

END-OF-PROJECT EVALUATION

ECHO CHILDREN OF PEACE PROJECT

LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR CONFLICT-AFFECTED CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN UKRAINE

REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

UNICEF developed the ECHO Children of Peace-funded project, *Life Skills Education and Psychosocial Support for Conflict-Affected Children and Adolescents in Ukraine*, in response to assessments conducted during 2014, which showed patterns of distress, anxiety and deterioration of behaviour among children throughout the five eastern-most oblasts.

The aim of the project was to support the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) to provide the children and adolescents most severely affected by the conflict in Ukraine life skills they need to live peacefully within host and returnee communities; and psychosocial support to strengthen their resilience.

ECHO offered €800,000 for the project, which were supplemented by €84,141 from UNICEF's own funds. UNICEF worked with two excellent implementing partners: Children's Fund Health through Education (HtE), for the Life Skills Education (LSE) component; and with the National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) for the psychosocial support (PSS) component. Those partners worked very closely with staff of the Institutes for In-Service Teacher Training (IISTTs) in the five oblasts.

The evaluation was undertaken to provide UNICEF with a formal report on the achievements and outcomes of the project covering the period August 2015 – November 2016. The evaluation report is written for staff of UNICEF, the donor ECHO, the Government of Ukraine, notably the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Policy, and UNICEF's implementing partners, Health through Education and Kyiv Mohyla Academy.

In addition to documenting the achievements and challenges of the project thus far, the evaluation gave those agencies an opportunity for reflection on the future needs of children within and outside of schools in the areas of LSE and PSS. It will guide the development of UNICEF's future programmatic activities in the LSE and PSS fields.

The evaluation team was comprised of two international consultants: Christopher Talbot, a specialist in Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction; and Michael Wessells, a specialist in Child Protection and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies.

The evaluation was conducted between 10 and 18 November 2016, in Kyiv, Kramatorsk and Kharkiv, with thorough quantitative and qualitative methodologies: consultative workshops, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and review of project documentation.

The evaluation set out to answer the following questions:

1. Was the project an appropriate way to achieve the desired objectives? (Relevance)
2. What were the effects of the project? (Outcomes)
3. To what extent has the project achieved each of its objectives? (Effectiveness)
4. How did the two project components interact? (Synergies)
5. Will project activities and benefits continue after external support is withdrawn? (Sustainability)

Relevance

There was widespread agreement that the learning opportunities and services provided to students and teachers through the LSE and PSS components of the project were highly relevant to the needs of both the internally displaced and those hosting them in the five eastern provinces, and will be required to prepare children and teachers for post-conflict reconciliation one day. Teachers, trainers, psychologists and ministry officials expressed their perception of a great need to extend the LSE and PSS activities geographically – within the five oblasts, with greater attention to those communities close to the contact line, and to non-government controlled areas (NGCAs). Many expressed the view that the whole country needs this work.

Outcomes

The testimony of students, teachers, trainers, psychologists and ministry officials was overwhelmingly positive, that the project achieved extraordinary outcomes for children: medium-term behaviour and attitude change that met the needs, protected and enriched the lives of hundreds of thousands of children and thousands of teachers. Those children and teachers learned how to cope with stress, distress, anxiety, and the threat of violence. Children engaged less in disruptive behaviour, and many exhibited prosocial, helping behaviour as they reached out to IDP children. Student-teacher relationships were markedly improved, and the school environment became much more supportive and friendly for children. In many cases these outcomes were described as life-changing, as people rediscovered hope for the future. Notable changes occurred in host community children's acceptance and welcome of internally displaced (IDP) children, and in the openness of IDP children to friendship with their hosts.

Effectiveness

Four factors key to the project's effectiveness emerged very strongly through the evaluation process: Joint implementation of LSE and PSS; the key role of school directors and administration; the high quality of planning and training by UNICEF's two implementing partners; and the fact that the project built upon proven models of international experience and expertise. The partners, trainers, teachers and students worked very hard to overcome difficulties linked to insecurity in the east, political and language sensitivities, caution from parents, limited funding and logistical obstacles.

Synergies

Making progress towards PSS goals has helped to make progress towards LSE goals, and vice versa. They are interlinked: PSS occurs partly in and partly out of class, LSE through the curriculum. There is great complementarity between them, such as the emphasis on strengthening self-esteem, communication, trust, assertiveness and interpersonal relationships. In the PSS component, specific activities, such as stress management activities, undertaken for purposes of improving psychosocial well-being are done 'out of class', but the overall approach teachers use (communicating better with students, creating a more supportive, protective environment, etc.) applies during actual class time as well.

Some school psychologists have supported teachers of Basics of Health with children in their classes. Some of the BoH teachers invited school psychologists to work with them in class, developing and delivering the content of the life skills together in team teaching arrangements. The synergies between PSS and LSE are all the more vital for IDP children and children on the move. Training teachers and school psychologists in both sets of skills (LSE and PSS) is highly desirable.

Sustainability

The project made strong efforts towards sustainability beyond its immediate funding. This was done through: the publication and dissemination of assessment tools, training materials and teaching and learning materials; provision of training to teachers, school psychologists, MoES and IISTT staff in LSE and PSS methodologies and monitoring; involvement of families in project activities; involvement of school directors and other school administrative staff in project activities. The approach taken creates ongoing demand and motivation by garnering the interest of both students and teachers.

Recommendations

The evaluators provide a full set of recommendations for MoES, ECHO, UNICEF, HtE and NaUKMA on pages 64-68 of this report.

Conclusions

In short: This is one of the very finest projects dealing with life skills education for and psychosocial support to children and adolescents that the evaluators have ever seen in over 50 years of combined experience in emergency settings.

The LSE component achieved remarkable results in a very short time – developing the methodology for LSE, training materials, teaching and learning materials and assessment instruments; delivering high quality training to master trainers and teachers; supporting and monitoring the teaching of life skills. Students, teachers, trainers and ministry officials were almost unanimous in their appreciation of the quality and impact of the work on the lives of children and communities. There were notable spillover effects to other areas of learning and to other schools. The provision of LSE through the carrier subject Basics of Health has provided MoES with evidence and a model for the child-centred, active, participatory learning and motivated teaching that the Ministry plans to implement throughout Ukraine with the New school reform process.

The PSS component has made impressive contributions to the resilience of conflict-affected children in Ukraine, and its accomplishments under difficult circumstances rival those of the very best PSS programmes in other war-torn countries. Embodying excellent academic-practitioner collaboration, the intervention enabled teachers, head teachers, and school psychologists to better understand the situation of children in five of the most war-affected oblasts and gave them the tools for engaging in supportive communication and a positive approach with children, for addressing issues of withdrawal, anger, and disruptive behaviour, and referring children who need specialized assistance. Its success in providing psychosocial support on a wide scale and at a relatively low cost following the initial start-up phase make it a model that is worthy of continuation, extension, and enrichment in Ukraine.

The question for Ukraine, where conflict and hardships are ongoing, should not be whether to continue but how to continue this Life Skills Education and Psychosocial Support, which have profound implications for the future of the children of Ukraine.

Despite these achievements, and despite the commitment of MoES to continue to support and mainstream the work, ECHO and UNICEF should continue to support the processes that have begun.

INTRODUCTION

Context and origin of the project

Armed conflict in eastern Ukraine

At the time of the project's conception, in February 2015, the armed conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts between the Government of Ukraine and pro-Russian separatists had been underway for ten months. Assessments undertaken by the United Nations, UN OCHA, the European Union, the World Bank and ACAPS indicated that as of 6 February 2015, at least 5,486 people had been killed and 12,972 wounded in eastern Ukraine. 5 million people were estimated to need humanitarian aid and there were 1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).

OCHA estimates the total numbers killed between 6 April 2015 and 1 December 2016 to be 9,758, including 2,040 civilians, with another 22,779 people injured. During 2015 and 2016, Ukraine's 'slow-burning' emergency continued, with an informal trade war with Russia and ongoing low-level hostilities in the east of the country (an average of 'only' 6.5 combat-related deaths per day during those two years).

The conflict continues to destabilise the Government of Ukraine, the Ukrainian economy and the people living in the conflict-affected oblasts to the east, and it continues to have powerfully negative implications for peace in Europe. There had been little public discourse in Ukraine about social peace prior to the outbreak of this conflict; the level and intensity of violence have rocked the country. Moreover, there are now over 1.75 million IDPs in Ukraine. Although a small number have returned home, many may not be able to do so for a long time to come.

Needs assessments

In September 2014, UNICEF worked with the German agency GfK to conduct a Rapid Psychosocial Assessment of Children in Donetsk Oblast. This was complemented two months later by an assessment led by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. The assessments revealed heightened levels of anxiety and fear among children and adolescents who had witnessed aversive or violent events, such as encounters with soldiers, military vehicles, people threatening others with guns and people being wounded and killed. While most children were resilient and coped reasonably well with the heightened stress, a significant number were less resilient, notably among younger children.

Psychologists' assessments of children in Donetsk oblast suggested that the highest levels of distress and deterioration in behaviour patterns (26 percent) occurred in children aged 3-6 years, compared to 13 percent and 14 percent, respectively for 7-12 and 13-18 year olds.

Only about a quarter of children who had witnessed violence reported having received any help to deal with their experiences and feelings. The most vulnerable children were found to be those living in the war zones and IDP children exposed to bullying.

These findings indicated two interrelated needs for the children and adolescents affected by the conflict in Ukraine.

First was the need to strengthen the skills needed for living together with people in their host communities (in the case of IDPs) and in reintegrating into their home communities (for returnees in the post-conflict zones in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts). In time, children and adolescents in the areas of active conflict will need similar life skills to help build a sustainable peace between Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking communities in the Donbas region. This requires extensive training of individual school teachers in the skills of facilitating Life Skills Education (LSE) / Learning to Live Together programmes. It also requires strengthening of the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) through curriculum development and teacher training processes.

Second was the need for effective psychosocial support on a large scale for distressed children and adolescents. Since most children and adolescents attend school, schools were identified as an appropriate venue for providing psychosocial support on a large scale. For the out-of-school children, there was a need for strengthening community-based referral and care systems.

UNICEF's response and identification of partners

Based on data derived from these assessments and other sources, UNICEF determined to support MoES to develop a response to the needs of children, which would be delivered both through life skills education programming in the school curriculum and through extra-curricular psychosocial support.

The principal institution responsible for these issues is MoES, centrally in Kyiv, at department level in the oblasts, and through the Institutes of In-Service Teacher Training (IISTTs) in each oblast. These three entities within MoES were UNICEF's close partners throughout project development and implementation. The engagement of MoES and other Ukrainian bodies increases the likelihood of national institutional ownership and thus the sustainability of the project's impacts beyond 2016.

UNICEF and its partners chose to infuse learning content on Life Skills into the school subject Basics of Health (BoH), which is currently offered to pupils in grades 1-11. This activity, known as a 'carrier subject' approach, is much more effective than seeking 'integration' of

LSE across the whole curriculum. It is also more effective and realistic than seeking the creation of a 'stand-alone' subject devoted exclusively to LSE.¹

As there had been no specific content on learning to live together in the Ukrainian curriculum, MoES encouraged UNICEF to work with an appropriate partner to develop such content, methodologies, and teaching and learning materials. Given the number of schools and teachers targeted by the project's LSE component, UNICEF decided to adopt a cascade approach of training master trainers from the IISTTs in LSE methods and resources, then organising trainings by those trainers for teachers at oblast and raion level.

For the psychosocial component, UNICEF settled on an approach of (i) training school psychologists who in turn trained and mentored teachers, who implemented a more supportive approach and activities designed to address problems such as fear and stress; and (ii) developing mechanisms for the identification and referral of children and adolescents who need more specialized support.

With the approval of MoES, UNICEF discussed the needs with several potential technical implementing partners, settling on the Charitable Foundation Health through Education (HtE) for the LSE work and the National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) for the PSS component. Both partners had and continue to have excellent reputations for delivering services and facilitating processes of high technical quality, and strong working relationships with MoES. HtE built on the network of teachers and teacher trainers active in curriculum planning, materials development, teacher training and teacher support for Basics of Health, the carrier subject for LSE. NaUKMA works with an active network of school psychologists and teachers.

At ECHO's request, the implementation of the LSE and PSS work under the project was to be limited to the five ostensibly most conflict-affected oblasts in the east of the country: Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhya and Kharkiv.

UNICEF's approach to ECHO and ECHO's approval

UNICEF drafted a comprehensive project proposal in February 2015, which it shared with the Kyiv office of ECHO and submitted to ECHO headquarters in Brussels, requesting funding through the Children of Peace (CoP) mechanism. After some exchanges, UNICEF received final approval for the project from ECHO on 15 September and funding on 16 October 2015. The official starting date was set as 1 August 2015. The amount approved by ECHO was

¹ For a comparison of the benefits and disadvantages of each approach, see Margaret Sinclair, Lynn Davies, Anna Obura and Felisa Tibbitts, *Learning to Live Together: Design, Monitoring and Evaluation of Education for Life Skills, Citizenship, Peace and Human Rights* (Eschborn, GTZ, 2008), p. 50 (https://s3.amazonaws.com/inee-assets/resources/doc_1_Learning_to_Live_Together.pdf).

€800,000, with a corresponding contribution from UNICEF's own resources of €84,141, which was almost 10 percent of the total value of the project (€884,141).

Inception workshop

On 2-3 December 2015, UNICEF convened an Inception Workshop with staff of all the partners engaged in the project. Thirty people attended, drawn from the main implementing partners, MoES staff from the five project implementation oblasts, plus the central Ministry, other partner agencies and UNICEF. Everybody contributed actively and very constructively to the discussion of the project plans and their implementation in each oblast.

A consistent message of the workshop was that the work on LSE and PSS constituted a single project with two major components. Areas of collaboration and synergy between those two components in the implementation of the project were identified. All participants in the project came to a shared understanding of the concepts and terminology used in the project description, which made it possible to avoid confusion and misapplication during implementation. The partners also developed shared understandings on baselines, monitoring and evaluation activities, publication of research findings generated by the project, and the project's communication and visibility plan.

Project aim

The aim of the project was to provide the children and adolescents most severely affected by the conflict in Ukraine life skills they need to live peacefully within host and returnee communities; and psychosocial support to strengthen their resilience.

Objective 1: Conflict-related life skills

To provide the most severely affected children and adolescents, as well as those in host and returnee communities, life skills, behaviours and values, focused on clear communication, empathy, cooperation, problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, negotiation, mediation, reconciliation, appropriate assertiveness, respect for human rights, gender sensitivity and active citizenship through life skills courses in learning to live together, implemented at appropriate curriculum entry points in pre-school, primary and secondary school curricula, and through community education centres.

Objective 2: Psychosocial support

To provide effectively targeted psychosocial supports to strengthen the resilience of conflict-affected children and adolescents.

Purposes of the evaluation

The evaluation was undertaken to provide UNICEF with a formal report on the achievements and outcomes of the project covering the period August 2015 – November 2016. The evaluation report is written for staff of UNICEF, the donor ECHO, the Government of Ukraine, notably the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Policy, and UNICEF's implementing partners, Health through Education and Kyiv Mohyla Academy. In addition to documenting the achievements and challenges of the project thus far, the evaluation gave those agencies an opportunity for reflection on the future needs of children within and outside of schools in the areas of LSE and PSS. It will guide the development of UNICEF's future programmatic activities in the LSE and PSS fields.

The evaluation should not be seen as an end point. All concerned with education and child protection in Ukraine are on a journey; they need support and encouragement along the way.

Evaluation team

The team was comprised of two international consultants: Christopher Talbot, a specialist in Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction; and Michael Wessells, a specialist in Child Protection and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies

Dates and sites of the evaluation

The evaluation was conducted between 10 and 18 November 2016, in Kyiv, Kramatorsk and Kharkiv.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Evaluation criteria and questions to be answered

Relevance: Was the project an appropriate way to achieve the desired objectives?

Outcomes: What were the effects of the project?

Effectiveness: To what extent has the project achieved each of its objectives?

Synergies: How did the two project components interact?

Sustainability: Will project activities and benefits continue after external support is withdrawn?

Baselines and monitoring

Baselines for most of the project's indicators were initially set as 'zero' because detailed baseline studies were conducted in January 2016 for the PSS component of the project and in May 2016 for the LSE component.

The partners worked towards target incidence figures (quantitative indicators) and target conditions (qualitative indicators), which were specified in their respective project cooperation agreements. HtE and NaUKMA had sound methods of monitoring progress on the indicators.

UNICEF constantly supported the two main partners in the monitoring, paying attention to the technical aspects of observation and measurement. UNICEF did this through their network of Field Office staff members and through frequent visits of staff members based in Kyiv, who were responsible for the project.

Methods of data collection and analysis and sites visited

The evaluation team used a variety of methods to gather information about the project's processes and outcomes. These were workshops in Kramatorsk; focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) in Kharkiv; KIIs in Kyiv; journals kept by a small number of self-selected teachers, PSS providers' session logs, and review of project documentation: principally monitoring reports, training materials, teaching and learning materials assessment instruments and data generated by the project partners. In most cases, discussions and interviews were conducted in Ukrainian, and sometimes in Russian, depending upon the language the respondents felt most comfortable speaking. The evaluation team was supported by two highly capable interpreters who translated from Ukrainian or Russian to English and vice versa.

Reasons for choices of methods and sites

Mixed methods were used to take advantage the distinctive strengths and complementarities of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Whereas the quantitative methods helped to identify the programme activities and effects on a scale based on standardized measurement, the qualitative methods made it possible to learn in greater depth about participants' experiences, perceptions, and the processes behind observed changes.

The qualitative methods, particularly the workshops, FGDs, and KIIs, used an elicitive approach that was designed to learn from and capture the narratives and lived experiences of the participants. The elicitive approach was flexible, oriented towards answering a set of key questions, yet was largely respondent-driven. This approach began with asking very general, non-leading questions such as, "What has changed during the period of this project?" As particular changes were mentioned, the interviewers asked probing questions such as, "Could you please give an example of that?", to learn more about changes identified. This approach was designed to learn from the narratives of the participants and to focus on the changes that they saw as important rather than on the preconceived changes that the evaluators or programme designers might have focused on. It was also designed to draw upon the lived experiences of the participants and to capture what they saw as being most important or challenging. For details of the tools and instruments that the evaluators used, see Appendix 1, below.

In inviting participants to respond to various questions, the interviewers emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers, that there was no pressure to 'make the programme look good', and that it is natural to encounter challenges in a programme dealing with complex personal and interpersonal issues. The interviewers indicated that the purpose was to learn in an honest manner about the various strengths and challenges of the programme,

with an eye toward making improvements and guiding future work on behalf of conflict-affected children.

The field visit sites were chosen because they allowed inputs from project participants from a mixture of locations that were directly affected by the armed conflict (Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts), and others less directly affected by conflict but which were the relocation site of many IDPs (Kharkiv). We interviewed staff of MoES, HtE, NaUKMA, UNICEF and ECHO who are based in Kyiv because they and their institutions were crucial to the project's implementation. For details of evaluation participant numbers and profiles, see Appendix 2, below.

Joint reflective workshop, Kramatorsk, 14 November 2016

The joint reflective workshop gathered 41 practitioners and policymakers active in the LSE and PSS fields from the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, and from Kyiv. It explored the achievements and limitations of the project during the implementation period. Creating a reflective space that enabled practitioners from the LSE and the PSS components of the project to learn from each other, it allowed the identification of patterns emerging through the work, including synergies between the LSE and PSS project components. It highlighted the implications of those emerging patterns for future work on LSE and PSS considering changing situations, opportunities and capacities in Ukraine.

Specialist workshop on the Life Skills Education component, Kramatorsk, 15 November 2016

This specialist workshop brought together 29 practitioners and policymakers from the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, and from Kyiv, to deepen the reflections on the LSE component. It focussed on the progress, achievements and limitations of implementation, the learner-centred methodology, Basics of Health as a carrier subject, the LSE teaching and learning materials; the training of trainers and of teachers; the experience of teaching LSE in the classroom; outcomes of the work in terms of the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours of students and teachers; whole-of-school approaches to LSE; and next steps with LSE.

Specialist workshop on the Psychosocial Support component, Kramatorsk, 15 November 2016

This specialist workshop brought together 35 practitioners and policymakers from the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, and from Kyiv, to deepen the reflections on the PSS component. It focussed on the outcomes achieved and the changes seen by teachers and school psychologists, particularly regarding teacher-student relations; improvements seen in

student behaviour; challenges and needs of the PSS programme; and the functionality and quality of the process of referring students for specialised support.

Focus group discussions, Kharkiv, 16-17 November 2016

The purpose of the focus group discussions was to learn from particular sub-groups such as teachers, school psychologists, students, MoES officials, and implementing partner staff in small groups about their views regarding what had changed during the project's implementation, what positive improvements or challenges had arisen, and any suggestions for future work on strengthening LSE and PSS. The project-wide FGD with MoES staff had 23 participants. The FGDs with LSE participants included 3 trainers, 8 students, 30 teachers, 2 school psychologists and 9 IISTT staff, a total of 52 informants. The FGDs with PSS participants included 6 trainers, 6 head teachers or school directors, 6 school psychologists, 8 teachers, and 10 children, a total of 36 informants.

Key informant interviews, Kharkiv, 16-17 November, and Kyiv, 10-11 November 2016

The purpose of the KIIs was to learn in greater depth about individual views regarding what has changed during the project's implementation, what positive improvements or challenges had arisen, and any suggestions for future work on strengthening LSE and PSS. The evaluators interviewed five LSE participants (one trainer, one teacher, two students and one IISTT coordinator); and four PSS participants (one trainer, one teacher, one school psychologist and one student).

Review of project documentation

The project documentation was a rich source of data and impressions about the project's implementation and outcomes. We reviewed assessment instruments, monitoring reports, training materials, teaching and learning materials, LSE teachers' lesson logs, PSS providers' session logs, and data generated by the project partners.

Fifty-three LSE teachers, working in all five project implementation oblasts, kept logs of their lessons between September and November 2016. The evaluators selected five such logs for detailed analysis, one from each oblast, and covering the full range of school grades from 1 to 11, with four female and one male teacher represented.

Ten PSS implementers – two teachers or school psychologists per oblast, kept logs of their PSS work between September and November 2016. By design, the participants came from schools that were designated by the KMA team as 'strong' (8) or 'average' (2) based on criteria such as the number of teachers and others involved in the programme per school and feedback from supervision meetings. Four journals were selected on a probabilistic

basis, such that there were two school psychologists and two teachers. In the selected set, one participant was in the 'average school' category, whereas three were in the 'strong school' category. The participant records varied in their specificity but were designed to describe useful approaches, and changes and challenges encountered during the programme implementation.

For the LSE component, HtE conducted on-line, pre- and post-implementation surveys, with questions covering 42 indicators.² The scope of the surveys is summarised in Table 1, below.

	Pre-implementation survey September 2016	Post-implementation survey December 2016
Students in grades 1-11	60,163	60,448
Teachers	2,891	2,934
Total surveyed	63,054	63,382
Schools	591	635

Table 1: HtE's pre- and post-implementation survey numbers. Source: HtE

The on-line surveys sampled more than 26 percent of the 241,474 students who received LSE lessons during the project period. The data collected, analysed and displayed in the HtE report is very rich. The most vital findings have been analysed for this evaluation report. The evaluators recommend to readers to consult the HtE report in its entirety. It is available from the offices of UNICEF and HtE in Kyiv.

For the psychosocial component, KMA conducted pre- and post-implementation surveys designed to identify children's war-related experiences and stresses, as well as their prosocial behaviour, disruptive behaviour, and aspects of their coping, support, and resilience. Two baseline samples, one probabilistic and the other random, were taken in November 2014 and February 2016; they included a total of 1,807 children and adolescents (8-17 years of age). The November 2014 sample included 1,365 participants from Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, whereas the February 2016 sample (n=422) was a random sample from all five participating oblasts. The post-implementation survey was conducted using a random sample from all five oblasts in November 2016, and the results are currently being analysed.

² Health through Education, *Report on the Results of Online Survey on the Project 'Learning to Live Together' Component 'Life Skills Education'* (Kyiv, HtE, 2016).

Analysis

The information collected was analysed using diverse methods and a consultative, holistic approach. The quantitative data were analysed using a mixture of descriptive statistics and where, relevant, inferential statistics. The narrative data were examined through reading and re-reading of the records, with attention to consistent patterns. As the evaluators read, they informally coded the narratives using emergent categories such as "teacher-student relations" and "challenges". Within these categories, recurrent or typical themes were identified, with outlier themes also noted. Whenever possible, the data were triangulated across different methods to make sure, for example, that the identified programme strengths were consistent across group discussions and individual interviews.

Consultative reflection was also an important part of the analytic process. On an ongoing basis, the evaluators shared their observations and reflections on what they had learned, discussing any differences of views as they progressed. Their discussions helped to generate working hypotheses, which were then tested through additional reading and interviews. In addition, on an iterative basis, the evaluators engaged in a similar process with Ukrainian technical lead teams for the life skills and psychosocial components, respectively. This made it possible for the evaluators to test their views and to enrich their understanding through dialogue with those who had the greatest involvement in the project's implementation. Throughout this process, the evaluators engaged in co-learning while also maintaining appropriate distance and a critical, reflective orientation. Ultimately, this evaluation report expresses the views of the evaluators.

Constraints or problems encountered in carrying out the evaluation

Access to informants

Time, available funding and security constraints limited the evaluation to three sites only (Kyiv, Kramatorsk and Kharkiv). Without those constraints, the evaluators would have wished to:

- Listen to project participants in all five oblasts where the project was implemented
- Visit project implementation sites close to the contact line
- Visit schools to interview students, teachers and parents in greater numbers and depth
- Observe actual LSE lessons and PSS sessions in progress

- Visit some schools where the project was not implemented, as a control for purposes of comparison

Quality of interactions

Our informants spoke freely and with candour to us about their experience of the project's activities, its outcomes and future needs in LSE and PSS work. We did not observe or sense any reticence to speak due to political or institutional pressure, though some individuals were understandably reserved at first, as they were speaking with international evaluators through interpreters. We did our best to set interviewees and FGD participants at ease.

We also felt that the social desirability bias had been managed effectively. Interviewees and FGD participants made relatively few attempts to feed us positive inputs to 'please' us or to ensure a favourable evaluation report. Teenaged students as well as teachers spoke to us fully and frankly, including about limitations and difficulties encountered in learning, teaching and psychosocial support processes.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Introduction

In this section, we consider the most important findings of the evaluation concerning the project's relevance, outcomes, effectiveness and sustainability. We begin with brief remarks about each of those features as they apply to the whole project.

Relevance

Among our informants, there was widespread agreement that the learning opportunities and services provided to students and teachers through the LSE and PSS components of the project were highly relevant to the needs of both the internally displaced and those hosting them in the five eastern provinces.

Many informants noted that, with the war in the east continuing, LSE and PSS are highly relevant to current needs and to preparing children and teachers for post-conflict reconciliation one day. The evaluators observed that the combination of LSE and PSS could be very helpful in strengthening a protective environment for children and addressing issues such as family violence and bullying.

Nevertheless, many people regretted what they perceived as the artificial limitation of the project's scope of implementation to the five ostensibly most conflict-affected oblasts in the east of the country. Over and over, teachers, trainers, psychologists and ministry officials expressed their perception of a great need to extend the LSE and PSS activities geographically – within the five oblasts, with greater attention to those communities close to the contact line, and to non-government controlled areas (NGCAs). A training coordinator from the Donetsk IISTT remarked, 'One day we will return, so this project is needed in the NGCAs.'

Many told us that the whole country needs this work. There are hundreds of thousands of IDPs in Ukraine's other oblasts. One person warned that Ukraine is facing a political perception of widening gap in the provision of services between east and west, and that, by focussing only on the east, UNICEF's ECHO-funded project was unintentionally reinforcing east-west divisions.

The validity or otherwise of this observation is beyond the scope of this evaluation to investigate. However, out of respect for the do-no-harm principle, as well as for even more positive reasons, UNICEF may wish to consider seeking funding to allow deeper and broader implementation of the LSE and PSS activities throughout Ukraine in the coming years. They

would certainly be relevant to needs in the whole country and welcomed by MoES, host communities and schools.

Outcomes

The ECHO-funded project aimed for medium-term behaviour and attitude change in hundreds of thousands of children and thousands of teachers. Such outcomes require painstakingly complex and time-consuming social, psychological and educational processes, involving planning for transition beyond immediate emergency response towards longer-term recovery. These were not the quick logistical fixes often associated with emergency responses in the past, and the project's many positive outcomes will need ongoing investment to sustain their impact.

The fact that an emergency-oriented donor was willing to invest in medium- to long-term processes is a sign of considerable maturity and integrity. ECHO, UNICEF and their implementing partners are to be commended for the vision and ambition that underlay the project's formulation.

Further details of the project's outcomes may be found in the following sections of this report, dealing with LSE, PSS and synergies between the two.

Effectiveness

Overall, the project has achieved its two objectives – the provision of life skills and psychosocial support to conflict-affected children and adolescents – remarkably fully and well. Four factors key to the project's success emerged very strongly through the evaluation process:

JOINT IMPLEMENTATION OF LSE AND PSS

Very effective outcomes were reported from schools, teachers and trainers who had participated in both components, and especially where the LSE and PSS work was planned and implemented in a coordinated way. For more detail, see the section on synergies, below.

KEY ROLE OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS AND ADMINISTRATION

Many teachers testified that the LSE and PSS programmes were optimally effective when school directors, their deputies and other school administrative staff were informed, involved and supportive. Some quite outstanding outcomes were reported by teachers from schools where the director took the trainings himself or herself.

HIGH QUALITY OF PLANNING AND TRAINING BY UNICEF'S IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Both HtE and NaUKMA brought deep experience, considerable creativity and dogged thoroughness to planning the project and training their respective master trainers. That high quality was emulated by the master trainers from the ISITTs in their training of teachers and school psychologists, with very positive effects.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE

Several trainers and oblast-level officials commented that a strength of the project was that it drew on proven international models in both LSE and PSS components. This gave them confidence and pride in building locally and specifically upon global experience. 'We do not need to reinvent the wheel,' said one trainer.

Further details of the project's effectiveness may be found in following sections of this report, dealing with LSE, PSS and synergies between the two.

Sustainability

The project made strong efforts towards sustainability beyond its immediate funding. This was done through:

- The publication and dissemination of assessment tools, training materials and teaching and learning materials
- Provision of training to teachers, school psychologists, MoES and IISTT staff in LSE and PSS methodologies and monitoring
- Involvement of families in project activities
- Involvement of school directors and other school administrative staff in project activities

To deepen the project's sustainability, UNICEF should encourage MoES to make policy commitments to, and mainstream technical implementation of LSE and PSS work throughout Ukraine.

Life Skills Education component

Progress of implementation

While HtE has proved to be a very experienced, competent and willing partner, and the school subject Basics of Health has been an excellent vector for LSE content, the project had to begin work on life skills from scratch. HtE and UNICEF correctly foresaw and planned a lot of time for the development of teaching and learning methodologies and materials, their

trial, modification and acceptance by MoES and other authorities, training of trainers and then training of teachers. Any attempt to rush the processes of methodology and materials development would have compromised the quality and integrity of the whole project component.

Full-scale implementation of the large range of life skills learning activities was planned for and carried out from the beginning of the new school year in September 2016.

The Programme Cooperation Agreement signed between UNICEF and HtE in November 2015, covering the LSE component, stipulated six major project outputs. HtE and UNICEF monitored progress towards those outputs against 27 agreed indicators, both quantitative and qualitative. On 20 December 2016, HtE reported that the results achieved against 26 of the 27 indicators had equalled or exceeded the numerical and yes/no targets. HtE and UNICEF agreed to reduce one quantitative indicator, dealing with the number of publications produced, by combining separate books for secondary and high school students into one.

The donor, ECHO, required the project to be completed by 31 December 2016 and the evaluation to be undertaken in mid-November. Normally, life skills content, taught through the carrier subject Basics of Health, would be spread out through the school year. HtE secured an agreement with MoES that the life skills themes would be taught in all the schools implementing the project during the first few weeks of the 2016-17 school year, thereby ensuring that all students who were due to take these lessons would have finished them before the evaluation began.

Table 2, below, highlights the achievement of some of the most important project deliverables of the LSE component. For details of progress against all 27 indicators, see Appendix 3, below.

Parameter	Planned by end-2016	Actual on 20 December 2016
Schools reached, including:	1,570	1,589
Pre-school	735	735
Primary and secondary	835	854
Trainings of trainers conducted	3	3
Trainers trained	90 (increased during project implementation from the original 60)	90
Trainings conducted in region	130	134
Teachers trained	3,240	3,369
Children and school students reached	174,000	241,474

	(increased during project implementation from the original 50,000)	(196,453 school children and 45,021 pre-schoolers)
Number of titles of publications	18	17 (secondary and high school are combined)
Total circulation of publications	13,200	13,400

Table 2: LSE component coverage 2016: Selected indicators. Source: HtE

The target of 1,570 schools implementing LSE, which was exceeded, represents 25 percent of all schools in the five eastern oblasts. However, the most remarkable figure in Table 1 is the number of students who took LSE lessons: 241,474 compared with the planned number of 174,000. That target was originally set at 50,000, but revised during the project's development phase. The directors of HtE explained that this was partly due to an at-the-time appropriately conservative pre-project estimate of the number of students that teachers of Basics of Health would have taught in the first four months of the 2016-17 school year.

The target was greatly exceeded for two main reasons:

- (i) The training of trainers and teacher training programmes were highly successful and enthusiastically received by teachers of Basics of Health in primary, secondary and high schools and by pre-school teachers. There was a big uptake and high rate of implementation of what the trained teachers had learned.
- (ii) Those teachers shared their experience of teaching LSE with their colleagues responsible for other classes and other disciplines, outside of BoH. Many of those colleagues are 'Class Hour' teachers, who take a designated group of students for a lesson once a week throughout the year, often moving forward with the same class throughout their years within a cycle of schooling. The equivalent of the Ukrainian 'Class Hour' is known in western education systems variously as 'Home Room', 'Tutor Group' or 'Pastoral Care'. The evident benefits of life skills lessons for teachers and students alike led many Class Hour teachers to study the teaching and learning materials and to deliver the lessons during their Class Hour time slots. This is a major positive spillover effect of the project and was identified by project trainers as a major opportunity to scale up the implementation of the project.

Teaching and learning materials

ACHIEVEMENTS

HtE researched, drafted, trialled, revised, and arranged artwork, layout, printing and distribution for a comprehensive and remarkable array of 17 different teaching and learning materials for LSE. These included a curriculum overview, training materials for teacher training, teachers' guides and student workbooks, covering all grades of schooling. These were supplemented by videos, musical recordings, stories, poems and PowerPoint presentations. In all, there were 74 lessons covering grades 1-10, plus pre-school.

The process of materials development was very consultative, sound and thorough. During the evaluation, many trainers expressed their appreciation that they had the opportunity to pre-test all the materials and that their suggestions for improvement were considered before the release.

Here is a link to the full package of resources that were developed by HtE through the project: <http://autta.org.ua/ua/ProjectUNICEF/resourse>.

It is a remarkable and outstanding achievement that in only ten months HtE could develop so many resources. Yet there was no trade-off of speed for quality; the pedagogical quality of the materials is very high. The evaluators reviewed the whole package of materials, with selected translation into English as needed. The materials are visually very attractive and appealing to children of varying age groups. Their pedagogical structure is clear and sound. They are comprehensive and well adapted to the needs of children of different abilities and ages, and make appropriate use of humour.

Many teachers met during the evaluation praised the quality of the learning activities and materials. From the records of a 1st grade teacher in Zaporizhzhya:

'It was easy to work with the well-selected materials. The lesson was interesting, informative, and very much needed in the first grade.'

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND PUBLICATION

Most of the learning materials were published on the project website in both Ukrainian and Russian languages. Teachers appreciated that fact, which allowed them to use the language that they and their students know better.

However, due to time and budgetary constraints, *printed* publications are only available in Ukrainian (except the curriculum guides, which are printed in both languages). Only teachers were provided with printed texts. To prepare handouts for the classroom the teachers had

to make copies of materials from the student manual, available on line. They usually printed copies of handouts from PDF files. PowerPoint presentations are only available in Ukrainian; and videos and animations only in the original language (Ukrainian or Russian).

Clearly both languages are needed. A 4th grade teacher from Severodonetsk commented on the video resources used in a lesson, 'It was difficult to understand certain Ukrainian words, since the school uses Russian language. Some children struggle with understanding Ukrainian, while Russian is easy for them.'

DISTRIBUTION AND AVAILABILITY

Altogether, HtE had 13,400 copies of 17 different publications printed and distributed. The lack of budgetary provision for printing copies of materials for students forced teachers to spend part of their own, usually quite meagre salaries on photocopying. This was a particularly serious problem in rural areas, where access to photocopiers and the Internet is harder. Some teachers struggled because they needed to convert PDF files to Word format to allow children to work on case studies.

Teachers everywhere asked that copies of essential texts be provided for children in future. This is a reasonable request. A project coordinator and trainer from Donetsk oblast stressed that 'preschool-aged children need an exercise book to nail down the skills gained: colouring books or other tools.'

NUMBER OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN EACH LESSON

A consistent observation from teachers was that there were too many learning activities programmed into each lesson plan. The evaluators verified this impression.

For example, Grade 3, Lesson 6, *How to resolve a conflict*, has nine separate activities for children to conduct in groups, with five different inputs (videos, animations and stories). The teacher also must introduce the lesson, linking to past learning, give some instruction and guidance at each turning point, and wrap up. All this is to be squeezed into 45 minutes. Similarly Grade 8, Lesson 1, *Sex and gender roles*, has nine separate activities for the children with six stimulus materials and five discrete interventions by the teacher.

Students in Kharkiv commented that often they did not have time to finish lesson activities. Several teachers referred to this difficulty of too much content per lesson in their teaching journals. Combined with the need to spend time moving the furniture in their classrooms to accommodate the active learning methodologies, discussed in a later section of this report, the apparent overcrowding of each lesson was problematic.

Possibly teachers are meant to choose among the stimulus materials and activities, not to try to do them all. However, the teachers whom the evaluators met were clearly reluctant to drop activities from the lesson plans, because they viewed all of them as being of great value to their class.

One possible solution would be for HtE to divide existing lesson content and activities, spreading the learning experiences for each topic over two or three lessons. This would be consistent with the calls from many teachers in the Kharkiv FGDs and Kramatorsk workshops to provide LSE throughout the academic year, and not just for a few lessons each year. Of course, this would have implications for the balance of content offered through the subject Basics of Health. Nevertheless, the quality and value of the learning experiences provided by the LSE programming warrants an approach that does not cram too much material into each lesson.

Training of trainers and of teachers

HtE worked closely with experienced teacher trainers from the IISTTs in the five oblasts to train a cadre of 90 trainers in three sessions. Those 90 trainers conducted 134 trainings, lasting between three and five days each, with a total of 3,369 teachers trained between May and September 2016.

TRAINING METHODOLOGY

The training methodology used was intensely practical and immersive: The teachers were treated as students; they went through many life skills learning activities and were thus well prepared to teach them to their own students.

Groups of teachers who participated in the evaluation workshops and FGDs praised the methodology and content of the training very highly. They highlighted the active format, the topical subjects that were relevant to both children and adults, and which helped them to understand the behaviour of children and adults, the opportunity to exchange experiences with other teachers, the availability of ready-to-use materials, and the age-specificity of the training activities. They appreciated that they were given the right to make mistakes, and chances to test and correct their own practice as LSE teachers.

Many referred to the trainings as opportunities to change their emotional state and attitudes to themselves, that they were given the possibility to believe in their own strength. Some mentioned that the training activities helped them to resolve personal issues and problems.

NUMBERS AND CONCENTRATIONS OF TEACHERS TRAINED

Many teachers in the Kramatorsk workshops and particularly at the Kharkiv FGDs regretted that too few teachers were trained in each school – not enough to create a critical mass for sustainability. However, due to decisions taken by the master trainers working in the oblast-level IISTTs, a natural experiment arose. In Dnipro oblast, relatively greater numbers of teachers were trained in relatively fewer schools; in Kharkiv typically one or two teachers were trained in many schools. The two oblasts found different solutions to the problem of trading off depth for breadth in training.

During 2017, HtE and UNICEF may wish to compare the outcomes of the LSE teaching among children in these two oblasts. While any differences observed may not be attributable solely to the differences in the concentration of training provision [many teachers in few schools in Dnipro versus few teachers in many schools in Kharkiv], some useful lessons could be inferred, particularly in terms of knowledge-sharing among teachers and impact upon the whole school environment.

To overcome the small number of trained teachers per school in Kharkiv, the project coordinator planned to work with the trained teachers to train the untrained, at school level. However, problems arose, in that primary school teachers had completed a training on how to work with children, but now had to work to train adults. The coordinator feared that the quality of training would not be the same.

POST-TRAINING SUPPORT AND NEXT STEPS

Support is provided to teachers through the Facebook page, which HtE maintains for the project (<https://www.facebook.com/ditu.mury/?fref=nf>). A primary school teacher from Luhansk expressed her appreciation for the friendships developed between teachers through the project's social media networks, which help to break down professional isolation. The Donetsk Oblast IISTT created a portal for the project, entitled *Learning to live together* (www.ippo.dn.ua), where all the project materials, presentations, instructional webinars and on-line testing are available. The project coordinators also assist teachers directly via email and telephone.

In late December 2016, HtE posted on its website a draft test version of an on-line distance learning LSE course for teachers (<http://multycourse.com.ua/ru/>), which will be available to teachers to test early in 2017. The purpose of the testing is to identify gaps in content, which will allow HtE to modify content and software. After those processes, the on-line course must pass MoES' certification procedure. If the course is certified, teachers who pass it will officially receive additional in-service teacher training credits. This on-line course could be a

great opportunity to spread the knowledge of the LSE work and to equip many more teachers, even some working in NGCAs.

Donetsk Oblast ISITT trainers spoke of the possibility of extending the training to Lviv and Zakarpattia oblasts, in western Ukraine, through training institutes there.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Gender: Teachers trained in LSE are overwhelmingly women. Almost 90 percent of the attendees at the evaluation workshops, FGDs and KIIs were women. The project needs to reach out to train more male teachers.

Venues: Teachers and trainers at the Kramatorsk workshop regretted that some training venues were in poor condition and did not meet proper standards.

Choice of trainees: Trainers noted that some school directors allocated weaker teachers to the LSE training courses, or sent teachers who were not teaching Basics of Health, whereas some BoH teachers from the same schools were not trained. On the other hand, the principal of a school located 13 kilometres from the contact line took the training, then personally trained all 19 teachers in his school. He commented, 'It was great, but not all the teachers were ready. Some are afraid to express their emotions to the children and to elicit expressions of children's feelings.'

Rotation of teaching staff: Some schools had only one teacher trained for LSE. When he or she is transferred, the work may stop.

Time allocation: Although the basic training for teachers was of three days' duration, and some teachers received five days, the trainers and teachers were unanimous in their view that insufficient time was available for in-depth training in the challenging LSE material and methods. Further follow-up is greatly needed.

Learning programme approach: In future, the LSE training should take on a Learning Programme approach (on-line coursework and self-study → workshop → put into practice → more on-line coursework and self-study → follow-up workshop → more practice). Some of this training should take place by distance learning, on-line in most areas and in paper format for participants located in areas with poor Internet coverage.

Basics of Health as a carrier subject

Basics of Health has proved to be an effective 'carrier' for life skills content. Its advantages include being an accepted school subject, with set textbooks and other learning resources, which the new LSE materials complement very well. BoH already covers some awareness

raising and behavioural change elements, such as education about the effects of smoking, alcohol and drugs, sex education, and HIV and AIDS prevention. It thus provides a systemic approach for the formation of life habits linked to learning to live together. HtE's survey found that grade 4-11 students had mostly positive views of the subject (see Figure 1, below).

Student's attitude to the school subject "Basic of Health"

Indicator: % of students who consider "Basic of Health" as favorite, useful and interesting, is generally useful but not interesting, useless
Target group: students of 4 - 11 grades
Issues in Questionnaire for Students: 23

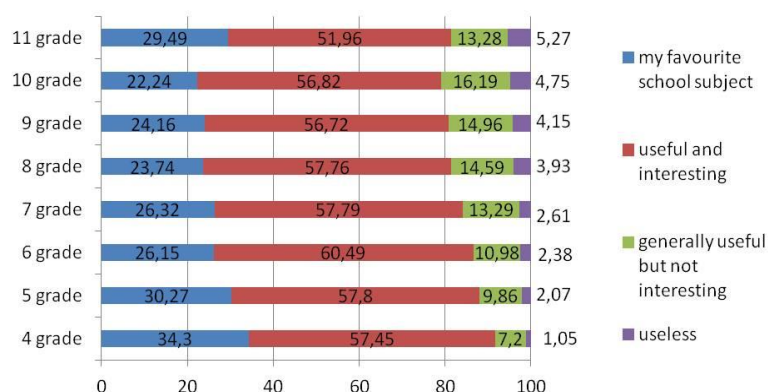


Figure 1: Students' attitudes to the school subject Basics of Health. Source: HtE

The concept of the New School, which MoES is introducing, includes among its aims forming of 'key life competencies', which include 'social and civic competencies' and 'environmental literacy and healthy lifestyle.' Basics of Health, newly infused with LSE content, is an excellent vehicle for accomplishment of these aims.

Set against these benefits are some disadvantages. Although they enjoy the subject, most students and teachers consider BoH as being of secondary importance compared to more academic subjects that are examined at the *Matura*, the Ukrainian high school exit examination. Unfortunately, BoH classes are assigned to teachers who are specialists in other disciplines and who are not necessarily trained in BoH.

Moreover, there are rumours in educational circles in Ukraine that the content of BoH may be subsumed into another subject area, as part of a rationalisation of the curriculum associated with the New School reform process. No firm decision has yet been taken. However, UNICEF and HtE should advocate strongly with MoES for retention within the Ukrainian curriculum of BoH's content and methodologies, including those of life skills.

Classroom teaching and learning methods

APPRECIATION

The teaching and learning methods were learner-centred, active, participatory and varied. Ukrainian students, teachers and trainers all referred to this type of learning as ‘training’ [ТРЕНІНГ], not as ‘teaching’ [НАВЧАННЯ], showing that they understand it as something that engages students in ways different from those in which they learn in other school subjects. Students and teachers typically sat in circles or on the floor. Both children and teachers enjoyed the spontaneity and freedom that these learning techniques gave. A primary school teacher from Luhansk said that the ‘trainings’ felt ‘like a family.’

Many teachers spoke of enjoying the creativity that the programme encourages and of the positive impact of the games used as learning experiences in the LSE lessons. According to a 2nd grade teacher:

‘The children in my class were hyperactive. What helped? GAMES! Now they are always looking forward to me coming and ask whether we will play. These games yielded a significant result and enabled communication with the children.’

Teenagers in an FGD in Kharkiv regretted that there were only a few LSE lessons for their grades and wished that they were available every week of the school year. They appreciated the relaxation activities, small group discussions and video inputs.

HtE’s pre- and post-implementation surveys showed that students noticed increasing levels of engagement by teachers during the project period (see Figure 2, with a sample of 5th-7th graders, below).

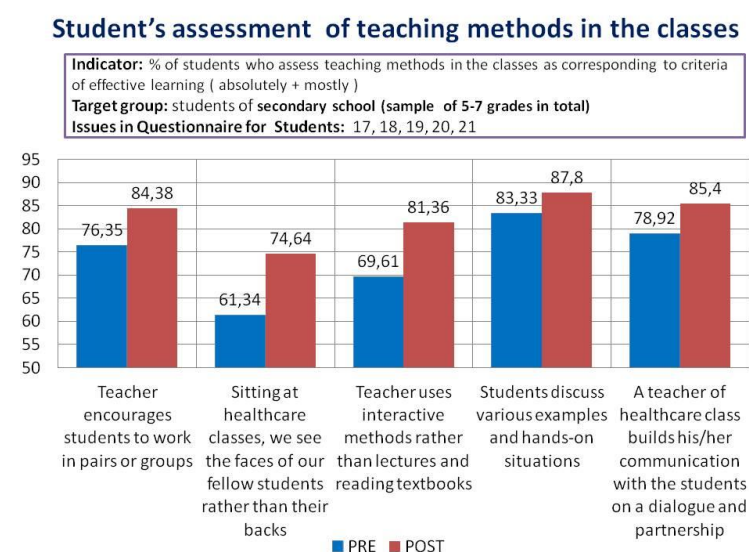


Figure 2: Students’ assessments of teaching methods in LSE classes, grades 5-7. Source: HtE

CHALLENGES

Equipped and dedicated training room: Almost every teacher and school director stressed the lack of a dedicated ‘training’ room – equipped with a television, video player and computers for Internet resources, and furnished for child-centred, active learning – as a major obstacle to successful implementation of LSE. Sitting in a circle, in small groups or on the floor are essential to opening children up to listen and speak of their feelings. Teachers must waste precious lesson time moving furniture at the beginning and end of each life skills lesson.

Class sizes: Class sizes are too large for effective and high quality group work. They should be limited to 12 in pre-school and primary school, and 20 in secondary and high school. A trainer from Donetsk oblast stated that ‘there are 35-40 children in the class; it is not possible to carry out the training in 40 minutes. It is necessary to split children into groups.’ Until MoES allows and funds smaller class sizes, HtE may need to develop a section of a training module specifically devoted to methodologies that will help teachers to cope with active, child-centred learning in large classes.

Insufficient quantities of learning materials: This was discussed in an earlier section of the report.

Remuneration of teachers: Several teachers spoke of the need for extra pay to compensate for the more demanding nature of the teaching required in LSE classes. This consideration feeds into a wider debate about the low status and low salaries of teachers generally, throughout Ukraine, a concern that MoES feels and which it hopes to address through the New School reform process.

Speaking at the Kramatorsk joint workshop, a teacher from Luhansk oblast summed up the challenges of the LSE programme felt by some teachers. Responding in discussion to many very positive comments from her colleagues, she said:

‘Let me rain on the parade. For this project is an additional stress. The main emphasis during normal lessons used to be on strong students, but in LSE we have to pay appropriate attention and involve all the children. That is a complicated task for a teacher. Teachers are afraid of being evaluated on their performance in LSE. It is also difficult for some teachers to “switch off the teacher mentality” and to cease evaluating children. Children sensed this too. So, some teachers switched back to more formal teaching methods. For some, the expectation that they should teach differently became a real emotional pressure. We felt that we did not have sufficient mentoring from our trainers after the workshops were over and we had started the training.’

While these views were not representative of those of most teachers, they express an important minority perspective for MoES, UNICEF and HtE as they plan for the next steps of LSE implementation.

Outcomes in terms of students', teachers' and parents' knowledge, skills and attitudes

The learning outcomes for both students and teachers from the LSE classes were very positive. The evaluation also revealed encouraging signs among parents of the children.

STUDENTS

Students gained a great deal of knowledge through the life skills lessons. HtE administered a test of students' knowledge before and after the teaching took place. Figure 3, below, shows the percentage of children in grades 5-11 who scored excellent or good results (75-100 percent on the test) before and after the LSE lessons.

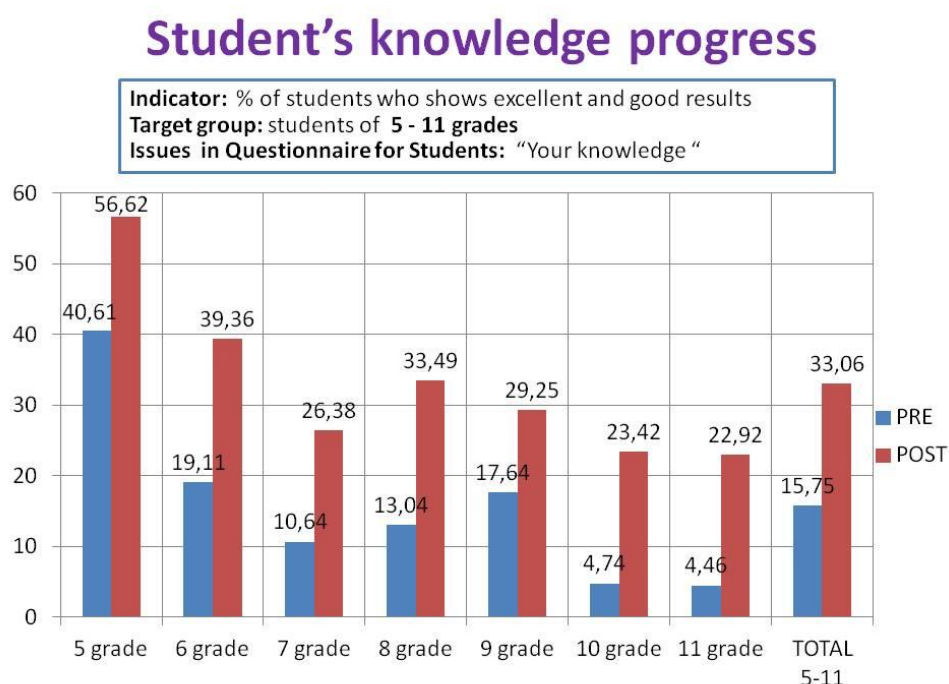


Figure 3: Percentage of grade 5-11 children scoring 75-100 percent in pre- and post-tests.

Source: HtE

Almost all teachers reported that the children in their classes had greatly enjoyed the LSE lessons. In some cases, children had been puzzled by the novelty of the approaches used in the first one or two lessons, and occasionally slightly resistant to the changes, but by the third lesson, most were eagerly anticipating the classes.

In a Kharkiv FGD, students all expressed enjoyment of and value for the LSE lessons, though they acknowledged that a few of their classmates thought the sessions were ‘boring’, ‘a waste of time’ or ‘won’t yield useful results.’

HtE asked teachers to assess their students according to eight key social and life skills, in September before and in December after the teaching took place. The skills assessed were communication, self-control, empathy, cooperation, problem-solving, conflict resolution, assertiveness and self-esteem. The results of those assessments for grades 1-11 are summarised in Figure 4, below. The table shows, in red, the positive changes over time among those rated excellent or good, which ranged between 9 and 17 percent on those eight skills.

Assessment by teachers of students key life skills

Indicator: % of students who shows excellent and good skills
Target group: students of 1 - 11 grades in total
Issues in Questionnaire for Teachers: 12 ,13,14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

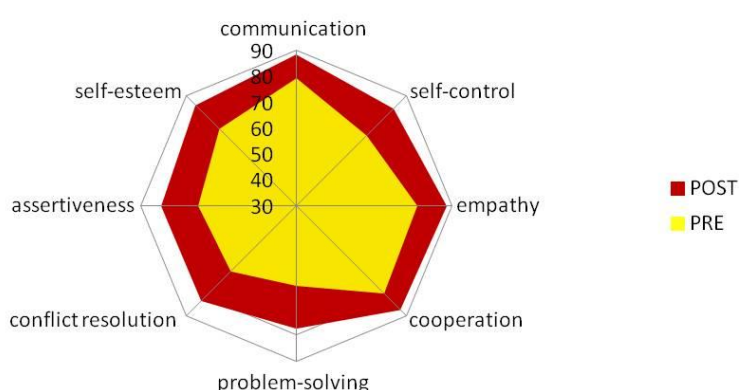


Figure 4: Teachers’ assessments of students’ life skills as excellent or good, grades 1-11.

Source: HtE

Students clearly valued the opportunities provided by LSE to express their feelings and opinions. They felt listened to and understood. They also gained understanding of their changing life circumstances. According to a 10th grade student, ‘We can see ourselves as adults.’

Both students and teachers affirmed that the games and activities helped students to relax and de-stress. Teachers remarked upon greater openness, confidence, capacity for self-management and self-regulation, tolerance and team spirit among children. They found students to be more positive in outlook as a result of the lessons.

A teacher from Kramatorsk described this change in visual terms:

‘We have an external studies department. We have a girl from Donetsk, who drew a picture of her house in Donetsk before and after. At first the house was grey, but after the LSE classes it became a sunny house of her dreams.’

Several teachers mentioned that, in LSE classes, they did not need to discipline children ‘in the usual way.’ One teacher noted that ‘boys became politer and let girls go ahead of them.’

A trainer from Donetsk Oblast stated, ‘I have observed declining aggression and anxiety in students, and increased resilience.’ ‘It was good to learn pleasant things about myself and my friends in class,’ said a 13-year-old student from Kharkiv. And a 16-year-old from a town in Kharkiv Oblast declared, ‘I appreciated being able to share my dreams and goals without being afraid. My classmates and I became very open.’ According to some teachers, parents also noticed that their children were more forthcoming and communicative about what was happening at school. Several teachers noted that children had learned how to apologise, which had not been easy for them before the LSE classes. One IDP girl, who at the beginning had been completely silent, was speaking a few sentences by the third lesson.

Observers of the LSE work particularly noted a rise in confidence among children who had participated. A UNICEF staff member remarked that ‘Life Skills Education has been crucial for children’s self-confidence and for equipping them to face the challenges of the war and displacement.’ The parents of a 7th grade child told a School Director that, because of the LSE classes, his daughter had gained the confidence to sing with a local choir. And according to a 6th grade teacher from Donetsk Oblast, ‘children learn to resist peer pressure and to say “no” confidently.’

TEACHERS

Many teachers spoke of the personal impact of the LSE training on themselves. Most were tense and stressed before the trainings. Many described feeling that they had become more effective, engaged in better communication, listened more intently, improved relationships with all kinds of people, could both give and take more. Teachers appreciated that the training required them to act as though they were children; this helped them better to understand children’s feelings.

‘I decided to join the project for self-therapy, to work on myself,’ a teacher from Donetsk Oblast stated. ‘The training gave me strength to cope and to work with those who are closed.’ A BOH teacher from the small city of Toretsk remarked, ‘Near the contact line, we live in high anxiety and nervousness. The LSE training was very important and relevant. It helped me to forget the noises of the night.’ Teachers ‘felt wings on their backs’, said a primary school teacher from Luhansk. They found the LSE work ‘very stimulating’.

In many schools, teachers who had not been trained asked for training or to have access to the materials to use in their classes. There is a legitimate question about the quality of teaching that might be provided by teachers not explicitly trained in LSE methodologies. However, there is evidence that many trained teachers offered informal training opportunities to colleagues in their schools.

A teacher in Kramatorsk commented:

‘The project works like a chain reaction, I was touched – I touch others. My family encouraged me to become a blogger. They helped me to create a blog called *Add Life to Every Day*. We add life to children each Thursday. They call me a YouTube star. That is why LSE works in elementary, middle and high school. Children follow the project results and the chain reaction kicks in.’

SPILLOVER TO OTHER SCHOOL SUBJECTS AND PLACES

The fact that LSE classes were stimulating, meaningful and clearly meeting needs of students and teachers seems to have had secondary, or spillover effects in other subject areas within the schools taking part in the project. According to a trainer from Kharkiv, ‘We are seeing better quality teaching in other subjects.’

A teacher observed:

‘My motivation has increased in other subjects [beyond LSE]. I share what I have learned in teachers’ methodological meetings. Some of my colleagues came to observe my LSE lessons. I also shared some of the video sessions that I made of my lessons.’

A teacher from Starobilsk remarked, ‘Due to the games and dialogue generated through the project we have seen even better results in other school subjects.’ ‘Since taking the LSE training,’ said a teacher in Kharkiv, ‘in my regular [i.e., non-LSE] teaching I find I am paying more attention to how the children are learning the information I am conveying. Focussing on the process of their learning helps me be more relaxed about the content.’

Students also informed the evaluators that they discuss what they are doing and learning with friends in other classes.

Teachers are sharing the LSE materials with their friends and colleagues who teach in other schools throughout eastern Ukraine, which have not yet been part of the ECHO-funded UNICEF project. Trained LSE teachers are also sharing the materials with teachers living and working in NGCAs, some of whom are starting to use them, even without training.

A trainer from Donetsk Oblast mentioned that ‘the Oblast has begun to work on the project of hub schools³ and we have actively used the methodology already within this process.’

During the evaluation, many teachers called for clearer communication about what children have learned in LSE between the cycles of schooling in a district: pre-school – primary – secondary – high school. Such communication would facilitate continuity for the children and enrich the experience for their teachers.

NEW ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Teacher-student

Teachers feel that their role is changing. A 4th grade teacher asked her class, ‘Why do you enjoy these trainings?’ A child replied, ‘Because YOU are completely different!’

A male teacher in his late 50s explained:

‘Previously my job was to explain facts to children. But now with LSE I am required to talk with teenagers about things that matter to them, like dating and relationships between boys and girls. What do I know about these things? I’ve come to understand that it is not my job to tell them. But it *is* my job to listen and to facilitate dialogue between the kids. Now I am asking the kids all kinds of questions.’

Teachers reported sharing more of their experience of life in life skills lessons than in other subjects. The interaction is more personal, yet they try not to cross a line into intimacy. Children seem to understand the boundaries of what they can say and ask.

Teachers referred to a greater sense of trust in their classes, and greater respect from their students after several LSE lessons. Teenagers interviewed during the evaluation agreed with that observation.

Many teachers spontaneously dropped the use of their patronymic (formal style of address) with students in LSE classes, allowing students to refer to them, for example, simply as ‘Nataliia’, not ‘Nataliia Stepanivna’. Teenagers who took part in the FGD in Kharkiv appreciated this change.

In the Kramatorsk workshops, teachers vigorously debated its appropriateness, some deploring the possible loss of respect and professional distance from the children that the patronymic provides, others welcoming the greater sense of openness, familiarity, even

³ ‘Hub schools’ is a pilot programme that seeks to rationalise and reorganise small rural schools while providing additional money, teachers, equipment, learning resources, and learning spaces to centrally located schools.

friendship implied. Most said that the greater informality was limited to LSE classes. Everyone agreed that retaining or dropping the patronymic needed to be handled with sensitivity.

A 13-year-old remarked:

‘We liked the fact that we called our teacher by her name [without the formal patronymic]. It made it easier for us to share our problems and dreams with her. She was opening up together with us. I didn’t feel the age difference.’

Student-student

Several teachers stated that IDP children who had been isolated found acceptance and established new friendships through the LSE activities.

A teenager from a village in Kharkiv Oblast said:

‘Some new people came to our class. At first it was hard to communicate with them, but after the LSE training, it became easier; we got to know their interests.’

A teacher of 8th grade stated:

‘In the class, there was an IDP girl who was an outsider. No one would sit with her. After a couple of classes, children understood that she is like everyone else and she was accepted by other classmates.’

According to a Deputy Principal:

‘We have a student from Horlivka, a displaced person. I brought him to the classroom, introduced him, and everybody got up and applauded to him. This is what can change.’

Yet there is a long way to go. A 10th grade student in Kharkiv commented on IDP children:

‘Many classmates had been through very bad experiences, which they wanted to forget. Some hid behind smiles. Some didn’t want to open up because their experiences were so intense. Some don’t trust others easily and will only share with close friends and family members. It is hard for them to do so in class.’

PARENTS

Although the project did not specifically target parents and family members for LSE training, many students, teachers and school administrators spontaneously informed parents about the programme. According to a teacher of 1st grade, 'There is a definite connection with parents. The children bring home whatever was brought to them during training.' A teenager in Kharkiv echoed this observation: 'My parents were very interested in the lessons. They gave me lots of positive feedback.' A 16-year-old talked with her brother and their sporting coach about the LSE lessons. 'Discussing with them helped me to understand what I had learned in the training.' Yet another teenager remarked, 'I often quarrel with my parents and don't want to compromise. After this training, I have learned to compromise, especially when I am at fault.'

In a few schools, teachers conducted LSE sessions with parents, playing games and teaching them to express and recognize their and others' feelings. Some parents played the games with their own children at home. Teachers in Kramatorsk reported that the 'Circles of Contact' activity showed parents how important they are to their children's wellbeing. Some parents were shocked by the realization.

A kindergarten teacher from a town near the contact line described her engagement with parents over LSE:

'Mothers started to call with questions after the session; so, I organized a separate training for parents and caregivers, including the "Pizza" activity. At first they commented, "What is this, an Alcoholics Anonymous group?" After the parent-teacher meeting, parents keep asking me for more; they want to learn better how to support their children.'

There were varied responses from parents to the LSE lessons. A trainer from Luhansk oblast observed that 'parents are more engaged but still cautious.' A school director stated:

'Parents are puzzled. They do not understand us so far. They ask questions about what their children are doing in life skills lessons. But we are still early in our implementation. We need to persevere with the parents.'

During the evaluation, there were multiple appeals from trainers and teachers to extend the use of LSE training methodologies and materials to parents. A teacher from Kramatorsk, who works in a school where there was no special outreach to parents, gave her view:

'We need to start with working the parents. We need four trainings aiming strictly at the parents, including *Stress, Conflict and Emotion Management, Goal Setting* and

Effective Communication. First of all, we need to develop the system of trainings for the parents.'

Throughout the evaluation, we witnessed many strong expressions of emotion. Only once, however, did a person break down while describing the experience of implementing LSE. At the Kramatorsk LSE workshop, a teacher of 9th grade teacher described a very difficult situation. The school has normal face-to-face classes but also operates distance learning classes. Part of her distance teaching load is with IDP children displaced from Donetsk but located elsewhere in NGCAs. Those children thanked her deeply for providing the life skills lessons. Many were overwhelmed by strong emotions.

But some of the local children, and some of her local teacher colleagues, criticised her, particularly for a lesson focussed on building tolerance and skills for living together in the future. Many of the children in her class come from pro-separatist and pro-Russian families. Children asked why she was teaching in the Ukrainian language and why she was encouraging tolerance. She felt that these views reflected those of the parents. The teacher wept as she described the contrast between her IDP distance learning students and her local class, and the stress that this experience of teaching life skills had brought her. 'Children are so aggressive about it that sometimes I'm just stumped about how I should conduct lessons. Sometimes teaching feels like mounting the scaffold.' She acknowledged that the key to success in future will be working with parents and families to win trust.

Trainers and HtE staff suggested that, for this class, the LSE content may have come too late. They advised the teacher to stop the lessons with this class. The LSE work is sometimes very politically sensitive, locally. While the LSE teacher training is not explicitly political, it indirectly addresses controversial issues, stressing the need for teachers to practise clear and effective communication skills. Nevertheless, individual teachers may need support, including from their local school psychologist, if challenged so forcefully by their students and their parents.

There is a need for realistic expectations about LSE. The conflict resolution skills taught in the trainings are not intended to be applied directly to the macro-level political and military separatist conflict in the Donbass, but rather to inter-personal conflicts.

Outcomes in terms of the school environment

School directors who had undergone the training, and senior officials at departmental level praised the value of LSE and PSS training to school administrations. The New School concept requires higher psychological competencies in school management, as there is a perception that some individuals are still too authoritarian in style and do not listen sufficiently deeply to their staff. This problem is felt more acutely in rural schools.

The LSE training could have positive outcomes upon the governance of schools, by providing opportunities to administrators, teachers, parents and students to deepen their understanding of skills of clear communication, conflict resolution and appropriate assertiveness, and values such as mutual respect. For that to occur, school directors and other administrators would need specific training courses, and larger numbers of regular teachers would require training. Teachers, particularly in Kharkiv, lamented the limited impact upon school culture and environment due to the training of only one or two teachers per school.

Nevertheless, there were many accounts of positive outcomes in the school environment, beyond the LSE classrooms. A pre-school trainer in Luhansk Oblast stated, 'These trainings brought us together as a teaching staff.' A 2nd grade teacher in Kramatorsk said, 'The work collective has changed as well. Our meetings with the head teacher are also held in a circle.' A trainer from Donetsk Oblast pointed out, 'These materials may be used during class hours, at the teachers' council meetings, and at extra-curricular events.'

Implications for wider Ukrainian education reform processes

The senior leadership of MoES sees the participatory, active, pupil-centred learning methods of LSE as a valuable experiment for the recently launched comprehensive curriculum reform process, known as the New School. The new curriculum will be based on European principles, with a competency approach. The reform will encourage child-centred, active, participatory and resource-based learning, with less magisterial lecturing, rote learning and dependency on textbooks. Grades 1-3 will no longer be structured by traditional academic subjects, but rather by broad themes and topics that allow integration of learning of a range of knowledge, skills and values. This change will take place partly to allow for a gentler transition between the activity-based learning of pre-school and more formal subject-based learning later in primary school.

The New School includes among its aims forming of 'key life competencies', which include 'social and civic competencies' and 'environmental literacy and healthy lifestyle'. Learning of 'soft skills', especially for employability after education, will be an important emphasis of the curriculum reform. The New School has as one of its guiding principles 'values-based education', which covers issues such as personal and collective responsibility, trust, friendship, goodwill, mutual help and mutual support in adversity, and prevention of discrimination, violence and bullying at school. These values are at the core of the LSE programme. BoH, newly infused with LSE content, is an excellent vehicle for accomplishment of these aims.

To ensure the success of the reform, MoES considers that the greatest need is to change the culture of teachers, who are generally perceived as being wedded to traditional lecturing, rote learning and textbook-mastery teaching methods. The New School seeks to develop the

‘Motivated Teacher’. This is to include training on ‘the student-oriented and competencies-based approaches, on educational process management and on the psychology of group dynamics. The role of the teacher is no longer to be the unique source of knowledge, but rather a coach, facilitator, tutor and moderator in the educational path of a child.’ All these elements were emphasised in the training and teaching of life skills implemented under the project. UNICEF and HtE will communicate the lessons learned from this project to the leadership of MoES, to serve as supporting evidence for their planning of the New School reforms.

Psychosocial Support component

The evaluation reviewed both the programme outputs and also its outcomes with an eye toward discerning its effectiveness. The outputs are considered first because these give an overall picture of the scale of the implementation achievements, and because the activities implemented were intended to lead to the programme outcomes. In addition, this section identifies various challenges that the PSS work encountered. It ends with a discussion of the relevance and sustainability of the intervention.

Outputs and implementation achievements

The implementation of the PSS component entailed multiple elements. First was the training, in September, 2015 of 31 school and pre-school psychologists as trainers, who subsequently trained classroom teachers and head teachers in the schools that participated in the programme. Following the training of teachers and also of social workers, the teachers implemented supportive, positive approaches and activities designed to provide psychosocial support, with follow-up mentoring and support provided by the relevant school psychologist.

Although the specific activities were applied mostly outside of class, the design was for teachers to use a more supportive approach in all their interactions with all students, both inside and outside of classes. Some specific activities, e.g., stress management activities, undertaken for purposes of improving psychosocial well-being were conducted out of class, but the overall approach teachers use (communicating better with students, creating a more supportive, protective environment, etc.) was found to apply during actual class time as well. The PSS component involved a mixture of specific activities and also an overall change of approach in classrooms and schools.

NaUKMA expected that teachers would work with children during their classes and thus the project could reach more children. Outside of classes, school psychologists trained by NaUKMA worked with more severely affected children. The PSS component’s results showed these differences exactly: Teachers were able to help children to overcome emotional

difficulties, improve relationships between children and increase prosocial behavior but had no significant impact on hyperactivity and traumatic stress. Those problems could be most effectively treated outside of class by school psychologists.

NaUKMA aimed to build a multi-layered intervention system in schools:

1st level for all children – in-class intervention – provided by teachers

2nd level – out of class for children with higher levels of stress – provided by school psychologists

3rd level – out of class for children with several emotional/behavioural symptoms – provided by specialized mental health services, such as the NaUKMA Centre for Psychosocial Rehabilitation in Slovyansk

Students who needed specialized mental health and psychosocial support were referred through the school psychologists to external psychologists who would then provide psychotherapeutic care that was tailored to the needs of the individual child and provided free of charge. The relatively rapid start-up of the PSS component made it possible for the final evaluation to discern the effects of the intervention over a reasonably long period of time.

The outputs regarding each of these elements are reviewed below, and a full summary of achievements is provided in Appendix 4. For purposes of convenience, and recognizing the similarities in the implementation activities and experiences of head teachers and other teachers, both types of teachers will be referred to using the collective term 'teachers', with differences noted as necessary.

TRAINING AND FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT

As shown in Table 3, below, NaUKMA achieved and surpassed its goal of training 30 school or pre-school psychologists in the five oblasts as trainers who had the capacities to train classroom and head teachers on providing psychosocial support through various activities and a supportive environment. The school psychologists who had been trained consistently praised the quality of the training, saying it had increased their knowledge and understanding of psychosocial support and given them practical approaches and skills to impart to teachers. Further, as discussed in the following section on outcomes, the school psychologists said that the training had enabled them to undergo significant personal change themselves and to enhance their role and contributions to the well-being of both teachers and students.

Output	Target	Achieved
School and pre-school psychologists from the five oblasts are trained and have the knowledge and practical skills to carry on trainings for classroom and head teachers on facilitating supportive environments	30 psychologists trained	31 psychologists trained
4,000 classroom and head teachers from the five oblasts have knowledge and practical skills on facilitating supportive classroom environments, observation, symptom recognition, and referral of affected children to psychological assistance	4,000 classroom and head teachers trained	3,842 classroom and head teachers trained
	2,020 bi-monthly mentoring sessions	1,432 monthly mentoring sessions for 3,842 trainees
Levels of psychosocial distress and social interpersonal tensions of 300,000 children, adolescents, and families from the five oblasts are reduced	220,000 children and adolescents reached by psychosocial support activities	200,671 children and adolescents reached
	80,000 caregivers reached in outreach work by classroom and head teachers, school psychologists and social workers	50,190 reached
Child psychologists from Donetsk region (Sloviansk) have the knowledge and practical skills to provide intensive psychotherapeutic assistance to more severely affected children and adolescents in the centre of specialized psychological (psychotherapeutic) assistance	15 child psychologists are trained	15 child psychologists are trained

Table 3: Selected PSS component outputs, targets, and achievements. Source: NaUKMA

Table 3 also shows that the trainers subsequently provided mostly two-day trainings for 3,842 teachers and head teachers how to support conflict-affected children through supportive classroom environments and communication approaches, the use of activities and skills that calmed and supported students, and the identification of students who may need specialized assistance. This number is very close to the target of 4,000, which could be achieved if the programme were continued for additional time. To allow extensive dialogue and also individual attention, the trainings were typically provided for relatively small groups of twenty or fewer teachers and head teachers. Both teachers and head teachers spoke very highly of the trainings, saying that the trainings had boosted their confidence and the understanding and practical skills on how to support conflict-affected children. They greatly valued their new understanding and skills since they had previously felt unprepared to deal with the situation and did not know how to support war-affected children. In addition, the

teachers said that the trainings had begun a process of deep personal change wherein they learned to communicate in positive ways, discuss their feelings, be calmer, avoid burnout, be less authoritarian in their demeanour, and to empathize with and support conflict-affected children. Many teachers commented that trainings had awakened memories of their own childhood and the value of adult support, and had helped them to be able to support all children and adolescents.

With regard to mentoring, the programme achieved its aim of providing effective follow-up support for trainees. Whereas the design had called for 2,020 bimonthly mentoring sessions, NAUKMA observed that monthly meetings might provide greater continuity and be more useful. Although the programme provided a smaller number of mentoring sessions, the sessions occurred with greater frequency and reached all the trainees. In cases where travel was dangerous or distances were large, the programme compensated by providing mentoring by means of video, wherever it was accessible. Teachers said consistently that the mentoring sessions had enriched their understanding of psychosocial support and had provided valuable advice (including through collective reflection and problem-solving) on how to manage particular children, how to communicate effectively with children and adolescents, and how to create a more supportive classroom and school environment.

TEACHERS' PROVISION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

As indicated in the programme monitoring reports and in the evaluators' interviews and group discussions, the teachers began their part of the implementation soon after they had been trained. Using their new skills and understandings, they provided specific activities for children and changed their overall approach to relating with children. In place of their former authoritarian approach, they adopted a warmer, empathic, and supportive approach that helped students to feel safe, cared for, and confident. Teachers engaged in positive emotional communication with students, calling them by their first name, giving them compliments, and inviting them to speak about their feelings. Teachers also changed their mode of discipline from the use of threats and corporal punishment to the use of gentler, nonviolent methods. They also helped students to relax, cope with stress in positive ways, resolve conflicts in a nonviolent manner, care for one another and to greet, welcome, and associate with IDP children who had recently joined their class or school.

Using the skills and practical exercises they had learned in the trainings, teachers taught students how to relax and keep calm. In one exercise, students were invited to imagine a very safe place. The teachers then encouraged students who were feeling upset or fearful to close their eyes and imagine being in that safe place. This activity helped many students to calm themselves, thereby strengthening the capacity for self-regulation that is at the heart of resilience. Similarly, teachers invited students to draw freely and express their feelings about things they had drawn. Being able to discuss feelings in a classroom was a new experience for students, and one that many said they found very helpful. Teachers also

conducted activities that encouraged good social relations by helping students establish eye contact when talking with someone, listening with respect, and avoiding hurtful behaviour, such as putting others down or bullying. Further, teachers encouraged prosocial behaviour, inviting students to talk with each other in a supportive way about their feelings and to include others who were initially shy, withdrawn, or isolated. As discussed below, teachers also used their new skills and approach in interacting with students' family members.

As shown in Table 3, the programme had aimed to reduce distress and interpersonal tensions for 300,000 children, adolescents, and families. In a large-scale programme that features mostly group activities, it is inherently challenging to determine with precision the number of children whose distress has been reduced. Based on internal teachers' reports, PSS had been provided for some 200,671 children. Although the evaluators did not set out to determine exact numbers, the qualitative data indicated that the programme had supported large numbers of children, adolescents, and families. Even in schools in which the PSS work had encountered challenges, such as low support from a head teacher who had not been trained and showed little interest in the programme, teachers consistently reported positive results in using what they had learned. The success of the programme in reaching large numbers of children was augmented by the fact that it created demand as it was implemented. Indeed, students in the classrooms of teachers who had been trained in and used the PSS approach told other students about the positive changes they were seeing and about how they liked this approach. As the news about the programme spread by word of mouth, other students and teachers showed interest in participating in hope of benefitting themselves.

In addition, the programme supported 50,190 family members, including other children. This brought the total number of people who benefitted directly to 250,861. These numbers rise when one considers the significant numbers of people who benefitted also through the work of the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre in Slovyansk. Yet the total number of children, adolescents and families supported by the programme fell just short of the initial target of 300,000.

The main reason for this modest shortfall seemed to be the lack of a structured curriculum and materials for working with caregivers and family members. Another reason is the relatively low uptake of training by social workers, who only dealt with 1,125 children. Also, the initial target figure may have been unrealistic. Nevertheless, the programme succeeded in supporting a very large number of children, adolescents, and families and greater numbers would be supported if the implementation of the programme were extended.

REFERRAL MECHANISM AND ACTIVITIES

A significant achievement was the 12-day training of 15 child psychologists from Slovyansk, Donetsk oblast, building the knowledge and skills needed to provide psychotherapeutic

support for more severely affected children and adolescents, including those who had been referred by school psychologists. The psychotherapy provided was through the NaUKMA Centre for Psychosocial Rehabilitation in Slovyansk, which opened in September 2015 and provided weekly one-hour supervision sessions for the trained psychologists.

NaUKMA investigated the existing referral system and suggested how to improve it. Based on their qualitative and quantitative results, they will now be able to develop a referral algorithm that can be discussed with MoES, teachers and school psychologists.

Referral between the NaUKMA Centre and schools works on the following principles: Close and regular communication between school psychologists and Centre psychotherapists; clearly described eligibility criteria of the Centre programs; appropriate instruments for assessing eligibility (school psychologists in Slovyansk are familiar with CRIES-8 and SDQ); and regular feedback about treated cases to the school psychologist.

During the programme, the Centre's psychologists, psychotherapists, and social workers provided 580 individual counselling sessions for 20 children, and 108 family counselling meetings for 63 children. In addition, the Centre organized a diversity of group therapeutic events, including 12 art therapy workshops for 37 children; 10 children's group meetings for five children; three teenagers' group meetings on 'Children and War' for 10 persons; eight support meetings for seven adolescents; and sand therapy in Slovyansk and Lyman with 145 children. Programme monitoring information and a study conducted by NaUKMA indicated that the children who were referred from schools have received appropriate psychotherapeutic care.

The relatively small number of children who have been referred and treated should not obscure the magnitude of this achievement, which serves as a useful model and a foundation that can be tested systematically and replicated in other areas in eastern Ukraine. In most war zones, there are no functional referral mechanisms, and there is typically a severe shortage of trained psychologists to help support severely affected children.

As discussed below, work on establishing referral mechanisms faces many challenges. Among these are a shortage nationally of trained psychologists who are well equipped to support war-affected children, variation in the quality of referrals, and the paucity of free psychological supports.

Outcomes and effectiveness

In presenting the main outcomes of the PSS component, it is useful to consider first the psychosocial needs of children and adolescents and then to consider separately the

outcomes for students, teachers, and school psychologists, respectively. This will be followed by an analysis of the effectiveness of the PSS component.

WAR EXPOSURE AND PSYCHOSOCIAL STRESS AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Under NaUKMA supervision, quantitative survey data were collected on children's and adolescents' (8-17 years of age) exposure to war-related events and levels of distress in November 2014 and February 2016. The 2014 data were collected from 1,365 children and adolescents (probabilistic sampling) in Donetsk and Luhansk, whereas the 2016 data were collected from a random sample (n=422) of children from the five participating oblasts.

The 2014 data indicated high levels of exposure to traumatic events among students. Figure 5, below, shows that many students witnessed tanks, shootings, beatings, fighting, and other threatening sights and episodes of violence. The beatings and murder of close relatives can be particularly stressful and upsetting.

This conflict exposure led to high levels of psychosocial distress for both girls and boys. Nearly 60 percent of children mentioned having been stressed by those events, and 17.7 percent stated that they were stressed 'a lot'. Figure 6, below, shows that the stress was manifest in feelings of fear or sadness, nightmares, poor concentration, and sleep disruption. A smaller percentage of children showed withdrawal and were unwilling to speak or to meet with other people.

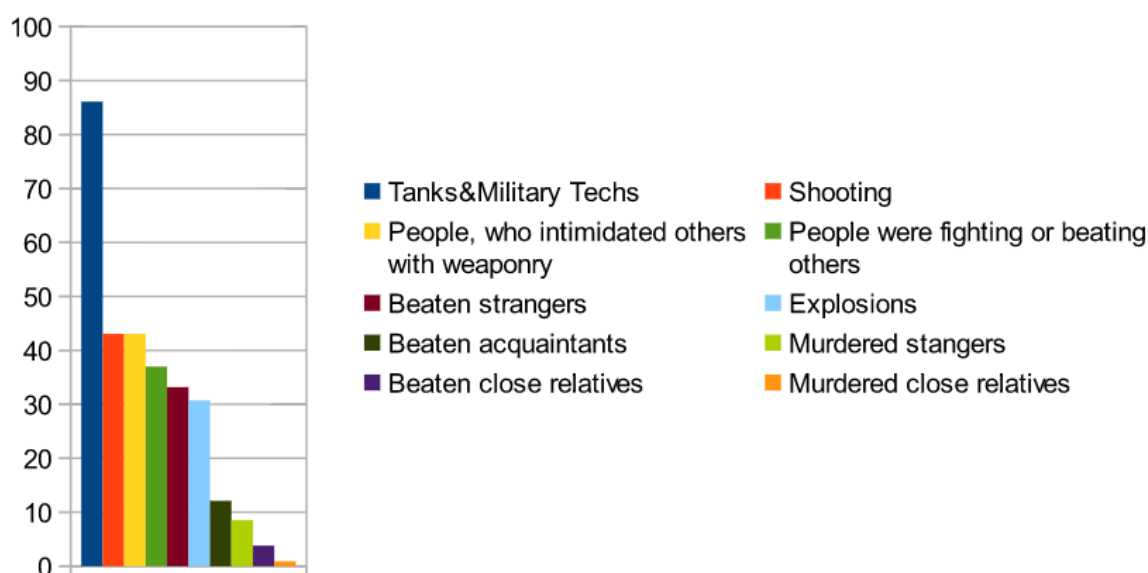


Figure 5: Exposure of children and adolescents to traumatic events in 2014. Source: NaUKMA

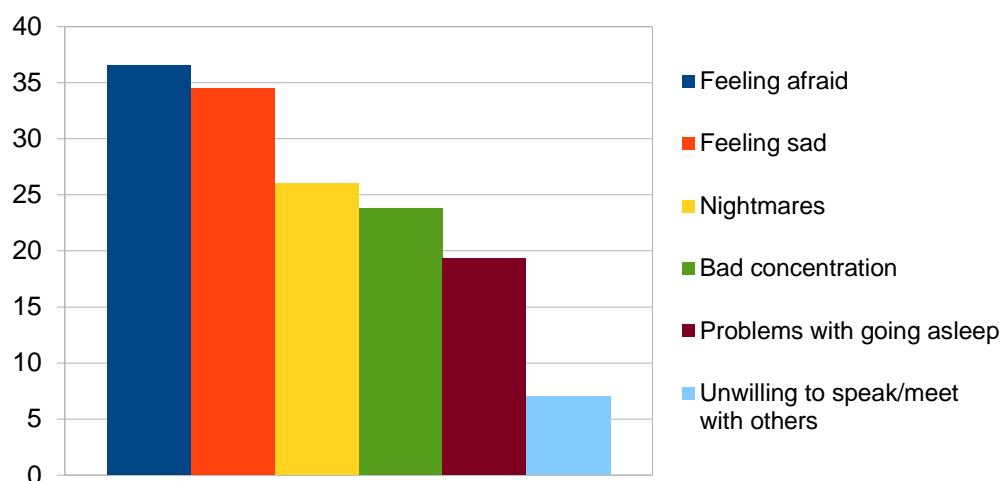


Figure 6: Percentage of children and adolescents in the 2014 sample who exhibited various stress reactions. Source: NaUKMA

Stress reactions were also evident in regard to social relations and disruptive behaviour. In the 2014 sample, 32.9 percent of participants showed signs of problems in their relations with peers. Also, 28 percent of participants showed hyperactivity, with boys being 1.6 times as likely to show hyperactivity as girls. Such hyperactivity was likely disruptive in classrooms and throughout the schools. In addition, 25.3 percent of the participants showed reduced prosocial behaviour, a problem that occurred significantly more often in boys than in girls. The combined effects of the conflict-related stress indicated the need for psychosocial support for children and adolescents on a wide scale. Of note, 52.8 percent of the children and adolescents reported in 2014 that they did not feel able to deal with such stress on their own.

In 2016, near the time when the implementation of the PSS component in most schools had begun, many of the same questions were asked. Table 4 shows that in 2016, children were seeing more military vehicles, fighting, and beating of unknown persons than had occurred in 2014. However, there were fewer explosions and shooting. Thus, children were being exposed to new sources of stress and also carried the burdens of ongoing stress.

Item	2014	2016
Military vehicles	80	86
Shooting	50	43
Fighting	22	37
Explosions	50	30
Killing of unknown persons	10	8

Table 4. Percentage of children exposed to traumatic incidents, 2014 and 2016. Source: NaUKMA

With regard to levels of stress and children's ability to manage it, the 2016 data revealed some troubling patterns. On the positive side, children and adolescents showed mild reductions in hyperactivity and conduct problems, and they showed increased levels of prosocial behaviour and improved peer relations. However, 25 percent of the children showed high levels of distress, and only 19 percent of children said they could cope with the stress by themselves. In contrast, over 48 percent of the children in the 2014 sample had indicated that they could cope with the stress by themselves. These changes may be observed because (i) stresses are accumulating over time; (ii) stress levels are roughly the same over time but parents' and adults' capacities for support are decreasing (people are worn down); or (iii) people, including children, are becoming more aware of their stress levels and are more likely to report high stress than they had been previously.

Further, children in 2016 did not feel supported by adults. Asked 'Did you feel support from adults at that time?', 50 percent of children in the 2016 sample responded 'No', whereas 36 percent of the children in the 2014 sample had responded 'No' to the same question. A possible explanation of the difference is that over time, adults were feeling worn down by the war and were themselves not in a good position to help support children.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

The psychosocial outcomes for students were measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), a widely-used instrument (see www.sdqinfo.com) that examines issues such as peer relationships, emotional problems, and conduct problems, among others. The SDQ was applied before the PSS intervention (in February and May, 2016) and again following the PSS intervention (in November, 2016) to students 9-16 years of age in basic secondary schools in Donetsk and Luhansk. Approximately half the students (randomly selected) were in a 'control group', since they were from schools which had not participated in the project. The other half of the students (randomly selected) comprised an 'intervention group', since they were from schools in which teachers had received PSS training. Statistical comparisons indicated that relative to students in the control group, students in the intervention group showed significantly fewer problems in peer relationships, a reduction in emotional problems (e.g., feeling worried, having many fears, or feeling unhappy), and fewer total difficulties. However, the intervention did not reduce traumatic symptoms or conduct problems, which likely require a focused, group-level psychological intervention. It should be noted that these findings are not based on the complete data set (data from some schools is still coming in) and hence should be regarded as provisional. Nonetheless, they are promising and suggest that the PSS intervention had significant, positive outcomes for students.

The findings regarding significant psychosocial outcomes were also supported by the narrative data.

Children said consistently that they were calmer and more relaxed as a result of the programme and that they had learned specific methods for calming themselves and felt less anxious, fearful, and worried as a result. One 17-year-old student from Kharkiv said that he had learned how to calm himself, and he used the calming methods to reduce the powerful exam pressure he otherwise felt. Numerous students said that, because they had become more relaxed, they were in a better position to learn, a view that teachers also confirmed.

Also, students showed less withdrawal behaviour, which often is a sign of feeling emotionally overwhelmed and can lead to longer-term social isolation and loss of social support. A teacher related the case of an IDP child as follows:

'In 2016, I worked with an IDP boy who had hidden in a shelter during an attack and saw bad things happen. He was totally quiet. But various exercises changed him – he opened up. It was like a miracle!'

Children and adolescents echoed this sentiment, saying things such as, 'We opened up, trust others, and become more resilient' and 'We were shy before. Now we are interested in talking with others and share our problems.'

In fact, teachers consistently reported that children were showing better relations with peers and reduced aggression and acting out. A teacher from Luhansk said:

'Now the children are pouring energy in a positive direction. They are now paying compliments to each other, and they respond to my compliments, too.'

Further, children showed more prosocial behaviour and were actively helping each other. In one case related by a teacher, children in the classroom heard loud sounds outside, which resembled the sound of military equipment. To prevent his classmates from becoming upset, one boy went outside on his own initiative, observed that the noise was coming from a tractor, and successfully asked the operator to quiet the tractor.

Children were also reported to show increased tolerance toward IDPs and helping behaviour in regard to them. This clearly entailed increasing mutual respect. Teachers spoke enthusiastically about how IDP children were making friends and fitting in. Talking about the difficulties related to IDP children showing up in the class, one teacher from Donetsk who tried to prepare students to support the IDP children said,

'Children made fun of everything initially but then we discussed in depth the problems facing the IDP children. In that context, a girl revealed that she lived in the orphanage. She had never said that in open before. The children supported her! It

surprised me and the children began talking about their homes too. There was a good feeling of support.'

Children confirmed their supportive attitude toward IDPs, saying, 'Newcomers arrive, but we don't use labels'; 'They are treated the same'; and 'The programme helped prepare us to support others.'

OUTCOMES FOR TEACHERS

Teachers reported unanimously that, before the programme had begun, they had been unprepared to respond appropriately to the armed conflict situation, which was unlike anything they had experienced previously. The teachers could see that their students were struggling, as some were withdrawn and others engaged in disruptive behaviour. Following the Soviet model, their teaching approach was authoritarian and content-focussed, and provided little space for discussion of feelings and relating as a human being. Teachers said consistently that they had lacked both the understanding and the tools for supporting their students in the new context of the armed conflict and mass displacement. In addition, teachers recognized that they and their own families had been affected yet did not know how to react or cope with the difficult circumstances.

Teachers and head teachers consistently praised the PSS training. They reported that it had helped them to understand how children had been affected and had taught them practical skills for supporting their students and their own children. As a result, they felt more confident in their role as teachers and were better able to adapt to and cope with the difficult situation. They also reported consistently that they themselves had become calmer and now transmit that calmness to their students. As indicated in the following narratives from teachers at diverse levels, their calm, supportive demeanour led to significant improvement in their relations with their students.

'The training helped me not to be a dictator as teacher. I used to say to students, 'You haven't done your homework,' and grabbed them, making them feel afraid. But now I talk about feelings, his interests, and what his friends think. I reach kids. I now talk to children at home and see improvement in relations in my own home.'

'Teachers changed their attitudes toward children. They used to instruct children but now try to understand children's needs.'

'We had angry practices before. We punished children for things they did wrong. Now we react differently. If we see them struggling, we hug them and the problem decreases.'

'We are calmer now and listen more.'

'Students are shocked by our support. They used to retreat into their shell but now we listen more and use games to help children relax and open up. I tried the methods with my own children, and they worked!'

'I added softness in my work.'

In the PSS training, teachers gained new understanding of how they had been affected by the conflict situation and learned methods for expressing their feelings and for self-regulation. Teachers spoke with passion about the personal changes they had undergone during the training, saying that the essential first step toward supporting students was to change themselves. The PSS training created a space in which they recalled their own childhood, remembered the importance of having adult support, and reflected on their own emotional burdens, with the associated risks of burnout. Teachers also said that they used the supportive, emotionally focused approach they had learned with their husbands and children, with positive results. Some teachers even described the training as a life-changing experience:

'The psychosocial training was like a breath of fresh air.'

'We're changed as human beings.'

'We were sad in our hearts. The training helped open us up and to discuss our feelings. We took a different approach to children.'

'My values and time priorities changed. We took a deep dive into our own inner worlds. My calm and openness is transmitted to the children.'

'This work helped us not to burn out. Now we make order in our minds.'

'I have two children, and the boy acts out. In the training, I saw my own image as Mom, and it scared me. Now I talk more about stress.'

In describing how their relations with students had improved, teachers clearly attributed the positive changes to the PSS training and follow-up and to the new approaches and activities they used with children:

'I was reserved, but I became more human and in touch with the most important things and take a different approach with a focus on family and friends. It was a very humanizing experience.'

Importantly, teachers had not only a changed approach but also a set of activities and exercises to help children do things such as relax, communicate in positive ways with each other, and manage their anger in a constructive manner:

'Children were acting out, breaking all the rules. Having read about anger management, I used exercises and they had a big effect. The children stopped acting out and kept their anger under control.'

Teachers reported that they had also helped to share the more supportive, emotionally sensitive approach with their students' parents and other family members, with positive effects. As teachers from different grade levels described:

'I tried to get parents engaged and observed the value of hugging and giving compliments. We should support all parts of the puzzle.'

'Parents are doing better at handling stress and tension.'

'Parents weren't able to share feelings, and parents felt too upset. We need to help parents, too. If they are negative, they will undo some of the positive effects of the programme. We tried to get them engaged and showed the value of hugging children and giving compliments. Some parents talked about how this had really improved relations with their children.'

Teachers noted that without teaching the new approach to their students' family members, there was a risk that the improvements in children's coping and resilience that were being achieved in the school would be undermined or reduced by the authoritarian or emotionally distant environment at home.

OUTCOMES FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

The programme had highly beneficial effects on the work of school psychologists, who said that they had often faced uncertainty about their role and how to support large numbers of conflict-affected students. They spoke consistently about how the programme had clarified their role and given them a channel or means for working collaboratively with teachers in a manner that benefitted large numbers of students. As a school psychologist from Donetsk put it:

'At first, I didn't know that to do as a school psychologist. I have 860 children in my school. Who am I supposed to help? Horrors! But this project helped gave me a clear role and helped to streamline my work. My professional competency increased, and this gave me the foundation. Working with children is challenging, but I'm now more confident and can do something to help.'

School psychologists also spoke with pride about their increased stature and how students had become much more eager and willing to approach them. In turn, their improved relations with students enabled them to support students more effectively. Similarly, school psychologists reported having improved relations with teachers, who regarded them as programme leaders and valued collaborators and who frequently turned to school psychologists for advice. School psychologists felt that they had become better resources for the teachers due to their new skills. As stated by the same school psychologist who had produced the narrative above:

'Psychologists used to be given ordinary tasks, but now my role and prestige have changed. Children and colleagues welcome me. It used to be a punishment to be sent to see the psychologist, but now students like it. I was compared to the Phoenix – burning out yet restoring, inspiring, and supporting teachers.'

School psychologists related numerous cases in which they had used the new skills developed by the PSS training to help children who were suffering. As a school psychologist from Luhansk said:

'A child had nausea and was afraid to go to school. He had hidden in the basement from shelling and had headaches and fear. He was in my office but felt suffocated. At meetings in my office, I explained that he is not different – many children are suffering, and this is normal in extraordinary situations. Over time his mood improved, and this showed in his drawings. He became calmer and eventually thanked me and told me, "I can do this myself." It was a success!'

EFFECTIVENESS

These findings indicate that the PSS component achieved a high level of effectiveness regarding its intended objective. The programme provided targeted psychosocial supports that are fully consistent with dominant international standards, in particular the *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings* (see <https://mhpss.net>). Effective targeting was achieved through the selection of oblasts that had been highly affected by the armed conflict and mass displacement, and through the combination of a more supportive approach, group supports for all children, and referral and individualized supports for severely affected children.

In addition, the programme was highly effective in strengthening the resilience of conflict-affected children and adolescents. Students exhibited greater calmness, better relations with their peers, improved relations with teachers, increased prosocial behaviour, and decreased fighting and acting out. To be sure, the stress levels remain high due to both the current situation in Ukraine and the accumulation of stress since the outbreak of hostilities.

Yet the students now have improved skills for managing the stress and the positive social relations and networks that are critical for effective coping and resilience. These are no small achievements in a context as complex and demanding as that in Ukraine. The continuation and dynamism of the armed conflict, coupled with the accumulation of stress over time, makes it unlikely that the changes observed in this programme owed to general improvements in the Ukrainian context. The fact that positive outcomes occurred shortly following the use of specific tools, activities, and approaches suggests also that the changes observed are due to the PSS component rather than to other, extraneous factors.

The effectiveness of the PSS component on a large scale is particularly noteworthy. Efforts to take psychosocial interventions to scale frequently encounter challenges associated with limited, one-off trainings, fatigue, and difficulties maintaining the quality of the psychosocial supports. This programme effectively built in ongoing training by means of regular mentoring and group problem-solving. Despite the heavy workload and pressures on teachers, fatigue was overcome by the depth of the personal transformation that the training and activities encouraged, by teachers seeing positive, immediate results in their work with children and adolescents, and by teachers' sense that they were becoming fuller human beings through the use of the new approach. Also, students' excitement for the new approach proved to be infectious and highly motivating. The quality of the psychosocial supports was remarkably consistent, although it was higher in schools in which the head teacher or school director understood and supported the intervention. The high quality owed in part to NaUKMA's systematic approach in backstopping and monitoring the programme team and to the enthusiasm and strong capacity of the lead trainers. By comparison to psychosocial programmes in other countries, this programme ranks among the top three PSS programmes globally that evaluator Mike Wessells has worked with in the past 25 years.

Challenges

The PSS component also encountered significant challenges, including the following.

- The needs for psychosocial support for children and adolescents remain high, particularly in rural areas and also in NGCAs.
- Some teachers felt like a 'single warrior' as they were not supported by their school administration. In several cases, school administrators reportedly saw the games and activities that were part of the PSS work as a 'party' designed to make people laugh. They did not take it seriously or see its relevance to education.
- Some teachers felt bombarded by too many different projects.

- There is no curriculum for working with parents, and this leaves teachers feeling uncertain how to enable psychosocial support for families or relying excessively on their own intuition.
- Additional and longer training (two days is not enough) is needed to prepare teachers how to effectively support war-affected children.
- School directors and head teachers need additional support, as bringing them on board is critical for taking a whole school approach to creating a safe, supportive environment.
- The participation of social workers was difficult due to work overload and difficulties related to burnout and low motivation.
- On a personal level, not everyone is ready for innovations, particularly those that require looking at and talking about one's feelings.
- The limited time for implementing the PSS component is a problem. As one teacher put it, 'Our work is not done yet – we need more time.' Or as one Director said, 'Don't reinvent the wheel – this approach works and should be continued.'
- Psychologists carry a very heavy load of paperwork related to government demands, and this detracts from their ability to provide quality psychological services for children and families.
- Shortage of psychological specialists: Ukraine remains in the grip of a Soviet-era psychiatry that focusses excessively on the medical model and the use of medication and institutionalization of severely affected people. There is a severe shortage of trained psychologists who understand how to support war-affected children and can adapt to the Ukrainian context and use effectively the therapies and methods that have proven effective in other war-affected countries.
- Currently, there are severe shortages of free referral and treatment services. Outside of Slovyansk, many of the most severely war-affected children have nowhere to turn for support and professional treatment. This problem weighs most heavily on the poorest families, who cannot afford to pay for psychological services.
- Parents and pedagogical and administrative staff in schools have low levels of knowledge about children's psychosocial stress reactions, depression, and anxiety issues. Hence, they do not regularly make referrals for children in need of specialized assistance.

- Current mechanisms frequently make it difficult to refer children for specialized psychosocial assistance. From the legal point of view, all Ukrainian schools have the possibility to refer children to specialized services. The problems are the lack of high quality services and the lack of a standardized referral algorithm/mechanism within the school system. Teachers and school psychologists in many cases are taking a decision for referral based on their experience and not on a clearly described procedure.
- Corruption at many levels continues to be a serious problem. As one psychologist from Donetsk said, 'A child gets bad marks so the teacher (who is paid) can tutor to improve marks. Corruption is a national disease!'

These challenges indicate the need for continuing the PSS component and for the Ukrainian government to take concerted steps to strengthen its system of mental health and psychosocial support.

Relevance

The relevance of the PSS component is indicated by both the data on war exposure and stress levels among students and the urgent need for psychosocial support. The provision of PSS in an educational context enabled the programme to benefit large numbers of children and adolescents. In addition, the inclusion of the PSS component likely contributed to the quality of education, as many teachers noted that without psychosocial support, children were not in a good position to learn.

The relevance of the PSS component was increased by the fact that the new approach that teachers and school psychologists used helped to support the well-being of all students. A common error in PSS programming is to focus solely on children affected directly by shelling, attack, displacement and other direct effects of war. Yet the most vulnerable children in war zones frequently turn out to be children who are abused at home. Further, children in Ukraine suffer from a diverse array of stresses associated with problems such as poverty, bullying, disability, and discrimination. Experience in different war zones indicates the value of taking a holistic approach that supports all children and avoids a narrow focus only on a particular sub-group of children and adolescents. This project achieved positive outcomes in no small part through enabling a more supportive approach and a more protective environment for all children. Even when the conflict ends, the approach taken will continue to be relevant in helping to address the psychosocial well-being of Ukrainian children.

The relevance of the PSS component stems also from the fact that it fit well with the IASC Guidelines. Because the programme regarded psychosocial support as an approach as much as a set of processes and activities, it enabled effective mainstreaming of PSS into education

and kept strong emphasis on creating a safe, supportive environment. In addition, the programme included multiple tiers of supports, enabling most students to benefit from a supportive environment and group activities, with students in need of specialized support being referred for professional therapeutic services. Overall, the approaches used in the PSS component are highly consistent with good practices from other war zones and with international guidelines and standards. Further, the NaUKMA team adapted the PSS work to the Ukrainian context, insuring its cultural and contextual relevance.

Sustainability

The PSS component has excellent likely sustainability since, following the initial trainings and start-up costs, it can be run at relatively low cost over a long period of time. Also, the PSS work enjoys a high level of grassroots support and enthusiasm from students, teachers, head teachers, and school psychologists, all of whom are motivated to continue it. The ongoing demand for the PSS component, which is evident in the spread of excitement about it via word of mouth and also the view of different stakeholders that it is vital to continue, boost its sustainability. In some schools, the PSS work seems to be reaching critical mass and becoming woven into the school culture in a whole school approach.

Further, MoES is highly supportive of the PSS component and its continuation. Indeed, the MoES Deputy Minister said that he sees the approach as part of a badly needed, new approach to education and that the programme should be extended nationwide. Via UNICEF and MoES, discussions are currently under way to have the PSS work built into a wider, national approach on Safe Schools. The keen government interest and UNICEF support contribute significantly to the sustainability of the PSS work and approach.

These favourable signs of sustainability, however, should not be seen as a rationale for discontinuing external funding for the programme. As discussed above, the psychosocial needs of children and adolescents remain high, and the programme needs to be enriched and expanded into rural and non-government controlled areas. The continuation, extension, and enrichment of the programme could make a vital contribution to protecting Ukraine's most valuable resource – its children.

Synergies between the Life Skills Education and Psychosocial Support components

The project was deliberately designed with two complementary components. The goals of the two components are interrelated: Making progress towards PSS goals has helped to make progress towards LSE goals, and vice versa.

Several evaluation informants had been trained in the two components. They spoke of the complementarity between them, with different examples, such as the emphasis on

strengthening self-esteem, communication, trust, assertiveness and interpersonal relationships. Those who were trained in only one component but who worked in schools where both were implemented were enthusiastic about the value of the other component to their work.

A school psychologist commented:

‘There is a perception that PSS is doing a firefighting job, while LSE brings children back to life from the ashes; but that is not completely true. There are emotions present in both components; both deal with planning your future with hope. They are interlinked.’

Some school psychologists have supported teachers of Basics of Health with children in their classes. Some of the BoH teachers invited school psychologists to work with them in class, developing and delivering the content of the life skills together in team teaching arrangements.

A student interviewed in Kharkiv stated, ‘In our school the School Psychologist takes the BoH classes. Since she taught these LSE trainings, she has become much more popular.’

Teachers and school psychologists called for stronger coordination between the two components. One vital first step would be to map schools which are implementing each component, both components, and none. UNICEF may wish to work with MoES, the Education Cluster and Child Protection Sub-Cluster in Ukraine to carry out an initial mapping in 2017, and to keep the maps up to date in the future.

The synergies between PSS and LSE are all the more vital for IDP children and children on the move. A trainer from Donetsk Oblast spoke passionately about this:

‘The project yields results, but the two components must work in synergy. Not only teachers work with children from the conflict zone, but psychologists and other experts are also involved. And we must establish cooperation as well. Children are characterized by dynamic movement, including to uncontrolled territories. The project results in socialization, increased resistance, stress relief. But this is possible only when both components of the project are thoroughly implemented together! When children move to other territories we have to start everything from scratch.’

MoES, UNICEF and their partners should seek opportunities to train teachers and school psychologists in both sets of skills (LSE and PSS). Several informants from Donetsk Oblast made the interesting suggestion that PSS training needs to be provided first, ‘thus creating a base for LSE,’ as an IDP teacher from Donetsk expressed it. There are sound reasons for this

suggestion, as PSS training encourages participants explicitly to work on their own psychosocial needs. That would allow the LSE training to focus even more fully on the pedagogical side of conveying life skills to children.

The evaluation has shown that both project components need to focus on reaching out to parents, to strengthen their commitment to and investment in their children's education and wellbeing. That outreach would be more effective as a joint effort than if conducted separately.

Communication and visibility

Throughout project planning and implementation, UNICEF and its two main partners, HtE and NAUKMA, have communicated project activities and achievements with local, national and international media. This has included press briefings held with media outlets in each oblast of implementation when major training events or launches were held. UNICEF's Communications section provided guidance on overall project messaging, use of logos and banners, and tools and activities that could be used to communicate the project's progress and results.

HtE was particularly effective in its use of the Internet and social media. Its staff created and maintained a lively web page, the Prevention Education portal (<http://autta.org.ua/>). They assiduously gathered and analysed statistics of visits to the website, focussing on numbers of 'hits', the specific locations of those consulting the site and the development of the site's audience over time (http://www.clustrmaps.com/map/Autta.org.ua?utm_source=widget). Many LSE trainers and teachers maintained rich and detailed blogs of their classroom experiences of conveying life skills to children and their sharing of those experiences with other teachers (<http://autta.org.ua/ua/ProjectUNICEF/Blog>). The HtE staff, trainers and teachers also maintained an active Facebook page, with many video clips, photos and written accounts, which provided another window into the project's active, child-centred learning approaches (<https://www.facebook.com/ditu.mury/?fref=nf>).

KMA has been highly active in communicating to the public about the PSS needs, intervention approach, and findings. Between March and November 2016, five press briefings were conducted for journalists in Dnipro, Kharkiv, Severodonetsk, Sloviansk, and Zaporizhzhya. Information about programme activities and events, programme materials, and news and blog updates are posted on the websites of the NaUKMA Centre for Mental Health and Psychosocial Rehabilitation (<http://www.ukma.edu.ua/index.php/science/tsentri-ta-laboratoriji/cmhpss/pro-nas>), on the Wordshelp information resource on PSS for children (<http://wordshelp.com.ua/#/about>), and on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/PshcoosocialSupportNaUKMA/>).

Publication of research findings

The work conducted by the LSE teams is innovative and potentially ground-breaking in Ukraine. HtE intends to publish papers in Ukrainian academic and professional journals, which is heartily to be encouraged. Moreover, there would be considerable global interest in this work in the global Education in Emergencies community. The HtE team will aim for publication of their findings in this project in the *Journal on Education in Emergencies*, an international, peer-reviewed journal. For international publication, translation into English and some specialised technical editing will be necessary.

NaUKMA is active in disseminating information about the programme to a wide scientific audience. In May 2017, Dr Sergey Bogdanov will present the approach and findings at a major international conference of researchers and practitioners, the 2017 International Symposium on the Contributions of Psychology to Peace, in Florence. He also plans to publish the results in articles in leading journals such as *Child Abuse and Neglect*. These activities will likely boost the longer-term impact of the programme and help to make it a model psychosocial approach that can be useful in other countries.

Conclusions

The LSE component achieved remarkable results in a very short time – developing the methodology for LSE, training materials, teaching and learning materials and assessment instruments; delivering high quality training to master trainers and teachers; supporting and monitoring the teaching of life skills. Students, teachers, trainers and ministry officials were almost unanimous in their appreciation of the quality and impact of the work on the lives of children and communities. There were notable spillover effects to other areas of learning and to other schools. The provision of LSE through the carrier subject Basics of Health has provided MoES with evidence and a model for the child-centred, active, participatory learning and motivated teaching that the Ministry plans to implement throughout Ukraine with the New school reform process.

The PSS component has made impressive contributions to the resilience of conflict-affected children in Ukraine, and its accomplishments under difficult circumstances rival those of the very best PSS programmes in other war-torn countries. Embodying excellent academic-practitioner collaboration, the intervention enabled teachers, head teachers, and school psychologists to better understand the situation of children in five of the most war-affected oblasts and gave them the tools for engaging in supportive communication and a positive approach with children, for addressing issues of withdrawal, anger, and disruptive

behaviour, and referring children who need specialized assistance. The positive approach with children has considerable value for supporting all children in Ukraine, even beyond the armed conflict. Its success in providing psychosocial support on a wide scale and at a relatively low cost following the initial start-up phase make it a model that is worthy of continuation, extension, and enrichment in Ukraine.

The question for Ukraine, where conflict and hardships are ongoing, should not be whether to continue but how to continue this Life Skills Education and Psychosocial Support, which have profound implications for the future of the children of Ukraine.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MoES

1. Make policy commitments to, allocate budgets for, and mainstream technical implementation of LSE and PSS work throughout Ukrainian schools.
2. Allow for the creation of sub-groups, limiting LSE class sizes to 12 students in primary school and 20 students in secondary and high school.
3. Issue a regulation authorising and supporting schools to create a multi-purpose training room for active, child-centred learning and group work, or to modify an existing classroom for such purposes.

ECHO

1. Renew appropriately generous funding to UNICEF for deepening and geographic infilling of the LSE and PSS programming (more schools, more teachers and school psychologists trained per school, greater concentration close to the contact line) in 2017-18. This implies allowing multi-year funding for emergency-related education projects, an approach strongly recommended by a recent evaluation of ECHO's work in Education and Child Protection in emergencies.⁴
2. Share the findings of this project evaluation with other ECHO offices in countries affected by conflict and displacement.

UNICEF

1. Seek ECHO funding for deepening and geographic infilling of the LSE and PSS programming (more schools, more teachers and school psychologists trained per school, greater concentration close to the contact line), and for adequate numbers of teaching and learning materials for all teachers and students in both Ukrainian and Russian languages, in 2017-18.

⁴ ICF, *Final Report - Evaluation of DG ECHO's Actions in the Field of Protection and Education of Children in Emergency and Crisis Situations (2008-2015)* (Brussels, EU, 2016). http://s3.amazonaws.com/inee-assets/resources/ECHO_2016_Brussels.pdf

2. Seek funding from other donors to allow implementation of the LSE and PSS activities throughout Ukraine in the coming years.
3. Deliberately implement the two components of the project in the same schools, to maximise the evident synergies. In new sites, begin with PSS training, to prepare the ground for LSE.
4. Work specifically with school administrations of pre-school and school establishments. Develop a special course on LSE and PSS for school directors and deputies.
5. Support MoES to make policy commitments to and mainstream technical implementation of LSE and PSS work throughout Ukrainian schools.
6. With technical help from MoES, the Education Cluster and Child Protection Sub-Cluster, map the locations of schools implementing the LSE component, the PSS component, both components, and neither.
7. UNICEF, NaUKMA and HtE should jointly communicate the lessons learned from this project to the leadership of MoES, to serve as supporting evidence for their planning of the New School reforms.

HtE

1. Continue to publish and disseminate assessment tools, training materials, teaching and learning materials in sufficient quantities and appropriate languages of instruction, and results of project activities.
 - a. Ensure that each child has access to his or her own textbook or other essential learning materials.
 - b. Have all teaching and learning materials translated into Ukrainian and Russian, including videos, animations and PowerPoint presentations.
2. Broaden and deepen training of teachers, school psychologists, MoES and IISTT staff in LSE methodologies and monitoring.
 - a. The training should take on a Learning Programme approach (on-line coursework and self-study → workshop → put into practice → more on-line coursework and self-study → follow-up workshop → more practice). Some of

this training should take place by distance learning, on-line in most areas and in paper format for participants located in areas with poor Internet coverage.

- b. The training should include specific competencies related to the armed conflict and displacement.
 - c. Until MoES allows smaller class sizes, HtE should develop a section of a training module specifically devoted to methodologies that will help teachers to cope with active, child-centred learning in large classes.
 - d. Encourage ISITTs to offer LSE courses for the whole teachers' collective of schools.
 - e. Encourage participants after the project's completion to develop and deliver their own trainings.
 - f. Reach out to train more male teachers.
 - g. Extend the training to other parts of Ukraine, beyond the five eastern oblasts.
- 3. Broaden and deepen involvement of parents and families in project activities. This should include systematic training for parents, an on-line group for parents and interested community members, and a manual for parents on how to work with their children to reinforce life skills.
 - 4. Broaden and deepen involvement of school directors in project activities.
 - 5. Ease the burden of reporting upon teachers.
 - 6. Reach out to train more male teachers.
 - 7. Create more distance education courses for children in the NGCA territory.
 - 8. Facilitate clearer communication about what children have learned in LSE between the cycles of schooling in a district: pre-school – primary – secondary – high school.
 - 9. Conduct another on-line survey for teachers and students in late spring 2017, to understand what children have retained and how their behaviour has changed half a year after the project.

10. UNICEF and HtE should jointly communicate the lessons learned from this project to the leadership of MoES, to serve as supporting evidence for their planning of the New School reforms.
11. Hold a conference intended to spread the experience to other oblasts (for example, Zakarpattia and Lviv Oblasts) and eventually to all of Ukraine.

NaUKMA

1. Continue developing, strengthening, and documenting the referral system for supporting severely affected children of different ages.
2. Monitor the dynamic psychosocial needs associated with the armed conflict, and wherever possible, extend the PSS component into the areas that are underserved and pose high risk to children.
3. Continue to publish and disseminate assessment tools, training materials, teaching and learning materials, and results of project activities.
4. Broaden and deepen training of teachers, school psychologists (who provide services for severely affected children), MoES and IISTT staff in PSS methodologies and monitoring.
 - a. The training should take on a Learning Programme approach (on-line coursework and self-study → workshop → put into practice → more on-line coursework and self-study → follow-up workshop → more practice). Some of this training should take place by distance learning, on-line in most areas and in paper format for participants located in areas with poor Internet coverage.
 - b. The training should include a specific curriculum and competencies related to the armed conflict and displacement.
 - c. The training should include a specific curriculum and competencies geared specifically to working with families.
 - d. The training should be accompanied by ongoing mentoring.
5. Broaden and deepen involvement of families in project activities. This should include training on understanding how conflict has affected families and family dynamics, how to approach families, how to engage effectively with parents, children, and adolescents, respectively, and how to be supportive but non-intrusive. It might also

include discussion groups among different families that enable co-learning, problem-solving, and mutual support.

6. Broaden and deepen involvement of school directors in project activities.
7. Extend the PSS work to a greater number of pre-schools since young children have been affected by the conflict and early intervention can help to prevent the development of psychosocial issues later.
8. Continue to deepen the knowledge of families and school pedagogical and administrative staff, enabling them to make referrals for children in need of specialized psychosocial support.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Tools / instruments used for data collection

Focus Group Discussion Questions

Note: We will make clear that the questions and discussion focus on the project work in Kharkiv. For each question, participants will be asked to please describe, give an example, etc. Also, probing questions will be asked and will be tailored according to the content of a particular statement.

A. NaUKMA's local partner staff

- What changes did you see in students as a result of the project here?
- What changes did you see in teachers as a result of the project here?
- What changes did you see in school psychologists as a result of the project here?
- How was the project work seen by school officials?
- Were students who needed special assistance identified effectively?
- Were students who needed special assistance referred for additional support? To whom?
- Following the referral, were there any noticeable changes in the student's behaviour, demeanour or well-being?
- Have you been in contact with the trainers working on life skills education in partnership with the NGO Health through Education? If so, how has that interaction been?
- Has this project been rewarding for you?
- What challenges arose in the work here?
- What changes would you like to see in the PSS work in the next year? Beyond?

B. HtE's local partner staff

- What changes did you see in students as a result of the project here?
- What changes did you see in teachers as a result of the project here?
- How was the project work seen by school officials?
- How well did the life skills content fit with the school subject Basics of Health?
- How did the teachers respond to the learner-centred methodologies?
- Have you been in contact with the trainers working on psychosocial support in partnership with the Kyiv Mohyla Academy? If so, how has that interaction been?
- Has this project been rewarding for you?
- What challenges arose in the work here?
- What changes would you like to see in the LSE work in the next year? Beyond?

C. Teachers

- What did you like about this project?
- What did you do differently because of this project?
- What changes did you see in students as a result of the project here?
- Did you see changes in teacher-student relations as a result of the project here?
- What changes did you see in teachers as a result of the project here?
- What changes did you see in school psychologists as a result of the project here?
- How was the project work seen by school officials?
- What challenges arose in the PSS / LSE work here?
- What changes would you like to see in the PSS / LSE work in the next year? Beyond?

D. Students

- What did you like about this project?
- What changes did you see in students (including those who had been displaced by the conflict)?
- Have there been changes in students helping each other?
- What changes did you see in teachers?
- Did relations with teachers change during the project?

E. School Psychologists

- How did your work and role change as a result of this project?
- Which new skills were most important for teachers?
- What changes did you see in teachers as a result of the project here?
- What changes did you see in school psychologists as a result of the project here?
- How was the project work seen by school officials?
- Were students who needed special assistance identified effectively?
- Were students who needed special assistance referred for additional support? To whom?
- Following the referral, were there any noticeable changes in the student's behaviour, demeanour or well-being?
- Have you been in contact with teachers working on life skills education in the subject Basics of Health? If so, how has that interaction been?
- Has this project been rewarding for you?
- What challenges arose in the work here?
- What changes would you like to see in the PSS work in the next year? Beyond?

F. MoES Officials

- Why is this work important from the standpoint of the Ministry?
- From your standpoint, what have been the main achievements of the project?

- Is it important to continue this work or particular elements of it?
- What are the challenges to this work and approach?
- What should be the next steps in continuing this work?

Key Informant Interview Questions

These will be similar to the above but will be adjusted to have greater focus on the individual. For example, in talking with an individual teacher, we would ask about what changes are they seeing in their students rather than in students in general. Also, we will likely ask in greater depth about particular examples or experiences.

Appendix 2. Numbers of participants in evaluation activities

Activity	# MOES staff	# Trainers	# Students	# Teachers	# School psychologists	# In- Service Teacher Training Institute	# Total
Kramatorsk joint workshop 14/11	2	4	0	18	7	10	41
Kramatorsk LSE workshop 15/11	2	0	0	18	0	9	29
Kramatorsk PSS workshop 15/11	1	4	0	15	12	3	35
Kharkiv MOES FGD 16/11	4	0	0	8	2	9	23
Kharkiv LSE FGDs 16- 17/11	0	3	8	30	2	9	52
Kharkiv PSS FGDs 16- 17/11	0	6	10	14	6	0	36
Kharkiv LSE interviews 16-17/11	0	1	2	1	0	1	5
Kharkiv PSS interviews 16-17/11	0	1	1	1	1	0	4

Appendix 3. Progress against project indicators: LSE component

Project results on key indicators on 20 December 2016 LSE component				
Result statement	Performance indicator/s	Baseline	Target	Actual on 20.12.2016
Programme Output 1 Learning content, teaching methods, and teaching-learning materials are developed.	Number (types) of developed educational and methodological materials for pre-schoolers (3-6 years)	0	3	3
	Number (types) of developed educational and methodological materials for primary school (grades 1-4)	0	7	10
	Number (types) of developed educational and methodological materials for secondary school (grades 5-9)	0	8	12
	Number (types) of developed educational and methodological materials for senior secondary school (grade 10)	0	4	4
	Number (types) of developed educational and methodological materials translated into Russian	0	18	24
Programme Output 2 Capacity of MoES policymakers and technical staff in the principles, objectives and methods of life skills education, leading to accreditation of life skills courses in curricula is increased	Number of staff in MoES and in the regions involved in advocacy, planning, coordination and monitoring of implementation of developed training courses	0	18	23
	Plan of actions approved by MoES on the project implementation	No	Yes	Order MES #№5 dated 11.01.16
	Number of heads of educational establishments supporting implementation of developed LSE training courses	0	1,570	1,589
Programme Output 3	Number of national trainings of trainers conducted	0	3	3

Teachers, teacher trainers and community workers in the principles, objectives and methods of life skills education are trained	Number of trained regional trainers (pre-school, primary and secondary levels)	0	90	90
	Number of developed training courses for students of pedagogical schools of higher education (pre-service training for primary school and secondary school professionals)	0	2	2
	Number of developed online courses for continuous distance learning for all teachers after the project completion (in-service training)	0	1	1
	Number of trainings held for educators and teachers in the regions	0	130	134
	Number of pedagogues trained in the regions	0	3,240	3,369
Programme Output 4 In-service support to teachers and community workers to implement life skills courses effectively has been held	Information resources for preschool educators, teachers and parents are regularly updated and available online at web-portal www.autta.org.ua and webpage www.helte.org.ua	No	Yes	Yes
	Web banners of the project information resources placed on schools' webpages	No	Yes	Yes
	Counselling of trained educators and teachers by the project regional coordinators	No	Yes	Yes
	Test version of online training course for distance learning is available to all teachers	No	Yes	Yes
Programme Output 5 Monitoring of implementation and evaluation of the impact of the life skills courses has been held	Monitoring of project implementation in the regions against approved plan of actions	No	Yes	Yes
	Number of educational establishments reached by the project	0	1,570	1,589
	Number of children and students receiving education on the basis of developed training courses	0	174,000	241,474
	Indicators, tools and questionnaires to evaluate the impact of the project	No	Yes	Yes
	Number of children and teachers participating in the BEFORE and AFTER surveys	0	3,000	63,054 in the BEFORE survey 63,382 in the AFTER survey

	Positive changes in children's and pedagogues' knowledge and attitudes	N/A	Yes	Yes
Programme Output 6 Developed learning and teaching materials and evaluation findings had been prepared, printed and disseminated	Number of printed products in Ukrainian and Russian	0	18	17 (secondary and high school are united)
	Number of training video collections	0	4	4
	Total print-run of publications, produced and delivered to the regions	0	13,200	13 400

Appendix 4. NaUKMA PSS component final report

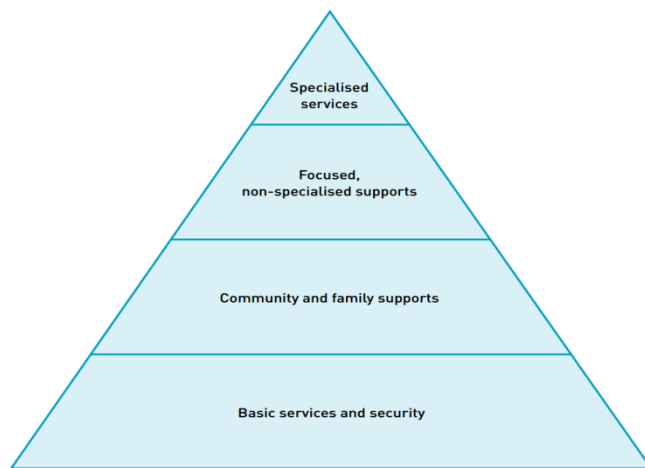
This report of the PSS component, submitted by NaUKMA, contains 22 detailed annexes in the Ukrainian language. The full report is available from the offices of UNICEF and NaUKMA, in Kyiv.

Project title:	Comprehensive Psychosocial Support to Conflict-Affected Children, Adolescents, and Families in Ukraine (ECHO Children of Peace Initiative)
Project duration:	16/10/2015 – 16/12/2016
Project scope:	Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipro, Kharkiv and NaUKMA National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy Zaporizhzhya Regions
Final Report:	16/10/2015 – 16/12/2016
Date:	16/12/2016

Introduction

The project “Comprehensive Psychosocial Support to Conflict-Affected Children, Adolescents, and Families in Ukraine” as a PSS component of *Children on Peace* EU-UNICEF initiative aimed at providing multilevel psychosocial support to the conflict-affected children and their families in Dnipro, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhya oblasts in the framework of school-based model of psychosocial support and prevention for children and caregivers.

This approach, based on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines, allows comprehensive support for children by caregivers, teachers, psychologists on all levels according to the IASC intervention pyramid for mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies, building a safe environment for children.



The model demonstrates different levels of support by:

- family and community members as social surrounding
- teachers providing emotionally positive classroom environments and observing those schoolchildren who may be disturbing
- school psychologists – focused, non-specialized support for children with any psychosocial problems
- psychotherapists (outside school) – specialized, psychotherapeutic assistance for more severely affected schoolchildren

Effective psychosocial support for children implies support for caregivers and other duty-bearers as well. Therefore, the project approach implies also support for:

- parents provided by teachers and psychologists
- teachers and psychologists – by psychologists-supervisors
- psychologists and psychotherapists – by senior supervisors and external supervisors

This model enables a referral mechanism for children and their caregivers including those who are likely to need more specialized support.

Training Programme

The training programme implemented within the project comprised five types of trainings (Annex 1):

- Training of trainers for the project trainers-psychologists
- Trainings for teachers
- Trainings for school and pre-school psychologists
- Trainings for social workers
- Training on child psychotherapy

Training of trainers

A 5-day training of trainers was conducted on 26-30 September 2015 in Dnipro with **31** psychologists taking part. The participants were school and pre-school psychologists from Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipro, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhya oblasts, also participants to the prior joint UNICEF-NaUKMA project and the project programme of post-conflict counselling (Annex 2). Psychologists were taught the programme of trainings for classroom and head teachers on positive emotional communication and facilitating a supportive classroom environment (Annex 3, 4, 5).

Training for teachers

31 project trainers-psychologists conducted afterwards 200 training sessions for **3,842** teachers in five eastern oblasts of Ukraine during the whole project period. The numbers of trained teachers per oblast: 780 – in Dnipro oblast, 761 – Donetsk, 740 – Luhansk, 766 – Kharkiv, 795 – Zaporizhzhya. In general, 893 education facilities participated in the project (258 – Donetsk obl., 150 – Dnipro, 212 – Luhansk, 193 – Kharkiv, 80 – Zaporizhzhya) (Annex 6, 7, 8).

Selection criteria for participation in trainings were as following:

- ✓ classroom or head teachers
- ✓ not participated in UNICEF training program before
- ✓ come from remote, rural areas of a region
- ✓ come from areas with high concentrations of IDPs

Training for school and pre-school psychologists

10 project senior trainers provided 20 training sessions for **420** psychologists from schools, kindergartens and other education facilities in five oblasts: 87 – in Dnipro, 61 – Donetsk, 86 – Luhansk, 82 – Kharkiv, 82 – Zaporizhzhya, plus 22 specialists from 20 regional in-service institutes for pedagogues and psychologists participated in training on skills of crisis counselling and psychosocial resilience strengthening in children (Kyiv, November 2015) (Annex 9, 10).

Training for social workers

Five training sessions for social workers were conducted in March-April 2016 in five eastern oblasts with **112** participants (22 – Dnipro, 24 – Donetsk, 22 – Luhansk, 20 – Kharkiv, 24 – Zaporizhzhya) (Annex 11). The training program for social workers focused on crisis counselling, psychosocial support for family and community support (Annex 12).

Training on child psychotherapy

A 12-day training on child psychotherapy was conducted in four three-day training sessions in May and June for fifteen child psychologists from Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts at the

NaUKMA Centre for Psychosocial Rehabilitation in Slovyansk (Annex 13). The programme allowed psychologists to provide specialized psychotherapeutic assistance to more severely affected children and their caregivers (Annex 14).

Methodological Support and Supervision

Methodological and supervision support for the training participants was one of the core project objectives. Regular meetings with trained teachers and psychologists helped to refresh knowledge and skills obtained, to provide feedback and get support (Annex 15).

Throughout the project's duration the following types of support were provided (in person or via Skype):

- per 26 bi-weekly two-hour supervision sessions (in total 260 hours) for each of five oblast teams of 31 project trainers-psychologists – by the project experts (senior trainers)
- per 26 weekly one-hour supervision sessions (in total 52 hours) for Donetsk and Luhansk teams of 15 school, pre-school and child psychologists who participated in the project training on child psychotherapy (May-June)– by the project experts (senior trainers)
- 1,432 monthly two-hour methodological support sessions (2,864 hours) for 200 groups of the teachers trained (3,842 persons)
- 154 monthly two-hour methodological support sessions (308 hours) for 20 groups of the school and pre-school psychologists trained (420 persons)
- 35 monthly two-hour methodological support sessions (70 hours) for 5 groups of the social workers trained (112 persons).

Except for the regular methodological and supervision support meetings, trainers and trainees kept regular contact through the internet communities.

School psychologists provided group and individual counselling for children and their caregivers according to the programme modules.

Teachers were not expected to provide specific kinds of psychological work with children, but to apply the skills acquired in their everyday work with schoolchildren: providing positive emotional communication, and facilitating a supportive classroom environment.

Teachers and school psychologists reported on benefits of applying the acquired resilience and emotional communication skills in their everyday activities in school – lessons, meetings with parents, colleagues, extracurricular activities, in private life. Among the most important practices used, teachers and psychologists named relaxing, coping with stress, positive emotional dialogue, conflict resolution and building friendly environment activities.

A group of 15 child psychologists trained on the programme of child psychotherapy used the skill obtained in their work in NaUKMA Centre for Psychosocial Rehabilitation (Slovyansk) - 6 psychologists, in their work with children as school psychologists from different places in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts – 9 persons. They hope and expect that such centres out-of-school centres for psychotherapeutic support for children and families will be established some day in other cities of their regions. As of today, only one is open (in Slovyansk).

On the other hand, participation of the social workers in the project was to some extent challenging. Social workers reported to be overloaded with various kinds of work, completely burnt out and unmotivated. Trainings were mainly therapeutic sessions for them. Regular supervision and psychological support is what they do not have in general practice, though need desperately.

Project experts kept regular contact with the social workers trained (once / twice per month). Unfortunately, personal meetings happened rarely – many participants were from different and remote places and had no finances and administrative allowance for a trip. Usually, trainers come to different groups of trainees for supervision. However, a big part of the social workers trained refused to take part in the meetings of methodological support due to exhausting workload, lack of time and personal reasons. Another part of the social workers trained had quit by the end of the project.

Among the social workers trained, only those working directly with children and families said that they were satisfied and could fully apply knowledge and skills obtained during the training sessions in their everyday work and personal life.

Information materials

All the project participants – teachers, psychologists, and social workers – were provided with certificates on completion of the project's PSS programme course and information materials for their work with children: per 4,500 copies of brochures on PSS support for teachers, parents, and games books (in total 13,500 copies); 1,000 copies of manuals for school psychologists on workshops for youth leaders; 20,000 copies of leaflets for teachers and parents (positive vocabulary, stress and children) (Annex 16).

Support for Children

The numbers of children reached for the period of December 2015 – December 2016 by the teachers, psychologists, and social workers trained (according to the reports received) are as following:

- by teachers: **110,228** (30,456 – in Donetsk obl., 13,970 – Luhansk, 12,951 – Dnipro, 26,686 – Zaporizhzhya, 26,165 – Kharkiv)
- by psychologists: **46,298** (8,992 – Donetsk obl., 5,780 – Luhansk, 15,052 – Dnipro, 5,341 – Zaporizhzhya, 11,133 – Kharkiv obl.)
- by social workers: **1,125** (975 – Donetsk obl., 150 – Dnipro)

- by school psychologists during the workshops for school leaders (schoolchildren of 14-17 years): **43,020** in five oblasts.

Teachers, psychologists, and social workers also provided information meetings, group and individual counselling for caregivers and school staff, administration, psychologists, other specialists. The numbers (according to the reports received) are following:

- Parents reached: **50,190** (9,858 – in Donetsk obl., 5,202 – Luhansk, 8,043 – in Dnipro, 14,079 – Zaporizhzhya, 13,008 – Kharkiv obl.).
- Teachers and other school staff reached: **12,725** (2,467 – in Donetsk obl., 1,161 – Luhansk, 2,998 – in Dnipro obl., 1,547 – Zaporizhzhya, 4,552 - Kharkiv) (Annex 17, 18, 19, 20, 21).

Specialized Psychotherapeutic Assistance

The Centre of psychotherapeutic assistance (NaUKMA Centre for Psychosocial Rehabilitation) was opened in Slovyansk in September 2015 and in the framework of the project provided specialized psychotherapeutic and psychosocial assistance for children, families and everybody suffering from psychological trauma.

For the project duration the centre psychologists, psychotherapists, and social workers provided:

- 580 individual counselling sessions for 20 children and
- 108 family counselling meetings for 63 children
- group therapeutic events:
 - 12 workshops (art-therapy) for 37 children
 - 10 children's group meetings for 5 children
 - 3 teenagers' group meetings "Children and War" for 10 persons
 - 8 support meeting for 7 adolescents
 - sand therapy in Slovyansk and Lyman with 145 children participated.

In general, 2,045 children and adolescents took part in the Centre's activities.

Coordination Activity

Coordination activity undertaken by the project experts (6 local project coordinators) in five eastern oblasts enabled communication and cooperation between various organizations (governmental, non-governmental, international) providing psychosocial support for children and their families at regional level with the emphasis on referral, information exchange and professional network development.

For the six-month period (January – June 2016) the project local coordinators:

- updated regional contact databases of PSS service providers for children and combined them with the general MHPSS sub-cluster database

- created shared events calendars for the regional stakeholders
- took part in the regional MHPSS, CP and HP cluster meetings
- conducted 16 general meeting for stakeholders in the regions on the project activity and the main project developments (capacity building for psychologists, teachers and social workers, referral mechanism) (sample presentation: see Annex 23).

A local network of PSS services and a common information space for all participants enabled the effectiveness of the referral system for conflict-affected children and their families. Being unable to provide assistance in some cases (due to lack of resources, professionals, and any other reasons) PSS providers, informed about all other PSS organizations on the ground, were able and responsible to refer clients to those service providers who could provide needed support.

One of the core coordination activity achievements was close cooperation with the governmental organization – regular meetings, needs assessment, proposals for joint work on PSS programmes on a local level.

Shared events calendar, PSS service providers' database, and regular coordination meetings allowed sharing information among the partner governmental and non-governmental organizations, referral mechanism, discussion of needs, and boosted mutual cooperation (Annex 24, 25).

For the six-month period (January – June 2016), project local coordinators revealed needs and wishes of PSS stakeholders on the ground (what later was reached in particular within other UNICEF/NaUKMA initiatives - Mobile teams project):

- ➔ need in referral mechanism within PSS service providing
- ➔ problems of IDPs' adaptation, conflicts with host community members, bullying
- ➔ need in learning spaces for children and youth with master-classes, psychological workshops etc. (Zaporizhzhya, Kramatorsk, Slovyansk)
- ➔ need in financing rehabilitation centres for children with disabilities, in temporary settlements for IDPs (Kharkiv).

The coordination activity project part was provided over the short six-month period. It still needs to be developed further to promote created cooperation and referral system among PSS service providers for conflict-affected children and governmental structures on the regional and central level.

Public Relations

Project activity and main project developments were highlighted in a number of public relations events and information resources.

Press briefings for local mass media

Five press briefings for regional journalists in Dnipro, Kharkiv, Severodonetsk, Sloviansk, and Zaporizhzhya were arranged in March and November 2016. Project coordinators on the ground, with support from UNICEF representatives, informed local journalists of the EU-UNICEF Children of Peace initiative in the east of Ukraine, main project goals and developments, numbers of the specialists trained and the children reached (Annex 26).

Competition among schoolchildren

Project experts proposed the idea of an alternative positive activity for schoolchildren in improving their environment to boost young people's active social position and support their psychological well-being. In the project framework, the idea was implemented by a competition among schoolchildren on the best creative video "Renovation of my Place of Living".

The competition was carried on in five eastern oblasts during three months (September-November 2016) and 21 winners on visited Kyiv on 19 November and were awarded with diplomas and UNICEF prizes on the premises of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (Annex 27).

Information resources

Information about project activities and events (training, supervision, methodological sessions for teachers, psychologists, social workers, working meetings, briefings etc.), project documents, training materials, books, leaflets, news, and blogs is posted and regularly updated on the websites of:

- ✓ NaUKMA Centre for Mental Health and Psychosocial Rehabilitation (MHPSSC) (<http://www.ukma.edu.ua/index.php/science/tsentri-ta-laboratoriji/cmhpss/pro-nas>)
- ✓ MHPSSC Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/PsychosocialSupportNaUKMA/>)
- ✓ Information resource on psychosocial support for children *Wordshelp* (<http://wordshelp.com.ua/#/about>)

Conclusion

The project on comprehensive psychosocial support to conflict-affected children, adolescents, and families in Ukraine has been implemented in line with the core IASC guidelines on providing complex support for children on the different levels of the pyramid and covering main commitments to affected population: 1) leadership/ governance, 2) transparency / information sharing, 3) feedback and complaints, 4) participation, 5) design, monitoring and evaluation.

(1) Methodological materials and protocol for teachers, as well as referral mechanism description have been developed by the project experts and are to be considered by the

MoES Committee in February 2016 (after a new statement of the Committee is issued) for further integration into the MoES programmes.

(2)(3) All the participants of the project PSS programme (teachers, psychologists children, caregivers) were informed about project activities and programme content and eligible to provide their feedback and submit suggestions to fine-tune the whole program.

(4) Participation of beneficiaries in project activities (school psychologists providing outreach for teachers, caregivers, cooperation with youth school leaders) and decision-making process ensured they were represented and had influence. Besides, that strengthened PSS programme impact and enable sustainability of the project implemented.

Knowledge and skills acquired within the training programme allowed teachers and psychologists to change their approach to teaching process, to understand children's and their own needs better, to provide positive emotional environment and participatory communication.

The project PSS programme was highly supported in those education facilities (schools, kindergartens) where teachers, psychologists and administration all participated in the trainings. Thus, each side could understand the value of the programme proposed and supported each other.

(5) The PSS project programme was designed in accordance to needs and requests of the beneficiaries. The programme had been initially modified according to feedback of the prior project participants, and incorporated views of the current project participants. Regular weekly and monthly supervision and methodological support sessions to psychotherapists, psychologists, social workers, and teachers trained allowed them to get professional and personal help and be involved in planning and evaluation processes. Besides, feedback from children, caregivers and care providers on the programme was crucial for fine-tuning the programme content and implementation.

Appendix 5. Abbreviations

ACAPS	Assessment Capacities Project
BoH	Basics of Health
CoP	Children of Peace [ECHO funding programme]
ECHO	European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Operations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GfK	Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung (Society for Consumer Research)
HtE	Children’s Foundation Health through Education
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee [for Humanitarian Affairs]
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IISTT	Institute of In-Service Teacher Training
KII	Key Informant Interview
LSE	Life Skills Education
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science, Government of Ukraine
NaUKMA	National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PSS	Psychosocial Support
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

Appendix 6. Glossary

Life skills education	<p>Life skills education is a process of learning to live together with others in everyday life, in the wider society and as responsible citizens. It provides young people with skills, values and behaviours needed to prepare for the personal, interpersonal and active citizenship aspects of their individual and social lives. Life skills include clear communication, empathy, cooperation, problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, negotiation, mediation, reconciliation, appropriate assertiveness, respect for human rights, gender sensitivity and active citizenship.</p> <p>Source: Margaret Sinclair, Lynn Davies, Anna Obura and Felisa Tibbitts, <i>Learning to Live Together: Design, Monitoring and Evaluation of Education for Life Skills, Citizenship, Peace and Human Rights</i> (Eschborn, GTZ, 2008), pp. 10-11 (https://s3.amazonaws.com/inee-assets/resources/doc_1_Learning_to_Live_Together.pdf).</p>
Mental health and psychosocial support	<p>The composite term 'mental health and psychosocial support' is used to describe any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental disorder.</p> <p>Source: Inter-Agency Standing Committee, <i>IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings</i> (Geneva, IASC, 2008), p. 1. (http://www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/guidelines_iasc_mental_health_psychosocial_june_2007.pdf).</p> <p>Note: This composite term is used to indicate that one cannot have mental health with psychosocial well-being, and vice versa. At field level, programmes that emphasize mental health typically focus on mental disorders and therapeutic supports. Programmes that emphasize psychosocial support typically take a holistic approach, try to create a positive social environment for war-affected children, and focus on resilience and well-being.</p>