CONCEPT NOTE

Emergency Response Ukraine
Education for Ukrainian children in and outside of Ukraine

10 March 2022

Title

Emergency Response Ukraine - Education for Ukrainian children in and outside of Ukraine

Context

The war in Ukraine has already forced more than 2 million people to flee their home[1]. It is estimated that there are 854,000 internally displaced people in Ukraine while Poland has received over 1.2 million refugees, Moldova over 83,000 and Romania 82,000 at the time of writing. Predictions are that an estimated total of 4 million people may flee Ukraine[2].

The majority of refugees are women, children and the elderly. Approximately half of the refugees arriving to Poland are school-aged children[3]. This has massive implications for school systems of host countries who are in the middle of the school year. EU Member States have already begun efforts to channel children into mainstream education systems, but the sudden incorporation of large numbers of refugee children poses a range of challenges. It has the potential to stretch school system capacities at the institutional level and damage teacher-student ratios. Children often face difficulties beyond simply doing their homework including adjusting to a new school, coping with trauma, dealing with language barriers and navigating curriculum differences. Teachers are often insufficiently trained on addressing these challenges. Various approaches are now being assessed including creating special classes for Ukrainian children to transition into Polish classrooms and hiring Ukrainian-speaking staff[4].

It is estimated that another 5.7 million children within Ukraine are out of school due to immediate school closures[5].

War Child is currently scoping the needs on the ground together with UNICEF and other child-rights organisations.

Problem statement

The needs of Ukrainian refugees are vast. While other humanitarian organisations are focusing on basic needs such as food and shelter, War Child Holland is looking to the protracted crisis and thinking about long-term recovery and support. In this phase, education will play a crucial role. From experience we know that it is vital to start preparing for the medium and long-term as soon as possible, even if the actual situation is volatile and unpredictable.

Forced to leave their homes or remaining in Ukraine, where there school is destroyed, thousands of children are missing out on education. Children, especially when travelling alone, are vulnerable to exploitation including trafficking, sexual-exploitation or other forms of child labour. Education can

---

[1] Source: UNHCR [08.03.2022]
[2] Source: UNHCR [08.03.2022]
[3] Source: Gazeta Prawna (interview with Poland's education minister) [01.03.2022]
[4] Source: ICMPD [08.03.2022]
[5] Source: UNOCHA [06.03.2022]

decrease the looming danger of child exploitation and offers a high return on investment. Education is the best support we can provide Ukrainians to rebuild their society after the war.

Host countries will do whatever they can to provide education for these children, but no education system is prepared for such a sudden high influx of refugees. Some educators and local authority representatives in Poland are warning that the solutions currently in place may not be sufficient to cope with the difficulties faced by children arriving in the country. They have already indicated that they need help: there are no adequate spaces for learning, no available educational materials - let alone in Ukrainian and teachers don't speak their language. Even if they did, teachers have little time to assess the learning needs of these children and little experience in dealing with urgent mental health and psychosocial needs.

Proposed response

War Child has developed an evidence based EdTech programme to meet the immediate and longer-term needs of conflict-affected children who are out of school. Can't Wait To Learn (CWTL) is a set of offline self-paced educational games accessed on tablets that guide children through government-approved curricula in math and reading, grade 1-3. The programme is specifically designed for children on the move: for situations where there are no teachers, not enough teachers in overcrowded classrooms, no adequate educational materials or safe spaces to learn. Thoroughly researched and widely recognised as a reliable, low-cost solution[6], this tablet-based e-learning innovation is capable of providing Ukrainian refugee and host communities with quality education.

Due to its in-built assessment at in-take, children can start or continue their education at the appropriate level while slowly being mainstreamed (back) into the formal school system. It would allow Ukrainian children to catch up on vital months of schooling - lost during displacement, while hiding in shelters or moving back to their home country. Because War Child understands the high toll

---

[6] Over the past decade of implementation, a series of studies were conducted confirming the effectiveness of CWTL. Pre-post- and quasi experimental studies conducted in Sudan in 2012 and 2014-2015 gave indications of effectiveness (Stubbé et all, 2016). Supported by USAID and the Humanitarian Education Accelerator (HEA), CWTL conducted a number of studies in 2017 and 2018. A quasi-experimental study in Sudan, two evaluation studies in Jordan and a before-and-after study in Lebanon showed large and statistically significant effects on mathematics and reading outcomes for out-of-school children (Brown et al., 2020; Turner et al., under review). The quasi-experimental study in Lebanon showed that the program also had positive effects on children's psychological wellbeing and self-esteem. The research and experiences from a decade of implementation confirm the below underlying assumptions of the CWTL ToC:

1. Self-paced, tailored approaches encourage children's regular attendance and ongoing participation and learning
2. CWTL assists teachers/facilitators to provide differentiated learning for over-crowded and heterogeneous classes
3. CWTL addresses barriers to equitable access to quality education
4. Government and EiE sector involvement in developing curriculum-based digital games enhances sustainability

- Brown, F. et al. (2020) 'Can't Wait to Learn: A quasi-experimental mixed-methods evaluation of a digital game-based learning program for OOSC in Sudan', Journal of Development Effectiveness.

- Stubbé H, Badri A, Telford R, van der Hulst A and van Joolingen W. (2016) E-Learning Sudan, Formal Learning for OOSC.
- Turner, J. S. et al. (n.d.) 'A mixed-methods evaluation of an innovative, digital game-based learning programme to improve educational outcomes of out-of-school children in Lebanon'.

of war and conflict on children's wellbeing, our games also support their social and emotional learning (see Annex 1 - CWTL Brochure).

It is evident that education in Ukraine and neighbouring countries will be disrupted for an unforeseeable time, thus robbing children and their families of the basic means to (re-)build their future. Our long-term strategy is to align CWTL with the curricula of the given host-country, working closely with national Ministries of Education (MoEs) to assure the relevance of the learning content. However, our proposed response to the current crisis has a different focus. Due to the uncertainty about the development of the war; as well as the final destination of children, we propose to deliver the tablet-based reading and maths games in the children's mother tongue - Ukrainian. This approach will allow children to continue learning in the most effective way while on the move and in flux.

In both instances, offering CWTL in line with the Ukrainian curriculum has the potential to avoid the development of a significant learning backlog.

Project description

Objective

Provide 40,000 Ukrainian primary school-age children with quality education in math and reading (Can't Wait to Learn) based on the Ukrainian curriculum and in their mother tongue. This education will help them either stream into the educational system in their new host -country or re-start their education in Ukraine. It will prevent children from missing out on vital weeks; months of education while on the move or out of school. In instances where gaps in learning cannot be avoided, this intervention will help children catch up on lost time.

Target population

The project will focus on two target groups:

1. Children from Ukraine aged 6 to 10 who currently reside in a host community and are not able to immediately access the education services provided by the host country.
2. Children aged 6 to 10, residing in Ukraine (including internally displaced children) who are not able to access primary education due to displacement or school closure.

The current intervention will primarily focus on addressing the learning needs of children in grades 1 to 3. If the crisis continues, older children who missed out on education could also benefit from the programme.

Our plan is to reach 20,000 children in the first two years and 40,000 in the first four years. The return of investment is highest if the project can be run for four years or longer.

Partnerships and Implementation

To maximize the impact and efficient roll-out of the programme, CWTL will be implemented in collaboration with (multiple) (I)NGO's and UN organisations who have an active network and education intervention in either the host countries or within Ukraine. Building on the existing operational structure, the local capacity and expertise, CWTL will be embedded into the existing interventions. Being a self-guided learning programme, CWTL does not require fully trained teachers but can be implemented by existing staff members or members from the refugee community itself. It's cyclical approach - with an average play time of 1.5 hours per day - provides the ideal context for aligning with other emergency response programmes targeting children (e.g. combined with MHPSS or recreational activities), implemented by War Child and other (local and international) emergency

response providers. Our play and movement-based psychosocial support intervention, TeamUp is one such method.

CWTL's longstanding presence and recognition within the Education in Emergencies (EiE) sector has resulted in multiple global partnerships that will be leveraged for the emergency response to the Ukraine crisis. The programme has a strong track-record in joint implementation together with MoEs and the (international) NGO sector. Active partnerships with UNICEF, UNHCR, World Vision and other EiE providers will be leveraged to secure a fast and cost-efficient roll-out of the programme at the highest possible quality. The CWTL Implementation Manual developed with support from UNHCR will serve as a guiding document for implementation and quality assurance.

Anticipating the potential of the current emergency leading into a more protracted crisis, the embedding of CWTL into the emergency responses of partners will secure continuation of the programme beyond the first-stage emergency and allow for continued support to out-of-school and refugee children during the subsequent phases of the crisis.

Project outline

CWTL builds on extensive experience of implementing self-guided education programmes in the most complex and volatile conditions. Throughout the past 10 years of implementation in post-conflict and refugee hosting environments, a multitude of challenges have been addressed effectively. Lessons learned and best practices have been bundled into an operating manual, and will guide the start-up and roll-out of the programme response to the Ukraine crisis.

During the first phase of the programme (4-6 months), two parallel processes will take place: 1) contextualisation of the CWTL games by War Child's expert team in collaboration with the local education sector specialists 2) selection and preparation of partner-organisation(s) to deliver and maintain the programme on the ground. Once the partners are selected, they will be prepared for the start-up and roll-out of the programme through a comprehensive training program. The second phase will focus on embedding the intervention in host communities including setting up the infrastructure (educational spaces) and source equipment (tablets, internet-provision, electricity). It will also be the phase where we identify children; while War Child starts training relevant staff members and community members in support of the project.

Once the facilitators have been trained, facilities are in place, games are developed and uploaded on the tablets, learning can begin (Phase 3). The progress of the project will be monitored through online data collection. Support could be provided by War Child, depending on the partner's needs. Because the context is changing every day, a quarterly assessment of the needs and the response will be carried out - and in the second year this will become a 6-monthly exercise. Thereafter, this will be done on a yearly basis.

Activities and timeline

Programme adaptation and contextualization: 4-6 months

Output 1: Can't Wait to Learn is fully adapted to the context of the Ukrainian crisis through the development of gamified learning content covering the learning outcomes of the national Ukrainian curriculum in Math and Reading Grade 1-3.

- Alignment of the CWTL curriculum content with the learning objectives as specified in the Ukrainian curriculum
- Development of video instructions and mini-games in the Ukrainian language.

- Alignment of the graphic design / visualisation of the CWTL game with the Ukrainian and host community context

Partner selection and preparation: 2-3 months

Output 2: Key response partners (both (I)NGO's, UN organisations and local education providers) in the EiE sector are able to implement Can't Wait to Learn according to the minimum programme quality standards.

- Identification and selection of programme response partners
- Tailoring the CWTL Implementation Handbook to the Ukrainian EiE response context
- Training of Master Trainers of the response partners on the implementation of the CWTL programme in various (classroom) contexts
- Training of implementing partners in quality assurance (monitoring) of the implementation of the CWTL programme

Preparation of implementation in (host)communities: 1-2 months

Output 3: Implementing communities (formal/non-formal education provider in host and home country) are equipped to implement Can't Wait To Learn within their existing programming contexts. Identification and selection of host communities, including a needs assessment at learner, facilitator and resource level.

- Identification and training of the local CWTL facilitators (educators and/or community members)
- Preparation of the learning environment (upgrading of learning facilities based on CWTL minimum standards, procurement and loading of tablets, setting-up child-friendly spaces for roll-out of CWTL)

Implementation in host-communities: 2 - 4 years

Output 4: 30,000 Ukrainian refugee children in different host communities have accessed basic math and eeading education through the use of the tablet-based Can't Wait to Learn programme.

- Identification, selection and grouping of learners in host communities, including placement test to determine the entry level and grouping
- Implementation of the CWTL programme in a classroom modality at two shifts per day in refugee camps or host community schools/facilities, and/or
- Implementation of the CWTL programme in embedded modality offering the programme alongside other (MHPSS/recreational) interventions, and/or
- Implementation of CWTL in home-based, online modality through individual downloads or targeted family response

Implementation out of school children in Ukraine: 2 - 4 years

Output 5: 10,000 conflict-affected, out-of-school children in Ukraine have accessed basic math and reading education through the use of the tablet based Can't Wait to Learn programme.

- Identification, selection and grouping of out-of-school children, including placement tests to determine entry level and grouping
- Implementation of CWTL programme in classroom modality in schools (catch-up/remedial education) or in internally displaced refugee settings (providing direct access to learning and opportunities for accelerated education)

- Implementation of CWTL in home-based, online modality through individual downloads or targeted family response

Monitoring, learning, maintenance and continued programme improvement

Output 6: The implementation of Can't Wait to Learn according to quality standards is periodically monitored. Findings are reviewed and translated into tangible actions to improve learning impact and quality implementation.

- Conducting of periodic monitoring of the implementation of CWTL, collecting information on programme fidelity and areas for programme improvement
- Conducting periodic programme review and planning meetings with partners and communities to translate monitoring results into tangible action
- Conducting periodic teacher/facilitator refresher training programmes to assure continued quality implementation

Budget

The attached budget is specified based on two potential scenarios of the proposed intervention.

- The first tab provides a budget for a reach of 40,000 children, covering an implementation period of four years with a total budget of **EUR 14,319,800**
- The second tab specifies the budget for a reduced target of 20,000 children over a two-year implementation period with a total budget of **EUR 8,435,900**

The games should be contextualised for both scenarios, thus making this investment more cost-efficient if a higher number of children can be reached. In our experience, a maximum of 20,000 children can be reached in two years. This can grow more exponentially over the years, when the infrastructure is in place.

In summary, the budget includes the following cost elements:

	40.000 target / 4 year	20.000 target / 2 year
CWTL Game Contextualization *Full revision of the CWTL game content and design based on the Ukraine curriculum and language, technical support to continued updating*	EUR 1,000,000	EUR 900,000
Implementation 1. *teacher/facilitator salaries (cost sharing modalities with implementing partners will be applied as much as possible)* 2. *hardware and software* 3. *coordination and monitoring*	EUR 11,210,000 *1 = 73%* *2 = 18%* *3 = 9%*	EUR 6,365,000 *1 = 64%* *2 = 28%* *3 = 7%*
Global CWTL support *All costs related to global technical support structure, including global online data portal, IT support to partners, dissemination of learning within the global EiE community, global partnerships, communication, outreach and scaling*	EUR 808,000	EUR 404,000
Indirect Programme Cost (10%)	*EUR 1,301,800*	*EUR 766,900*
Total	**EUR 14,319,000**	**EUR 8,435,900**

Clarification to the budget:

- The game contextualisation budget includes cost for annual updating (which is required to keep an EdTech innovation to respond to technical and contextual changes over time). This clarifies the difference in costs between the four-year and two-year implementation budgets. However, the majority of the contextualization costs are "one-off" and will need to be fully covered in the budget for both. Generally, a contextualized game has a life-span of eight years, therefore roll-out of the programme beyond four years will see a substantial increase in cost efficiency.
- The "implementation costs" consumes the largest portion of the budget. While this includes both learning hardware and software provision, the major cost factor is the facilitators' salaries. These are fully recurring and tied to a fixed number of children, therefore they are not subject to economies of scale. While this budget is based on a "worst case scenario" with no facilities and teachers/facilitators on the ground, it is anticipated that a substantial cost reduction can be achieved when roll-out of CWTL is embedded into existing partner programmes. The ability to leverage resources and embed CWTL in existing structures will be a key factor in the selection of implementing partners.

Sustainability and scaling

The fully contextualized games are a one-off investment that can provide education to many more Ukrainian children beyond the proposed project period and under different circumstances. The games, in combination with the CWTL Standard Operating Procedures, will allow for easy and low-cost adoption by partners and adoption by the wider EiE sector - thereby generating impact beyond the scope of this particular programme. Nevertheless, our present software, implementation requirements and support structure limits our ability to scale and guarantee quality education to around 20,000 children per year.

An upgrade of the core technical content of our games would allow us to scale more exponentially. It would increase the flexibility of partners to implement the games as part of their responses in different contexts, it would increase our agility to make adjustments to the games when needed. It will also substantially increase the ability and speed of developing new games which will broaden our geographical reach (more countries). An estimated amount of EUR 600,000 would allow the CWTL game to become fully device agnostic and accessible in both an online and offline modality. This revision has not been included in this proposal.

Given the specifics of the Ukraine crisis context - with the refugee population having multiple devices and online access available to them - the revision of the core structure of the game will allow for scaling and expansion of the CWTL game, allowing for continued access to the programme while children remain on the move.

Annex 1 - CWTL Brochure

Annex 2 – Budget CWTL Emergency Response Ukraine

For further details, please contact:
Willem Nederstigt, Programme Developer - CWTL
War Child Holland, – Helmholtzstraat 61-G, 1098 LE Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Tel: +31 06 447 26 409 – Email: willem.nederstigt@warchild.nl