



# ROUND TABLE

## REPORT

“Supporting Futures: paths to successful integration of  
displaced Ukrainian children and youth into the  
education system”

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10<sup>th</sup> March 2025  
Warsaw

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# INTRODUCTION

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**THE ONGOING INVASION OF RUSSIA IN UKRAINE HAS LED TO MANY TEMPORARILY DISPLACED PEOPLE, INCLUDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS, SEEKING SAFETY IN COUNTRIES LIKE NORWAY, ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN, AND POLAND. THESE PEOPLE FACE DISRUPTIONS IN THEIR EDUCATION, WHICH IS ESSENTIAL FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING, AND LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT.**

The round table brought together experts from Iceland, Norway and Poland to discuss the challenges and opportunities of integrating Ukrainian displaced pupils into local education systems and to develop recommendations for further work.

**Aim of the round table** was to create a sharing space for the schools, and educators to create inclusive, high-quality learning environments for displaced pupils from Ukraine.

## Objectives

1. Encourage discussions on the challenges and solutions for integrating Ukrainian displaced pupils into host countries' education systems.
2. Offer the space for an exchange of practical tips for schools, educators, and local authorities to address challenges and promote inclusivity.
3. Enhance international cooperation while sharing effective practices and innovative ideas.
4. Produce the outline for creation of the recommendation and insights to guide policies and practical actions.

# INTEGRATION OF DISPLACED UKRAINIAN STUDENTS

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**THE OPENING REMARKS WERE FOLLOWED BY A PRESENTATION BY MAGDALENA GÓROWSKA-FELLS, HEAD OF THE POLISH EURYDICE UNIT, TITLED “INTEGRATION OF DISPLACED UKRAINIAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN SCHOOL SYSTEMS – A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE” THE PRESENTATION PROVIDED A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE INTEGRATION OF UKRAINIAN CHILDREN IN THE 23 EU MEMBER STATES, THE MAIN MEASURES UNDERTAKEN, AND THE CHALLENGES FACED.**

*The presentation can be accessed via the following [LINK](#)*

Recommended further reading:

- European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, The inclusion of displaced children from Ukraine in EU education systems – 2023-2024, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024.

[Read here](#)

- European Commission: European Education and Culture Executive Agency, Supporting refugee learners from Ukraine in schools in Europe, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022.

[Read here](#)

- Education of refugee children and youth from Ukraine, 2024 (This report describes the most relevant trends and data points on education of refugee children and youth from Ukraine based on the most recent 2023 Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted in seven countries included in the 2023 Ukraine Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for the Ukraine refugee emergency: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.)

[Read here](#)

## PARTICIPANTS

The round table brought together 31 participants, including representatives of state and local authorities, educational establishments, NGOs, and research institutions:

- The Ambassador of Iceland to Poland and Ukraine, representatives of the Royal Norwegian Embassy and the Ukrainian Embassy in Poland, and representatives of the Ministry of National Education of Poland and the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy,
- experts in education policy and refugee integration,
- school management representatives, regional education administrators, and teachers,
- representatives from NGOs, international organisations, and civil society groups supporting education and refugees,
- academics and researchers focused on education and social integration.

## FLOW OF THE ROUND TABLE

The opening remarks from distinguished guests outlined the scale of efforts and commitments by governments and various stakeholders in Iceland, Norway, and Poland toward integrating displaced Ukrainian families, particularly the integration of children into the education systems of host countries.

The participants were welcomed by:

- H.E. Mr. Friðrik Jónsson, Ambassador of Iceland,
- Mr. Vasyl Melnychuk, 3rd Secretary at the Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of Poland,
- Ms. Agata Hernik-Ślusarczyk, Representative of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Warsaw,
- Ms. Alina Prochasek, Member of the Board of the Foundation for the Development of the Education System.

# INTEGRATION OF UKRAINIAN STUDENTS INTO EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN ICELAND, NORWAY, AND POLAND

**FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION ON THE GENERAL SITUATION IN THE EU, PARTICIPANTS SHARED THEIR PERSPECTIVES ON INTEGRATING UKRAINIAN STUDENTS INTO THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS OF ICELAND, NORWAY, AND POLAND.**

## **NORWAY<sup>1</sup>**

Norway hosts approximately 90,000 Ukrainians under temporary protection, with around 40% having children under 18 years old. School education in Norway is mandatory for children aged 6–16. Ukrainian children are enrolled in Norwegian schools, with up to 98% of children under 16 and 91% of those aged 16–17 attending Norwegian schools.

At the same time, approximately 60% of Ukrainian children continue their Ukrainian education remotely alongside attending Norwegian schools. This dual schooling system leads to excessive workload, which can hinder their socialization and integration. Parents of these students remain uncertain about their future and are concerned about whether the Ukrainian education system will recognize studies completed in Norwegian schools.

To facilitate integration, Norway has established integrational schools and classes. Younger children tend to integrate more easily, while teenagers face greater challenges, primarily due to difficulties in forming friendships with local peers. Research conducted by Oslo Metropolitan University indicates that younger children (ages 6–12) are more engaged in extracurricular activities (76%) compared to older students (69% for ages 13–15 and 47% for ages 16–17).

Parental satisfaction with school services is high, with an average rating of 4.6 out of 5. However, there is limited data on students' own perspectives regarding their educational experiences.

## **FURTHER READING**

- Ukrainian Refugees – Experiences from the First Phase in Norway (2022) by Vilde Hernes, Oleksandra Deineko, Marthe Handå Myhre, Tone Liodden & Anne Balke Staver
- [Read here](#)
- Reception, Settlement, and Integration of Ukrainian Refugees in Norway (2022–2023) by Vilde Hernes, Aadne Aasland, Oleksandra Deineko, Marthe Handå Myhre, Tone Liodden, Trine Myrvold, Mariann Stærkebye Leirvik, and Åsne Øygard Danielsen
- [Read here](#)

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The description of the country's situations provided below, including numerical data, is based on the information provided by the participants of the during their presentations.

## Integration of Ukrainian Students into Education Systems in Iceland, Norway, and Poland

### ICELAND

Iceland currently hosts approximately 5,300 Ukrainians under temporary protection, with around 1,200 (20%) being children under 18. Among them, approximately 50 children arrived unaccompanied and are under state supervision.

Since school attendance is mandatory in Iceland, all Ukrainian children are enrolled in the local education system. Around 10% also follow the Ukrainian curriculum online. Ukrainian children, like their Icelandic peers, attend schools near their place of residence. Additionally, special integration classes are available in designated schools, where students take up to four language lessons before joining regular classes.

Teachers report that Ukrainian students perform well in mathematics but struggle with foreign languages, particularly English. As part of integration efforts, Ukrainian children, like their Icelandic peers, receive an annual allowance of 75,000 ISK (approximately 500 EUR) for extracurricular activities, which can be used for sports clubs, hobby groups, or tourism-related activities. They also have the right to engage in part-time work, such as gardening or assisting neighbors, during school summer breaks.

### POLAND

Poland hosts one of the largest numbers of displaced Ukrainians in Europe. During the 2023–2024 school year, around 200,000 Ukrainian students were enrolled in Polish schools, with the number continuing to rise. In the 2024–2025 academic year, approximately 18,000 additional Ukrainian students (11,000 in secondary schools and 7,000 in primary schools) arrived. Warsaw has the highest concentration, with up to 70,000 Ukrainian students.

Before the 2024–2025 school year, attending school was not mandatory for Ukrainian children under temporary protection in Poland. However, new legislation now requires all school-age children to enroll in Polish schools. Warsaw offers four secondary schools and nine primary schools with preparatory classes.

Across Poland, about 58% of schools (approximately 12,500) have Ukrainian students, with every fourth student being Ukrainian. Due to language barriers and unfamiliarity with the Polish curriculum, Ukrainian students face challenges in accessing higher education. A significant proportion (70%) opt for vocational or technical schools, compared to 55% of Polish students.

# DISCUSSION ON CHALLENGES AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

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## THE COUNTRY-SPECIFIC PRESENTATIONS WERE FOLLOWED BY A DISCUSSION ON THE MAIN CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING UKRAINIAN STUDENTS INTO HOST COUNTRIES' EDUCATION SYSTEMS.

The primary challenge identified was uncertainty about the future. Many Ukrainian parents remain unsure whether they will be allowed to stay in their host countries after the war ends or if they will be required to return. This uncertainty significantly influences decisions regarding their children's education—whether to fully integrate into the host country's education system or continue following the Ukrainian curriculum remotely.

Another major concern is the lack of information from Ukrainian authorities regarding the recognition of education completed in host countries. Without clear assurances, families fear that their children may face obstacles in continuing their education upon returning to Ukraine.

One potential solution suggested was Ukraine's integration with the EU, including opening borders and allowing individuals to freely decide whether to stay in a host country or return to Ukraine.

One high-ranking public official expressed the belief that most host countries will likely grant long-term residency and work permits to Ukrainian refugees, as many European nations face demographic challenges and will require an educated workforce in the future. As a result, governments are actively working to facilitate the integration of Ukrainian students into their education systems.

However, another dilemma emerged during the discussion: Ukraine's post-war recovery versus integration in host countries. Ukraine will need its citizens to return in order to rebuild the nation. Questions such as *"Should host countries deport Ukrainians after the war?"* and *"Should Ukraine create incentives for its citizens to return?"* were debated.

# GOOD PRACTICES

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**FOLLOWING THE DISCUSSION ON CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS, PARTICIPANTS SHARED EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR INTEGRATING UKRAINIAN STUDENTS INTO EDUCATION SYSTEMS. NINE KEY PRACTICES WERE PRESENTED:**

## **IRKA JAZUKIEWICZ**

*Educational Integration  
Specialist, Centre for Civic  
Education*

Good practices in supporting the integration of displaced Ukrainian children and youth into Polish schools.

## **SOLEY ÓMARSDÓTTIR**

*Expert in Psychological  
Support, Icelandic Red  
Cross*

"Psychological First Aid for Children" and a Trauma-Informed Approach to support refugee students.

## **OLGA KHODOS**

### **KONSTANTIN STROGINOV**

*Mental Health Support for  
Ukrainian Refugees in Iceland*

A private initiative running for three years, providing psychological support to displaced Ukrainians.

Olga Khodos also delivers lectures at the Icelandic Red Cross on psychological adaptation for adult Ukrainians, some of which are available on YouTube.

## **OLEKSANDRA DEINEKO**

*Ukraine Research Group,  
Norwegian Institute for  
Urban and Regional  
Research*

Understanding the situation of young Ukrainian refugees in Norway.

## **JOANNA ŁEBEK-**

### **DIRECTOR**

### **OLGA ŁUSZCZYŃSKA - ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER**

*Primary School 58 in  
Warsaw.*

Adapting the curriculum and cooperating with parents to support Ukrainian students.

## **KRZYSZTOF STANOWSKI**

*Director, International  
Cooperation Centre, City of  
Lublin*

"Rescue City Lublin" – A model for mobilising civil society, from receiving the first refugees to integrating students into the education system.

## **SILJE SKEIE**

*PhD Candidate, Educational  
Science, OsloMet - Oslo  
Metropolitan University*

"Better Learning Programme (BLP) Norway" – an initiative to enhance learning experiences for refugee students.

## **OKSANA SHABATURA**

*Teacher, City of Reykjavík*

## **ÍNA HOLOYAD**

*Language & Cultural  
Mediator for Ukrainian  
Families, Center of  
Education and School  
Services of Iceland.*

Providing integration services for families and children in Reykjavik.

## **NATALIA YEREMEEVA**

*Senior Advisor, European  
Wergeland Centre*

Integration of Ukrainian Refugee Children into the Norwegian Education System through Maximum Language Immersion.



# CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

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**INSPIRED BY THE GOOD PRACTICES, PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED IN A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE EXISTING CHALLENGES IN INTEGRATING UKRAINIAN STUDENTS INTO THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS OF ICELAND, NORWAY, AND POLAND. THE IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES FALL INTO FIVE MAJOR DOMAINS:**

## **1. UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE OF FAMILIES UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION**

- Lack of a long-term integration strategy in host countries. Better coordination between educational policies and refugee/immigration policies is necessary. Governments should provide a clearer vision and transparent criteria for families regarding their long-term status to help parents make informed decisions about their children's education.
- Unclear reintegration plans from Ukraine. The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science has no clear strategy for reintegrating returning children into the Ukrainian school system. Better communication from the Ukrainian side is needed to address parents' concerns.
- The challenge of "double schooling." Due to uncertainty, many Ukrainian students are enrolled in both the education system of their host country and online Ukrainian schooling. This leads to excessive stress and hinders social integration.
- Educational policies must align with human rights to ensure students' well-being and access to quality education.

## **2. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT & TRAUMA RECOVERY**

- Distinguishing between refugee and immigrant children. Refugee children, affected by war, have significantly greater psychological and social needs than immigrant children. Policies and support programs should reflect this difference.
- Addressing trauma in children and young people. A better assessment of their psychological needs is essential for effective support.
- Maintaining social cohesion. Involvement of all stakeholders—parents, school staff, and communities—is crucial for successful integration.
- Shortage of specialized professionals. There is a critical lack of trained psychologists, social workers, and support staff to assist refugee families and children.

## Challenges Identified

### **3. LACK OF TEACHER TRAINING & INADEQUATE CURRICULA FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION**

- Need for curriculum adaptation. A more European-oriented curriculum could serve as an alternative or complement to national curricula to better support diverse student backgrounds.
- Teachers are not adequately trained to work in multicultural classrooms or address the unique needs of refugee students. Specialised training and professional development programs are needed.

### **4. INSUFFICIENT UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE ON INTEGRATION**

- Lack of research on how children themselves experience integration. Most studies focus on parents' perspectives, while children's voices remain underrepresented.
- Different perceptions of Ukrainians across countries. The integration experience varies widely depending on how host societies view and support Ukrainian refugees.

### **5. MISINFORMATION ABOUT HOST COUNTRIES**

- Widespread misinformation about social and medical services. Many refugee families receive misleading online information about the benefits and support available in host countries.
- Misunderstandings about language use in education. For example, while English is widely spoken in Iceland, the official language of education is Icelandic, which can create unexpected barriers for Ukrainian students.

# RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE PARTICIPANTS

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Participants of the proposed recommendations and possible solutions to address the challenges of integrating Ukrainian students into the education systems of host countries. These recommendations are directed toward teachers, civil society organisations, and educational practitioners, and may also be useful for the governments of host countries as well as Ukraine.

## PROVIDING A CLEARER FUTURE PERSPECTIVE FOR DISPLACED UKRAINIAN FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

- **Governments should communicate clear**, reliable information about long-term residence options for displaced Ukrainians once the war is over. People need to understand the criteria and conditions for staying to make informed decisions.
- **Address uncertainty by ensuring equity** for both those who wish to return to Ukraine and those who want to stay in their host country.
- **Emphasise Human Rights** as a guiding principle in decision-making, ensuring that displaced Ukrainians have the right to choose their future.
- **Raise awareness among Ukrainians** that integrating into the education system of a host country is an investment in their children's future. Learning the language and pursuing education abroad can provide long-term career opportunities.
- **The Ukrainian government should clarify return conditions** and provide information on education reintegration programs for students returning to Ukraine

## PRIORITISING TRAUMA SUPPORT AND MENTAL HEALTH

- **Adopt trauma-informed approaches** in schools, recognising that mental health must be prioritised before academic success.
- **Raise awareness among parents** about the importance of mental health, as stigma around displaced people's integration still exists.
- **Improve the assessment of children's war-related experiences** before they enter schools in host countries to better tailor support services.
- **Continue supporting Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) projects** from local NGOs to ensure ongoing psychological aid.

## Recommendations by the Participants

### PREPARING AND TRAINING TEACHERS FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

- **Mandatory training for teachers** on psychological first aid and trauma-informed care.
- **Conflict resolution and anti-bullying training** to help teachers create a safe environment for refugee students.
- **Specialised courses for teachers** on teaching the host country's language as a second language.
- **Regular teacher networking events** to share experiences, strategies, and best practices.
- **Creation of an online platform with structured materials for teachers** working with Ukrainian students and informative resources for Ukrainian parents.
- **Capacity-building opportunities through EU programs** such as Erasmus+ and eTwinning European School Education Platform.
- **Integration of non-formal education methods** into teaching practices through collaboration with youth work initiatives.
- **Training programs for teachers** to effectively engage with parents from host countries and build awareness about refugee children's challenges.

### CLOSING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE ON INTEGRATION

- Increase research on children's and youth's educational and integration experiences across different countries.
- Expand studies on the mental health of refugee children and its connection to successful integration and academic achievement.
- Provide children and young people with more opportunities to express their opinions, particularly regarding policies that affect their education and integration.
- Conduct research to better understand the needs and expectations of displaced children and youth, ensuring their perspectives shape integration policies and practices.

### ADAPTING SCHOOL CURRICULA TO SUPPORT INTEGRATION

- **Develop a standardised curriculum for Polish** as a foreign language and establish teacher qualifications for this subject.
- **Create educational materials for teaching Polish** as a foreign language within schools.
- **Incorporate Human Rights Education, Citizenship Education, Global Education, Migration, and War Studies** into school curricula to provide historical and international perspectives.
- **Equip teachers with tools** to embrace multilingualism and multiculturalism in their classrooms.
- **Integrate soft skills development** (e.g., cooperation, conflict resolution, mediation, stress management, mental health awareness, and anti-discrimination).
- **Introduce elements of Ukrainian culture** into the host country's school curriculum and vice versa to foster mutual understanding.
- **Provide teachers with assessment guidelines** for Ukrainian students in host countries.
- **Develop tailored curricula for Ukrainian students** and other international students, ensuring they can catch up with the national curriculum and pursue higher education.

# CONCLUSIONS

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The participants found the round table to be a valuable platform for exchanging good practices, discussing challenges, and proposing solutions for the better integration of displaced Ukrainian children into the education systems of Iceland, Norway, and Poland. They highlighted the importance of learning from colleagues across different countries, gaining new insights, and identifying opportunities for further collaboration. The discussions provided fresh perspectives and actionable ideas that can support and enhance their ongoing work in educational integration.

## **PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS ON THE ROUND TABLE:**

*The best part for me was the discussion of overcoming challenges the possibility of comparing best practices from outside one's own country.*

*For me, personally, it was very valuable to hear how, despite the challenges faced by children and their parents from Ukraine in the education system abroad, there are many positive practices shared by our participants.*

*All parts were well-organized, important, and very useful for those who working with children from Ukraine.*