

CHILDREN CONSULTATIONS

REPORT



Marina Oprea

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INTRODUCTION

This report reflects the results of Child Consultations activity. This activity was framed in the AECID-funded project “Integrated and inclusive humanitarian response in Moldova to ensure the protection of the most vulnerable population affected by the conflict in Ukraine”. The main objective of the project is to promote accountability for affected populations (AAP) in line with Child Protection (CP) and the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), by engaging both the service providers and the subjects of rights.

Background

The international armed conflict in Ukraine has forced people to flee their homes seeking safety, protection, and assistance. Millions of refugees from Ukraine have crossed borders into neighbouring countries. Up to 16 January 2023, 102.283 refugees have chosen to stay in Moldova. Of them, 47,784 are children and adolescents (under 18 years old).

Different needs assessments have highlighted the urgency to better understand the needs of children, as very little data and resources are yet available in Moldova. In order to ensure an effective humanitarian response, it is imperative that the participation, voices of children are heard, understood, documented, and taken into account in the development of humanitarian programming.

Study Design

The study design for the Child Consultations activity was initially pre-planned and approved by the main stakeholders involved in the AECID-funded project. However, during the engagement with children, some adjustments were made to ensure that the activity was more effective and meaningful.

Objective

The objective of Children Consultations was to **better understand the differentiated impact, needs, and concerns of children and adolescents who have been affected by the conflict and strengthen accountability and feedback mechanisms for humanitarian workers providing services, and key-government decision-makers**. Its goal is to empower the voices of children and adolescents and allow them to raise their concerns regarding their perceptions, challenges, and needs. The findings will help inform the development of more effective and responsive programs and services for children affected by the conflict in Ukraine.

Sample

A total of 50 children participated in the consultation activities, which took place in Refugee Accommodation Centers (RACs) and centers located in the following regions:

- Chisinau

- Calarasi
- Criuleni
- Baltata

Based on age and gender, the respondents can be classified into the following categories:

- **Gender:** 52% male, 42% female;
- **Age:** 56% 10-13 y.o., 44% 14-17 y.o.;
- **Ethnic minorities:** 15%

The composition of the sample groups deviates slightly from the original plan due to unforeseen circumstances such as unavailability, illness, and scheduled activities. Nevertheless, the current sample still closely reflects the actual demographic situation and ensures a diverse representation of children and adolescents who have been impacted by the Ukrainian crisis and have settled in Moldova.

Methodology & Techniques

Qualitative research methodology was used to collect primary data, with certain elements of quantitative research included. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were organized for this purpose. The discussions and reflections in these groups were guided by an agreed-upon questionnaire with related activities. Some questions were directed individually to each respondent.

A total of 13 FGDs were organized. Each group comprised 3-6 children and lasted up to 1.5 hours. To ensure gender and age sensitivity, boys and girls from different age groups were consulted separately.

The data collection tools were piloted within the first 2 groups and proved to be quite successful with the children and adolescents. The pilot study revealed that field notes needed to be written up immediately after the event.

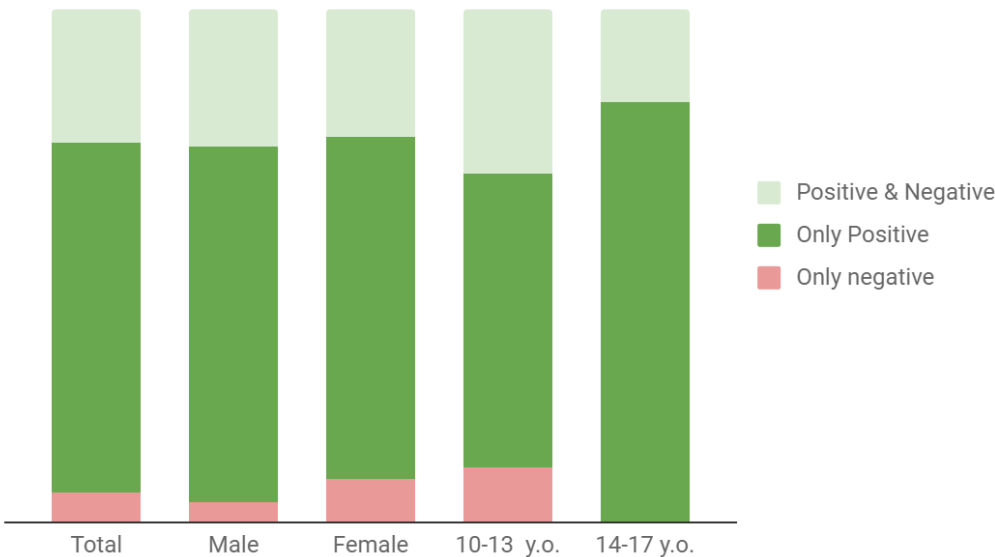
Questionnaire & Activities

Special activities were designed to accompany the key questions in order to facilitate engagement with the children. These child-friendly activities were tailored to specific age groups to ensure appropriateness, and some activities, such as those involving emojis and ratings, were found to be particularly effective in engaging with adolescents as well. The full questionnaire, including these activities, is presented in Annex 1.

SECTION 1: MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

To start the evaluation of the mental health and psychosocial state of children and adolescents, a question about their feelings related to their current place of residence was used. The first activity, which also served as an icebreaker, aimed to determine how the children felt about their current living place. All participants expressed interest and willingness to participate in this activity, and their responses were recorded to allow for a quantitative presentation of the results. The following two charts are intended to show only the proportions for reference purposes, without exact figures.

Chart 1.
Types of feelings about current living place per age and gender groups

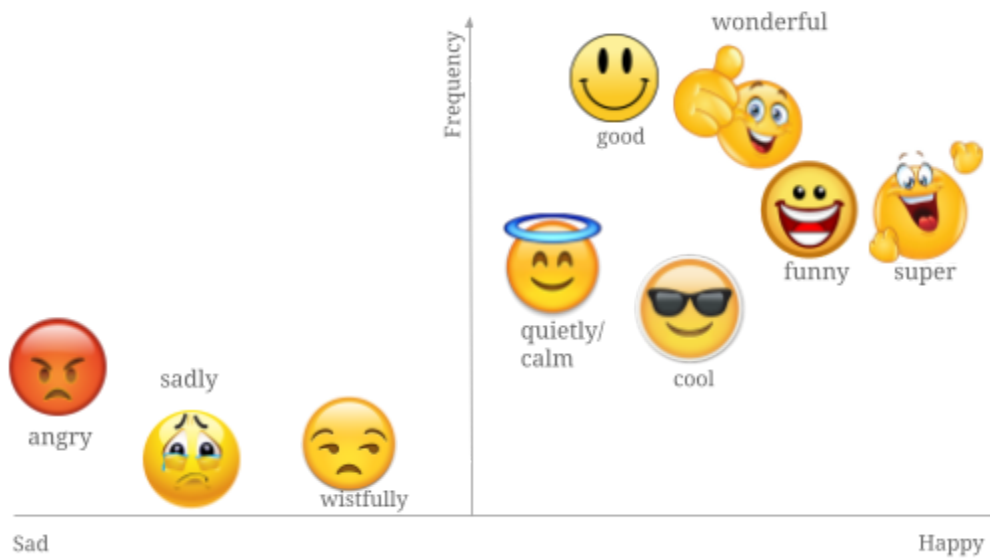


Upon analyzing Chart 1, it can be observed that the majority of participants selected only positive emojis. Some participants who chose positive emojis also included sad feelings, while only a few selected only sad emojis. It should be noted that girls are more likely to express negative emotions, while boys tend to hide their true feelings and try to be more positive. Additionally, children between the ages of 10-13 are more open to expressing a range of emotions, including sad ones.

The following chart (Chart 2) shows the specific emotions selected by participants, with the frequency axis indicating which emojis were chosen more often than others.

As mentioned previously, the majority of participants selected images with positive emotions such as feeling good, wonderful, funny, super, calm, and cool when describing how they feel about where they currently live. Among the less frequent, but still mentioned, negative emotions were anger, sadness, and wistfulness.

Chart 2. Feelings about current living place



The table below summarizes the reasons provided by participants for selecting certain emojis and feelings related to where they currently live.

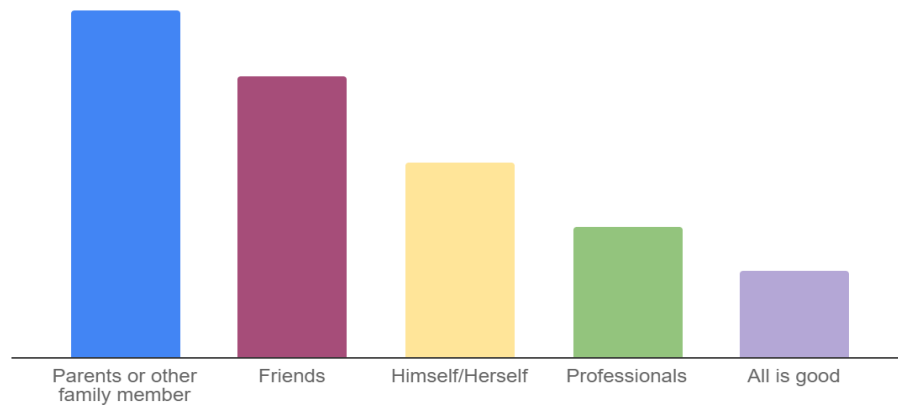
Table 1. Reasons for feeling happy or sad where children live now

Happy	Sad
Close people are nearby	Personal boundaries are violated
Pleasant surroundings	Impossibility to return back to Ukraine
Good time spent with friends	Missing relatives
New friends and acquaintances	Disputes/quarrelling among people leaving in RACs

The reasons provided by participants for selecting positive emojis/feelings were generally related to their living conditions, environment, and relationships with family and friends. Negative emojis/feelings were often related to difficulties and challenges associated with their current living situation and missing their previous home and life.

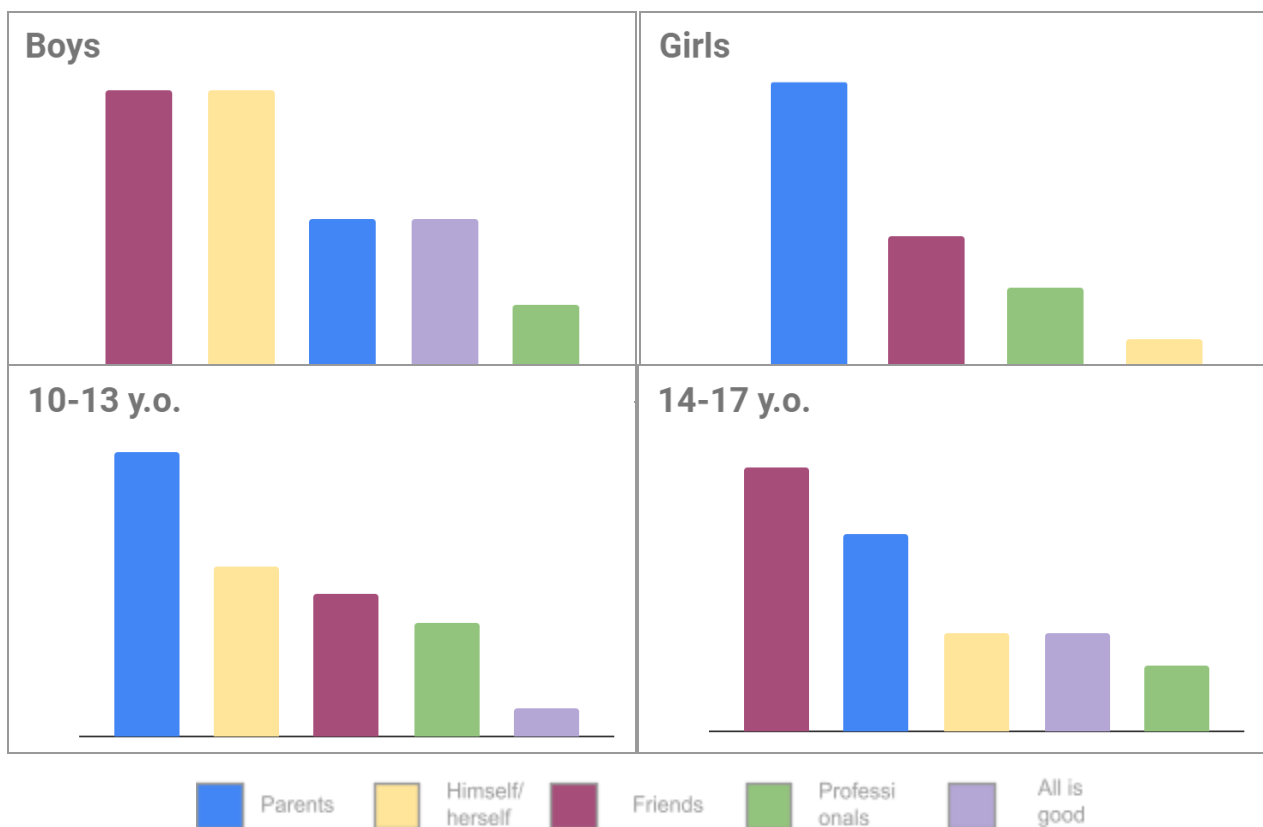
Inquiring about whom they turn to for help when feeling upset or anxious, children were found to commonly name their parents or other family members as their primary source of support. Following this, friends were identified as the second most popular option. Some children expressed a preference for managing their emotions independently, while professionals were the least frequently cited choice. Additionally, a portion of respondents reported not experiencing feelings of sadness or worry and thus did not require assistance.

Chart 3. Who is addressed for support when feeling sad



Upon closer examination of the data by age and gender, it was observed that boys tend to turn to their friends or deal with their emotions independently, while girls are more likely to seek support from their parents. Younger children are more comfortable sharing their worries with their parents, while older children are more likely to confide in their friends.

Chart 4. Who is asked for support when feeling sad, per gender and age

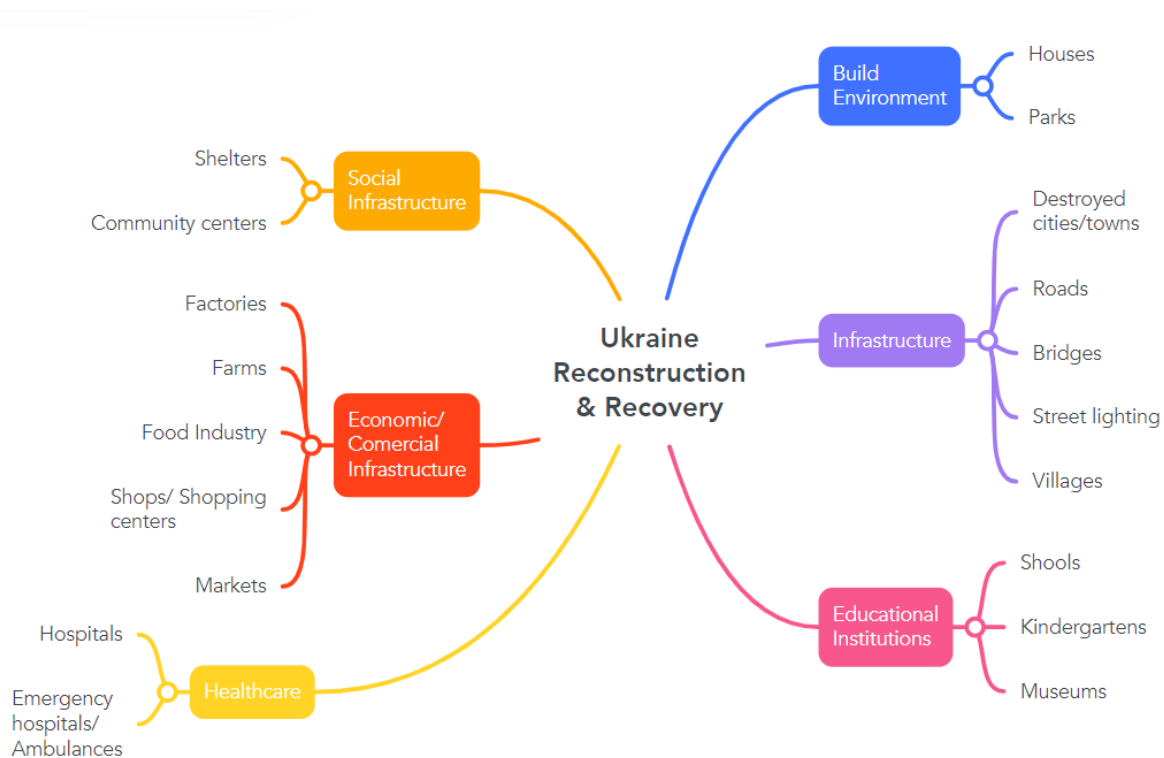


SECTION 2: VISION OF A SUSTAINABLE UKRAINE

A game was utilized to encourage children to provide input on what they believe should be the top priority for reconstruction in Ukraine. A poster with an assigned minister role was distributed exclusively to younger children, whereas older children were simply asked to imagine themselves as ministers. This activity aided in creating a rapport with the children and facilitated their sharing of ideas.

A mind map was generated based on the feedback received during the discussions, and it is illustrated in Chart 5. It's worth noting that the most prevalent suggestion was to recover houses.

Chart 5. Who is asked for support when feeling sad, per gender and age



Continuing the discussion, children were asked to share their visions of how they see their country's future. Those who wanted to draw were given the opportunity to do so. The majority of children expressed hope that their country would improve, become more developed, and modernized. Some children even touched on geoeconomic situations, mentioning that they hope Ukraine will become a part of the EU and have good relationships with neighbouring countries.

Upon analyzing the drawings of those who chose to draw, it was observed that the majority of images were bright and featured the sun (yellow), greenery, and blue, colours that

symbolize hope, happiness, new beginnings, abundance, serenity, and stability. Other drawings depicted tall buildings, modern cars, and developed infrastructure.

It is clear that children want to see their country prosperous, wealthy, and highly developed, offering high-quality life standards. However, it is worth noting that a small number of children do not expect Ukraine to improve and fear that it will remain the same or even worsen due to the ongoing war, which has had a significant impact on the country's ability to recover and regain its former level of development.

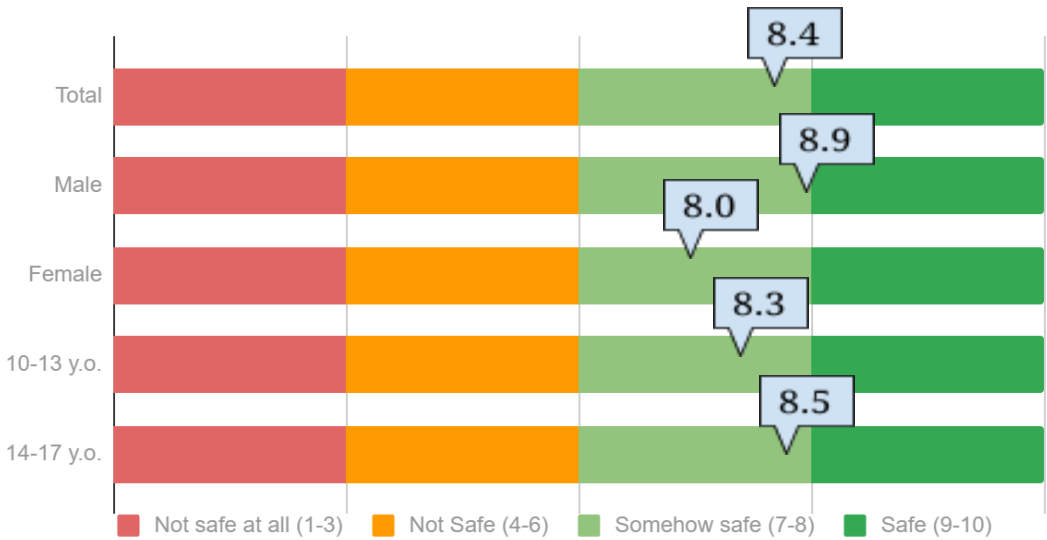
Some images from the drawing exercise are included in Annex 2 to provide a better sense of the mood and themes that emerged during the discussion.

SECTION 3: PROTECTION.

Protection and risks

To evaluate the level of safety perceived by children in their current place of residence, a quantitative approach was employed. Children were asked to rate their sense of safety on a scale of 1 to 10. The results, which include the average score for each age and gender group, are outlined in Chart 6.

Level of safety that children feel



In general, it can be concluded that children feel quite secure in their current place of residence, as reflected by the average safety score of 8.4. Interestingly, boys reported a slightly higher level of perceived safety than girls. However, the difference in safety perception between different age groups was not found to be significant.

The children were requested to elaborate on the reasons behind their safety rating. The collective responses have been compiled and presented in the table below.

Table 2. Factors contributing to feeling safe or concerned

Safe	Concern
Presence of friends, family, and other close people	Family members are in Ukraine
Adequacy of living conditions/arrangements provided	Proximity to the war
Absence of rocket attacks, explosions, and alarms	Possibility of war extending to other countries, including Moldova, and potential for nuclear war
Ability to continue day-to-day activities without disruption	Disputes in the Refugee Center
Distance from the war	News and media
Government support	Language barrier
Balance and sound assessment of the situation	People outside of their community

This data suggest that various factors influence children's perception of safety, such as their living conditions, the presence of family and friends and distance from the war zone. The study also highlights several factors that contribute to a sense of concern among children, including knowing that family members are in Ukraine, the potential for war to spread to neighbouring countries, and disputes in the Refugee Center. The language barrier was also found to be a significant issue sometimes.

Children's rights are an essential aspect of ensuring that children feel safe and protected. During discussions with children, it became apparent that the awareness of children's rights is generally high. Even though some children initially stated that they did not know about their rights, they confirmed their awareness once the concept was explained to them.

Moreover, the majority of the children agreed that their rights are executed well in Moldova, indicating that the relevant organizations are taking necessary steps to ensure children's rights are respected. However, there were some instances where children only partially agreed or disagreed with this statement. Upon further probing, it became apparent that some children were referring to specific issues that were not directly related to children's rights. This highlights the importance of not only raising awareness about children's rights

but also ensuring that children have a clear understanding of what their rights entail. It also emphasizes the importance of continued education and vigilance to ensure that children's rights are upheld in all circumstances.

Integration

When assessing how well children are integrating in Moldova, the first question asked was about their sense of belonging and welcome in the community. Based on responses, the majority of children strongly agree that they feel very welcomed in Moldova and appreciate the support they receive. This positive sentiment helps to facilitate the process of integration.

The second question assesses the children's level of social integration by asking whether they have friends in Moldova. About half of the children surveyed have friends in Moldova, with younger children being more open to making new friendships than older children, and boys being more likely to make friends than girls. The activities that children participate in with their new friends include walking, drawing, playing football, tennis, and volleyball.

It is noteworthy that most children between the ages of 14-17 are on online education, while only a small number of children aged 10-13 are enrolled in local schools for offline education. Online education has proven to be beneficial for children, allowing them to maintain a connection with their previous life and making the transition to a new place of living less dramatic. However, it is still important to organize special classes/rooms within the center where children can come and listen to lessons online, as it brings an additional level of discipline to their studies. Additionally, children attending local schools are more likely to make local friends and participate in recreational activities.

Participation in recreational activities is essential for the full integration of children. The majority of children participate in activities within their community, such as hobby classes, playing sports, and language classes. However, about one-third of the children do not participate in any activities, with reasons ranging from a lack of modern activities like dances to a lack of time due to a focus on school. Some children simply do not want to be involved in any activities outside of school. It is also worth noting that girls are less involved in extra activities than boys.

To summarize, the evaluation of children's integration in Moldova is assessed through their sense of welcome, the friendships they make, their educational pursuits, and their participation in recreational activities. In general, most children express feeling welcomed and have established friendships in Moldova. Although many of them are pursuing online education, arranging specialized offline classes/rooms to offer further guidance and support may prove beneficial. Additionally, active participation in community-based recreational activities is vital for complete integration, and most children are already engaging in them. However, there is still room for improvement by providing more contemporary leisure options for children.

Accountability to affected people (AAP)

Reflecting on accountability to affected children, it is important to acknowledge that in many cases, only a portion of them have been engaged previously in activities aimed at gathering their needs and priorities. Often, these engagements were limited to interviews that sought to gather insights after leaving their home country or feedback sessions after participating in some programs. Only a few of them have had the opportunity to participate in needs assessment consultations.

While some small improvements have been observed, it is important to recognize that children may only be able to assess visible impacts. It is, therefore, crucial to continue engaging with them in meaningful and inclusive ways to ensure that their perspectives are taken into account.

During the discussion, the children were invited to share their views and suggest ways in which they would feel comfortable sharing feedback. The emphasis was placed on the importance of their feedback, which would be considered in decision-making processes. The children expressed their enjoyment in participating in such group sessions and highlighted the significance of their input being acknowledged.

It was interesting to note that most of the children preferred sharing their feedback in interactive sessions with peers of the same age and gender, without the presence of parents. However, a few mentioned that they would prefer one-to-one interviews. These responses suggest that children value having a safe and inclusive space where they can freely express their thoughts and opinions and that their feedback is valued and acted upon. It is therefore important to continue to engage with children in ways that respect their preferences and create a supportive environment for their participation. Some additional recommendations on how the children can be approached:

- Having a friendly and approachable facilitator;
- Meeting in a safe and familiar place;
- Being able to express themselves without fear of judgment;
- Using interactive and engaging methods to encourage and facilitate participation;
- Being informed in advance about the purpose and process of the consultation;
- Being given clear information about how their feedback will be used and what actions will be taken as a result.

In addition to asking children how they would feel comfortable sharing their feedback, they were also asked to share their ideas on what would make them feel safe and comfortable. In some groups where applicable, a voting process was organised to determine the most frequent ideas. However, some groups preferred to keep their answers private.

Based on the responses received, the following ideas emerged as ways to make children feel safer and more comfortable here in Moldova. It is important to note that while there were some differences based on gender, age was the most significant factor, and thus the answers

have been divided into two separate columns based on age group:

10-13 y.o.	14-17 y.o
More engaging activities within centers	Separate space from the younger children
Activities outside of the centers	Special courses to prepare for future jobs
Modern hobby groups	Possibility of continuing the second education
Activities closer to nature (planting flowers, taking care of some pets)	Approachable psychologist, in some cases private appointments

These ideas reflect the desire of children to have access to a range of engaging activities and educational opportunities, as well as the need for age-appropriate spaces and support services. A complete analysis upon provided ideas with some practical suggestions is presented in Annex 3.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The last section of the report focuses on presenting conclusions and recommendations, which are organized in a similar way as the rest of the report.

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)

Based on the results of the Children Consultations activity, it can be concluded that the majority of the participants had positive feelings towards their current place of residence. However, several children also expressed some negative emotions and challenges associated with their current living situation, including missing their previous home and life.

It is important to note that girls are more likely to express negative emotions, while boys tend to hide their true feelings and try to be more positive. Younger children are also more comfortable sharing their worries with their parents, while older children are more likely to confide in their friends.

Parents and family members were commonly named as the primary source of support for children when feeling upset or anxious, followed by friends. Some children expressed a preference for managing their emotions independently, while professionals were the least frequently cited choice.

Based on these findings, it is recommended to prioritize support for children and adolescents to manage their emotions and cope with the challenges associated with their

current living situation. This can be done by providing mental health and psychosocial support services and strengthening support networks for children, including parents, family members, and friends. It is also important to take into account gender and age differences in the provision of support and services.

Vision of a sustainable Ukraine

It is clear that the children have a strong desire for Ukraine to improve and become more developed. The most prevalent suggestion from the children was to recover houses, indicating the importance of home and safety for every child. It is important to prioritize these needs to provide a safe and stable environment for the children.

Additionally, it is important to invest in education, social infrastructure, economic and commercial infrastructure, and healthcare to ensure that the country can progress and provide high-quality life standards for its citizens. Providing access to education and healthcare, as well as opportunities for economic growth, can help to create a brighter future for the children of Ukraine.

Furthermore, it is important to listen to the concerns of those who fear that the country may not improve or even worsen due to the ongoing conflict. Efforts must be made to address their fears and work towards building a stable and peaceful future for the country.

In conclusion, the feedback and drawings from the children in Ukraine provide valuable insights into their hopes and concerns for the future of their country. It is important for relevant organizations to prioritize their needs and work towards creating a brighter future for them.

Protection

Protection and risks

Although children and adolescents from Ukraine generally perceive their current place of residence as safe, there are various factors that can affect their sense of security. It is imperative to address these factors to ensure that children and adolescents feel protected and secure here in Moldova.

Furthermore, it is crucial to maintain efforts to raise awareness about children's rights and guarantee that they have a comprehensive understanding of their entitlements. Organizations and relevant authorities must remain vigilant to ensure that children's rights are upheld in all circumstances.

While some concerns of children cannot be addressed, several improvements can still be implemented, such as creating a peaceful environment in refugee centers without disputes, facilitating constant communication with family members who remained in Ukraine, and ensuring children have access to media channels that provide accurate and appropriate

information. Children should also receive education on their rights and how to advocate for themselves when necessary.

Overall, it is essential to continue monitoring the safety and well-being of children in Moldova and take the necessary steps to ensure that they feel protected and secure.

Integration

Most children feel welcomed and have established friendships in their new community. While many children are pursuing online education, it is still important to arrange specialized offline classes/rooms to offer further guidance and support. The majority of children also participate in recreational activities within their community, but some do not due to a lack of contemporary options or time constraints.

To improve the integration process, it is recommended to provide a wider range of modern recreational activities that cater to the interests of all children, including those from low-income families. It is also crucial to ensure that all children have equal opportunities to participate in these activities and that the facilities and equipment are safe and well-maintained.

By fostering a sense of community belonging through inclusive recreational activities, the social integration of children can be further promoted to create a safe and welcoming environment for them to thrive here in Moldova similar like it was in Ukraine.

Accountability to affected people (AAP)

In conclusion, it is crucial to continue engaging with children in meaningful and inclusive ways to ensure that their perspectives are taken into account, especially in situations where they have been affected by displacement or crisis. Children value having a safe and inclusive space where they can freely express their thoughts and opinions, and their feedback should be considered and acted upon. To make children feel safer and more comfortable when sharing their feedback, it is important to create a supportive environment that respects their preferences, uses engaging methods to facilitate participation, and provides clear information on how their feedback will be used. Additionally, providing access to engaging activities and educational opportunities, age-appropriate spaces, and support services can contribute to meeting the needs and priorities of affected children.

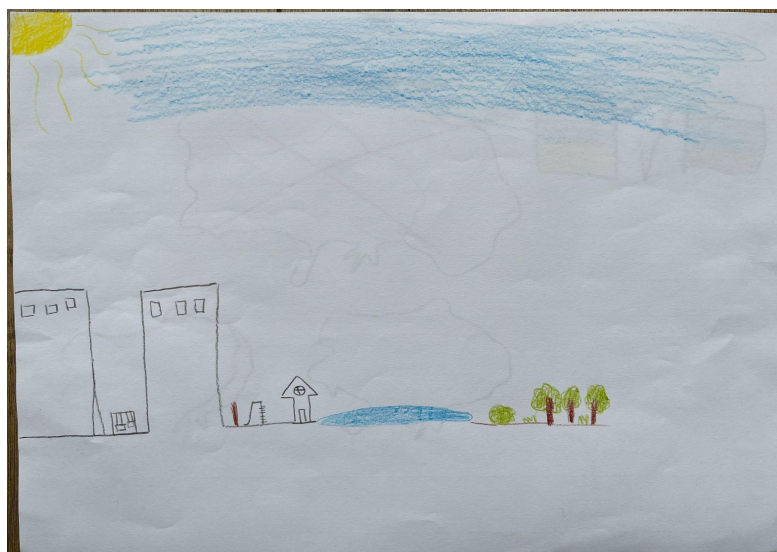
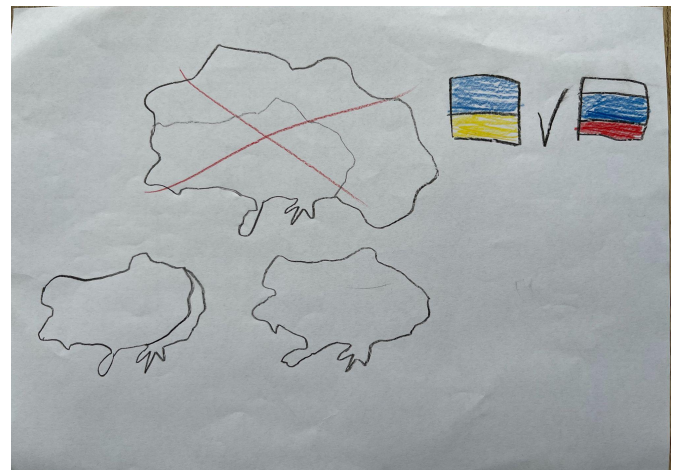
ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. Questionnaire with activities

Question	Tools/Activities
0. Intro	Ice breaker to get to know each other.
<u>Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)</u>	
1. How do you feel where you live now?	Smiles with different emotions (happy, crying, sad, excited, etc.) are printed on cards. Children are asked the main Question (How do you feel where you live now?) and as an answer to pick up a smile and keep it. Several cards can be picked up by one child.
1.1. What makes you happy or sad?	Each child is asked to explain why they selected this smile(s), i.e. what makes them feel the way the smile they selected. Participants can write the answer on the back side of the smile card.
2. When you're feeling sad or worried, from whom do you ask for support (professionals, parents, friends, etc)?	This question to be discussed in groups.
<u>Vision of a sustainable Ukraine</u>	
3. If you were in charge of Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery what would be the most important things for you to work on first?	A special paper hat of the "Reconstruction & Recovery Minister" is prepared. The participants are asked to wear this hat and imagine themselves in this role. After that, they are asked what would be the most important things to work on first. The part with the hat is optional for 14-17 y.o. children.
4. How do you imagine your country in the future when you will be an adult?	Children are asked to draw on the paper the response to this question. (If there are children for whom it is not possible, they can answer the question orally)
<u>Protection and risk</u>	
5. Do you feel safe where you live now?	A colourful scale from 1 to 10 is used on the board. The participants are asked to put their mark on the board answering how safe they feel where they live now. (1 means they do not feel safe, 10 - they feel very safe)
5.1. What makes you feel safe (or not) safe? / Anything that you are concerned/worried about?	Participants are divided into pairs and given 2 papers: 1. What makes you feel Safe 2. What makes you feel concerned/worried The participants are asked to answer these questions in pairs and write down the responses.
6. Do you know about the rights of children and adolescents?	Each participant is given Yes/No cards and is asked to answer each question. Additional discussions can follow if children are willing to answer.
6.1 Do you feel that you can exercise your rights in Moldova?	
<u>Integration</u>	
7. Do you feel welcome where you	The room is divided into 3 parts and marked

live now?	accordingly: Agree/ Neutral/ Disagree. Participants are asked the questions, and as a response, they should select the respective room area.
7.1 Do you have friends from Moldova? /How do you spend time together?	
7.2 How do you spend time together?	Tell your story. The participants who responded that they have friends are asked to tell a story about their friends.
8. Do you participate in the activities of your community?	Each participant is given Yes/No cards and is asked to answer each question. Additional discussions can follow if children are willing to answer.
8.1 Can you access school/would you like to?	
8.2 Do you participate in recreational activities for children of your age? Do you participate in activities with Children in Moldova	
8.2.1 Examples for yes answer	
8.2.2 Why not? (Question to understand barriers)	These questions to be discussed in groups.
<u>AAP</u>	
9. Have you been asked by other organizations about your needs, your opinion, desires and how to better respond to them? /	Each participant is given Yes/No cards and is asked to answer each question. Additional discussions can follow if children are willing to answer.
9.1 Has your feedback been taken into consideration?	
10. Do you have any suggestions for what makes children feel more welcome or safer in Moldova?	Dots game. Ideas are generated by participants. After that, they vote for each variant. The most popular 3 variants to be selected.
10.1 How would children like to be consulted? (Cross-cutting accountability question).	This question to be discussed in groups.
Wrap up	

ANNEX 2. Pictures from the activity “How do you imagine your country in the future?”



ANNEX 3. Analysis of the suggestions that have been generated regarding what can make children feel more welcomed and safer in Moldova

"More engaging activities within centers" suggests that children want activities that are interesting, exciting, and meaningful. This could include activities that encourage creativity, exploration, and skill-building. Providing a range of activities that cater to different interests and abilities can help keep children engaged and motivated to participate. Additionally, involving children in the planning and development of activities can help ensure that their preferences and ideas are taken into account, which can lead to greater satisfaction and enjoyment.

"Activities outside of the centers" refers to activities that take place beyond the confines of the center's physical space. This could include outdoor activities like camping, hiking, as well as cultural or educational outings such as visits to museums, historical sites, or other places of interest. Providing opportunities for children to explore the world beyond the center can broaden their horizons, expose them to new experiences and perspectives, and promote social and emotional development. It can also help them develop skills in areas such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.

"Modern hobby groups" refers to groups that focus on hobbies that are popular or trendy among children and youth. This could include activities like gaming, coding, music, dance, or fashion. Providing opportunities for children to explore and develop their interests in modern hobbies can help them develop new skills, express their creativity, and build confidence. It can also create a sense of community among children with similar interests and foster social connections and positive relationships.

"Activities closer to nature" refers to activities that involve connecting with and caring for the natural world. This could include gardening, planting trees or flowers, or taking care of animals like pets or farm animals. These types of activities can promote an appreciation for the environment, provide opportunities for learning about ecology and biology, and instill a sense of responsibility and stewardship. They can also provide a sense of calm and relaxation, and help children develop skills in patience, empathy, and nurturing. Additionally, caring for animals or plants can create a sense of purpose and accomplishment, as children can see the tangible results of their efforts.

"Separate space from the younger children" suggests that older children want their own space separate from younger children. This could mean having dedicated areas or rooms within the center where older children can gather and socialize without younger children around. Providing separate space for older children can help them feel more independent and respected, and can create opportunities for them to form deeper friendships and social connections with peers their own age. It can also help them develop a sense of identity and belonging as they transition into adolescence and begin to explore their own interests and values.

"Special courses to prepare for future jobs" refers to courses or programs designed to help

older children acquire skills and knowledge that can prepare them for future careers or vocational opportunities. This could include courses in computer programming, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, or vocational training in trades like carpentry, plumbing, or electrical work. Providing special courses for older children can help them gain practical skills, explore their career interests, and improve their employability. It can also help them develop a sense of purpose and motivation as they prepare for the transition to adulthood and the workforce.

"Possibility of continuing the second education" refers to the availability of educational opportunities beyond the compulsory level, such as high school or vocational training. Providing access to continued education can be important for older children who wish to pursue higher education, vocational training, or professional development. This may include access to programs that provide support for academic achievement, scholarships, or mentorship. Having access to continued education can help older children achieve their goals and aspirations, increase their job opportunities, and improve their quality of life. It can also help them develop a sense of purpose and motivation as they continue to grow and develop.

"Approachable psychologist, in some cases private appointments" refers to the availability of mental health services and support for older children who may be experiencing emotional or psychological difficulties. Providing access to a psychologist who is approachable and easy to talk to can be important for older children who may be struggling with issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, or trauma. Having access to private appointments can also be helpful for those who may not feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues in a group setting or who may require more specialized or individualized support. Providing mental health services can help older children feel supported, valued, and understood, and can help them build the resilience and coping skills necessary to navigate the challenges of adolescence and young adulthood.