

# Education Sector Assessment in Conflict-Affected Areas

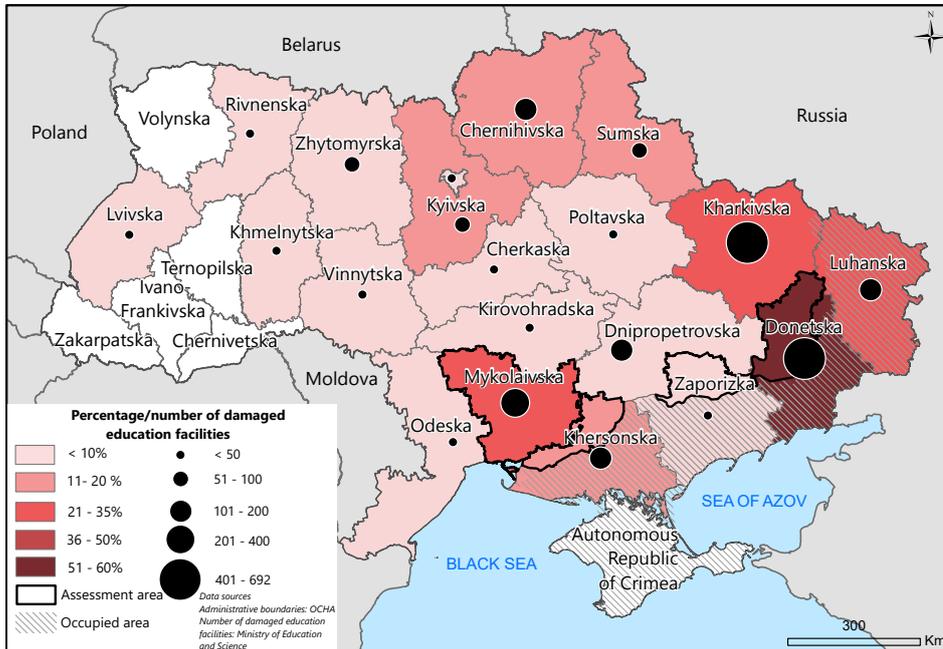
February 2023  
Ukraine

## KEY MESSAGES

- Following the onset of full-scale war in February 2022, deteriorated security conditions and displacement of staff and students have forced many schools to resort to online education.
- War-related disruptions such as power cuts, loss of internet, and air raid sirens made it even more difficult to ensure the continuity of education, especially in regions close to the frontline.
- A third of all teachers surveyed reported requiring additional training on online education best practices.

## Damage and destruction of education facilities

Map 1: Reported magnitude of damage to educational facilities in assessed areas, by oblast



This map shows the number of damaged education facilities across Ukraine, as of 02 February 2023.<sup>4</sup> Oblasts where a large number of education facilities have been damaged, or destroyed (see below), are those that have seen the greatest intensity of hostilities since February 2022. These are also the areas from where there has been the largest displacement of the resident population, as per IOM's general population surveys (see below), and have been badly affected by war-related disruptions to utilities, telecommunications, and essential services. Damage to education facilities and disruptions to electricity and internet in particular have created significant barriers to the delivery of education across Ukraine, especially in southern and eastern regions.

## CONTEXT & RATIONALE

According to the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), Zaporizka, Donetsk, Mykolaivska and Khersonska have been among the most severely impacted oblasts in terms of damage and destruction of educational facilities since the full-scale war started in February 2022.<sup>1</sup> Still subject to partial occupation and active hostilities, schools in Zaporizka, Donetsk and Khersonska now teach exclusively online, with many students and teachers displaced internally or abroad. Although access to education is slowly being restored across eastern and southern regions,<sup>2</sup> conditions remain challenging for effective online learning, with classes often disrupted by electricity outages, unstable internet connection, and air raid sirens. This assessment aims to understand the specific needs of teachers and learners in this context.

## ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

This assessment aims to:

- **Inform the humanitarian community and local government** on the challenges faced by schools in the assessed areas;
- **Explore the current trends and practices** of online learning in oblasts near the frontline;
- **Better understand the needs and barriers** in accessing online education for learners and educational staff in the current Ukrainian context.

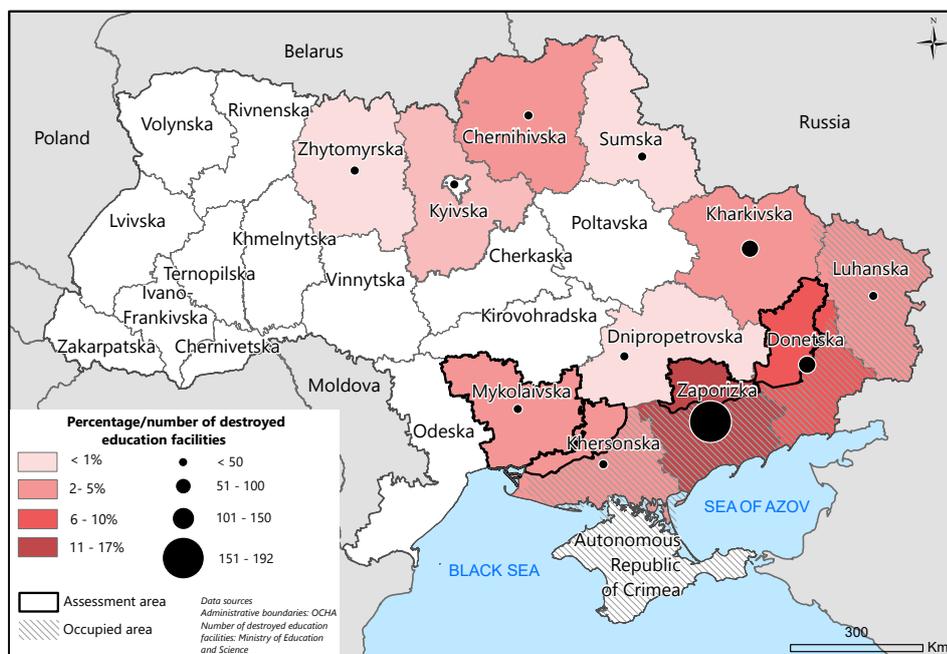
## METHODOLOGY:

Four oblasts were assessed, with a total of 400 household interviews and 120 key informant interviews with educational staff. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 parents of children with disabilities and 8 FGDs with school staff were also organised. The findings should be interpreted as indicative.<sup>3</sup>

Map 2: Reported magnitude of destruction of Ukrainian education facilities in assessed areas, by oblast

Using the same source of data and method for calculating percentages in the assessment areas as the map showing damage to education facilities above, this map shows the number and proportion of education facilities destroyed since the beginning of the full-scale war, as of 02 February 2023.<sup>5</sup>

It is clear that destruction is concentrated in oblasts where areas of territory have been captured by military forces following intense battles, such as in Kharkivska, Donetsk, Zaporizka, Khersonska and Mykolaivska.



### Impact of war on learning modality

Sustained hostilities in eastern and southern regions have resulted in successive waves of displacement of the local population towards locations perceived as being safer or where accommodation and work is thought to be available, among other reasons.<sup>6</sup> As of 23 January 2023, IOM estimated that there were 5.4 million IDPs displaced across Ukraine, of which 19% from Donetsk, 13% from Zaporizka, and 10% from Khersonska.<sup>7</sup> The same report indicated that, for the first time since the start of the war, the estimated number of returnees exceeds that of IDPs.<sup>8</sup> It is also true that many households have not left their primary place of residence, even in areas heavily affected by war. Thus the populations of interest for this assessment—elementary and secondary school teachers and students—have exhibited different movement behaviours, resulting in data that shows different experiences and needs across different subpopulations.

and the relatively high proportion of damaged and destroyed education facilities in these oblasts, has reportedly resulted in nearly 100% of education being moved online. It is notable that, despite being affected by war-related challenges similar to those in other assessed areas, in-person education was reportedly slowly returning in Mykolaivska.

#### Proportion of teachers reportedly displaced since February 2022



#### Share of students reportedly displaced since February 2022



Teachers reported a large proportion of teachers and students participating in online education from a location other than their permanent home before Feb 2022 as a consequence of the high level of displacement. For students in collective sites, the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM) has reported that children learning online may lack separate space, internet connection and laptops, themes which are addressed in more detail below.<sup>9</sup> The tense security situation in Donetsk, Khersonska and Zaporizka in particular,

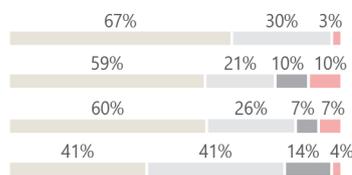
#### Learners with disabilities

Most parents of children with disabilities (CwD) indicated that their children were attending school in person prior to the military escalation, where they received additional support according to their specific needs.

Broadly speaking, disabilities can be categorised as conditions affecting hearing, sight, mobility, communication and learning. It is common practice for CwD to receive additional support in school in the form of key workers.

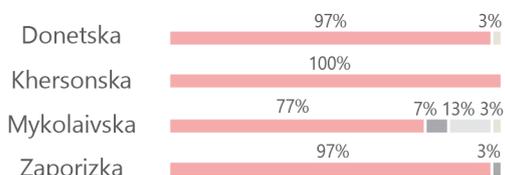
The move to online learning has meant that, not only have CwD lost the support of auxiliary staff and specialists, they have less contact with teachers than before.<sup>10</sup> Key informants (KIs) reported that the number of lessons has decreased and the amount of homework has increased, which is a concern for CwD in the assessed areas, many of whom were reported to have difficulty learning independently.

#### Reported learning modality before escalation



Legend: Less than half of the lessons are online (light grey), Half of the lessons online (medium grey), More than half of the lessons are online (dark grey), All lessons online (red).

#### Learning modality reported at time of data collection



Legend: Less than half of the lessons are online (light grey), Half of the lessons online (medium grey), More than half of the lessons are online (dark grey), All lessons online (red).

## Barriers to online education

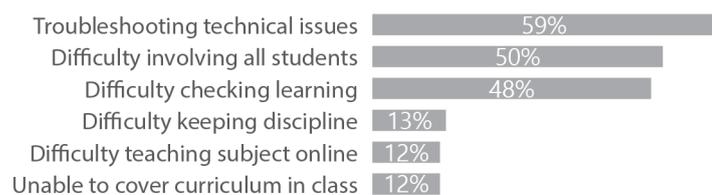
While schools have resorted to online learning to mitigate the insecurity of face-to-face learning in the assessed areas, war-related disruptions to power supply, insecurity at home, and other factors present obstacles to the continuity of education.

Although points of resilience—locations equipped with shelters, electricity and Starlink that can be used by the community—do exist in areas close to the frontline, in theory allowing educators (and learners) to connect to lessons; practice seems to show that the vast majority of the surveyed teachers try to conduct classes from their homes, with the exception of Zaporizka, where 37% of teachers reported teaching classes from school or some place other than their home.

### Main challenges reportedly faced by teachers teaching from home, by oblast

	Donetska	Khersonska	Mykolaivska	Zaporizka
The security situation at/near home	63%	63%	47%	40%
Power outages at home	90%	70%	86%	80%
Lack of heating at home	3%	17%	10%	7%
Lack of equipment at home	0%	10%	10%	0%
Lack of internet at home	70%	60%	48%	43%
Difficulties with online learning software	7%	17%	14%	3%
Difficulties with covering the school curriculum	10%	10%	0%	3%
Organization of the educational process	10%	10%	10%	7%

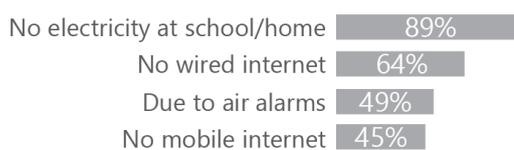
### Top 6 difficulties faced by teachers using online teaching modalities



with the absence of direct interaction with their students... The most commonly reported challenge was the fact that teaching online involves troubleshooting technical issues. Respondents reporting on behalf of students emphasised the lack of interaction with other students and group involvement as the main disadvantages of online learning. Learners with disabilities (38%) were more commonly reported to have difficulty concentrating on the lesson than those without (20%).

Beyond environmental factors directly related to the war, teachers reported experiencing difficulties associated

### Top reasons for cancellation/non-attendance of classes reported on behalf of learners



(95%) and IDP (94%) households experienced lack of electricity as a reason for cancellation/non-attendance of class than the assessed population as a whole (89%). Relatedly, a larger share of single-headed (40%) and non-IDP households (35%) reported frequent cancellation/non-attendance of classes than the assessed population as a whole (33%). There is of course a geographical component to this: Zaporizka and Khersonska oblasts were apparently worse affected, with 52% and 37% of respondents respectively reporting class cancellation/non-attendance several times a week or more.<sup>12</sup>

The reasons for cancellation/non-attendance of classes reported by parents of students largely mirror those of teachers.

Looking at how subpopulations are differently affected, it is interesting to note that a larger share of single-headed

### Learners with disabilities<sup>11</sup>

The lack of communication with classmates was identified by 14 of 16 KIs as a limiting factor on the social development of children with disabilities. Relatedly, half the KIs discussed the deterioration of the child's relations with family and friends.

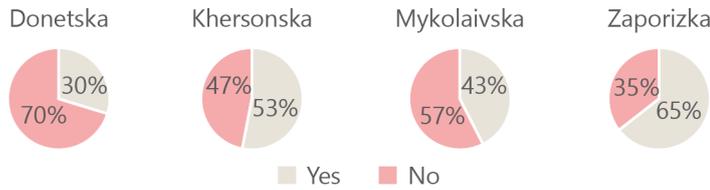
Most parents reported that their child suffered from anxiety and stress, impacting their ability to concentrate on their work. This, combined with less contact with teachers, was reported by some parents to affect the child's learning speed and their motivation to study.

Some children were reported to have previously benefitted from physical health rehabilitation that was interrupted by the war. Examples of such support include speech therapy, physiotherapy, consultations with a defectologist, and regular medical examinations.

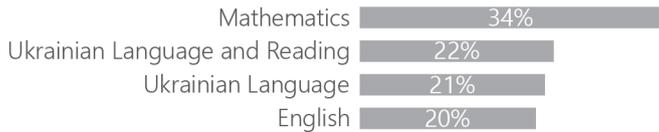


## Impact of online learning on coverage of curriculum

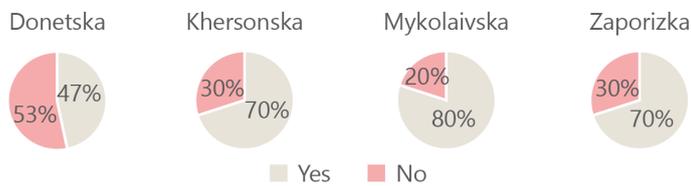
Teachers reporting lesson cancellations in month prior to data collection



Classes that were cancelled in month prior to data collection by subject (top 4) according to parents of learners<sup>15</sup>



Teachers who reported being able to cover entire subject curriculum during online learning



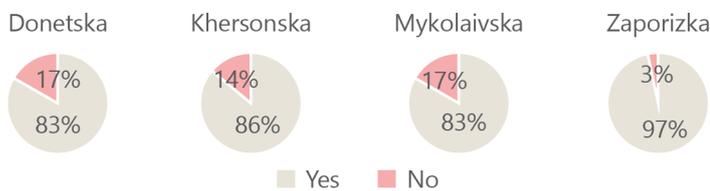
It is noteworthy that IDP teachers were more likely to report not covering the entire subject curriculum than non-displaced teachers (43% v. 25%). The picture, however, is complicated. While a similar share of IDP (64%) and non-IDP teachers (60%) reported having to cancel at least some classes in the month before data collection, the reasons given for cancellation were different. IDP teachers more often cited lack of electricity and/or internet as reasons for class cancellation, while non-IDPs more often cited air raid sirens. It's possible that IDP teachers' reported difficulties covering the entire curriculum may be the product of their own access barriers combined with the access barriers of their students.

Difficulties faced by students as reported by teachers

	IDP	Non-IDP
No electricity at home	98%	93%
No wired internet	96%	78%
No mobile internet	80%	77%
No internet-enabled device	80%	62%
Dangerous at home	65%	15%

## Resources and support available at the time of data collection

Teachers who reported having received technical/pedagogical support in the 3 months prior to data collection

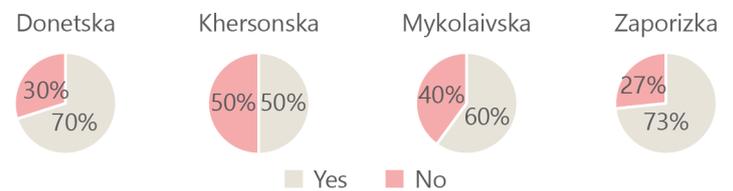


At least one teacher in every focus group reported being provided with a computer, laptop or Chromebook (limited functionality) by the school, and some participants from Zaporizka reported access to a protected cloud environment.

However, a sizeable minority of surveyed teachers reported hardware and software needs for online teaching (see below).

A few focus groups discussed access to free educational and communication platforms.<sup>13</sup> A greater

Teachers who reported having received psychological support since February 2022



number of focus groups, 7 out of 8, discussed the need for licensed software, as discussed below.

Information from MoES suggests there are professional development opportunities available for teachers.<sup>14</sup>

### For children with disabilities

Measures reportedly put in place by teachers to support students with disabilities in assessed areas

	Donetska	Khersonska	Mykolaivska	Zaporizka
Special classes for such children	13%	13%	7%	25%
Extra classes	88%	25%	14%	33%
Adapted Learning Tools	44%	50%	57%	58%
Help from a school psychologist	25%	75%	50%	50%
Tutor for such children	25%	0%	7%	8%

Some parents of children with disabilities indicated that they received financial assistance from humanitarian organisations, and few other parents noted that they had received assistance in purchasing educational materials and stationery (UNICEF and Caritas were named).



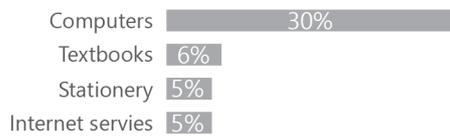
## Needs expressed by educators and learners

While the main barriers to accessing online education result directly from war-related disruptions, and the difficulties faced by teachers and students in adapting to online education are to a certain extent a feature of the modality, some of the needs expressed by different subpopulations of teachers and students are amenable to targeted interventions by Education Cluster partners.

### Needs of learners

Children and their families may experience material barriers in accessing online education. While 36% of assessed households reported being unable to purchase school items for their child in the current academic year, the same indicator was markedly higher among single-headed households (47%), IDP households (43%), and families with children with disabilities (53%). In line with this trend, single-headed (47%) and IDP households (50%) were more likely to report a lack of learning devices for children than the sample as a whole (36%), with needs most pronounced in Donetsk (68%).

#### Main school items households reported being unable to purchase



#### Main learning devices children were reported to be missing



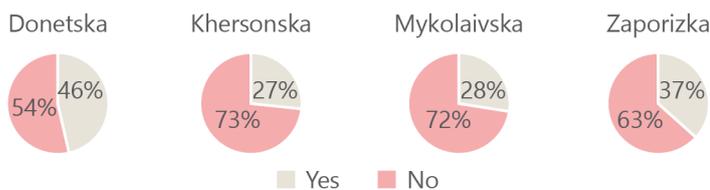
### Material needs of educators

All teachers who reported teaching 100% of their classes online were asked what teaching devices they were missing. Reported needs are similar across the assessed areas, with needs for some items more pronounced in certain oblasts.

#### Learning devices teachers reported not to own

	Donetska	Khersonska	Mykolaivska	Zaporizka
Computer	38%	37%	35%	45%
Interactive board / Projector	10%	40%	43%	31%
Tablet	24%	43%	17%	24%
Webcam	21%	17%	13%	28%
Headset	28%	13%	9%	24%
Printer	10%	30%	4%	24%
Computer speakers	21%	20%	4%	14%
Wi-Fi router	10%	20%	0%	17%

### Training needs of educators



A third of all teachers surveyed reported requiring additional training on online education best practices (pie charts by oblast to the right). Half the focus groups discussed the need for advanced training courses to

develop IT skills and subject-specific vocational skills. Relatedly, a couple of groups described the need for support with the creation/sourcing of pedagogic materials, e.g. audiovisual and interactive games, to cater to

### Needs of learners with disabilities

One of the main forms of assistance sought was additional school classes/extra-curricular tuition with educational specialists.

Several parents noted the need for learning aids (glasses, skin for computer screens to protect the user's eyes, hearing aids), in addition to standard equipment for online learning (computers/laptops, graphic tablet for drawing). Parents also reported the need for a comfortable learning environment, mentioning additional lighting and comfortable computer chairs.

Additional needs included educational materials adapted to different learning styles, such as tactile mathematical activities, picture flashcards for vocabulary building, puzzles and games for the development of fine motor skills, learning materials adapted for hearing or visually impaired children, as well as printed textbooks.<sup>16</sup>

### Needs expressed in teachers' FGDs

All teacher focus groups discussed the need for work-related equipment, such as laptops, powerbanks, laboratory equipment for practical science experiments and reactants/reagents for chemistry experiments. In terms of financial needs related to expenses incurred following the move to online education, they discussed salary increase, reimbursement of internet fees, and costs of paper textbooks and other printed materials.

The same subset of teachers asked about missing learning devices in the survey were asked about their software needs. 20% of those asked reported not having Microsoft Office, 18% Antivirus software and 15% OS Windows 10+. In seven of eight focus group discussions, teachers discussed the need for licensed software, including Adobe, secure cloud environment for information storage, and programs for creating videos.

different learning styles. Half also discussed the need for face-to-face communication with colleagues to maintain communities of practice. The need for psychosocial support was also discussed by two focus groups.



## METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The oblasts selected for this assessment were those that scored as most severe according to data from the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as those which were identified as priorities of the Education Cluster. The assessment covered only those areas under government control at the time of data collection.

In each oblast, quantitative household-level interviews were carried out with a minimum of 50 households both for elementary and secondary school learners (100 households per oblast). Interviews were conducted using a method of random phone dialing. Only households with children were interviewed.

Additionally, there were 15 key informant interviews (KIIs) with educational staff both for elementary and secondary school (30 KIIs per oblast). The qualitative component of the assessment targeted elementary- and secondary-level students and teachers, comprising four individual interviews per oblast with parents of children with disabilities and two focus-group discussions per oblast with educational staff.

Due to the chosen sampling methodology and sample size, these statistics cannot be extrapolated to represent a proportion representative of the population and thus should be interpreted as indicative.

## ENDNOTES

1. Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), Education in emergency (accessed 30 March 2023): <https://saveschools.in.ua/en/>
2. According to this report published by a department at MoES, access to education varies between oblasts, however, in general it appears schooling has been less disrupted in central and western regions due to fewer conflict-related events, and more schools in these macro regions are returning to face-to-face or mixed learning modalities (p. 12): [https://sqe.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Dovidka\\_pochatok\\_2022-2023\\_ZDO\\_ZZSO\\_ZPO\\_SQE-2022.pdf](https://sqe.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Dovidka_pochatok_2022-2023_ZDO_ZZSO_ZPO_SQE-2022.pdf)
3. Please see Methodology Overview on p. 6 which explains why results are indicative only.
4. Data is held by oblast administrations and aggregated figures are issued by the Ministry of Education and Science. In Zaporizka, for example, the number of damaged facilities is shown as a percentage of the entire number of education facilities in the oblast, and includes damaged facilities in occupied areas. However, obtaining reliable data for areas outside of government control is difficult and these percentages should be considered indicative only.
5. Information received from Education Cluster partners, who are in touch with state education authorities, suggests that the high proportion of destroyed facilities in Zaporizka may reflect differences in the categorisation of “destroyed” as opposed to “damaged” in different oblasts.
6. See REACH Arrival and Transit Monitoring products (accessed 27 March 2023): <https://www.reachresourcecentre.info/search/?search=1&initiative%5B%5D=reach&pcountry%5B%5D=ukraine&rcid%5B%5D=48664&dates=&keywords=>
7. IOM, Internal Displacement Report, General Population Survey Round 12: <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/ukraine-internal-displacement-report-general-population-survey-round-12-16-23-january-2023>
8. This means that, for the first time since the start of the war, the number of people that have returned to their permanent place of residence prior to 24 February 2023 is greater than the number of people internally displaced by the war. IOM estimated that, as of 23 January 2023, there were 5,562,000 returnees compared with 5,352,000 IDPs.
9. National Child Protection Subcluster Meeting, 28 February 2023:
10. A quotation from one parent summarises the issue: “When [he] went to school, it was easier for him, he was constantly helped by an assistant who was always there to help him concentrate and guide him. They left only classes with a speech therapist. The psychologist was canceled and they said that there was no funding.”
11. In-depth interviews with parents of CwD provided insights that may apply to the wider population of students. However, given no in-depth interviews of parents of children without disabilities were conducted, it is not possible to ascertain the applicability of these findings to the wider population
12. Currently there is a limited understanding of the impact of war-related disruptions in terms of learning losses or learning gaps. However, the MoES is apparently preparing a nationwide assessment on this topic: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3673619-minosviti-planue-provesti-vimiruvanna-osvitnih-rozriviv-navcalnih-rezultativ-skolariv.html?fbclid=IwAR2IFyhSMYMi70TXQtFSf4wIjbl1luW6oacLlfDq3JYkLa6O6mrCP-g5CO4>
13. Platforms mentioned included Zoom, Googleclass, Teams, Meet, New knowledge, LearningApps, Vseosvita, Naurok, Robus, Classtime, Wizer.me, Padlet, Jamboard.
14. According to information from the MoES’ Reform Support Team, as of January 2023, the platform “EdWay” offers 462 professional development opportunities for teachers from both

### ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).



public and non-governmental organisations, as well as private structures. This information comes from the Reform Support Team of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, which is a group of Ukrainian specialists who are not public servants and provide targeted support to the Ministry in implementing educational and public administration reforms. It was formed in accordance with the order of the Ministry of Education and Science dated 04.17.2019. More: <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/komanda-pidtrimkireform-ministerstva-osviti-i-nauki-ukrayini>

15. Ukrainian Language and Reading is for elementary school learners only.

16. In the absence of subsidies in 2023, the New Ukrainian School (NUSH) will not make printed textbooks available to teachers this year. The "New Ukrainian school" (NUSH) is a standard of school education that was adopted in 2017 and gradually implemented from the level of elementary education to secondary education and involves reforming the field of general secondary education in accordance with new principles of education based on the formation of competencies necessary for successful self-realization in society. More: <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/tag/nova-ukrainska-shkola>

