

Evaluation of UNICEF Ukraine support to the education sector in Ukraine 2018 - 2020 Evaluation Report

UNICEF Ukraine

Submitted by Junction Bulgaria

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List of abbreviations

CEE	– Central and Eastern Europe
CIS	– Commonwealth of Independent States
COAR	– Country Office Annual Report
CP	– Country Programme
CPD	– Country Programme Document
CSO	– Civil Society Organisation
ECE	– Early Childhood Education
ECERS	– Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale
ERB	– Ethical Review Board
ET	– Evaluation Team
EU	– European Union
FGD	– Focus Group Discussion
FE	– Formative Evaluation
GCA	– Government Controlled Area
GDP	– Gross Domestic Product
GNI	– Gross National Income
GoU	– Government of Ukraine
HDI	– Human Development Index
HDN	– Humanitarian Development Nexus
HNO	– Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRBA	– Human Rights-Based Approach
HRP	– Humanitarian Response Plan
ICF	– International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
IDI	– In-depth Interview
IDP	– Internally Displaced Person
IP	– Implementing Partner
IR	– Inception Report
IT	– Information Technology
LNOB	– Leave No One Behind
LSE	– Life Skills Education
MoES	– Ministry of Education and Science
M&E	– Monitoring and Evaluation
NGCA	– Non-Government Controlled Area
NGO	– Non-Governmental Organisation
NUS	– New Ukrainian School

OECD – Organisation for Cooperation and Economic Development
OECD-DAC – OECD-Development Assistance Committee
OSCE – Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PD – Programme Document
PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment
PMCR – Peer Mediation and Conflict Resolution
QA – Quality Assurance
SCFS – Safe and Child-Friendly School
SCORE – Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index
SDG – Sustainable Development Goals
SOP – Standard Operations Procedures
SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
ToC – Theory of Change
ToR – Terms of Reference
ToT – Training of Trainers
UN – United Nations
UNDAF – United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG – United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF – United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VEI – Vocational Education Institutions
WASH – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB – World Bank

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation report is developed by the evaluation team (ET) of Junction Bulgaria at the reporting phase of the 'Evaluation of UNICEF's support to the education sector', commissioned by UNICEF Ukraine. The aim of this report is to present the object, purpose, and scope of this formative evaluation (FE), the methodology (with details like evaluation matrix, criteria for sampling and interviewees) and data collection instruments that will be used, main findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.

1.1. OBJECT, OBJECTIVES, PURPOSE AND PRIMARY USERS

The object of this FE is UNICEF's support to the Education Sector, outlined in the CPD 2018-2022. The programme component consolidates the innovations introduced in education settings as part of the humanitarian response in Eastern Ukraine, with a view to progressively shifting from supply-driven to quality-oriented interventions for the improvement of learning outcomes. UNICEF's goal is to assist the government in shaping school curricula towards competency-based approaches and foster education opportunities that are more inclusive for vulnerable children. The key directions of UNICEF Education programme are: support to providing increased access to quality inclusive pre-primary education for disadvantaged children aged 3-6 years old, especially in rural areas; support to providing quality, competency-based primary and secondary education for children and adolescents aged 6-18 years old and ensure inclusive, violence-free learning environment for all with special focus on children with disabilities; support to the completion of a full cycle of compulsory inclusive education for all children and adolescents, especially the most disadvantaged and those in conflict-affected areas, including their timely enrolment in grade 1; support to engagement and skills building so that adolescents and youth have skills and competencies to be adequately prepared for adult life as active citizens and for the world of work.

The budget of the programme is 7 800 000 \$, including regular resources (800 000 \$) and other resources (7 000 000 \$). It is expected that the period of implementation of the programme will be until 2022. The programme has a national scope in the whole territory of Ukraine. The stakeholders involved as major partners in the implementation are Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), World Bank, European Union (EU), subnational authorities, civil society organisations (CSOs), local community groups.

The reconstructed ToC of the Education programme identifies the expected outcome that the intervention is seeking and the ways in which the interventions are expected to lead to the outcome. It includes major bottlenecks, UNICEF Core roles and contributions, risks and assumptions, outputs, and outcome. The major bottlenecks are: barriers to quality education for all, which results in inadequate skills in all domains; many children with disabilities appear marginalized from mainstream education; access to quality early learning remains problematic, particularly in rural areas; alarming gaps in access and results in education between rural and otherwise underprivileged children and those with high socioeconomic status; disruption of education for internally displaced children and children in conflict areas. The main areas of UNICEF contribution are: strengthening capacity of preschool, school staff and local educators on safe and inclusive educational environment; supporting evidence-based national policy and programming on quality preschool and inclusive education; strengthening the capacity of the education system to provide a violence-free and protective learning environment; improving the physical safety and rehabilitation of the education facilities and adjusting them to child-friendly and quality standards; increasing civic engagement and participation of adolescents and youth, strengthening their resilience and supporting youth engagement. These interventions are realised as a part of UNICEF's core roles: advocacy, policy dialogue and advice, knowledge generation and child rights monitoring, capacity development of government and civil society, modelling, and testing innovations.

The main purpose of the evaluation is to generate substantive evidence-based knowledge by identifying good practices and lessons learned from the impact of Education Programme implementation in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in fulfilment of the right to education.

The main objectives of the FE are accountability and organizational learning in the field of education sector development for the primary purpose of improving UNICEF's Education programme and fulfilment of the right to education of all children: in terms of accountability, the evaluation will independently assess overall progress towards intended outcomes, and, where possible, seek indications of possible effects on the most vulnerable groups of children (incl. children living in the rural area, children with disabilities, conflict affected children, internally displaced persons etc.), as well as serve for an indicative analysis of UNICEF's added value to the education sector reform; in terms of organizational learning, the purpose of this evaluation is to identify, and document good practices and lessons learned from the implementation of the Education programme, inform decision-making on scaling up the different approaches adopted during the implementation and review existing strategies.

This evaluation will inform the relevant stakeholders up to what degree the planned outcome was achieved, in order to understand what works and what doesn't work and will inform UNICEF on how to improve its endeavours to support the on-going reform in the educational sector and ensure the right to education of all children is fulfilled. The primary users of the evaluation are: UNICEF Country Office, Monitoring & Evaluation unit, Education Cluster, national and oblast level authorities, local authorities, partner non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other CSOs, donors and other development partners.

The scope of the evaluation is the time period: 2018-2020, locations: Kyiv city, Kharkiv city, Kharkiv oblast, Donetsk oblast (government-controlled area (GCA)), Luhansk oblast (GCA). The population groups that are covered are: children at an early age, children with disabilities, children at a school age and adolescents, conflict-affected children, and internally displaced persons (IDPs), teachers and principals, parents and professionals, national stakeholders, and partner organisations. The data collection focuses on Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, since the initial review showed that in Kharkiv city and oblast there are no interventions for the period of evaluation.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework includes the basic concepts and definitions, taken into account in UNICEF's programme and used in the formulation of goals and tasks and design of interventions, development of the evaluation matrix, ToC and conduction of the evaluation. The basic concepts are inclusive education, child-friendly school, pedagogy of partnership, leave no one behind agenda, UN Humanitarian and development nexus.

The evaluation criteria, used in this evaluation, are based on the updated standards of Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Assistance and Development (OECD-DAC), covering relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, other criteria, cross-cutting issues, and humanitarian-development nexus (HDN). The goal is to understand the extent to which the programme is relevant and coherent to the needs and policies, achieves the planned outcomes at a low cost, ensures impact and sustainability. The key evaluation questions and sub-questions have been elaborated in an evaluation matrix. A set of indicators has been suggested, based on available information in the CPD, key evaluation questions, areas of evaluation and the specifics of the FE.

The methods that have been used for data collection in this FE include, firstly, desk review of the following topics and groups of documents: general information on Education reform; information on Education Cluster with data; information and data concerning education in Eastern Ukraine; information mapping of all education sector interventions; information on COVID-19 impact in

education; research/studies supported by the Education Section; programme documents and report of Implementing Partners (IPs) and list of Program Documents (PDs) and reports. The second method is secondary data analysis, based on publicly available or provided data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, PISA datasets, UNICEF provided data, the Institute for education development, TransMonEE Database, Institute for Educational Analytics Ukraine, etc. Other methods used are in-depth interviews (IDIs), focus groups discussion (FGDs) and observations. The total number of participants in IDIs and FGDs is 72 and there have been 9 observations conducted. The last method used is online surveys with students. 307 children from 20 schools participated in the survey, in a ratio corresponding to the ratio of schools for the three outputs.

The methods for data analysis include recording, transcribing, translating, and coding the IDIs and FGDs in the NVivo software for processing qualitative information by extracting coding categories and generating coding trees. The quantitative data from the surveys has been analysed via SPSS using statistical methods.

The human rights-based approach has been used as a cross-cutting approach to conduct the formative evaluation and understand the main features of the program. The evaluation focuses on equity and human rights aspects and is appropriate for analysing the gender equality, human rights issues, including child rights issues identified in the scope. The ET complies with ethical considerations, such as UNICEF's guidance on children in research, to avoid any form of stigma, discrimination or harm to children and all participants in research. It was ensured that the research complies with the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis as well as Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), integrating human rights, gender, and equity in accordance with the relevant UNEG guidelines (by including girls and boys/men and women equally in the research, as well as all vulnerable groups of children and their parents, following the UNEG norms in data collection and analysis, etc.). It should be pointed out that no conflicts of interest have been identified in this FE. An External Ethical committee has been established and it has consequently approved the ethical considerations in the data collection process in all of the components.

Different issues and limitations have been identified, which have not affected the planned methodology and instruments for data collection and analysis, since mitigation strategies have been applied in order to follow the preliminary planned workplan. The data collection was conducted in the period May-August 2021.

1.3. KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The **relevance** of UNICEF's support to the Education Sector is analysed in view of the country's needs, programs and policies, upstream and downstream interventions, UNICEF's strategic plans, as well as the needs of children and parents, vulnerable groups in particular. The relevance is influenced by the contextual factors and situation in the country, related to the protracted armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, political changes in 2019, as well as the recent COVID - 19 pandemic, all of which affect children's rights and education in particular. UNICEF's approach was adapted to the new emerging needs, but at the same time, the focus and effort to achieve the planned goals was kept. The interventions have been implemented at a national and regional level (in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts) with a balance between upstream and downstream interventions. UNICEF has concentrated its efforts, where there is a combination of more than one factor of vulnerability, so the situation in the schools in these oblasts is difficult and they have a variety of needs, starting from renovations, material support and repairs and meeting current challenges related to the conflict to new models of working with children in relation to inclusive education and work with parents. The education component in the CPD is moderately relevant to the country needs, programmes, and policies, because the national reform and UNICEF Education programme have similar goals. However, UNICEF concentrates its efforts to vulnerable groups of children, while the national reform is wider in scope. Also, the correspondence between the national and UNICEF priorities is a bit questionable since there

is no formal mechanism to ensure alignment and sometimes communication is lacking. The level of internal consistency of the education component to the other goals and priorities of UNICEF is moderate. This component is based on outputs and outcomes in education that are a part of the Concept note and CPD but are not included in a separate Education programme document. Additionally, the education outcome is consistent with the other outcomes, but the outputs are redefined in the process of their realisation. Also, there is no specific ToC developed for education. The ratio between upstream and downstream interventions shows that most of them are in the 'middle ground' and this provides an opportunity to affect a bigger number of right holders but is rather related to applying interventions than change in the policy context. There is a high level of relevance to the needs of children. When it comes to the schools, UNICEF's contribution is relevant, but there is a risk of focusing too much on meeting the basic needs of the school system and ensuring a safe environment for children instead of securing access to inclusive and quality school education.

UNICEF's approach towards **coherence** includes working with 22 partner organisations, which have realised different project, mostly in conflict-affected areas in youth policy and material support. Their efforts seem to be complementary, although there is no coordination mechanism for it. The role of coordinator is of UNICEF that also sets the framework, in which these organisations would plan and realise their projects. The complementarity of efforts and avoiding overlap in the different areas is most clearly seen in education in emergencies, where there is a Ukraine Education Cluster. The conclusions are related to a moderate level of complementarity of efforts of different organisations, involved in implementation of activities, could be determined. It comes from, on the one hand, coordination between many different organisations, which has to be achieved without an internal mechanism for exchange of information. Additionally, there is a low level of participation of IPs in the decision-making about priorities and activities. It should be noted that there is an Education Cluster, which ensures coordination of the efforts in the area of humanitarian response. The complementarity between the different programs of UNICEF seems visible between social policy, health, and education, but with different dimensions. In child protection, it seems planned theoretically, but not always totally realised in practice, while in the health sector, it is realised in practice, but not so much planned in theory.

The Education programme aims to improve the access of all children to quality education, with a focus on the most vulnerable. The achievement of this goal would mean there is an **effectiveness** of interventions. In order to achieve this aim, interventions in four main areas have been realised, related to: pre-school education, inclusive education, safe and violence-free school environment, competency-based learning, support for conflict-affected areas and youth policy. The achievement of the results is ensured by a complex systematic approach on behalf of UNICEF, including policy advice, technical assistance and data collection and management support, advocacy strategies and communication, as well as building capacity and modelling of interventions at the local level at the schools. Different enabling factors and bottlenecks were identified in the process of achievement of the planned outputs and outcome. They are mostly related to the consequences of COVID-19 and the development of the educational reform itself, as well as the challenges in the rural and conflict-affected areas. The produced changes are most definitive in the fields of ensuring a safe environment, development of skills of teachers, students and parents, peer-to-peer mediation, and support, while in the fields of inclusive education and participation, they are in an initial phase of their development.

The evaluation has found that, for the period 2018-2020, a different number of children, teachers and parents have been reached in the four outputs of the programme component. There is a difficulty in defining the level of achievement, due to encountering different data in different sources. Overall, in spite of this inconsistency, data shows that there is a progress in achieving the outputs. A serious attention needs to be paid to the tendency for achievement of the indicators of the outcome. The data shows that there is no change in relation to enrolment of children in primary education. Also, it is demonstrated from the data that the topic of out-of-school children is in an initial phase of discussion and planning. Young people are still not highly engaged in planning and realisation of all

activities. However, there is adequate support for ensuring access to education in conflict-affected areas. This brings attention to the issue what is the possibility to achieve these indicators until the end of the programme and the need for redefining some of them. The second one is contribution of the Education programme to the development of national and local policies and education reform, as well as to changes in the lives of children, families, community, and the broader environment. At the time of pandemic, they adapted their activities and supported the process of finding solutions for the immediate effects on the educational system.

Regarding **efficiency**, the Education Programme is managed in the framework of the CPD, including a significant number of experts like educational and field work officers and IPs. This leads to a variety of connections and relationships in the programme and when contacting partners outside of UNICEF like national stakeholders, local stakeholders, and international partners. The invested resources in the programme are far from the total planned (8%). They are not allocated equally between the four outputs and there is a good level of compliance with the achieved results in terms of some of the outputs. In terms of some other outputs like the one related to pre-school education, as well as the outcome, more efforts/resources are needed to achieve efficient results. The governance of the Education Programme ensures establishing connections, which are the basis for exchange of information and cooperation between actors, so as to avoid overlapping. All the projects have been realised on time, according to the preliminary plan, and the resources were enough to achieve the expected results. Still, until the current moment of realisation of the programme, the share of utilized resources is rather small and the division regarding the separate outputs is not equitable. The evaluation has found that there is a good level of efficiency at this moment of realisation of the programme. The analysis indicates that capacity building is the component, in which most resources have been invested. However, the comparison with similar programmes shows that the most efficient change comes when you invest systematically in all components of the programme. This should be taken into account in the future.

The **impact** can be seen, as well as measured, through the increased access for all children to quality education, especially most vulnerable groups, and changes in the levels of their perception about the school environment and soft and life skills. The contribution of UNICEF can be seen in the schools, in which interventions were implemented. The impact assessments of the two main programmes SCFS and PMCR show that there are changes in the relationships in the school community, the attitudes of children towards school, their feelings of safety, their skills for conflict resolutions and other soft skills, etc. The students from schools that participated in the interventions, describe the school as a place where it is interesting and safe for them, they will gain life skills and have extracurricular activities. In spite of this data, regarding impact, two areas are still questionable, with a lower level of change – inclusion of children with disabilities and participation. At the level of school system, the interventions affect teachers' proactiveness and create preconditions for their desire to become agents of change, feel empowered and actively participate in the change of the school environment. However, they still rely on UNICEF's continuous support, especially in terms of repairs and rehabilitation of buildings.

The data shows that the schools have changed, and children have acquired new skills and knowledge and have developed their relationships with peers, teachers, and parents. As a result of interventions, the school has changed, in terms of possibilities to develop skills for children and to be interesting for them, to be a safe place and prepare for the future. At the same time, there is still a need to increase the level of participation and more efforts are needed to change attitudes, motivation, and develop skills for inclusion of children with disabilities. These preconditions for systemic change in the school environment should be ensured by the proactive participation of teachers and the whole school community in development of their own ToC.

At this point of the realisation of the Education programme, **sustainability** of achieved results can be seen through several aspects. At the level of the concrete schools, sustainable change is ensured through capacity development, renovation of buildings and provision of materials. At the oblast level, change could be seen in the schools that took part in the programme, since they have disseminated

and exchanged good practices and experience that they gained as a result of UNICEF's interventions, which they talk about as a positive and sustainable change. At the national level, one of the key tasks, showing sustainability, is the inclusion of this experience in policy and decision-making, which is a process that has started, but is still on-going and more efforts need to be put into ensuring a sustainable inclusion of results from the interventions into the national policy. The capacity that was created at the level of educational institutions, as well as on a local level, could be disseminated successfully at a national level. What is necessary, at the level of policy in the whole country, is to include the good practices and experience gained as a result of the interventions, into national documents, strategies, programmes, etc., in order to achieve a higher level of sustainability into the long-term and for the whole of Ukraine.

In terms of **other criteria and cross-cutting issues**, the Education programme is planned and applied in a way to meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups of children. These groups are defined clearly, and the design of the programme seems age and gender appropriate. The pilot interventions in Donetsk and Luhansk succeed in reaching the most vulnerable conflict-affected children, as well as children in rural areas, but need to be disseminated in the whole country, in order to support access to quality education for all children. The achievement of this goals requires a clear M&E system, which would allow to disaggregate data for all groups of children.

The conclusions in terms of other criteria concern coverage and coordination, gender, and age-appropriateness and equity issues. The programme has reached the most vulnerable groups in conflict-affected and rural areas, equally for all school ages and both genders, but still more could be done in some directions.

It is important to take into account the role of **HDN** for protecting children and youth at times when risk and vulnerability increase due to emergencies. Meeting these needs and ensuring the protection of children puts education in a special position to contribute to and develop resilience to manage the immediate, as well as long-term effects. The conflict in Eastern Ukraine poses a difficult task for education to protect children, ensure a possibility to learn, provide psychological support and, at the same time, to not steer away from the needs for overall development in the educational reform and ensure access to quality education for all children. In order to achieve this, there need to be coordinated efforts of all actors, collective outcomes and ensuring coherence between humanitarian response and developmental needs. UNICEF's contribution, activities and goals seem in compliance with the humanitarian, as well as developmental outcomes. At a time when the most immediate effects of the conflict have already become less strong, it is necessary to shift from a humanitarian to a more developmental perspective.

1.4. LESSONS LEARNED

The evaluation concludes that overall, UNICEF would achieve an outcome in education of its 2018-2022 CPD. At this stage of the programme implementation, the evaluation found a number of external challenges and some limitations in planning and design of the interventions. Overall, however, UNICEF targeted outputs of policy advice, technical assistance and piloting of interventions have been achieved and could contribute to making an impact on children's lives, especially those most disadvantaged and affected by the conflict.

The main lesson learned is that it is time for UNICEF to shift efforts from a humanitarian to developmental perspective, to focus more its endeavours, and to rely on more systemic evidence as a basis for decision-making.

The ET identifies the following specific lessons learned:

- **Importance of more focused operational planning and communication with different stakeholders at the different stages of implementation of activities towards achieving the common goals.** Ensuring a high level of relevance and total achievement of the goals depends on focused

operational planning with specific tasks, expected outcomes and indicator, agreed between all involved actors;

- **The development of a ToC at the planning phase of realisation of interventions is a key factor for identifying clear expected outcomes and impact, key activities, assumptions and risk mitigation and description of the road to these results.** The road to these results will provide a clear guidance of the ratio between upstream and downstream work;
- **Modelling and piloting tailor-made interventions with different goals requires additional efforts in identifying the specific needs of specific groups of children, including vulnerable children.** The individual approach to the needs of each child, class and school is crucial to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all;
- **There is a high level of importance of empowering teachers, parents, and children to develop their own ‘project of change’ for each school.** The development of a ToC for every school would guarantee a high level of commitment and ownership on behalf of the schools, including parents, students, and teachers;
- **It is necessary to ensure that the indicators for outcomes are clearly defined, reliable and measurable and that high quality data is collected and analysed in a proper way.** This is essential in order to set priorities, monitor and measure the achievement of the outcome, as well as to identify the needs for future programming;
- **A systemic change could be ensured by efficient planning and investing of resources,** taking into consideration the main components of educational reform, the schools of the future concept and all components of the change like pedagogy, leadership, school environment, technology, and efficient investment;
- **It is important to ensure participation at all levels, which could change the system.** The road to change is long and passes through a change in attitudes, motivations, and capacity development;
- **A clear system of data collection is important** to have an evidence base for analysis, disaggregated for different groups that are reached and to address equity issues;
- **It is important to shift towards systematic interventions since the need in humanitarian interventions is decreasing.** Significant results can be achieved if a strong level of ownership by national government is achieved during the different stages like planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

1.5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having in mind that this is a formative evaluation, and the programme is past its mid-term phase, the recommendations are divided in strategic recommendations (focused on the major sectoral policy challenges); practical recommendations (UNICEF positioning); operational recommendations: coordination, M&E, guidance. These formulated recommendations are based on findings about all the areas of evaluation and data collected involving all duty bearers and rights holders, meaning all participants were asked to provide their recommendations during the IDIs and FGDs and these were taken into account and integrated in the report. They are in different levels – school communities, including parents and children, principals and teachers talked more about individual and school system level, national and local partners and NGOs talked about the implementation of the reform and the focus of UNICEF’s programme on a national level. The recommendations were compared with the 2018-2022 Country programme document and agreed upon with the key stakeholders, ERG and the UNICEF team. Recommendations were discussed and validated at a final ERG workshop.

Strategic recommendations (focused on the major sectoral policy challenges) in the frame of the reform implementation with responsibilities of the line ministries and UNICEF support.

Systematic support to education reform in the country with a focus on children from vulnerable backgrounds should be considered:

- support to implementing the reform, with a focus on the small rural areas. The evaluation has identified a number of challenges, related to the attitudes and motivation for implementing the reform in the small rural areas and what resources are needed
- support for strengthening initial and continuous professional development of capacity of teachers. This support would address the needs of the overall NUS reform and ensure a well-planned and realised preparation of teachers to become agents of change
- accelerate a change in attitudes and preparedness of the system to ensure inclusion of children with disabilities beyond the level of access to classrooms, but to ensure an access to high-quality education and continuity between the different educational levels in the school system
- support for data collection on the different vulnerable groups of children (Roma children and other vulnerable children of different ethnic backgrounds, children with disabilities, out-of-school children, IDPs, vulnerable girls/boys, etc.) and disaggregation of this data; expanding the scale of anti-discrimination expert examination through a design of anti-discriminatory activities based on the evidence-based data collected; promote shaping of an unbiased attitude to the gender equality matters in the educational community
- support the development of capacity of stakeholders (school principals, leaders, and oblast level administration) to reach different types of vulnerable children such as Roma children and other vulnerable children of different ethnic backgrounds, children with disabilities, out-of-school children, IDPs, vulnerable girls/boys, etc.

Systematic support to education in the country to mitigate negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on children from vulnerable backgrounds should be considered

- ensure support related to COVID-19 challenges by addressing the needs to be some form of a shift of focus in terms of dealing with the COVID pandemic and ensuring distance learning and online education is made possible for all children (with focus on families with three and more children)
- provide advisory support on digitalization issues. This raises several questions in terms of presence of enough technological resources; knowledge on how to use them in a successful and productive way, in order to achieve the goals of the reform and ensure that technology is used as an integrated part of the pedagogical process, instead of replacing textbooks

Practical recommendations (UNICEF positioning) in the next CPD 2023-2027 with UNICEF responsibilities

Improve UNICEF's programming aimed at strengthening the Government's systemic and institutional capacity in providing basic services:

- support the creation of interventions that increase the level of participation of teachers, parents and children in needs assessment, planning and decision making at the school level (piloting, modelling, knowledge sharing, dissemination of best practices, etc.)
- draft resource mobilization strategy based on the previous experience and evidence base from the implementation of the programme, as well as projection on the interest of the donors and engagement in public-private partnership
- explore and promote interventions in the conflict affected areas to ensure a contribution to the humanitarian-development nexus, shifting from humanitarian to development perspective
- conduct additional analysis focused on efficiency / analysis of the budget of interventions in order to decide what is the most efficient way for spending the resources and distribution of funds according to the identified priorities and needs

Operational recommendations: coordination, M&E, guidance in the next CPD 2023-2027 with UNICEF responsibilities and line ministries and implementing partners

Improve UNICEF's programming in terms of:

- strengthen synergy focused on support to reforms (educational, social, decentralization) that is extremely important in the area of deinstitutionalization and development of inclusive education and early interventions; enhance coordination of the efforts in the three sectors (education, child protection, health)
- further develop a mechanism for coordination and communication with partner organisations and facilitate the creation of a network between different organisations working in the education sector, which would include possibilities for participation in decision-making, as well as exchange of information and feedback, thus ensure a higher level of their participation
- invest efforts in operational planning for the next (final) year of realisation of the programme together with the MoES and Ministry of youth and sports, which would contain operational goals, concrete activities, and projects, related to these goals
- ensure that planning of resources in the future should follow the main components of ToC in a systemic way and be focused on those that would have the biggest contribution to the programme
- review the suggested ToC to be taken into account in the process of development of a new country programme document for 2023-2027
- improve the monitoring system and respective data collection in view of further evaluation of the achieved results and effects at the end of the next programme. The baseline indicators need to be reviewed in order to capture what is expected to happen at the end of the programme implementation and, taking into consideration, whether there is any data available against these indicators and, if not, are there possibilities to collect them
- ensure a higher level of sustainability through acceleration of the efforts that have already been invested

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. OBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

The object of this FE is UNICEF's support to the Education Sector. The aspects of this support can be found in the CPD 2018-2022. The CPD outlines the major bottlenecks in the education system and longstanding barriers to quality education, *'especially for children and adolescents with physical or mental disabilities, who experience difficult access to mainstream education. Roma children are over-represented in special education and segregated schools, while school dropout rates are high among Roma girls. Enrolment in preschool education in rural areas is 65 per cent as opposed to 95 per cent in urban areas. Furthermore, there are pressing concerns about the disruption of education for internally displaced children and children living in conflict areas'*¹.

The Evaluation of the Country Programme of Cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and UNICEF 2012-2016 found that *'during the 2005-2010 CP cycle UNICEF was not involved into any major education sector reforms. Opportunities to influence such critically important areas as child-friendly schools, inclusive education, early school leavers and others where UNICEF has developed significant global and regional expertise were missed'*². The focus on the need to protect the rights of children affected by the conflict in the East of the country meant it was necessary to prioritize the importance of education in the UNICEF Ukraine portfolio. The conflict has taken a severe toll on the education infrastructure as hundreds of education facilities have been damaged.³

¹ UNICEF Ukraine, Country programme document 2018-2022

² Evaluation of the Country Programme of Cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and UNICEF 2012-2016

³ Ibid

UNICEF's response to the humanitarian crisis in Eastern Ukraine aims to ensure uninterrupted access to quality education in conflict-affected areas in Eastern Ukraine⁴. The UNICEF in Ukraine Programme strategy note points out that *'one of the determinants of success of the new country programme strategy will be how well UNICEF finds a balance between responding to the urgent pressures of the humanitarian and recovery response and finding space for its core mandate of programming and advocacy for children at the national and sub-national level across the country'*.⁵

The Country Programme Results Framework underpins and drives the strategy for the period 2018-2022. It specifies the overall impact and outcomes that are sought to be achieved by UNICEF with partners. A key focus is on ensuring that the national reform process now underway takes children into account both in design and implementation, is 'family-friendly' and is rights-based. Specific outcomes are sought in the areas of (a) Health /Early Years, (b) Education and Learning, (c) Child Protection, (d) Social Policy and in (e) Monitoring of Child Rights⁶.

UNICEF strategic documents recognise that every child has the right to an education and quality learning opportunities from early childhood to adolescence. The 'New Ukrainian School' reform aims to set out the values and principles of a child-centred model of education and pedagogy of partnership that addresses gender norms and stereotypes. However, a range of factors, including geographic location, economic circumstances, gender, disability, low-quality teaching and schools, disruption from conflicts and other shocks, prevent children from learning. According to the UNICEF CPD, there was a need to consolidate the efforts concerning the safe school concept, integrating the principles of child friendliness, school safety and a protective learning environment which were the entry points for UNICEF support to national education reform, with a particular emphasis on extending preschool education opportunities and ensuring inclusiveness across the education spectrum⁷.

The programme component 'All children learn' consolidates the innovations introduced in various education settings as part of the humanitarian response in Eastern Ukraine, with a view to progressively shifting from supply-driven to quality-oriented interventions for the improvement of learning outcomes. Additionally, in line with European standards and benchmarks, UNICEF's goal is to assist the government in shaping school curricula towards competency-based approaches and foster education opportunities that are more inclusive for vulnerable children, such as Roma children, and children with special needs, as well as to prevent gender stereotyping linked to the early-intervention efforts in this programme.

The key directions of UNICEF Education programme implemented in Ukraine in order to support the education sector are:

- Support to providing increased access to quality inclusive pre-primary education for disadvantaged children aged 3-6 years old, especially in rural areas;
- Support to providing quality, competency-based primary and secondary education for children and adolescents aged 6-18 years old and ensure inclusive, violence-free learning environment for all with special focus on children with disabilities;
- Support to the completion of a full cycle of compulsory inclusive education for all children and adolescents, especially the most disadvantaged and those in conflict-affected areas, including their timely enrolment in grade 1;
- Support to engagement and skills building, so that adolescents and youth have skills and competencies to be adequately prepared for adult life as active citizens and for the world of work.

⁴ UNICEF Ukraine, Country Office Annual Report 2018

⁵ UNICEF In Ukraine Programme strategy note 2018-2022, retrieved from: <http://files.unicef.org/transparency/documents/Strategy%20Note%20Ukraine.pdf>

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

In CPD, there are three main outputs planned, that are then reconstructed and divided in four outputs, related to four main groups, identified as target – children 3-6 years old in rural areas, children with disabilities, children in conflict areas, youth, and adolescents. These four outputs are realised in a series of activities, oriented towards a change in policy and awareness raising, as well as capacity building, modelling and support for implementation of different interventions. As it could be seen from reconstructing the planning logic, there is a comprehensive list of activities, and their conduction would lead to achieving the desired outputs (figure 1).

Figure 1 Logic of planning



The budget of the programme is 7 800 000 \$, including regular resources (800 000 \$) and other resources (7 000 000 \$). It is expected that the period of implementation of the whole programme will be until 2022. The programme has a national scope in the whole territory of Ukraine. The stakeholders involved as major partners in the implementation are Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), World Bank, European Union (EU), subnational authorities, civil society organisations (CSOs), local community groups. The MoES is managing entity for reform implementation and policy change, as well as coordination of all actors within and outside the education system; CSOs and local organisations are in partnership roles; local authorities facilitate the implementation of the different strategies to achieve the expected outcomes, while the World Bank (WB) and European Union (EU) support and monitor the implementation.

The programme is in the mid-term phase of implementation and a mid-term review has not been conducted. However, the internal review of achievements shows the need for fine-tuning some of the outputs. In 2020, as a result of this internal review, a Strategy Note has been developed and outputs have been elaborated further. While the overall strategy of the current CPD 2018-2022 is not changing, UNICEF Ukraine is proposing a gradual shift from the geographically focused programming on the protracted crisis in Eastern Ukraine, into a more balanced, upstream expansion of the 'national' programme with a strong advocacy component, while simultaneously strengthening the nexus between emergency, recovery and development programmes and optimizing resources available.⁸

Since this is a FE, the collected information and analysis regarding the achievement of expected results, will provide information on how to update the logic of intervention.

2.2. THEORY OF CHANGE

The evaluation has a theory-based design⁹ and applies a mixed-methods approach, given the complexity of the environments in which the UNICEF programme is being implemented. A theory-based evaluation is based on an explicit ToC that explains the logic of development of an intervention. The evaluation is designed to produce a plausible case with evidence that shows what has changed at each level of the theory and explores the linkages between those changes. The development of the key elements of a ToC facilitates the understanding of what worked, why and how it worked; to examine wider contributions to change; to have a part that involves collecting evidence to establish whether and/or how an intervention produced the desired changes. At the inception phase, the ET has reconstructed a ToC, focused on pathways to change and UNICEF's contribution to these pathways, the expected results, and outcomes, as a result of the implementation of this programme. The data from the FE does not impose a need for changing the ToC at this stage, on behalf of the ET. Among the recommendations towards UNICEF is the need for them to make this review of the ToC.

While there is no fully developed and documented education ToC for Ukraine, the set of adopted legislation as well as specific documents developed in the observed period provide information on what was the status at the beginning of the process and what were the changes that were envisioned. The Education programme was also introduced as a part of the humanitarian response plan. ToCs were not developed for the humanitarian response. Therefore, the ET of Junction Bulgaria has reconstructed a ToC, taking into consideration the planned outcomes and outputs in the CPD. The ToC identifies the expected outcome that the intervention is seeking and the ways in which the interventions are expected to lead to such outcomes. As the intervention evolves, the lessons learned from the evaluation process will lead to the ToC to be revisited and adapted, since the Programme

⁸ Programme Strategy Note, All Children Learn, 2020

⁹ INTRAC for civil society, (2017), Theory-based evaluation, retrieved from: <https://www.intrac.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Theory-based-evaluation.pdf>;

Morra Imas, L. G., & Rist, R. (2009). The road to results: Designing and conducting effective development evaluations. The World Bank.

Strategy Note¹⁰ outlines adapted outputs and the evaluation findings will provide information about the possibilities to make changes. Annex 10 provides information regarding a results framework in CPD 2018-2022, as well as suggestions for adapted outputs and strategy notes. The reconstructed ToC on figure 2 (annex 6) includes major bottlenecks, UNICEF Core roles and contributions, as well as risks and assumptions, outputs, and outcome. The major bottlenecks, identified in the CPD and other key documents and reports in the period of planning, are: barriers to quality education for all, which results in inadequate skills in all domains; many children with disabilities appear marginalized from mainstream education; access to quality early learning remains problematic, particularly in rural areas; alarming gaps in access and results in education between rural and otherwise underprivileged children and those with high socioeconomic status; disruption of education for internally displaced children and children in conflict areas.

The analysis of the implemented interventions shows that the main areas of UNICEF contribution are: strengthening capacity of preschool, school staff and local educators on safe and inclusive educational environment; supporting evidence-based national policy and programming on quality preschool and inclusive education; strengthening the capacity of the education system to provide a violence-free and protective learning environment; improving the physical safety and rehabilitation of the education facilities and adjusting them to child-friendly and quality standards; increasing civic engagement and participation of adolescents and youth, strengthening their resilience and supporting youth engagement. These interventions are realised as a part of UNICEF's core roles: advocacy, policy dialogue and advice, knowledge generation and child rights monitoring, capacity development of government and civil society, modelling, and testing innovations. The assumptions and risks are a result of the ET's reconstruction of the process of setting outputs, which was probably accompanied by different hypothesis about the state of policy and conflict in the country, state of the educational system, financial situation, different unexpected events, legislation, and capacity of different system. The outputs and the outcome are taken from the CPD 2018 – 2022.

The review of the causal paths and linkages between different interventions and the degree to which they lead to achieving a long-term change shows that the intention was to implement a complex and systemic approach with different areas of interventions, which could ensure it. The assumptions were that changes in the capacity of the professionals, school environment and evidence-based policy in the short term will lead to the new practices and sustainable policy change, change in the attitudes and as a final result ensure access to quality education for all children. However, the programme seems too focused to some target groups of children, which makes the 'road' to achievement of the outcome, longer. Additionally, new practices or policies that may have been piloted only in some locations, will need to be disseminated and scaled up. This will depend on the enabling environment. For example, stakeholders in other locations could be supported to learn from practices and develop their own adaptations in multiple locations, or approaches could be scaled upwards to support adoption at sector-wide, policy or institutional levels.

2.3. CONTEXT

2.3.1. Political, Socio-Economic, and Legal Context

According to the Human Development Index (HDI)¹¹, Ukraine's total value for 2019 is 0.779— which put the country in the high human development category— positioning it at 74th place out of 189 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2019, Ukraine's HDI value increased from 0.725 to 0.779, an increase of 7.4 percent, while Ukraine's life expectancy at birth increased by 2.2 years and the mean years of schooling increased by 2.3 years. However, despite some achievements in the area of

¹⁰ Programme Strategy Note, All Children Learn, 2020

¹¹ UNDP, Human Development Report 2020, Work for human development, Briefing note for countries on the 2020 Human Development Report Ukraine, retrieved from: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/UKR.pdf

economic and social development, Ukraine faced multiple challenges. The Gross National Income (GNI) per capita decreased by about 18.3 percent between 1990 and 2019.

One of the major challenges, faced in the country, is the armed conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine (Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts) that started in 2014. Of some 5.2 million people in the region, at least 3.9 million have been directly affected by the conflict.¹² Now in its seventh year, the situation continues to take a significant toll on the lives of people. The 'contact line' separates areas under and outside government control, leaving communities in non-government-controlled area (NGCA) facing a variety of challenges¹³. Furthermore, *'the conflict in Eastern Ukraine continues to threaten the wellbeing of children. Some of the most vulnerable children live in close proximity to the 'contact line'. On the government-controlled side alone, it is estimated that over 55,000 children live within 15 km of the contact line. In addition to dozens of ceasefire violations recorded every day by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission along the contact line, these children are also exposed to mines and unexploded ordinance'*¹⁴. In addition to displacement, vulnerabilities of many children and their families increased due to poverty, lack of proper housing, unemployment, and social exclusion¹⁵. *'Throughout 2020, the Government remained committed towards Eastern Ukraine with a new ceasefire agreement signed, decreasing the level of fighting. An Action Plan for the implementation of the Safe School Declaration was developed including a monitoring mechanism on attacks on schools. Agreements were reached for the opening of new entry and exit points along the Line of Contact easing civilians' crossing. However, ceasefire violations were still recorded almost daily on both sides impacting people's lives. In total, 60 incidents of damage to water infrastructure and 11 to education facilities were reported by the WASH and Education clusters'*¹⁶.

Currently, *'the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine continues to have a fundamental devastating impact upon children, youth, education personnel and the whole education system; especially in the areas along the 427-kilometer-long 'contact line'. There is widespread evidence of the cumulative effect of the conflict on 735,000 children and teachers' learning and teaching in 3,500 education facilities in the wider affected areas. Access to education is intermittently disrupted and the wellbeing and learning of children and youth is severely affected due to conflict-related trauma and prolonged toxic stress. Being both caretakers and victims, teacher's ability to teach is impacted as they themselves are severely stressed'*¹⁷.

In 2019, there was a change in the political landscape with a new President and Parliament. Analysts believe that this political change was triggered by Ukrainian people's mistrust in the long-serving political elite. Corruption remains endemic and powerful oligarchs still dominate the economy. The newly elected President, Parliament and resulting Government declared their commitment to an ambitious and wide-ranging reform agenda, oriented towards decentralization¹⁸.

The COVID-19 pandemic that broke out across Europe in March 2020, dominated Ukraine last year and influenced the socio-economic development of the country in all its aspects. *'On the economic front, the COVID-19 outbreak hit Ukraine half-way in its reform efforts with modestly growing economy*

¹² World Bank; European Union; United Nations. 2015. Ukraine Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment: Analysis of Crisis Impacts and Needs in Eastern Ukraine, Volume 1. Synthesis Report. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank, retrieved from: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22089> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO

¹³ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2020), Ukraine Humanitarian Needs Overview

¹⁴ UNICEF Ukraine (2018), The children of the contact line in Eastern Ukraine, 2017 Assessment Update

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ UNICEF Country Office Annual Report 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/media/101221/file/Ukraine-2020-COAR.pdf>

¹⁷ Education cluster strategy, Ukraine 2019 - 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/ru/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-education-cluster-strategy-final-engukr>

¹⁸ UNICEF Country Office Annual Report 2019, retrieved from: [https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Ukraine-2019-COAR\(1\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Ukraine-2019-COAR(1).pdf)

and a six-year ongoing conflict in the East. The lockdown crippled the economy, and the officially registered unemployed rate increased by 60 percent according to media reports. Ukraine's Gross Domestic Product is reported to have fallen at the rate of 3.5 percent in Q3 compared to the same period in 2019.¹⁹ At the same time, there is progress, since the lockdown triggered a greater consumption. 'Under the less severe scenario described by the Institute of Economy and Demography and UNICEF, the level of poverty was forecasted to increase from 27.2 to 43.6 percent with an increase in absolute child poverty from 32.8 to 51.3 percent.'²⁰ In regard to the social protection system, the government adopted some measures to adjust the social protection system, such as extending subsidy programmes as well as the duration of payments and providing one-off top payments to vulnerable groups, but results are barely noticeable.

Last year, the COVID-19 quarantine measures caused the closure of schools 'leaving around 6.5 million girls (48%) and boys (52%) out of school. Out of them 42,000, including children with disabilities, were sent back home from institutions without prior verification of their family conditions further increasing the risk of abuse and neglect'²¹. Distance education options were challenging, especially for children with disabilities and those living in Eastern Ukraine and/or remote and poor communities. 'A National Assessment of Schools' preparedness to operate in conditions of COVID was conducted over the summer resulting in a new Regulation on the provision of distance learning. All schools reopened early September following a strict sanitary protocol, however UNICEF estimates that 360,000 girls (48%) and boys (52%) of primary and secondary school age stayed homebound'²².

Ukraine's national priorities in the area of protection of children's rights include setting up adequate conditions for full realization of the rights of children to grow up in a family environment, modernisation of the system of social services for children and the transformation of institutional care. These priorities are enshrined in a system of legal and strategic documents. The main normative documents that regulate the place of the child in society and child wellbeing in Ukraine are the Constitution, the Family Code, and the Law on the Protection of Childhood.

Ukraine ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 27 September 1991. By this act the country undertook obligations which are subject to commitment and regular monitoring expressed in the Law of Ukraine 'On the National Program 'National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' for the period until 2016.'²³ This law was adopted in March 2009 and every subsequent year through 2015, the Cabinet of Ministers approved a National Plan on Implementation of Measures Recommended by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Recently, on May 30, 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the State Social Program 'National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' for the period until 2021.

The main national regulations in the area of children rights are the Law of Ukraine 'On ensuring the organizational and legal conditions for the social protection of orphan children and children deprived

¹⁹ ibid

²⁰ World Bank Group (2017), Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Ukraine for the Period FY17-FY21. Report No. 114516-UA. Washington, DC: World Bank in World Bank Group, (2019), Review of the Education Sector in Ukraine, Moving toward Effectiveness, Equity and Efficiency (RESUME3), Final report, retrieved from: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/884261568662566134/pdf/Review-of-the-Education-Sector-in-Ukraine-Moving-toward-Effectiveness-Equity-and-Efficiency-RESUME3.pdf>

²¹ UNICEF Country Office Annual Report 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/media/101221/file/Ukraine-2020-COAR.pdf>

²² ibid

²³ Government approved National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child up to 2021, (2018), retrieved from <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/news/uryad-uhvaliv-nacionalnij-plan-dij-shodo-realizaciyi-konvenciyi-on-pro-prava-ditini-na-period-do-2021-roku>

of parental care’ (2005); the ‘Law of Ukraine About prevention and counteraction to domestic violence’ (2017); the law that protects children from sexual abuse and exploitation: Law 3055 (2021).²⁴

There are several strategic documents which focus and direct the efforts of the country in child protection. In 2007 the Government of Ukraine approves the ‘State Targeted Social Program for Reforming the System of Institutions for Orphan Children and Children Deprived of Parental Care’ which launched the process of deinstitutionalization and reformation of the system of institutions for orphan children and children deprived of parental care. Related to it is the ‘Action Plan for the implementation of the Concept of reforming the social services system leading up to 2012’ approved in 2008.

In 2012 the strategic document ‘About National Strategy of prevention of social orphanage for the period up to 2020’ was approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine. The process of deinstitutionalisation began in Ukraine with the approval of the ‘National Strategy for Reforming the System of Institutional Care and Upbringing of Children for 2017–2026’. The ‘National Strategy for Reforming the System of Justice for Children’ by 2023 was approved by the Government of Ukraine in 2018.

The Law of Ukraine ‘On the Protection of Childhood’ (dated April 26, 2001 No. 2402-III), defines the protection of childhood as a ‘nationwide strategic priority’, which *‘is important for ensuring the national security of Ukraine and the effectiveness of domestic state policy and in order to ensure the realization of the child’s right to life, health, education, social protection, comprehensive development and upbringing in the family environment, it establishes the basic principles of state policy in this sphere based on ensuring the best interests of a child.’*²⁵

The growing readiness of Ukrainian society to strengthen the efforts on integration of children with disabilities is reflected in the Law on Education of Ukraine regarding the accessibility of people with special educational needs to educational services and inclusive education.²⁶

The analysis of the socio-economic and legal context of Ukraine shows consistent efforts to put children’s rights in the focus of regulations and change in the country, although a number of factors slow this process down. As mentioned before, this is due to the challenges that the country has faced like political instability, the war conflict and the recent COVID-19 pandemic that affected the whole world.

2.3.2. Education Reform Implementation in Ukraine

Ukraine’s education system has been in a state of reform for many years. Radical reform is planned and needed, which would reverse all the negative trends and turn Ukrainian schools into entities able to leverage social equity and consolidation, economic development, and the competitiveness of Ukraine.²⁷

The history and context for education reform in Ukraine provides an important backdrop for understanding the level of ambition brought by the current reform agenda, as well as the potential roadblocks and implementation challenges.²⁸ There are several important historical and contextual

²⁴ Ukraine adopts law to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation, (2021), retrieved from <https://www.end-violence.org/articles/ukraine-adopts-law-protect-children-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation>

²⁵ Kryvachuk, L. (2018), Transformation of Social Services in Ukraine: the Deinstitutionalization and Reform of the Institutional Care System for Children, retrieved from [https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/Transformation of Social Services in Ukraine the D.pdf](https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/Transformation%20of%20Social%20Services%20in%20Ukraine%20the%20D.pdf)

²⁶ The Law on Education, (2017), retrieved from: [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF\(2017\)047-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2017)047-e)

²⁷ Ministry of education and science of Ukraine (2016), The New Ukrainian School

²⁸ OECD Multi-level Governance Studies: Maintaining the Momentum of Decentralisation in Ukraine. Paris: OECD. in World Bank Group, (2019), Review of the Education Sector in Ukraine, Moving toward Effectiveness, Equity and Efficiency

factors shaping this process that must be clearly understood, including: (a) the historical roots of education reform, (b) the Euromaidan Revolution and ensuing conflict, (c) demographic pressures, and (d) economic competitiveness and human capital, as well as the pandemic of COVID 19 that happened in 2020 and had a great impact on all of the processes in the country, including the educational reform.²⁹ Since 2014, Ukraine has been engaged in an ambitious and transformative reform of the education sector to promote human capital development. The first significant step in this direction is the Law on Higher Education, adopted in 2014. *‘The new Law on Higher Education is the first large systemic reform-oriented law adopted by the Verkhovna Rada after the Euromaidan Revolution’*³⁰ The next step is the budget decentralization started in 2014, which *‘aims to transfer a considerable extent of authority and responsibilities from the central government to intermediate, local levels of government’*³¹. In the area of education, *‘decentralisation reform provides control of preschools and general secondary education institutions to AHs (amalgamated hromadas). As of July 2018, control of approximately 63 percent of schools in the amalgamated areas has yet to be transferred to AHs from rayon-level administrations, and less than 50 percent of AHs had taken full responsibility for their respective school systems’*³².

Three years of national dialogue took place with the aim to create a common understanding of the need for change in secondary education. Building a broad, shared understanding, across the political spectrum, on why reforms are needed is an important ingredient in sustaining reforms. The New Ukrainian School and associated reforms mark an ambitious effort and high-level commitment to improve the quality of general education. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government continued strengthening quality preschool education through reviewing the key policy documents (e.g. Basic Component of preschool education, the Law on preschool education, the Concept of preschool development). The framework Law on Education passed in 2017 guarantees every citizen the right to high-quality and affordable education.

The modernization of educational activities in Ukraine involves solving five key problems. Firstly, this could be done by ensuring the education of innovative persons - persons with innovative thinking, who can then set the basis for researching and progress and the building of a knowledge society in Ukraine. Secondly, a solution could be the adoption of a childhood-centered principle in education, that is, a focus on children and their abilities, taking into account individual aspects of children’s development. This requires a systemic restructuring of the educational sphere on the basis of a competent approach and the resultant paradigm in education. Thirdly, the transition to tolerant pedagogy, subject-to-subject relations in the educational process, mutual respect for the student and teacher, means that ‘New Ukrainian School’ could ensure the formation of a civil society in Ukraine, leading to a democratic development of the country. Fourthly, the reform aims to prepare the Ukrainian citizens for living in the global reality, forming ‘globalist people’, which could ensure Ukraine’s competitiveness in Europe and the world. Fifthly, forming a modern system of values for citizens of Ukraine could promote their maximal self-realization, the establishment of a national unity, a deeper understanding of national interests and their development in cooperation and competition with other countries, including the protection of Ukraine’s independence and territorial integrity.³³

(RESUME3), Final report, retrieved from:

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/884261568662566134/pdf/Review-of-the-Education-Sector-in-Ukraine-Moving-toward-Effectiveness-Equity-and-Efficiency-RESUME3.pdf>

²⁹ ibid

³⁰ ibid

³¹ ibid

³² Rabinovych, Levitas, and Umland (2018), Revisiting Decentralization After Maidan: Achievements and Challenges of Ukraine’s Local Governance Reform. Washington, DC: Wilson Center in World Bank Group, (2019), Review of the Education Sector in Ukraine, Moving toward Effectiveness, Equity and Efficiency (RESUME3), Final report, retrieved from: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/884261568662566134/pdf/Review-of-the-Education-Sector-in-Ukraine-Moving-toward-Effectiveness-Equity-and-Efficiency-RESUME3.pdf>

³³ Nychkalo, N (2017), “New Ukrainian School”: the Present and the View to the Future. LABOR et EDUCATIO nr 5/2017, https://depot.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/123456789/14896/labor_5_2017_nychkalo_1.pdf?sequence=1

The new school formula consists of nine key elements:

- New educational content based on enabling the competencies necessary for successful self-fulfillment in society;
- Motivated teaching staff who enjoy freedom of creativity and professional development;
- A cross-cutting educational process that informs values;
- Decentralization and effective administration that will bring real autonomy to schools
- Teaching based on partnerships between the pupil, the teacher and parents;
- A focus on pupil's needs in the educational process, i.e., child-centered education;
- A new school structure that allows to master the new content and acquire life competences;
- Fair allocation of public funds that ensures equal access to quality education for all children;
- A contemporary educational environment that will provide necessary conditions, means, and technology for education of pupils, teachers, and parents, not only in the premises of the educational establishment.³⁴

The new Law on Complete General Secondary Education was adopted on January 16th, 2020³⁵ to improve equity in access to quality secondary education in Ukraine and to support implementation of the reform. The law guarantees the enrolment of children in the most territorially accessible primary schools without any contests; opportunities for children with special educational needs to study in regular schools, according to their own learning path ('learning trajectory'); envisages greater financial autonomy of schools, extra payments to teachers; more rights for the student self-governance; and envisages various models of learning the Ukrainian language in schools for the ethnic minorities, among other provisions.

The implementation of the reform in the period 2018-2020 includes a number of activities, among which are a pilot realisation of a new way of working in 100 schools - they gain knowledge and master new skills via practical activities, and they learn to express their opinions and feelings and listen to others³⁶. Additionally, the new content of primary school standards has been defined. To ensure the achievement of new goals, teachers have been supported through introducing a teacher certification process. The educational subsidies from the state budget were increased and were calculated based on the enrolment statistics, which helped make more proportional educational allocation to local budgets. Targeted subsidies have been introduced to improve school facilities and resources, which includes new furniture, digital equipment, school buses, etc. In 2018, for the first time Ukraine participated in the OECD programme PISA. In the area of inclusion in secondary education, the efforts were oriented towards development of inclusive classes, and they increased five times. Furthermore, inclusive centres were created to support inclusive education of children with special educational needs³⁷.

The educational reform has been planned to be implemented in the period 2016 – 2026. Up until now, efforts have been invested in realising different components like inclusive education, primary education, professional development of teachers, change in the structure and quality assurance.

3. OBJECTIVES, PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The main purpose of the evaluation is to generate substantive evidence-based knowledge by identifying good practices and lessons learned from the impact of Education Programme

³⁴ MoES (2016) The New Ukrainian school conceptual principles of secondary school reform, retrieved from: <https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/zagalna%20serednya/Book-ENG.pdf>

³⁵ Прийнято новий закон "про повну загальну середню освіту" – "за" проголосували 327 нардепів, (2020), retrieved from: <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/prijnyato-novij-zakon-pro-povnu-zagalnu-serednyu-osvitu-za-progolosuvali-450-nardepiv>; https://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=66333

³⁶ MoES, New Ukrainian School, retrieved from: <https://mon.gov.ua/eng/tag/nova-ukrainska-shkola>

³⁷ Education and Science Reform, 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/reformi/rozvitok-lyudskogo-kapitalu/reforma-osviti>

implementation in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in fulfilment of the right to education. As this is a FE, the results will be highly useful to enable any redirection necessary for the future programme in the context of reform implementation, relevant state programmes at national and local levels and education activities, organizational learning in implementing education programmes in complex environments.

The main objectives of the FE are accountability and organizational learning in the field of education sector development for the primary purpose of improving UNICEF's Education programme and fulfilment of the right to education of all children:

- In terms of accountability, the evaluation will independently assess overall progress towards intended outcomes, and, where possible, seek indications of possible effects on the most vulnerable groups of children (incl. children living in the rural area, children with disabilities, conflict affected children, internally displaced persons etc.), as well as serve for an indicative analysis of UNICEF's added value to the education sector reform.
- In terms of organizational learning, the purpose of this evaluation is to identify, and document good practices and lessons learned from the implementation of the Education programme, inform decision-making on scaling up the different approaches adopted during the implementation and review existing strategies.

This evaluation will inform the relevant stakeholders up to what degree the planned outcomes were achieved, in order to understand what works and what doesn't work and will inform UNICEF on how to improve its endeavours to support the on-going reform in the educational sector and ensure the right to education of all children is fulfilled (table 1).

Table 1 Intended users and uses of the evaluation

Users	Uses
UNICEF Country Office	<p>Improve the programme strategic notes for the next period, tailor strategic approaches depending on the changing context.</p> <p>Document lessons learned and best practices that can inform future education programme replication and identify gaps/provide recommendations.</p>
All sections UNICEF Country Office, Monitoring & Evaluation unit, Education Cluster	Incorporate best practice and draw on lessons learned to improve the performance of future interventions in the field of education; to improve planning/programming of the future interventions; to strengthen the ME component and ensure strong evidence-based approach in planning and strategizing.
National and oblast level authorities	Take decisions and develop strategic orientations on the reform implementation, including the allocation of human, material, and financial resources based on the evidence generated by the evaluation. Use best practice lessons to accelerate reform implementation towards national SDG4 targets and ensure the right to education for all children is fulfilled as per the convention of the rights of child ratified by the Government of Ukraine
Local authorities	<p>Adjust and optimize the reform mechanisms on a local level based on the lessons learned from the evaluation.</p> <p>Adjust monitoring approaches to enhance quality programme delivery.</p> <p>Improve budget allocation and effective budget usage procedures, coordination of actions with all actors to minimize expenses and avoid leaving gaps or overlapping in covering critical needs</p>

Partner governmental organisations and other CSOs	non- (NGOs)	Build on the evidence generated by the evaluation to improve performance in the implementation of education projects/ interventions. Strengthen capacity where it is lacking.
Donors and other Development partners		Influence the future design and scale-up of Education Programmes

According to the Terms of Reference (ToR - annex 1), the scope of the evaluation is the time period: 2018-2020, locations: Kyiv city, Kharkiv city, Kharkiv oblast, Donetsk oblast (government-controlled area (GCA)), Luhansk oblast (GCA). The population groups that are covered are children at an early age, children with disabilities, children at a school age and adolescents, conflict-affected children and internally displaced persons (IDPs), teachers and principals, parents and professionals, national stakeholders, and partner organisations.

The data collection focuses on Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, since the initial review showed that in Kharkiv city and oblast there are no interventions for the period of evaluation.

In terms of the scope as the specific interventions, these are the following: formulation of the 'Concept of preschool development'; generation and analysis of data to inform policies and programmes, advocacy and endorsement of the Safe School Declaration (2019)³⁸; modelling of the 'Child Friendly and Safe School' programme, aimed at strengthening an inclusive and non-violent environment; provision of education supplies, school furniture, sports equipment, rehabilitating schools; building capacity of teachers on Life Skills Education (LSE) and development of an LSE training curriculum for primary teachers, which was incorporated in in-service teacher training in the country; implementation of International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF); development of a Training of Trainers (ToT) course on inclusive education which was adopted by MoES as part of the national training module and produced an innovative on-line training simulator; technical support to MoES in reviewing the draft National Strategy of Inclusive Education 2020-2030; development of National Implementation Roadmap for PISA and associated National Communication Strategy as well as the development of a dedicated PISA website with interactive functionality; launch of the first SCORE report, which examines the impact of risk exposure on adolescent development and the protective role of the education system assessed through the concept of 'School Connectedness', the acquisition of life skills and their protective nature as well as that of parenting dimensions.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this evaluation, presented in table 2, includes the basic concepts and definitions, taken into account in UNICEF's programme and used in the formulation of goals and tasks and design of interventions, the course of the ET's development of the evaluation matrix, ToC, and conduction of the evaluation.

Table 2 Conceptual framework

Basic concepts and approaches	Working definitions	Reference to the assignment
Inclusive education ³⁹	Inclusive education is the most effective way to give all children a fair chance to go to school, learn and develop the skills they need to thrive. Inclusive education means	Having in mind the goals of the Education Programme in the Country Programme (2018-2022), regarding

³⁸ Education cluster strategy, Ukraine 2019 - 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/ru/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-education-cluster-strategy-final-engukr>

³⁹ UNICEF, Inclusive education, retrieved from: <https://uni.cf/3nIJ86T>

		all children in the same classrooms, in the same schools. It means real learning opportunities for groups who have traditionally been excluded – not only children with disabilities, but speakers of minority languages too. Inclusive systems value the unique contributions students of all backgrounds bring to the classroom and allow diverse groups to grow side by side, to the benefit of all.	ensuring inclusive access to education for all children, such as disadvantaged and affected by conflict, children with disabilities, children in rural areas.
Child-friendly school		A child-friendly educational institution is inclusive, protective, and healthy for all children regardless of their social background, ethnic origin, gender, and level of ability. It has all the necessary facilities that make the child's school experience more effective and comfortable. A child-friendly school is respectful of all children, and the families and communities of the students are invested in school life as well as the students themselves ⁴⁰ . Principles of child-friendly school: This school is child-seeking; This school is child-centered; The school is inclusive; The school is effective for gaining knowledge; The school is healthy and protects the students; The institution is gender-sensitive; The school is involved with the kids, their families, and communities.	Having in mind the goals of the Education Programme in the Country Programme (2018-2022), regarding ensuring inclusive access to education for all children, such as disadvantaged and affected by conflict, children with disabilities, children in rural areas.
Pedagogy partnership	of	<p>Partnership pedagogy is the direction of pedagogy, focused on the education and training of students on the principles of humanism and a creative approach to personal development. The basis of partnership pedagogy is the interaction of teachers, students, and parents.</p> <p>The practical experience of the EU countries in the context of the implementation of partnership pedagogy provides as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – common understanding of the objectives, means and methods of implementing partnership pedagogy; – the desire to implement in joint activities, a comprehensive approach to education, the competence of teachers and parents based on the conditions of social and family education; – respect for the child's personality; mutual respect and mutual trust; – studying the best practices of partnership; improving education; – rapprochement based on awareness, mutual responsibility of parents and teachers for making decisions that can improve the quality of educational services; – use of techniques that promote dialogue.⁴¹ 	In Ukrainian educational science, pedagogical partnership has been considered quite widely. Its basic elements and the need for understanding relate to the program document on the New Ukrainian School (New Ukrainian School: conceptual principles for the reform of the secondary school). ⁴²

⁴⁰ What is child-friendly school environment? Definition, principles and objectives (2021), retrieved from: <https://www.legit.ng/1155403-what-child-friendly-school-environment.html>. <https://www.legit.ng/1155403-what-child-friendly-school-environment.html>

⁴¹ Pavelkiv, K., Fedyaeva, V., Butenko, N., Tombulatova, I., & Borysiuk, I. (2021). Partnership pedagogy: practical experience of the EU countries and issues of implementation in Ukraine. *Laplage em Revista*, 7(Extra-D), 175-186.

⁴² ibid

Leave no one behind agenda ⁴³	Leave no one behind (LNOB) is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole.	The Leave no one behind agenda is used in order to understand the contribution of the program towards ending discrimination and exclusion.
UN Humanitarian and development nexus ⁴⁴	Nexus-related considerations become more evident when looking at the way in which evaluations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - present and give the rationale for the scope of analysis; - discuss agencies' positioning and their different spheres of influence and comparative advantage vis-à-vis other actors and in relation to specific policy or operational issue; - make a more 'progressive' use of evaluation criteria – particularly effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability; - include more comprehensive context (and as relevant) conflict analysis; - include an analysis of risks that also looks at risk convergence. 	The ET has explored the synergy between the development and humanitarian interface on a national and subnational level. The coherence between humanitarian and development goals is analysed.

4.2. EVALUATION CRITERIA

A FE is an evaluation which is intended to support programme actors, i.e. managers and direct protagonists, in order to help them improve their decisions and activities. It mainly applies to public interventions during their implementation (on-going, mid-term or intermediate evaluation). It focuses essentially on implementation procedures and their effectiveness and relevance⁴⁵. This evaluation has been conducted at the mid-point of the Country Programme (CP) and responds to the need to recommend directions for further education reform and development.

The evaluation criteria, which are used in this evaluation, are based on the updated standards of Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Assistance and Development (OECD-DAC), covering relevance (to what extent are the programme objectives justified in relation to needs), coherence (how well does the intervention fit; what is its degree of compatibility with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution), effectiveness (to what extent have the objectives been achieved; have the interventions and instruments used produced the expected effects; could more effects be obtained by using different instruments), efficiency (have the planned outputs been achieved at the lowest cost), impact (what difference does the intervention make; what is the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended, or unintended, higher-level effects) and sustainability (are the results including institutional

⁴³ UNSDG, Universal Values Principle Two: Leave No One Behind, retrieved from: <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind>

⁴⁴ UNEG, (2018), The Humanitarian-Development Nexus – What do evaluations have to say?, retrieved from: <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/2872>

⁴⁵ EVALSED (2013). Evaluation of Socio-Economic Development, retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/evaluations-guidance-documents/2013/evalsed-the-resource-for-the-evaluation-of-socio-economic-development-evaluation-guide

changes durable over time; will they continue if there is no more public funding)⁴⁶. The goal is to understand the extent to which the programme is relevant and coherent to the needs and policies, achieves the planned outcomes at a low cost, ensures impact and sustainability.

4.3. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This FE responds to the following evaluation questions:

- **Relevance:** to what extent is the Education programme relevant to the governmental policies and priorities and needs of children in Ukraine, particularly of those from vulnerable groups in line with the Child Rights Convention?
- **Coherence:** how well does the intervention fit to better capture synergies, linkages, partnership dynamics and complexity?
- **Effectiveness:** is the Education programme achieving its objectives? To what extent is the Education programme contributing to the Education sector development at the national and local levels?
- **Efficiency:** are the financial, human, and material resources allocated to the Education programme sufficient to meet the intended outcomes of the programme?
- **Impact:** what difference does the Education programme make? To what extent is the Education programme likely to contribute to access to education of boys and girls in Ukraine, particularly those from vulnerable groups?
- **Sustainability:** to what extent are the results of the Education programme likely to sustain after the programme period?

The key evaluation questions and sub-questions have been elaborated in an evaluation matrix (see annex 9). The key questions are stated as per the ToR (annex 1), but the sub-questions have been elaborated by the ET in order to fine tune them and be able to operationalise them in questions for respondents. Additionally, a set of indicators has been suggested, based on available information in the CPD, key evaluation questions, areas of evaluation and the specifics of the formative evaluation.

4.4. DATA SOURCES, COLLECTION METHODS AND SAMPLING

In order to address the evaluation questions, having in mind the reconstructed ToC, the ET of Junction Bulgaria has used both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, as per the terms of reference (TOR) (annex 1). Relevant data has been collected from programme beneficiaries and key implementation stakeholders and partners (implementing NGOs, partners, central and local authorities, the education sector group, Education cluster, UNICEF, etc.). These methods provide an opportunity to study the complexity of UNICEF's contribution to the reform of the educational sector, in view of the different influencing factors. It is important to point out that due to COVID 19 restrictions, all the data collection process has been conducted online. The detailed methodology is presented in annex 5.

– Desk review

The desk review was an appropriate method for this evaluation, because it allowed getting familiar with the context in the country, regulatory framework, available studies, and reports, in order to collect information and review the available evidence regarding the educational reform and the overall situation in Ukraine.

⁴⁶ OECD, Evaluation Criteria, retrieved from: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>
EVALSED (2013). Evaluation of Socio-Economic Development, retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/evaluations-guidance-documents/2013/evalsed-the-resource-for-the-evaluation-of-socio-economic-development-evaluation-guide

The ET of Junction Bulgaria has reviewed the following groups of documents provided by the office of UNICEF Ukraine:

- General information on Education reform;
- Information on Education Cluster with data;
- Information and data concerning education in Eastern Ukraine;
- Information mapping of all education sector interventions;
- Information on COVID-19 impact in education;
- Research/Studies supported by the Education Section;
- Programme documents and report of Implementing Partners (IPs) and list of Program Documents (PDs) and reports.

A detailed list of the reviewed and analysed sources, as well as documents, which have been included in the desk review, is presented in Annex 2.

– **Secondary data analysis**

The secondary data analysis is chosen as a method for data collection in order to provide information regarding contextual aspects related to the educational reform process in the country, as well as baseline data regarding the different outputs, achieved results in view of effectiveness, efficiency, and other areas of evaluation. The analysis has taken into account all the data at the level of disaggregation at which it is provided such as gender, age of children in the education system, geographic location, trends for the years, etc. The secondary data analysis is based on publicly available or provided data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine⁴⁷, PISA datasets, UNICEF provided data, the Institute for education development, TransMonEE Database, Institute for Educational Analytics Ukraine, etc. In Annex 2 are indicated the specific sources of information.

– **In-depth interviews**

The IDI is a qualitative method, providing the opportunity to collect and analyse information on opinions, perceptions, attitudes, points of view and reasons for the influence of certain factors. Using IDIs, the evaluation has gained the practices of the stakeholders, experts and decision-makers involved in the field of education and the activities of UNICEF in the sector. The method provides possibilities to participants to share their knowledge about programmes, implementation, strategies, and changes in the lives of beneficiaries as a result of this implementation. In this particular FE, IDIs were appropriate in order to understand the main goal and purpose of the reform, UNICEF's contribution to it, the main assumptions and risk mitigations strategies, as well as all relevant specifics. A guide for IDIs has been developed (annex 7), containing different questions to the different stakeholders. These guides served as a basis for conducting the IDIs, but any generic questions were translated into specific questions to respondents in the course of the conversations themselves, relevant for the specific programme context of the different stakeholders. The respondents have been chosen, having in mind the features of this method and they could be seen in annex 3.

– **Focus group discussions**

This qualitative method was chosen, because it provides the opportunity to research in-depth the different aspects through motivations, attitudes and process of educational reform, opinions, and perceptions of the different stakeholders, etc. In addition, the bigger number of respondents in a single conversation in comparison with IDIs allowed for generation of new knowledge in the process of discussion. A guide for FGDs has been developed for parents, as well as the IDI/FGD guide containing different questions to the different stakeholders (annex 7). Additionally, as in the IDIs, the guides were used as a basis, while general topics and questions were transformed into specific questions to respondents, relevant for the specific context for the different stakeholders and their level of

⁴⁷https://ukrstat.org/en/operativ/operativ2005/osv_rik/osv_u/dosh_osvit/arch_dosh_osv.htm?fbclid=IwAR0XK7yX6E8ps0Qy18r7TPxVfOmnArSCc6KdzUvSowBHhC7UUN7KIOYc7Kk

involvement in the programme implementation. The respondents for FGDs have been chosen, having in mind the features of this method and they could be seen in annex 3.

– **Observations**

The qualitative method of observation was chosen to research in-depth the school environment and general atmosphere in the classrooms and other premises, equipment, any type of changes due to the interventions, in order to be able to see what effects the educational reform has brought about. Also, the concrete outputs achieved in the implementation of interventions and UNICEF's contribution to the process have been observed. An observation protocol has been developed (Annex 7), as well as a list of schools that were included in the FE for observation (and other methods, when applicable) (Annex 4).

– **Online surveys**

The evaluation team has used the quantitative method of online surveys, chosen to provide the opportunity for collecting data regarding the opinions of many students, thus enlarging the scope of the research, and complementing the already available data from other sources. The survey (annex 7) has been programmed and distributed online via the Survs platform.

4.5. DATA ANALYSIS

The methods for data analysis include recording, transcribing, translating, and coding the IDIs and FGDs in the NVivo software for processing qualitative information by extracting coding categories and generating coding trees. The coding trees with categories of codes have been created using an inductive method, according to several criteria: based on areas of evaluation and key questions, the guides were created and after that this was used for making the first version of the coding tree, which was subsequently complemented with topics that emerged in the discussions. Different coding trees were created for the different groups of respondents like: teachers and parents, principals, local and national stakeholders and IPs. After that, the analysis was conducted in NVivo by producing word clouds, analysing the frequency of encountering certain codes and words, analysing quotes, etc.

The quantitative data from the surveys has been analysed via SPSS using statistical methods, one-dimensional and two-dimensional distributions, calculating shares, means and medians, significance tests and other methods. After that, visualisations and graphs were produced.

4.6. GENDER EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)⁴⁸ is focused on the conscious and systematic enhancement of human rights in all aspects of project and program development and implementation. It is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed towards promoting and protecting human rights. The HRBA has a two-fold objective: 1) to empower people (rights-holders) to claim and exercise their rights and 2) to strengthen the capacity of actors (duty-bearers) who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfil rights of the poorest, weakest, most marginalized, and vulnerable. The HRBA principle has been used as a cross-cutting approach to conduct the formative evaluation and understand the main features of the program. The evaluation has provided opportunities for participation in the data collection process of all the stakeholders included in the education programme, regardless of their gender, age, ethnic origin, sexual preference, etc. The methods for data collection were appropriate in order for everyone to express their opinion and it has been taken into account in the data collection and analysis process. The

⁴⁸ UNICEF Finland, (2015), Introduction to the Human Rights-Based Approach, retrieved from: https://unicef.studio.crasman.fi/pub/public/pdf/HRBA_manuaali_FINAL_pdf_small2.pdf

parents of younger children were asked for their opinion, while older children participated and expressed their views themselves, keeping all ethical considerations and principles of confidentiality.

The evaluation focuses on equity and human rights aspects and is appropriate for analysing the gender equality, human rights issues including child rights issues identified in the scope. Both men and women, boys and girls have participated equally in the evaluation and their opinions have been treated equally.

4.7. ETHICS

The ET of Junction Bulgaria complies with ethical considerations, such as UNICEF's guidance on children in research, to avoid any form of stigma, discrimination or harm to children and all participants in research. We have a strong policy in this regard, following strictly the professional research standards and ethical aspects of the Code on Market and Social Research of the European Society for Opinion and Marketing research. We have ensured that the research complies with the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis as well as Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), integrating human rights, gender, and equity in accordance with the relevant UNEG guidelines (by including girls and boys/men and women equally in the research, as well as all vulnerable groups of children and their parents, following the UNEG norms in data collection and analysis, etc.). Additionally, all key areas in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines have been taken into account – integrity, accountability, respect and beneficence, which means that the ET was transparent, regarding the evaluation purpose and all actions taken for the achievement of the goal of the FE, responsible for all questions and adapting plans, as well as ensured access to all relevant stakeholders in the data collection process.

The ET members of Junction Bulgaria believe that the data collection process must be meaningful, not harmful to the respondent and potentially beneficial for him/her through the results. Therefore, quality assurance is monitored at each phase of the research process by implementing the following activities:

Data-collection phase

- o In order to ensure the quality of the data collection, information on the background/country context is collected.
- o When making an appointment for interview the research team has clearly explained the goal of the research and motivated informants to participate, explaining the value of their contribution.
- o Before the start of the IDIs written consent and assent forms have been provided to the participants to inform them about the Study Purpose, Material Benefits, Types of Questions, Skipping Questions or Ending Participation, Confidentiality.

Reporting phase

Quality assurance in the reporting phase is achieved by triangulating the information collected via different instruments and sources. At each key question of the report, we are looking at the different points of view of the participants and orientate towards answering it in the most clear and detailed way. The report is purposeful, objective, appropriate, clear and follows the main goals.

The ET of Junction Bulgaria ensures that access to raw data is limited through password protection of electronic data, physical locks and restricting staff who can access the data. Hard copies such as interview notes and any other materials are kept securely locked away and are only accessed by members of the team. It is also important to point out that no payment or compensation was envisaged for any participants in the research.

Design of the survey is based on the Ethical principles of conducting social research among children in Ukraine (Decree №7 of December 10, 2008, approved by the Board of the Sociological Association of Ukraine).

In addition, when conducting research with children, we have worked according to the following principles:

- We have respected children's views and feelings;
- We were sensitive to local concerns about children;
- We explained the process of collection and sharing the information and how the data might be used;
- We explained anonymity and confidentiality;
- We took particular care not to raise expectations about the impact of the research. We learned from the children, but we did not promise to improve their lives;
- We explained to children/caregivers that they may not fill out all the questions in a survey, only the ones they wish to;
- We emphasised that we are interested in children's descriptions in their own words and that there are no right or wrong answers;
- We were respectful that a child may be reluctant to share information about a sensitive topic;
- We strived to be punctual, organised and take into consideration the opinions of our respondents.

It is important to point out that the survey questions were formulated in a way that is compliant with children's age and level of understanding. In addition, no conflicts of interest have been identified in this FE.

An External Ethical committee of Junction Bulgaria has been established and it has consequently approved the ethical considerations in the data collection process in all components, described above (annex 12).

4.8. RISKS AND LIMITATIONS

Different issues and limitations have been identified, which affect the planned methodology and instruments for data collection and analysis. Firstly, this is related to the process of development of a results framework with outcomes and outputs. In different documents, related to the education reform and UNICEF's contribution to it, information can be found about planned outputs and changes in their development. This means that a reconstruction of the ToC was necessary, which needed to be flexible and focused on data collection towards formulating lessons learned and recommendations for further elaboration of the ToC.

Secondly, the interventions made, through support by partners, are mainly in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Though the scope of the evaluation has been kept, most of the information was collected in these two regions. The influence of COVID-19 on the functioning of the educational system is still present and has been taken into account when analysing the interventions.

The focus groups, interviews and observations have been conducted online, which means facilitations and achieving group dynamics has been more difficult and it was necessary for all participants to have access to Internet and to have electronic devices. Risk mitigation strategies were related to some parents going to the schools to use devices and get together to talk to members of the ET, while others used their devices at home. However, some ethnical groups might be underrepresented in the FE due to these limitations.

In addition, in terms of availability and reliability of data, some limitations have included timeliness of the data (not all thematic areas were covered in data from 2020) and scope of available data. Whenever data was not available on certain aspects, the ET of Junction Bulgaria either collected it additionally or looked for more possible sources for secondary data collection. Furthermore, the available data is from UNICEF, Institute for education development, State Statistics Service of Ukraine, PISA, TransMonEE Database, etc. Since these are usually big datasets and all procedures, which ensure data reliability and validity are followed strictly by the relevant national/international organisations, the ET of Junction Bulgaria considers the data reliable. Additionally, the variety of methods allows for data triangulation to avoid bias and compensating for most missing data.

In view of the potential bias of the proposed data collection methods, the online surveys with students lead to limitations in terms of children's level of knowledge about UNICEF's interventions at their school and their assessment to what extent they have been useful, having in mind that some of the interventions are related to capacity building of teachers and parents and repairs or renovations, which students might not attribute to changes in the school environment. In order to ensure answerability of the evaluation questions and to overcome potential bias, different methods have been used so to achieve data triangulation and reliability of information. The unevenness of the different interventions and the way they are distributed among the schools has been addressed in the sampling approach and has also been taken into account by the ET in the data analysis.

4.9. WORK PLAN

The detailed workplan, including phases of the evaluation, activities and deliverables, team members responsible, number of workdays and timeline has been presented at the inception phase. The evaluation has been carried out in three phases. The timeline has been updated according to the ToR (annex 1) and period of contracting, the overall pandemic situation and measures taken, online conduction of the fieldwork, duration of the school year, etc. The data collection process started a little bit later and took longer than expected, since a coordination with MoES needed to be achieved.

Table 3 Timeline and deliverables

Phase of the evaluation	Activities and deliverables	Timeline
Planning phase	Overall evaluation schedule and implementation plan, with staffing, brief description of approach, field trips, dissemination plan incl. presentation, other relevant information	January 2021
Inception phase	Detailed IR	January 2021 – February 2021
	Quality Assurance Review and incorporation of feedback	March 2021
Fact finding phase	Meeting notes and participant lists from data collection/Field work (virtual/travel, considered COVID-19 related risks)	May 2021 – August 2021
Reporting phase	Draft of Evaluation Report	August - September 2021
	Evaluation Report (Final draft)	September 2021
Dissemination phase	Power point presentation on key findings and recommendations	October 2021

5. EVALUATION FINDINGS

5.1. RELEVANCE

The relevance of UNICEF's support to the Education Sector is analysed in view of the country's needs, programs and policies, upstream and downstream interventions, UNICEF's strategic plans, as well as the needs of children and parents, vulnerable groups in particular. The relevance is influenced by the contextual factors and situation in the country, related to the protracted armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, political changes in 2019, as well as the recent COVID - 19 pandemic, all of which affect children's rights and education in particular. This means that UNICEF's approach needs to be adaptive to the new emerging needs, but at the same time, keep the focus and effort to achieve the planned goals.

5.1.1. Country Needs, Programmes, and Policies

The New Ukrainian School and associated reforms mark an ambitious effort and high-level commitment to address different issues and improve the quality of general education. Elements of the New Ukrainian School concept include modern approaches to:

- school curricula, focused on 21st century skills and competencies;
- teacher professional development, emphasizing student-centred learning;
- system management and school administration, emphasizing greater local decision-making powers;
- a different role for the central government with a focus on setting and monitoring learning standards⁴⁹.

UNICEF's support to the Education Sector was planned in 2017 for the period 2018-2022, a year in which the new Law on Education⁵⁰ was adopted and the reform was already being discussed, having in mind that the Government adopted the New Ukrainian School approach in 2018⁵¹. UNICEF's ambition, seen in the expected results, is to support the reform with a focus on access to inclusive and quality education for all children, with a special focus on disadvantaged children and groups.

In this sense, UNICEF's Support to Education is aligned with SDG4 Education targets and the findings from the National Report on SDG Goals for the children of Ukraine⁵² show that, *'to achieve the SDGs, it is important to implement key ideas of sustainable development in every person's life, first of all through formal education, starting from preschool education, through primary and secondary school...'* Additionally, *'a significant issue for Ukraine is education for children with disabilities and special needs.'* UNICEF's Education Programme is relevant to SDG4 indicators and targets, since it focuses on ensuring quality education for all children, especially children in a vulnerable position such as children with disabilities, children in pre-school education, etc.

In 2020, based on an analysis of the current situation, UNICEF developed a Programme Strategy Note⁵³, describing steps to be taken forward towards realizing the rights of all children in Ukraine, particularly the most marginalized, for the next 3 years of the current CPD 2018-2022, building on the results achieved so far. This Strategy Note outlines the building blocks and key strategic pathways informing UNICEF's engagement in this area for the last 3 years of UNICEF Ukraine Country Programme. In the document the stage of the implementation of the reform is outlined, determining

⁴⁹ World Bank Group, (2019), Review of the Education Sector in Ukraine, Moving toward Effectiveness, Equity and Efficiency (RESUME3), Final report, retrieved from: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/884261568662566134/pdf/Review-of-the-Education-Sector-in-Ukraine-Moving-toward-Effectiveness-Equity-and-Efficiency-RESUME3.pdf>

⁵⁰ Law on Education, (2017), retrieved from: https://mon.gov.ua/ua/npa/law-education#_Toc493603837

⁵¹ UNICEF, Country Office Annual Report 2018

⁵² UNICEF, (2019), Sustainable Development Goals for the Children of Ukraine, retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/media/11016/file/SDGsForChildren%20Ukraine%20engl.pdf>

⁵³ UNICEF, (2020), Programme Strategy Note, All Children Learn

that the reform process has been uneven and additional efforts are needed to ensure its success and continuity, as per the Sectoral Review of the WB (2019)⁵⁴.

The stakeholders describe the reform as oriented mostly towards quality of education, including a child-centred approach, which is individual towards every child, their needs, and interests; inclusive education for all children with different needs; partnership between the different stakeholders in the process; competence-based approach to learning (figure 2).

Figure 2 Goals of the reform according to national and local stakeholders



UNICEF's efforts in the support for the education sector are focused towards: greater access to children aged 3-6 years, especially the most disadvantaged, to quality and inclusive early learning services; increasing the capacity of the education system to provide quality education for children and adolescents aged 3-18 years through inclusive, violence-free, and competency-based learning, including social, emotional, and functional competencies; development of a stronger capacity to support the completion of a full cycle of compulsory inclusive education for all children and adolescents, especially the most disadvantaged and those in conflict areas, including their timely enrolment in grade 1.

Although oriented in the same direction, achieving quality education in Ukraine, the national reform aims to change the system in all its levels, components, and stakeholders, while UNICEF focuses on children, their access to education, development of skills, ensuring an inclusive and violence-free environment for all children, with an emphasis on vulnerable groups.

Ensuring such relevance, however, means an effort in planning together and agreeing on priorities together with the ministry. This correspondence is a bit questionable, according to stakeholders' opinions since there is no formal mechanism to ensure alignment of priorities and sometimes communication is lacking. However, they share that, mostly, the goals of UNICEF and the New Ukrainian School reform are the same. Sometimes this alignment happens after planning, rather than before that and it is also influenced by changes in the responsible experts in the different institutions.

5.1.2. Strategic Plans and Level of Internal Consistency

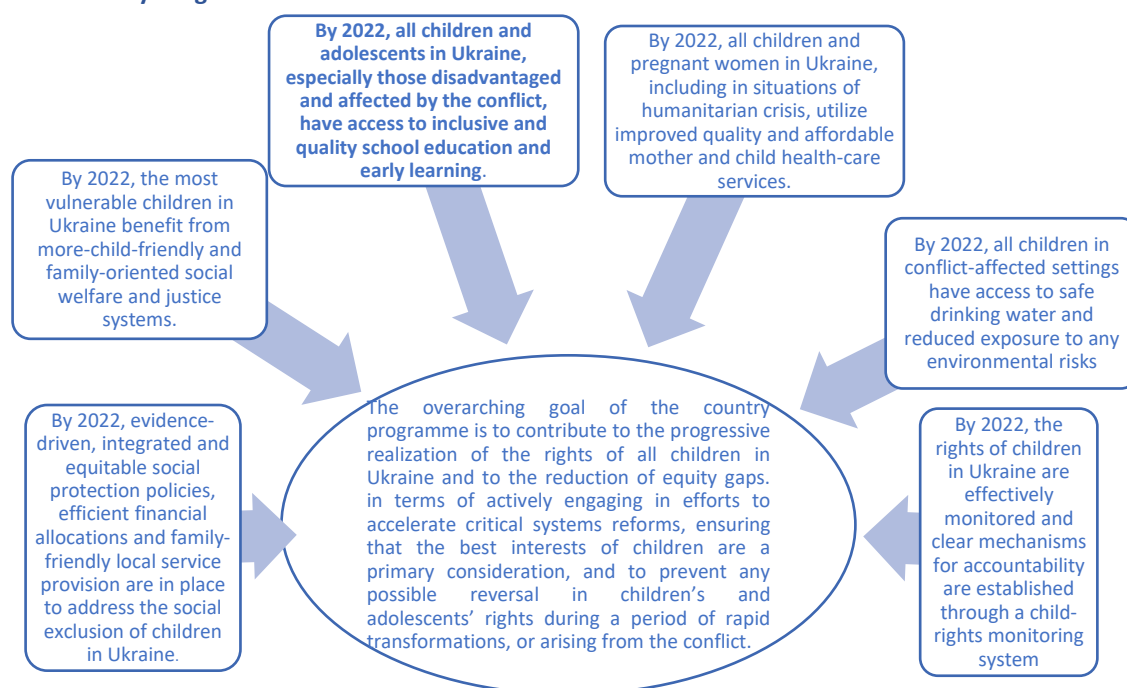
The Country Programme mirrors the new organizational strategic plan's goal areas. It integrates development, recovery, and humanitarian interventions, with the intent of strengthening the humanitarian and development nexus⁵⁵. The main goal of the programme is related to the realisation of children's rights in Ukraine. While contributing to the achievement of the SDGs in Ukraine, the

⁵⁴ World Bank Group, (2019), Review of the Education Sector in Ukraine, Moving toward Effectiveness, Equity and Efficiency (RESUME3), Final report, retrieved from: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/884261568662566134/pdf/Review-of-the-Education-Sector-in-Ukraine-Moving-toward-Effectiveness-Equity-and-Efficiency-RESUME3.pdf>

⁵⁵ Country Office Annual Report 2018

results are fully aligned with the draft UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, and are an integral part of the four thematic pillars of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018-2022⁵⁶. There are six main areas, in which outcomes have been planned, related to all children's rights: child-friendly and family-oriented social justice system, evidence-driven, integrated and equitable social protection policies, quality and affordable mother and child health care services, access to safe drinking water and reduced exposure to environmental risks, monitoring and clear mechanisms for accountability through a child-rights monitoring system, as well as access to inclusive and quality school education and early learning (figure 3). This last area is relevant to the main goal of the Country Programme and UNICEF's vision for realisation of children's rights in Ukraine. Education is key for realisation of children's rights; it is the most important area for their development. Investing in access to inclusive and quality education means investing in children, their well-being, quality of life and future development in the society, the labour market, as individuals and community members.

Figure 3 Country Programme 2018-2022



Planning of priorities in education sector development is influenced by several factors. Firstly, until 2018, UNICEF didn't have a separate education component in their programme. Secondly, at the time of planning, as it was mentioned before, the educational reform had already been planned and the Law on Education was adopted. Last but not least, the war conflict was still going on and had its impact on the educational field. This put many schools and regions in a situation, in which many factors influenced the educational process. When it comes to needs assessment, there is no data on a purposeful, targeted, and general needs assessment in education on the whole. However, in certain projects vulnerabilities and children's rights are analysed and the recommendations in the previous evaluations are taken into account, which serves as a basis for planning different interventions, related to progressive realisation of the rights of all children in Ukraine.

The reconstructed logic of the planned activities (figure 1) seems consistent with expected outputs and sufficient to produce results, including a big variety of activities, related to policy advice, technical support, capacity building, as well as direct support to education facilities, modelling and expansion of programmes. The list of activities seems ambitious, and data shows it is growing in the years, as a result of different emerging needs. In this sense, it is important to point out that different factors influenced this plan and its realisation, among which political changes (2019) and COVID (2020). It

⁵⁶ United Nations Economic and Social Council, (2017), Country programme document, Ukraine

should be emphasised that when reconstructing the theory of change at the inception phase of this evaluation, the following assumptions and risks were taken into account (annex 6):

- Assumptions: stable political will and targeted reform efforts; the influence of the armed conflict will be reduced gradually; financial stability, which would allow dealing with the conflict;
- Risks: unexpected events that could change the reform; lack of sufficient capacity of the educational system; change in the legislation and political agenda.

The process of implementation met a number of challenges, mostly COVID that influenced education, shifting it to the online modality of education, etc. It should be noted, however, that the programme seemed to react flexibly to these challenges.

5.1.3. Upstream vs Downstream Interventions in Terms of National and Local Capacities

The analysis regarding UNICEF's contribution to the elements of the New Ukrainian School concept (table 4) shows that there is a high level of relevance of the components of UNICEF's support. However, the most visible level of relevance is regarding the school curricula, focused on 21st century skills and competences. The main areas of influence are not oriented towards direct change of the school curriculum, but are of key importance, since they complement it with important components like soft skills development, non-violent communication, and mediation. It should also be noted UNICEF's support for the country's first participation in the PISA programme is very significant, since it provides information regarding the place of the country in terms of educational development among many other countries, as well as the needs, and gaps in terms of children's knowledge in the main areas: reading, mathematics and science. Another area of intervention, in which UNICEF has a relevant contribution, is the professional development of teachers. Almost all interventions of UNICEF contain a capacity-building component, emphasising student-centred learning and complement the important knowledge and skills of teachers. At the same time, only a part of these components is included in the in-service teacher training curriculum. They are included as additional components but are still not a part of the higher educational programme, which means that the first step to ensure relevance of the programmes and elements of the New Ukrainian School concept is made, but further work is necessary to ensure sustainability. When it comes to system management and school administration, emphasising greater local decision-making powers, UNICEF doesn't have targeted interventions, except for a component of the UPSHIFT programme, oriented towards creation of local youth groups and support for projects, related to local development and empowerment of local people. In view of the different role for the central government with a focus on setting and monitoring learning standards, UNICEF's contribution is relevant due to systematic efforts to support the government to develop different strategies, assessment rating scales and policies in order to shape the conditions, in which it is necessary to implement the reform.

Table 4 Level of relevance to the national policy and programmes

Elements of the New Ukrainian School concept	UNICEF contribution	Level of relevance
School curricula, focused on 21st century skills and competences	Technical assistance to the Government in planning for PISA Policy dialogue about the adoption of the Safe School concept Modelling the Safe School concept Support for development of the training curriculum on Life Skills Education (LSE) Development of peer-to-peer mediation toolkit and skills development of students	High level

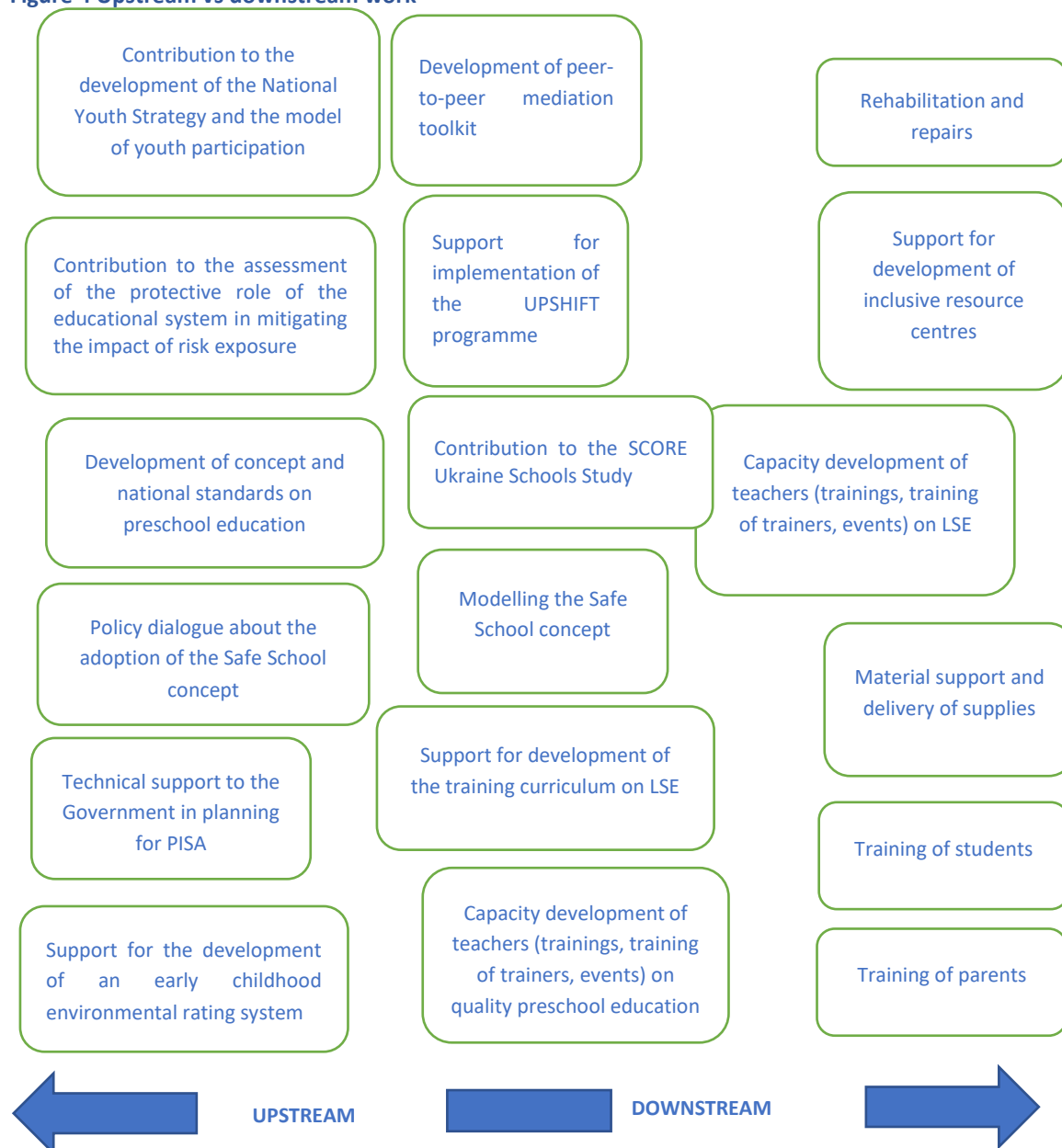
Teacher professional development, emphasizing student-centred learning	Capacity building of preschool personnel and parents on quality preschool education Capacity building of teachers on safe, protective, and inclusive school environment Capacity building of teachers on LSE Capacity building of teachers on inclusive education Support for development of inclusive resource centres	Moderate level
System management and school administration, emphasizing greater local decision-making powers	Support for implementation of the UPSHIFT programme	Low level
A different role for the central government with a focus on setting and monitoring learning standards	Contribution to the concept of preschool development and technical support for implementation of Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) Technical assistance for development of a National Strategy on Inclusive Education Contribution to the assessment of the protective role of the educational system in mitigating the impact of risk exposure Contribution to the development of the National Youth Strategy and the model of youth participation Contribution to the SCORE Ukraine Schools Study	High level

In addition to the main areas of UNICEF contributions, UNICEF provided supplies, educational kits, sports equipment, school furniture, technological equipment and made repairs, renovations, and rehabilitations of the school buildings in the conflict-affected areas in Donetsk and Luhansk.

The analysis of UNICEF contribution against the criteria of ratio between upstream and downstream interventions shows the balance between working with and through national actors versus providing education goods and services directly at the local level, affecting a limited number of targeted rights holders, with a limited time horizon⁵⁷. At a national level, UNICEF contributes to the development of concepts, strategies, and policies in different areas of the educational programme. At the same time, it can be seen that most of the interventions in implementation of policies, scales and concepts are happening more at the local level (downstream work), specifically in two geographical areas – Donetsk and Luhansk. This causes piloting and modelling these concepts to be more strongly influenced by other factors as well, like the emergency context. As it could be seen, a major part of interventions is somewhere in between the upstream and downstream work, mostly those related to the process of development of curriculum, capacity development and different programmes. The ‘middle ground’ between upstream and downstream work provides an opportunity to affect a bigger number of right holders but is rather related to applying interventions than change in the policy context.

⁵⁷ UNICEF, (2014), UNICEF’s Upstream Work in Basic Education and Gender Equality 2003-2012, Evaluation Report, retrieved from: <https://mokoro.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/UNICEF-BEGE.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0uENo9KGWwj87ty5rgYs4M7pOzt9vn3vPvhyLXzho6tXthaVJAFvy13w>

Figure 4 Upstream vs downstream work



5.1.4. Needs of Children

UNICEF's support to education is directly oriented towards the most vulnerable groups of children. At the time of planning, the following groups of children have been targeted: children with disabilities, children in conflict-affected areas, internally displaced children, children in rural areas, children in poor families, out-of-school children, children from minorities.

In 2015⁵⁸, the number of children with disabilities, is 153 547, out of which 75 800 are in educational institutions in Ukraine (49.4%), in 2016 – 156 099 out of which 79 483 are in educational institutions (50.9%), in 2017 – 159 044, out of which 82 989 are in educational institutions (52.2%). It should be noted, however, that a major part of these children study in boarding schools for children with special needs, 38 396 in 2014/2015, 38 962 in 2015/2016, 39 596 in 2016/2017. This means that in 2015, 50.7% of all children with disabilities in educational institutions study in boarding schools, in 2016 this

⁵⁸ Статистичний збірник/Statistical Publication «Соціальний захист населення України»/«Social Protection of the Population of Ukraine, retrieved from: http://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/publzhist_u.htm

share is 49%, while in 2017 it is 47.7%. It is visible that there is a slight decrease of this share, but it still rather big, meaning that inclusive education is still an issue and support is needed in order to ensure inclusion of children with disabilities in the mainstream educational system, with a focus on quality for support for them and training. According to some stakeholders' opinions, the concept of inclusiveness needs to be developed in terms of support for development of different assessment scales, methods for learning, study materials, raising awareness of all stakeholders, etc. Regarding the gender disaggregation of the children with disabilities according to the data from 2020 their ratio is 42,4% girls to 57,6% boys.⁵⁹

In 2017, children in the conflict-affected areas of Donetsk and Luhansk are 637 765⁶⁰. In 2018, the estimated number of children in need of psychological support services (PSS) services to address impact of the conflict on their student's ability to learn or well-being is a minimum of 23,000 children. 48% of education facilities report that at least 1 out of 4 children in their education facility is in need of education materials due to displacement or economic decline in families. The estimated number of such children in the surveyed education facilities is a minimum of 36,000 children⁶¹. In 2016, 4.4% of children in Ukraine are forcibly displaced by conflict⁶². In 2019, 24% of IDPs are children (under 18, by age of household members among IDPs), which is nearly 1.3 times higher compared to their share in the general population⁶³. Gender structure of IDPs is dominated by women - about 58% (more than their share in the whole population, which is 54%), and in June 2019 about 21% of those women are girls below 18 years of age.⁶⁴ At the same time the share of men among IDPs is 42% of them 28% are boys under 18 y.o.⁶⁵ The support, planned by UNICEF, is relevant to their needs, especially when this is influenced by several factors of vulnerability, when children are conflict-affected and internally displaced. According to the opinion of stakeholders, many IDPs leave the conflict-affected areas and they get adapted to the new environment up to a certain degree. At the same time, a big number remain in the statistics⁶⁶, across the different regions. Additionally, the data shows that the number of children on the contact line remained the same or slightly increased⁶⁷. The stakeholders share the opinion that the needs of children and families, affected by the conflict, seem to be shifting, since they get adapted and move to different places, therefore in the last years they have different issues, related to quality education, not just access to it. This means that UNICEF support has been relevant to their needs, but further efforts need to take into account the emerging new needs and changes in the situation.

Data shows that in 2017 there are 44.6% of children in rural areas aged 3-6 years, covered by preschool education institutions and structural units of public and private legal entities. This is a significantly smaller share in comparison with the % of the same group of children in urban areas (66.6%) and in the whole country (59.1%). The tendency between 2015-2017 is of a very slight increase in this share

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ukraine, Children, Teachers and Education Facilities in Donetska and Luhanska oblasts - Education Cluster estimate as of start of 2017/2018 school year.

https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/children_teachers_and_education_facilities_in_donetska_and_luhanska_oblasts_-_summary_2017_10_24.pdf

⁶¹ Education Cluster Needs Survey in Government Controlled Areas of Donetska and Luhanska oblast September 2018

⁶² Save the Children, (2017), Stolen Childhoods, End of Childhood Report 2017, retrieved from:

<https://www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/usa/reports/emergency-response/end-of-childhood-report.PDF>

⁶³ National monitoring system report, *The Situation of IDPs*, retrieved from:

https://displacement.iom.int/system/tmf/reports/Ukraine_DTM_National%20Monitoring%20System%20Report_Round%2014_June%202019.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=6707

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ National Monitoring System Report: The Situation of IDPs, retrieved from:

https://dtm.iom.int/reports?title=Ukraine&body=&field_report_regional_report=All&page=1&fbclid=IwAR0hMrIQBs1KYt_cENPPEcF_tradLXn54Vg0XRSPLOjVoWegdwNgY1aiCcs

⁶⁷ UNICEF Ukraine, (2018), The Children of the Contact Line in East Ukraine, 2017 Assessment Update

in rural areas (43.4% in 2015, 44.2% in 2016), while in urban areas and the total of the country there is also a small increase, but a bit bigger than that in rural areas (around 2% increase between 2015 and 2017)⁶⁸. The support of UNICEF is relevant to the needs of children of young age, who need to be enrolled in preschool educational institutions, especially in rural areas, where places are not enough, and for children with disabilities.

In 2014, 27% of children of official primary school entrance age (6-9 years) were out of school in Ukraine⁶⁹. In addition, Ukraine has a population of nearly 44 million (2018 estimate) and, in terms of ethnic minorities, the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook breakdowns the ethnic groups in the as follows (based on a 2001 estimate): Ukrainian 77.8%, Russian 17.3%, Belarusian 0.6%, Moldovan 0.5%, Crimean Tatar 0.5%, Bulgarian 0.4%, Hungarian 0.3%, Romanian 0.3%, Polish 0.3%, Jewish 0.2%, other 1.8%⁷⁰. The needs of children out-of-school and children from ethnic minorities are significant, but the lack of recent data on their share and needs, makes it difficult to determine the relevance of the programme to their needs. The main issues here are related to mechanisms for identification and needs assessment for them.

The specific analysis of the relevance to the identified needs and priorities could be made in three levels: national, regional, local. As already mentioned, at the national level, the education component is influenced by the effort to support the educational reform and to meet the needs of the different groups of vulnerable children. When it comes to the regional level, firstly, it should be noted that most of the interventions directly target schools in Donetsk and Luhansk regions (in a previous period there were also interventions in other regions like Kharkov, but, in this program cycle, all interventions related to education, were concentrated in the regions closest to the conflict). This is most likely connected to the impact of the war conflict and challenges for children living in the region. This impact, as well as the location of the schools in rural areas in the region has led to the presence of, first and foremost, basic needs like repairs and rehabilitation of the buildings, new equipment, water supply and other material support. These needs, up to a certain degree, are a barrier to being engaged and dedicated to the whole process of reform, including capacity development, change in the educational process, developing future skills and achieving higher quality of education.

Additionally, it is important to note that the implementation of the reform has been planned in stages following the different grades and it hasn't reached the secondary schools yet. The opinions, shared by stakeholders, show that their role in identifying needs at a local level, was more of recipients of support and participators in agreement of the realization of already planned interventions. This leads to not always having tailor-made interventions to the needs of the schools and the reform at the same time in the specific regions. This level of participation is also shared by schools. They tell the story of old school buildings, lack of sanitary facilities, study materials, sports halls, canteens, transport, of never having any organisation's help before the war, of not taking part in trainings, etc. This level of needs makes them gladly accept the help they get, even if this help is slightly different from their basic needs.

In some schools, several projects were realised, which was more than their size and capacity could handle. Some stakeholders shared that there was a needs assessment prior to interventions. The active role in defining the priorities, criteria for choosing schools and implementation of the project, is of UNICEF:

'They found us and offered to work with them, and we agreed'; 'they came themselves...they chose us, somehow it turned out like this';

⁶⁸ Дошкільна освіта в Україні у 2020 році, retrieved from https://ukrstat.org/en/Noviny/new2021/new2021_u/new_u_05.html

⁶⁹ UNICEF, (2016), Report Out of School Children in Ukraine, A Study on the Scope and Dimensions of the Problem, with Recommendations for Action, retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/out_of_school_children_report_eng.pdf

⁷⁰ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ukraine/#people-and-society>

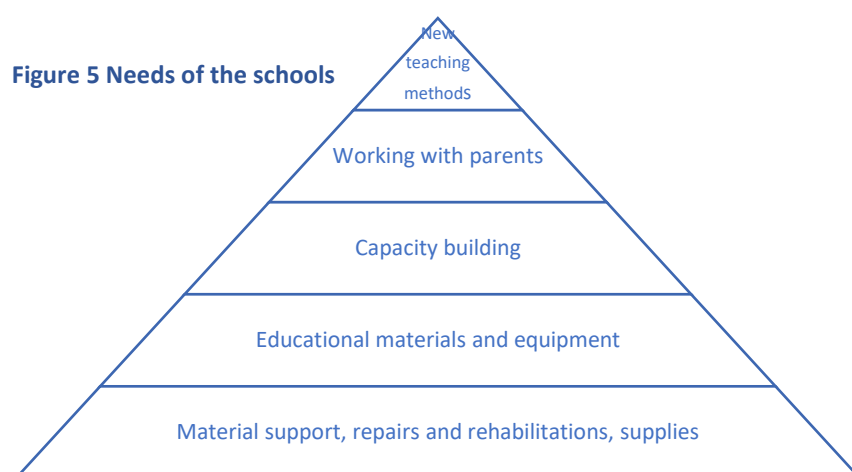
‘Yes, after the war they came. They somehow found out for us; they began to help us only due to such a perverse situation. That is, I join the opinion that after the war began and before that, maybe it is kind of rude saying probably, but no one paid attention to us’;

‘We did not plan this assistance from UNICEF, it was unexpected assistance, that’s why it was always joy and unexpected results’;

‘They come, we show the needs, they tell us what they are ready to do’⁷¹.

This outlines a situation in which the priorities were planned at the national level, suggested at a local level, and reached schools in the form of an already designed project. It is important to point out that these projects are complementary and do not overlap the efforts of the state in the New Ukrainian School reform.

When evaluating relevance of the interventions to the needs in policy, strategic plans, and the needs of children, it is important to point out what are the needs shared by the schools (figure 5). As it could be seen, the most shared and mentioned needs at the beginning of the interventions and currently, are those related to material support, repairs, rehabilitations, and supplies. Higher in the pyramid and a bit less frequently, but still mentioned, are educational materials and equipment. After them are capacity building, working with parents and teaching methods, which are realised as needs by stakeholders more frequently after the interventions. This needs analysis should be elaborated further, in order to ensure not only relevance to the needs of the schools, but also to reach a level of relevance to the policy, reform and a higher quality education as



an ultimate goal.

In summary, the main areas of interventions and the main outcome, planned to be achieved in the UNICEF Education programme, are relevant to the needs of children in relation to access to quality education with a focus on the most vulnerable groups. The implementation of those interventions only in Donetsk and Luhansk shows that UNICEF has concentrated the efforts to the needs of the most vulnerable, where there is a combination of more than one factor of vulnerability. In addition, according to the stakeholders, the situation in schools in these oblasts is difficult and they have a variety of needs, starting from renovations, material support and repairs and meeting current challenges related to the conflict to new models of working with children in relation to inclusive education and work with parents. UNICEF’s contribution is relevant to these needs, but there is a risk of focusing too much on meeting the basic needs of the school system and ensuring a safe environment for children instead of securing access to inclusive and quality school education. In view of the relevance and support for the national education policy, there is a need to gradually shift the geographic focus on Eastern Ukraine, into a more upstream expansion of the ‘national’ programme encompassing the humanitarian-development nexus.

5.2. COHERENCE

⁷¹ Interviews with principals

5.2.1. System-thinking, Partnership Dynamics, and Complexity

UNICEF's approach in implementing the programme includes work in partnership with different NGO organisations at the national, local, as well as international level. In the period 2018-2021 UNICEF works with 22 organisations, which realise projects in implementing the goals and tasks of the educational component. Out of them, 10 are working on a national level, 11 are local and 1 is international. When it comes to different outputs⁷², data shows that most organisations work on the 3rd and 4th output (15 of them) and less work on the 1st and 2nd output.

The work with implementing partners (IPs) reflects the dynamics and complexity of interventions, as well as the ratio between upstream and downstream interventions. The start of the partnership is due to the initiative of the NGOs, in some cases, they apply for a project. In other cases, UNICEF contacts them since they need a partnering organisation in a specific location for project implementation. This results in a situation, in which some of the organisations establish a long-term partnership with UNICEF and work on projects, related to their main task and goal. For other organisations the work with UNICEF leads to the introduction of new programmes and models like the UPSHIFT programmes. There are also NGOs that work in a different direction than their main goals and tasks, related to supply of different materials, repairs and rehabilitations. From what is shared by stakeholders, UNICEF's approach is flexible enough to adapt to different modalities and possibilities of the different IPs. It is important to point out that some of these partnerships started long before the programme was planned, so UNICEF already had a long-term partnership with the organisation. Additionally, the scope of the interventions is mainly determined by UNICEF beforehand, and the partners implement them in view of their capacity. The representatives of the partner organisations share they are happy with their work with UNICEF and that they are a stable partner:

*'Therefore, UNICEF remains the only stable partner in Ukraine who is directed to the reform of school and preschool education'*⁷³.

In view of external coherence, the most visible is coordination of education in emergencies. On one hand, since interventions are in the same regions, on the other, due to the creation of a structure and coordination body (the Ukraine Education Cluster) that would coordinate the efforts of the stakeholders. The Cluster has its own system for data collection, planning interventions and coordination, as well as an advocacy strategy for planning education in emergencies. It was activated in 2014, based upon analysis of humanitarian need and coordination capacity on the ground. It focuses on a participatory approach to all stakeholders and is aligned with the New Ukrainian School reform, SDGs, and other key documents⁷⁴. In the beginning the Education Cluster had 33 members among which there were global organisations such as Save the Children, UNHCR, SOS Children Villages, Mercy Corps, Step by Step, La Strada, GIZ etc. Save the Children (co-creator of the cluster together with UNICEF) developed its own projects in the frame of the cluster regarding inclusive education, not only for children with disabilities, but also for minorities and other groups who experienced restriction in

⁷² Output 3.1. The education system is able to provide greater access to children aged 3-6 years, especially the most disadvantaged, to quality and inclusive early learning services; Output 3.2. The capacity of the education system is increased to provide quality education for children and adolescents aged 3-18 years through inclusive, violence-free, and competency-based learning, including social, emotional, and functional competences, especially children with disabilities; Output 3.3. The education system has a stronger capacity to support the completion of a full cycle of compulsory inclusive education for all children and adolescents, especially the most disadvantaged and those in conflict areas, including their timely enrolment in grade 1; Output 3.4. By 2022, adolescents and youth increased skills and competences to be adequately prepared for adult life as active citizens and for the world of work.

⁷³ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

⁷⁴ Interviews with representatives of IPs

⁷⁴ Ukraine Education Cluster, Education cluster strategy, Ukraine 2019 - 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/ru/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-education-cluster-strategy-final-engukr>

access to education.⁷⁵

The EU remains a consistent partner in the implementation of educational reforms in Ukraine, involved in the development of legislation, curricula, and teacher training programs, e.g., in December 2019, the implementation of the EU technical assistance project "EU4Skills: Best Skills for Modern Ukraine" was officially launched, within which 63 million euros were directed to reform of the Vocational education and training system in Ukraine.⁷⁶ In this regard, EU is a promising partner of UNICEF during the remainder of the current programme and in the next programme.

5.2.2. Coordination and Complementarity of Efforts between the Different Policies and Programmes

The policies and programmes in tightest connection with each other and related to education, are in the fields child protection, social policy, and health. One of the key topics in the field of child protection, that gets intertwined with education, is separation of children from their families. In the Annual Report for 2018⁷⁷ it is indicated that 106 000 were separated from their families in 2018. UNICEF's efforts are oriented towards evidence-based advocacy on child welfare and social protection reforms with a specific focus on gatekeeping and community support welfare services for the period 2018 - 2020.

Another topic is related to the support and development of services for children with disabilities. In 2018, children with disabilities are a significant share of children in state-run residential institutions. The identification and implementation of the early interventions remained slow⁷⁸. UNICEF strives to support the design and development of the Early Childhood Development Draft Action Plan in 2018-2019. Responding to a critical gap in locally driven child protection services for children and families, UNICEF promoted the reform of integrated social protection in the same period.

All these efforts of UNICEF in the field of social protection and providing support for children with disabilities and children separated from their families are in compliance with UNICEF's efforts in education to ensure inclusive education and timely enrolment of children 3-6 years old in preschool educational institutions. However, the data shows that, in spite of these efforts in both areas, which are in compliance, some stakeholders believe it is better for children to be in the specialised schools due to the life situation in some families:

'Of course, deinstitutionalization is important, but the work with the family is very bad in this regard. This is why it is good that these families can choose special schools'⁷⁹.

This issue should be seriously considered in the future. This opinion is also shared by principals, who say that the school or kindergarten doesn't have enough specialists and equipment to work with children with special needs, other children would make fun of them and in general, it is better for them to be in the specialised boarding schools, since the support there would be more adequate. They also share that parents prefer these schools over general schools in some cases.

When it comes to harmonisation with the health type of programmes, some of the NGOs, which have worked with UNICEF in the educational component, have provided a programme, information and materials related to health like hygienic materials, sexual education, etc. The biggest current health issue, related to COVID-19, imposed a need for flexible reorientation and reaction to new emerging

⁷⁵ https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ukr_edcluster_mtgmims_kyiv_2018_09_28_eng.pdf

⁷⁶ <https://ukraine-eu.mfa.gov.ua/en/2633-relations/galuzeve-spirovbitnictvo/klyuchovi-tendenciya-politiki-yes-u-sferi-osviti-ta-kulturi-programa-yes-erazmus>

⁷⁷ UNICEF Ukraine, Country Office Annual Report 2018

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Interviews with national and local stakeholders

needs, related to health education. Materials were supplied and there was support for the usage of an online platform and materials for distance education.

In summary, the approach of UNICEF for implementation of the education component, includes work with many different partner organisations (22), among which are mostly local and national. These partners have realised different project in all the components of the programme, but mostly related to support for the children affected by the conflict and youth policies. Their efforts seem to be complementary, although there is no coordination mechanism for it. The role of coordinator is of UNICEF that also sets the framework, in which these organisations would plan and realise their projects. The complementarity of efforts and avoiding overlap in the different areas is most clearly seen in education in emergencies, where there is a Ukraine Education Cluster, which coordinates efforts, has clear goals, and expected results, strategy, and framework. The complementarity between the different programs of UNICEF seems visible between social policy, health, and education, but with different dimensions. In child protection, it seems planned theoretically, but not always totally realised in practice, while in the health sector, it is realised in practice, but not so much planned in theory.

5.3. EFFECTIVENESS

5.3.1. Achievement of the Planned Outputs

The educational component in the Country Programme of Ukraine is oriented towards the outcome of ensuring access to inclusive quality education and early learning for all children and adolescents, especially those disadvantaged and affected by the conflict. The programme has 3, later revised into 4 outputs, directed towards children of different ages, and needs, related to ensuring access to quality education.

Technical assistance and policy advice have been realised as a part of the activities in each output. This means that these results will reflect on the situation for all children in Ukraine in the respective age groups and with the respective issues. The concrete interventions, however, have been realised only in Donetsk and Luhansk oblast, which means that the effects from their implementation would reflect on the lives of children in these regions and could be used in the whole country in the future.

Output 3.1 The education system is able to provide greater access to children aged 3-6 years, especially the most disadvantaged, to quality and inclusive early learning services

Output 3.1 is realised through different activities, such as:

- Technical support to MoES in evidence-based quality policy and programming on Early Childhood Education (ECE) and development of the key policy documents;
- Capacity building of preschool personnel and parents on quality pre-school education and child-friendly approach;
- Support to introduction of alternative child-friendly modalities of pre-school education services in selected municipalities;
- Awareness raising and demand generation on quality ECE among parents and communities.

The data from UNICEF 2019 and 2020 Output Reporting⁸⁰ shows that there are 6 793 children enrolled in pre-school education with UNICEF's support for the period 2018-2020, while the number of children benefiting from early childhood education through alternative approaches (such as home-based provision of early childhood development, accelerated school readiness models, parent education, among others) with UNICEF's support is 1 500 for the period 2018-2020.

⁸⁰ UNICEF 2019 and 2020 Output Reporting – National/Business Area level

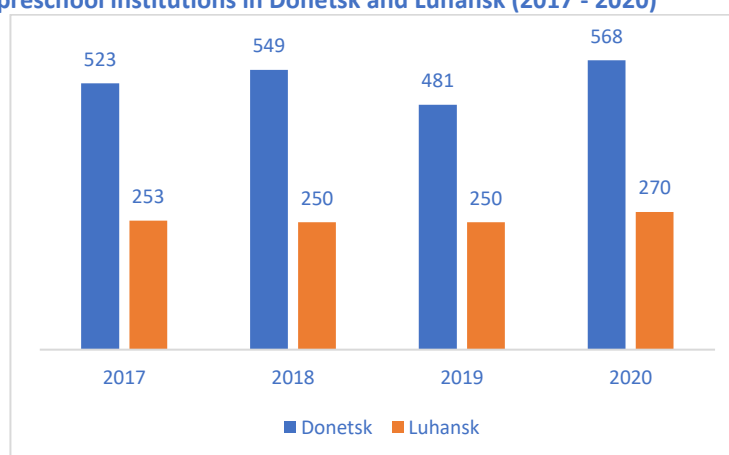
In 2019, UNICEF reached some 6,000 children and their families through 35 kindergartens in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The programme includes capacity-building of teachers and trainings with parents, related to early childhood development.

UNICEF provided technical and financial support for the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ECERS) pilot assessment, while conducting capacity building of preschool personnel and parents on quality preschool education and child-friendly approach through face-to-face and online trainings of 850 preschool teachers and 450 parents; webinars for 15,000 educators; conducting national advocacy events for 100 representatives of local educational authorities and in-service teacher training⁸¹.

UNICEF's effort to achieve results in terms of access of children 3-6-years old to quality inclusive education seems systematic in the degree to which it includes technical and policy support in development of documents, as well as a scale for measurement of the educational institution environment, in addition to capacity building of teachers and parents. The main results, seen until the moment of realisation of the strategy, could be united in the following groups: access to preschool education for all children, especially the most disadvantaged, improvement of the learning environment, child-centred practice and increasing the level of participation of teachers and parents in the educational process.

When it comes to the access to preschool education, available national data shows that the waiting list for pre-school enrolment in 2017 was 46 898, 39 000 in 2018, 33 000 in 2019, 26 000 in 2020. This shows that although this number is decreasing, it still remains an issue for the country. The data for Donetsk and Luhansk oblast shows an increase in the number of preschool institutions in 2020, in comparison with 2019 and there is a small increase in their share out of the total number of children in preschool institutions in Ukraine (graph 1). Although this data is related to the number of children in this age group in the two areas, which is quite uncertain, since there are both GCA and NGCA areas, still it could be seen that the kindergartens are increasing in number.

Graph 1 Number of preschool institutions in Donetsk and Luhansk (2017 - 2020)



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine⁸²

The stakeholders don't talk about an issue in general access of children to preschool education, but rather about issues in terms of quality of education and inclusiveness. The groups of most disadvantaged children 0-6 years old (internally displaced children, children with disabilities, children in conflict-affected areas and children in rural areas) have been reached in terms of access, due to the scope of the projects, direct interventions and training components in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. In most kindergartens, where interventions took place, there were children from IDP families that needed specific psychological support, especially in the beginning after displacement. The data shows

⁸¹ UNICEF Ukraine, End of Year Results Summary Narrative 2020

⁸² https://ukrstat.org/en/operativ/menu/menu_e/osv.htm

that those needs were addressed through projects, whose goal was to teach the internally displaced children to communicate and live together with the other children.

Additionally, stakeholders share that a big contribution of UNICEF is the idea of alternative kindergartens, which is a new initiative. They are a good alternative in places where kindergartens are not popular:

‘The idea is to show that an alternative form of early childhood education can exist in the legal field of Ukraine, and that this is not so hard to do. The main thing is to show the community that it is important. This is a new initiative but the problem with preschool education for children is very important, it remains a priority of UNICEF together with the Ministry of Education. UNICEF will pressure them to realize this initiative.’⁸³

In terms of quality of preschool education and the learning environment, the efforts of UNICEF and their partners were focused on providing knowledge and skills to teachers and motivating parents for a positive and individual attitude towards children, individualisation of the development and playing as an important element for achieving a child-centred environment, where children are able to learn, solve problems and develop their soft skills. According to stakeholders’ opinions, kindergartens have increased the level and quality of education they provide, since *‘the kindergarten now actually meets the educational standard for second - third grade’⁸⁴*. Parents and children highly appreciate their participation in projects, although they are not always successful in defining the concrete topics. They most often relate trainings to inclusive education than to positive parenting and learning. In spite of this, the increase in parents’ participation and their motivation, change in attitudes and turning them into partners in the educational process in kindergartens, is notable:

‘There are only 2 groups in this kindergarten, but they became so famous in their area after they start doing seminars with parents, i.e., they received a very large amount of trust from parents and became known thanks to the parents. They were invited to talk about their experience about the inclusion of preschool education, they have become such an educational centre for their entire region for a larger number of communities.’⁸⁵

There were also trainings for parents and principals. The approach of UNICEF in trainings is stepwise, meaning teachers get trained to then become trainers of other pedagogical staff themselves, children learn to train other children, etc. In addition, kindergartens received educational materials and other type of material support to satisfy their needs and enhance the teaching and learning environment.

The endeavours of UNICEF to support the access to preschool quality education for all children resulted in pilot implementation of the ECERS assessment, which was realised in spite of COVID limitations and the need to adapt to online work; trainings and material support for kindergartens in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts; work with parents in terms of trainings and support.

Output 3.2 The capacity of the education system is increased to provide quality education for children and adolescents aged 3-18 years through inclusive, violence-free, and competency-based learning, including social, emotional, and functional competences, especially children with disabilities

Output 3.2 is realised through different activities, such as:

- Support to development and implementation of assessment of special educational needs based on bio-psycho-social model of disability and adjusting curricula to ensure access of children with disabilities;

⁸³ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

⁸⁴ *ibid*

⁸⁵ *ibid*

- Assistance with integration of critical thinking, self-management and other essential cognitive and social skills and competencies in education curricula to mainstream primary and secondary education;
- Implementation of professional trainings and development of materials that will help teachers and other service providers to provide competency-based learning and create safe, inclusive, and non-violent learning environment for all children including most vulnerable groups;
- Support to evidence-based policy making in the area of Education through programs of data collection and analysis (SCORE, PISA);
- Communication and advocacy to promote inclusive, non-violent, and safe education for all.

The *Peer mediation and conflict resolution* programme was implemented in the eastern part of the country as a part of the Life Skills acquisition programme. Focusing on adolescent students who attend, mostly, vocational educational institutions, the programme aims to empower youngsters with conflict resolution and non-violent communication. Conflict resolution and peer-to-peer mediation programmes are proposed as an alternative means of addressing school conflicts. Mediation is a student-centred, preventative process that focuses on conflict resolution and is run by a trained third party, called the mediator. Peer-to-peer mediation is a structured process in which an impartial and specialised student works with other students who face conflict with one another and assists them in negotiating a solution that is welcome by all parties. In 2018, 60 educational institutions in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts make use of the programme⁸⁶.

Additionally, UNICEF supported in-service teacher modules on inclusion, the establishment of 600 inclusive resource centres across the country⁸⁷, as well as building capacity on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) implementation through a training of trainers (ToT) course and an innovative on-line training simulator for use in primary schools, while providing technical support to MoES in reviewing the draft National Strategy of Inclusive Education 2020-2030. Furthermore, UNICEF supported evidence-based policy making in the area of Education through programs of data collection and analysis (SCORE, PISA).

The review of activities in this area of interventions shows that UNICEF has realised modelling and implementation of concepts, capacity building and policy advice. The main results, seen until this moment of realisation of the programme, could be united in the following groups: development of a safe, violence-free, and competence-based learning environment, as well as inclusive education.

In terms of the capacity building component, it is oriented towards development of knowledge, improvement of skills, and change of the school environment. The approach of UNICEF is ToT and direct work with children, empowering children, and teachers to be active in the creation of a non-violent, free, and safe learning environment at school. This approach is determined as very successful by all stakeholders, although it raises questions regarding the need for constant work with new children who come to the school.

Regarding the produced changes, stakeholders share that as a result of UNICEF's interventions, children communicate better with each other and with their teachers, pedagogical staff's approaches, and skills for working with children have improved and the reputation of schools has improved, since now more parents want their children to be enrolled there. This creates some differences between the schools, which participated in the interventions and those that weren't targeted, according to the stakeholders. However, there isn't tension between schools, according to principals' opinions, since they know of other schools/kindergartens in the area that received support. It is important to note that often, they did not know what kind of support they or other schools received in terms of concrete

⁸⁶ Symeou, M., Dryga, A., Lordos, A., (2021), Peer mediation and conflict resolution programme in Ukraine, Impact Assessment of the Life Skills programme: the report on the mediation programme in schools, retrieved from: https://www.scoreforpeace.org/files/publication/pub_file//PUB_UkrYouth_Peer_Mediation_and_Conflict_Resolution_Programme_in_Ukraine.pdf

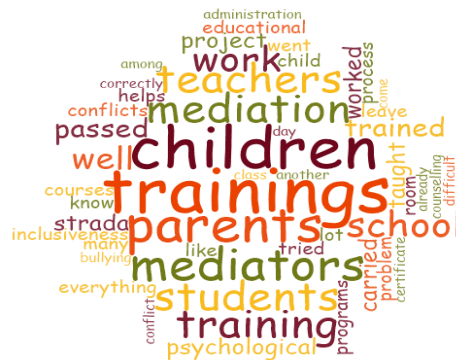
⁸⁷ ibid

content of the programmes, projects, and trainings, as well as what training was a part of what programme:

'I know that our methodologist and the principal went to some trainings. They told us more about the essence and purpose. Maybe we just did not know that it was from UNICEF. Very often the principal and the methodologist went. I just was not aware at that time what it was exactly...I don't know, I know the furniture came on the 8th of March and then parents were included, our parents quickly gathered'.⁸⁸

It is notable that the produced changes from the capacity building don't seem focused enough. Teachers and principals share of received knowledge and skills on conflict mediation, but overall, they are not really sure what training was on what topic and, most importantly, what is the way to implement it in practice (figure 6).

Figure 6 Topics of the trainings according to principals



Although the ToT approach is successful in terms of transmission of experience and empowerment, there is no data on additional activities like supervision, upgrading trainings and long-term support, which would sustain implementation in practice, tailor-made to the specific needs of the specific target groups. The low level of participation in the choice of topics and approaches for implementing capacity building activities prevent, up to a certain degree, the feeling of ownership and being drivers of change of the school environment.

One of the most visible achievements of the Peer mediation and conflict resolution programme is participation and empowerment of young people. The students, who took part in the survey, express the opinion that among the most useful activities for them were activities for prevention of bullying, surveys about the level of violence and bullying at the school and peer-to-peer mediation activities (graph 2). It is also notable, however, that there is a high share of children (18%) who indicated they don't know which three activities were most useful for them. This could mean they were not able to identify concrete separate activities on different topics, probably due to not enough communication of the goals of the trainings with the students and not enough tailor-made solutions adapted to their individual needs.

⁸⁸ Interview with principal

Graph 2 Three most useful activities for children



Source: Quantitative survey with students

Note: The respondents can choose more than one answer that is why the resulting percentage exceeds 100%.

One of the most important aspects in output 3.2. is the focus on *inclusive education*, which is a complex topic, understood at the different levels as individual approach and possibilities for every child to be included in education, as well as individual approach to children with disabilities:

*'The New Ukrainian school is oriented towards an individual approach to every child, each child has its own character, this is a wider concept towards inclusion. This is the idea of New Ukrainian school, someone perceives the material easily, someone needs more time. This could be a peculiarity of the very development of a child. This causes an aggressive reaction from teachers. To these aspects of social inclusion is what the reform pays attention to. Unfortunately, pedagogy is not ready for this.'*⁸⁹

UNICEF's contribution is related to support for teachers to work individually with all children, in particular with children with disabilities at a young age. Teachers share:

*'I didn't have experience in work with such children and I was in panic – with what to begin and what to do. It was scary. I searched in internet how to deal with them and didn't find anything. After three months thanks to UNICEF, I was invited to a seminar with very good specialists. They have provided not only training but consultations as well. After that we conducted the trainings for teachers and parents in the kindergarten'*⁹⁰.

Principals talk about a change in their perceptions of inclusive education:

*'We found out that inclusion is not just for children with special educational needs. And these are also the displaced ones, and for the gifted, that is, those who need a little bit different attention. In general, we learned to distribute this attention'*⁹¹.

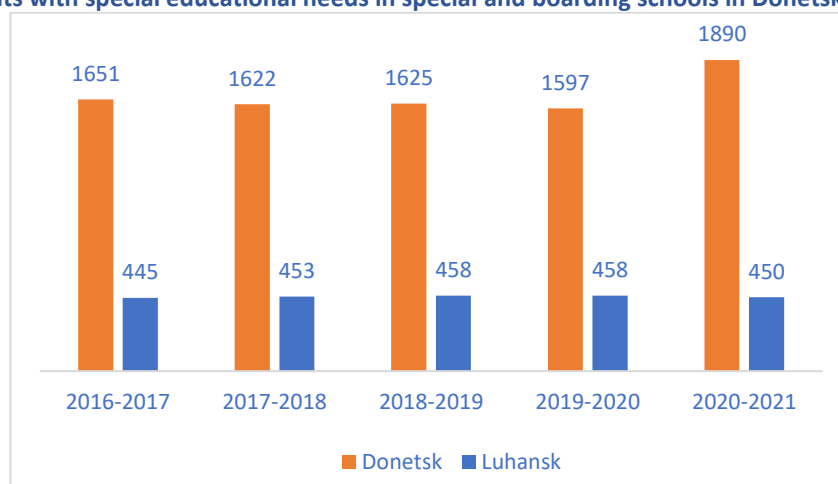
Overall, the changes as a result of UNICEF's contribution could be seen in a shift in the attitudes and understanding of inclusiveness, as well as specific techniques and approaches to working with children with disabilities and the creation of resource centres. In spite of these described changes, the data shows that the share of children with disabilities in special schools in Donetsk and Luhansk, in comparison with the whole country in the last years, has increased slightly, so there is still a need for further efforts (graph 3).

⁸⁹ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

⁹⁰ Interviews/FGDs with teachers and/or parents

⁹¹ Interviews with principals

Graph 3 Students with special educational needs in special and boarding schools in Donetsk and Luhansk



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine⁹²

UNICEF's support resulted in capacity-building for all target groups, which contributed to increase in knowledge and creation of skills for ensuring a non-violent and competence-based learning environment. The focus on inclusive education is realised, but still in an initial phase of changing attitudes and motivation at schools. The number of children with disabilities outside of the mainstream educational system (in specialised and boarding schools) is still big.

Output 3.3 The education system has a stronger capacity to support the completion of a full cycle of compulsory inclusive education for all children and adolescents, especially the most disadvantaged and those in conflict areas, including their timely enrolment in grade 1

Output 3.3. is realised through different activities, such as:

- Provision of essential educational supplies and rehabilitation of education facilities in conflict affected areas to mainstream primary and secondary education;
- Building capacity of educators to provide conflict-sensitive, risk-informed and life skills-based education in conflict-affected areas;
- Support to the Government of Ukraine in the Safe Schools Declaration implementation;
- Technical support to MoES in countrywide data collection and management on out-of-school children (OOSC), dropouts and prevention of school dropout/early school leaving.

The *Safe and Child-friendly school* programme was adopted within the education reform in 2018 and became an entry point for UNICEF for modelling the provision of a competency-based safe and enabling learning environment for the achievement of better learning outcomes for children. Educational institutions become safe and child-friendly if they integrate the following four standards:

- safe physical school environment (examples of how a school can be a safe place to be around while promoting adolescents' healthy development are to offer students nutritious meal options, playground and sports facilities, modern pedagogical equipment, and clean and adequately equipped restrooms);
- safe psychosocial school environment (access to mental health support, e.g., psychosocial services and counselling for those who need it, access to extra-curricular activities, and having ongoing bullying prevention programmes);
- competency-based teaching (promotion of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, encouraging students to ask questions and express their opinions, and getting them involved to group assignments and discussions);

⁹² https://ukrstat.org/en/operativ/menu/menu_e/osv.htm

- participatory and inclusive governance (engage schoolteachers, school-related staff, along with the students and parents, into the school's decision-making process)⁹³.

After several years of advocacy, technical support and capacity building by UNICEF and other partners, the Safe School Declaration was endorsed by the Government in 2019, aiming to ensure safe access to education in conflict-affected areas of the country. The concept of safe school was first modelled in 14 schools, for 5 000 children and more than 1 800 trained professionals⁹⁴. According to the data provided in the UNICEF Country Annual Report 2020⁹⁵, based on the successful modelling of the Child-friendly and Safe School model, in 2020, UNICEF and MoES further implemented it in 50 education facilities, located along the contact line. Elements of the Safe School instrument and modules were incorporated into the mandatory institutional pre-schools and schools' audit, as well as national on-line capacity building conducted for 4 000 educators and 2 000 representatives from 650 schools. The model was integrated in 25 in-service teacher training centres to scale it up. Additionally, more than 114 400 children benefited from emergency response, including repairs and renovations.

In terms of development of safe and violence-free environment, as it was mentioned earlier, the first schools in Donetsk and Luhansk, in which the Safe School concept was implemented, were 14. They were chosen by preliminary criteria and UNICEF were most active in making this choice, while local administration and schools were more engaged in the process of implementation. Asked about UNICEF's interventions, stakeholders first associated them with Safe School and trainings in mediation, this means that these are the most well-known and recognisable interventions.

As a part of these programmes, schools received material support and renovations, as well as capacity-building of teachers, students, and parents. It should be noted that all stakeholders comment and highly appreciate the systematic approach, material support and capacity building in combination. As a result of UNICEF's interventions, children communicate better with each other and with their teachers, pedagogical staff's approaches, and skills for working with children have improved. Although they are very happy with the overall support, a major part of school representatives emphasizes the material support. They explain this with the many basic needs they have in terms of buildings and facilities:

*'Definitely unambiguously led because I say as if our activity is more material, it can be felt by the example of the school, where there was only one toilet, now there are two toilets for both boys and girls which will cover all the needs of all students. All directors who were involved in this project are grateful and they see serious changes after the intervention'*⁹⁶;

*'Toilets were renovated on the ground floor, now everyone is waiting for the 2nd and 3rd floors to be renovated'*⁹⁷.

A big part of these renovations and rehabilitations have ensured physical access, especially for children with disabilities in terms of toilets, access to the buildings, etc.

The observations of the school environment through online methods add to what was shared by the different stakeholders in terms of repairs and rehabilitations of the buildings. Some of these repairs were done to facilities, damaged due to the war conflict, but also most buildings had problems even before the war, since they were old and needed maintenance. The list of repaired facilities is long and includes sanitary facilities, classrooms, sports halls, rooms for mediation, canteens, entrances to the buildings, etc. Apart from the repairs, materials support provision of furniture, equipment, study

⁹³ Symeou, M., Dryga, A., Lordos, A., (2021), Safe and Child-Friendly Schools in Ukraine, Longitudinal analysis for the Impact Assessment of the 'Safe Schools' programme in Ukraine, retrieved from: https://www.scoreforpeace.org/files/publication/pub_file//REP_UKRYouth_Safe_and_Child-Friendly_Schools_in_Ukraine.pdf

⁹⁴ UNICEF Ukraine, Country Office Annual Report 2018, UNICEF Ukraine, Country Office Annual Report 2019

⁹⁵ UNICEF Ukraine, Country Office Annual Report 2020

⁹⁶ Interviews/FGDs with implementing partners

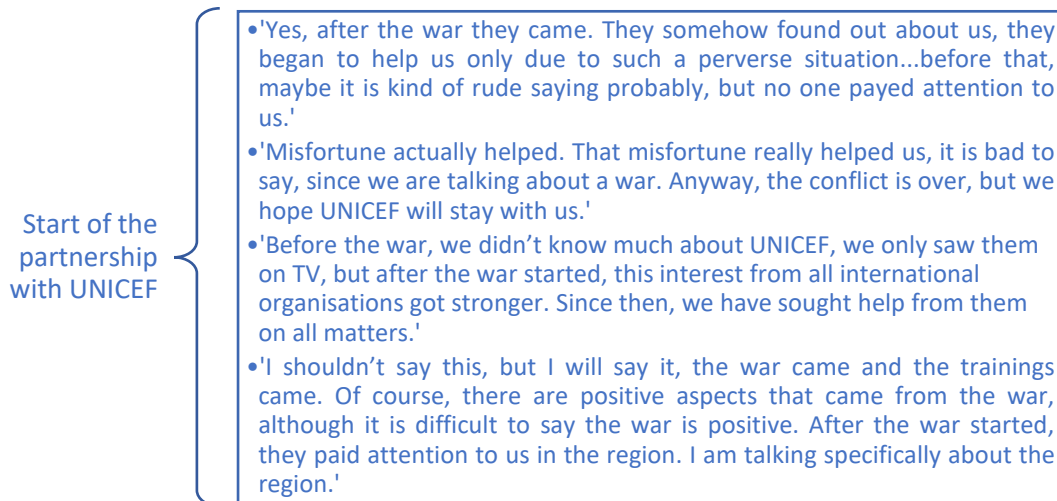
⁹⁷ ibid

materials, school supplies, etc. Additionally, due to the COVID situation during the last year, as a part of this and the other outputs (3.1.-3.4), hygienic materials were supplied, and online learning was enabled through technical resources.

It is, however, important to point out that children did not often choose material support, rehabilitation and repairs, provision of sports equipment and educational supplies among the three most useful activities for them. This is contrary to the opinion of teachers and principals, shared during the focus groups and interviews, according to whom material support, equipment and repairs are some of the most important aspects of UNICEF's programmes (see graph 2). The explanation for this could be that for children it is most important what are their relationships with others at school, the safe environment, and trainings, as well as their level of participation, rather than material support, rehabilitation, and repairs.

The focus on conflict-affected children in the interventions in output 3.3. has been achieved since their scope is in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The stakeholders share that their needs, related to ensuring possibilities for continuing the education process in a period of decreasing the intensity of the conflict, are mostly addressed. What's more, they think that the conflict and bad situation they have ended up in, actually turned into an opportunity for help from UNICEF (figure 7).

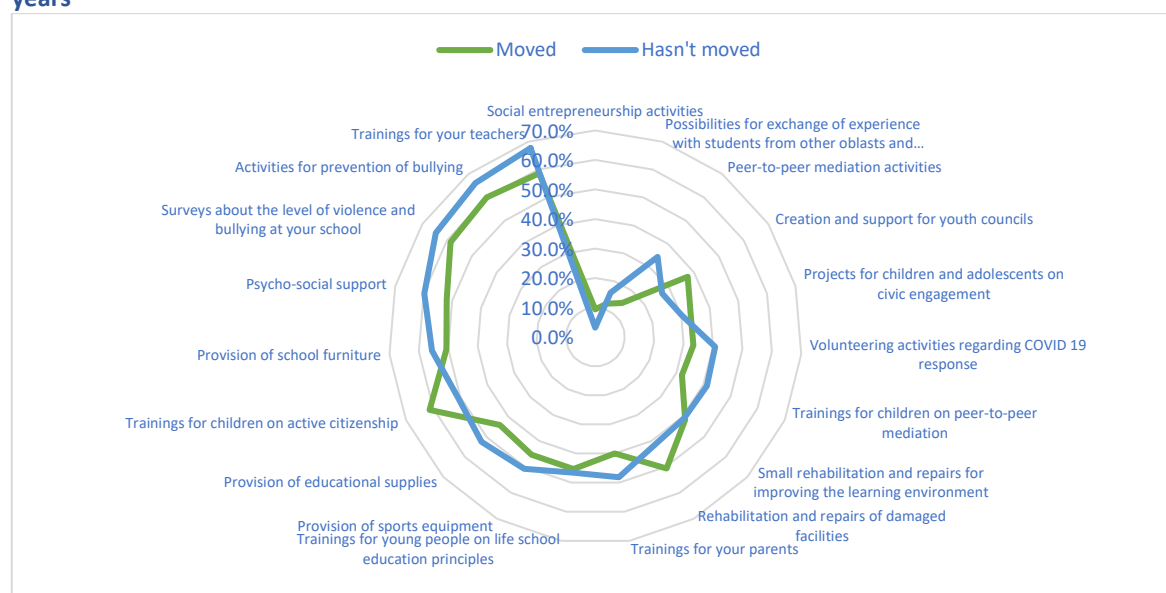
Figure 7 Start of the partnership after the war⁹⁸



Data shows that in the schools where there are children who have moved from one town to another in the last few years, including IDPs, there were more trainings for children on active citizenship, rehabilitation and repairs of damaged facilities, creation, and support for youth councils, as well as projects for children and adolescents on civic engagement (graph 4). In terms of usefulness, children who have moved find most useful psycho-social support, activities for prevention of bullying, small rehabilitation, and repairs, similar to those who have happened most in the schools. This could be explained by the fact that these activities are useful and relevant for IDP children, as well as for all conflict-affected children, which means their needs have been addressed.

⁹⁸ Interviews with national/local stakeholders; Interviews with principals

Graph 4 Activities that took place at the schools according to whether children have moved in the last few years⁹⁹



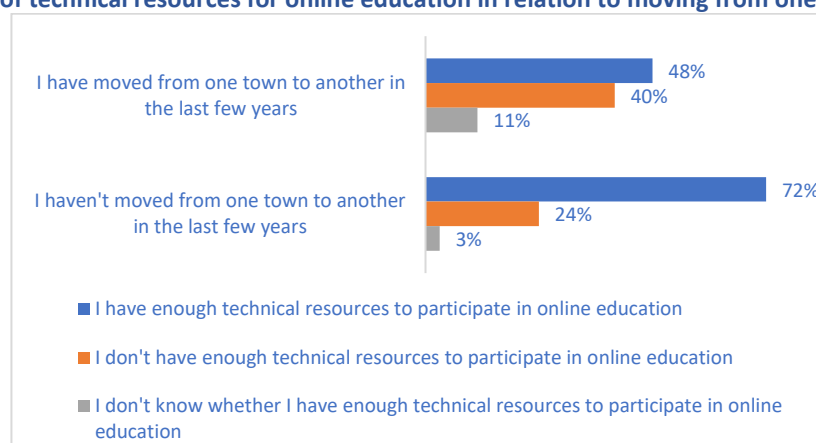
Source: Quantitative survey with students

Note: The respondents can choose more than one answer that is why the resulting percentage exceeds 100%.

Data shows that the situation of children in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts is gradually returning to normal, in terms of the immediate effects of the war. However, the impact on the quality of life is still visible when it comes to the socio-economic situation in the regions, which is also seen during the pandemic of COVID 19.

As it could be seen on graph 5, there is a different situation between children who have moved from one town to another in the last few years and those who haven't, in relation to the presence of technical resources to participate in online education. A rather smaller share of children who have moved, including IDPs, have enough technical resources (48%), in comparison with those who haven't moved (72%). Respectively, more of the IDP children have indicated they have less technical resources and also a bigger share of them don't know whether the resources they have are enough. This is also most likely due to the socio-economic situation of IDPs.

Graph 5 Presence of technical resources for online education in relation to moving from one town to another



Source: Quantitative survey with students

UNICEF's interventions in output 3.3. have created changes in terms of parts of the school environment, facilities, materials, etc. However, not all needs of the schools have been satisfied in

⁹⁹ The question of whether children have moved from one town to another or not in the last few years is asked in the survey, in order to identify IDPs in an ethical way, but it might include moving from one town to another for different reasons

terms of material support and rehabilitations, since they share it is still necessary to make additional renovations, but not due to the war conflict. The modelling of the safe school concept in the 14 schools seems successful, in spite of the limited scope. Capacity building is also appreciated highly by the students and adults alike.

Output 3.4. Adolescents and youth have increased skills and competences to be adequately prepared for adult life as active citizens and for the world of work

Output 3.4. is realised through different activities, such as:

- Capacity building of adolescents and youth on skills development for learning, personal empowerment, employability, and active citizenship;
- Expansion of UPSHIFT (social innovation programme for young people);
- Policy engagement for a development of the new youth strategy;
- Support civic engagement of young people through community mobilization and small grants projects;
- Expansion of U-report, online platform for youth participation.

The contribution of UNICEF to adolescents' and youth's increased skills and competences for adult life as active citizens and for the world of work is based on working with the Ministry of youth and sports and MoES on the expansion of the UPSHIFT programme, including capacity building of young people, creation of youth councils, work on policy making and support for small grant projects of youth. The work on capacity building is focused on extracurricular activities, involving skills building on civic engagement, media literacy, critical thinking, communication, civic engagement, ethic, empathy, communication with others, peace building, etc. 40 teams of young people were trained to build skills and capacities in 2018. In 2019, UPSHIFT was expanded in six additional cities and reached a bigger scope of young people – 1 401, according to the UNICEF Output Reporting¹⁰⁰. Until 2020, the number of small grant projects of youth that were supported, is 30, while adolescents and youth who benefitted from civic education information and activities in selected regions, are 8 800¹⁰¹. The work on policy making includes the support for development and adoption of a youth strategy, including the areas of health, education, social policy, civic engagement, in addition to several other regulations, documents and concepts on the way to the adoption of the policies.

Additionally, UNICEF's contribution through this output includes the support for the expansion of U-report for young people to be able to influence participation in decision-making and civic education. Again, according to the UNICEF Output Reporting¹⁰², the number of adolescents and youth engaged through U-report, is 74 137.

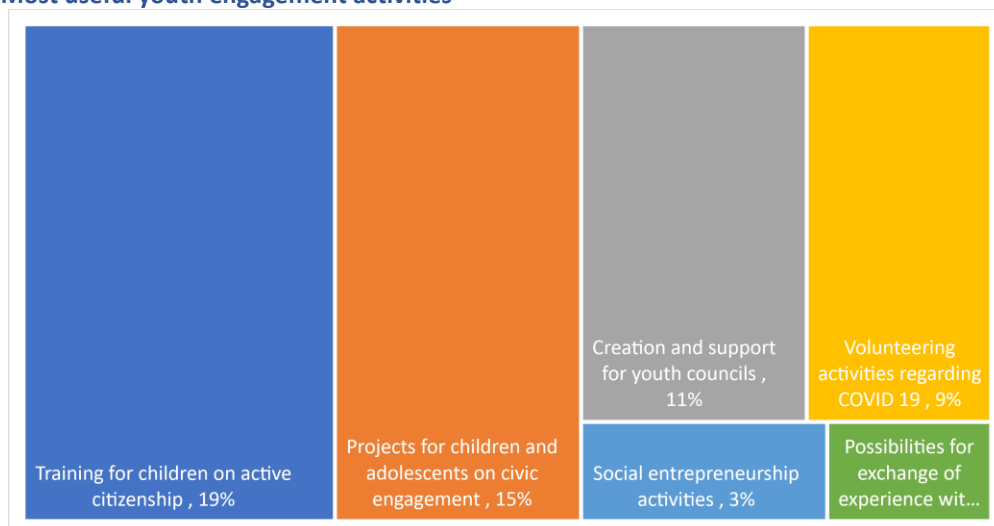
According to students' opinions, among the three most useful activities, the trainings for children on active citizenship are most often mentioned, followed by projects for children and adolescents on civic engagement and creation and support for youth councils. This means that children highly appreciate the activities, in which they could be most involved (graph 6).

¹⁰⁰ UNICEF 2019 and 2020 Output Reporting – National/Business Area level

¹⁰¹ *ibid*

¹⁰² *ibid*

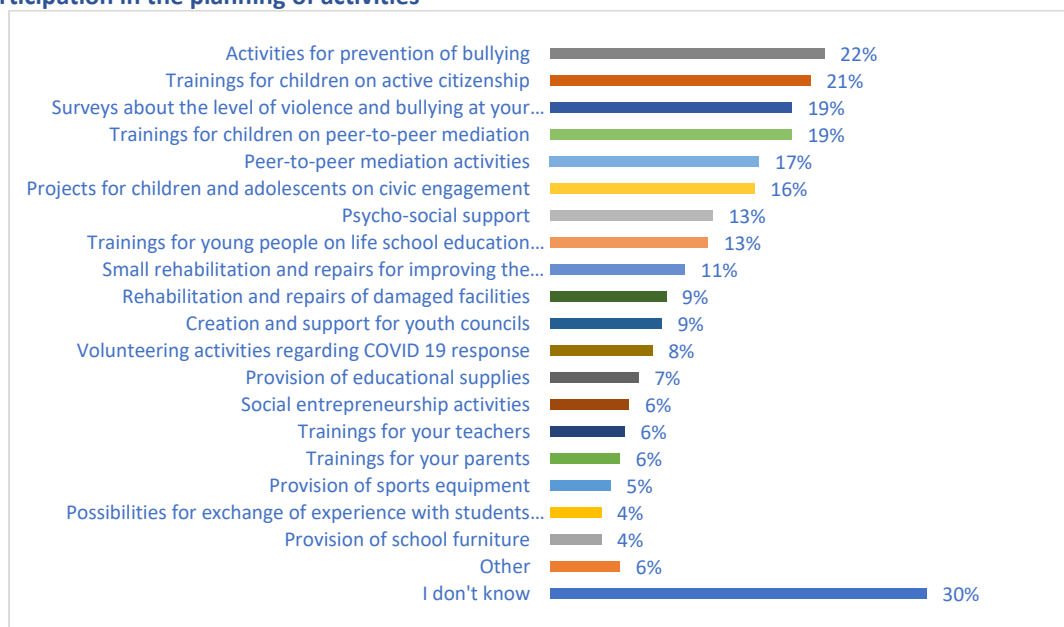
Graph 6 Most useful youth engagement activities



Source: Quantitative survey with students

It is important to point out that participation is crucial for all youth activities in general and in this output, in particular. In this sense, it is necessary to see what participation they have in the planning of what activities. On graph 7, it is most visible that 30% of students who took part in the survey don't know whether they participated in the planning of activities. Most children said they took part in the planning of activities for prevention of bullying, trainings on active citizenship, surveys about the level of violence and bullying and trainings on peer-to-peer mediation. It could be seen that those that are most useful to them are similar to those, in which they participated in the planning process.

Graph 7 Participation in the planning of activities



Source: Quantitative survey with students

Note: The respondents can choose more than one answer that is why the resulting percentage exceeds 100%.

UNICEF's efforts regarding youth policy are complementary in terms of the goals of the educational reform and are implemented through extracurricular activities, trainings, and support for young people to develop skills, become active citizens and influence decision-making regarding their lives. Although there are many different activities, some of which students evaluate as useful, it is still notable that there is a low level of participation in the planning of these activities. This is probably due

to the overall low level of participation in school activities and to the understanding of active citizenship, which is still at an initial stage.

5.3.2. Assessment of the Planned Outputs and Outcome

In summary, the education component in the CP aims to ensure access to inclusive quality education and early learning for all children and adolescents, especially those disadvantaged and affected by the conflict. The main indicators towards the achievement of the four outputs (updated in 2020) show that there is a development in most indicators and data is missing for some of them (table 5). The data in the table is summarised from the UNICEF Internal Reports¹⁰³. It should be noted, however, that the analysis of the monitoring data is difficult, on one hand, due to the lack of data for some indicators, on the other hand, due to overlapping in the number of beneficiaries in the different outputs. In addition, the system for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is not unified, therefore not accurate enough to measure the outputs and outcome. The sources of information for monitoring progress are in different documents, which is probably one of the reasons for discrepancies. The M&E system and process, related to output indicators, includes data collection and monitoring of implementation of activities, number of participants, number of schools, etc. In 2020, the Results Framework was adapted and some of the indicators, regarding both outputs and outcome, have been changed, which requires a change in the system of data collection, on one hand. On the other hand, quality and reliable data regarding outcome indicators, is not always available through the M&E system or may not be sufficiently systematically or transparently used. The cross-sectoral data systems on children sometimes lack or function unsatisfactory, so they cannot ensure reliable data to facilitate monitoring of the programmes/reforms. Contextual national data is also often insufficient and missing due to challenges like the war conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, etc., which prevents evidence-based monitoring. This should be addressed in an action plan in the future.

What's more, the indicators for measuring the different outputs are not fully in line with the expected results at the level of outputs and outcome. Having in mind that there is only one year left until the end of programme realisation, it is possible that not all targets will be achieved.

Table 5 Achievement of the planned outputs

Output	Indicator	Baseline 2017	2018-2020	Target 2022
Output 3.1 By 2022, MoES and other central and local government agencies provide increased access to children aged 3-6 years old, especially the most disadvantaged, to quality and inclusive early learning services, especially in rural areas.	Number of children benefiting from early childhood education through alternative approaches (such as home-based provision of early childhood development, accelerated school readiness models, parent education, among others) with support from UNICEF [standard output indicator] Source: UNICEF internal reports	0	1 500	4 500
	Existence of quality teaching and learning environment for early learning (based on the SP indicators) Data source: UNICEF Project Reports	No (2017)	Partly	Yes (2022)

¹⁰³ UNICEF 2019 and 2020 Output Reporting – National/Business Area level

	% of parents who know about the benefits of early learning to their children and can assess its quality [standard output indicator] Source: UNICEF Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices survey	17%	No data available	50% (2022)
Output 3.2 By 2022, government agencies (central and local) and educational institutions have increased capacity to provide quality education for children and adolescents aged 3-18 years old through inclusive, violence-free, and competency-based learning, including social, emotional, and functional competencies with special focus on children with disabilities.	Assessment and support of children with disabilities done through the use of multidisciplinary teams, working under the social model of disability [standard output indicator] Source: UNICEF internal reports	Score 2	Score 2	Score 3
	Existence of curricula and support from teachers and school administrators that are inclusive of children with disabilities [standard output indicator] Source: UNICEF internal reports	Score 2	Score 2	Score 3
	Pre-service and in-service teacher training includes modules on diversity and inclusion issues [standard output indicator] Source: UNICEF internal reports	Score 2	Score 2	Score 3
	# of schools that received support from UNICEF through the child-friendly school or similar model (new) Source: UNICEF internal reports	14	50	120
Output 3.3 Government and communities have increased capacity to support the completion of a full cycle of compulsory inclusive education for all children and adolescents, especially the most disadvantaged and those in conflict-affected areas, including their timely enrolment in grade 1.	# of UNICEF-targeted children in humanitarian situations accessing formal or non-formal basic education (including pre-primary schools/early childhood learning spaces) [standard output indicator] Source: UNICEF internal reports	38 400	114 400	150 000
	# of Safe Schools Declaration commitments operationalized by the Government of Ukraine with the support of UNICEF [custom indicator] Source: UNICEF internal reports	0	1	3
	National Education Management Information System (EMIS) provides data on attendance and dropout [standard output indicator] Source: UNICEF internal reports, Ministry of Education	Score 2	Score 2	Score 3

Output 3.4 By 2022, adolescents and youth increased skills and competencies to be adequately prepared for adult life as active citizens and for the world of work.	# of adolescents and youth engaged through U-Report to boost volunteer community participation Data source: UNICEF Reports	54 000 (2017)	74 137	200 000 (2022)
	# of adolescent girls and boys who completed a skills development programme [standard output indicator] Source: UNICEF internal reports	1 401 (2019)	No data available	5 000
	National education/training policies and plans support the mainstreaming of skills development within the national system [standard output indicator] Source: UNICEF internal reports	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3
	# of adolescent girls and boys participating or leading civic engagement initiatives [standard output indicator] Source: UNICEF internal reports	6 751 (2019)	No data available	20 000

The updated version of the results resource matrix (2020) defines four main indicators, through which the achievement of the outcome 3 (Education) in the CPD could be measured. The current evaluation makes statements about the level that has been reached in terms of the achievement the outcome at this stage of realisation of the programme (table 6).

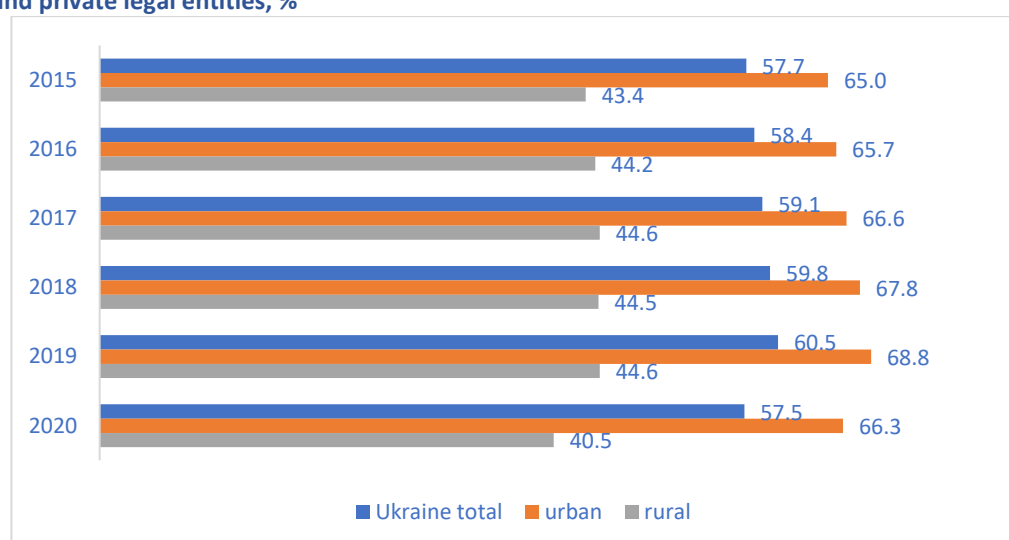
Table 6 Achievement of the planned outcome

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	2020	Target
Outcome 3 (Education) By 2022, all children and adolescents in Ukraine, especially those disadvantaged and affected by the conflict, access inclusive and quality school education and early learning while enjoying opportunities for meaningful	Percentage of pre-primary age children (3-6 years) who are enrolled in pre-primary education Data source: Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) statistics	57.7% (2015)	The data from the MoES statistics shows that 57.5% of children of pre-primary age (3-6 years) are enrolled in pre-primary education in 2020 (graph 8).	70% (2022)

participation and civic engagement.	A nation-wide mechanism to identify children of compulsory school age who are not enrolled and/or not attending school is in place and functioning effectively. Data source: MoES reports	Non-existent (2016)	Official data of UNICEF in internal reports shows that there are activities in technical support of the MoES in data collection and management on out-of-school children, dropouts and prevention of school dropout/early school leaving. The data from the research demonstrates that this topic is not commented very actively by stakeholders. At this stage, only the first steps in this direction have been made, but further efforts are necessary.	Out-of-school children are identified through implemented and functioning mechanism (2022)
	Percentage of children in conflict-affected settings whose interrupted access to education is resolved, annually. Data source UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children	0 (2017)	According to data from the research, conflict-affected settings receive support and manage to ensure access to education to children. For children who can't be physically present at school, since they are in NGCA, an individual/online form of education is ensured. There is support from teachers and provision of materials, etc.	100%
	Existence of a strengthened system for adolescent participation [standard output indicator] Source: UNICEF internal reports, Ministry of Youth	Score 1 (2019)	There is no official data on the score in 2020 in the internal UNICEF reports. According to the data from the research, young people are still not highly engaged in planning and realisation of all activities. However, they find some of them useful and have developed skills for active citizenship.	Score 2 (2022)

The data on tendencies between 2015-2019 in terms of coverage of children aged 3-6 years by pre-school education institutions and structural units of public and private legal entities shows that there is an increase of the share of children in the pre-school educational system in urban areas and the total of Ukraine, but it is very slight in rural areas (graph 8). In 2020, however, the tendency is changed, not maintained, but shifted to a decrease, probably due to the COVID 19 pandemic's influence on the education system, more specifically, on the presence of children in the kindergartens. This aspect needs to be taken into account, when realising interventions, related to an increase in the coverage in next years.

Graph 8 Coverage of children aged 3 - 6 years by pre-school education institutions and structural units of public and private legal entities, %



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine¹⁰⁴

The systematic approach of UNICEF includes policy advice, technical assistance and modelling and implementing concrete interventions at the local level. The focus on most vulnerable target groups of children in conflict-affected areas comes from the assumption that, *'in order to achieve the goals, it was essential to address access to education and a healthy educational environment'*¹⁰⁵. In this sense, the planning and realisation of the interventions with the aim to achieve the outputs and outcome in the territories, affected by the conflict, and near the conflict line, is appropriate and effective complementation of the efforts to achieve the reform in these regions. The question is how to transfer all these results in the non-conflict-affected areas of the country, in order to achieve the outcome to reach all children in Ukraine and ensure access to safe and quality education for them.

The enabling/success factors for achievement of the outputs and outcome so far are, firstly, related to the desire of all stakeholders to participate at the local, regional, and national level. This is especially valid for the schools, since the support they received was very important for them and it was the first time they got help. Another success factor is that the process of reform is on-going, therefore there is a national effort to change the system in a similar direction. Last but not least, UNICEF's image as a key stakeholder, international organisation working for children's rights contributed to the willingness of people to take part in the interventions.

The constraints/bottlenecks related to the achievement of the outputs and outcome so far are related to the COVID 19 pandemic and the lack of enough technical resources in the two oblasts to implement online education. Additionally, the pandemic shifted, up to a certain degree, the focus of the reform and created a need for acceleration of the process of digitalisation:

*'The reform is designed for 12 years. Stages of reform are fixed in education legislation. But time demands changes. For example, when these laws were passed, the digitalization of education was one of the points in developing the educational environment. But in a world of pandemics, this is no longer just one of the reform points; it is an urgent need. Forced distance learning has accelerated the digitalization of education, but it has caused steps and the benefits of 'blended' learning. Now the digitalization of education is a different priority of the reform'*¹⁰⁶

Another bottleneck are the challenges in rural and conflict-affected areas like lack of resources for taking part in online trainings or even in face-to-face education (like lack of electricity and Internet);

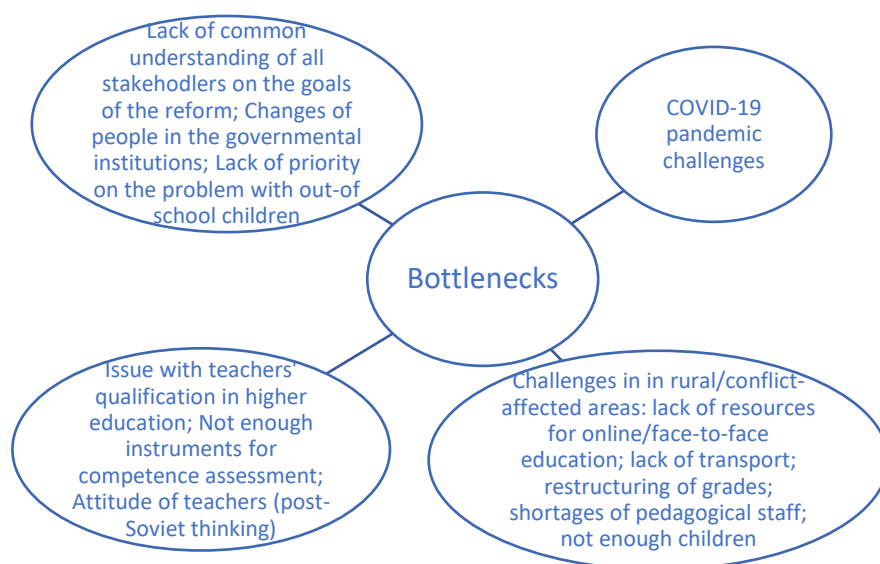
¹⁰⁴ https://ukrstat.org/en/operativ/menu/menu_e/osv.htm

¹⁰⁵ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

¹⁰⁶ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

lack of transport; shortages of pedagogical staff (not enough teachers in some or all subjects); issues caused by the reform, due to the restructuring of grades, which causes problems for children in the region who don't have anywhere to study after a certain age. There are also other important bottlenecks, related to pedagogical staff in the schools like the issue with teachers' qualification at the higher education stage, which is where capacity building for them should start from; difficult change in the attitudes and way of thinking of teachers, which is still so-called 'post-Soviet'. These and other constraints/bottlenecks, shared by stakeholders, are shown on figure 8.

Figure 8 Constraints/bottlenecks related to the achievement of the outputs and outcome



To summarise, the main bottlenecks are related to the stage of the reform and its challenges, COVID-19, as well as challenges in rural and conflict-affected areas. The implementation of UNICEF's programmes should take into account these issues and address them into the framework.

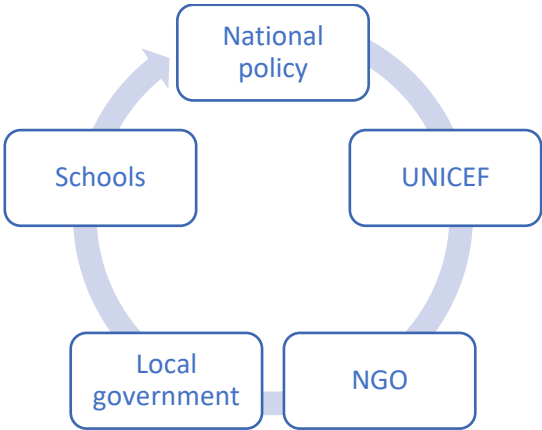
The programme could not address all of the challenges of the education reform in the country, like teachers' qualifications in higher education, instruments for competence assessment, attitudes of different stakeholders and lack of common understanding, as well as any other newly emerging issues, related to the implementation of the reform. At the same time, the data shows that the implementation strategy of UNICEF was adopted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and most of the activities were performed online. This adaption did not change the pathways to achieve the outcome but influenced the whole process and the chain of results logic. Some of these bottlenecks didn't affect the current planning but should be taken into account in the future. The data shows that, in August 2020, in the Programme Strategy Note 'All children learn', there is a review of what was achieved so far from the programme and a ToC was developed for the future period of implementation, including system-strengthening, service delivery, knowledge management and advocacy. These change strategies would ensure that Education programme would continue its crucial work in strengthening policies and advocating with the GoU to maintain a focus on equity and inclusion to advance the education reform processes and address socio-economic inequalities, while ensuring the sustainability of programmes.

Contribution of the Education programme to the development of national and local policies and education reform, as well as to changes in the lives of children, families, community, and the broader environment

The contribution of UNICEF's interventions in development of national and local policy and education reform could be seen at several levels. At the first level is the direct contribution to policy advice and

technical assistance in terms of framework, curriculum, system of concepts, strategies, policy documents, etc. In addition, UNICEF’s interventions are realised at the local level by working together with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as implementing partners (IPs). They are aimed at increasing the capacity of children and teachers, modelling of concepts, and bringing them back to the national stakeholders and implementing them in the national policy. This transfer of interventions from local to national level and vice versa is realised through local authorities at the regional level since they are engaged with implementing the educational reform. In this sense, the role of partners is key in identifying the groups of children, with whom they would work, communication with schools, planning and realisation of all activities (figure 9).

Figure 9 Path of change

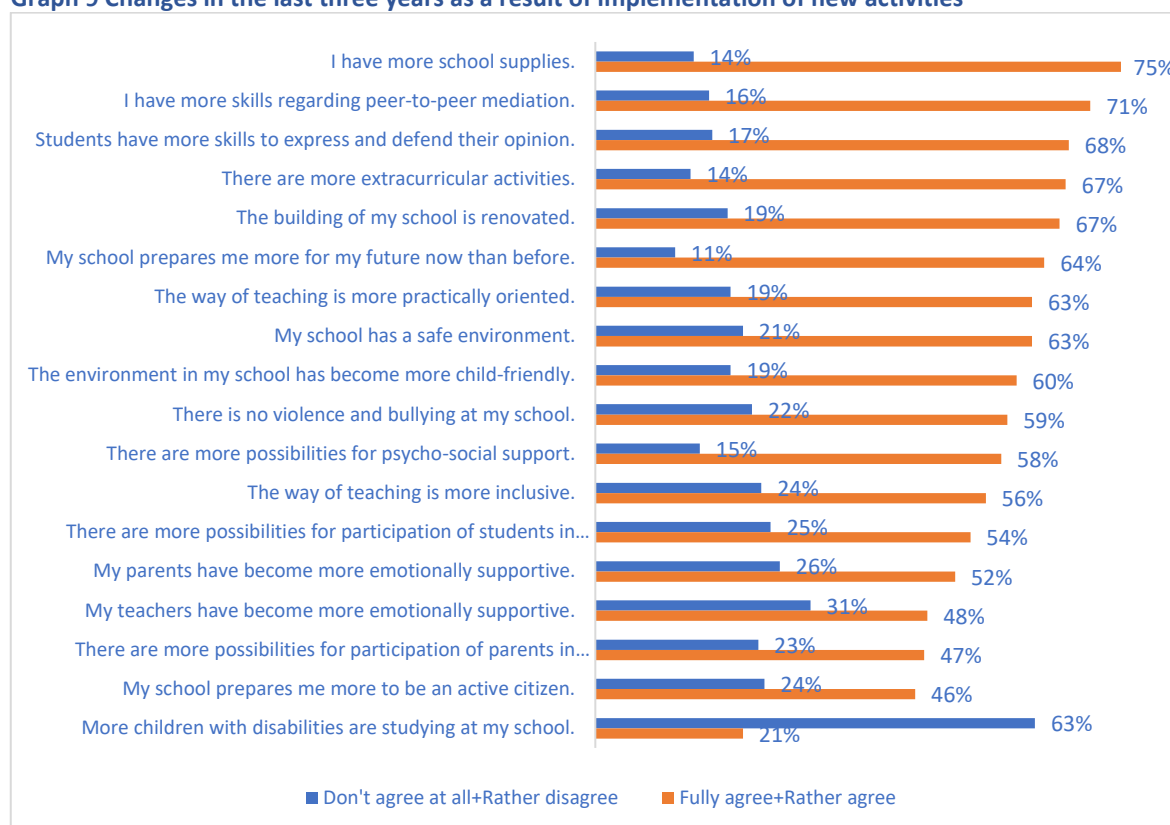


The IPs apply for projects and take part in them. Therefore, the main issues and coverage of the project are already identified and are not related to their role. At the same time, they are active in discussing the design of the project and the way of their implementation, while setting priorities is UNICEF’s task and no official internal mechanisms for communication between the NGOs have been identified. The local government shares about satisfaction from working with the organisations.

The contribution of UNICEF at a national and local level leads to changes in the lives of children, families, teachers, and communities. According to the data from the study on lasting changes in the last three years as a result of implementation of new activities, the most agreed upon changes are: school supplies, and building renovations; skills for peer-to peer mediation and expressing opinions, more practical way of teaching and orientation of education towards children’s future, as well as more extracurricular activities; a safer and more child-friendly school environment with less violence and bullying and more possibilities for psycho-social support (graph 9).

The level of agreement is lower with statements regarding child and parent participation, changes in the family and school environment in terms of parents and teachers becoming more emotionally supportive, preparation of children to be active citizens. It is notable that 63% of students disagreed with the statement that more children with disabilities are studying at their school and there is also a lower level of agreement with the way of teaching being more inclusive in the last years. The data indicates changes in the schools, related to contributions of UNICEF in the last three years and they are more in renovations and material support, safer environment and skill building than in child and parent participation and inclusive education.

Graph 9 Changes in the last three years as a result of implementation of new activities¹⁰⁷

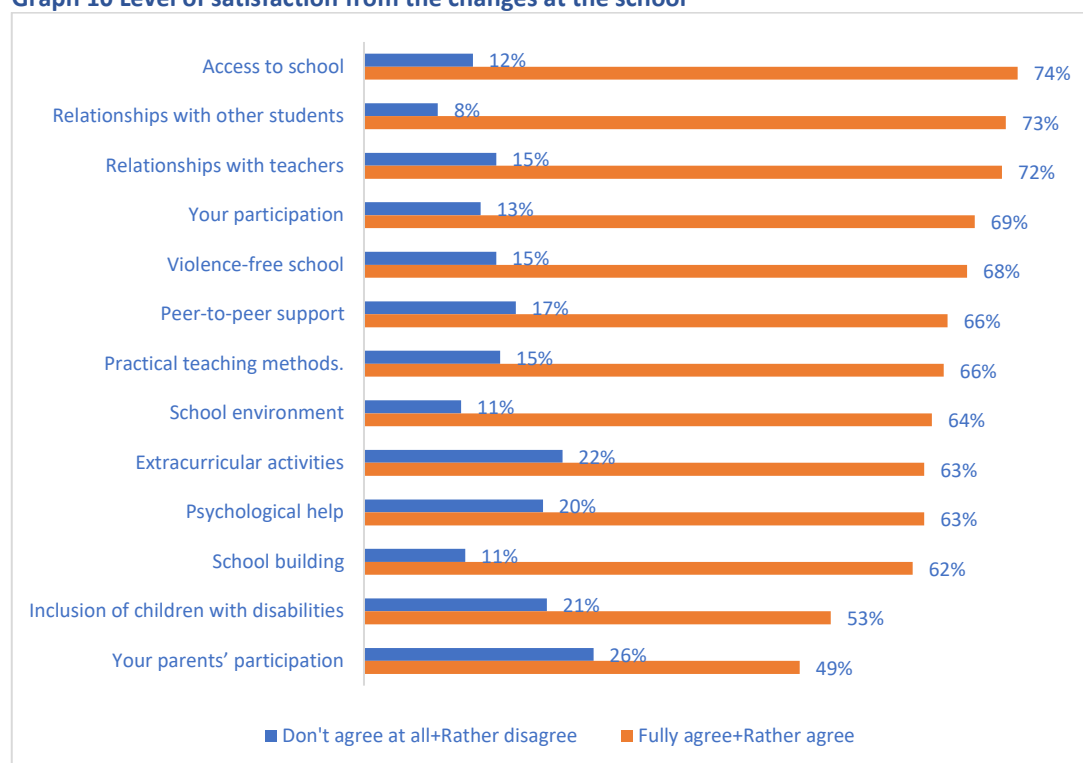


Source: Quantitative survey with students

The level of satisfaction of children from the changes at the school mostly confirm the data on the presence of changes at the school. They are mostly satisfied with the access to the school, relationships with other students and teachers, their participation, the violence-free school environment in better school buildings, peer-to-peer support, practical teaching methods and extracurricular activities, as well as psychological help (graph 10). Again, less of them are satisfied with inclusion of children with disabilities and their parents' participation. A smaller share of them agrees with having more possibilities for participation, but there is a bigger share who are satisfied with their participation. This might be due to the fact that they have more skills to express and defend their opinion, but they are at the individual level, while at the school maybe the possibilities for participation are not enough.

¹⁰⁷ The scale is from one to five, where one and two express disagreement and four and five express agreements with the statements, while three is neutral meaning neither agree, nor disagree and the share of students who chose 3 is the rest adding up to 100% for each statement.

Graph 10 Level of satisfaction from the changes at the school



Source: Quantitative survey with students

Regarding changes for parents, in contrast with the opinions of students, they say their possibilities for participation are bigger, probably because they had less before. They appreciate their participation in the trainings, their relationships with the teachers and changes in their attitudes in view of children's development. Teachers also share they are satisfied of the changes regarding relationships with children and parents. Teachers in kindergartens say the methods they use in working with children with special needs have improved. All the adults agree with the fact that the school environment, facilities, and material base has improved, which influences the way they perceive the school. The community also benefits from the changes in terms of using the new school yards and sports halls, as well as the bombing shelters. The schools in the small towns and rural areas are central to the relationships in the community and broader environment.

In summary, the Education programme aims to improve the access of all children to quality education, with a focus on the most vulnerable. In the first three years of implementation, many activities oriented towards achieving these results have been planned and realised, in partnership with 22 IPs, in two oblasts and on a national level.

The achievement of the results is ensured by a complex systematic approach on behalf of UNICEF, including policy advice, technical assistance and data collection and management support, advocacy strategies and communication, as well as building capacity and modelling of interventions at the local level at the schools. At the time of pandemic, they adapted their activities and supported the process of finding solutions for the immediate effects on the educational system.

Different enabling factors and bottlenecks were identified in the process of achievement of the planned outputs and outcome. They are mostly related to the consequences of COVID 19 and the development of the educational reform itself, as well as the challenges in the rural and conflict-affected areas.

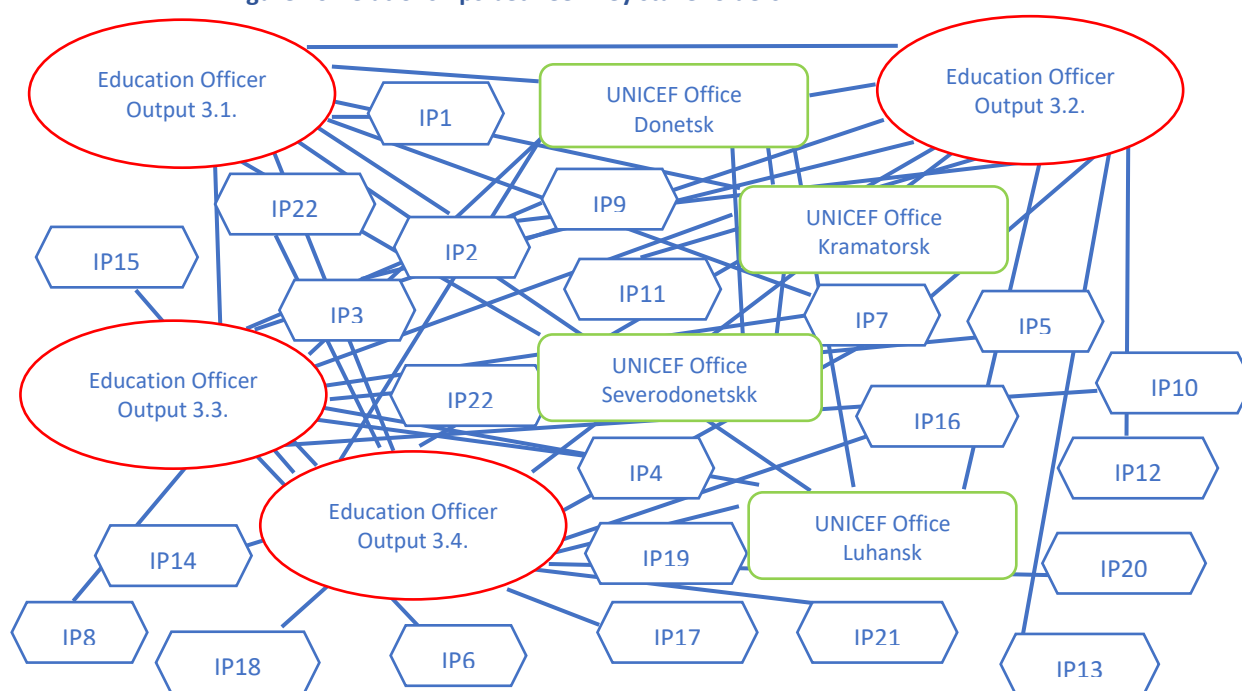
The produced changes are most definitive in the fields of ensuring a safe environment, development of skills, peer-to-peer mediation, and support, while in the fields of inclusive education and participation, they are in an initial phase of their development.

5.4. EFFICIENCY

5.4.1. Governance of the Programme

The Education programme is a part of the CP of UNICEF Ukraine in the framework of governance of the programme itself. There is no unified governance board, but rather different responsible persons for the different components of the programme like early childhood development, education in emergency, inclusive education, and youth policy. Having in mind that the programmes are implemented in Donetsk and Luhansk, the governance includes the field work offices in the four offices – Donetsk, Luhansk, Kramatorsk, Severodonetsk. This form of governance of the programme outlines the divided responsibilities for achievement of the outputs and outcome. Additionally, in the implementation of the programme were included 22 NGOs and data shows that some IPs realised activities in more than one output. In terms of efficiency, this causes difficulties in data monitoring, analysis, and implementation of the different activities (figure 10).

Figure 10 Relationships between key stakeholders



According to the opinion of stakeholders, all projects were planned and realised on time and any adjustments were normal and caused only slight delays and not so many difficulties. This leads to the conclusion that the programme governance was efficient to the achieved results, but it should be taken into account that a unified type of governance of the programme is lacking, and it is difficult to monitor results. National stakeholders talk about a difference in working with education officers from UNICEF, leading the different outputs, which means that the level of efficiency is dependant, up to a certain degree, on the concrete individuals. The development of a clear system of rules, relationships and responsibilities between all participants would prevent such a dependency in the future.

Additionally, this would prevent schools from being burdened with too many activities sometimes:

'If you take the example of Donetsk and Luhansk, these are words of teachers who ask the Ministry: 'Boys do something, we already are fed up with these trainings here. We can't digest this information because the program of one training absolutely contradicts the program of the other'. It is because the international donors react when they heard 'East', 'conflict line', training related to this 'psychological', fifth, tenth and that's all – 'We are giving you money you give us report.' I've spoken with UNICEF about this, and I said, 'See we as a state should regulate these issues, and we as a bureaucratic machine

if we send a letter to the regional governor we must know 'what', 'how', 'in what period' and 'what's next'. And here we don't have problems with UNICEF, gradually other donors also recognise the issue that something is not quite efficient and are switching to other programs which are more 'visible' let's put it this way. And I speak with colleagues from other countries this is a wide-spread disease'¹⁰⁸.

When it comes to the different programme activities and their level of complementarity with other similar interventions, nationally or donor funded, most stakeholders share that UNICEF's interventions complement well those of other organisations and there is no or only a little overlap, since they are different, and each organisation contributes to a different aspect. In their opinion, one of the Education cluster's aims is to avoid this overlap and it is successful in this:

'The cluster is there to avoid this actually... all the cluster partners, they try to follow these standards as much as possible at least';

'I don't think it's possible to avoid like overlap completely';

'In our country, look, in principle, we are trying to establish a partnership in such a way that each of our partners would add to the work in some specific way, so that they complement each other and not duplicate. There are maybe 10 different organizations there, but at the same time we are trying to build our communications in such a way that they complement each other';

'No, there was no overlap. Even if there were the same topics in the trainings, the approach and methods were different';

'When they saw one NGO is better at working with teachers and others for example with parents, it was not a competition, but rather they complemented each other in their work'¹⁰⁹.

5.4.2. Invested Resources

Since 2018, Ukraine has been implementing a major education reform programme: The New Ukrainian School. Attracting, retaining and continuous training of qualified teachers, along with developing high quality flexible and competency-based curriculum, are among the most crucial parts of education reform. *'Leading nations see the educational sector as a high-priority area for investment which will provide a return with new technologies, knowledge and revenues from innovation activities. In the New Ukrainian School, public finances will be allocated in a transparent manner. The state and the society will see how funding is being used and monitor the outcomes of investments in education'.¹¹⁰*

The Law on Education outlines a *'procedure of distribution of the educational subvention among the local budgets is established according to the formula based on the number of education seekers who study in the respective territory, taking into account the following factors: a level of education; a category of the territory where the institution of education is located; presence of education seekers with special educational needs; special aspects of study of education seekers from ethnic minorities; the necessity of transportation of education seekers to an institution of education and back; other factors'.¹¹¹*

While acknowledging the Government of Ukraine (GoU) bold steps toward reforming its system of Education, in its Sectoral Review (2019), the WB reports that the reform process has been uneven and additional efforts are needed to ensure its success and continuity. Ukraine spends more of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education than most EU and Organisation for Economic Assistance and Development (OECD) countries, but those resources are not used efficiently.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

¹⁰⁹ Interviews with national/local stakeholders; Interviews/FGDs with implementing partners

¹¹⁰ MoES (2016) The New Ukrainian school conceptual principles of secondary school reform, retrieved from: <https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/zagalna%20serednya/Book-ENG.pdf>

¹¹¹ Law on Education, 2017, Article 78

¹¹² Programme Strategy Note, All Children Learn

In terms of financing of education, it is necessary to point out the new formula for subvention from the central government to the local authorities. The change in the subvention formula in 2018, which is mentioned in the Sectoral Review of the WB (2019)¹¹³, leads to a number of possibilities for the local governments to be flexible in planning and spending the funding and creates a need to optimize the school network in terms of achieving a bigger average class size and saving money, which could be used in the next year for additional expenditures. This is an opportunity, on one hand, but on the other, could lead to additional challenges in the rural and remote areas, related to reorganising schools, making it necessary for children to move elsewhere to study, as well as making it difficult for some schools to be put in a category, in which they would receive a subvention, among others:

‘There is a subsidy, it’s coming for support for schools with more than 200 people, but there are a number of schools that are less than 200 people, they do not even fall under the category of under-staffed. Yes, they are in the context of 200 people, but according to the criteria for granting sovereign students, they do not get here. Therefore, there is such a problem and all rural schools in rural areas, such schools cannot be closed. UNICEF’s help here would be very, very important.’ ‘The reform is related to structural changes. Therefore, we have already started this stage, but it kind of scares us. Why? Because we have the trouble that the small towns that have just one school, the restructuring for only until 7th grade would mean children don’t have anywhere to study. Here immediately the problem is the access of these children, it would be difficult for them to travel, there is no transport, so we have such problems.’¹¹⁴

The topic of the connection between spending and outcomes for children is commented in terms of its different aspects, having in mind that increasing expenditures for education aims to increase its quality and achieve better outcomes through spending efficiently. Research and analysis show that this connection is not always direct and clear – spending more money doesn’t always lead to better results. *‘Decisions on how to use public resources often lack coherent alignment with learning. The evidence on ways to improve learning is growing, suggesting ways to use funding more effectively. Also important is ensuring that the mix of inputs and interventions that are funded work together well. Many education systems find this difficult. For example, more classrooms may be built, but there are insufficient funds to hire the teachers needed to use them. Teachers are present in classrooms, but they lack the learning materials needed to teach effectively. Improving coherence is not just about the mix of inputs, but also about the systems that manage these inputs. In Tanzania, grants given to schools were ineffective on their own, but combining grants with teacher incentives ensured the grants were used effectively to improve student learning. In Indonesia, school grants improved learning only when they were combined with measures to link school committees with village authorities.’¹¹⁵*

Additionally, it is crucial to use resources to improve learning, especially for disadvantaged children. However, because there is no certainty that spending more would lead to better outcomes, spending better is most important. The overall level of school funding matters, but even more do the strategies used to allocate it. *‘As countries seek to enhance the performance of all students while also providing more equitable learning opportunities for different groups, there has been greater focus on ensuring that resources are directed to the areas where improvements in teaching and learning outcomes can best be achieved. Developing an equitable distribution of school funding requires countries to take into*

¹¹³ World Bank Group, (2019), Review of the Education Sector in Ukraine, Moving toward Effectiveness, Equity and Efficiency (RESUME3), Final report, retrieved from: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/884261568662566134/pdf/Review-of-the-Education-Sector-in-Ukraine-Moving-toward-Effectiveness-Equity-and-Efficiency-RESUME3.pdf>

¹¹⁴ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

¹¹⁵ Spending more or spending better—or both?, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/28340/9781464810961_Spot06.pdf

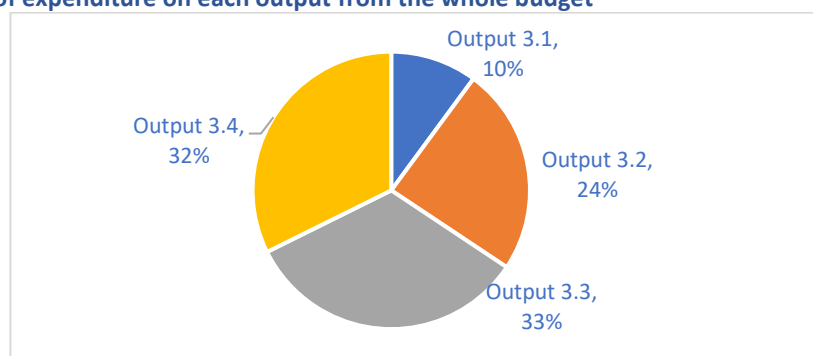
*account both horizontal equity (allocating similar levels of resources to similar types of provision) and vertical equity (allocating different levels of resources to student groups with different needs'*¹¹⁶.

The basis of all UNICEF activities is to ensure the rights of the child. According to national stakeholders, the priorities of the New Ukrainian School (NUS) and the circumstances in which some Ukrainian children find themselves, resonate very well with the priorities of UNICEF. They share there was a large group of children (over 200,000) in the occupied territories and in the frontline who did not have access to quality education and the ministry quickly found a common language with UNICEF, they introduced the concept of reform, and UNICEF decided to focus on the most vulnerable groups of children whose rights were fundamentally violated. It was about supporting schools: reconstruction, renovation of premises, training in security measures (including mine safety), providing psychological assistance after traumatic occurrences. In stakeholders' opinions, UNICEF representatives have always sought to find where the child's rights are most violated, which are the most vulnerable groups of children who need help.

The budget of the UNICEF Education programme (CPD) is 7 800 000 \$, including regular resources (800 000 \$) and other resources (7 000 000 \$) and is expected to be spent until 2022, which is the end of the period of implementation. The data on the expenditure for the period of evaluation shows that the resources have been used for implementing four outputs. The biggest share is for output 3.3. (33%), while for output 3.1. it is the smallest (10%) (graph 11). This shows an uneven allocation of resources in the different outputs. The biggest investment is in output 3.3., which means that most activities are related to conflict-affected areas. Results in output 3.3. include support for conflict-affected areas: modelling of the safe school concept, material support, repairs, and rehabilitations. Due to the specificity of the interventions, which reach a big number of children in conflict-affected areas, there seems to be a high level of efficiency. In output 3.4., for which there is 32% expenditure from the whole budget, the following results have been achieved: creation of youth councils, support for youth start-up projects and development of the youth strategy, among others. This demonstrates a good level of efficiency, since a big number of young people have been reached, but their level of participation in decision-making and planning of the interventions still needs improvement. After that comes output 3.2., in which the following results have been achieved: peer-to-peer support through capacity-building of teachers and students, development bio-psycho-social model of disability, among others. The level of efficiency is good, having in mind the reached children and adults, especially through peer-to-peer mediation trainings. However, inclusive education development for children with disabilities is still in an early phase of implementation. The smallest share of expenditure is for output 3.1., focusing on support for pre-school education and ECE, in terms of capacity-building, technical support and awareness-raising. When it comes to efficiency, it seems to be a bit lower for this output, since additional activities need to be implemented in order to achieve planned results.

¹¹⁶ OECD (2017), The Funding of School Education Connecting Resources and Learning, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264276147-5-en.pdf?expires=1631732366&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=E68C1B69FBEDB7714D2ACED1D35D996D>

Graph 11 Share of expenditure on each output from the whole budget¹¹⁷

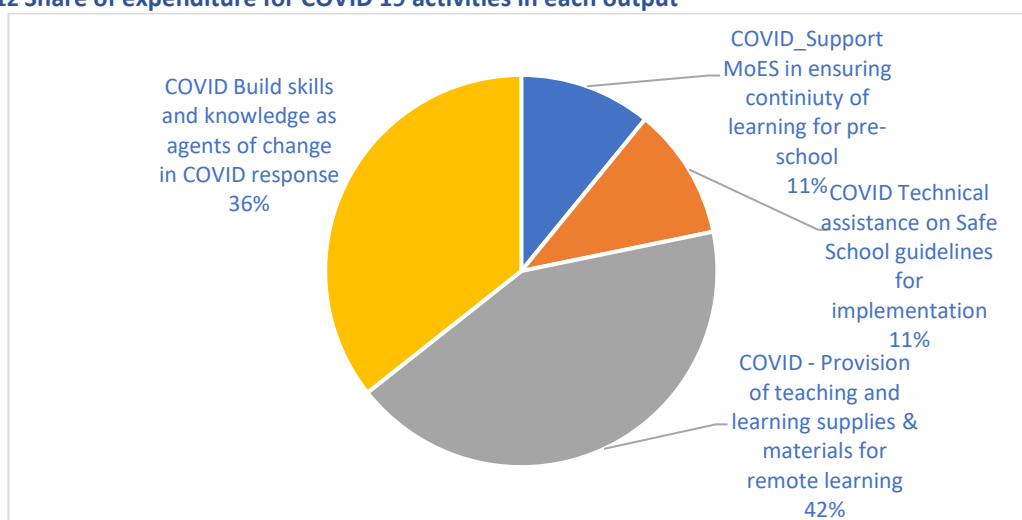


Source: Annual Work Plan 2021

Although there is an overall good level of efficiency, that the programme is demonstrating up until now, there are many different components of the outcome that need to be included, in order to achieve it, which makes the programme not focused enough and leads to scattering resources. *‘Even though UNICEF might seem as one of the important, big players in education, frankly, I never understood what UNICEF priorities were and where they were ready to invest a lot of resources substantially, just a little bit here and there’¹¹⁸*. This means that, in order to increase the level of efficiency, the efforts need to be more focused in terms of financing activities that would directly achieve the indicators for the outcome.

The expenditure is complemented by financing received for tackling the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (graph 12). The biggest share goes for teaching and learning supplies, followed by building skills and knowledge, and technical support for pre-school education and safe school guidelines. This means that there is a focus on access, which is an expected decision in an emergency situation. At the same time, it should be taken into account, that after dealing with the immediate effects of the crisis, the long-term effects need to be taken into account and resource allocation needs to be redefined, in order to manage them and ensure continuity of the reform.

Graph 12 Share of expenditure for COVID 19 activities in each output

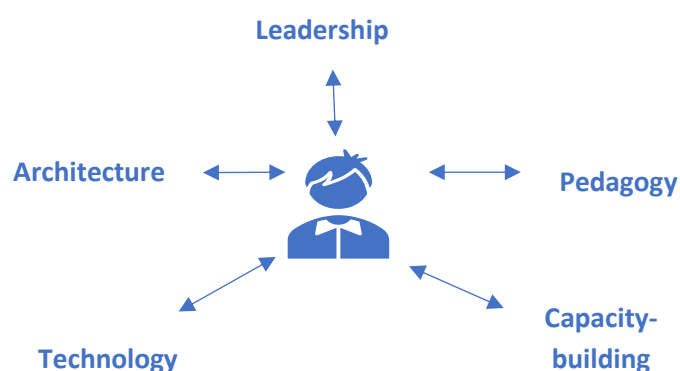


¹¹⁷ Output 3.1. The education system is able to provide greater access to children aged 3-6 years, especially the most disadvantaged, to quality and inclusive early learning services; Output 3.2. The capacity of the education system is increased to provide quality education for children and adolescents aged 3-18 years through inclusive, violence-free, and competency-based learning, including social, emotional, and functional competences, especially children with disabilities; Output 3.3. The education system has a stronger capacity to support the completion of a full cycle of compulsory inclusive education for all children and adolescents, especially the most disadvantaged and those in conflict areas, including their timely enrolment in grade 1; Output 3.4. By 2022, adolescents and youth increased skills and competences to be adequately prepared for adult life as active citizens and for the world of work.

¹¹⁸ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

Another key aspect of efficiency is the ratio between the financial resources, allocated for implementing different activities. This is quite important, especially when it comes to supporting the process of reform, therefore the criteria for division of these resources needs to be carefully considered. Data from different international research and analysis shows that when reforming the educational system, it is very important to apply a systematic approach, which would influence the operational and pedagogical culture at school, including the different aspects: leadership, pedagogy, capacity building, technology, and architecture. All these must be developed and advanced equally towards the school and students of the future. The learner is in the centre of change, and the focus of learning moves away from the teacher, textbooks, and teaching, and towards a learner-centred, learning process-based and personalised learning. The change starts from a pedagogical vision and its implementation¹¹⁹ (figure 11).

Figure 11 Systematic change

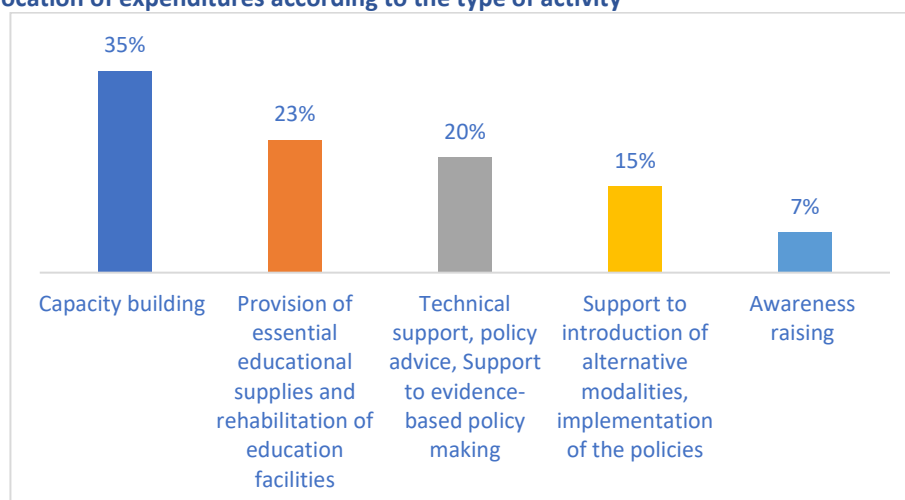


The efforts to achieve systematic change should be oriented towards the different components of the educational process, thus ensuring development of teacher competences in terms of teaching and pedagogical methods and techniques, architecture of the classroom when it comes to furnishing and its arrangement, material support and using spaces in the educational building, technology, and leadership. All of these elements can't be started with at the same time but need to be included in any educational reform.

Analysing the investment of UNICEF according to these basic components and taking into account the context, in which they realised their investments and the target groups, it could be stated that, in terms of efficiency, all components have been included in financing, although with different shares (graph 13). It could be seen that the biggest part of expenditures is allocated for capacity building. In the paradigm of 'schools of the future', described above, this corresponds also with pedagogy and leadership. It should be noted, however, in terms of the realised activities and achieved results, that there is no change identified in the roles of principals as managers and the level of participation of pedagogical teams in choosing topics and programmes, is not very high. There is investment in technical support and policy advice, which is investment in management at the policy level, but not at the individual level of school principals. Next comes supply and rehabilitation, which could be seen as basic preconditions for reforming, but at the basic level. There are 15% of resources allocated for support to introduction of alternative modalities and implementation of the policies and it could be developed in the future in terms of modelling change in the school environment. Awareness raising is the activity for which the least resources are distributed – 7%. This component should also be further developed, in order to ensure a common understanding of all stakeholders and support for its implementation.

¹¹⁹ Mattila, P., & Silander, P. (2015), How to create the school of the future – Revolutionary thinking and design from Finland, retrieved from: <https://www.classter.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/How-to-create-the-school-of-the-future.pdf>

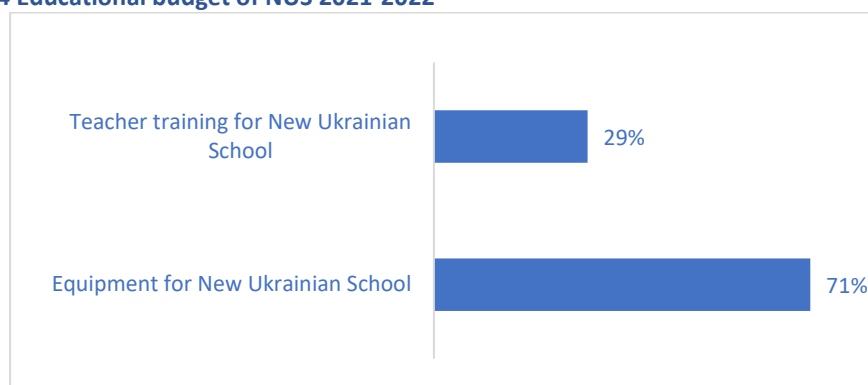
Graph 13 Allocation of expenditures according to the type of activity



Source: Annual Work Plan 2021

In comparison, the available data regarding the budget of NUS shows that the biggest share has been allocated to purchasing new equipment, as well (graph 14).

Graph 14 Educational budget of NUS 2021-2022



Source: Finance New Ukrainian School¹²⁰

Additionally, targeted subsidies have been introduced to improve school facilities and resources. Programmes for the procurement of furniture, digital equipment, primary school handouts, school buses have been implemented over the past three years, and the Efficient School and Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education subventions have been added this year¹²¹.

The data is also confirmed by the qualitative research and shows the efforts to create conditions to realise the reform at a national level. At the same time, this could only be a first step towards achieving the desired change that needs to include all the rest of the components, listed above.

In summary, the Educational Programme is managed in the framework of the CPD, including a significant number of experts like educational and field work officers and IPs. This leads to a variety of connections and relationships in the programme and when contacting partners outside of UNICEF like national stakeholders, local stakeholders, and international partners. This doesn't, however, cause an overlap of realised activities. The invested resources in the programme are far from the total planned (8%). They are not allocated equally between the four outputs and there is a good level of compliance

¹²⁰ <https://nus.org.ua/news/zatverdylly-byudzhety-2021-skilky-na-shkilnu-osvitu/>; <https://nus.org.ua/news/186-milyardiv-gryvnen-na-osvitu-proyekt-byudzhety-2022/>

¹²¹ Education and Science Reform, 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/reformi/rozvitok-lyudskogo-kapitalu/reforma-osviti>

with the achieved results in terms of some of the outputs. In terms of some other outputs and the outcome, more efforts/resources are needed to achieve efficient results. Capacity building is the component, in which most resources have been invested, although it should be developed in terms of new pedagogical methods, relationships between teachers and children, and leadership.

5.5. IMPACT

5.5.1. Changes in the Lives of all Children, especially Vulnerable Groups

The changes in the lives of children, which are a result from the contribution of the Education programme, could be analysed, at this stage of the implementation of the programme, through the aspects of: access to quality education, development of soft skills and change in the educational environment.

Since the impact is not explicitly indicated in the results framework and there is no indicator to measure it, the following assumption about expected impact could be made – the educational programme, in the long-term, will change the motivation of the children, their skills, attitude towards the school and interest in the subjects, relationships with teachers and the rest of the school community, feelings of safety, etc.

It should be noted that UNICEF's Education programme is realised in parallel with the NUS reform in the country. This means that the programme should complement and contribute to the achievement of the goals of the reform. This makes it difficult to measure the concrete contribution of UNICEF. However, analysing the geographic oblasts, as well as the schools, where the programme was implemented, could give reason to state that there are changes in the lives of children, in relation to their education, and the programme has an impact.

Firstly, it is good to point out that the NUS reform itself has achieved results in terms of increased access to quality education like¹²²:

- Nearly a million of students 1-4th grade are already studying at the New Ukrainian School;
- 71,675 additional places for pre-school kids were created in Ukraine from 2017 to 2019. Additional places continue to be created even during the difficult pandemic times: over 3,000 additional places in the first half of 2020;
- A hub school network has been built as of June 2020, 77,581 students have been transported to and from 912 institutions;
- The number of students with special educational needs studying in inclusive classes of secondary schools has increased by 7.1 times over the past five years.

Secondly, the monitoring of the NUS reform's implementation shows the results for children¹²³. In the 25 pilot NUS schools that were included in the monitoring, students have higher performance in soft skills like cooperation, decision-making, problem solving, substantiation of their own position, initiative, creativity, compared to non-pilot schools, and NUS reform is supported by both students' parents and teachers and school leaders. In specialized schools and pilot classes, students are more involved in the learning process. In addition, in the pilot schools students worked on their own decisions, sought information from several sources, explained the choice, solved problems in everyday life, much more often than in non-pilot schools. Recommendations were also developed for the implementation of NUS reform, as a result of the monitoring. The recommendations concern, in particular, the professional development of teachers and school principals, teaching methods, the

¹²² Education and Science Reform, 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/reformi/rozvitok-lyudskogo-kapitalu/reforma-osviti>

¹²³ MoES, 2020, The results of monitoring the implementation of NUS have been published: the reform is supported by both parents and teachers, and students of pilot schools have higher indicators of end-to-end skills, retrieved from: <https://bit.ly/2Xz2QDA>

system of assessment of student achievement, the development of students' cross-cutting skills, class size, the introduction of inclusive education.

When it comes to the impact on children's lives in terms of education for vulnerable groups as a result from UNICEF's Education programme, it should be noted that the programme has contributed to increasing the level of access for children with disabilities, in conflict-affected and rural areas, which creates the necessary preconditions to implement the reform in the future, since it hasn't reached all children in these areas. The programme has ensured a possibility for children to be able to continue studying in the emergency context, which has a very important impact, since education plays a crucial role in protecting children and youth at times when risks and vulnerability increase due to crises. This increase of access is achieved mainly through repair and rehabilitations of: buildings, affected by the war, old and not well-maintained buildings in rural and other areas; repair and construction of toilets and entrances of the buildings with appropriate access for children with disabilities; ensuring information access through providing study materials; ensuring technological access, especially in COVID-19 pandemic. When it comes to the most vulnerable conflict-affected children, access is also ensured through material support, including provision of educational materials, backpacks, etc.:

'These projects in the East improved the quality of life of children and teachers. When there is such support and attention, people perceive that Ukraine does not forget and cares about them'¹²⁴.

The impact assessments, based on longitudinal analysis using the SCORE methodology, provide information on development of children's skills and their perception of the school. The impact assessment of the Safe and child-friendly school (SCFS) programme¹²⁵ outlines the following results:

- The programme effectively enhances adolescents' perceptions of their school. For instance, findings show that when comparing students attending SCFS to their counterparts, participating adolescents rate the provisions and operation of their schools much higher than nonparticipating adolescents;
- A positive and safe physical school environment is linked to experiences of school connectedness, life skills acquisition, and quality of life;
- Students attending SCFS consider their schools as more physically attractive, with better psychosocial provisions, with higher teaching quality, and as being more inclusive;
- 'Competency-Based Teaching' and 'Participatory and Inclusive School Governance' came out as the most important school standards, in the design of SCFS, so these two school standards should have a central role.

The data from Impact Assessment of the Life Skills programme: Peer Mediation and Conflict Resolution (PMCR) outlines the main results and how likely it is that the results will be achieved in the long-term:¹²⁶

- Girls are more likely than boys to turn to mediators when they experience challenging situations and are also more likely to seek healthier ways of resolving incidents of conflict. Consequently, interventions should aim towards enhancing boys' competency in healthy conflict resolution and to encourage them into using the help of supportive figures more;
- Students of Vocational Educational Institutions use mediators as a source of support significantly more than students who attend general schools. This is an encouraging finding

¹²⁴ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

¹²⁵ Symeou, M., Dryga, A., Lordos, A., (2021), Safe and Child-Friendly Schools in Ukraine, Longitudinal analysis for the Impact Assessment of the 'Safe Schools' programme in Ukraine, retrieved from: https://www.scoreforpeace.org/files/publication/pub_file//REP_UKRYouth_Safe_and_Child-Friendly_Schools_in_Ukraine.pdf

¹²⁶ Symeou, M., Dryga, A., Lordos, A., (2021), Peer mediation and conflict resolution programme in Ukraine, Impact Assessment of the Life Skills programme: the report on the mediation programme in schools, retrieved from: https://www.scoreforpeace.org/files/publication/pub_file//PUB_UkrYouth_Peer_Mediation_and_Conflict_Resolution_Programme_in_Ukraine.pdf

considering how the focus of PMCR programme was primarily on students who attend vocational education institutions (VEI);

- Findings demonstrate that adolescents who show the highest levels of conflict resolution competence make use of both informal support and support from mediators. Whereas adolescents benefit a lot from making use of informal sources of support, findings show that the addition of mediators as a source of support gives the highest competency in healthy conflict resolution;
- Peer mediation programmes are very important for students who experience challenging situations (e.g., bullying, victimisation, or externalising behaviours). Findings demonstrate that when adolescents display high levels of maladjustment and want to get help and guidance from others, they prefer disclosing and getting support from mediators than from parents, teachers, or friends;
- Healthy conflict resolution competence positively predicts adolescents' behavioural, emotional, social, and educational adjustment. Adolescents with high competency in conflict resolution are less likely to display negative behaviours or experience negative emotionality but are more likely to experience positive social relations and enhanced academic performance. No gender or school-type differences were identified, which means that the benefits of healthy conflict resolution support extend to all adolescents, irrespective of their gender or which type of school they attend;
- The two most essential indicators that contribute to the development of VEI students' competency in healthy conflict resolution were (i) schools making use of adaptive conflict resolution strategies, and (ii) adolescents making use of mediators;
- Analyses showed that to promote healthy conflict resolution competence in VEI students through life skills education, programmes should prioritise negotiation skills, kindness, and respect for diversity;
- The most important determinant of healthy conflict resolution competence in students who attend general schools is adolescents making use of mediators as a source of conflict resolution support;
- Some drivers of healthy conflict resolution competence in general schools' students are gender-sensitive; for instance, parental monitoring enhances competency to resolve conflicts in an adaptive manner, but only in boys.

The two programmes SCFS and PMCR, which are key components of UNICEF's contribution lead to a change in the school environment, develop children's skills and their perceptions of education. In addition, data from the current evaluation shows that all teachers and principals highly appreciate the impact of peer mediation on students' attitudes and skills:

*'We had a center for mediation where children could go, it also helped to solve conflicts in the family, not just at school. Mediation was like a contract between the mother and the child.'*¹²⁷

Teachers share that students got soft skills that they couldn't get in regular school classes:

'The children changed. What we got during the trainings; we can't get during regular school hours. There was a new element in our school curriculum. They get these soft skills during the trainings, like teamwork, which is different in the lessons from teamwork during the trainings. Children said no one had talked to them like that before. Children's relationships changed and they became more sensitive towards other children's feelings, before they didn't notice if someone went sad to school, but now they notice and they find out someone's relative died. Children had their eyes opened for new things.'

*'We also had other trainings for young leaders. Then they went to their organizations and continued applying their skills. They were empowered in these trainings. They truly became leaders due to the trainings; you can't give these life social competences in a regular lesson at the school.'*¹²⁸

They also believe that trainings of UNICEF are an investment in children's future:

¹²⁷ Interviews and FGDs with teachers and parents

¹²⁸ *ibid*

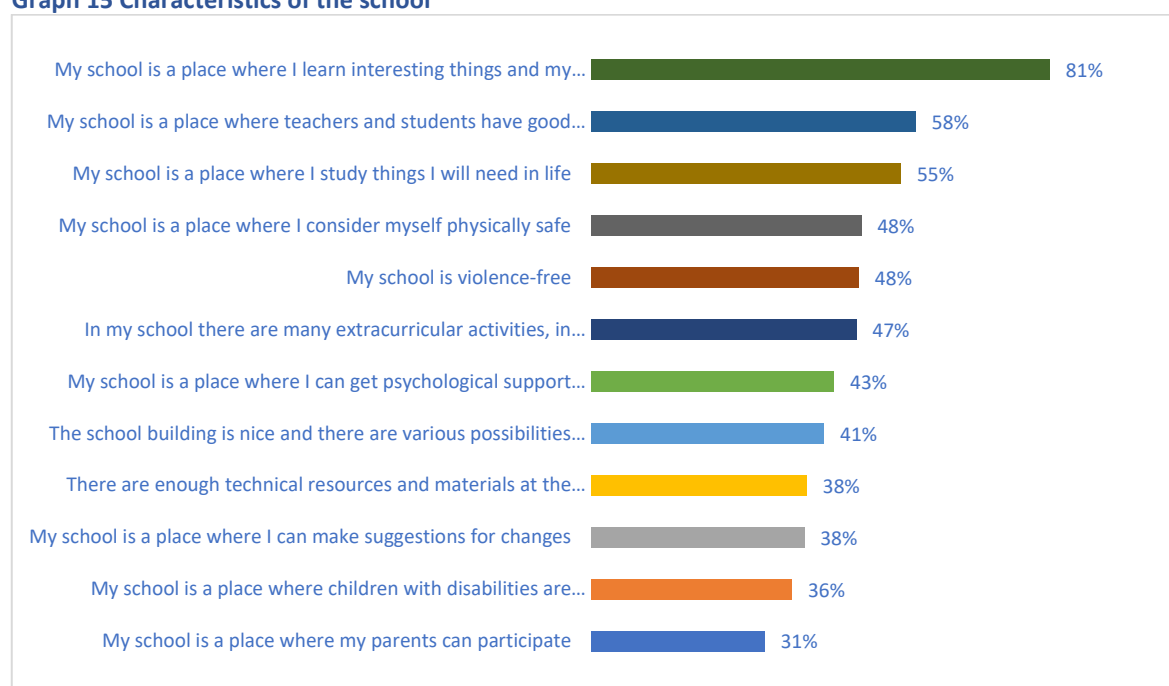
‘We learned new methods. We are proud of our students. The trainings were very good, children developed their skills, and we are very happy. These trainings are an investment in the future. Use what you got from us in the future, at the university, at work, wherever you want.’¹²⁹

According to principals, the trainings in conflict mediation helped decrease conflicts and stress situations for the whole school community:

‘Now the school environment is better, children and teachers communicate as equals, there are less conflicts, we dealt with stress situations. Because children and teachers learned to live in peace all together. And if conflicts arise, we know how to deal with them.’¹³⁰

Children’s opinions on the characteristics of their school are shown on graph 15. They most often (more than 40% of them) characterize their school as a place where: they learn interesting things that they will need in life and their skills are developed; teachers and students have good relationships; they consider themselves physically safe in a violence-free environment; there are extracurricular activities; they can get psychological support when they need it; the school building is nice. A smaller share of students (less than 40%) has indicated that there are enough technical resources and materials at the schools, they and their parents can make suggestions for changes and children with disabilities are accepted.

Graph 15 Characteristics of the school



Source: Quantitative survey with students

Note: The respondents can choose more than one answer that is why the resulting percentage exceeds 100%.

This data confirms the opinion of teachers regarding the change in the school environment, in relation to the skills provide and relationships formed, as well as the feeling of safety and violence-free environment for the children. At the same time, the two key topics, related to inclusion of children with disabilities and the level of participation of parents and students are still an issue and do not characterise the schools at this stage. This means that the degree of impact of UNICEF’s contribution to the level of participation is still low.

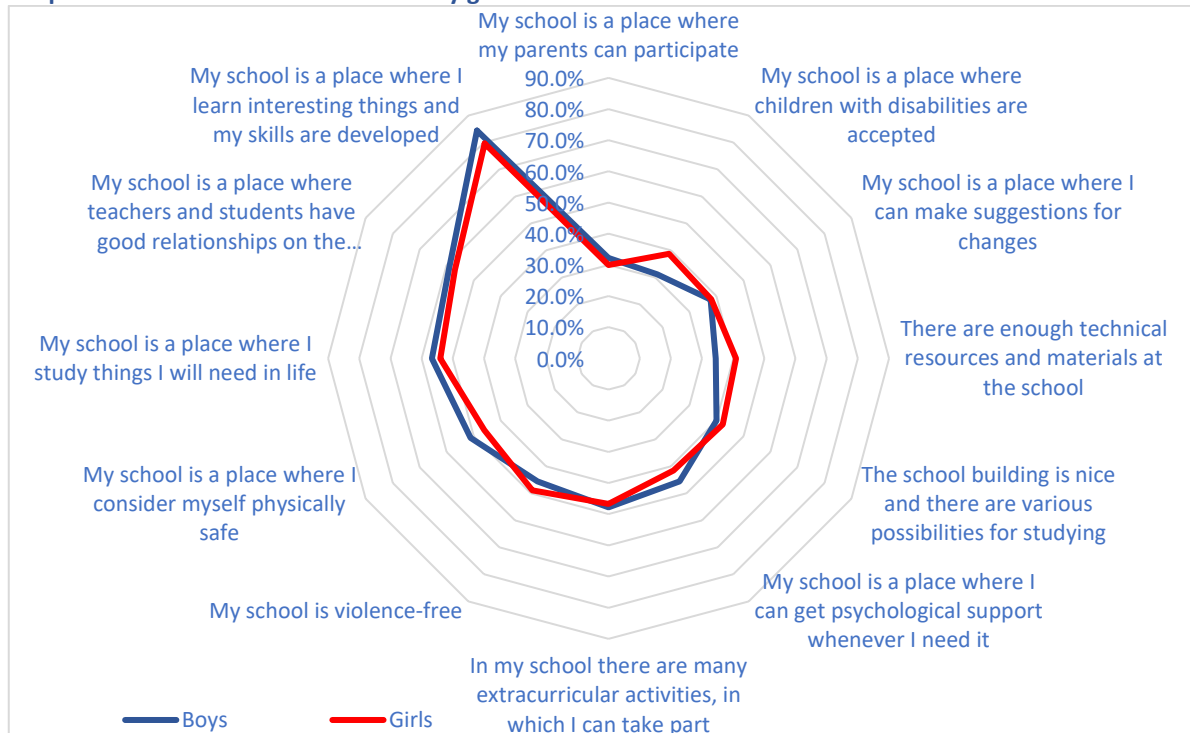
When it comes to the characteristics of the school, analysed through the gender of students, there are not very significant differences in their answers (graph 16). The only difference could be seen in

¹²⁹ ibid

¹³⁰ Interviews with principals

the slightly bigger share of girls saying that their school is a place where children with disabilities are accepted. This data shows that the impact is similar for boys and girls and that the development of perceptions towards the school, relationships with teachers, as well as level of participation is similar for both genders.

Graph 16 Characteristics of the school by gender



Source: Quantitative survey with students

Note: The respondents can choose more than one answer that is why the resulting percentage exceeds 100%.

5.5.2. Unintended Positive/Negative Effects of the Interventions

The unintended positive effects of the interventions are related to the additional good and sustainable results that are achieved. School communities feel empowered after participating in UNICEF's programmes and now look for other possibilities to apply for projects and teachers have become proactive:

*'Everyone is happy with UNICEF's activities and say there are good results. One of the results, for example, is expanding schools' possibilities. For example, the schools that were included in the projects, before that, the pedagogical staff in these schools was inactive and thought the system is functioning like it always did and everything should be provided by the principal. Now more than 50% of teachers became active, they now make their suggestions for development of the schools without projects at the level of city, region and they turn to us from where they can find resources for different activities. They now have small projects, but they found them themselves.'*¹³¹

Furthermore, due to working with UNICEF, principals have realised the significance of relationships with parents and teachers and have made steps towards creating a community through a local organisation:

'Working with UNICEF we understood that you can't help but create your own community organization with the parents, the teachers. We have our own organization, a school organization called 'Together next to each other with the school'. We have those problems that arise and can solve this with this organisation, by working together on projects. It is necessary to rely on all our school community. We

¹³¹ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

have our own account, we sometimes look for sponsors or, on the contrary, we represent from our public-school organization.’¹³²

Additionally, partners indicate that changing the attitudes and way of thinking of young people significantly impacts the whole local community:

‘We work since 2018, the approach that UNICEF chose is the development of skills and competencies, it significantly impacts the local community and they become agents of change in our local community, and they start such small groups around them which are the game changers. It influences the older people and thus the change happen. It is hard to change the older, but if you invest in the young people they slowly and quietly begin to convey these correct thoughts and actions to the entire community and will change the community.’¹³³

When it comes to other unintended effects of UNICEF’s interventions, seen mainly through the recommendations of the principals and teachers, they create an expectation that there will be continuous material support, repairs, and rehabilitation of buildings.

In summary, the impact of the Education programme of UNICEF Ukraine can be seen, as well as measured, through the increased access for all children to quality education, especially most vulnerable groups, and changes in the levels of their perception about the school environment and soft and life skills. This program was implemented in parallel with the educational reform NUS, which means that the reform has its own results, but the contribution of UNICEF can be seen in the schools, in which they implemented interventions. The impact assessments of the two main programmes SCFS and PMCR show that there are changes in the relationships in the school community, the attitudes of children towards school, their feelings of safety, their skills for conflict resolutions and other soft skills, etc. The students from schools that participated in the interventions, describe the school as a place where it is interesting and safe for them, they gain life skills and have extracurricular activities. In spite of this data, regarding impact, two areas are still questionable, with a lower level of change – inclusion of children with disabilities and participation. At the level of school system, the interventions affect teachers’ proactiveness and create preconditions for their desire to become agents of change, feel empowered and actively participate in the change of the school environment. However, they still rely on UNICEF’s continuous support, especially in terms of repairs and rehabilitation of buildings.

5.6. SUSTAINABILITY

5.6.1. National Policy

It should be pointed out again that the implementation of the Education programme is in its mid-term phase, which means that measuring sustainability takes into account the on-going interventions and makes assumptions on their levels of sustainability, although they are still on-going. Additionally, COVID-19 impacted the level of sustainability, similarly to many other aspects since it has slowed down interventions in 2020 and many activities had to be conducted online. Also, the pandemic affected the implementation of national policy and reforms. However, the available information shows that policies are developing, although slower.

In the field of preschool education, in 2020, the basic component of preschool education was approved, which became a State standard in the beginning of 2021¹³⁴. The support of UNICEF in this

¹³² Interviews with principals

¹³³ Interviews and FGDs with partners

¹³⁴ MoES, 2020, New places in kindergartens, development concept and basic component of preschool education: MoES presents ten main events in preschool in 2020, retrieved from: <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/novi-miscya-u-ditsadkah-koncepciya-rozvitku-ta-bazovij-komponent-doshkilnoyi-osviti-mon-prezentuye-desyat-osnovnih-podij-u-doshkilli-u-2020-roci>

Government portal, 2020, Education and Science Reform, retrieved from: <https://rakhiv-osvita.gov.ua/en/2021/01/13/%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%B9->

field is related to technical assistance for piloting and implementing the ECERS, whose implementation was postponed due to COVID-19, but it still shows the efforts of UNICEF are sustainable, since it is already planned in the national policy. Even if UNICEF's support doesn't continue, the implementation is already on-going.

In the field of primary and secondary education, there has been support to evidence-based policy-making in terms of PISA, SCORE, etc. Secondly, the training curriculum in peer-mediation and inclusive education became a part of the in-service teacher-training curriculum.

*'Based on our experiment in Luhansk and Donetsk, a program has been developed at the level of the Ministry for such trainings as in the Safe school program, to happen in each school in Ukraine. This includes inclusive education, Safe school, a non-violent environment and mediation'*¹³⁵.

However, a big part of respondents talks about the need for a change in the system for higher education of teachers, which is the shortest way to sustainability and system change. This component still hasn't been developed.

Another factor, influencing sustainability, is the adoption of the Safe School concept, which has become a part of the Action Plan of MoES in 2021 and is in the process of endorsement:

*'In the Safe school project, it is planned in 2021-2022 to disseminate the experience and all the online instruments in the whole country'*¹³⁶.

In terms of policy, a Youth Strategy has been adopted in 2020, as well as an online platform for U Report. This data shows that most of UNICEF's efforts at a national level are sustainable, in the degree up to which they become a part of national policies. At the same time, some of the stakeholders share that it will be difficult to continue some of the interventions, related to the national level policies and practices, if UNICEF ceases to support them, such as inclusive resource centres:

*'Today on a national level we are creating a centre for the professional development of teachers. There should be a lot of them, they should be there for several communities. Such a centre should quickly respond to the needs of teachers, but they have not yet started their work, the local government does not yet know how to support them, because this is a new structure. We still have a big problem with inclusive resource centres and if UNICEF ceases to support them, there is nobody else'*¹³⁷.

This means that external support, as well as advocacy activities are still necessary to ensure that the national policy will integrate all achievements.

5.6.2. Capacity of local stakeholders and IPs

The Educational Programme has identified and built capacities at a national and local level. National capacity is built mostly through advocacy efforts and technical assistance in implementation of different ratings, scales, advocacy mechanisms and strategy development. As it was mentioned before, most of these efforts are sustainable due to the fact that some of the policies were adopted, but some of them were postponed, which means that additional efforts are needed. When it comes to local capacity, it should be noted that the most visible is the change at the level of the school system. There is no data that there were efforts towards increasing the capacity of local administrations or oblasts/hromadas. Another fact that influences the level of sustainability is the implementation of interventions in Donetsk and Luhansk, meaning that sustainability can be viewed regarding these specific oblasts, but also regarding the possibility to disseminate results at the national level:

[%D0%B1%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%B9-%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82-%D0%B4%D0%BE%D1%88%D0%BA%D1%96%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%97-%D0%BE/](#)

¹³⁵ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

¹³⁶ ibid

¹³⁷ Interviews and FGDs with partners

*'We tested the model of Safe and Child-Friendly school in Eastern Ukraine and then recommended it at a national level. I think it's related to the fact that we used Eastern Ukraine to test programs, because funding came there and then wanted to spread it nationally. I also work nationally as well, in all the programs'*¹³⁸.

In terms of sustainable change at the school level, the key factor for sustainability is the knowledge and skills of teachers and parents, as well as the change in attitudes and possibilities to apply these skills and knowledge in the long-term. According to stakeholders, the results from the trainings are sustainable, since they were well organised, they had continuous support after the trainings, developed partnerships, and there were materials that were developed and provided:

*'I really like the approach of the specialists who work on the trainings. Very literate people. Very professionally in terms of what I understand from psychology, what is necessary to understand the questions that are asked. Also, they didn't leave us after the trainings. We had many video conferences after the trainings. If there are any problems, they were there, from La Strada, let's say I needed materials on the project, I called, and she immediately sent me these materials'*¹³⁹.

*'And, of course, with the help of these projects a partnership has been established and we can ask them questions and discuss with them'*¹⁴⁰.

*'All projects of UNICEF are in line with both the sustainable development goals and also all projects didn't include only training and mentoring interventions, but also developing products which can be used by teachers in the future, like leaflets, booklets, informational materials that are evidence of sustainability, which can be used for a long period of time, by teachers as well'*¹⁴¹.

Another aspect of sustainability is the exchange of experience between schools, as well as the empowerment of school communities to seek possibilities, which creates a community of parents, teachers, and principals and even some schools create formal organisations to make use of these opportunities:

*'Other schools thought we had very interesting things and they wanted to know about it as well, so we held a seminar with other schools to tell them what mediation is, to solve all conflicts. We exchange literature with other schools.'*¹⁴²

*'We had an interesting round table with people from the project and we took part in it. The Safe school project was very big, all Ukraine knew about it. At this round table we talked about the results, how it influenced others, there was a principal, coordinator, teacher, and a student to present the different points of view. UNICEF was also present in some of the training to conduct monitoring.'*¹⁴³

*'After participating in the project 'Safe and child-friendly school' we found sponsors for us to talk to. They made a sports gym. We have a big school and building and a small gym, uncomfortable. Now, the hall is so comfortable, and the floors are normal, lighting is normal, you can use it during school hours and after that'*¹⁴⁴.

It is also important to point out that buildings and equipment are a factor that contributes to sustainability, since they are used in the long-term and all school communities share, they are happy with them.

Stakeholders also share a number of challenges towards sustainability, which should be considered. Firstly, not all teachers accept and implement the new information in the same way. Change if a long

¹³⁸ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

¹³⁹ Interviews with principals

¹⁴⁰ *ibid*

¹⁴¹ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

¹⁴² Interviews with principals

¹⁴³ Interviews and FGDs with teachers and parents

¹⁴⁴ Interview with principals

process in post-Soviet societies and there needs to be support and more efforts to achieve a sustainable systematic change:

‘Some time they will be sustainable because everything in education changes very quickly. For a certain period, skills that they have would be enough. But if we do not support the training program, we know that teachers will come back to the practices where it is easier for them. It is easier to talk to the whole class and write on the black board than to think, how to give an assignment to children in groups, what to hang on the blackboard on the right and to show on the screen on the left. If this is not stimulated, after a while only those will be left who are capable to produce the product itself, but they are few’¹⁴⁵.

Another factor is that the level of participation of the whole pedagogical teams at the school is not fully ensured. This implies that a change has started, but in order to reach a higher level of sustainability, this participation and capacity development should continue. What’s more, stakeholders share a concern that without UNICEF’s support, they won’t be able to continue working, due to lack of capacity:

‘Trainings without UNICEF’s support? We always need support for such things. When people came from UNICEF, they were already trained and wanted to help us and show us. When we work ourselves, we think that we are coping with this situation. When they started working with us and showing us, we saw we did not fully cope with the situation’¹⁴⁶.

‘What about the sustainability of the activities with UNICEF. That is, if they stop helping can you proceed alone? Not in this moment. The school budget is low enough to permit this’¹⁴⁷.

It should also be noted that, according to stakeholders work on dissemination is a challenge, since it needs to be done together with the MoES and sometimes, there are constant changes of decision-makers:

‘It should be probably the most sustainable approach, you know, pushing the government to fulfil your function, you know, assessment there and actors have to take. So, this as I said something, which I guess could have been done better as for their approaches’¹⁴⁸.

‘I know that the Ministry is interested in this project and would like to disseminate in the whole of Ukraine. But this work on dissemination is slow, since people constantly change at the ministry, you have to make new partnerships again, they have to learn, to make an evaluation, to know whether it is good or bad’¹⁴⁹.

Last but not least, IPs share that their work depends on the projects that are available and when they end, they need to seek new possibilities, but they don’t always have enough capacity to take on new ones:

‘It is clear that when the supply time ends it will end, but at the same time we are, in principle, mentally and physically ready. Well, let’s just say that we are not allowed to work with other donors because we have almost one hundred percent workload and we cannot switch’¹⁵⁰.

In summary, at this point of the realisation of the Education programme, sustainability of achieved results can be seen through several aspects. At the level of the concrete schools, sustainable change is ensured through capacity development, renovation of buildings and provision of materials. The degree of sustainability could be evaluated as moderate, having in mind that there needs to be a sustainable change in attitudes and motivations of teachers, which requires more time, efforts, and support. At this stage, there is a risk of going back to the status quo, without these continuous efforts and

¹⁴⁵ Interviews and FGDs with partners

¹⁴⁶ Interviews with principals

¹⁴⁷ Interviews and FGDs with teachers and parents

¹⁴⁸ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

¹⁴⁹ *ibid*

¹⁵⁰ Interviews and FGDs with partners

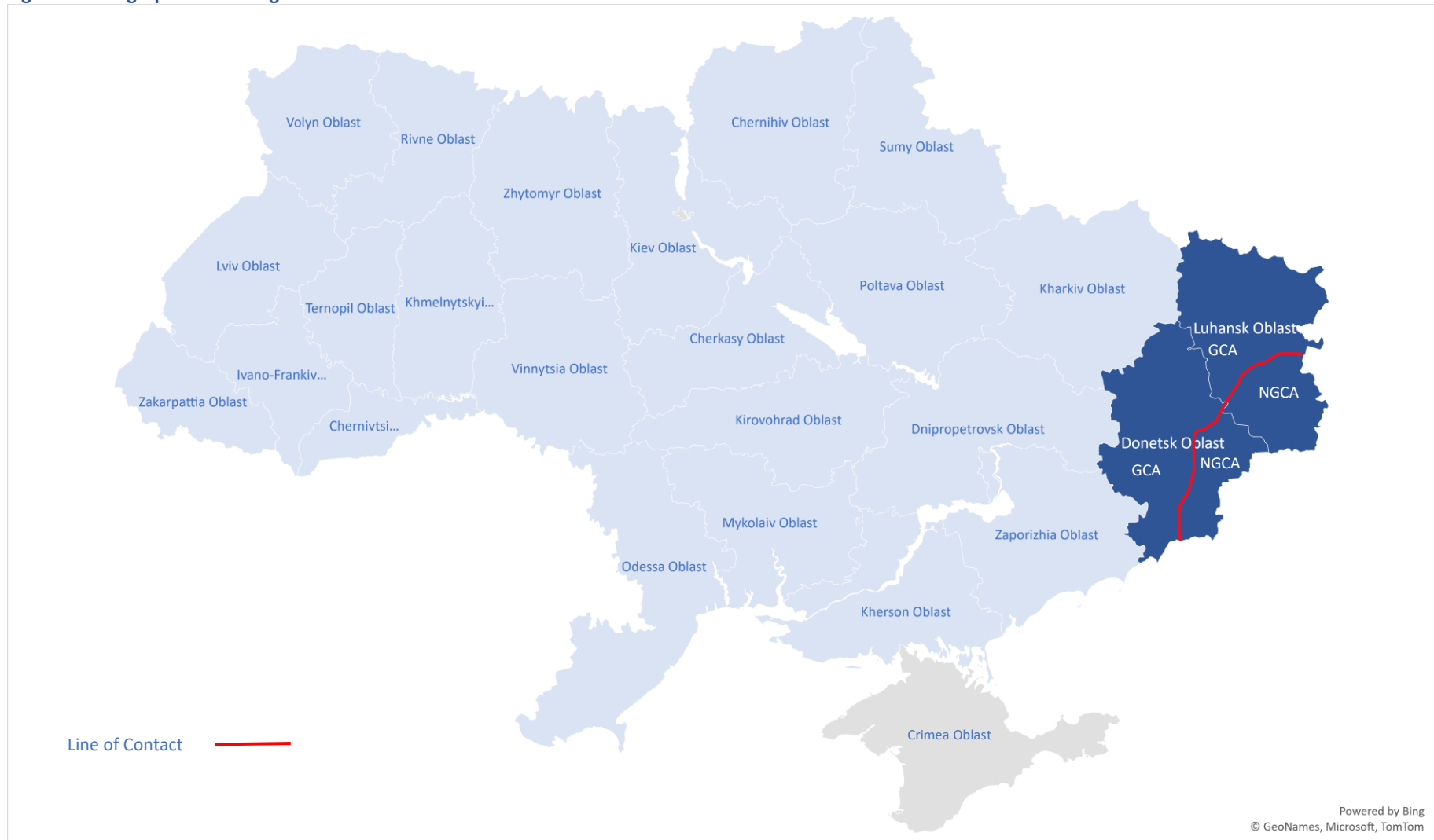
resources. At the oblast level, change could be seen in the schools that took part in the programme, since they have disseminated and exchanged good practices and experience that they gained as a result of UNICEF's interventions, which they talk about as a positive and sustainable change. At the national level, one of the key tasks, showing a high level of sustainability, is the inclusion of this experience in policy and decision-making, which is a process that has started, but still is on-going and more efforts need to be put into ensuring a sustainable inclusion of results from the interventions into the national policy. The capacity that was created at the level of educational institutions, as well as on a local level, could be disseminated successfully at a national level.

5.7. OTHER CRITERIA (COVERAGE, COORDINATION, APPROPRIATENESS, QUALITY AND PROTECTION) AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

5.7.1. Coverage and Coordination

The Education programme of UNICEF Ukraine aims to ensure that all children in Ukraine, especially the most disadvantaged and conflict-affected, have access to inclusive and quality school education and early learning. As it was mentioned before, the programme covers both national and oblast levels. At the national level, technical assistance, and policy advice, as well as a data collection mechanism were implemented. When it comes to implementation of pilot interventions and modelling, they are only in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (both GCA and NGCA), although the programme is oriented towards all children in Ukraine (figure 12). Some of the interventions are oriented towards conflict-affected children, while others are oriented towards marginalised children with different levels of vulnerability. The positioning of interventions only in Donetsk and Luhansk helps to reach the most vulnerable children and families, but at the same time raises the issue how will results at a national level be implemented.

Figure 12 Geographical coverage of interventions



When choosing schools, in which the interventions would be implemented, different criteria on behalf of UNICEF has been applied that could be distance from the line of conflict, needs for rehabilitation of school facilities, presence of IDP children, etc. In the period of implementation of interventions, the activities get more and more focused on the distance closest to (0-20 km) the contact line as the area that is most affected by the conflict. This means that, in terms of reaching vulnerable groups, the focus is on conflict-affected children. Additionally, the COVID 19 pandemic put millions of people in Eastern Ukraine, including children and youth in a vulnerable situation, which was addressed by UNICEF's interventions. *'In 2020, the armed conflict and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continued affecting millions of people in eastern Ukraine, especially children, young people and people with disabilities living in both the government (GCA) and non-government (NGCA) controlled areas.'*¹⁵¹

Oriented towards the most vulnerable groups of children, the programme of UNICEF Ukraine is in compliance with the goals of the educational reform and at the same time, concentrates its efforts in ensuring access to quality education for children in two oblasts of the country. The coordination of the efforts in the humanitarian plan is implemented by the Education Cluster, in which UNICEF takes part, which aims to prevent overlap with other interventions and efforts in the sector. The achieved results are still not institutionalised and mainstreamed in national policies. Although data shows there is a possibility for implementation at the territory of the whole country, as it is mentioned in the part on sustainability.

5.7.2. Gender and Age-Appropriateness

The design and implementation of the UNICEF programme is age-appropriate, since the separate components and outputs are oriented towards different ages of children, taking into account their specific needs. Their needs, related to the age, are also viewed through the level of vulnerability and the particularities, connected with it:

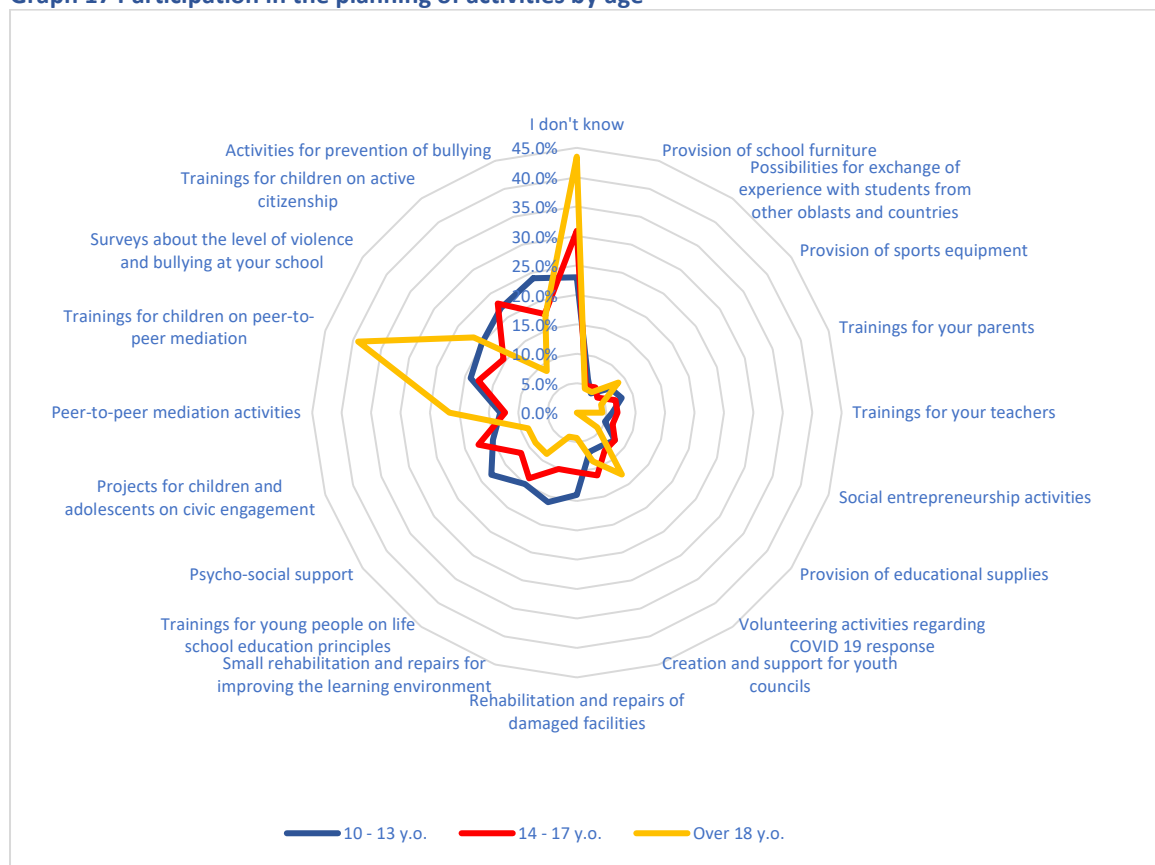
*'Gender equality was a requirement from La Strada when we formed the groups of mediators'*¹⁵².

The activities at the schools, as it is shown on graph 18, are oriented towards children of different ages. There are some differences between children's participation according to their age group, which comes from the design of the programmes, on one hand, but also from their different needs. Children between 10-13 years old more often share they took part in psycho-social support activities, as well as small rehabilitation and repairs. At the same time, a bit more children between 14 and 17 years old say they have participated in projects on adolescent civic engagement and a bigger share of them don't know in what they have participated. Young people over 18 years old have mostly replied they don't know in what activities they have taken part and the rest have indicated trainings on peer-to-peer mediation, as well as provision of educational supplies.

¹⁵¹ UNICEF Ukraine Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4: 1 January - 31 December 2020, retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/unicef-ukraine-humanitarian-situation-report-no-4-1-january-31-december-2020>

¹⁵² Interviews and FGDs with teachers and parents

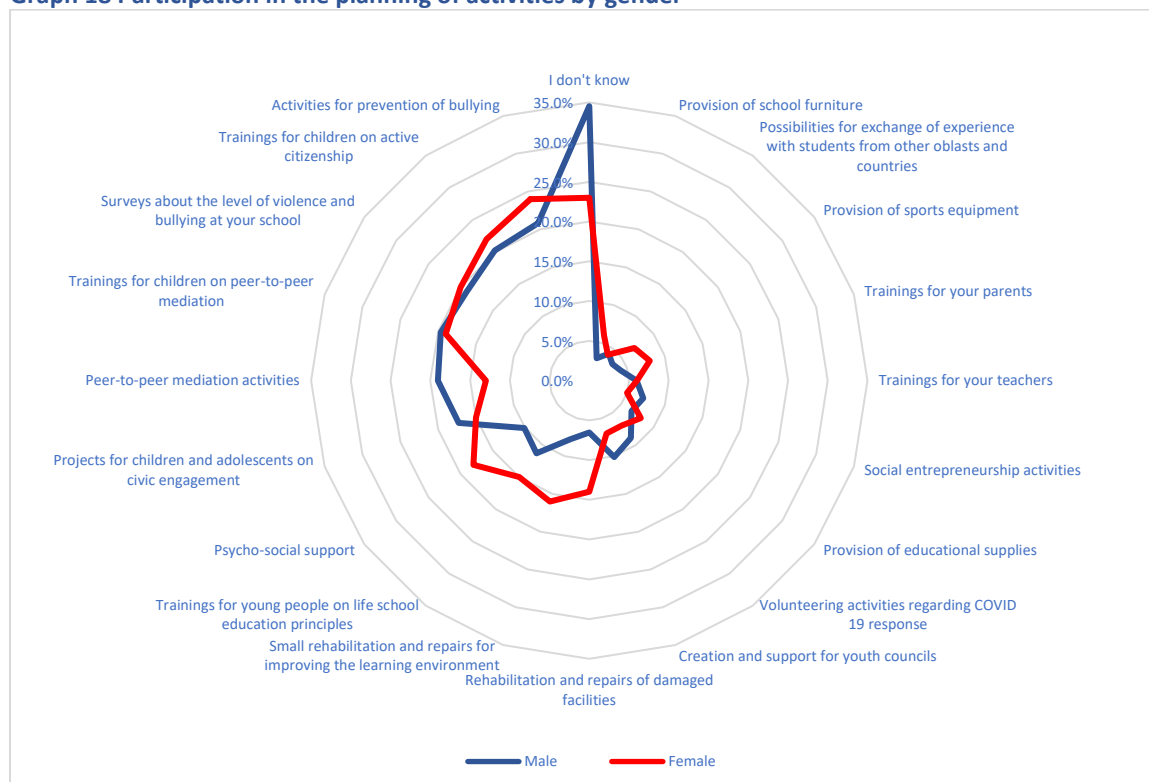
Graph 17 Participation in the planning of activities by age



Source: Quantitative survey with students

When it comes to the level of appropriateness of activities to the gender of students, the design and implementation of programmes is not oriented towards a specific group, since both boy and girls equally take part in them. As it could be seen on graph 19, boys more often don't know in what they participated, which could mean they were less involved in the overall process. The rest have indicated that they took part in peer-to-peer mediation activities, social entrepreneurship activities and volunteering related to COVID-19 a bit more than girls. At the same time, more girls than boys have indicated they participated in psycho-social support, rehabilitation, and repairs, creation, and support for youth councils. This most likely means that there are no significant gender differences in the activities and all children participate equally.

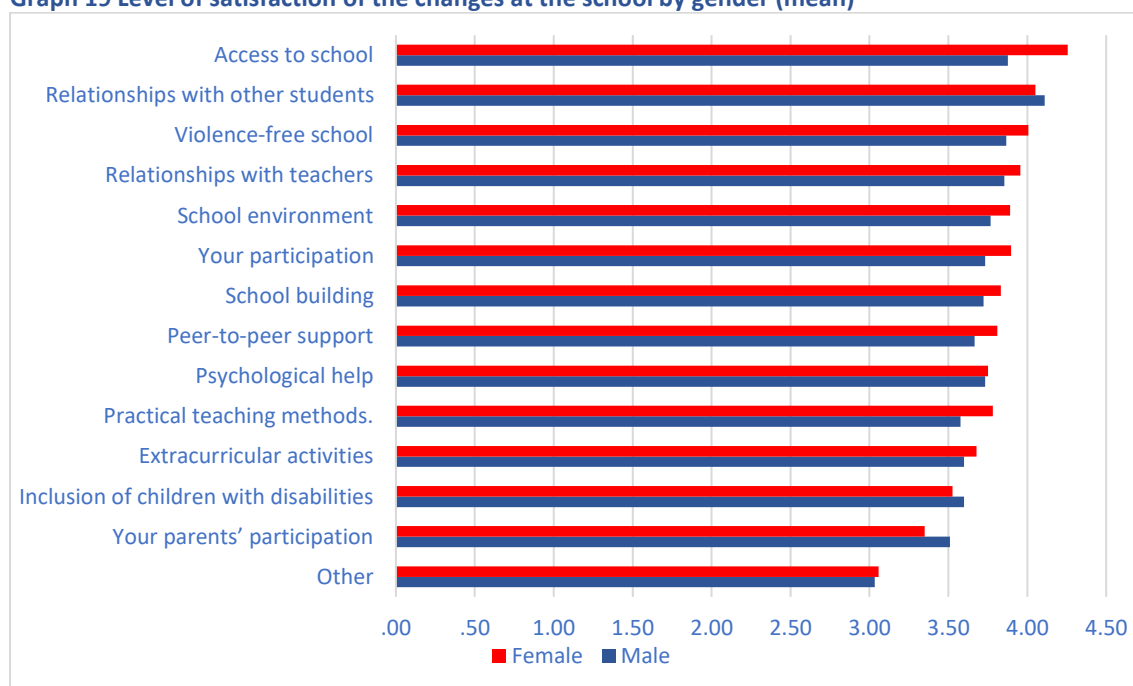
Graph 18 Participation in the planning of activities by gender



Source: Quantitative survey with students

The data on graph 19 shows a similar level of satisfaction between boys and girls, there are no significant differences. There is a slightly bigger share of girls, satisfied of the level of access to school, as well as practical teaching methods. On the whole, girls are more satisfied than boys with most changes, with the exception of relationships with other students, inclusion of children with disabilities and the level of their parents' participation, which boys appreciate higher.

Graph 19 Level of satisfaction of the changes at the school by gender (mean)



Source: Quantitative survey with students

5.7.3. Equity Issues

The Education programme of UNICEF is oriented towards supporting access to quality education for all children, with a focus on the most vulnerable. The Situation analysis (SitAn) (2015)¹⁵³ identified challenges to the realization of children's rights, related to different equity issues like poverty, system inefficiencies, social norms, political instability and conflict, and the state of the economy. Inequalities in rural areas reflect high poverty, low quality of services, and high costs of service provision in these areas. Additionally, before the start of the war conflict in 2014, children in the south and east seemed to fare better than those in the west in many aspects. *'The conflict has created unprecedented challenges to the fulfilment of children's rights throughout Ukraine, however, and especially in the conflict-affected areas of the south and east.'*¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, gender equality is a basic notion in the Constitution and laws of Ukraine, and the level of access to education is similar for girls and boys, yet women are disproportionately represented among the poor and economically disempowered. When it comes to ethnicity, Roma children represent a marginalised group.

In the CPD¹⁵⁵, it is indicated that, in relation to equity, the biggest barriers are: for children with disabilities in terms of inclusion in the educational system; Roma children and children in rural areas in terms of enrolment in pre-school education and drop-out rates among Roma girls; internally displaced children and children living in conflict areas in terms of disruption of education. The design of the programme adequately reflects the equity issues, identified in the SitAn, since the main vulnerable groups and their challenges in access to education are properly addressed and all outputs are oriented towards ensuring this access.

The implementation of the programme in Donetsk and Luhansk ensured reaching the conflict-affected children, as well as children in rural areas, both girls and boys. At the same time, however, there is no data on the concrete number of children with disabilities, although anecdotal data confirms there were a number of interventions, supporting this target group. The situation is similar for Roma children, since stakeholders don't share concrete issues that have been resolved for this group of children. This is related, up to a high degree, not just with implementing interventions, but also with the system for data collection, whose design doesn't allow measuring equity issues for some of these groups like Roma children, children with disabilities, out-of-school children.

In summary, the Education programme is planned and applied in a way to meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups of children. These groups are defined clearly, and the design of the programme seems age and gender appropriate. The pilot interventions in Donetsk and Luhansk succeed in reaching the most vulnerable conflict-affected children, as well as children in rural areas, but need to be disseminated in the whole country, in order to support access to quality education for all children. The achievement of this goals requires a clear M&E system, which would allow to disaggregate data for all groups of children.

5.8. HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

The synergy between the development and humanitarian interface on a national and subnational level has been explored, using the Humanitarian and development nexus¹⁵⁶. This approach acknowledges that humanitarian and development actors need to collaborate side-by-side at global and country levels. For education, this means that education specialists, Ministry authorities, donors, and policymakers, amongst

¹⁵³ UNICEF Ukraine, (2015), Situation Analysis of Children in Ukraine

¹⁵⁴ ibid

¹⁵⁵ UNICEF Ukraine, Country programme document 2018-2022

¹⁵⁶ UNEG, (2018), The Humanitarian-Development Nexus – What do evaluations have to say, retrieved from: <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/2872>

others, need to find ways to improve coordination across their humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities as they consider both short- and long-term education responses.¹⁵⁷

During the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), the United Nations Secretary General, eight UN agencies, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the World Bank committed to a 'new way of working', aimed at reducing risk and vulnerability over time and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In 2017, a third pillar, 'peace', was added, creating a triple nexus where development and humanitarian work should align. The resulting 'New Way of Working' framework seeks to transcend the humanitarian and development spheres of international assistance in crisis contexts by enabling them to work together towards collective outcomes and shared goals.¹⁵⁸ A collective outcome is a concrete and measurable result that humanitarian, development and other relevant actors want to achieve jointly, usually over a period of 3- 5 years, in a country to reduce people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities and increase their resilience.

The analysis of the humanitarian development nexus (HDN) should take into consideration the main goal of the educational reform in Ukraine, which is *'to create a school that will be pleasant to go to and will provide the students not only with knowledge, as is the case now, but also with the ability to apply it in real life'*¹⁵⁹. The education outcome in CPD states that *'By 2022, all children and adolescents in Ukraine, especially those disadvantaged and affected by the conflict, access inclusive and quality school education and early learning while enjoying opportunities for meaningful participation and civic engagement.'* From the analysis of these main goals, it could be seen that the NUS reform aims to ensure access to quality and practically oriented education for all children, while the goal of the Education programme is in line with this, adding a further focus on conflict-affected children and all other vulnerable groups, for whom access to inclusive and quality education should be ensured.

The Humanitarian Development Plan¹⁶⁰, in 2019, defines three collective outcomes for development partners, the government and donors: *"Collective Outcomes' towards which humanitarian, recovery and development actors will contribute. 1. Affected people have access to adequate protection and means of livelihoods; 2. Affected people have improved access to quality and affordable services; 3. Affected people have consistent access to critical civilian structures.'*

The Education Cluster, in its strategy from 2019¹⁶¹, defines the following overarching goal and outcomes: *'to ensure access to safe and quality education for children and adolescents affected by the crisis in Ukraine prioritizing those who are most vulnerable and strengthen the capacity of the education system and education facilities (including schools, kindergartens, vocational schools, after school education facilities, orphanages and higher education facilities) to deliver a timely, coordinated and evidence-based response to those in need.'* These two outcomes are in compliance with collective outcomes of the Humanitarian response plan *'Improve access to safe school (education facilities) that provide quality education services to conflict affected learners in a protective learning environment and Improve the quality of teaching (Collective outcome 2) and learning for conflict affected and vulnerable children and teachers (Collective outcomes 1 and 2)'*¹⁶².

The presence of a collective outcome and the compliance with it ensures coordination of the activities towards access to education of conflict-affected children.

¹⁵⁷ UNICEF, (2019), Navigating the humanitarian-development nexus in forced displacement contexts, retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/4866/file>

¹⁵⁸ Humanitarian Development Nexus, New way of working, (2020), retrieved from: <https://www.unocha.org/fr/themes/humanitarian-development-nexus>

¹⁵⁹ MoES, New Ukrainian School, retrieved from: <https://mon.gov.ua/eng/tag/nova-ukrainska-shkola>

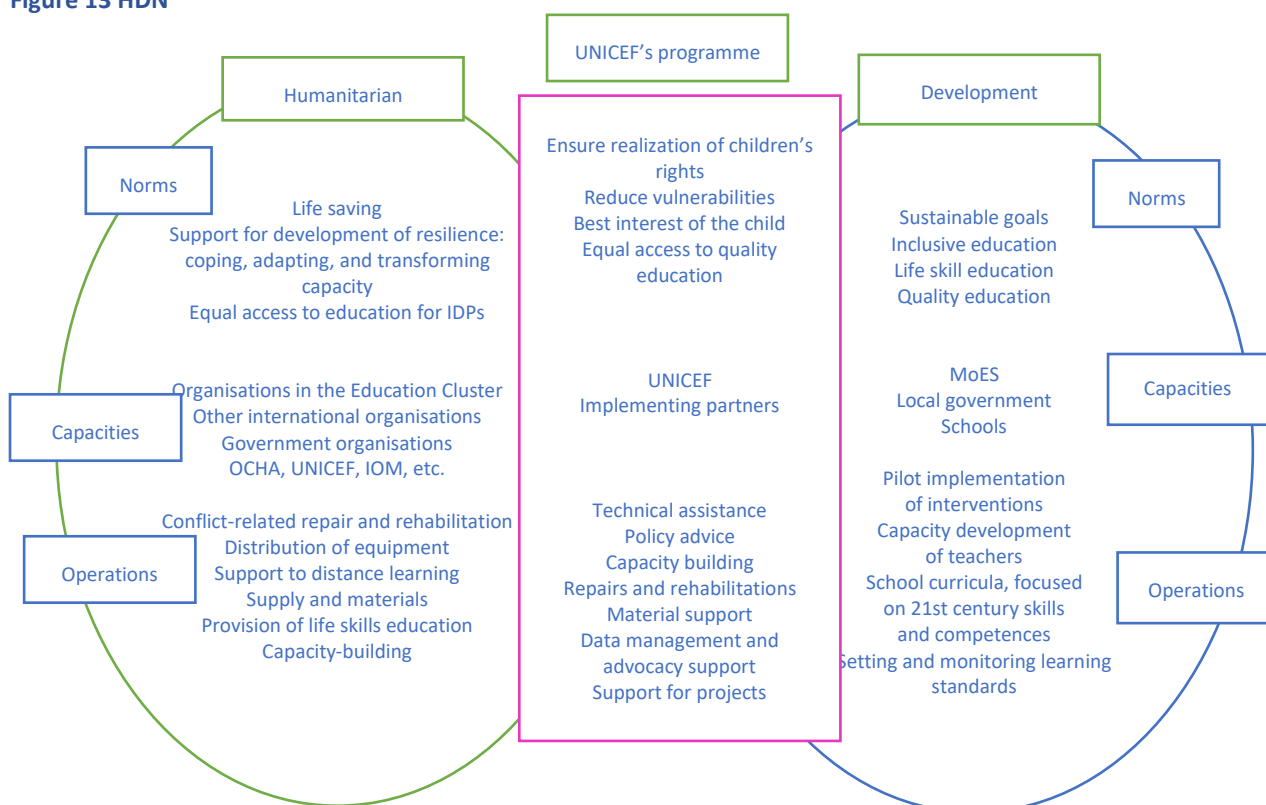
¹⁶⁰ Humanitarian response plan 2019, retrieved from: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ukraine_2019_humanitarian_response_plan_en.pdf

¹⁶¹ Ukraine Education Cluster, Education cluster strategy, Ukraine 2019 - 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/ru/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-education-cluster-strategy-final-engukr>

¹⁶² ibid

Another aspect of the HDN is coherence between humanitarian response and developmental goals. Figure 13 presents this connection, taking into account the main norms, principles and standards, the capacity and coordination towards achieving the goals, as well as specific activities, which are implemented, towards achieving these goals.

Figure 13 HDN



The analysis of HDN guiding norms and principles, as well as UNICEF's programme, shows that there is a complementarity of norms and UNICEF, led by the principle of the best interest of the child, makes a contribution to the humanitarian goals, as well as to the goals of the reform. This contribution is amplified by the participation of UNICEF in the Education cluster and the fact that the programme has been agreed upon with the government makes it easier establish this connection. The variety of interventions in the UNICEF programme is relevant to the humanitarian, as well as development objectives. As it was mentioned in previous parts of this report, interventions are realised in Donetsk and Luhansk, which makes UNICEF's response more related to the humanitarian context. Taking into account that the reform is entering in a next stage of its implementation and the immediate effects from the conflict are not as strong, probably it is necessary to shift to a dissemination of the achieved results to the rest of the country:

*'It has an impact. I can now explain why. Because we held joint conferences, and the same experience of communities from the East that used tools developed by UNICEF under the Safe School program has already been disseminated to other communities. That is, they were not limited to the East. The schools themselves distributed. They shared their experience in Safe School projects. Well and besides it is necessary to tell about estimations or interrogations which we together with UNICEF did and through Institute of educational analytics, and then UNICEF experts analysed and already gave us ready offers'*¹⁶³

'I'm talking now, for example, about the Safe School project, which has become a good tool for measurement. Therefore, this tool can be used by other schools, because according to the concept of NUS,

¹⁶³ Interviews with national/local stakeholders

*each school should be safe for students, so it is a good tool that has become and can be distributed nationwide*¹⁶⁴

*'It depended on UNICEF because we offered for everyone, UNICEF decided which specific school to choose. Yes and this aspect is very important, that the experience we received would be extended to all schools through some projects. This is relevant, because it's the basis of the New Ukrainian school, the fact that it must be implemented in all institutions, regardless of the where they are located, this should be reported'*¹⁶⁵.

In summary, when we talk about HDN in education, it is important to take into account its role for protecting children and youth at times when risk and vulnerability increase due to emergencies. Meeting these needs and ensuring the protection of children puts education in a special position to contribute to and develop resilience to manage the immediate, as well as long-term effects. The conflict in Eastern Ukraine poses a difficult task for education to protect children, ensure a possibility to learn, provide psychological support and, at the same time, to not steer away from the needs for overall development in the educational reform and ensure access to quality education for all children. In order to achieve this, there need to be coordinated efforts of all actors, collective outcomes and ensuring coherence between humanitarian response and developmental needs. UNICEF's contribution, activities and goals seem in compliance with the humanitarian, as well as developmental outcomes. At a time when the most immediate effects of the conflict have already become less strong, it is necessary to shift from a humanitarian to a more developmental perspective.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

6.1. CONCLUSIONS

6.1.1. Relevance

Based on the evidence and findings, presented in the report, several conclusions, regarding relevance could be drawn. The first one is that the education component in the CPD is moderately **relevant to the country needs, programmes, and policies**, because the national reform and UNICEF Education programme have similar goals. However, UNICEF concentrates its efforts to vulnerable groups of children, while the national reform is wider in scope. Also, the correspondence between the national and UNICEF priorities is a bit questionable since there is no formal mechanism to ensure alignment and sometimes communication is lacking. In some cases this alignment happens after planning, rather than before that and it is also influenced by changes in the responsible experts in the different institutions.

The **level of internal consistency** of the education component to the other goals and priorities of UNICEF is moderate. This component is based on outputs and outcomes in education that are a part of the Concept note and CPD but are not included in a separate Education programme document. Additionally, the education outcome is consistent with the other outcomes, but the outputs are redefined in the process of their realisation. Also, there is no specific ToC developed for education.

The **ratio between upstream and downstream interventions** shows that most of them are in the 'middle ground' and this provides an opportunity to affect a bigger number of right holders but is rather related to applying interventions than change in the policy context.

There is a high level of relevance to the **needs of children**. When it comes to the schools, UNICEF's contribution is relevant, but there is a risk of focusing too much on meeting the basic needs of the school system and ensuring a safe environment for children instead of securing access to inclusive and quality school education.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid*

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*

6.1.2. Coherence

The conclusions, regarding coherence, are firstly related to **system-thinking, partnership dynamics and complexity**. A moderate level of complementarity of efforts of different organisations, involved in implementation of activities, could be determined. It comes from, on the one hand, on the coordination between many different organisations, which has to be achieved without an internal mechanism for exchange of information. Additionally, there is a low level of participation of IPs in the decision-making about priorities and activities. It should be noted that there is an Education Cluster, which ensures coordination of the efforts in the area of humanitarian response.

When it comes to **coordination and complementarity of efforts between the different policies and programmes**, the complementarity between the different programs of UNICEF seems visible between social policy, health, and education, but with different dimensions. In child protection, it seems planned theoretically, but not always totally realised in practice, while in the health sector, it is realised in practice, but not so much planned in theory.

6.1.3. Effectiveness

The conclusions, regarding effectiveness, are oriented in its two main aspects. The first one is **achievement and assessment of the planned outputs and outcome**. The evaluation finds that, for the period 2018-2020, a different number of children, teachers and parents have been reached in the four outputs of the programme component. There is a difficulty in defining the level of achievement, due to encountering different data in different sources. Overall, in spite of this inconsistency, data shows that there is a progress in achieving the outputs. A serious attention needs to be paid to the tendency for achievement of the indicators of the outcome. The data shows that there is no change in relation to enrolment of children in primary education. Also, it is demonstrated from the data that the topic of out-of-school children is in an initial phase of discussion and planning. Young people are still not highly engaged in planning and realisation of all activities. However, there is adequate support for ensuring access to education in conflict-affected areas. This brings attention to the issue what is the possibility to achieve these indicators until the end of the programme and the need for redefining some of them.

The second one is **contribution of the Education programme to the development of national and local policies and education reform, as well as to changes in the lives of children, families, community, and the broader environment**. The achievement of the results is ensured by a complex systematic approach on behalf of UNICEF, including policy advice, technical assistance and data collection and management support, advocacy strategies and communication, as well as building capacity and modelling of interventions at the local level at the schools. At the time of pandemic, they adapted their activities and supported the process of finding solutions for the immediate effects on the educational system. Different enabling factors and bottlenecks were identified in the process of achievement of the planned outputs and outcome. They are mostly related to the consequences of COVID 19 and the development of the educational reform itself, as well as the challenges in the rural and conflict-affected areas. The produced changes are most definitive in the fields of ensuring a safe environment, development of skills, peer-to-peer mediation, and support, while in the fields of inclusive education and participation, they are in an initial phase of their development.

6.1.4. Efficiency

The conclusions, in terms of efficiency, are related, firstly, to **governance of the programme**. The Education Programme is managed in the framework of the CPD, including a significant number of experts like educational and field work officers and IPs. This leads to a variety of connections and relationships in the programme and when contacting partners outside of UNICEF like national stakeholders, local stakeholders, and international partners. This doesn't, however, cause an overlap of realised activities.

Secondly, regarding **invested resources**, it is important to note that more efforts/resources are needed to achieve efficient results. The invested resources in the programme are far from the total planned (8%).

They are not allocated equally between the four outputs and there is a good level of compliance with the achieved results in terms of some of the outputs. Capacity building is the component, in which most resources have been invested, although it should be developed in terms of new pedagogical methods, relationships between teachers and children, and leadership.

6.1.5. Impact

When it comes to impact, conclusions are in two directions. The first one is **changes in the lives of all children, especially vulnerable groups**. Some of UNICEF's programmes have achieved a change in the lives of children, that would probably have an impact and could be attributed to UNICEF's efforts at this stage of implementation. The data shows that the schools have changed and children have acquired new skills and knowledge and have developed their relationships with peers, teachers and parents. The students from schools that participated in the interventions, describe the school as a place where it is interesting and safe for them, they will gain life skills and have extracurricular activities. In spite of this data, regarding impact, two areas are still questionable, with a lower level of change – inclusion of children with disabilities and participation.

The second direction is **unintended positive/negative effects of the interventions**. These effects can be seen at the school level. At the positive side, the interventions affect teachers' proactiveness and create preconditions for their desire to become agents of change, feel empowered and actively participate in the change of the school environment. However, they still rely on UNICEF's continuous support, especially in terms of repairs and rehabilitation of buildings.

6.1.6. Sustainability

Conclusions in view of sustainability are in regard to **national policy and capacity of local stakeholders and IPs**. A change could be seen in the schools that took part in the programme, through their level of dissemination and exchange of good practices and experience that they gained as a result of UNICEF's interventions, which they talk about as a positive and sustainable change. At the national level, one of the key tasks, showing a high level of sustainability, is the inclusion of this experience in policy and decision-making, which is a process that has started, but still is on-going and more efforts need to be put into ensuring a sustainable inclusion of results from the interventions into the national policy.

6.1.7. Other criteria

The conclusions in terms of other criteria, concern, firstly, **coverage and coordination**. The pilot interventions in Donetsk and Luhansk succeed in reaching the most vulnerable conflict-affected children, as well as children in rural areas, but need to be disseminated in the whole country, in order to support access to quality education for all children.

Secondly, when it comes to **gender and age-appropriateness**, the design of the programme seems age and gender-appropriate, since both girls and boys are involved equally in activities.

Thirdly, in terms of **equity issues**, a clear M&E system is required, which would allow to disaggregate data for all groups of children and to adequately address equity issues.

6.1.8. Humanitarian-Development Nexus

In terms of **humanitarian-development nexus**, the conclusions are related to a compliance of UNICEF's contribution, both with the humanitarian, as well as developmental outcomes. At a time when the most immediate effects of the conflict have already become less strong, it is necessary to shift from a humanitarian to a more developmental perspective.

6.2. LESSONS LEARNED

In summary, the evaluation concludes that overall, UNICEF would achieve an outcome in education of its 2018-2022 CPD. At this stage, of the programme implementation, the evaluation found a number of

external challenges and some limitations in planning and design of the interventions. Overall, however, UNICEF targeted outputs of policy advice, technical assistance and piloting of interventions have been achieved and could contribute to making an impact on children's lives, especially those most disadvantaged and affected by the conflict.

The main lesson learned is that it is time for UNICEF to shift efforts from a humanitarian to developmental perspective, to focus more its endeavours, and to rely on more systemic evidence as a basis for decision-making.

The ET identifies the following specific lessons learned:

- **Importance of more focused operational planning and communication with different stakeholders at the different stages of implementation of activities towards achieving the common goals.** Ensuring a high level of relevance and total achievement of the goals depends on focused operational planning with specific tasks, expected outcomes and indicator, agreed between all involved actors;
- **The development of a ToC at the planning phase of realisation of interventions is a key factor for identifying clear expected outcomes and impact, key activities, assumptions and risk mitigation and description of the road to these results.** The road to these results will provide a clear guidance of the ratio between upstream and downstream work;
- **Modelling and piloting tailor-made interventions with different goals requires additional efforts in identifying the specific needs of specific groups of children, including vulnerable children.** The individual approach to the needs of each child, class and school is crucial to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all;
- **There is a high level of importance of empowering teachers, parents, and children to develop their own 'project of change' for each school.** The development of a ToC for every school would guarantee a high level of commitment and ownership on behalf of the schools, including parents, students, and teachers;
- **It is necessary to ensure that the indicators for outcomes are clearly defined, reliable and measurable and that high quality data is collected and analysed in a proper way.** This is essential in order to set priorities, monitor and measure the achievement of the outcome, as well as to identify the needs for future programming;
- **A systemic change could be ensured by efficient planning and investing of resources,** taking into consideration the main components of educational reform, the schools of the future concept and all components of the change like pedagogy, leadership, school environment, technology, and efficient investment;
- **It is important to ensure participation at all levels, which could change the system.** The road to change is long and passes through a change in attitudes, motivations, and capacity development;
- **A clear system of data collection is important** to have an evidence base for analysis, disaggregated for different groups that are reached and to address equity issues;
- **It is important to shift towards systematic interventions since the need in humanitarian interventions is decreasing.** Significant results can be achieved if a strong level of ownership by national government is achieved during the different stages like planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having in mind that this is a formative evaluation, and the programme is past its mid-term phase, the recommendations are divided in strategic recommendations (focused on the major sectoral policy challenges); practical recommendations (UNICEF positioning); operational recommendations:

coordination, M&E, guidance.. These formulated recommendations are based on findings about all the areas of evaluation and data collected involving all duty bearers and rights holders, meaning all participants were asked to provide their recommendations during the IDIs and FGDs and these were taken into account and integrated in the report. They were in different levels – school communities, including parents and children, principals and teachers talked more about individual and school system level, national and local partners and NGOs talked about the implementation of the reform and the focus of UNICEF’s programme on a national level.

Recommendations are listed in table 7 below. Each recommendation is assigned responsibility, priority, and timeframe. These recommendations were also compared with the 2018-2022 Country programme document and discussed with the key stakeholders, ERG and the UNICEF team. Recommendations were discussed and validated at a final ERG workshop conducted in 19 October 2021. Final evaluation workshop participants are shown in Annex 13.

Table 7 Recommendations

Recommendation	Priority (High/Medium)	Timeframe	Responsibility
Strategic recommendations (focused on the major sectoral policy challenges)			
Systematic support to education reform in the country with a focus on children from vulnerable backgrounds should be considered			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support to implementing the reform, with a focus on the small rural areas. The evaluation has identified a number of challenges, related to the attitudes and motivation for implementing the reform in the small rural areas and what resources are needed 	High	In the frame of the reform implementation	Line ministries, with support of UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support for strengthening initial and continuous professional development of capacity of teachers. This support would address the needs of the overall NUS reform and ensure a well-planned and realised preparation of teachers to become agents of change 	Medium	In the frame of the reform implementation	Line ministries, with support of UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accelerate a change in attitudes and preparedness of the system to ensure inclusion of children with disabilities beyond the level of access to classrooms, but to ensure an access to high-quality education and continuity between the different educational levels in the school system 	High	In the frame of the reform implementation	Line ministries, with support of UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support for data collection on the different vulnerable groups of children (Roma children and other vulnerable children of different ethnic backgrounds, children with disabilities, out-of-school children, IDPs, vulnerable girls/boys, etc.) and disaggregation of this data; 	Medium	In the frame of the reform implementation	Line ministries, with support of UNICEF

expanding the scale of anti-discrimination expert examination through a design of anti-discriminatory activities based on the evidence-based data collected; promote shaping of an unbiased attitude to the gender equality matters in the educational community			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support the development of capacity of stakeholders (school principals, leaders, and oblast level administration) to reach different types of vulnerable children such as Roma children and other vulnerable children of different ethnic backgrounds, children with disabilities, out-of-school children, IDPs, vulnerable girls/boys, etc. 	Medium	In the frame of the reform implementation	Line ministries, with support of UNICEF
Systematic support to education in the country to mitigate negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on children from vulnerable backgrounds should be considered			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure support related to COVID-19 challenges by addressing the needs to be some form of a shift of focus in terms of dealing with the COVID pandemic and ensuring distance learning and online education is made possible for all children (with focus on families with three and more children) 	High	In the next year and upcoming CPD period	Line ministries, with support of UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide advisory support on digitalization issues. This raises several questions in terms of presence of enough technological resources; knowledge on how to use them in a successful and productive way, in order to achieve the goals of the reform and ensure that technology is used as an integrated part of the pedagogical process, instead of replacing textbooks 	High	In the next year and upcoming CPD period	Line ministries, with support of UNICEF
Practical recommendations (UNICEF positioning)			
Improve UNICEF's programming aimed at strengthening the Government's systemic and institutional capacity in providing basic services			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support the creation of interventions that increase the level of participation of teachers, parents and children in needs assessment, planning and decision making at the school level (piloting, modelling, 	Medium	In the next CPD 2023-2027	UNICEF

knowledge sharing, dissemination of best practices, etc.)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • draft resource mobilization strategy based on the previous experience and evidence base from the implementation of the programme, as well as projection on the interest of the donors and engagement in public-private partnership 	Medium	In the next CPD 2023-2027	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore and promote interventions in the conflict affected areas to ensure a contribution to the humanitarian-development nexus, shifting from humanitarian to development perspective 	Medium	In the next CPD 2023-2027	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct additional analysis focused on efficiency / analysis of the budget of interventions in order to decide what is the most efficient way for spending the resources and distribution of funds according to the identified priorities and needs 	High	In the next CPD 2023-2027	UNICEF
Operational recommendations: coordination, M&E, guidance			
Improve UNICEF's programming in terms of:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthen synergy focused on support to reforms (educational, social, decentralization) that is extremely important in the area of deinstitutionalization and development of inclusive education and early interventions; enhance coordination of the efforts in the three sectors (education, child protection, health) 	High	In the next CPD 2023-2027	UNICEF and line ministries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further develop a mechanism for coordination and communication with partner organisations and facilitate the creation of a network between different organisations working in the education sector, which would include possibilities for participation in decision-making, as well as exchange of information and feedback, thus ensure a higher level of their participation 	Medium	In the next CPD 2023-2027	UNICEF, IPs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> invest efforts in operational planning for the next (final) year of realisation of the programme together with the MoES and Ministry of youth and sports, which would contain operational goals, concrete activities, and projects, related to these goals 	High	In the next CPD 2023-2027	UNICEF and line ministries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that planning of resources in the future should follow the main components of ToC in a systemic way and be focused on those that would have the biggest contribution to the programme 	High	In the next CPD 2023-2027	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the suggested ToC to be taken into account in the process of development of a new country programme document for 2023-2027 	High	In the next CPD 2023-2027	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve the monitoring system and respective data collection in view of further evaluation of the achieved results and effects at the end of the next programme. The baseline indicators need to be reviewed in order to capture what is expected to happen at the end of the programme implementation and, taking into consideration, whether there is any data available against these indicators and, if not, are there possibilities to collect them 	High	In the next CPD 2023-2027	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure a higher level of sustainability through acceleration of the efforts that have already been invested 	Medium	In the next CPD 2023-2027	UNICEF

ANNEXES