities		
<b>Stratification</b> <i>Select type(s) and enter number of strata</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning modality # 2 refugee children: online Ukrainian schooling vs. In-person Moldovan schooling will be sampled separately  Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Age # 2 primary school age and secondary school age children will be sampled separately  Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender #2 male/female students within the two school levels will be sampled to allow for equal representation. Population size per strata is known? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Data collection tool(s)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structured (Quantitative)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Semi-structured (Qualitative)		
	<b>Sampling method</b>			<b>Data collection method</b>		
<b>Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 1</b> <i>Select sampling and data collection method and specify target # interviews</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Purposive</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Key informant interview (Target #): 12</b> <b>(Local authorities, national authorities, Ukrainian online school teachers, Moldovan teachers will be sampled)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview (Target #): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target #): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify] (Target #): _____		



<b>Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 2</b> <i>Select sampling and data collection method and specify target # interviews</i> <i>***If more than 2 structured tools please duplicate this row and complete for each tool.</i>	<b>x Purposive</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview (Target #):_____ <b>x Individual interview (Target #): 20 (Parents/Caregivers of school children)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion (Target #):_____ <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify] (Target #):_____ 	
<b>Semi-structured data collection tool (s) # 3</b> <i>Select sampling and data collection method and specify target # interviews</i> <i>***If more than 2 structured tools please duplicate this row and complete for each tool.</i>	<b>x Purposive</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Snowballing <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify]		<input type="checkbox"/> Key informant interview (Target #):_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Individual interview (Target #):_____ <b>x Child consultations (Target # 6):</b> <b>Focus group discussions (Target # 6):</b> <b>(Total sessions (12) with children (primary school age) as well as focus group discussion with secondary school aged children separated by gender, learning modality)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> [Other, Specify] (Target #):_____ 	
<b>Target level of precision if probability sampling</b>	__ __ % level of confidence		__ __ +/- % margin of error	
<b>Data management platform(s)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IMPACT	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNHCR
<b>Expected output type(s)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Situation overview #: __ __	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Report #: 1</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Profile #: __ __

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Presentation (Preliminary findings) #: 1</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Presentation (Final) #: 1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Factsheet #: __
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interactive dashboard #: __	<input type="checkbox"/>	Webmap #: __	<input type="checkbox"/>	Map #: __
	<input type="checkbox"/>	[Other, Specify] #: __				
<b>Access</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public (available on REACH resource center and other humanitarian platforms)				
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restricted (bilateral dissemination only upon agreed dissemination list, no publication on REACH or other platforms)				
<b>Visibility</b> Specify which <b>logos</b> should be on outputs	<b>REACH</b>					
	<b>Donor:</b> UNHCR					
	<b>Coordination Framework:</b> - UNHCR , UNICEF , RRP					
	<b>Partners:</b> UNHCR, UNICEF					

## 2. Rationale

### 2.1 Background

As of 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2023, the total influx of refugees from Ukraine into the Republic of Moldova (since February 2022) has exceeded 798,223 border crossings, with 106,634 Ukrainian nationals remaining in the country<sup>3</sup>. Among those who reside in Moldova, almost half are children<sup>4</sup>. According to the latest figures from the Republic of Moldova Ministry of Education and Research, only 1,887 refugee children are enrolled in in-person schooling in Moldova as of March 2023<sup>5</sup>. Findings from the [Education Rapid Needs Assessment](#) (RNA) conducted in June 2022 indicate that the majority of refugee children receive education through the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science's online learning programmes. Yet, little is known about the students accessing this type of learning modality or how learning online has affected learning quality. Additionally, while the RNA explored barriers faced by refugee children to accessing the Moldovan education system, the relationship between these barriers and the reasons for children continuing their education through Ukrainian online learning platforms requires further investigation. Finally, the impact of displacement and the protraction of the crisis is likely to have taken a toll on children's social and emotional well-being which in

<sup>3</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/248?sv=0&geo=680>

<sup>4</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/MDA>

<sup>5</sup> <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/integrarea-copiilor-refugiati-din-ucraina-scolile-din-republica-moldova-discutata-cu>

turn, can hinder their development and ability to learn and integrate within the community and schools<sup>6</sup>. To address the identified information gaps, REACH proposes to conduct an assessment to explore perceptions of access to education, challenges in the learning environment of refugee children, and to explore aspects of the social and emotional well-being.

## 2.2 Intended impact

This assessment will be conducted in the capital of Chisinau and will seek to explore main challenges to education enrolment and attendance for primary and secondary school-aged refugees, caregivers' perceptions of the different education systems available to their children, as well as aspects of social-emotional well-being of children. The information collected will fill gaps in knowledge by providing evidence-based contextual and granular information to:

- a) humanitarian partners on education barriers, perceptions, needs of refugees (including UNICEF and UNHCR) to inform their programming and help strengthen future interventions.
- b) Informing future policy decisions by the Ministry of Education and Research of Moldova in their efforts to understand barriers to education enrolment and facilitate inclusion for refugees for the coming school year.

The low rate (less than 2000 children total) of in-person school enrolment by Ukrainian refugees into Moldovan schools presents a challenge for the humanitarian community and education authority<sup>2</sup>. Through discussions with caregivers and children attending Ukrainian online schooling and in-person schooling in Moldova, the assessment aims to provide a clearer understanding of sentiment regarding the education system, and how to improve inclusion.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Methodology overview

The assessment will draw on a **qualitative approach** consisting of:

- a) **Semi-structured key Informant interviews (KIIs) with local/national authorities** KIIs will be conducted with up to 6 local and national representatives from sectors relevant to the child-specific refugee response in education. Interviews aim to better understand education service policies, needs and access to services, and extent to which these are shaped by contextual factors.

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<sup>6</sup> Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for school, work, and life success

- b) **Ukrainian/Moldovan school teachers** KIIs will be conducted with 3 Moldovan education school teachers and 3 Ukrainian online school teachers. The KIIs will be purposively selected with the help of partners and REACH staff working in Ukraine. The aim of interviews is to better understand service needs, difficulties in education delivery, school capacity for the influx of refugees (Moldova), and coping strategies. Ukrainian teachers will be interviewed through portals such as Teams or Zoom, while Moldovan school teachers will be interviewed in person.
- c) **Informant interviews (IIs) with parents/caregivers of refugee children attending Ukrainian online education and in-person education in Moldova** The IIs with caregivers of children displaced from Ukraine will employ a qualitative approach, based on purposive sampling, and will be conducted at the same locations as the child consultations. The aim is to conduct 20 consultations with caregivers of children enrolled in online and in-person schooling (10 online education, 10 in-person education), to gain information on the specific experiences of refugee caregivers.
- d) **Focus group discussion (FGDs)/Child Consultations with refugee children attending Ukrainian online education and in-person education in Moldova.** Interviews are intended to better understand the impact of any education barriers, coping mechanisms, and perceptions of schooling. The consultations will employ a qualitative approach, based on purposive sampling, and will be conducted in Chisinau where REACH/partners implement projects. The aim is to conduct 12 focus group discussions with children between the ages of 6 and 17 to gain information on the specific experiences of refugee children. The consultations will be grouped by age (primary and secondary) and gender group and will rely on age-appropriate child participatory methods delivered in group settings, which have been tried and tested.

#### Key Definitions:

- **Primary school system**- The age group of primary (elementary) school is 6-9/10 years or grades 1-4.
- **Secondary school system**- This consists of Basic Secondary (Gymnazium) and Upper Secondary (Lyceum) components. Ages range from 10-14/15 years for basic secondary and 15-18 for upper secondary. Basic Secondary school covers a general core curriculum while upper secondary has an academic stream or vocational stream for students to choose from during their studies.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.2 Population of interest

This assessment targets refugee children ages 6-17, caregivers, local and national authorities, Moldovan teachers, and Ukrainian online teachers. It will be conducted in one location- Chisinau, the capital of Moldova and the area with the highest number of target refugees relative to the total refugee population in the country (based on figures from

<sup>7</sup> <https://assets.gov.ie/222828/a4b04455-50c4-4cda-915f-250ced871b87.pdf>

UNHCR). Students of interest are from both education modalities (students enrolled in Ukrainian Online schooling and in-person education in Moldova). Particular attention will be paid to ensure equal representation of women and men among the KIs and parent/caregiver interviews. The pool of respondents for the qualitative assessments is confined to refugee children and caregivers, as well as teachers in the locations selected for data collection. Therefore, findings from the qualitative assessment are indicative of the school-aged refugees' education situation in Chisinau.

**Unit of measurement:**

- **Focus Group discussions: Individual**
- **Key Informant Interview: Area/Sector**
- **Informant Interview: Individual/Area**

### 3.3 Secondary data review

Secondary Data review (listed below) explored information about the current policies regarding refugee enrolment into Moldovan education institutions, figures on enrolment numbers of children, previous assessments done regarding education in Moldova, and consultation with education sector partners. Information on the Ukrainian education system focused on the structure of the grade levels, learning topics in each level, the online learning system and its operational capacity throughout Ukraine.

These resources were used in the preparation of research questions as well as consultation with education sector working group partners.

Source	Relevance
<a href="#">UNHCR Moldova Data portal</a>	UNHCR portal for partners in Moldova.
<a href="#">UNHCR dashboard</a>	Ukrainian refugees arriving, departing Moldova. Updated daily on UNHCR data portal.
<a href="#">Ministry of Education of Ukraine website</a>	The Ministry of Education of Ukraine website regarding online learning, schools in the country operating in-person, and mixed learning methods.
<a href="#">UNESCO article</a>	Moldova's education responses to the influx of Ukrainian students

<a href="#">Education Rapid Needs Assessment</a>	ISRAid Rapid needs assessment 2022
<a href="#">Refugee Education Access Article</a>	Assessment of the refugee access to education in Moldova 2022
<a href="#">Ministry of Education of Moldova</a>	The Ministry of Education of Moldova, regarding the integration of refugee children into the school system.
<a href="#">SEL Assessment</a>	Social and Emotional Learning assessment information
Provided directly	UNHCR's data on the location of refugees
Data on school-aged refugee children attending schools in Moldova, (provided directly)	Directorate of General Education-Chisinau Municipality
<a href="https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/kit-of-tools_1.pdf/">https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/kit-of-tools_1.pdf/</a>	
<a href="#">REACH MSNA 2022</a>	REACH MSNA 2022
<a href="https://assets.gov.ie/222828/a4b04455-50c4-4cda-915f-250ced871b87.pdf">https://assets.gov.ie/222828/a4b04455-50c4-4cda-915f-250ced871b87.pdf</a>	Information on Ukrainian school levels and ages
<a href="#">unicef</a>	Unicef, "The state of the world's children" report

### 3.4 Primary Data Collection

The data collection method adopted for this assessment will be qualitative consisting of semi-structured interviews.

#### 1. Informant Interviews (IIs) with caregivers

Caregivers will be identified through consultation with partners working in the education sector. Those who agree to participate will be contacted for an in-person interview. Interviews will last approximately 45 minutes and will be conducted by a pair of enumerators- 1 facilitator, 1 notetaker. Interviews will be recorded with the participants' consent. Caregivers will be asked about their individual experience and that of their community within the geographical area of which they are knowledgeable. This methodology revolves

around the assumption that individuals are able to provide information relating to their community in a specific small-sized geographical area about which they can reasonably be expected to have knowledge.

This community-centered approach aligns with the principle of Accountability towards Affected Populations (AAP), where members of the community are considered in the best position to speak about their experiences as well as their needs and ways to help address them.

### **Discussion Points**

Method: Semi-structured discussions will be conducted, topics include:

- Factors influencing Ukrainian refugee decisions regarding children's education modality
- Conditions in which Ukrainian refugee children access the online education system in Ukraine
- Social and emotional well-being of Ukrainian refugee children
- Any challenges involving integration/social cohesion into Moldovan society
- Satisfaction with the online education system of Ukraine
- Possible solutions to improve integration of children into Moldovan schools

## **2. KIs with Moldovan teachers**

Interviews with school teachers in Moldova will employ a qualitative approach aimed at capturing perception of students' needs and access challenges to education services, any integration issues, school-level challenges for teachers, resource needs/challenges due to integration, and policy impacts. The interviews will last approximately 45 minutes, and will be recorded with consent. Two enumerators will conduct the interview after the respondent has consented. Respondents will be selected purposively through facilitation from education sector partners. A total of 3 interviews are planned.

### **Discussion Points**

Method: Semi-structured discussions will be conducted concerning the perceptions of teachers, topics include:

- Challenges to enrolment
- Absorption capacity of school for new students
- Challenges of integration of refugee students into Moldovan schools

- Quality of education provided and additional resources needed

### **3. KIIs with Ukrainian online teachers**

Interviews with Ukrainian school teachers will employ a qualitative approach aimed at capturing perception of needs and access challenges for refugee children living abroad to online education services, instruction challenges for teachers, resource needs/challenges due to the context, and any perception of impacts on student social and emotional well-being. The interviews will last approximately 45 minutes, and will be recorded with consent. Two enumerators will conduct the interview on Teams or Zoom platforms after the respondent has consented. Respondents will be purposively selected through facilitation from REACH project staff in Ukraine, as well as through facilitation from education sector partners working in Ukraine and Moldova. A total of 3 interviews are planned.

#### **Discussion Points**

Method: Semi-structured discussions will be conducted concerning the perceptions of teachers, topics include:

- Sustainability perception for modality of online education
- Social and Emotional perception of student well-being
- Quality of education provided and additional resources needed
- The challenges of teaching online education in general and related challenges due to the context (can be related to internet, technology, personal situation, etc.) and coping strategies
- Educator perspective into learning modality preference of Ukrainian students

### **4. KIIs with Local and National Authorities**

Interviews with authorities employs a qualitative approach aimed at capturing service providers' understanding of needs and access challenges for children to education services, integration issues, policy planning, and overall impact on educational institutions. The interviews will last approximately 45 minutes, and will be recorded with consent. One enumerator will conduct the interview after the respondent has consent

ed. Respondents will be contacted through facilitation from representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research in Moldova. Officials who have an understanding of the education system will be consulted. A total of 6 interviews are planned, 3 representatives from Chisinau and 3 national level authorities.

#### **Discussion Points**



- Method: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to understand how policy has impacted
- Education policies that are in place for refugees
- Impact of refugees on school systems, absorption capacity, impact on resources
- Challenges of integration/social cohesion within schools
- Assistance provided to local schools to improve access for refugees
- Future planning for refugees

### 5. Child consultations FGD's with children- primary and secondary school ages

We will consult/conduct FGDs with boys and girls aged 6 to 17. For younger children we will use techniques such as body mapping or “yes/no/maybe” to facilitate discussion on education. Body mapping is a participatory tool, which uses the drawing of a body and body parts to explore children’s needs and experiences. “Yes/No/Maybe” is a tool that involves participants identifying the barriers to services and identifying solutions to the most important barriers. Symbols or handouts are given that express each response which the child can show as a response to questions asked by the facilitator.<sup>8</sup> These techniques have been used by organisations such as Save the children in their work with children, including a project with REACH in Romania and Poland (not yet published). After the end of each FGD, a feedback activity will be conducted to ask about how they feel about the discussion and if they want to discuss anything further with the facilitator. The feedback activity can vary with each group but will generally have each child discuss their thoughts and feelings about the discussion to the group.

Tool	Duration	6-11 years	12-14 years	15-17 years
Introductions and informed consent	10 min	X	X	X
Body Mapping	45 min	X		
Focus Group Discussion	45 min		X	X
Yes No Maybe	35 min	X		
Feedback Activity 1	5 min		X	X

<sup>8</sup> [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/kit-of-tools\\_1.pdf/](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/kit-of-tools_1.pdf/)

Interview techniques will remain flexible with younger age groups to allow for adaptation based on each respective consultation group's dynamic. Each group activity will consist of 4-8 participants. This will give participants enough opportunities to share their ideas and explore new ones together. Using a gender-sensitive approach, boys and girls will be consulted with separately. Female group interviews will be done with female facilitators and note-takers while male groups could have mixed male and female facilitators.

**Example of topics for discussion (based on age/education modality):**

- How they are performing in school
- If they have someone to talk to when they have problems
- Preference for education modality
- If they are able to understand their teachers
- What they think is hard about school
- Anything they worry about in general

### 3.5 Sampling methods

First, Chisinau with the highest levels of target refugees (ages 6-12 years) was identified (based on data from UNHCR about population size). This strategy was used due to the low numbers of enrolment of refugees in schools in Moldova (approximately 2000 students in preschool to secondary school).<sup>9</sup> This means that most children are participating in online education or other informal types of education, however, there are no figures available to determine how many. The majority of children are participating are mainly in primary or lower secondary education, (1141 students (grades 1-9)), while only 30 students are participating in upper secondary education (grades 10-12), based on data provided by MER in April 2023. This presents a challenge in identifying children for both modalities, and an important consideration in the number of interviews conducted with children. We intend to interview more students participating in Ukraine online education as this is part of the purpose of the assessment, to understand their perceptions on Moldovan schooling.

Children/teachers participating in in-person education in Moldova will be located with the help of the Ministry of Education's information on school enrolment as well as Directorate General of Education in Chisinau Municipality. Children participating in online schooling will be identified with the help of education working group partners through their programs

<sup>9</sup> <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/integrarea-copiiilor-refugiati-din-ucraina-scolile-din-republica-moldova-discutata-cu>

and working with this population in the community and in RAC's (Refugee accommodation centres). Ukrainian online teachers will be identified through the assistance of REACH teams in Ukraine, and partner organizations. Local and National Authorities will be identified and linked with our team through assistance from the Moldova Ministry of Education and Research.

The main purpose of this data will be to help inform the Ministry of Education and Research as well as partners about the perceptions of refugees before the start of the next school year. The intention is to reduce any barriers to education enrolment and understand why more refugees have not enrolled in schools in Moldova.

#### Limitations:

The result of this purposive sampling strategy is that the data is not representative of the population as a whole and can only be indicative of experiences of the sampled refugees in Chisinau. The small sample size in addition to the sampling strategy results in the lack of statistical significance of the results.

For each education modality, interviews will be conducted with KIIs, caregivers, and children. In total, up to 15(KII) interviews will be conducted between both modalities, as well as 12(FGDs) focus group discussions with children, and 20(IIs) Informant interviews with caregivers (See table 1 below). Interviews are planned to last for an average of 45 minutes, to allow for enough time for detailed answers. Respondents will be asked about their level of confidence in speaking about the situation of their community before selecting them.

**Table 1:** Breakdown of sampling strategy by education modality

	Ukrainian Online education				In-person Moldovan education				Total
	Primary school		Secondary school		Primary school		Secondary school		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
FGDs with children	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	12
IIs with caregivers	5		5		5		5		20

KIs with Moldovan school teachers	NA	3	3	6
KIs with local authorities	NA	1-3		1-3
KIs with Ukrainian online school teachers	3	NA		3
KIs with national authorities	NA	1-3		1-3

### 3.6 Data collection methodology

#### 3.6.1 Child consultations

A team of one Field Officer and ten enumerators will be conducting the interviews, supervised by an Assessment Officer. Enumerators will be split up into teams of two and in each data collection session, a duo will be responsible for carrying out interviews with each KI. When conducting the interview, one enumerator will be leading the discussion (facilitator) and the other taking notes (note taker). Names and phone numbers for local and national authorities, caregivers, and teachers will be collected in order to coordinate interviews. No personal data will be used in the analysis. Note takers will assign codes to each consultation and FGD discussion to protect vulnerable groups. The codes cannot be matched to children's names. The enumerators will have a clear understanding of all questions before starting the interviews due to training sessions with the assessment officers prior to the beginning of data collection. Enumerators are recruited who speak Ukrainian or Russian and are able to communicate with children taking part in Focus group discussions without the help of an interpreter. The identification of consultation sites will be discussed with education working group partners under the coordination of MER, UNICEF and UNHCR to ensure that it is a safe space, familiar to the child such as school spaces or community location options. As mentioned previously, the female consultations/FGDs with children will be conducted

by female facilitators. For younger age groups, the facilitators will be 4 per group. At the end of each discussion, 10-15 minutes will be dedicated for children who wish to have private time with an adult of the same gender. The enumerators will have a debrief with the FO and AO on how the session went, and if needed, any issues that need to be referred to referral partners. All consultations conducted with the children will also abide by the Child Protection Protocol of REACH Initiatives.

### 3.7 Enumerator Training

#### 3.7.1 child consultations training

Prior to data collection, all enumerators will take part in an in-person training with UNHCR child protection specialist. The half-day training will cover topics needed to conduct assessments with children in an ethical manner, respecting the principles of child protection. The training includes: Safeguarding, , Safe Identification and Referral, The Referral Protocol and Risk Assessment, 9 Basic Requirements for Meaningful and Ethical Participants, and Child Protection Principles.

Separate from the UNHCR training, REACH will conduct its own training for all enumerators on child protection principles as well as best practices from previous experience in child consultations. The training includes: in-depth sessions on safeguarding, Child Participatory Methodology and Tools, Psycho-social first aid (PFA), 9 Basic Requirements for Meaningful and Ethical Participants. There will also be a chance for enumerators to practice interviews and ask questions. The training will be a full day. Enumerators will also abide by ACTEDs policies regarding safeguarding (listed in section 4.1.1).

In addition to training on child protection and consultations, all enumerators will review the assessment questions with the AO and FO and familiarize themselves with the objectives of the assessment. For all the FGDs with children in primary level education, trainings for all enumerators will be provided based on materials developed by Save the Children International used in another assessment conducted by REACH team Poland. Two assessment officers that worked on that project as well as the project lead will help to train. There will be extra enumerators for the younger child focus groups to monitor these activities when conducted.

### Data Processing & Analysis

**Qualitative IIs with parents and consultations with schoolchildren** will be recorded (when consent is given), and interviewers will take notes. Enumerators will transcribe these notes, using recordings to consolidate, as soon as possible after the discussions. In each II/FGD, at least one enumerator will be dedicated to taking notes while another moderates the discussion. Also, after each interview and FGD they will complete enumerator debrief forms. All data cleaning and analysis will be conducted in Microsoft Excel and reviewed by the IMPACT HQ Research Design and Data (RDD) Unit before the output production. Original notes will be kept for reference until the end of the assessment.

After transcription is complete, data will be processed according to [IMPACT's qualitative data processing and analysis checklist and minimum standards](#). Throughout data collection, the assessment team will produce a data saturation and analysis grid (DSAG). The DSAG allows for a systematic analysis of qualitative data through thematic coding. The results will be disaggregated by learning modality. Participants will be able to receive the final report through an email link provided in the consent form which goes to a REACH staff member directly.

**Qualitative KIs with teachers and local/national authorities** will be recorded (when consent is given), and one interviewer will take notes. Enumerators will transcribe these notes, using recordings to consolidate, as soon as possible after the discussions. All data cleaning and analysis will be conducted in Microsoft Excel and reviewed by the IMPACT HQ Research Design and Data (RDD) Unit before the output production. Original notes will be kept for reference until the end of the assessment. After transcription is complete, data will be processed according to [IMPACT's qualitative data processing and analysis checklist and minimum standards](#). Throughout data collection, the assessment team will produce a data saturation and analysis grid (DSAG). The DSAG allows for a systematic analysis of qualitative data through thematic coding. The Field Officer will provide the enumerators with the locations of IIs and key informants to interview. Results will be analysed to see differences based on national and local considerations/challenges and policies.

## 4. Key ethical considerations and related risks

### 4.1 Consent considerations

Informed consent and/or assent will be obtained from all participants and from the caregivers of child participants. At the start of each group activity with children, enumerators will summarise key information related to data collection and check that all children continue to assent prior to participation. It will be emphasized that participation is voluntary and the child does not have to participate even if their parents consent, or they decided previously to participate. The child is also free to decide on their own if they would like to participate and their decision will be respected. Consent will be obtained from every participant prior to any interviews taking place.

#### a. Referral Mechanism

There are various types of referral systems in place for any situation that may arise. The ACTED hotline for complaints against our staff or for any concern in general will be provided to participants. Enumerators will be provided with a guide on when to refer cases to UNHCR and what to do when there is an emergency situation. In these case UNHCR will be contacted as well as the pertinent authority (police, ambulance) depending on the situation. UNHCR's phone number will be provided to enumerators to refer to if in any doubt while in the field. For all other non-urgent concerns, education sectors partners have provided a list of organisations to refer based on the circumstance. For

any within-team concerns, the enumerator will report to the FO who will report the concern to the AO. The AO will report to a referral partner if the situation dictates this action. After every consultation or discussion session there will be a debrief with enumerators, FO, and AO to discuss any issues that arose during discussions. Any issues that need to be reported (including anything children have disclosed that is concerning, or concerning behaviour) will be done after this debrief.

## **4.2 Safeguarding**

In addition to the UNHCR Child Protection Training, enumerators and the data collection team will be trained on and commit to abide by:

- o ACTED's Child Protection Policy;
- o ACTED's Data Protection Policy;
- o ACTED's Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy;
- o ACTED's Grievance Policy;
- o ACTED's Policy Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse;
- o ACTED's Anti-Terrorism and Anti-money laundering Policy;
- o ACTED's Environmental Safeguarding Policy
- o ACTED's procedures, manuals and handbooks e.g. Finance, Logistics, Administration & Human Resources, Transparency & Audit, Security & Safety and AME;
- o Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, of which ACTED is a signatory,
- o U.N. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises.

REACH will share with and ask its enumerators to abide by SCI's Child Safeguarding policy and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy

REACH abides by SCI's Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy and Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Policy

## **4.3 Data Protection**

Project staff will follow IMPACT data protection SOPs. REACH will ensure that personal data is processed and transferred in accordance with the applicable data protection laws, regulatory guidelines and industry standards. REACH will ensure at all stages of the research that consent is sought from the respondent before the recording of any data. REACH will place appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect the personal data against accidental or unlawful destruction or accidental loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure or access, and which provide a level of security appropriate to the risk represented by the processing and the nature of the data to be protected. Any sharing of the raw (non-anonymized) microdata is done via Microsoft SharePoint, in order to restrict access only to authorized people. Facilitators, note takers and the analysis team will have access to the raw data. In addition, the translator will have access to the raw transcripts. The translated transcripts would be accessed by the analysts in Moldova as well as lead analyst in Geneva. After data cleaning, any identifiable information will be deleted and anonymized. Raw data and translated data will be kept on REACH/ACTED SharePoint for 6 months after the final report is completed, after which it will be deleted.

The proposed research design meets / does not meet the following criteria:

<b><i>The proposed research design...</i></b>	<b><i>Yes/ No</i></b>	<b><i>Details if no (including mitigation)</i></b>
... Has been coordinated with relevant stakeholders to <b>avoid unnecessary duplication</b> of data collection efforts?	Yes	
... <b>Respects respondents, their rights and dignity</b> ( <i>specifically by: seeking informed consent, designing length of survey/ discussion while being considerate of participants' time, ensuring accurate reporting of information provided</i> )?	Yes	
... Does not <b>expose data collectors to any risks as a direct result</b> of participation in data collection?	No	In the risk assessment section of the DMP, we assess the loss of privacy as the risk for enumerators in case they are identified.
... Does not <b>expose respondents / their communities to any risks as a direct result</b> of participation in data collection?	No	In the risk assessment section of the DMP, we assess the loss of privacy as the risk for caregivers, teachers. We



		collect names and phone numbers to facilitate interviews.
... Does not involve <b>collecting information on specific topics which may be stressful and/ or re-traumatizing</b> for research participants (both respondents and data collectors)?	No	<p>Children and Caregivers will be asked general questions relating to social and emotional well-being of children.</p> <p>The purpose of asking these questions is to understand how the child's social and emotional well-being could be affecting their learning ability. The focus will be on schoolwork challenges, and if they have any social connections in Moldova.</p> <p>Facilitators will be trained to recognize signs of distress, abuse or anything else warranting psycho-social first aid or further referral, and on the appropriate course of action if a participant discloses an experience which requires referral and/or reporting. They will ensure children know that they can approach them privately if they want to share something without fellow participants overhearing what they share. Additional channels to access support (e.g. helpline numbers) will be shared following the activity</p>

... Does not involve <b>data collection with minors</b> i.e. anyone less than 18 years old?	No	Special training will be provided to enumerators, consent/assent of parents/children will be collected.
... Does not involve <b>data collection with other vulnerable groups</b> e.g. persons with disabilities, victims/ survivors of protection incidents, etc.?	No	We aim to include persons with disabilities if possible, to generate a diversity of opinion and understand inclusion challenges.
... Follows IMPACT SOPs for management of <b>personally identifiable information</b> ?	Yes	

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

Table 3: Description of roles and responsibilities

<b>Task Description</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Accountable</b>	<b>Consulted</b>	<b>Informed</b>
<i>Research design</i>	Assessment Officer	Research Manager	Partners Impact HQ (RDD) unit	Partners
<i>Supervising data collection</i>	Field officer	Assessment Officer	IMPACT country representative	Operational partners (ACTED)
<i>Data processing (checking, cleaning)</i>	Assessment Officer	Assessment Officer	IMPACT HQ RDD Unit	Research manager
<i>Data analysis</i>	Assessment Officer	Assessment Officer	IMPACT HQ RDD unit	Research manager
<i>Output production</i>	Assessment Officer	Research Manager	IMPACT HQ RDD unit	IMPACT RRU
<i>Dissemination</i>	Assessment Officer			Partners, education sector

		IMPACT country coordinator	IMPACT HQ Research department and Communication department	working group, Moldova Ministry of Education and Research
<i>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</i>	Assessment Officer	Assessment Officer	Research Manager	IMPACT country coordinator; IMPACT HQ RDD department
<i>Lessons learned</i>	Assessment Officer	Assessment Officer	IMPACT HQ RDD Unit; Research Manager	IMPACT HQ Research

## 6. Data Analysis Plan

Available at this link

<https://repository.impact-initiatives.org/resources/view-resource/?id=57910>

## 7. Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

IMPACT Objective	External M&E Indicator	Internal M&E Indicator	Focal point	Tool	Will indicator be tracked?
Humanitarian stakeholders are accessing IMPACT products	Number of humanitarian organisations accessing IMPACT services/products  Number of individuals accessing IMPACT services/products	# of downloads of x product from Resource Center	Country request to HQ	User_log	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of downloads of x product from Relief Web	Country request to HQ		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of downloads of x product from Country level platforms	Country team		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of page clicks on x product from REACH global newsletter	Country request to HQ		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of page clicks on x product from country newsletter, sendingBlue, bit.ly	Country team		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		# of visits to x webmap/x dashboard	Country request to HQ		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
IMPACT activities contribute to better program implementation and coordination of the humanitarian response	Number of humanitarian organisations utilizing IMPACT services/products	# references in HPC documents (HNO, SRP, Flash appeals, Cluster/sector strategies, RRP)	Country team	Reference_log	<p>[List here relevant HPC-documents to be monitored: E.g. Iraq HNO 2018, Iraq Flash Appeal Mosul, Shelter Cluster strategy]</p> <p>[List here relevant agency-documents to be monitored: E.g. UNHCR Country Strategy, UNICEF WASH Response Strategy]</p>
		# references in single agency documents			
Humanitarian stakeholders are using IMPACT products	Humanitarian actors use IMPACT evidence/products as a basis for decision making, aid planning and delivery	Perceived relevance of IMPACT country-programs	Country team	Usage_Feed back and Usage_Survey template	Through debriefing session with UNHCR at the end of the project
		Perceived usefulness and influence of IMPACT outputs			
		Recommendations to strengthen IMPACT programs			

	Number of humanitarian documents (HNO, HRP, cluster/agency strategic plans, etc.) directly informed by IMPACT products	Perceived capacity of IMPACT staff Perceived quality of outputs/programs Recommendations to strengthen IMPACT programs			
<b>Humanitarian stakeholders are engaged in IMPACT programs throughout the research cycle</b>	Number and/or percentage of humanitarian organizations directly contributing to IMPACT programs ( <i>providing resources, participating to presentations, etc.</i> )	# of organisations providing resources (i.e.staff, vehicles, meeting space, budget, etc.) for activity implementation # of organisations/clusters inputting in research design and joint analysis # of organisations/clusters attending briefings on findings;	Country team	Engagement_log	x Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Yes x Yes

## 8. Child Protection Protocol

### 1. Purpose of the Protocol

Child abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation is considered worldwide a violation of the fundamental rights of the child. Violence against children is unacceptable and requires comprehensive action, IMPACT is committed to safeguarding and protecting children's rights in the overall performance of its activities.

This protocol outlines key principles and actions that will be taken by IMPACT staff and contractors to safeguard the rights of children, adolescents, young people, their families and communities directly addressed, in the implementation of its activities. This protocol aims at ensuring that urgent issues that can put the life and/or well-being of a child in immediate danger detected during the implementation of the activities are timely and efficiently referred to child protection personnel for their due follow-up in full respect of the International Convention of the Rights of the Child and following Protocols.

This protocol outlines compulsory procedures to be undertaken by IMPACT staff and contractors.

The protocol will be validated by a Child Protection specialist and include an ethics review of the methods and materials used for the assessment. No data collection will be carried out before the validation of this instrument.

### 2. Guiding Principles

1. **The Best Interest of the Child** lies at the heart of the assessment, its design and implementation.

2. **Respect:** all evidence-generating activities should ensure respect for all persons. Respect demands that individuals be treated as autonomous agents. An autonomous agent is an individual capable of deliberation about personal goals and of acting under the direction of such deliberation. To respect autonomy is to give weight to autonomous persons' values, preferences, and beliefs and to recognize their capability for self-legislation, their ability to make judgments, to state their opinions and to make choices.

3. **Non-discrimination** requires that all the participants in evidence-generating activities should be treated with equal respect and given equal opportunity to speak for themselves. That includes accommodating special needs of children with disability. Additionally, all children should be allowed to express their ideas without judgement. Beyond meeting the selection criteria for participation (i.e. refugee children between 6-17 years old who fled Ukraine), children will not be discriminated against due to any reason, including gender, sexual orientation, race, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, economic status, disability, birth or other status.

3. **Do –no harm:** is a principle of paramount importance when involving children in research. Children are a vulnerable population that requires special protection and care. This principle ensures that the well-being, rights, and dignity of children are upheld throughout the research process. It emphasises the ethical responsibility to minimise any potential harm or negative consequences that may arise from their participation. By adhering to this principle, researchers prioritise the safety, physical and emotional well-being, privacy, and confidentiality of children, while also considering their developmental needs and best interests. Implementing the do-no-harm principle safeguards children's rights, promoting a respectful and ethical approach to involving them in humanitarian research.

4. **Anonymity:** is a guiding principle of any evidence-generating activities. It provides a safe space for participants to share their ideas and experiences, as it ensures that participants of the data collection cannot be identified by third parties, who could potentially use their data against them.

5. **Relevance:** Children draw upon their expertise, insights, knowledge, and capabilities to express their views on issues of relevance to them.

### 3. **Informed consent/assent:**

For any primary data collection, informed consent is obtained from the respondent; if the respondent is a child, this entails assent by the child and informed consent by their caretaker. Once the individual participants have been identified, REACH staff will contact respective guardians and explain the research activities in its purpose and methodology. Once the guardians' verbal consent has been obtained, REACH staff will provide the informed consent form, outlining all the procedures to be taken to ensure child protection and privacy, and request the guardians' signature. At the start of each group activity with children, enumerators will summarise key information related to data collection and check that all children provide assent prior to participation. It will be emphasized that participation is voluntary, and the child does not have to participate even if their parents' consented, or they decided previously to participate. The child is also free to decide on their own if they would like to participate and their decision will be respected. In addition, the child has the right withdraw from participation in the activity at any moment during its occurrence.

#### **Procedure:**

- Children from age 6 to 17 will be interviewed in the study.
- After the selection of the potential participant, the Enumerator engages with his/her legal representative to seek his/her consent for the child to participate in the data collection exercise using the Consent Form.
- Upon consent from the child's legal representative, the Enumerator engages with the child to seek his/her assent to participate in the data collection exercise using the Assent form.
- The Consent and Assent forms outline important elements of which the potential participant and her/his legal representatives should be informed, including the purpose of the research, the selection of the participants, the voluntary nature of the participation, the procedures of relevant data collection methods, the confidentiality of the research, the data management policy, the risks involved in taking part in the research, the no compensation/no-benefit policy as well as the way findings will be shared (for more details refer to the Consent/Assent forms).

• Enumerators shall inform the participants that even if issues related to abuse are not the topic of the assessment, in respect of the Republic of Moldova's mandatory reporting procedures for cases of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and trafficking, if there is evidence or suspicion of abuse occurring, it will have to be reported to the authorities. • No data collection exercise may be carried out without the formal consent of the legal representative AND the

assent from the child.

- See the Informed Consent/Assent form.

#### 4. Confidentiality and Professionalism:

Project staff will follow IMPACT data protection SOPs. REACH will ensure that personal data is processed and transferred in accordance with the applicable data protection laws, regulatory guidelines and industry standards. REACH will ensure at all stages of the research that consent is sought from the respondent before the recording of any data. REACH will place appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect the personal data against accidental or unlawful destruction or accidental loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure or access, and which provide a level of security appropriate to the risk represented by the processing and the nature of the data to be protected. PII will not be collected for child consultations. For adults, names and contact information will be collected to schedule interviews and in the consent form for caregivers, teachers, and local/national authorities. Facilitators, note takers, translators and the analysis team will have access to the raw data. The anonymised and translated transcripts would be accessed by the assessment officers in Moldova as well as lead analyst in Geneva.

Any discussion recording, raw data and translated data will be kept on REACH/ACTED SharePoint for 1 month after the final report is completed, after which it will be deleted. It will ensure no dispersion of confidential information by anonymizing transcripts and reports.. The communication will be set up in such a way to reduce communication leaks or any violation of the privacy of the child and other respondents. The data management plan specifically outlines appropriate procedures for the collection, treatment and disclosure of confidential information.

##### **International best practices and instruments:**

IMPACT personnel will receive a specific training on how to refer child protection urgent cases. They will be provided with tailored training materials from UNHCR's child protection specialist to cover topics: Safeguarding, safe identification and referral, the referral protocol and risk assessment, and child protection principles. Separate from this training, REACH will conduct its own training for all enumerators on child protection principles and best practices. The training will include in-depth sessions on safeguarding, child participatory methodology and tools, 9 basic requirements for meaningful and ethical data collection with children, as well as the referral system for any child protection or related concerns. These trainings will rely on tried and tested material from past work with children and agencies dedicated to working with children. Enumerators will be provided with reporting instruments such as: (1) the Assent/Consent Form, (2) the Confidentiality Agreement as well as (3) the Enumerator Debriefing Form.

In addition to the UNHCR Child Protection Training, enumerators and the data collection team will be trained on and commit to abide by:

- o ACTED and IMPACT's Child Protection Policies;
- o ACTED and IMPACT's Data Protection Policies;
- o ACTED and IMPACT's Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policies;
- o ACTED and IMPACT's Grievance Policies;
- o ACTED and IMPACT's Policies Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse;
- o ACTED and IMPACT's Anti-Terrorism and Anti-money laundering Policies;



- o ACTED and IMPACT's Environmental Safeguarding Policies;
- o ACTED's procedures, manuals and handbooks e.g. Finance, Logistics, Administration & Human Resources, Transparency & Audit, Security & Safety and AME;
- o Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, of which ACTED is a signatory,
- o U.N. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises.
- o UNHCR/HCP/2015/6 Policy on the Protection of Personal Data of Persons to Concern to UNHCR

### 3. Legal Framework

#### In Moldova

#### Mandatory reporting

The main laws offering special protection for children at risk and children separated from their parents are law number 140 as well as law number 270 on the the Intersectoral cooperation mechanism<sup>10</sup>. The law on Mandatory Reporting complements these two laws, to specifies when and how cases of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or trafficking should be reported.<sup>11</sup>

### 4. Procedures

#### Informed assent/consent

- Children from age 6 to 17 will be interviewed in the study.
- After the selection of the potential participant, the Enumerator engages with his/her legal representative to seek his/her consent for the child to participate in the data collection exercise using the Consent Form.
- Upon consent from the child's legal representative, the Enumerator engages with the child to seek his/her assent to participate in the data collection exercise using the Assent form.
- The Consent and Assent forms outline important elements of which the potential participant and her/his legal representatives should be informed, including the purpose of the research, the selection of the participants, the voluntary nature of the participation, the procedures of relevant data collection methods, the confidentiality of the research, the data management policy, the risks involved in taking part in the research, the no

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<sup>10</sup>[intersectoral cooperation mechanism](#)

<sup>11</sup>[Mandatory Reporting](#)

compensation/no-benefit policy as well as the way findings will be shared (for more details refer to the

Consent/Assent forms).

- If during the activity, a participant shares something that makes us worry that your child, another child, or any third person might be at risk of being harmed, or if a child discloses past or present abuse, it will have to be reported in accordance with the law to the judicial authorities, according to REACH Child abuse reporting procedures.
- No data collection exercise may be carried out without the formal consent of the legal representative AND the assent from the child.
- See the Informed Consent/Assent form.

#### **Data collection time**

- Enumerators shall make sure both with the facility representatives and the children that the time of data collection does not interfere with the daily schedule of the children (schooling, recreational activities, meals, rest, praying, etc.).
- Interview and focus group exercises should take strictly the time needed to collect relevant information to minimize their impact on the children's daily schedule.

#### **Data collection space and privacy**

- The interview and focus group should take place in a room that guarantees the security and privacy of the respondents. Therefore, enumerators conduct consultation in 'safe spaces' where they and the respondents will not be heard by non-participants and where the child feels comfortable.
- If non-participants are present in the data collection room, enumerators explain them that in order to protect the participants' privacy, non-participants should leave the room.
- If privacy cannot be guaranteed the interview is rescheduled and Enumerators refer to the Field Coordinator.
- If third parties are interfering with an interview or focus group, the Enumerators will interrupt the data collection exercise.

#### **Confidentiality and anonymization**

- Before starting data collection, enumerators will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement with REACH whereby they commit not to disclose any information they collect as part of their Enumerator role to other actors.

- Data collection forms are anonymous, and the Enumerators shall not record the names of the participants.
- To protect confidentiality during Focus Groups the Enumerators shall demand participants to refrain referring to individual cases presented during the discussion outside the group with non-participants.
- However, the Enumerators shall inform the participants about the risk of other participants reporting topics discussed during the session.
- At the end of individual interviews, participants will be granted the possibility to check the script to make sure that answers were recorded correctly.

#### **Addressing discomfort from a child during data collection**

- Enumerators shall remind the children that they have the right to interrupt the interview at any point and are free not to answer specific questions if they wish so.
- Enumerators shall ensure that concerns and distress are timely detected and addressed during the data collection phase, including interrupting momentarily, or definitively the interview to protect the Best Interest of the Child.

#### **Ensuring cultural sensitivity**

- The Enumerator team accounts for potential political and cultural sensitivities of participants. Each sub-team will include 3 enumerators for all child consultations for primary school students and 2 enumerators for focus groups in secondary school. Enumerators are trained to ensure full respect of participants political or cultural sensitivities. Language sensitivities will be taken into account by ensuring the enumerator speaks the preferred language of the participants. At least 1 Ukrainian-speaking enumerator will be present during the Focus Group Discussions.
- Enumerators will not provide any information regarding their religious or political affiliations.

#### **Case Reporting Mechanism Procedure**

- For urgent cases which are not related to abuse or neglect, consent will be sought from the caregiver for REACH to support the needed intervention/referral. For urgent cases related to abuse or where otherwise not in the child's best interest to seek parental consent (ex: medical emergency and the parent is unreachable), REACH will follow applicable Moldovan laws and ensure that needed follow up is done to ensure that the child's best interests are upheld.

- Enumerators shall address children's concerns in an emergency situation and provide response, by interrupting the interview and responding to the child's individual concerns.
- In addition, Enumerators shall systematically provide the contact reference for complains to all participants and their caregivers at the end of the interview in the form of an email address and telephone number that is checked by assessment staff. In the case of a complaint against a staff member, ACTED CRM team will be notified for internal procedures, as well as UNHCR child protection specialist, if this is deemed appropriate.
- The Assessment Officer is the focal point for complaints. As such, she/he collects potential concerns and complaints and conducts the appropriate procedure.

#### **Urgent action cases and referrals**

There are various types of referral systems in place for any situation that may arise. The ACTED CRM hotline for complaints against our staff or for any concern in general will be provided to participants. In case of an emergency, UNHCR will be contacted after the enumerator has contacted the pertinent authority (police, ambulance, or the Guardianship Authority, if needed) based on the situation. UNHCRs phone number will be provided to enumerators as a reference while in the field. For all other non-urgent concerns, education sector and child protection partners have provided referral list of organisations based on the circumstance. For any within-team concerns, the enumerator will report to the FO who will report the concern to the AO. The AO will report to a referral partner if the situation dictates this action. After every consultation or discussion session there will be a debrief with enumerators, FO, and AO to discuss any issues that arose during discussions. Any issues that need to be reported (including anything children have disclosed that is concerning, or concerning behaviour) will be done after this debrief by the AO.

- In the event of any emergency, the discussion will be halted and rescheduled.
- While Enumerators are not asking about abuse, in light of legislation, if there is evidence or a suspicion of abuse occurring, it will have to be reported in accordance with the law to the judicial authorities in that case, the Enumerator will notify the Assessment Officer.
- If necessary, the Assessment Officer will contact a referral partner on behalf of the victim/s on the site (pre-identified by UNHCR), within 24 hours and notify ACTED CRM.

#### **Reporting**

Enumerators shall inform the participants that the outcome of the research process will be a public report, where all information will be de-identified, and sensitive information omitted in order to ensure protection of

participants.

- Participants who wish to be referred to specific social assistance services may provide their name and contact information but this will not be shared beyond the identified focal point nor be part of the data available for the research. This information will only be available to the Assessment officer and will be shared with the reference organization indicated in the Referral guide.
- The Assessment Officer shall make sure that the research outputs will present information that in no way could be traced back to individual participants.
- Draft reports are reviewed by the REACH Assessment Officer as well as by REACH Geneva HQ to ensure that information cannot be traced back to individual participants.
- An additional double-check is provided by UNHCR Child Protection specialists that will make sure that assessment outputs do not entail risks for the direct participants and/or to the target group

### **Risk Assessment**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk Mitigation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Children do not want to participate in the interview/focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No data collection exercise will be carried out without obtaining the formal consent of the legal representative AND the assent from the child.</li> <li>• Enumerators remind the participant that he/she has the right to interrupt temporarily or definitively the interview/focus group at any time</li> </ul>	Enumerators
Focus group facilitators, interviewers and field researchers cause distress to participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews procedures are designed in order to ensure that: (1) participants can take an informed decision upon participation; (2) participants can interrupt the interview at any time; (3) complaints are timely received</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field Coordinator</li> <li>• Enumerators</li> </ul>

	<p>and addressed during data collection; (4) Possibility to</p> <p>be referred to special social assistance services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview tools have been designed in order to ensure</li> </ul> <p>an escalation of the question sensitiveness. Time</p> <p>breaks have been introduced to allow • Enumerators to</p> <p>monitor participants' response to the questionnaire and</p> <p>ensure to pre-empt distress.</p>	
<p>Participants express concerns or complaints about the interview / FGD process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enumerators systematically provide the contact</li> </ul> <p>reference of the complaint email and phone number to all participants at the end of the interview and stress the Assessment Officers role as focal point.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field</li> <li>•Coordinator</li> <li>Enumerators</li> </ul>
<p>Limited / no privacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interviews shall be held in private spaces where</li> </ul> <p>overhearing is not allowed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If privacy cannot be guaranteed the interview is</li> </ul> <p>rescheduled and Enumerators refer to the Field</p> <p>Coordinator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If third parties are interfering with an interview or focus</li> </ul> <p>group, the Enumerators will interrupt the data collection</p> <p>exercise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field</li> <li>Coordinator</li> <li>• Enumerators</li> </ul>
<p>Confidentiality of data is compromised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The Assessment Officer designed a comprehensive</li> </ul> <p>Data Management Plan establishing procedures to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>Officer</li> <li>• UNICEF/UNHCR</li> </ul>

	<p>ensure that data collection, transmission and storage is secure and to protect the privacy of the participants (for more details, refer to the Data Management Plan).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The Assessment Officer ensures REACH staff comply with the Data Management Plan.</li> <li>• The Data Management Plan has been approved by UNICEF/UNHCR during the Inception phase and any modification to the plan will need to be validated by UNHCR before entering into force</li> </ul>	
Dissemination of findings potentially identify participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft reports are reviewed by the REACH Assessment Officer as well as by REACH Geneva HQ to ensure that information cannot be traced back to individual participants.</li> <li>• An addition double-check is provided by UNHCR Protection specialists that will make sure that assessment outputs do not entail risks for the participants and/or to the target group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment Officer</li> <li>• Field Coordinator</li> <li>• IMPACT HQ</li> <li>• UNHCR</li> </ul>
Evidence or disclosure of urgent cases that can put the life and/or well-being of a child in immediate danger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures to address evidence or disclosure are established before starting data collection.</li> <li>• Standard reporting forms are drafted to collect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field Coordinator</li> <li>• Enumerators</li> <li>• Assessment Officer</li> <li>• UNHCR</li> </ul>

	<p>information in a comprehensive and timely manner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enumerators are trained by UNHCR Protection Specialists in order to be ready to identify and refer all urgent cases.</li></ul>	
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