Regional Refugee Response
for the Ukraine Situation

# EDUCATION OF REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM UKRAINE

## An analysis of major trends and challenges in education of refugees from Ukraine in Europe

April 2025

# Contents


| | |
|---|---|
| Acknowledgements | 2 |
| Methodology | 3 |
| Summary of findings | 3 |
| Refugee children and youth from Ukraine in Europe | 4 |
| Refugee education: data limitations | 5 |
| Enrolment of refugee children and youth from Ukraine in Europe | 6 |
| Vulnerable groups | 10 |
| Gender disparities in enrolment | 10 |
| School enrolment by level of education | 12 |
| Remote and online education | 13 |
| A detailed look at remote and online learning | 14 |
| Reasons for non-enrolment in host country education systems | 17 |
| Risks and opportunities | 19 |
| Endnotes | 20 |


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**Cover photograph:**
United Kingdom: 'A Great British Welcome' tells the story of how communities across the UK welcome people who have been forced to flee their homes.
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# Methodology

This report contains an in-depth analysis of the education situation of refugee children and youth from Ukraine based on data collected through large-scale surveys of refugee households carried out by UNHCR and its partners in countries featured in the Refugee Response Plans for the Ukraine emergency.[1]

This includes data from the 2023 Multisector Needs Assessment (MSNA) in seven countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia)[2] and the 2024 Socio-Economic Insights Survey (SEIS) in ten countries (the countries included in the 2023 MSNA plus Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). The 2024 SEIS was implemented though a sample-based household survey with data collected through face-to-face interviews. 8,720 households were interviewed, representing 19,803 household members, with respondents providing information on behalf of all individuals within their households

Additional data to complement the 2024 SEIS data was obtained from States and other sources, including data from the Institute of Educational Analysis (IEA) and the National Statistics Office (NSO) of Ukraine. Most of this data has been made accessible in a single data dashboard on the inter-agency data portal on education of Ukrainian refugees.[3]

This report focuses on school age Ukrainian children and youth across the study countries and provides a comparative analysis spanning two years, by comparing the MSNA data from 2023 and the SEIS data from 2024. It will also link to the situation of internally displaced children and youth inside Ukraine where appropriate.

# Summary of findings

**79%**
of children are reported by refugee households to be enrolled in education in ten host countries included in the 2024 SEIS survey.

**29%**
of refugee children and youth included in the 2024 SEIS survey are reported to be studying both in a school in the host country while at the same time following remote or online education.

**225,000**
rise of estimated number children and youth from Ukraine enrolled in primary, secondary and higher education in Europe between 2023 and 2024.

**358,000**
children from Ukraine who are currently abroad and remain enrolled remotely or online in some form in the Ukrainian education system.

# Refugee children and youth from Ukraine in Europe

In February 2025, the full-scale war in Ukraine entered its fourth year. With no end to the conflict in sight, more than 6.9 million Ukrainians remain forcibly displaced worldwide, representing one of the largest refugee situations globally and the largest crisis of forced displacement in Europe since WWII. The vast majority of refugees from Ukraine (6,357,600 as of 17 April 2025) are hosted in the Europe region, while just over 560,000 are hosted in regions beyond Europe.[4]

**Refugees from Ukraine are primarily women and children.** Estimates based on household surveys and other data show that around 43 per cent of the refugee population are women over the age of 18, and around 32 per cent are children (female and male children ages 0-17).[5] Most of these children are of compulsory school age and have an obligation to be enrolled in a primary or secondary school in the host country.[6]

The refugee population from Ukraine in Europe has slightly increased from 5.9 million in early 2024 to 6.3 million at the end of April 2025. This points to a stabilization of the refugee population in the region. Germany, Poland and Czech Republic are hosting the largest refugee populations. Large populations are also present in the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom.[7]

**Most children and youth from Ukraine are hosted in high-income countries in the European Union with well-funded systems of compulsory education**. Most have legislation that grants Ukrainians unrestricted access to all levels of education and provide support to displaced learners to include them in education in the national education system.

Most European countries have policies aimed at including refugee and migrant children into their national education system.[8] In most cases, education is compulsory for any child residing on the territory of the hosting State, including for Ukrainians who are beneficiaries of Temporary Protection or a similar protective status. Most countries offer preparatory programmes or extra learning support for children enrolling in primary or secondary education. The support provided in schools and other educational institutions, however, varies considerably depending on local policies and available resources.[9]

The arrival of unprecedented numbers of refugee children and youth from Ukraine has put strains on education systems across the region. Some schools face capacity problems. In some cases, especially in urban areas with high numbers of refugees, school infrastructure can not accommodate additional admissions of refugee children and youth.[10] Existing shortages of teachers and other educational staff, as well as a lack of specialist teachers and pedagogical support staff capable of working with refugee children and youth, put additional limitations to the capacity of some schools to include refugee children and youth from Ukraine. Capacity problems were often compounded by existing regulatory, financial and administrative barriers to education.[11]

Countries in Central Europe such as Poland and Czech Republic are particularly affected as numbers of refugee children and youth in their education systems have risen exponentially compared to the period before the full-scale war in Ukraine.[12] Some EU countries granted exemptions to compulsory education for Ukrainians studying remotely or online early in the crisis in an effort to alleviate capacity problems in schools. Most of those exemptions are under review or have been abolished. Most countries in the region are taking measures to ensure adequate capacity will be available in schools to accommodate additional arrivals in years to come.[13]

# Refugee education: data limitations

**2024 SEIS data.** The 2024 SEIS survey data and other data presented in this report reflect current best estimates of the education situation of children and youth from Ukraine at the start of the current calendar year (2025).

Data limitations include the fact that the SEIS only provides data on ten countries on the border of, or near, Ukraine included in the Refugee Response Plans implemented through the inter-agency response by humanitarian organizations. Most other major refugee hosting countries in the region, such as Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy, are not included in the SEIS.

**2023 MSNA data.** The 2024 SEIS is to a large extent a repeat survey of the 2023 Multi-Sector-needs Assessment (MSNA), which was implemented with a sample-based household survey with data collected through face-to-face interviews with 11,496 households, representing 26,857 individuals in seven refugee hosting countries.[14] The 2024 SEIS questionnaire used in ten refugee hosting countries had similar questions on education of children and youth and was expanded with additional questions to capture more detail on enrolment of children and youth and remote and online education. This provides for datasets that are mostly comparable, allowing for a year-on-year comparison between 2023 and 2024 results.

**Survey limitations.** Household surveys such as the 2023 MSNA and the 2014 SEIS have limitations because households are asked to self-report on family members enrolled in education in the host country. Due to sampling constraints and the non-probabilistic selection of respondents, the results may not fully represent the entire refugee population from Ukraine. Additionally, the choice of sampling locations may have introduced a bias toward more vulnerable segments of the population. Variations in sampling approaches and data collection periods across countries can also affect comparability.

**Net enrolment rates.** The questionnaire of the 2024 SEIS contained more detailed questions on education of refugee household members than the 2023 MSNA, but needs to be interpreted with care knowing that any data on enrolment of children stemming from the survey needs to be contrasted to net enrolment rates as calculated according to internationally accepted standard methods used by UNESCO and the World Bank.[15]

Enrolment rates represent the ratio of refugee children and youth from Ukraine who are of school age and who are enrolled in a host country's education system.[16] The 2023 MSNA and SEIS data allows for a calculation of enrolment rates based on what households reply to the surveys with respect to the enrolment status of individual children and youth. However, this calculation differs from the global standard method of calculating a net enrolment rate. The global standard mostly relies on administrative data and household surveys of school age population and corresponds to enrolment in the relevant level of education. The 2023 MSNA and the 2024 SEIS have a slightly different focus and gauge whether or not children and youth are enrolled in education in host countries, and whether or not children are engaged in different types of remote or online learning without collecting detailed information relating the enrolment at different levels of education. An additional limitation is that SEIS is only available for ten countries. Compulsory school age brackets also vary across Europe, making comparison of enrolment rates complex.

**Refugee population data.** The data used to estimate the child and youth refugee populations has limitations related to disaggregation and potential double counting across countries. Countries in Europe for the most part do not make available and/or disaggregate data on refugee education, which has traditionally made detailed analysis and planning of inclusion of refugee children into education systems in Europe a challenge.[17] Some indicators and proxies can be

gleaned from asylum statistics, local studies and other sources but usually there are no exact breakdowns available of how many refugees are in education; their age, gender and other personal characteristics; nor about where they are educated and in which grades.

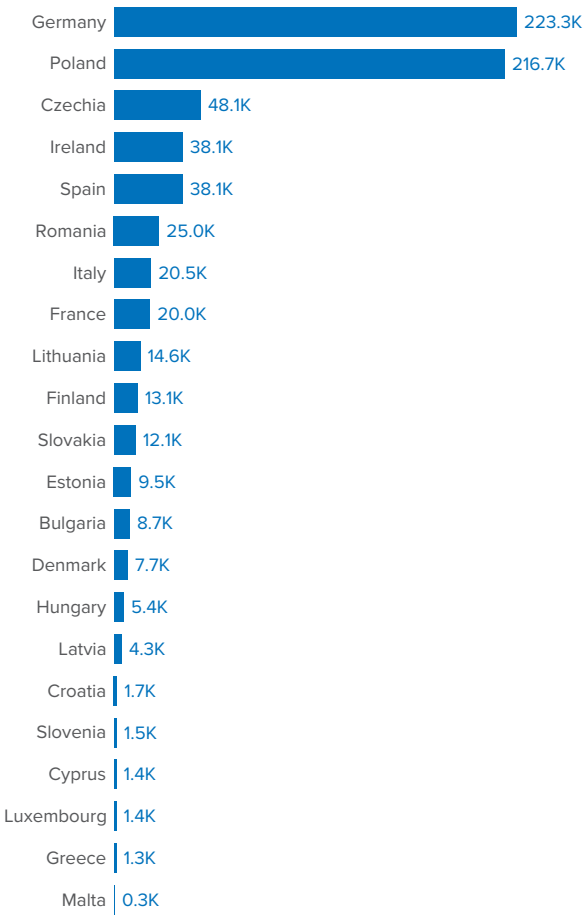
This situation has improved somewhat as a result of the Ukraine refugee emergency. Because Temporary Protection (TP) in the EU and the Republic of Moldova is limited to those fleeing Ukraine, some data has become available on numbers of TP beneficiaries in EU education systems, though it remains at times scattered and incomplete. While registration and documentation of TP holders has improved since the start of the full-scale war in Ukraine, many countries still have no precise data on place of residence, age, gender and education of many refugee children and youth from Ukraine. Double counting and lack of de-registration when refugees move to other countries also results in inaccuracies. Some education systems also lack planning data and assessments of how many places for refugee children and youth are available in the school system.

Due to these data limitations, this report draws mostly from comparison of the 2023 MSNA and 2024 SEIS surveys. It provides additional evidence for a consistent set of challenges in refugee education for Ukrainians emerging from the 2023 MSNA and other data sources, such as low enrolment rates, barriers to education, and factors contributing to hesitancy to enrol refugee children and youth in host country education systems. The data also points to advances in enrolment of refugee children and youth in schools and other educational institutions over time.

# Enrolment of refugee children and youth from Ukraine in Europe

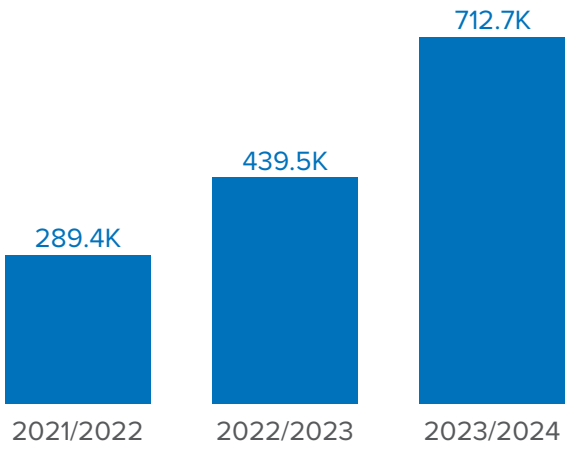
According to available administrative data on refugee children and youth from Ukraine, German schools and higher education institutions host the largest numbers of refugee children and youth from Ukraine, with over 223,000 enrolled in the first quarter of 2025. Poland and Czech Republic are second and third, with over 216,000 and 48,000[18] respectively.[19]

**NUMBERS OF REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM UKRAINE ENROLLED IN HOST COUNTRY SCHOOLS**




Source: administrative data and other sources, see the Ukraine Regional Education Data Dashboard

**TOTAL NUMBER OF REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM UKRAINE ENROLLED IN HOST COUNTRY SCHOOLS IN EUROPE**




Source: administrative data and other sources, see the Ukraine Regional Education Data Dashboard

## What does data from Ukraine show on enrolment of displaced children?

As described in the data limitations, enrolment figures can only provide for an estimate of the numbers or children and youth from Ukraine enrolled in host country schools across Europe. Estimates of school age populations of refugees from Ukraine in this report are based on administrative data and tend to be higher than estimates that can be calculated based on data available at relevant administrations inside Ukraine.

The most recent verified and fully reliable population census in Ukraine was carried out over two decades ago. If we estimate the current child population of school age based on age progression, average mortality rates and other data sources, such as mobile phone data, we can estimate that just over 3 million Ukrainian children are aged 6-17. Data for older children may present challenges because a part of the school age population moves into specialized tertiary or vocational training programmes around age 15 and may no longer show up in enrolment statistics.

If we extrapolate the population statistics and combine them with data from the Institute of Educational Analysis (EIA) and National Statistics Office (NSO) from Ukraine, we can calculate that around 568,000 Ukrainian children aged 6-17 are abroad, with a part enrolled in schools abroad, and a number engaged in continued remote or online study of Ukrainian curriculum (see p. 14 for estimates based on data from Ukraine). Some 39,000 Ukrainian children in this age bracket are estimated to be in territory occupied by the Russian Federation.

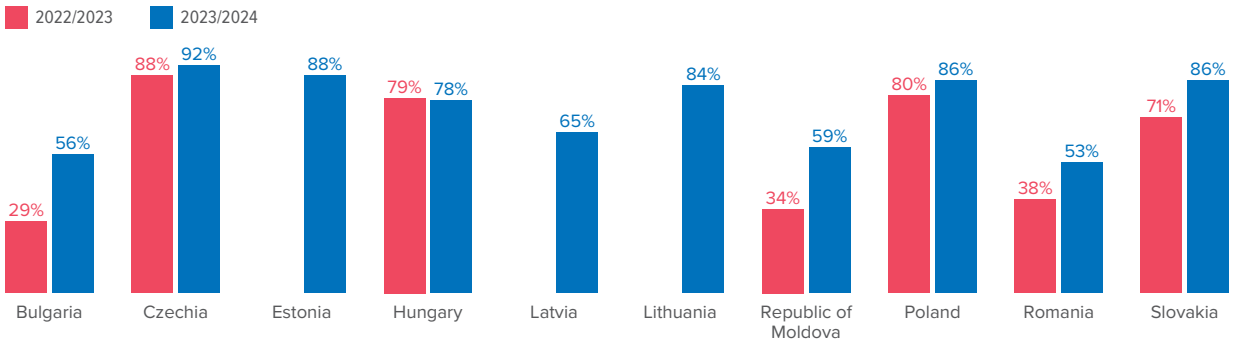
If we make a similar estimate of the child population based on administrative data available in refugee hosting countries, and if we assume that the the age distribution is similar to the one we see in the refugee population in the 2024 SEIS, we end up with a figure of some 859,000 children in the age bracket 6-17 currently in refugee hosting countries. This figure is 34 per cent higher than the estimate based on IEA and NSO data, showing the complexities and uncertainties related to calculating enrolment rates.

What the figures do show unequivocally is that the population of refugee children and youth in host countries is far larger than during the previous peak in arrivals of refugees and migrants in Europe in 2015-2016.[20]

**Enrolment of children and youth from Ukraine is on the rise in most European countries**. Administrative data from States and other authorities shows that enrolment of refugee children and youth from Ukraine in all levels of education rose from some 289,000 at the end of 2022 to 664,000 at the end of 2024. Year-on-year, the estimated number of enrolled children and youth from Ukraine rose by more than 225,000 between 2023 and 2024.

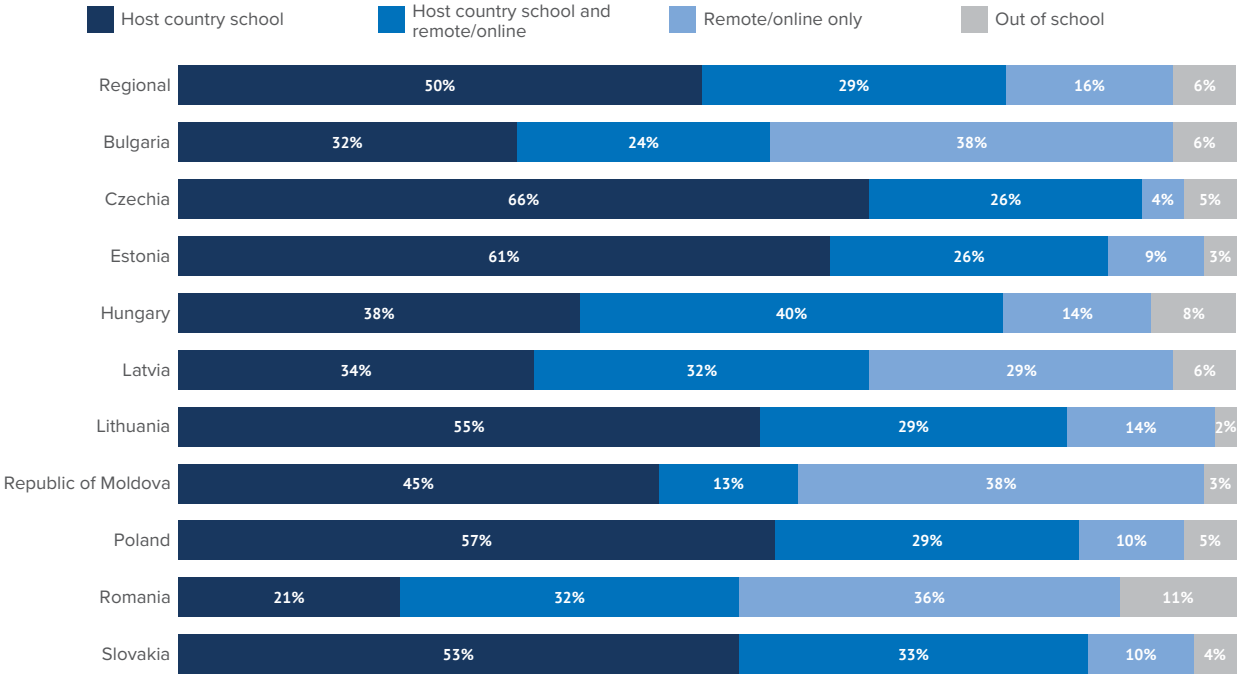
Households surveyed in the ten countries included in the 2024 SEIS report on average that 79 per cent of children are enrolled in compulsory education in the host country, with 50 per cent of children and youth only enrolled in a host country school (without following remote or online education). 29 per cent are going to school and are following remote or online education simultaneously.[21] There are disparities among countries, however, with reported enrolment of children in host country school systems ranging from 53 per cent in Romania to 92 per cent in Czech Republic.

**ESTIMATED RATE OF REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM UKRAINE ENROLLED IN HOST COUNTRY SCHOOLS**




Source: 2023 MSNA and 2024 SEIS, and other sources, see the Ukraine Regional Education Data Dashboard

**ESTIMATED RATE OF REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM UKRAINE ENROLLED IN HOST COUNTRY SCHOOLS**

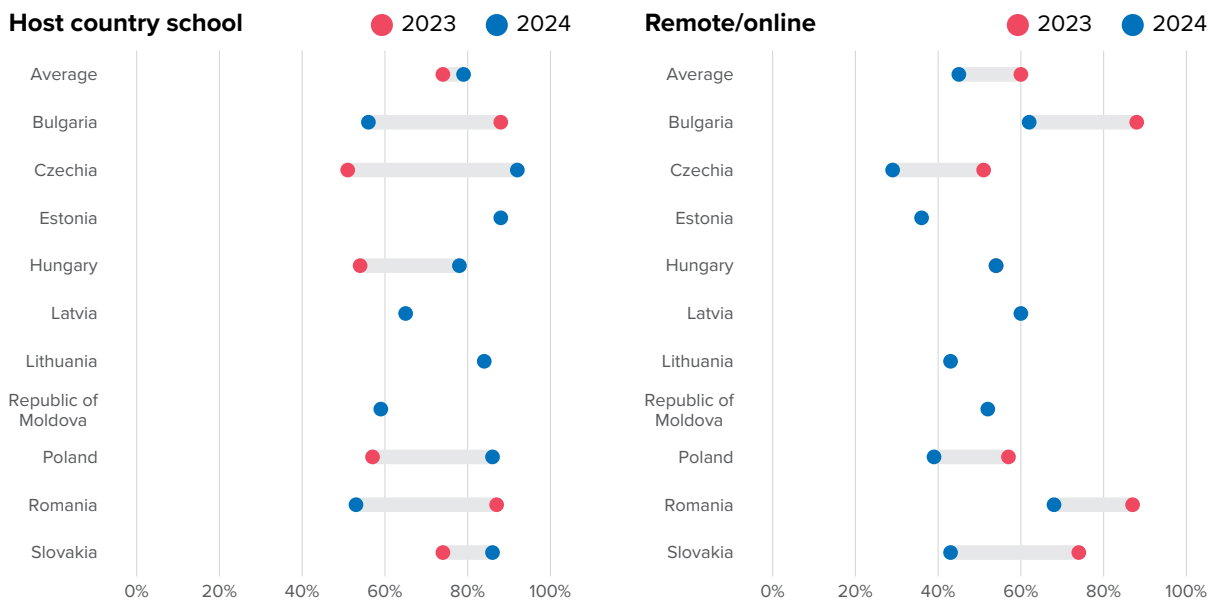



Source: 2023 MSNA and 2024 SEIS, and other sources

**2024 SEIS data shows that most countries with comparable data saw increases in reported enrolment of refugee children in host country education systems compared to data from the 2023 MSNA household survey.**[22] Refugee households in Bulgaria reported the largest percentage point increase of those enrolled in education in the host country, with a 27 percentage point increase between the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school year.

Czech Republic had the smallest increase with 4 percentage point, probablybecause it already had high enrolment rates to begin with. Hungary was the only country with a decrease, it showed 1 percentage point fewer refugee students enrolled than in the previous year.

**GROWTH OF ENROLMENT IN HOST COUNTRY EDUCATION SYSTEMS**




Source: 2023 MSNA and 2024 SEIS

# Vulnerable groups

**The SEIS data shows that some groups of refugee children and youth from Ukraine face severe hurdles in accessing education in host countries**. The data shows language is a barrier for some refugee children and youth from Ukraine, and those that have arrived in a host country more recently face more barriers in access to education than those who have been in the host country longer. There are big gaps in access to education for children and youth with disabilities compared to their peers.

- According to the 2024 SEIS, **children and youth with disabilities** were 19 percentage points less likely to be reported to be enrolled in school compared to those without disabilities.
- Children and youth with self-reported **beginner abilities in the language of instruction of the host country** were reported to be 50 percentage points less enrolled in a school in a host country school than those with intermediate and above language abilities.
- Children and youth who **arrived less than one year before the survey was conducted** were reported to be 30 percentage points less likely to be enrolled than those who arrived two or more years before being surveyed.[23]

**Compared to data from the 2023 MSNA, the out-of-school rates for all of these vulnerable groups are on the rise.** The most concerning change is the increase in the percentage of children and youth with disabilities that are reported to be not enrolled in host country education from 6 per cent in the 2023 MSNA to 18 per cent in the 2024 SEIS.

The percentage of children and youth not enrolled in host country education and who have been in the host country for less than one year increased from 8 per cent in the 2023 MSNA to 16 per cent in the 2024 SEIS. Here there were slight variations by level of education but the overall trends remained the same regardless of level of education.

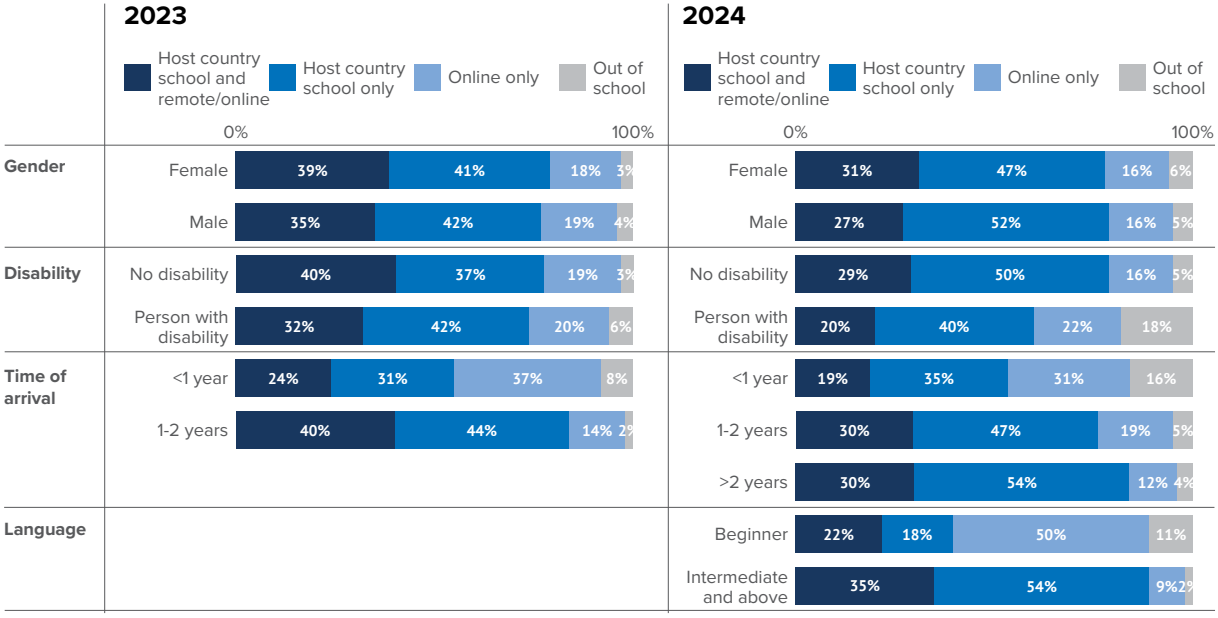
# Gender disparities in enrolment

There does not seem to be a large gap in school enrolment reported by households between boys and girls. There is a notable increase in reported enrolment in school education and less reliance on online education across the board for both genders.

However, girls seem to be more inclined to continue studying remotely or online in addition to being enrolled in a school in the host country. 31 per cent of the female children reported by households in the 2024 SEIS are engaged both in online or remote education and enrolled in school in a host country, where this is only 27 per cent for boys. This disparity is also reflected in the fact that boys are more likely to be only enrolled in a host country school without studying Ukrainian curriculum remotely or online (52 per cent) than girls (47 per cent).

A worrying trend, however, is that the percentage of children that is reported to be completely out-of-learning is on the rise and that girls (6 per cent) seem to be more likely to be completely out-of-school than boys (5 per cent). Out-of-school in this context means that children are neither enrolled in a school in a host country, nor studying Ukrainian curriculum online. This rise in completely out-of-school children is probably the result of the pronounced drop in those participating in remote or online education.

**ENROLMENT IN HOST COUNTRY EDUCATION SYSTEMS BY GENDER, DISABILITY AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS**




Source: 2023 MSNA and 2024 SEIS

# School enrolment by level of education

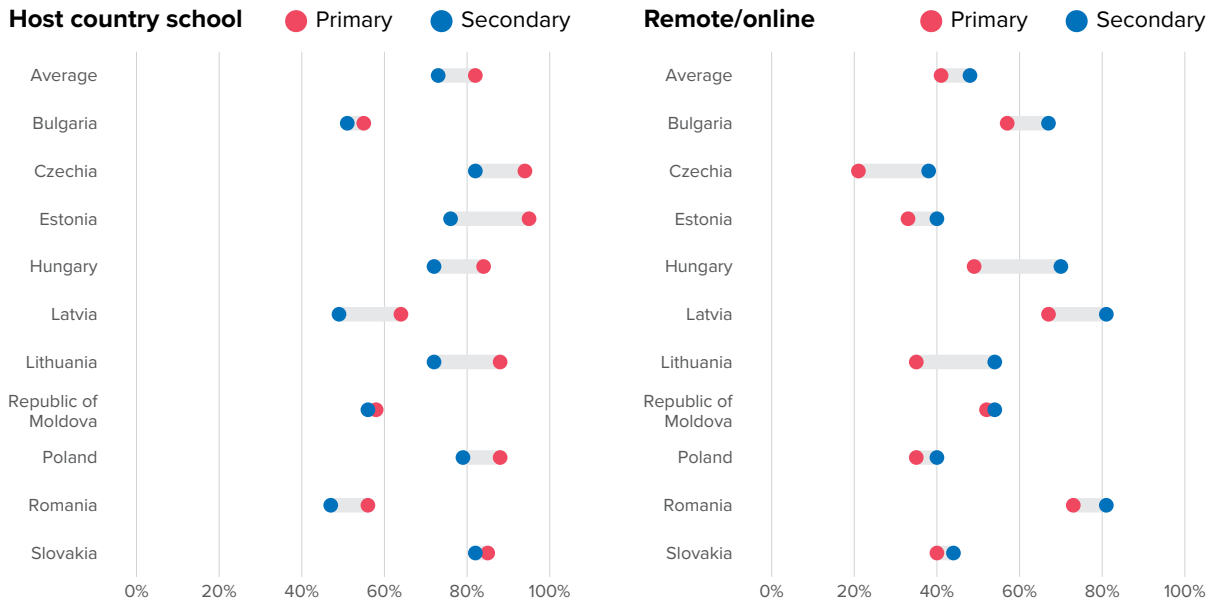
Looking at access to education by level of education, some of the trends of the 2023 MSNA continue in the 2024 SEIS.

**Enrolment in host country schools at primary level is higher than for secondary level**, whereas the reverse is true for remote and online education (children and youth in secondary education are more likely to study remotely or online).

The changes between 2023 and 2024 in enrolment in host country schools by education level show a similar trend, with a 3 per cent increase at the primary level, and a 1 per cent increase at the secondary level. Country-level changes in enrolment at both levels are similar.[24]

By level of education enrolment, the 2024 SEIS shows approximately similar rates for both girls and boys. This reflects a change from the results of the 2023 MSNA, which showed notable differences in rates of remote and online enrolment.

**ENROLMENT IN HOST COUNTRY EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND REMOTE OR ONLINE EDUCATION, BY TYPE OF EDUCATION**



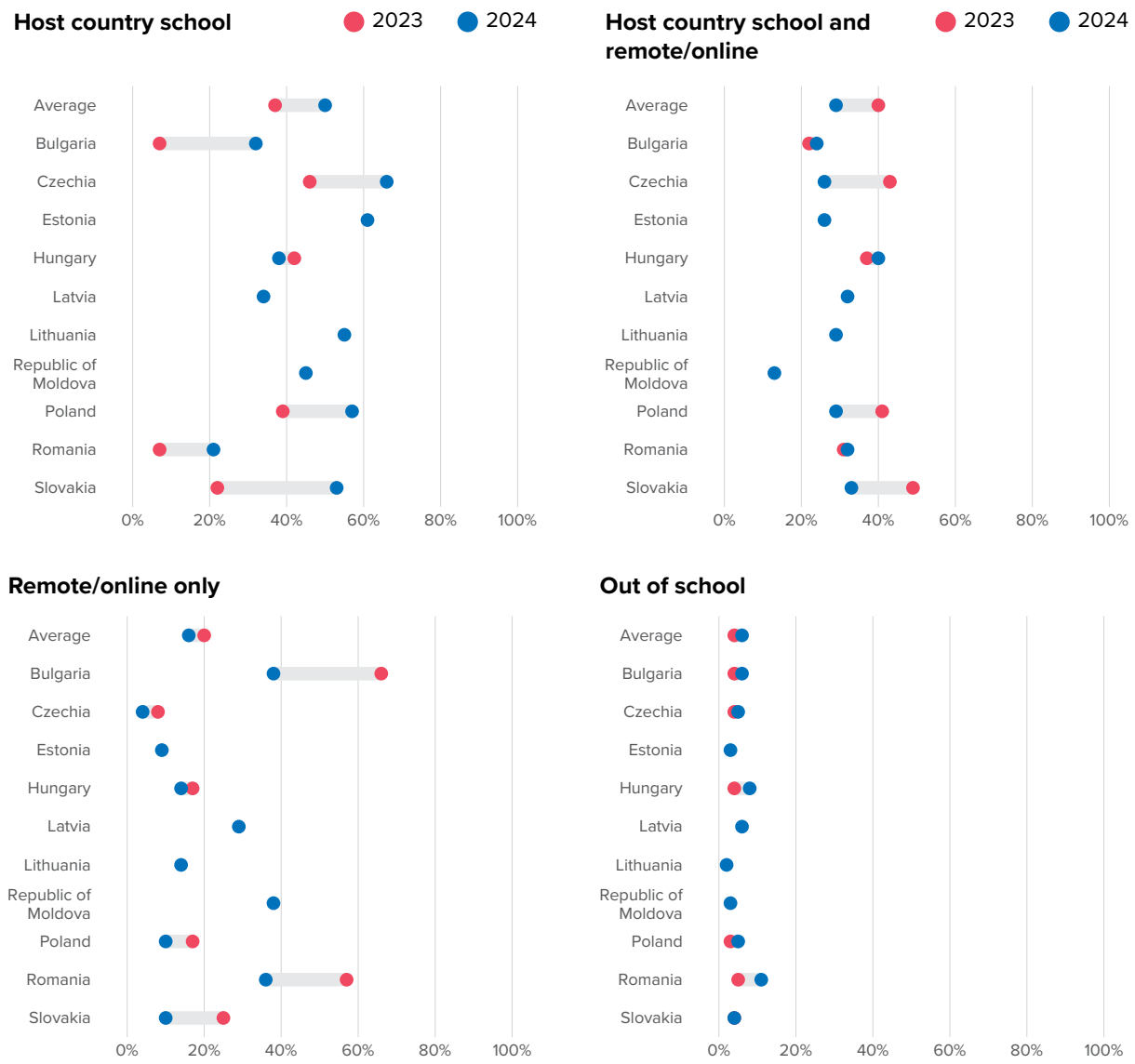

Source: 2023 MSNA and 2024 SEIS

# Remote and online education

The 2024 SEIS shows that remote and online learning of curriculum from Ukraine remains an important mode of learning for refugee children and youth from Ukraine.

- Households reported in the 2024 SEIS that 50 per cent of children are only enrolled in a school in the host country.
- 29 per cent are reported to be studying both in a school in the host country while simultaneously following remote or online education.
- A further 16 per cent are studying remotely or online only.
- 6 per cent are reported to be not in any form of schooling and have to be considered out-of-school.[25]

**ENROLMENT IN HOST COUNTRY EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND REMOTE OR ONLINE EDUCATION, BY TYPE OF EDUCATION**




Source: 2023 MSNA and 2024 SEIS

**Participation in remote and online education dropped nearly across the board.** Around 15 percent less children were reported by refugee households to participate in remote or online education in the 2023-2024 school year, from 60 per cent in the 2023 MSNA to 45 per cent in the 2024 SEIS.

Of the seven countries for which data is available for both years, only Hungary saw a stagnation in the percentage of Ukrainian learners participating in remote or online education (at 54 per cent). This was driven by an overall increase in the percentage of children enrolled both in remote and online education and those enrolled in schools in Hungary. By contrast, Slovakia saw a 31 percentage point decrease in those involved in remote and online education, with large drops also seen in Bulgaria and Czech Republic.

**Where there are decreases in engagement with remote and online education there are usually increases in enrolment in host country schools**. In the 2024 SEIS, of those children who are reported by households to still be studying in schools in Ukraine remotely or online, just 64 per cent are enrolled in host country schools, while 91 per cent of those that are no longer enrolled remotely or online in a Ukrainian school are enrolled in host country schools.

# A detailed look at remote and online learning

Remote and online learning and continued studying of curriculum and subject matter from Ukraine has allowed hundreds of thousands of children and youth from Ukraine to continue studying in some form when internally displaced or forced to leave the country as a result of the full-scale war.

Supplemental questions were added to the 2024 SEIS to gather more detailed data from refugee households on the ways in which Ukrainian children and youth are studying remotely or online. Data from the IEA in Ukraine also provides additional detail on how internally displaced children use remote and online education inside Ukraine. The results confirm that children and youth from Ukraine study online and remotely in a wide variety of settings and modalities, whether they are inside Ukraine or abroad in refugee hosting countries.

**Remote and on-line learning tools.** Some refugee children who have left Ukraine remain fully enrolled remotely in a school in Ukraine, with some in addition studying a full programme in a school in a host country ('double shifting'), while some study more limited programmes remotely or online. Many engage in studies supervised by teachers in informal educational settings and facilities in host countries, while others largely engage in self-study. Some participate in exams and evaluations, some do not or not always.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine introduced the All-Ukrainian Online School (AUOS) an online repository of learning tools, lesson plans and other teaching resources to enable Ukrainian children and youth to study online during school closures and access limitations. This platform is now being used intensively by displaced children and youth inside Ukraine and abroad. It is part used as a

self-study tool, but can also be used as a teaching tool for those who are still under supervision of a teacher.[26]

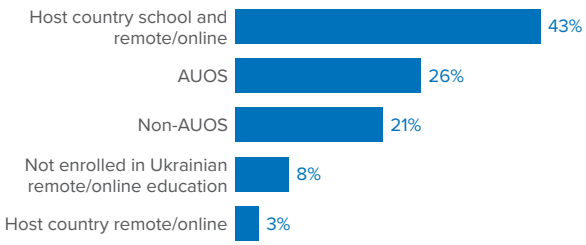
In addition, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine introduced the so-called Ukrainian Component, a reduced programme of six to eight hours per week. The programme was designed to be studied remotely or online as a complement to studies in a local school in a host country, and is delivered and supervised by designated schools inside Ukraine. The Ukrainian Component also facilitates recognition of grades obtained by students in refugee hosting countries so they do not need to study the same subjects both in the host country and in Ukraine, and to facilitate recognition of grades obtained abroad when children return to Ukraine.[27]

**Refugee population still enrolled in Ukraine but following lessons remotely or online.** According to the Institute of Educational Analysis, almost 358,000 children from Ukraine who are currently abroad remain enrolled in some form in the Ukrainian education system. Of these, almost 185,000 are still enrolled in a full educational programme in a school in Ukraine and are learning through remote or distance learning.[28] Some 166,000 are abroad and are enrolled through family schooling or other forms of remote studies ('externate'). This means they are not following a full school programme remotely but study Ukrainian curriculum in a private modality and they participate in exams and evaluations at set times in the school year.[29] The IEA data shows that around 7,000 Ukrainian students abroad have so far enrolled in the 'Ukrainian Component' programme.

The 2024 SEIS provides more detail on how refugee children and youth combine remote and online learning of curriculum from Ukraine with their studies in local schools in host countries.

- Of all children and youth in the compulsory school age range in the ten countries, **45 per cent are reported to be engaged in some form of remote or online learning**, ranging from 29 per cent in Czech Republic to 68 per cent in Romania.[30]
- Of those studying remotely or online, **43 per cent were studying** both **at a school in a host country and simultaneously studying Ukrainian curriculum remotely or on-line in some form.**
- Of those studying remotely or online, 26 per cent say they use the the All-Ukrainian Online School (AUOS).
- All other modalities of remote and online studying are far less common overall.[31]

**DISTANCE LEARNING TYPE FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEES OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE**




Source: 2024 SEIS

However, there are large variations across countries. For example, refugee households in Slovakia reported the highest proportion of children who are simultaneously studying in schools in Slovakia and following Ukrainian curriculum online (64 per cent), whereas in the Republic of Moldova this was only 14 per cent. The All-Ukrainian Online School was most used in Bulgaria, with 55 per cent of those studying on-line or remotely using the platform, and the least common in Hungary (15 per cent). Overall, each country included in the SEIS showed a unique blend of modalities for remote or online learning.

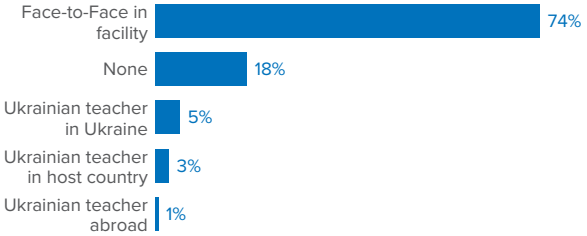
**Supervision and evaluation of remote and on-line learners.** The 2024 SEIS also examined whether those who were studying remotely or online were supervised by teaching personnel or not. The results show that Ukrainian children and youth often make use of informal face-to-face educational facilities where they can study Ukrainian curriculum remotely or online.[32]

- Households reported that **74 per cent of children were studying Ukrainian curriculum with teachers or other educational personnel**

**in an informal education facility** outside of the education system of the host country, for example through organizations providing informal 'Ukrainian schools' or 'Ukrainian classes' abroad.

- Households reported that of those children that were studying remotely or online, **18 per cent were not in contact with a Ukrainian teacher and studied by themselves**.
- All other modalities were less common overall.

**DISTANCE LEARNING BY SUPERVISION TYPE FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEES OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE**




Source: 2024 SEIS

**Time spent learning remotely or online.** Looking at length of time spent on remote learning, the 2024 SEIS shows:

- 28 per cent of children and youth who are reported to be studying remotely or online are studying for more than 4 hours per day.
- 21 per cent studied 2 to 3 hours per day.
- 20 per cent studied 1 to 2 hours per day.

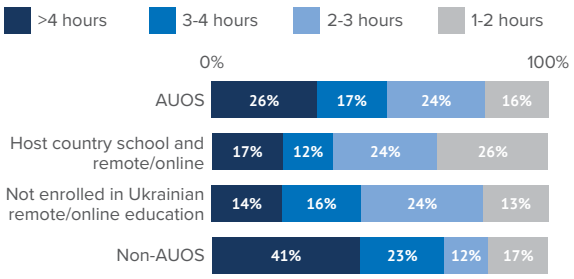
Here again, there are large differences in time spent studying remotely or online per country, with Romania having the most regugee children spending four or more hours on remote or online education a day (54 per cent ) and Czech Republic the least (11 per cent).

Those who use the All-Ukrainian Online School and those who use other online learning tools only were most likely to spend three or more hours per day on remote or online learning, reflecting the fact that they study in a far less structured way with less supervision.

Households also report that those studying remotely or online only spend more time per day on online education that those who are simultaneously enrolled in schools in a host country and studying remotely or online. 76 per cent of those studying remotely or online spend three or more hours per day studying online (with 54 per cent doing so for more than four hours). For those who are simultaneously going to school in the host country, as much as 26 per cent spend more than three hours a day on remote or online studies.

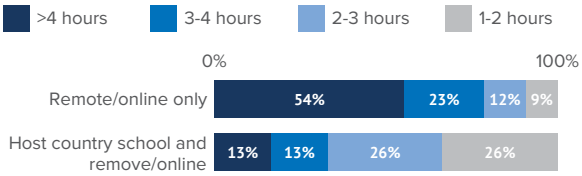
This is unsurprising given that those who are going to school in a host country usually have far less time available to study remotely or online. However, for the 26 per cent that do go to school and study remotely and online for more than three hours a day, workloads are probably not sustainable in the long run. Across age groups, time spent on education is reported at approximately similar rates for boys and girls.

**PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL-AGE BY TIME SPENT STUDYING AND MODALITY**




Source: 2024 SEIS

**THOSE STUDYING ONLINE ONLY SPEND MORE TIME STUDYING ONLINE PER DAY**




Source: 2024 SEIS

### Education of internally displaced children and youth inside Ukraine

Data from the Institute of Educational Analytics (IEA) of Ukraine[33] from early 2025 indicates that there were just under 3.7 million children enrolled in primary and secondary education inside Ukraine.

- Some 430,00 children are in education remotely or online all the time because they are in zones of active combat where it is too unsafe to organize face-to-face education.
- Over 736,000 follow a mixed programme of face-to-face and remote or online education because they are in unsafe zones where some face-to-face education is possible if safety measures are in place (cf. bomb shelters in the school).
- Around 2.2 million children inside Ukraine are following face-to-face-education under more normal circumstances, despite frequent air raid alerts and other hazards as a result of the conflict.

Many internally displaced children use the All-Ukrainian Online School and other learning tools together with children who are living as refugees outside of Ukraine, and with children that have not been displaced at all.

Some schools in unsafe areas of Ukraine switched entirely to remote and virtual education for a long time and are often led by school heads and teachers who are themselves internally displaced, or who are living as refugees abroad.

Many remote and online classes of schools that have gone completely remote or online have a mix of non-displaced, internally displaced and refugee children. This has led to a complex landscape of teaching modalities which is almost impossible to map accurately, but which may have important long-term effects on the academic performance and well-being of children inside and outside of Ukraine.

# Reasons for non-enrolment in host country education systems

The comparison between the 2023 MSNA and the 2024 SEIS data, as well as other data sources, show clearly that more refugees from Ukraine have started to enrol their children in schools and other education facilities in a host country.

The 2024-2025 school year is the fourth successive school year marked by education disruptions as a result of mass forced displacement from Ukraine.[34] With no end to the conflict in sight, many parents have started to plan for longer-term stays in host countries and have clearly been looking for longer-term stability in the education of their children. They are therefore more readily choosing to enrol their children in local schools in host countries.

Despite the apparent increase in the inclusion of refugee children and youth from Ukraine in education systems in Europe, important drivers for parents not to enrol children in host countries persist. The 2024 SEIS provides a more detailed analysis of these drivers for non-enrolment in host country education.

**Engagement in remote and online learning continues to be by far the largest barrier to enrolment in formal schools.** In the 2024 SEIS 67 per cent of Ukrainian children and youth reported by households not to be in school in a host country were in this situation because remote and online education was a barrier to enrolment in host country schools, compared to 72 per cent in the 2023 MSNA. There are differences among those who were following remote and online education and those that were not. In the 2024 SEIS, 83 per cent of those that said that they were accessing remote or online education found remote and online learning to be a barrier to enrolment in host country schools, compared to 7 per cent of those who were not studying remotely or online.

Of the children and youth of all ages (including small children and young adults under 24) that are reported by households not to be in school or in another educational facility, 34 per cent cited the fact that their children and youth are engaged in remote and online learning as a reason for non-enrolment.[35]

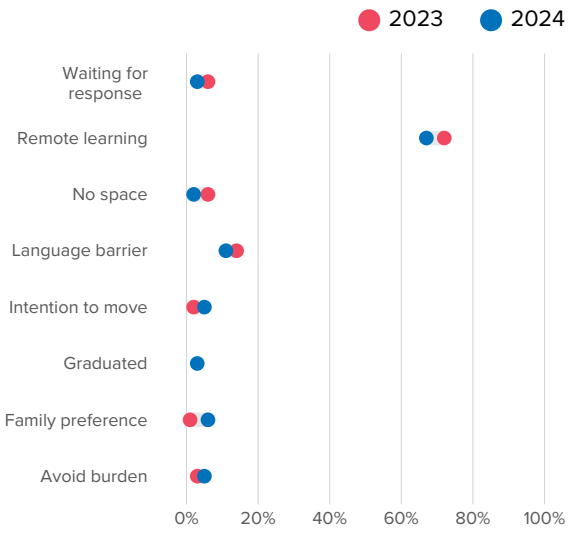
**Language barriers are the second largest barrier in accessing education in a host country for those of compulsory school age.**[36] 8 per cent of children reported to be in the compulsory school age range are said to experience language barriers as a reason not to enrol. If we compare the 2024 SEIS results for those not enrolled in host country schools to those in the age range for compulsory education we find that 11 per cent of those of compulsory school age found language to be a barrier compared to 6 per cent of those outside this age range. In line with expectations, the data shows that those with lower perceived ability in the language of instruction were more likely to identify language as a barrier to enrolment that those with higher perceived ability.

**Other reasons not to enrol in host country schools.** Compared to 2023, the intention to move to another country, avoiding the burden of enrolling children in local schools and family preference have increased as reasons for non-enrolment of children and youth in host country education systems. The fact that no spaces are available in schools, language barriers, and waiting for responses to enrolment requests have all become less prominent.

29 per cent of children and youth aged 3-24 are reported to have already graduated from a Ukrainian school and cite this as a reason to not enrol in a host country.[37]

For those under age 18, main barriers to enrolment are reported at similar rates for boys and girls. This marks another shift from the 2023 MSNA results, which showed differences in the rates of boys and girls experiencing barriers to education such as language and getting no responses from schools to enrolment requests.

**REMOTE EDUCATION IS STILL THE MAIN REASON FOR NON-ENROLMENT IN FORMAL SCHOOLS**




Source: 2023 MSNA and 2024 SEIS

# Risks and opportunities

This report shows some signs of improvement of the overall educational situation of refugee children and youth from Ukraine in host countries in Europe in early 2025.

Enrolment of children and youth in national education systems of host countries is clearly on the rise, indicating that an increasing number of refugee children and youth from Ukraine, and their parents, are choosing longer-term and more sustainable education options as they remain displaced for longer periods of time. The proportion of children that are completely out-of-school - those who are neither enrolled in a school in a host country nor in remote or online learning of curriculum from Ukraine - is also decreasing considerably in many host countries.[38]

Most available data, however, shows that significant numbers of refugee children and youth are still not enrolled in host country education systems. Estimated non-enrolment rates of refugee populations remain in double digits in many countries and are generally still lower than enrolment rates in the general population of host countries. Many of those who are not enrolled in host country schools remain overly, or exclusively, reliant on remote or online learning. This means that many thousands of refugee children and youth from Ukraine may not be attending schools in host countries for an extended period, which exposes them to long-term risks:[39]

- Lower likelihood to **complete primary and secondary** education and entering **higher education**.
- Limited opportunities to **seize their potential**, access **decent work** and become **self-reliant**.
- Prolonged **reliance on remote and on-line education** and less interaction with peers, which may affect **academic performance**, **psycho-social well-being** and **mental health**.
- Increased risks of **sexual exploitation** and **gender-based violence**.

Despite these continued risks, current trends also point to opportunities that may improve the educational situation of refugee children and youth from Ukraine in years to come:

- Some host countries are **removing administrative and other barriers** to education of refugees and are taking initiatives to **increase capacities** in schools and to **upgrade support systems** available to refugee students, by:
  - continuing to reinforce preparatory programmes for refugees in schools, including language support and other essential services;
  - taking all possible measures to promote safe and inclusive school environments;
  - stepping up support to children with disabilities and other vulnerable groups;
  - improving data collection, harmonization and analysis of Ukrainian refugee data to enhance accuracy and generate actionable knowledge to address the challenges observed in the educational situation of refugee children and youth from Ukraine.[40]
- The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science is offering educational options that allow for **maintenance of a link with the Ukrainian education system** and **portability of grades and certificates**[41], which would reduce workload for children and youth that wish to continue studying parts of the Ukrainian curriculum, while at the same time enabling re-integration into the Ukrainian education system whenever return becomes possible.

# Endnotes

1 For more information on the Refugee Response Plans, see https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine.
2 For the MSNA report on education for 2023, see https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/109522
3 See https://tinyurl.com/y2z7wnur
4 See https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine
5 Source: UNHCR refugee protection monitoring, see https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/392?sv=54&geo=0
6 Note that compulsory school age brackets vary considerably between countries. For an overview of compulsory education policies and data in Europe, see https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/compulsory-education-europe-20232024 and https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/integrating-students-migrant-backgrounds-schools-europe-national-policies-and-measures
7 See tables with country-per-country data on https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine
8 In European Union countries, Temporary Protection holders have full rights to access education; for asylum-seekers, EU States have an obligation to enrol asylum-seeking children within two months after registration, see EU Directive 2024/1346 https://www.refworld.org/legal/reglegislation/council/2024/en/148002
9 For an overview, see this report by the European Commission's DG EAC, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/224f94b0-32a8-11ef-a61b-01aa75ed71a1/language-en and a recent mapping study by the Council of Europe, see https://rm.coe.int/mapping-study-on-access-to-education-of-the-children-of-ukraine-in-cou/1680b27e7e - additional information available on the inter-agency data portal on education of refugees from Ukraine, and data gathered by Eurydice https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/supporting-refugee-learners-ukraine-schools-europe-2022
10 For example, as a result of regulatory limits on the number of children and youth that can be taught in a single classroom, or because of shortages of teaching materials.
11 See, among other, UNHCR's Policy Brief *Education on Hold*, pp. 12 - 13 - https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/103089
12 The Ukraine emergency caused a geographic shift in refugee populations in Europe, with arrivals more focused on land crossings on the eastern boundaries of the EU. During the previous peak in refugee and migrant arrivals in the region, in 2015-2016, the bulk of refugees and migrants arrived through sea routes on the Mediterranean.
13 To name two examples, Poland introduced an exemption to compulsory education early after the outbreak of the full-scale war if parents signed a declaration that their child would remain in remote education in Ukraine. Poland has since abolished this exemption and is gradually returning to compulsory education for Ukrainian children. A similar exemption to compulsory education in Latvia is under review and may be abolished, too.
14 See https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/109522
15 For a precise definition, see UNESCO - https://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/total-net-enrolment-rate
16 See https://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/total-net-enrolment-rate
17 See also UNHCR's Policy Paper *Learning after Lockdown*, p. 14 - https://reliefweb.int/report/world/refugee-education-europe-learning-after-lockdown-july-2022
18 The figure for Czech Republic reflects the situation in early 2024, for more recent data see https://msmt.gov.cz/ministerstvo/novinar/pocet-ukrajinskych-deti-a-zaku-uprchliku-se-v-regionalnim -
19 Source: administrative data and other sources, see the Ukraine Regional Education Data Dashboard
20 See among other https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/109522
21 Including the three additional countries that were not included in the 2023 MSNA (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania). If we count only the six countries for which we have comparative data, the difference between the two years is only 2 percentage points.
22 In 2023 there was data for only 7 out of the 10 countries we have data for in 2024.
23 There is very little correlation between these variables.
24 See full data for a more detailed breakdown per type of enrolment.
25 This means that 73 per cent of those not enrolled in host country schools are enrolled in online schooling.
26 The *All-Ukrainian Online School*, *Всеукраїнська школа онлайн*, see https://lms.e-school.net.ua/
27 *український компонент освітніх програм*, see https://offlineschool.mon.gov.ua/. The grade recognition system facilitates reintegration into the Ukrainian education system of students who have studied abroad and who return to Ukraine. For example, a student who passed mathematics in a given school year in Poland will be able to present that grade to a Ukrainian school upon return so the student does not have to redo the subject.
28 This usually means that children study 20-30 hours a week, as they would if they were in school under normal circumstances.
29 For example, participating in the National Multi-Subject Test to obtain a secondary education certificate that allows pupils to then enrol in higher education, see https://enic.in.ua/index.php/en/educationl-system/higher-education/national-multi-subject-test
30 When considering children of all ages, this figure is slightly lower, with 35 per cent of children and youth were enrolled in remote and online learning, ranging from 24 per cent in Czech Republic to 65 per cent in Romania. Those in the compulsory school age range made up 88 per cent of all remote and online enrolment.
31 The question asked was: "*What type of remote or online learning was the child/young person enrolled in or conducting during the school year 2023-2024?*"
32 In response to the question: "*Is/was this child/young person studying under supervision of a teacher or other qualified educator from Ukraine?*"
33 The IEA is a State Scientific Institution of Ukraine mandated with collection, management and analysis of a wide variety of data on education in Ukraine, see https://iea.gov.ua/en/; the data provided for this report was updated up to February 2025.
34 The full-scale war in Ukraine started in February 2022, half way through the 2021-2022 school year; most Ukrainians remained displaced through the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years; the current school year, 2024-2025, is therefore the fourth school year affected by displacement as a result of the Ukraine emergency.
35 In the survey the response was "*Still enrolled in a school in Ukraine and is attending this school remotely/online while staying abroad*"
36 The 2024 SEIS has data on the age of the children that are reported by households. These ages were linked to the compulsory school age bracket in the host country in which they reside to determine if they were under compulsory education or not. This allowed for a more granular analysis taking into account the differences in compulsory school ages in each country.
37 "*Already graduated*" - note that this result may be skewed by the fact that the question was asked for children and youth aged 3-24.
38 See among other the 'out of school over time tab' on the inter-agency data dashboard
39 These risks were also listed in the 2023 MSNA - see p.8 of https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/109522
40 UNHCR's policy recommendations can be found in the most recent Policy Brief, see pp. 21-22 of https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/103089
41 This can be achieved, for example, by building on the system of accreditation of grades and certificates suggested in the Ukrainian Component programme, which features tables that allow for grade comparison between host country education systems and the Ukrainian education system, see https://offlineschool.mon.gov.ua/

# EDUCATION OF REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM UKRAINE

An analysis of major trends and challenges in education of refugees from Ukraine in Europe

April 2025

Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation