



LISTEN TO US



Save the Children

**Girls' and boys' gendered experiences
of the conflict in eastern Ukraine**

Acknowledgements

This assessment was designed by and the report was written by Philippa Hill, Humanitarian Evidence, Effectiveness and Accountability Advisor at Save the Children UK, with the support of colleagues across the organisation. Firstly, we would like to acknowledge all children affected by the conflict in eastern Ukraine and give a special thank you to the 107 children and 50 adults who gave their time to be part of this assessment.

The core team of Margaux Wetterwald, Sergii Burlutskiy, Vladyslav Mardanenko (Save the Children in Ukraine), Jenny Becker, Hasnat Ahsan and Katherine McGregor (Save the Children Canada) were crucial to ensuring the quality of this assessment by informing the methodology, tools, planning and reviews of this report.

This assessment would not have been possible without the concerted efforts of staff from Save the Children in Ukraine and Slavic Heart. Thanks go to Anastasiya Romashko, Anton Stukalo, Natalia Hodunova, Nataliia Kondakova, Natalia Mishchenko, Nataliya Sotska, Oksana Kushnir, Oksana Volbenko, Oleksandr Pisteiko, Olga Kozhushana, Sergii Burlutskiy, Sergey Lugovoy, and Vladyslav Mardanenko for their support with data collection and translation.

This assessment was primarily funded by a Global Affairs Canada supported project titled “Lifesaving Protection and NFI Response for Conflict-Affected Communities in Eastern Ukraine,” with additional contributions from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Published by Save the Children Canada

Save the Children Canada

4141 Yonge Street, Suite 300 – Toronto, Ontario, Canada M2P 2A8

Save the Children Canada is a charity registered in Canada (10795 8621 RR0001).

1-800-668-5036

info@savethechildren.ca

<https://www.savethechildren.ca/>

Save the Children International in Ukraine

Kruhouniversytetska Str. 2/1, Kyiv, Kyivska Oblast, 01024, Ukraine

ukrainianresponse@savethechildren.org

+38 096 834 1619; +38 063 664 7703; +38 095 654 5279

<https://ukraine.savethechildren.net/>

Save the Children International is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 3732267 and a charity registered in England and Wales with charity number 1076822.

First published 2019

© Save the Children Canada and Save the Children International.

This publication is copyright, but may be reproduced by any method without fee or prior permission for teaching purposes, but not for resale. For copying in any other circumstances, prior written permission must be obtained from the publisher, and a fee may be payable.

Front cover photo: Save the Children

All photos in this report are from Save the Children programmes. However, we have not included any images of the participants who took part in this study.

The logo for the Government of Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a red maple leaf to the right of the letter 'a'.

Program undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada

Contents

Acronyms and tables and diagrams	4
Foreword	5
Executive Summary	7
Introduction and assessment objectives	9
Background	10
Methodology	11
Literature review	11
Primary data collection with children	11
Primary data collection with adult stakeholders	12
Ethics	13
Training, data collection and analysis	14
Limitations	14
Findings	15
Social norms, expectations and gender roles	15
How do gender norms shape boys' and girls' lives?	15
Effects of the conflict on children's ability to attain rights	20
Physical and psychological effects of conflict	20
Leisure, play and culture	25
Health	26
Education	27
Protection from violence, abuse and neglect	29
Alcohol and drug abuse	30
Access to information	31
Respect for children's views	32
Coping strategies	33
What do children think the future holds for them?	34
Conclusion and recommendations	35
Children's recommendations	35
Further recommendations	36
Annexes	39
Annex 1: List of respondents	39
Annex 2: Children's workshops methodologies	40
Annex 3: Adolescent girls' and boys' perceptions of opportunities, access and risks	48
Annex 4: Endnotes	49

Acronyms

ERW	Explosive remnants of war
FGD	Focus group discussion
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCA	Government Controlled Areas
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
IDPs	Internally displaced people
LGBT+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender plus
NFI	Non-food item
NGCA	Non-Government Controlled Areas
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
PSS	Psychosocial support
SCI	Save the Children International
USE	UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

Tables and diagrams

Table 1: Demographics of children consulted during assessment	11
Diagram 1: Adolescent girls' and boys' perceptions of decision making	16
Diagram 2: Adolescent girls' and boys' perception of safety and ability to express themselves	18
Diagram 3: Adolescent girls' and boys' perceptions of opportunities, access and risks	48

Foreword

Save the Children is marking many important anniversaries this year. One hundred years ago, a female social reformer changed the course of history when she declared that all children have rights. That woman was Eglantyne Jebb, our founder.

Four years later, in 1923, Jebb drafted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, laying the foundations for Save the Children's continuing mission. The Declaration was adopted by the League of Nations and later formed the basis of the current UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which sparked a global movement – one that continues to build through the work of all who strive to make the world a better place for children. Eglantyne Jebb took this revolutionary idea and made it internationally accepted. Without Jebb and the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, we would not be marking the 30th anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child this year. Nevertheless, much more remains to be done to ensure all boys and girls learn, survive, and are protected, in particular, those living in conflict-affected areas.

Indeed, the nature of conflicts across the world has changed, putting children on the frontline in new and terrible ways. Almost one-fifth of children worldwide live in areas affected by armed conflict; we see more girls and boys facing unimaginable psychological and physical trauma; more children are at risk of sexual violence and recruitment by armed groups; and, more children are trapped on the frontline without access to humanitarian aid. Children's experiences are different from those of adults, and factors such as gender and age contribute to varied experiences of children themselves. Conflicts are not gender-neutral – they have a different impact on girls and boys of different ages.

In eastern Ukraine, more than five years since the beginning of the conflict, boys are at greater risk of injury from explosive remnants of war (ERW), whereas girls are at greater risk of gender-based violence, specifically sexual harassment, assault, and exploitation.

Gender norms also influence children’s ability to seek support and the extent to which they benefit from the help on offer. For example, boys are more reluctant to show vulnerability or cry as it is perceived to be a “feminine” behaviour; and as a result, can make it harder for them to access appropriate psychosocial support. Despite these gendered trends, robust data on the intersection of gender and age in armed conflicts is lacking.

On November 20, 2019, Ukraine became the 100th state to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration, representing an important milestone in ensuring all girls and boys are protected during armed conflict. Schools continue to be deliberately bombed and destroyed in conflicts around the world, and schoolchildren and their teachers are being abducted, raped and recruited into armed groups, and even killed, at and on their way to school. The proportion of attacks specifically targeting girls’ education has increased significantly during the last two decades. In Ukraine, where more than 750 educational facilities have been damaged since the beginning of the conflict, many children fear attending school and are distressed by the presence of armed soldiers in and around their schools.

This report aims to help fill a gap in evidence concerning the gendered impact of the conflict on boys and girls of different ages. We explore social norms, expectations and gender roles, and how these shape children’s lives, analyze the effects of the conflict in Ukraine on girls’ and boys’ ability to attain their rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and look at the coping strategies adopted by boys and girls to live through the conflict. The report builds on a highly participatory methodology to truly reflect the voices of boys and girls. Humanitarian action that is not gender and age-sensitive is less effective and risks not reaching the most vulnerable, failing to respond adequately to their specific needs and exacerbating pre-existing inequalities. It is our hope that strengthening evidence on the importance of integrating gender and age will enhance the quality of humanitarian programming for boys and girls living in conflicts globally.



Dariusz Zietek
Country Director
Save the Children Ukraine



Marlen Mondaca
Chief Programs & Policy
Save the Children Canada





Executive Summary

Since 2014, an armed conflict has been ongoing in eastern Ukraine. An estimated 5.2 million people are affected by the conflict.

This study aims to help fill a gap in evidence concerning the gendered impact of the conflict on boys and girls of different ages. Children's experiences are different to those of adults, and factors such as gender and age contribute to varied experiences of children themselves. We believe that children are the experts in their own lives, and as such are capable of articulating their own experiences, needs and solutions. Therefore, this assessment consulted with boys and girls between the ages of 3-17-years old, as well as adults, in order to better understand how conflict is shaping the lives of children in eastern Ukraine.

The findings section of this report is split into four sections, aimed at 1) exploring social norms, expectations and gender roles, and how these shape children's lives; 2) analysing the effects of the conflict on children's ability to attain their rights; 3) looking at the coping strategies adopted by children to handle life in conflict; and 4) understanding what children think the future holds for them. The report closes with recommendations, including from children themselves.

The main findings from the assessment can be summarised as follows:

Gender norms begin to influence children from a young age. Gender norms in Ukraine assign women the role of a caring, resourceful and attractive wife, mother and homemaker, while men are considered providers and protectors, who should not share their emotions openly. Even among the youngest children

consulted, girls were more family-oriented and open about their emotions than boys, whereas boys were more likely to speak about militarised or violent play.

Gender norms and inequality exacerbate different risks for girls and boys; for example, boys are at greater risk of injury from explosive remnants of war (ERW), whereas girls are at greater risk of some forms of gender-based violence, specifically sexual harassment, assault and exploitation. Gender norms also influence children's ability to seek support, and the extent to which they benefit from the help on offer. For example, boys are reluctant to show vulnerability, fear or to cry as they are seen as feminine behaviours; this may make it harder for them to access appropriate psychosocial support.

Girls and boys feel that adults do not listen to them or value their concerns. There are pervasive attitudes in Ukraine that children's opinions are not important and that adults know better than children. This contributes to limited opportunities being provided for children's views to be taken into consideration during decision making. This frustrates children, who feel they have valuable insights to offer. In feedback at the end of several workshops with adolescents, children spoke about how they really valued the opportunity to tell adults about their opinions, be listened to and to be treated with respect.

Girls and boys face different physical risks from the conflict. While some of these risks, such as shelling, affect boys and girls equally, others are experienced differently by boys and girls. Boys are much more likely to be injured by mines and ERW. Both girls and boys report fear of the presence of military personnel, but

for some different reasons. Boys fear being beaten by soldiers, whereas girls report sexual harassment by the military.

The conflict is having profound psychological effects on children. Signs of trauma were reported for all age groups. These include heightened arousal and startle responses, nightmares and hallucinations, regression, speech impediments, separation anxiety and frequent thoughts of death. Children exhibit signs of anxiety and depression, and an increase in suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts among children is reported.

Children's play and leisure opportunities have been constrained by the conflict. Many of the places children used to play, including playgrounds and forests, have been damaged by the conflict or are scattered with ERV. Many extracurricular activities have stopped. The lack of safe places to play leads to children playing in dangerous locations. Play and games by younger boys appear to have become more militarised since the start of the conflict. With limited options, children spend more of their leisure time watching television, on smartphones or on computers.

The conflict has created health risks for children and negatively affected access to and quality of health services. Doctors report an increase in illnesses such as diarrhea, flu and coughs and the emergence of new illnesses. Damage to the water and sanitation infrastructure have contributed to this increased morbidity, as has insufficient food and inadequate nutrition. Adolescents and adults reported feeling that the quality and timeliness of medical assistance has decreased since the start of the conflict. The conflict has left some settlements near the contact line without adequate access to health services, increasing response time in emergencies and cutting off access to specialised health services.

Children do not feel safe and comfortable at school, due to not only conflict related threats but also bullying from peers and disrespectful treatment from teachers. Schools were often considered dangerous by children and adults, due to the continued risks from shelling. Access to a quality, inclusive learning environment is hampered by the departure of teachers from areas near the contact line, by limited accommodations for children living with disabilities (including conflict-related injuries), and by humiliating treatment of children by some teachers. Children also fear bullying from their peers. Children living in the NGCA face challenges with recognition of their education record and achievements.

Violence within families and communities negatively affects children, including forms of gender-based violence. Domestic violence perpetrated against women appears to have increased in both frequency and severity since the start of the

conflict, as families struggle living in a conflict-affected area, as tolerance for violence increases and as the response of the criminal justice system weakens. Children observe violence between their parents and are sometimes the direct victims. Sexual violence was reported as a risk for adolescent girls.

Children feel they do not have reliable access to trustworthy information. Propaganda and disinformation campaigns are a feature of this conflict. Boys and girls report having access to information from different sources, but that they generally do not believe this information is truthful. Adolescent's responses demonstrated their emerging critical thinking capacities, as they spoke about seeking to triangulate information to better ascertain the truth.

Children have adopted both positive and negative coping strategies in response to the conflict. Social relations and support between friends and within families emerged as something that helps children cope with difficult circumstances. Children dissociate from the conflict and distract themselves using technology. Others use black humour to make light of the horrors of conflict. Substance abuse by children as young as eight was also reported. Due to families struggling to earn money and cope with increasing costs of living, some children are resorting to risky and harmful forms of income generation. Some adolescent girls engage in transactional sex with military personnel (sometimes to meet financial needs). Boys sometimes loot abandoned buildings and collect scrap metal for sale, putting them at risk of injury from ERV.

Children are hopeful for an end to the conflict and a better future. Their future plans are strongly shaped by gender norms, with girls focusing on being wives and mothers and boys focusing on careers and income generation. However, many children do not see their future as being in eastern Ukraine. Most adolescents expressed their dreams to migrate to Kharkiv, Kyiv or abroad.

Despite the dire situation facing girls and boys in eastern Ukraine, this report helps identify areas where targeted interventions could help lessen the risks children face as a result of the conflict, promote gender equality for the benefit of all, improve children's ability to attain their rights and nurture the next generation of active citizens. It also highlights children's own ideas about how different stakeholders can improve the lives of girls and boys in eastern Ukraine.

Introduction and assessment objectives

This study was commissioned by Save the Children International in Ukraine to help fill a gap in evidence concerning the gendered impact of the conflict on boys and girls of different ages. It sought to investigate how the conflict has affected, changed or reinforced gendered social norms, what barriers and opportunities children experience, and coping mechanisms are employed in the face of hardship.

In 2019, the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is celebrated. Ukraine ratified the UNCRC in 1991. In recognition of the importance of upholding and promoting children's rights, this study investigates the extent to which girls and boys can attain their rights in conflict-affected eastern Ukraine. In the second findings section, summaries of relevant articles from the UNCRC are highlighted, followed by a discussion of the reality for boys and girls who participated in this study.

This study was primarily funded by a Global Affairs Canada supported project titled "Lifesaving Protection and NFI Response for Conflict-Affected Communities in Eastern Ukraine," with additional contributions from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The findings from the study will be used to inform the remainder of the Global Affairs Canada funded project. In addition, the study will be used to inform the current wider portfolio and future programme development of Save the Children's Ukraine country office. It is Save the Children's hope that this study will also inform peer humanitarian work in eastern Ukraine.

Assessment questions

The assessment sought to answer the following questions through triangulation:

Social norms and gender roles:

- What are the main social norms, expectations and gender roles that shape girls' and boys' upbringing, in the public (e.g. school) and private (e.g. at home) spheres, and how might have these norms, expectations and roles changed since the conflict? How does age influence the evolution of gender roles between childhood, adolescence and adulthood?

Barriers and opportunities:

- What are the main barriers and opportunities that girls and boys face to access their rights, especially since the start of the conflict, and how do these barriers and opportunities differ for boys and girls?
- How has the conflict changed the decision-making power of boys and girls in their families, at school, in their communities and how has the conflict influenced leadership opportunities for boys and girls?

Coping strategies:

- What are the main coping strategies girls and boys use, in relation to living in conflict-affected areas or following displacement, and how do these coping strategies differ for boys and girls?

Background

Since 2014, an armed conflict has been present in eastern Ukraine. An estimated 5.2 million people are affected by the conflict, 3.5 million of whom require humanitarian assistance and protection. Most people in need live in the conflict-affected oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk, divided by the 427-kilometre-long 'contact line'.¹

The population is spread between Government Controlled Areas (GCA) and areas controlled by armed non-state actors collectively known as Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCA). There is limited access for humanitarian actors in the NGCA. As of December 2018, over 3,000 civilians had been killed and approximately 9,000 injured since the beginning of the conflict.² Moreover, 1.5 million internally displaced people (IDPs) were registered by the Ministry of Social Policy in 2018.³

The conflict has had a profound effect on people's lives, from diminished livelihood opportunities, reduced access to services (such as health, education, protection, water, electricity and heating), and damage to infrastructure and buildings (including powerlines, gas supply, water treatment plants, houses, schools and hospitals). Non-combatants, including children, are at risk of direct physical harm from shelling, small arms and light weapon fire, mine-related incidents and the mishandling of explosive remnants of war. Furthermore, the conflict has had a profound effect on children's and adults' psychological wellbeing.



PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN



Methodology

In order to answer the research questions, outlined in the section above, this assessment used the following approaches:

- A literature review of published data related to the assessment;
- Primary data collection with children living near the contact line;
- Primary data collection with caregivers, teachers and social workers, living or working near the contact line;
- A workshop with staff of local partner organisations, working in the NGCA;
- And key informant interviews with representatives of local authorities, NGOs, and UN agencies.

Prior to starting this assessment, ethics approval was obtained from Save the Children UK’s independent Research and Evaluation Ethics Committee.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review focused on existing assessments, consultations and research conducted by NGOs, UN agencies and donors. Most of the documents included were identified by SCI in Ukraine. Documents were prioritised for review based on their focus on the affected area and a specific focus either on the gendered effects of the conflict or on the situation for children. While the literature review sought to focus specifically on identifying information regarding the gendered effects of the conflict on girls and boys (as opposed to men and women), child-specific gender analysis was limited in the available documents.

PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION WITH CHILDREN

This assessment sought to understand how the lives of girls and boys of different ages have been affected by the conflict, as well as understanding how gender norms shape children’s experiences from early childhood through adolescence to adulthood. In total, 107 children from rural and urban locations in Government Controlled Areas (GCA) near the contact line were consulted during the assessment through age and gender segregated workshops.⁴ Workshops took place in Marinskyi raion and Yasinivatskiy raion in Donetsk oblast and Popasnianskiy raion in Luhansk oblast. See table 1 for more information on the demographics of children consulted.

Table 1: Demographics of children consulted during assessment

Age	Girls	Boys
3-5 years old	6	14
6-9 years old	12	12
10-13 years old	13	16
14-17 years old	17	17
TOTAL	48	59

Only child participants living within areas where SCI or partners have active programming were selected for this study. This is to help ensure that follow-up support was available to children, should urgent needs have been identified during the assessment. Individual child participants were identified by SCI and partner staff, teachers and social workers who were given guidance

on how to support inclusive and voluntary participation (i.e. to not exclude children with physical disabilities, to not just select the most confident and outgoing children etc).

Data collection tools were specifically tailored to the ages of children participating, with different tools used for the 3-5, 6-9 and 10-17 age groups. All workshops included introduction and icebreaker activities, as well as a quick feedback session. The detailed data collection tools for children's workshops can be found in annex 3.

3-5-year olds

The main activity for 3-5-year old children was **individual expressive drawing**, where they were asked to draw a picture about their lives. A series of simple child-friendly questions were then used to discuss the drawing, and how what the child has drawn makes them feel. The **helping hands** activity was then used to identify the children's ideas about how different people could make life better for children.

6-9-year olds

The main activity for 6-9-year olds was the **puppet walk** activity: children each created a puppet the same age and gender as them and who lives in the same place. The facilitators then take the children and their puppets on a walk through a "day in the life" of the puppet, asking questions to understand what the puppets do, where they go, and how they feel. Children were engaged in a discussion about the problems children face in their community, followed by **dot voting** where children voted for what they thought were the biggest problems. Children then identified recommended actions using the **helping hands** activity (see above).

10-17-year olds

The workshops for older children began with a **line of life** activity where children created a timeline about the life of a child in their community from birth, through today and looking into the future. Groups then discussed how the events make children feel, and what differences they think there would be in the lines of life for children of the other gender. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was then introduced to children. Children moved on to the **empowerment star** activity, where they individually scored how often children were able to do certain things aligned to some rights of the child. The areas scored were as follows:

- Do girls/boys complete 11 years of school?
- Can girls/boys say what matters to them in front of an adult male?
- Do girls/boys help decide what to spend money on?
- Do girls/boys have access to information that they trust?

- Can girls/boys get medical care when they need it?
- Do girls/boys get to decide when and with whom they have relationships?
- Do girls/boys decide when and who they marry?
- Do girls/boys feel safe in this community?
- Can girls/boys freely share their emotions and how they feel with other people?
- Are girls/boys able to play and relax?
- Can girls/boys decide what work they will do when they become adults?
- Do girls'/boys' concerns matter in this community?

This was followed by a group discussion about the barriers and opportunities children across those twelve different domains (including education, decision-making power regarding relationships, access to information and whether their opinions are valued). Children then identified and voted for the biggest problems that children face, using **dot voting**. Finally, children were asked to identify **recommendations** for different stakeholder groups about how to improve the lives of children.

PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION WITH ADULT STAKEHOLDERS

The assessment identified various groups of adults who would have specific insights into children's lives. 20 caregivers (11 women and nine men) were consulted via gender segregated focus group discussions. Caregivers that were invited to discussions were identified from a list of caregivers whose children attend SCI-supported institutions (e.g. schools, kindergartens). Invitations were provided to this group, requesting volunteers to participate in the discussion. The process of requesting volunteers enabled people who would not feel comfortable discussing the topics in a group to self-exclude.

Discussions were also held with teachers (two women, with one male teacher joining a male caregivers' group) and social workers (five women).

Restrictions on access and activities in the NGCA precluded consultations with children or adults in that area. Instead, a workshop was organised with staff (seven women, one man) from local partner NGOs and civil society organisations in order to hear their assessment of how the situation is affecting children and their families in the NGCA.

Finally, semi-structured key informant interviews were held with staff from the Donetsk Department of Education, the Donetsk Department of Children, Families and Youth, UNFPA, UNICEF, the Danish Refugee Council, Slavic Heart, People in Need, and Save the Children (in total 9 women and 4 men).

ETHICS

The assessment sought to abide by the nine basic requirements for meaningful and ethical participation (that participation is transparent, voluntary, relevant, respectful, inclusive, child-friendly, safe, supported by training and accountable), as set out by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.⁵

Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and from the caregivers of child participants. In line with the nine basic requirements for meaningful and ethical participation, all participation was voluntary. Consent was considered renegotiable, i.e. if participants wished to stop participating at any point, they were free to cease involvement (and to have their data removed from the data set if this request came prior to data analysis). The child's own decision to consent or not to participate was considered final (i.e. if a caregiver provided permission but a child says no, the child will not be made to participate in the research). Indeed, some children declined to participate in workshops and thus were allowed to engage in other activities of their choice within a safe and supervised environment.

For children aged 10 years and older, written consent was obtained from both them and a caregiver several days prior to the date of the workshop. For children aged 3-9 years old, written consent was obtained from the caregiver several days prior to the date of the workshop and verbal assent was obtained from the child themselves at the start of the workshop. At the start of each children's workshop, we summarised key information related to the data collection and confirmed that all children continue to consent to participate. Similarly, consent from caregivers, teachers and social workers was obtained in writing prior to participation and consent was re-confirmed at the beginning of each group discussion. Verbal informed consent was obtained for all key informants interviewed, who were also given options regarding attribution and anonymity.

Inclusivity

The assessment targeted children from the age of three to 17 years old. The inclusion of very young children was an unusual step that was not without challenges but did yield data.

To support gender-sensitivity within data collection, data collection with children and caregivers was conducted in single sex groups (with the exception of one mixed workshop for 3-5-year olds). Data collection with women and girls was done by female facilitators and notetakers. Data collection with men and boys was done either by male facilitators and notetakers or by a mixed gender team (with at least one man), due to the challenges of finding male staff to support the

assessment. The presence of men in the data collection team was remarked upon by some boys, who said that it was the first time they had male facilitators for such a discussion and they appreciated it.

Save the Children Ukraine worked with partners to identify locations for data collection that were considered accessible and safe by different groups and were accessible to participants with mobility impairments. The assessment was not able to include adaptations to support participants with significant intellectual disabilities or significant sensory impairments (in the form of deafness and/or blindness); in the future, Save the Children Ukraine intends to do an assessment of the main gendered barriers and opportunities that children with disabilities face in terms of community participation and education.

Risk mitigation

A risk assessment and mitigation plan was developed prior to the assessment. This covered risks including physical harm due to conflict, creation of emotional distress, abuse or exploitation of participants, participants missing school, and data protection risks, among others.

The data collection tools were specifically designed to reduce risks of disclosure in a group setting and re-traumatisation by encouraging children and adults to talk about the experiences of children in general, rather than forcing them to recount their own experiences.

All staff involved in the assessment were trained in safeguarding and signed Save the Children's child safeguarding policy.

A referral protocol, based on SC Ukraine's existing identified referral pathways, was developed to enable timely and appropriate support for any concerns regarding the safety or wellbeing of specific children or adults that come to light during the assessment. This referral protocol covered issues including sexual and gender-based violence, urgent health concerns and emotional distress.

Measures have been taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants in the assessment, including separation of participants names from their responses. This report will not contain details about the specific locations visited during the assessment. The photographs used within this report are from SCI Ukraine's archive and are not of participants in the assessment.

All staff involved in data collection were trained in the risk mitigation plan and referral protocol during the training.

Accountability

Save the Children Ukraine is committed to using the results of this assessment to inform their own

programming, as well as advocating for other actors to take the findings and recommendations on board. The findings will be shared with Clusters and humanitarian agencies and be used to inform the 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview as well as ongoing work on children's rights in Ukraine. Two child-friendly summaries (one for younger and one for older children) have been produced and will be shared with children and families in areas where Save the Children implements activities.

TRAINING, DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data collection team was comprised of Save the Children staff and staff from our partner, Slavic Heart. A 1.5-day training was organised to orient data collection staff on principles of child participation, the data collection tools, the risk mitigation plan, informed consent and the referral protocol. The data collection tools were adjusted during the training to make them more context appropriate. Data collection took place between 7-13th September 2019. Children's workshops were supervised on the first day by the lead researcher and experienced staff from Save the Children Ukraine, following which a debrief and minor revisions to tools took place.

All children's workshops and focus groups with female caregivers and teachers were facilitated by Ukrainian staff, with notes taken in Russian. Focus groups with male caregivers and social workers were facilitated through translation (in one male caregivers FGD notes were taken in Russian). Key informant interviews were either conducted in English or through translation. All notes taken in Russian were translated into English prior to analysis.

The assessment concluded with a 2.5 hour initial collaborative analysis workshop, where the data collection team reviewed notes, began to identify codes and discussed trends in data.

An initial coding framework was developed. All primary data was coded using nVivo, with new codes being added as they emerged. Following this, themes were identified within the data. Where possible, data was triangulated between different sources (including the secondary data explored during the literature review).

LIMITATIONS

- As noted above, due to restrictions on the presence and activities of humanitarian actors in the NGCA, it was not possible to organise children's workshops there.
- Due to issues with accessing children, only children attending either school or early childhood care centres participated in the assessment. This means that out-of-school children were not covered by the assessment.

- The relatively unusual decision was taken to include very young children (children aged 3-5 years old) in the assessment (done in order to explore how gender norms form at an early age). In order to not cause distress to young children, the tools focused on free-choice expressive drawings by children and follow-up child friendly questions, rather than targeted questions about life during conflict. This was met with mixed success, with some children choosing to draw cartoon characters or similar. However, some data collected from the youngest age group offers insight into their lives in conflict and how gender norms affect very young children.
- Security restrictions limited the amount of time the data collection teams could spend near the contact line, limiting each team to conducting one children's workshop per day and thus limiting the sample size.
- The sample size was not sufficient to reach saturation for sub-groups (for example, 'girls aged 10-13' or 'children living in rural Luhansk'), and thus it is not possible to reach specific conclusions at sub-group level.

As this is a qualitative assessment the findings are meant to be indicative and give in-depth explanations and views concerning the targeted research questions. This assessment however is not a representative assessment either at the geographic or age level. Where possible this assessment has included representative data from other external assessments.



PHOTO: SIMON EDMUNDS/SAVE THE CHILDREN

Findings

SOCIAL NORMS, EXPECTATIONS AND GENDER ROLES

Ukraine has enshrined gender equality within its laws:

“The purpose of this Law is to achieve equal position of women and men in all spheres of public life by legislative ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, by combating gender discrimination and to use special temporary measures aimed at eliminating the imbalance between the opportunities for men and women to exercise equal rights granted to them by the Constitution and the laws of Ukraine.”⁶

However, efforts at implementing gender equality legislation are hampered by efforts of various religious and public organisations, who argue that gender equality and gender education harm the institution of the family and promote homosexuality.⁷ Across Ukraine as a whole, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reported concern in 2017, “at the persistence in political discourse, the media and in society of deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family, which perpetuate women’s subordination within the family and society and which are reflected, inter alia, in women’s educational and professional choices, their limited participation in political and public life, their unequal participation in the labour market and their unequal status in family relations.”⁸

As with every context, in Ukraine gender norms exist that determine the roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that society considers appropriate for men and women.

The perception of the “ideal” woman in Ukraine is linked to that of a caring, resourceful and attractive homemaker who yields to her husband in disputes.⁹ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted in 2017 that the conflict has contributed to, “an increase of violence against women by State and non-State actors and to the reinforcement of traditional and patriarchal attitudes that limit women’s and girls’ enjoyment of their rights.”¹⁰ Women’s traditional gender role of caring has increased, with women increasingly responsible for ensuring their families’ social and economic well-being, including managing domestic needs, securing housing, and providing economically.¹¹

In Ukrainian society, men are assigned roles of providers and protectors, which has been reinforced by media since the start of the conflict in 2014.¹² However, the Gender Based Violence Area of Responsibility reports that, “the conflict has... severely undermined men’s ability to fulfil their traditional gender roles, particularly among displaced and military families. This has led to a breakdown of the family support system and has led men to resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as domestic violence, neglect and alcohol abuse.”¹³ Research into masculinity in Ukraine found that men often struggled in seeking help when distressed, and that this was partly a result of a perceived notion of masculinity that disapproves of men displaying emotions.¹⁴

HOW DO GENDER NORMS SHAPE BOYS’ AND GIRLS’ LIVES?

As would be expected, these expectations and norms affect children as well as adults. Even among the youngest children aged 3-5-years old who participated

in workshops, there were some marked differences between what boys and girls chose to discuss. Boys were much more likely than girls to draw things associated with the military or violent creatures. While both boys and girls spoke about the importance of their family, girls appeared to be more family oriented. And in one group, boys said that:

**“Life is more difficult for girls.
They should cook, wash and clean.
Sometimes we can help them.”**

Boy 3-5

For the 6-9-year-olds, girls and boys discussed similar routines, including going to school, going for walks with friends and spending time with parents. However, boys were more likely to speak about militarised play or sports than girls, and girls more likely to speak about feelings and emotions.

When caregivers were asked about what behaviours and actions they would expect from young boys and girls, they explained that generally they would expect younger children to do similar things. They noted that in the past there were more expectations that young girls would be the ones helping their mothers with cooking and cleaning, but nowadays mothers reported increasingly asking their young boys to help them with household chores.

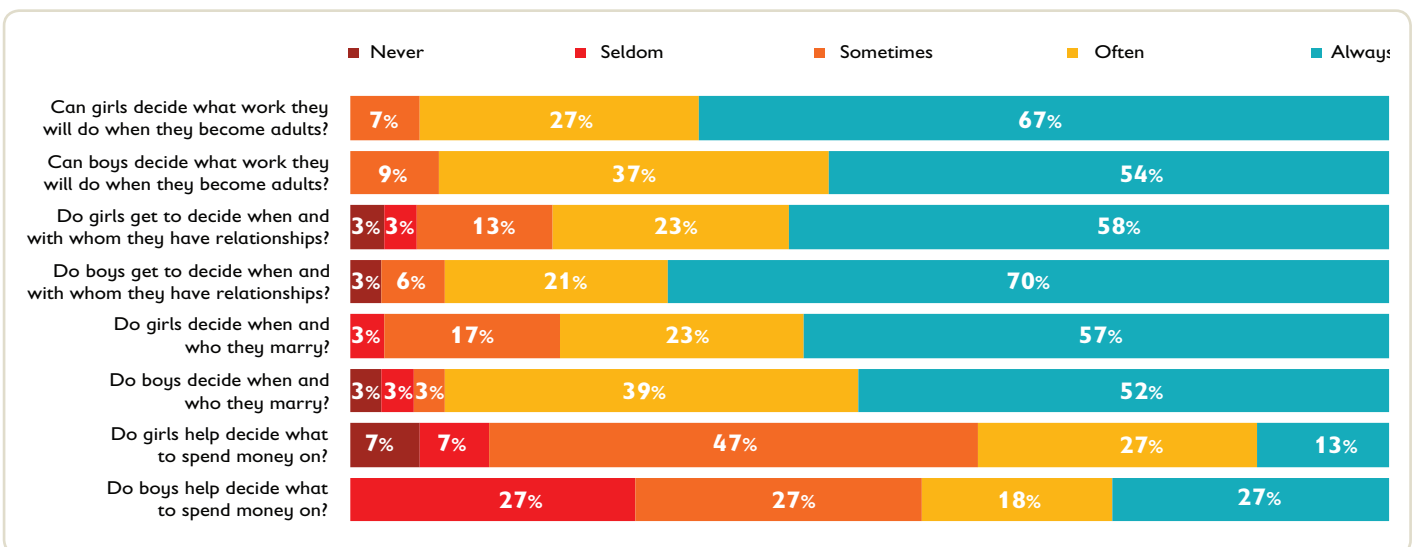
However, as girls and boys become adolescents, caregivers start to expect a bigger difference in behaviours and responsibilities. Male and female

caregivers spoke about how adolescent boys were expected to be strong, to support their fathers, to be independent, to play sports and to start protecting and looking after girls. Adolescent girls were seen as “mother’s assistant”, supporting with household chores. Girls were also expected to pay attention to their appearance, in line with a feminine beauty ideal with the aim of being attractive to boys and men.

Findings from adolescents themselves also support these gender roles and expectations. As noted in a later section on what children feel the future holds for them, girls consistently identified being a wife and mother as one of the most important things for them. Conversely, boys were much more likely to speak about being able to earn money. Adolescent boys expected that girls would take on more household chores because “they have to be good mistresses.” One group of boys said that in future relationships they would expect their wife to take on 70% of the household chores. Some boys also mentioned that they believe girls prioritise searching for a man who would look after them.

Boys also expected girls to be concerned about their appearance, in order to be attractive to boys and men. Girls themselves spoke about their appearance as something that created happiness and sadness. Conversely, girls explained that boys were expected to be courageous, were more likely to show aggression and were less concerned about love and relationships. The conflict was not mentioned by adolescents as something that had led to significant changes in gender norms, but gender norms affect how girls and boys experience the conflict and the extent to which they are able to seek support.

Diagram 1: Adolescent girls’ and boys’ perceptions of decision making



Please note: this assessment was not statistically representative and thus the percentages should be taken as indicative of the opinions of participating children, and not be treated as generalisable to the wider population.



PHOTO: SIMON EDMUNDS / SAVE THE CHILDREN

Adolescents' perception of decision-making ability

During the discussions with adolescents, children were asked to assess how often boys or girls were able to be involved in key decisions about spending within households, relationships and future careers.

In general, boys and girls reported similar frequencies of involvement in decision making across these areas. Boys and girls were most confident that they would be able to decide what work they would do when they grew up. While a couple of boys felt that their parents would choose their profession, most children felt the decision would be their own but that their parents would advise them. Distance to higher education facilities (and the cost implications) and beliefs about appropriate jobs for women and men (for example, teaching is seen as a woman's job and manual labour as a man's job) were identified as factors that restrict the choice of careers. These beliefs about appropriate jobs for men and women are likely to be influenced by the fact that until 2017 women were banned from many professions, including working as carpenters, train drivers or firefighters.¹⁵ Children and communities may not yet know that prohibitions have been lifted.

Boys were confident that they would be able to decide when and with whom they would enter relationships and get married. All groups mentioned that they would consult parents, but the final decision would be their own. Boys generally felt that it was important they had a home of their own and a good salary before getting married. Girls, while generally still feeling able to choose who they would be in a relationship with and marry, felt more pressure from others. Both groups of older adolescent girls noted that there was often pressure from boys in relationships to start having sex, and that this is generally applied through verbal and psychological pressure (girls said they were not aware of situations of physical violence and felt girls would end relationships if this occurred). Psychological and

verbal coercion are forms of gender-based violence, and this points to concerns about the ability of girls to give consent within relationships. Further issues of sexual violence are discussed in sections on *fear of military personnel* (page 20). and *protection from violence, abuse and neglect* (page 28). One group noted that their society expects girls to be chaste but doesn't have the same expectations for boys. Regarding marriage, girls generally felt free to choose though they said they would ask for advice from parents. However, several girls mentioned that parents sometimes forbid girls to marry who they want. Notably, unlike boys, girls did not mention a need to be financially independent before marriage. One group mentioned that,

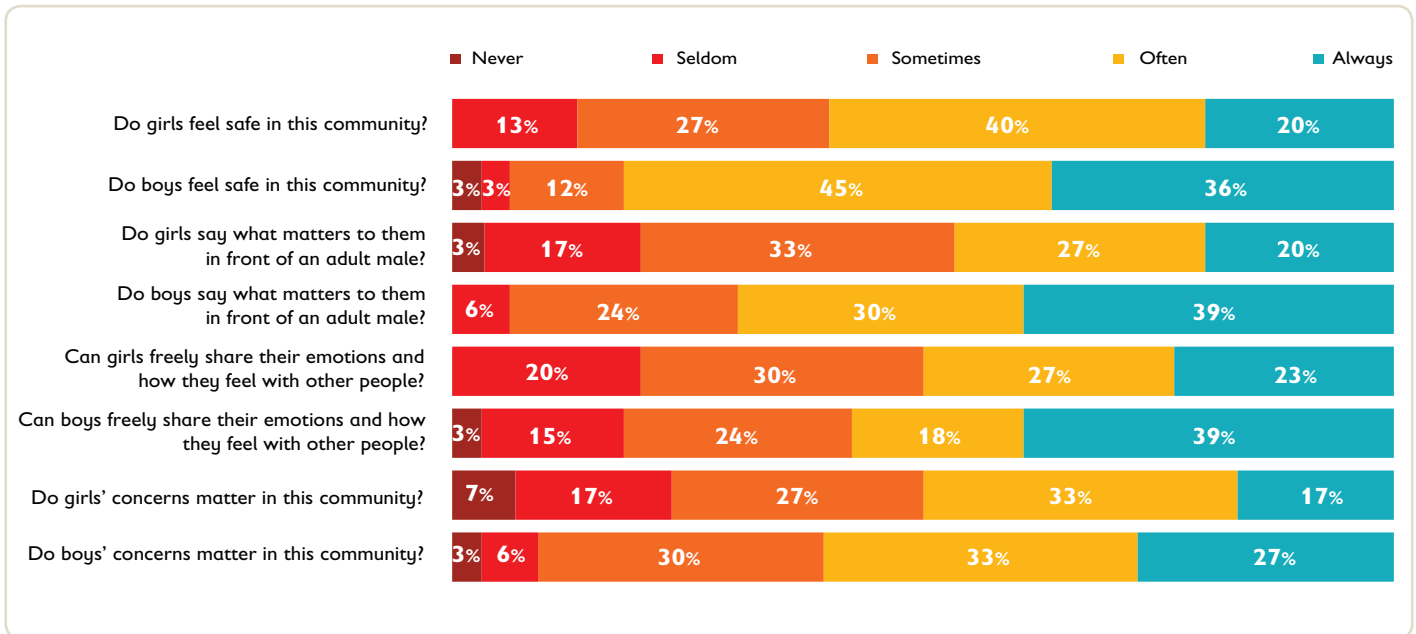
“Parents can urge girls to entice a well-off man to marry them.”

Girl 10-13

This suggests that despite high levels of education and participation in the labour force by women, a stereotype remains that the man should be the provider for the family.

Boys and girls reported on average that sometimes they are involved in household decisions about spending. Despite boys suggesting that they were more often able to be involved, in the discussions they spoke about having limited opportunities to influence spending decisions. Conversely, in discussions girls said that they were often involved in family budget planning and were consulted on how money should be spent (for example, being involved in budget decisions about spending on education and entertainment). Most children had access to a small amount of pocket money that they were free to spend as they wish. However, children noted that family budgets have become more constrained since the start of the conflict and that this has reduced children's ability to influence spending.

Diagram 2: Adolescent girls' and boys' perception of safety and ability to express themselves



Please note: this assessment was not statistically representative and thus the percentages should be taken as indicative of the opinions of participating children, and not be treated as generalisable to the wider population.

Adolescents' perception of safety and ability to express themselves

On average, girls reported feeling safe less often than boys. Many of the safety concerns (discussed in detail in the later section of this report) were the same for boys and girls: military personnel, substance abuse, shelling and ERV. However, girls also mentioned being harassed by men and darkness as safety concerns.

In general, boys felt confident in speaking up but doubted whether adults other than their parents would listen to them. Girls were more likely than boys to talk about being afraid or too shy to speak up. One group of adolescent girls said that they would choose to talk about their problems to a woman but would be reluctant to speak to a man. Most girls and boys doubted whether their concerns would be listened to by adults outside of their family. These issues are discussed later when we consider children's ability to exercise their right to participation.

While in their scoring, boys seemed more confident than girls that they would be able to express their emotions freely, discussions suggest a different story. Boys spoke about how they are unable to express some emotions in public, with crying being seen as something only girls are allowed to do. Reluctance to show vulnerability, fear or to cry was strongly linked to it being a feminine behaviour.

“Emotions are better contained. We prefer to express their emotions at home. Some of us hear from our dads that boys are not allowed to cry; it can only be done by girls.”

Boy, 10-13

“If you start crying with your friends, they can laugh at you and call you a girl.”

Boy 14-17

Girls also felt pressure to not be too emotional in public, though for them this seemed to be more linked to expectations that they should not seek attention and fears that if they show fear they may be bullied.

“You should not cry in public; they will say you do it on purpose, attracting attention. If a boy cries, it will be the end of him.”

Girl 14-17

“We’re told, ‘Show positive emotions and smile; do not be aggressive because you will be a mother.’”

Girl 14-17

Some girls reflected that it may be easier for girls to bear difficult situations as it is accepted that they can cry and seek support, whereas boys are expected to be brave. This finding aligns to some concerns of representatives of humanitarian agencies who noted that it can be hard for boys to seek support and that at present many may be missing out on psychosocial support or not fully benefitting from it due to the arts- and group-based approaches commonly used.

Reflections on discussing gender in eastern Ukraine

During discussions with adults who had grown up under the Soviet Union (caregivers and those working for local authorities), there appeared to be simultaneous existence of mutually exclusive gender discourse: one of gender-egalitarianism (or even gender-indistinctiveness) and one of gender-traditionalism. People would speak about how men and women are already equal and have the same opportunities (even stating that “there is no difference between women and men”), while at the same time promoting traditional gender norms that link women to caregiving roles and men to the role of protector and provider. Some academics have argued that gender-traditional discourse emerged following the dissolution of the Soviet Union as a way of framing a national identity for Ukraine linked to Christian morality and “family values.”¹⁶ Within Ukraine, the influential Council of Churches often opposes gender equality legislature and awareness raising, seeing it as undermining the traditional family and as being linked to LGBT+ concerns. Sometimes during discussions (predominantly with men), attitudes resistant to the concept of gender and gender equality were also linked to resistance to what was referred to as a “European agenda”, which was sometimes perceived as immoral or lacking in values. Reactions to questions related to gender often seemed to assume that a focus on gender equates only to a focus on women’s position, rights and opportunities, rather than also considering how gender norms affect masculinities and men. These issues combine to create a challenging context for discussion of gender equality.



PHOTO: SIMON EDMUNDS / SAVE THE CHILDREN



Effects of the conflict on children's ability to attain rights

PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF CONFLICT

Article 6: Every child has the right to life.

Article 38: Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflicts.

“I feel fear that my house will be destroyed, that I find a grenade and it will explode. There are mines and trip wires set by the militaries who want to fight. They do not care about people.” Girl 10-13

“We fear of dying from shelling, fear losing loved ones, fear being left alone without the support of loved ones...” Girl 14-17

Risks from shelling

Five years into the conflict, children and their families are still at risk of direct harm from shelling, exchanges of small arms and light weapons fire, landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). Some children, including young children aged 6-9-years old, recounted how they have seen homes, health facilities and schools destroyed by shelling.

In some places, people do not feel they have adequate shelters to keep them safe during shelling. Female caregivers in one location said that there was insufficient space in the shelters for all residents, and that fights sometimes broke out to get places. In one discussion, 10-13-year old girls referred to the shelter as a “common grave.” Some young children seem unaware of how to remain safe during shelling, with some boys saying that they hide under trees because they believe it is safe.

The continuation of shelling has contributed to a pervasive sense that no place in communities along the contact line is truly safe. Children feel they are living in a constant state of uncertainty, not knowing where a shell might next hit.

“It’s dangerous everywhere in our town. There are parks and places for walks, but we do not feel safe – a shell could hit any place.”

Boy 14-17

Fear of military personnel

The presence of military actors in communities emerged as one of the strongest sources of fear for girls, boys, men and women alike. There was a profound sense from children and adults that they did not believe the army cared about them; the army is not considered by residents to be their protector. Instead, it seems that people feel that either the army does not care about them or considers them to be part of the enemy. This is exacerbated by the fact that the majority of military personnel are drawn from other parts of Ukraine. There were several reports of the military criticising local residents’ use of Russian language.

“The military looks at me as a traitor. I am a stranger to them. I am unwanted in my country.”

Father

There was one exception where boys aged 10-13 mentioned having a positive relationship with the military, noting that the military gave them sweets and contributed to the local economy by buying things in shops.

Children and adults are also concerned that the continued presence of the military in their settlements risks drawing fire from forces in the NCGA. Children as young as 6 spoke about being scared when shooting was happening and staying home because it was too dangerous on the streets. Children and adults also recounted how tanks have destroyed the roads in their town.

Children and adults explained that they were particularly scared when soldiers were drunk. Given the frequency that this was reported across different locations, it seems to be a widespread problem. People were concerned that when drunk, the military actors have less control and sometimes start shooting near civilians or start fights with civilians.

While both older boys (aged 14-17) and girls from the age of 10 upwards explained that the military were one of their biggest sources of fear, there were some differences in the risks that girls and boys identified related to the military. For adolescent girls, fears were often linked to gender-based violence. Adolescent girls said that they face harassment from military men, who

catcall them in the street. Some girls reported that the military stop their cars close to girls in the street and try to touch them. Other girls (from the 10-13-year old age group) reported that military men talk to them and try to make the girls go with them; they also felt that there was a risk that soldiers could drag girls somewhere in the evening. Girls reported that they were afraid to go out in the evening, and that their parents had taken to keeping them in the house at night. Some representatives of humanitarian agencies noted that they have observed that girls are afraid to speak to the military. Some female caregivers reported that at the beginning of the conflict there was “interest and aggression” from the military towards girls but that they have since “calmed down.”

“Military men are always drunk. Nobody can tell what they are up to and they spend time near the school. They think they can do anything... The military should defend us, but we need protection from them.” *Girl 14-17*

Older boys’ fear of the military appears to be more linked to the risks of being caught in crossfire between armed groups, risks posed by tanks and military vehicles driving through settlements, and fear of soldiers being physically violent towards them. Boys aged 14-17 shared stories about seeing friends and relatives being beaten by the military. Girls reported seeing clashes between older boys and the military. Boys said that they did not complain to any authorities, as they do not feel it would result in any action. This sense of powerlessness in the face of the military and disbelief that the military would be held to account for poor behaviour was echoed by men.

“I am afraid of soldiers when I go to block posts. I’m like a rabbit in front of a soldier because he has weapons. My child sees this, sees my fear and thinks I’m weak. This is humiliation.” *Father*

“In front of the military, we are like kittens. Defenceless.”

Father

Men felt that authorities and administrative centres were located too far from where they live and as a result do not act on the day-to-day concerns of residents.

Mines and explosive remnants of war

The presence of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) continues to pose a risk to children. Mine-related incidents and mishandling of ERW accounted for 65% of child casualties in 2017 and 2018.¹⁷ During the first six months of 2019, 33 civilians were killed or injured by mine or ERW (10 killed/23 injured), among them four children (1 killed/3 injured).¹⁸ Children living in more rural areas are at greater risk of coming into contact with ERW and mines, as there are fewer child-friendly spaces outside of school and home.¹⁹ During discussions, caregivers spoke about how they worry about the risks to their children posed by ERW.

Some children as young as six spoke about fears related to mines and ERW. Some adolescent girls explained that they have stopped visiting the places they used to love to explore due to the risk posed by ERW, but that they knew boys from the age of 8-years old upwards continued to visit those sites.

Boys are more at risk of harm from ERW than girls. An assessment by the Danish Refugee Council – Danish Demining Group into child mine/ERW victims found that of the 17 children covered by the assessment, 14 were boys.²⁰ Respondents from humanitarian agencies stated that boys aged 11-13-years old who live in rural communities are most likely to become ERW victims. They felt that this is mainly due to searching for and playing with ERW being an outlet for boys’ curiosity in a context where there is little to keep children entertained. They also mentioned that for boys, the association of ERW with the military and masculine gender norms was a powerful draw:

“The military is associated with power. If children have a gun or related item, they think they take on power and strength.”

Representative of a humanitarian agency

For children injured by mines or ERW (who are predominantly boys), their ability to receive support is hindered by stigma. Representatives of humanitarian agencies report that some people, including social workers, place blame on the children for playing with the ERW. They also noted that the media spreads messages that child ERW victims all come from alcoholic families. The blaming and stigmatisation of both child survivors and their families contributes to reluctance to seek support. Child ERW survivors often also struggle with social reintegration. A representative of a humanitarian agency noted that child ERW survivors sometimes struggled to reintegrate into society due to physical signs such as scarring; they noted that they receive requests from child survivors for balaclavas to hide their scars. There is limited support available from the government for plastic or other advanced surgery for child ERW survivors.

Some respondents felt that mine risk education efforts had contributed to reduced risk of incidents; however, some others cautioned that despite knowing risks children, in particular boys, continue to search for ERW and play in places where there is a high risk.

Children’s association with armed groups

During the early stages of the conflict, it was reported that boys were often curious and would visit checkpoints to hang out with the military. Sometimes they would be involved in digging trenches. In general, both caregivers and staff from humanitarian agencies felt that there was less association of children with armed groups in the GCA compared to in the early years of the conflict. This was in part attributed to the military becoming more aware of children’s rights.

However, in the context of communities where the opportunities to generate income and meet basic needs have diminished, the perceived wealth of military personnel can be a lure. One older adolescent boy mentioned that he helps the military in his spare time to earn money. There were some concerns expressed that teenage boys living in the GCA with connections (through old friends or acquaintances) to armed groups in the NGCA are at risk of being used as informants. One group of girls reported that in their community a group of 15-year-old boys were forced to drink with the military.

Regarding girls, it was reported by organisations working in the NGCA that sometimes girls go to military bases to cook and clean. Both caregivers and staff from humanitarian agencies reported that older girls sometimes engaged in transactional sex with military personnel. Caregivers in the GCA reported that some girls hope to become pregnant, as they would receive benefits if they bore a child from a soldier. One respondent noted that often military personnel do not feel that sexual intercourse with adolescent girls is a problem, as they see it as the girl’s choice. Girls

engaging in transactional or survival sex were reported to be at risk of stigma, ostracization and further violence.

Regarding children's desire to join armed forces, the workshops with children painted a mixed picture. On one hand, several boys expressed fear at the prospect of potential military service, as they are concerned about hazing and service in active conflict. However, in each discussion with older adolescent boys one boy expressed a desire to pursue a military career. In one discussion with children aged 3-5 a boy said that he wanted to grow up to be a soldier. In the GCA, it is presumed that the general negative perception of military personnel by people living near the contact line may be a deterrent to children seeking to join the armed forces.

In the NGCA, it appears the situation may be very different, with higher rates of desire to join armed forces among young people. In the NGCA compared to the GCA it is more likely that that military personnel come from the areas in which they are fighting. This means that children feel a greater connection to those who are fighting. Staff of humanitarian agencies working in the NGCA report that the death of friends and close acquaintances is fuelling a desire for vengeance among

children, in particular adolescent boys. This in turn is stimulating desire to join the armed forces among children. In both GCA and NGCA, the increase in patriotic education and militarisation of extracurricular activities was considered to be a factor that may increase children's interest in joining the armed forces.

Psychological effects of conflict

All adults consulted during the assessment spoke of how they have observed children's behaviour change since the start of the conflict. Adults (whether caregivers, teachers, social workers, staff of local authorities or staff of humanitarian agencies) consistently talked about children "behaving older" or becoming like adults as a result of the conflict.

"Children aged eight already understand everything and live an adult life. They do not about think about playing and eating ice cream; they think about how to survive and hide." Male caregiver



PHOTO: SACHA MYERS / SAVE THE CHILDREN

As well as noting less engagement in typical childhood activities, several adult respondents mentioned that they have seen children taking on more supportive and caring roles, seeking to help the family rather than fulfil their own individual desires.

Children and adults reported many signs of responses associated with trauma across the assessment. It was reported that children (both boys and girls) have developed heightened arousal and startle responses, reacting sharply to sudden sounds such as doors closing or balloons bursting. Sometimes children drop to the floor or run and hide. It was also reported that sometimes children face being mocked by their peers for these reactions.

“I am afraid of any loud noises. I start crying, my heart aches and I hide in a corner. What can I do? I am afraid. I start crying when I hear loud noises, like fireworks that boys play with.” Girl 14-17

An increase in nightmares and hallucinations among children was reported by adults. Two girls in workshops for children aged 6-9-years old spoke about having nightmares and visions that left them scared and confused. Professionals reported an increase in regression among children. For example, social workers noted that there has been an increase in incontinence among children, with children aged 8-11-years old worst affected. Professionals also noted an increase in young children with speech impediments, such as stuttering or difficulties in pronouncing words. Some female caregivers also spoke about their concern that children might develop stutters.

Children were reported to have become more anxious, and adolescents (both girls and boys) spoke about feeling anxious themselves. Several younger girls aged 6-9-years old spoke about being scared when they think they see strangers. Caregivers, both male and female, reported that their children have become more nervous and fearful (including boys, who were reported to have become “more worried”). The UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine (USE) adolescent study found that girls reported higher levels of internalizing problems, such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress, than boys.²¹

Separation anxiety, both of children and of parents, emerged as an issue in many discussions. Social workers reported that they have seen an increase in children’s fears about being away from parents, manifested in reluctance to go to kindergarten or school and fears

about sleeping separately; they felt that separation anxiety was more common in girls than boys. Across workshops with children aged 6-17-years old, fear of being alone and the need to be near their family came up. Caregivers were also reported as being more reluctant to let their children out of their sight, or to let them travel far afield for education.

Adolescent boys and girls spoke about fear that they or their families would die. Children seemed to think about death frequently. One young adolescent boy recalled that at the start of the conflict (when he would have been about five or six years old) he and his friends took to playing games about funerals where they would bury their toys.

“I cannot think of any positive moments in my life.” Boy 14-17

Children were also reported as increasingly showing depressive symptoms. These include extended periods of low mood, low self-esteem, feeling tearful, finding it hard to recall positive memories and having a lack of hope. Both humanitarian organisations working in the NGCA and the Department of Children, Families and Youth talked about concerns they have around an increase in suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts among children. They noted that sometimes children mimic suicidal acts during play, for example, small children would use towels pretending to hang themselves. Local authorities noted that while child suicides happened before the conflict, they are more common now. They attributed this to the stressful situation having lowered children’s resilience and left them more open to manipulation. The Department of Children, Families and Youth are concerned about activity of the “Blue Whale movement” in eastern Ukraine, which is reported to be an online “suicide game” targeting teenagers. While the existence of an organised suicide movement is questionable²², the discussion of suicide on online forums and social media may be a risk factor for young people who are spending increasing amount of time online in the absence of other leisure opportunities.

Children and adults both remarked on poor behaviour of children. Caregivers talked about how their children no longer obey them as they used to. Young girls aged 6-9-years old spoke about how one of the biggest problems they face are fights among children. Adults (both caregivers and professionals) spoke of increased aggression among children of different ages, in general noting that it affected both genders but boys more so. Some aggression seems to be linked to difficulties with self-regulation; social workers reported the case of one boy who has violent periods and that once he

calms down, he explains that he cannot control himself and fears he will hurt others. Increased risk-taking behaviour (such as substance abuse and delinquency), primarily among boys, was reported as a concern by representatives of humanitarian agencies.

The above findings align to the findings of the 2017 UNICEF *Children of the Contact Line* study, which found commonly reported symptoms of psychological distress include anxiety, night terrors, bed wetting, increases in risk taking behaviour, depression, hyperactivity, social withdrawal and panic triggered by loud noises or unexpected touching.²³ It also aligns to data collected from adolescents in 2017 as part of the UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine (USE), which demonstrated that, “Conflict exposure is associated with a broad range of internalizing and externalizing mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse and aggression, while it is also associated with a reduced overall quality of life and life satisfaction.”²⁴

“We are accustomed to the fact that our settlement is being shelled. We are not as scared as we used to be.” Boy 14-17

The duration of the conflict has also resulted in conflict becoming “normal” for some children. In three out of four discussions with adolescent boys, they mentioned that they have got used to their settlements being shelled. In one group of adolescent girls, the girls reflected that they had forgotten to put conflict on the lifeline drawn in one sub-group because they have got so used to it. Caregivers of young children spoke about how they have children that have known nothing but life in conflict. Caregivers and professionals noted that some children no longer seem to notice explosions. While some informants felt that being used to conflict and how to respond helped to keep children safe, social workers expressed concern that children are so used to shelling and the presence of military personnel that they no longer want to take measures to protect themselves (for example, getting up at night to go to a shelter).

LEISURE, PLAY AND CULTURE

Article 31: Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

The conflict has affected the variety of leisure activities available to children. While on average adolescent children scored their ability to play and relax the highest among the rights-based domains (with the vast majority

saying that they were often or always able to play and relax), the conflict has changed what children are able to do in their spare time.

“Our children have nowhere to go, nothing to do.” Mother

Many of the places where children used to play (such as forests and fields) are now scattered with explosives, and the presence of military personnel in settlements sometimes deters children from playing outside. Boys aged 6-9 mentioned that the playground in their settlement is damaged and there’s no safe or age-appropriate place for them to play. Caregivers explained that many of the playgrounds have been damaged by the conflict and have not been repaired. Despite children often being aware of the risks, there were reports of children (in particular boys) playing in damaged buildings or places where there were ERV. In both groups of boys aged 6-9-years old, boys mentioned this – one group talking about wanting to go to the ruined school and play shooting games and in the other that they used to enjoy walking in abandoned places and looking for bullet cartridges. Some adolescent girls explained that they have stopped visiting the places they used to love to explore due to the risk posed by ERV, but that they knew boys from the age of 8-years old upwards continued to visit those sites. Male and female caregivers and social workers spoke of stories of children bringing home ERV, and the fear and risk that this causes.

“The boys run around with toy guns, build bases and shout ‘War!’”

Female caregiver

Play and games by younger boys appear to have become more militarised since the start of the conflict. Some boys, including those in the youngest age group, drew pictures of tanks or other military equipment or talked about how they liked to pretend to fight. Female caregivers said they feel that boys are playing more conflict-based and aggressive games.

The conflict has separated settlements in the GCA that are close to the contact line from the cities of Donetsk and Luhansk, which used to be cultural hubs. Some children reported missing going to the cinema. This isolation, combined with the departure of specialist teachers, has limited the amount of extracurricular activities open to children. Older adolescents, caregivers, social workers and local authorities lamented that clubs and activities such as chess, dancing, singing and sports have stopped.

“There is no possibility for development, since there is no place to go, relax or, hang out. When it gets dark, everyone is sitting at home. For entertainment there is only the Internet, talking to each other on the phone, and watching TV.” Girl 14-17

Instead, children appear to be spending more of their leisure time watching television, on smartphones or on computers. Adolescent boys in particular said that they were happy to spend large amounts of time playing computer games; adolescent girls were more likely to mention social media, surfing the internet and chatting with friends. One group of 6-9-year old girls said that they want to become bloggers in order to communicate with the outside world. While most children seem to enjoy using technology during their leisure time, it seems that increased use of technology is creating tensions between parents and children. Caregivers often referred to children’s use of technology in negative terms, talking about them being “addicted to gadgets,” worrying that children were becoming more isolated, or expressing concern that technology was undermining traditional values. In one discussion with older adolescent girls, they talked about some of the risks they perceived in online activities, mentioning that sometimes adults harass children online. Staff of humanitarian agencies working in the NGCA noted that since the start of the conflict they have observed an increase in hate speech and trolling online, both directed at and perpetrated by teenagers.

HEALTH

Article 24: Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy.

The conflict has both created health risks and restricted access to quality medical assistance. Social workers spoke about how in discussions with medical professionals, doctors report seeing both an increase in illnesses such as flu and coughs and the emergence of new illnesses. Doctors reportedly attribute this increased morbidity to stress, poor water quality and insufficient and lower quality food, noting that they have observed a decrease in immunity. Disease outbreaks sometimes result in school closures for quarantine periods.

The conflict has increased health risks as a result of damage to major water and sanitation infrastructure such as pipelines, pumps, and treatment plants. About 1/3 of households living within 20km of the contact line report water shortages.²⁵ Damage to water and sanitation infrastructure emerged as a concern during this assessment.

Problems seemed particularly severe in one location in Donetsk oblast, where lack of water or poor water quality was mentioned in all focus groups with male and female caregivers and in the discussion with young boys. In this location, caregivers spoke about how water is no longer cleaned and thus is drawn straight from the river where sewage also discharges. Caregivers explained that they’ve seen an increase in sickness such as stomach issues among children.

Damage to water infrastructure may be leading to children having to take on chores that were previously not required to do. One group of 6-9-year-old boys spoke about how there wasn’t enough water and how it was hard to carry heavy buckets of water.

Insufficient food and inadequate nutrition also worsen the health situation for some families. Teachers spoke about how they knew of families where children do not get enough food. One group of older teenage boys talked about how their parents get lower wages due to the conflict and that now there is not always enough money for a full meal. In one workshop with 3-5-year-old girls, two girls spoke about concerns about food. One explained that she enjoyed eating fruit, but her parents can rarely afford to buy fruit. Another spoke about how she was worried about birds eating all the harvest and her family not having enough to eat. While these concerns did not emerge in all children’s workshops, it suggests that for some children fear about insufficient food is a part of life.

Children and families are also facing reduced access to medical assistance and a decrease in the quality of care provided. With two-thirds of health facilities in areas closest to the contact line damaged, 38 per cent of households report lacking access to health-care services.²⁶ In one discussion with female caregivers, they spoke about how the area by the hospital is one of the most dangerous places in their settlement as the military are based near there and it is shelled.

“If you value your health, you have to go to another city to get medical help.” Girl 14-17

The Health and Nutrition Cluster report that over 1,500 healthcare professionals have left the conflict-affected area since 2014, contributing to a lack of staff. There is an irregular supply of medicines and medical equipment.²⁷ Adolescent children and adults reported feeling that the quality and timeliness of medical assistance has decreased since the start of the conflict. In seven out of eight discussions with adolescents, access to quality healthcare was reported as a problem. Adolescents talked about fears of misdiagnosis or of their health concerns being dismissed by medical staff. Some said they felt that good doctors did not want to live in their settlements due to the poor living conditions.

Several adolescent girls' groups talked about how people often wait a long time for a response from the emergency medical services, and how some people in their settlements died as a result. Often more isolated settlements only have a paramedic station (or use one in a neighbouring settlement); girls spoke about how these have short opening hours and only offer a limited range of services. Distance to a pharmacy and shortages of medical supplies were reported as a problem by some adolescents.

The conflict has cut off referral pathways between isolated rural health facilities and larger health facilities located in urban centres. Many adolescent children, both boys and girls, explained that there are a lack of specialist medical services in their settlements and the problems they face with firstly securing a referral and then traveling to where the service can be provided. Caregivers spoke about the challenges of travelling to another city for medical assistance. In one settlement in Luhansk oblast, male caregivers remarked that a bus goes to the city where they are meant to seek treatment only three times a week. Considering the challenges involved in travelling to seek medical assistance, poor families will be disproportionately affected by reduced access to quality healthcare.

EDUCATION

Article 28: *Every child has the right to an education. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights.*

Along the contact line, schools regularly come under fire, affecting the education and wellbeing of thousands of children and teachers.²⁸ The Education Cluster reported that more than 150 schools in eastern Ukraine were concerned about their proximity to military activities and 62 schools reported unexploded ordnance near them. Since the start of the conflict over 750 educational facilities have been damaged due to hostilities.²⁹ More than 50% of households living within 5km of the conflict line report hearing shelling on their way to an education facility.³⁰

Schools were often considered dangerous by children and adults. 10-13-year old boys and girls both talked about how they did not feel safe at school due to the risks of surprise shelling. Male caregivers in both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts reported that schools were shelled.

“The school is dangerous every day and every night.” *Father*

The Education Cluster reports that 45% of schools in affected oblasts have substandard latrines, or an inadequate water supply.³¹ Poor quality water in schools was reported as an issue by one group of older adolescent boys, who said that despite their complaints the problem had not been resolved. While sanitation facilities were not mentioned by children during discussions, inadequate WASH facilities have been found globally to contribute to absence or drop out by menstruating girls.³² Many schools across both sides of the contact line struggle to cope with winter due to old heating systems or lack of resources to procure fuel. In winter, sometimes parents do not send children to school when it is too cold in the classrooms.

The quality of education offered near the contact line has also suffered as a result of departure of teachers. Caregivers and children mentioned that some teachers had left due to the conflict and that in particular there were insufficient numbers of specialised teachers.

Conflict-related injuries and distress may also form barriers to children's education. A representative of a humanitarian agency noted that while children living with disabilities as a result of ERW incidents are sometimes able to return to school, schools often fail to make accommodations or respond to specific support needs. They shared an example of a boy who lost his writing hand as a result of an ERW incident; he returned to school but was not provided additional support nor permitted additional time in exams, despite having to learn to write with his other hand. Schools are sometimes unable to support children who are experiencing psychological distress as a result of the conflict. One girl recounted how her sister dropped out of school following a psychological breakdown; she resumed her education in another school but struggles to fully participate in class.

Several groups of children (adolescent boys and girls) and one group of female caregivers reported that teachers did not always treat children in a respectful way.

“School only causes negative emotions for us. Teachers disrespect us, insult us, and communicate from the top down.” Boy 14-17

One group of older adolescent girls reported facing “humiliation” by teachers in school. Of the adolescents who felt that teachers were not respectful enough of children, a common complaint was that teachers do not listen to the adolescents and dismiss their ideas and concerns.

Both adolescent girls and boys also explained that their experience at school was marred by bullying from other children, with girls more frequently reporting it as a big problem. In one group, girls mentioned knowing a girl who had dropped out of school as a result of bullying.

Children report that often those who are bullied are children from different social backgrounds, those with different appearances or those with different

intellectual abilities. This is supported by the findings of the UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine (USE) adolescent study, which found that what seems to drive victimization targeting is appearance, most notably being obese or looking dirty, and socioeconomic status.³³ However, some children also said that children who became distressed while at school were also at risk of being bullied; the risk of bullying as a result of showing emotions was deemed greater for boys. Children in general did not have faith in the ability of teachers or parents to resolve bullying and feared how bullies would respond if children reported the problem to adults.

“I am being criticised every day, humiliated, called names, so I’ve got used to it... we have no support from adults. We must solve problems ourselves.” Girl 14-17



PHOTO: DAN STEWART / SAVE THE CHILDREN

The concerns raised by children and caregivers are supported by the findings of the USE adolescent study, which found that adolescents living in areas near the contact line reported greater school drop-out tendency, higher normalization of bullying, and lower teacher support, compared to adolescents elsewhere in the Donbas.³⁴

“It’s better to go to vocational school after 9th grade. I want to get a profession faster and start earning money. I want to become independent.” Boy 14-17

While most boys and girls felt that children often or always finish 11 years of schooling, children and teachers noted an increasing desire from children to leave school after 9th grade to pursue vocational education. Both adolescent girls and boys said that they were eager to get a profession and start earning earlier, with the scholarships offered by vocational schools being an added incentive. Children felt that boys are more likely than girls to not continue into upper secondary school and higher education. This assessment does not have data that would enable a comparison of children’s preferences regarding education before and during the conflict. However, it is assumed that the challenges families are facing in generating income may be leading more children to seek financial independence at an earlier age.

Representatives of humanitarian agencies report that girls from the Roma community are at particular risk of gender-based violence, in turn affecting their schooling. They report that girls’ education is not prioritised by the Roma and girls are often removed from school at the age of 16 in order to get married. There were concerns that displacement as a result of conflict has led to a shift from Roma living in smaller groups to congregating in larger Roma communities, where adherence to traditions such as early marriage may be exacerbated. As Roma often lack birth certificates or other official documentation, they may not be counted in official statistics regarding education attendance and completion, making it challenging to understand the full extent of the problem.³⁵

The departure of many families from settlements near the contact line has created challenges for education as a result of low pupil numbers. Teachers reported that in some cases only one or two children seek to continue at school after 9th grade, but there is a law that requires a minimum of five pupils in a class. While teachers mentioned that they can sometimes make arrangements to support continuation of education, low pupil numbers and potential class closures may force students to travel further to continue their education beyond 9th grade.

In general, the Department of Education reports that they have also observed an increase in the numbers of students travelling long distances for education. Officials mentioned that they know of students who travel over 80km and one father said that his daughter travels over 100km each day for her education.

Children living in the NGCA face challenges with recognition of their education record and achievements. Caregivers talked about how they knew of children with certificates from the NGCA who were not allowed to continue their studies in the GCA until they took Ukrainian exams. As an initiative to mitigate some of the problems, the Department for Education has created distance learning opportunities for children in the NGCA that allow them to follow the Ukrainian curriculum remotely. However, organisations working in the NGCA report that having to attend both a physical school in the NGCA and remotely follow the Ukrainian curriculum can place a high burden on students. Sustained advocacy also contributed to students being permitted to cross the contact line during the last exam period to allow them to take their exams in the GCA.

PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE, ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Article 19: Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 34: Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.

The 2019 HNO reports that organizations providing case management services have observed an increased reporting on child neglect, in addition to forms of gender-based violence such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, exploitation and risk of sexual violence since the beginning of the conflict.

The 2019 REACH Protection assessment notes that, “Within the context of Ukraine, the concept of domestic violence is largely considered a private matter, and, due to lack of services and impunity for the perpetrators, threat of stigma, ostracism and further violence, is often widely underreported.”³⁶ This finding was borne out in discussions with representatives of humanitarian agencies. These representatives reported an observed increase in domestic violence, primarily directed towards women, since the start of the conflict, and that the most common forms of abuse were psychological and physical violence. Domestic violence within families affects children, as either subjects or witnesses of others being harmed. Though domestic violence did not emerge as a major concern in the majority of children’s workshops, in one discussion with girls aged 6-9-years-old it was highlighted as one of the biggest problems they face.

“We see parents fighting. Children are afraid of their parents’ screams. We worry that after a quarrel, one of the parents may leave the family.” Girl 6-9

In two discussions, adolescent girls also mentioned that parents sometimes hit, slap or yell at children when children misbehave or speak their mind.

During the workshop with staff from humanitarian agencies and civil society organisations working in the NGCA, the issue of domestic violence was discussed in depth. Participants mentioned that some contributing factors predated the conflict, including: acceptance of violence as a way of resolving disputes; perceptions that sometimes violence demonstrates that the perpetrator cares about the victim; norms that limit the discussion of domestic violence; and adults’ experience of violence in childhood. However, they noted that the conflict has exacerbated domestic violence in several ways. Firstly, they felt that a rise in unemployment and adoption of negative coping mechanisms including substance abuse increased the risk of violence. They also felt that the conflict has increased tolerance of violence within society as a whole, remarking that levels of cruelty have increased. Domestic violence was seen to be taking on more violent and severe forms, due to the ease of access to weapons; one participant recounted a story of a man throwing a grenade into the house of his former partner. Finally, they felt that deterrents and punishments for domestic violence have reduced, as police now consider it a minor matter unless someone dies. This reported increase in domestic and intimate partner violence is in line with findings from other contexts, which suggest that domestic and intimate partner violence are often the most common form of gender-based violence in humanitarian settings.³⁷

As mentioned previously, adolescent girls reported sexual harassment by military personnel and there are reports of underage girls engaging in transactional sex with military personnel (sometimes in the hope of becoming pregnant in order to receive benefits).

“The military men catcall and harass us. We are scared and run from the military people when we see them. Military people stop the car close to girls at the street, touching and talking to them. Parents do not let us leave house in the evening.” Girl 14-17

Beyond that, there were concerns that girls might be at risk of sexual violence perpetrated by non-military actors. Female caregivers talked about their concern that older girls could be raped by civilians if they went out at night. The lack of streetlights was identified by some people as a risk factor, and several girls reported feeling unsafe at night.

Some of the discussions with adolescent girls suggested concerns about sexual involvement of underage girls with older men. One girl reported that her 15-year-old sister was in a relationship with a 29-year-old man, with the support of their mother. Other girls reported that sometimes, “parents can pressure girls to entice a well-off man.”

Discussing sex with children remains a taboo, creating a barrier to supporting respectful relationships, safe sexual practices and encouraging reporting of sexual violence. This attitude among some of the older generation was attributed by respondents to have been caused in part by attitudes during the Soviet era towards the topic and the influence of the Orthodox Church. When asked about sexual violence within relationships, one group of older adolescent girls responded, “Maybe there are cases of violence, but this is hidden. It creates shame.”

ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

Article 33: Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs.

As mentioned earlier, the excessive consumption of alcohol by military personnel emerged as a widespread concern of both children and adults. In addition to this, in five out of eight discussions with adolescents concerns about alcohol or drug abuse by children or civilian adults emerged. Both adolescent girls and boys talked about being scared by the levels of substance abuse in their settlements.

Representatives of humanitarian agencies working on both sides of the contact line spoke about observations and anecdotal reports of increases in substance abuse, with some reporting that they feel people have become drawn to alcohol or drugs as a coping mechanism. Regarding substance abuse among men, the Gender Based Violence Area of Responsibility has reported that the conflict has severely undermined men’s ability to fulfil their traditional gender roles of protector and provider, thus leading men to resort to negative coping mechanism including increased alcohol consumption.³⁸

“Sometimes boys aged eight or nine drink beer.” *Girl 10-13*

Caregivers raised similar concerns about substance abuse in families, and fears that children observe and copy the adults around them. While they said that children were experimenting with drinking and drugs prior to the conflict, caregivers feel that the conflict has exacerbated the problem. Male caregivers reported that children sometimes start trying soft drugs at the age of 12 and can switch to hard drugs in the space of a year. In one focus group, male caregivers reported that people from other cities involve local children in the drug trade by giving them drugs to sell. Children themselves also reported peer pressure regarding alcohol and drug use:

“We don’t feel safe in the company of peers or older children, as they offer us alcohol and drugs.”

Boy 10-13

Participants felt that while there were instances of both girls and boys engaging in substance abuse, it was a greater risk for boys. This finding is supported by data from the USE study, which found that adolescent boys were more likely than girls to respond to problems by externalising behaviour including substance abuse.³⁹ One representative of a humanitarian agency reflected that it may be harder for boys to say no to offers of alcohol or drugs for fear of being seen as weak.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Article 17: *Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.*

“We don’t trust the information we get. There is a lot of deception and untruthful information.”

Boy 14-17

“We can get information, but this information is not always true or reliable. No sources can be trusted fully. It’s like with history: everybody writes it their way, which is beneficial for them.”

Girl 14-17

A surprisingly consistent finding across discussions with adolescent children was that they feel that the information they have access to is not reliable (reported in 7 discussions out of 8 with adolescents). Girls reported lower access to trusted information than boys did.

Children (both girls and boys) seek information from various sources, including social media, internet, newspapers, television and trusted adults such as parents and teachers. However, they are generally sceptical of the truthfulness of the information they can access. Some children believed that the misinformation was not purposeful, whereas others felt that information and news was used to advance various agendas. While some children trusted information coming from adults, others felt that parents often lied in attempts to protect children. Several children, both boys and girls, talked about the importance of triangulating information, checking different sources to see whether similar or different stories were being told.

While it seems that children’s right to information may be restricted, positives can be found in children’s emerging critical thinking capacities. These capacities could be further strengthened to support children to better assess the quality and reliability of information provided to them. In a conflict where sophisticated propaganda and disinformation campaigns are alleged to have been used,⁴⁰ such skills could help children identify truthful lifesaving and life-enhancing information and counteract information that seeks to fuel the conflict.

RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S VIEWS

Article 12: Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

“When we speak to adults, we want to be listened to, not shut up”.

Boy 14-17

Another strikingly consistent finding across all focus groups with adolescents was that children do not feel adults listen to or value their concerns. Some representatives of humanitarian agencies reported that there are pervasive attitudes in Ukraine that children's opinions are not important and that adults know better than children. This contributes to limited opportunities being provided for children to freely express their opinions, and reduced likelihood that children's opinions will be taken into serious consideration. The 2011 conclusion of the Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that there is a lack of genuine participation of children in the community and public life and that children's participation in decision-making processes remains the exception rather than the rule.⁴¹ The Young Voices study, which surveyed children aged 13 to 17 in Ukraine, found that that children were often afraid to express their opinions due to fear of ridicule, pressure or punishment from adults.⁴² During this assessment, children reported being told by adults that “they would understand when they grow up.” – but children felt that they had valuable views now.

“The war affected us. Parents think we are still small, but now the perception of the world is different. We see the mistakes our parents make, and we understand more than they do.” Girl 14-17

In several cases, children felt that parents did listen to them and consider their preferences when making decisions about household affairs. However, this was not consistent and in a small number of cases children reported that parents resort to violence in an attempt to quell children's opinions.

“In our town, many families do not want to listen to the views of children and even use violence.”

Girl 14-17

Consistently, adolescents spoke about how they feel they have limited opportunities to freely express their opinions at school or be consulted on decisions related to education. This appears to be one of the most widespread sources of discontent with education. One group of adolescent girls mentioned that they would consider it useless to speak to local authorities about their concerns, as they felt there was no hope that children's views would be listened to.

The sense children have that adults will probably dismiss their concerns may also reduce the likelihood that children will seek assistance or support from adults in dealing with problems they face in life. This in turn may prevent children receiving adequate protection and support.

“Our problems are considered irrelevant by society.” Boy 10-13

One representative of a humanitarian agency also expressed how they feel the limited opportunities for children to be involved in decision making restricts the development of critical thinking faculties. In turn, they felt that this then contributes to adolescents being less able to make systematic informed decisions, and thus being more open to influence from negative role models and a reduced ability to say no to risk-taking behaviour.

In feedback at the end of several workshops with adolescents, children spoke about how they really valued the opportunity to tell adults about their opinions and be listened to. There is clearly a desire from adolescent boys and girls for adults to listen to them, and to take their views into consideration in decisions within both the private and public sphere. A representative of a humanitarian agency reflected that they felt some aggression from adolescents is linked to their attempts to protect their opinion and autonomy in a context where their views are not adequately considered if peacefully expressed. The representative also noted that where positive opportunities for child participation had been available, they had observed adolescents becoming more socially active, including donating blood and volunteering in communities heavily affected by the conflict. One group of adolescent girls specifically requested that NGOs work to combat stereotypes that restrict children's ability to participate and create opportunities for children's opinions to be elevated.

Coping strategies

“Our parents also became friends, and we go for a walk together.” Boy 3-5

Children involved in the assessment displayed a range of coping strategies, both positive and negative. Social relations and support between peers and within families emerged as something that helps children cope with difficult circumstances. Most children’s groups, from the age of 3 to 17, talked about spending time with friends. Some remarked that one of the few positive effects of the conflict was that they made new friends with internally displaced children who came to live in their settlements.⁴³ Others, often in rural settlements very close to the contact line, expressed sadness that some of their friends had moved away.

Some professionals remarked that children have become more supportive of each other and that there is increased cohesion between children, including those of different ages. However, adolescent boys are not able to be fully open with their friends for fear of being mocked for showing emotions or fear; this limits the supportive value of friendship groups. Adolescent girls’ attitudes towards being open with friends varied. Some felt that only their friends truly understood them, whereas others were concerned that friends might betray them or bully them.

“You should hide your fear. They will know you are afraid and will bully you.” Girl 14-17

Family relationships were also a source of support for children of all ages. Younger children spoke about how they love it when their parents play with them, explaining it helps them to feel happy and calm. Adolescents generally felt able to talk to their parents about how they were feeling (though boys still felt pressure not to cry even within the family setting).

Some children noted that after the start of the war they started to visit relatives more frequently. However, other children have been separated from relatives by the contact line, which was a source of distress.

Adolescent children mentioned trying to avoid thoughts of the past. Both boys and girls spoke about “losing themselves” on computers and phones (boys talking more about playing computer games, and girls talking more about social media and speaking to friends). This suggests that these channels may be ways of children escaping or temporarily forgetting their day-to-day life, and thus a coping strategy. While children enjoyed these activities, there are some risks connected to use of social media due to concerns about trolling, propaganda and discussions of suicide in these fora (as discussed earlier in this report).

Some children seem to be using black humour as a way of coping. One young adolescent girl spoke about how it was “fun” when there was shelling. In that same group, girls told gruesome jokes about people dying or losing limbs.

Unfortunately, children were also engaged in very negative coping strategies, many of which have been discussed earlier in this report. Both boys and girls (though boys more frequently) were reported to be drinking alcohol and taking drugs; this was reported to be more widespread than before the conflict, and starting at a younger age. There were reports from caregivers that children had “started to act like thieves” and were visiting abandoned properties to loot them. Boys were also reported to collect scrap metal to sell. This sometimes drives them to collect ERW, putting them at risk of injury. There were reports of adolescent girls engaging in transactional sex with military personnel (sometimes in the hope of becoming pregnant in order to receive benefits), as a way of receiving money or material benefits.

What do children think the future holds for them?

When asked to think about the future, some adolescents felt hopeful whereas others saw a bleak future. One group of young adolescent girls refused to think about the future. From observations of girls' body language and the wider workshop, the facilitation team noted that they felt girls may have not wanted to talk about the future as their settlement is regularly shelled and so the girls do not know what tomorrow holds, let alone the longer term future.

“We do not want to think about the future.” Girl 10-13

However, most groups were able to identify positive things they felt the future would hold for them. There was a marked difference between what adolescent girls and adolescent boys saw as important when talking about the future.

In every adolescent girls' group (bar the one where they would not think about the future), girls saw their future as intrinsically tied to being wives and mothers. This family-oriented future was seen as positive by girls. The only thing one group of young adolescent girls wrote when asked to think about their future was that they would bear children. One group of older adolescent girls expressed concern that they would not be able to keep their family together, as they have seen so many separations and single parent families in their town. In most girls' groups they also spoke of continuing into higher education, their desire for academic success and that they would have careers in the future.

Adolescent boys did not mention having a family as one of their main aspirations for the future. Instead, boys' hopes for the future seemed to be more linked to education, careers and material items (such as being able to get new phones or buy a car). As noted previously, many boys expected to finish school after 9th grade and continue with vocational education; for some this was linked to better future income generation prospects while some simply thought it would be easier. Boys identified a range of future careers, including computer programmer, police officer and prosecutor.

Some boys hoped to pursue a military career, with one boy saying, “The army is a man's occupation.” However, for other boys the prospect of military service in the future filled them with fear, as they are concerned about hazing and service in active conflict. Older adolescent boys saw that one of the best things about the future would be greater independence and being able to make decisions for themselves.

“Here in the town there are no opportunities. We will just have to leave. If someone helped, then you can rebuild everything.” Girl 14-17

In three of the four discussions with older adolescents (two with boys and one with girls), children explained that they did not think they would have a good future if they remained in their settlements. Instead, they spoke about their plans to migrate, either to large cities like Kharkiv or Kyiv or abroad. Migration was seen as a way of escaping the limited career opportunities in settlements near the contact line, as the pathway to a better standard of living and as a way of escaping the conflict itself. The desire of children to migrate was mentioned by male caregivers, for whom the desire of youth to leave appeared to be a source of resentment. Humanitarian agencies working in the NGCA noted that young people often sought to migrate, to Russia from the NGCA or to Poland and Hungary from the GCA.

Overall, it seemed that children were more hopeful for the future than caregivers. Caregivers expressed concern about how higher education opportunities have become more restricted for young people. The conflict has separated settlements near the contact line in the GCA from Luhansk and Donetsk cities, which previously would have been easy to access for education. Now youth face the prospect of having to travel much further for high quality education, and caregivers (and some children) are concerned about whether families will be able to cover the costs. In general, both children and adults strongly hope for an end to the conflict – to reopen previous education and career opportunities and to be able to live in safety.

Conclusion and recommendations

Children in eastern Ukraine face a multitude of risks and hardships as a result of the conflict. Children's ability to attain their rights to education, health, play and protection are severely curtailed. Children are also suffering direct physical risks, such as shelling, abuse by military personnel and ERW incidents, and psychological effects of conflict.

Their experiences of these risks are shaped by gender norms that influence children from a very young age. Even in discussions with children aged three to five years old, gender norms of boys as active protectors and girls as emotional homemakers were emerging. Gender norms and inequality exacerbate different risks for girls and boys; for example, boys are at greater risk of injury from ERW, whereas girls are at greater risk of sexual harassment and violence. Gender norms also influence children's ability to seek support, and the extent to which they benefit from the help on offer.

This report helps identify areas where targeted interventions could help lessen the risks children face as a result of the conflict, promote gender equality for the benefit of all, improve children's ability to attain their rights and nurture the next generation of active citizens in eastern Ukraine.

Firstly, in recognition of children's ability to identify solutions to challenges they face, we wish to share recommendations identified by children during the assessment.

CHILDREN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Children across all age groups were asked for ideas about what people could do to improve the lives of children in eastern Ukraine. The recommendations below, while not always being a direct translation of children's words, summarise trends in recommendations from children. To distinguish whether recommendations were made by girls, boys or both, a letter is shown in brackets after each recommendation (with G meaning girls made the recommendation and B meaning boys did).

To all adults:

- Listen to us. Value our opinions. Let us work with you to help solve children's problems. (G, B)
- Prioritise ending the conflict. If the conflict ends, we believe many problems will be solved. (G, B)
- Teach children how to remain safe. (G, B)
- Vote for people who will help solve children's problems. (B)

To parents:

- Listen to us, spend time with us and support us; your help is really important to us. (G)
- Help us when we have problems with bullying at school. (G, B)
- Walk with us, if we have to go to places that we think are dangerous such as walking near armed groups. (G)

To teachers:

- Treat us with respect and do not humiliate us. (G, B)
- Listen to children's concerns about bullying and help solve that problem. (G)
- Support extracurricular activities and help us create interest clubs at school. (G, B)

To authorities:

- Help develop services and play and entertainment facilities in our communities. (G, B)
- Please pay attention to the situation in isolated villages. We are important. Listen to our concerns and help solve them. (G, B)
- Help to repair damaged roads, water pipes and buildings. (B)
- Make sure there are streetlights to help us feel safer. (G)
- Work to help the military behave in a good way towards local people. (G)

To children:

- Behave in ways that help keep you and other children safe – don't play in dangerous places and say no to things that could hurt you. (G, B)
- Be kind to other children and do not bully them. (G, B)
- Look out for other children; if they are being abused, speak to an adult you trust or call an emergency number. (G)
- Work with other children to help solve problems. (G, B)
- Do not be afraid to express your opinion. You have valuable ideas. (G)

To NGOs and humanitarian agencies:

- Help create safe places to play, like new playgrounds and sports pitches. (G, B)
- Keeping working to clear mines and make our communities safe. (B)
- Help to establish positive relations between representatives of the Ukrainian army and local residents. (G, B)
- Report poor behaviour of armed groups to the authorities. (G)
- Keep providing assistance to schools and helping to create safe environments for education. (G, B)
- Influence local and state authorities to improve lives for children. (G)
- Listen to the ideas and opinions of children – and encourage other people to pay attention to our ideas. Work to combat stereotypes that say children's voices do not matter. (G)

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen child rights programming in eastern Ukraine

Save the Children and other humanitarian actors are already supporting child rights through direct actions on violations of children's rights and gaps in provision of services. However, there are opportunities to strengthen child rights programming through increased focus on strengthening the capacity of duty-bearers to meet their obligations and strengthening the understanding and capacity of children, their carers and civil society to claim rights and hold others to account. At present, children and their families in eastern Ukraine feel distanced from local administrations and unable to influence the quality of services or hold duty-bearers to account.

- Collaborate with the Ukrainian Parliament Ombudsperson for Child Rights and the Presidential Commissioner for Child Rights to promote children's rights within Ukraine at national and regional levels.

- Implement child-centred social accountability approaches to build connections between children and their families and duty-bearers and service providers. These involve: improving access to information to make all stakeholders aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to child rights, and ensure transparent, informed and child-focused decision-making; service assessments and interface dialogue to build the civic space necessary to accurately assess the current situation, and foster open discussion on access and quality of services for children; accountability mechanisms, including action plans and budgets, community monitoring processes and complaint procedures, to agree joint commitments with clear lines of responsibility; and advocacy to encourage and support government and local authority ownership and sustainability.

As part of a child rights programming approach, it is recommended that further work is done to **promote child participation**. Children are eager to participate and influence decisions. This assessment has demonstrated that children have a nuanced

understanding of the effects of conflict and are capable of identifying actions to mitigate these issues. First and foremost, children have a right to participation. Beyond that, child participation can support improved interventions and solutions to the challenges children and their communities face, support the development of children's reasoning capacities and confidence, improve children's protection through helping them be better informed, and promote positive civic engagement and active citizenship. However, at present social and cultural norms that privilege the voice of adults and do not recognise children's right to and capacity for participation are a barrier to children's meaningful participation. Children also struggle to find information that they trust sufficiently to use to inform their decision making.

- Work with caregivers, teachers and wider society to build support for child participation. As a strategy to increase support, consider framing child participation as a way to support children's success in future education and work opportunities, as well as supporting children's ability to make informed decisions and resist risk-taking behaviour.
- For humanitarian actors, model good practice in child participation by ensuring that opportunities for meaningful and ethical child participation are created across the programme cycle (analysis, design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and advocacy). Use the nine basic requirements for meaningful and ethical child participation to guide efforts.
- Investigate approaches aimed at building critical thinking and media literacy skills among adolescents, to support their participation and to help counter propaganda and hate speech that fuels conflict and divides.

Creatively engage children and communities in discussions related to gender equality. Gender norms have a profound effect on how girls, boys, women and men in eastern Ukraine experience the conflict. However, understanding of gender equality seems to be limited and the concept often met with significant resistance, particularly from older generations. Gender equality seems often to be perceived as synonymous of women and girls' equality, without recognition of how boys and men may also be harmed by current gender norms; this seems to create resistance from boys and men (for example, one group of adolescent boys said, *"We are constantly being told about gender equality, which means that women's and girls' rights are the most violated. This means that their problems are more important for everyone than the problems of boys."*) Gender equality is also sometimes perceived as a Western construct and something that is antithetical to Ukrainian values; this negative conception of gender equality could put programming in some areas at risk.

- Develop creative ways of promoting discussions about gender equality without explicit mention of the term, in order to overcome initial resistance. For example, discussions could begin by exploring power structures and the different experiences of boys and girls in a community, without an explicit introduction as a gender equality awareness raising activity. Learning can be drawn from the adaptation of Save the Children's Choices, Voices and Promises curriculum for use in humanitarian contexts with conservative prevailing views.
- Ensure that capacity building and awareness campaigns related to gender equality focus not only on how gender equality can benefit girls and women but also boys and men.
- Promote positive role models of gender diverse and non-conforming roles within activities and materials. For example, consider inviting men and women in non-gender traditional roles to speak in schools about their lives and experiences. Continue existing efforts within Save the Children programming, such as the use of imagery that reinforces gender equality without explicitly stating it (for example, colouring books showing families where parents share responsibilities and children enjoy diverse opportunities).
- Identify opportunities to engage men in promoting positive models of masculinity. For example, consider how to engage men as role models in sharing feelings and communicating important information within families, and promote men's involvement in activities to support children's play and development. For example, given the reduction in extra-curricular activities for children, consider training parents, including men, to run extracurricular clubs (such as sports, chess or singing clubs) themselves.

Diversify and adapt protection and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) interventions to make them more gender sensitive and to respond to emerging concerns. Children in eastern Ukraine face multi-faceted protection risks. Gender norms both increase boys' and girls' exposure to certain protection risks and can limit the ability of children, particularly boys, to access appropriate protection and MHPSS support. For example, gender norms suggest that common MHPSS approaches that have a strong art therapy component and are delivered in group-based settings may be less appropriate for boys.

Gender-based violence, in particular domestic and intimate partner violence, is reported to have increased in frequency and severity since the start of the conflict. However, societal norms, stigma, limited access to appropriate services and impunity for perpetrators contribute to underreporting. Girls, boys, men and women report fearing the presence of military actors in

their communities, due to risks of both collateral damage and abuse by soldiers.

Parents and other caregivers have a key role to play in supporting children's mental health and wellbeing, but the strains they are facing as a result of the conflict sometimes seem to be reducing their ability to listen to and support their children. Parents sometimes feel pressure to hide their own feelings for fear of overburdening children. In particular, men face challenges in being open about their emotions due to gender norms.

The conflict is having a severe impact on children's mental health. In addition to widespread reports of an increase in depression and anxiety among children, concerns also emerged about suicide and suicidal behaviour. The World Health Organisation reports that suicide is the second leading cause of death for 15-29-year-olds globally.⁴⁴ Therefore, suicide prevention strategies deserve a place within the wider MHPSS response.

Children in eastern Ukraine are active online. While this brings them entertainment and helps them to feel connected to others, it can also create risks of online victimisation or getting involved in activities such as trolling.

- Promote violence prevention through awareness raising on rights and legislation within Ukraine. Advocate for improved response from the criminal justice system to better respond to and support a reduction in gender-based and other violence within homes and communities.
- Identify and support actors that can provide specialised support for survivors of violence, including survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence.
- Promote effective, safe, confidential, accessible and age, gender, and sexual orientation, gender identity or expression-responsive referral networks for GBV concerns. Support staff to be aware of and to apply referral protocols for GBV.
- Build the capacity of the Ministry of Defence and military forces on child rights, prevention of violence, protection of civilians and best practices from other conflict settings to reduce instances of harassment and violence against children by the military.
- Revise MHPSS approaches to better target boys. Consider sport for development approaches, which can support the restoration of social well-being and psychological health. While this is recommended with the specific intention of investigating PSS approaches that may be more accessible for boys, care should be taken to ensure girls are not excluded from sports-based approaches and that gender norms regarding appropriate activities for boys and girls are not perpetuated through this approach. Learning could be drawn from Save the Children's [Coaching for Life](#) programme in Jordan and Indonesia, which uses football as a way of supporting girls' and boys' wellbeing.

- Implement activities that support positive parenting to improve child-caregiver relationships, and encourage caregivers to talk to children about what is happening and explore how to share feelings. Provide support to adults (for example, resources and support groups).
- Investigate ways to strengthen suicide prevention and mitigation within humanitarian interventions. For example, humanitarian actors should establish appropriate referral protocols for suicide risks, and ensure staff are trained and supported to apply these with consideration for the best interests of the child. Children, caregivers, teachers, social workers and community leaders can be involved in the development of prevention campaigns.
- Incorporate activities on safe online behaviour into child protection interventions, working with children and caregivers to support identification of risks and promote online safety.

Continue interventions to promote schools as safe spaces and encourage quality learning environments. The conflict in Ukraine has had a severe effect on children's education in Ukraine, due to physical damage to facilities, displacement of teachers and class closures. Children and caregivers often fear schools will be hit by shells. Children's experience of education is blighted by experiences of humiliating treatment by teachers and bullying by peers.

- Continue advocacy for Ukraine to implement the [Safe Schools Declaration](#), an inter-governmental political commitment that provides countries the opportunity to express support for protecting education from attack during times of armed conflict; the importance of the continuation of education during conflicts; and the implementation of concrete measures to deter the military use of schools and attacks on schools.
- Implement interventions to tackle violence (including psychological) against children at schools perpetrated by peers, teachers and other school personnel. This could include facilitating development of protective school codes of conduct, including measures to respond to physical and humiliating punishment and bullying, as well as supporting teachers to develop skills in non-punitive positive discipline and child-friendly classroom management.
- Support activities that promote child participation within schools, working with teachers to build support for this.
- Support schools to implement disability-inclusive education; within this, ensure that the specific support needs of child survivors of conflict-related violence and incidents are met.

Annex 1: List of respondents

Stakeholder group	# of females	# of males	Approach
Children aged 3-5 years old	6	14	Participatory workshop
Children aged 6-9 years old	12	12	Participatory workshop
Children aged 10-13 years old	13	16	Participatory workshop
Children aged 14-17 years old	17	17	Participatory workshop
Caregivers	11	9	Focus group discussion
Teachers	2	1	Focus group discussion
Social workers	5	0	Focus group discussion
Humanitarian actors from NGCA	7	1	Participatory workshop
Representatives of Danish Refugee Council	1	0	Key informant interview
Representatives of Donetsk Department of Education	2	0	Key informant interview
Representatives of Donetsk Department of Children, Families and Youth	1	2	Key informant interview
Representatives of People in Need	1	0	Key informant interview
Representative of Slavic Heart	1	0	Key informant interview
Representatives of UNICEF	1	1	Key informant interview
Representatives of UNFPA	3	0	Key informant interview
Save the Children Child Protection Technical Specialist	1	0	Key informant interview
Save the Children Gender Technical Specialist	0	1	Key informant interview

Annex 2: Children's workshops methodologies

Workshop for children aged 3-5 years old

Introductions and informed consent

1. Introduce the team running the workshop. Share your names and say that you work for Save the Children, a group that is working in Ukraine and in other countries around the world to help children be safe, go to school and grow up healthily. Explain that you are here today to learn from children about their lives in Ukraine at the moment: what is good and what is bad for girls and boys. Explain that, "We will give you more details in a few minutes but first we want to get to know you a little bit."
2. Run an icebreaker activity with the children.

Ball game

Steps: Stand with the children in a circle. Throw the ball to a child across the circle; the person who catches it says their name and their favourite animal (you can make an animal noise & movement); keep going until everyone has said their name.

You can substitute favourite food or sport etc for favourite animal.

3. Provide a longer introduction and explanation.

Suggested script:

"We've come to talk to you today to find out what you like and what you don't like about your lives. We also want to hear if you have any ideas about how people could solve any problems children like you have. We are speaking to lots of different children in Ukraine as well as some grownups. We will share what children and grownups tell us, so that people are able to better look after children in Ukraine. To help us do this we will be writing down what you tell us.

You can ask us questions at any time. It is up to you to decide if you want to join in. If you don't want to speak to us or join in the activities, that is ok. Who would like to speak to us today?"

Draw me

Objectives:

- *To understand the young children's lives and experiences*
4. Children are given a small piece of paper each to do an individual drawing. They have coloured pens, pencils or crayons. Ask children to draw a picture about their lives. Give children 15-20 minutes to draw their picture (if they finish sooner, that is ok – you could suggest they draw another picture. Or if they all finish sooner, move on to the next step).
 5. Gather the children together in a group. Ask the children to each show and talk about their drawings in turn. The facilitator will ask simple child-friendly questions about different aspects of the drawings and will write this down. Examples of questions include:
 - Please can you tell me about your picture
 - This is interesting [*point to something that you don't know what it is*]: can you tell me about this?
 - You've drawn XXXX. How does that make you feel?
 - What do you like about XXXX?
 - What don't you like about XXXX?
 - When you see XXXX do you feel happy or sad? Why?
 - Have you drawn any people? Who are they? What are they doing?
 - What do grownups do here/when this happens?
 - What should grownups do here/when this happens?
 - Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?
- *Remember: never tell a child that you don't understand their drawing. This can make them feel bad. Just ask them to tell you about what they have drawn.*

Helping hands

Objectives:

- *To gather children's suggestions about how some of the problems they have talked about could be addressed*
6. Gather the children in a circle around a piece of flip chart paper on the floor. Ask each child to draw around one of their hands on the paper (so you have a piece of paper with as many outlines of hands as you have participants).
 7. Say, "Thank you for showing me your drawings just now. Some of you told me about some problems that children face here – things that are difficult or things that children don't like, or things that make children sad. Now I want to hear if you have any ideas about what people can do to help children with these problems."
 8. Say, "We've drawn our hands on this piece of paper. Everybody can use their hands to be kind to other people and to help them. What ideas do you have for how people can help children? Are there any ways that children can help other children?" *If there is enough time and children want to, they can draw pictures in the hands of people doing things to help children. Always ask the child to tell you about what they have drawn.*

Wrap up

9. Finish the workshop by thanking the children for joining in the games and activities. Say, "You've told me lots of things about what life is like for boys/girls here. For example, you told me that you like XXXX but that YYYY makes children sad. You've also shared your ideas about how people can help children. Remember, always speak to kind grownups that you trust, like your mother, father or teacher, if you have problems. I was also really impressed to hear how children are helping each other. That is a very kind and brave thing to do. Now

we will share what you have told us with other grownups so we can help children like you better. We can't promise to do everything you have said that grownups should do, but we will try our best to help children."

Sit, kneel, stand

10. Gather the children into a circle. Explain that we're going to finish by finding out what you thought about today. Explain that we are going to read out some statements. If the children agree with the statement they should stand up. If they partly agree, they should kneel. If they do not agree, they should sit down. And to make it more fun, we will ask you to close your eyes (*this helps reduce the chance they will copy their peers*). Read out the following statements (and invite children to open their eyes after they have stood, kneeled or sat for each one):
 - I made new friends today.
 - People listened to my ideas.
 - I was bored.
 - I had fun.
11. Thank the children again for taking part. Give the children their snack.

Workshop for children aged 6-9 years old

Introductions and informed consent

1. Introduce the team running the workshop. Share your names and say that you work for Save the Children, a group that is working in Ukraine and in other countries around the world to help children be safe, go to school and grow up healthily. Explain that you are here today to learn from children about their lives in Ukraine at the moment: what is good and what is bad for girls and boys. Explain that, "We will give you more details in a few minutes but first we want to get to know you a little bit."

2. Run an icebreaker activity with the children.

Ball game

Steps: Stand with the children in a circle. Throw the ball to a child across the circle; the person who catches it says their name and their favourite animal (you can make an animal noise & movement); keep going until everyone has said their name.

You can substitute favourite food or sport etc for favourite animal.

3. Provide a longer introduction and explanation.

Suggested script:

"We've come to talk to you today to find out the lives of children like you in Ukraine: what you like and what you don't like about your lives. We also want to hear if you have any ideas about how people could solve any problems children like you have. We are speaking to lots of different children in Ukraine as well as some grownups. We will share what children and grownups tell us, so that people are able to better look after children in Ukraine. To help us do this we will be writing down what you tell us, but we won't write down who says what.

We will stay here for at least 15 minutes after the end of the discussion if there is anything that you'd like to tell us that you don't want to say in front of the group.

Sometimes discussions bring up different feelings and memories. If you would like to speak to someone about these feelings, please come and tell us at the end.

You can ask us questions at any time. It is up to you to decide if you want to join in. If you don't want to speak to us or join in the activities, that is ok.

Who would like to speak to us today?"

Puppet Walk

Objectives:

- *To understand the experiences that girls and boys have faced in a safe way*
4. Each child is given a large envelope and materials to decorate it with. Explain to the children that we are going to make puppets (show example). The puppet should be the same age as them and lives in the same place as them. Children make a puppet each and give their puppet a name.
 5. When the children have finished making their puppets, the facilitator says, "We are going to take the puppets on a walk through their day." This starts with the puppets waking up in the morning. Children should move their puppets around and let their puppets speak to tell stories about what they are doing and seeing.
 6. The story takes the puppets from their home, into their community, to school and back home. During this, at every stage of the day and in every location the facilitator asks questions about what the puppets do, see and think in each of these spaces and times in the day and whether they feel safe, happy or sad. The notetaker must take careful notes about what the children say the puppets experience, and how this makes them feel.

Dot voting

7. When the puppets have gone back to sleep at the end of the day, gather children into a circle. Ask them, "What were the problems that the puppets face in their lives?" Write down a list of the problems that children mention. These could be things such as: violence at home, not being able to go to school, seeing fighting when outside, not having enough food, their homes being damaged etc.

8. When you have a list of problems, write each problem on a large piece of paper (and if possible, draw a picture to represent the problem). Show these to the children and ask them if there are any big problems that children in their community face that we have not written down here. If there are other problems, add them.
9. Explain that now we are going to vote to find out about the biggest problems that children face. Give each child one dot sticker each. Ask them to stick their dot on the poster that represents their biggest problem. Remind children that they can vote for what *they* think is the biggest problem. They do not need to copy their friends. Different people can face different problems.
10. Once completed, give them another sticker, and ask them to do the same, explaining that they can put the second sticker with their first if it is really a big problem or on another poster representing another problem.
11. Repeat with a third and final sticker, until each child has placed 3 stickers on the problem sheets.
12. Once all children have used all 3 stickers the facilitator should pick out the 3 posters with the most dots on. These now represent the 3 biggest problems. Move these posters to the wall at the front of the room / on to the floor / on the table.
13. Facilitator: "from the game we just played, it seems that the biggest problems for children right now are _____, _____ and _____. Does this sound correct? Are there any other problems that are bigger than these three problems that we didn't talk about in that game?"
14. Facilitator to write down each bigger problem articulated by the children (if any) and to repeat back the final top 3 priority problems.
15. Ask the children to explain more about why these are problems. E.g. Facilitator: many children have said that food is a big problem. Why is it a problem? What are the bad things? Are there any groups of children that experience this problem more? Write down the detailed explanations.
16. Ask the children if they want to tell you more about any of the other problems (e.g. the ones that were not prioritised as top 3). It is important to give children this opportunity as there may be an issue that is a severe problem for one child but not others (e.g. a protection concern). Remind children that they can come and speak to you after the workshop if they want to tell you something privately.

Helping hands

Objectives:

- To gather children's suggestions about how some of the problems they have talked about could be addressed
17. Gather the children in a circle around a piece of flip chart paper on the floor. Ask each child to draw around one of their hands on the paper (so you have a piece of paper with as many outlines of hands as you have participants).
 18. Say, "Thank you for telling me about the problems that children here face. Now I want to hear if you have any ideas about what people can do to help children with these problems."
 19. Say, "We've drawn our hands on this piece of paper. Everybody can use their hands to be kind to other people and to help them. What ideas do you have about how people can solve these problems and help children? Are there any ways that children can help other children?" Ask children to write down or draw pictures that explain their ideas about how people can help. *Make sure that you ask questions to understand who they are suggesting should do what.*

Wrap up

20. Finish the workshop by thanking the children for joining in the games and activities. Say, "*You've told me lots of things about what life is like for boys/girls here. For example, you told me that you like XXXX but that YYYY makes children sad. You've also shared your ideas about how people can help children. Remember, always speak to kind grownups that you trust, like your mother, father or teacher, if you have problems. I was also really impressed to hear how children are helping each other. That is a very kind and brave thing to do. Now we will share what you have told us with other grownups so we can help children like you better. We can't promise to do everything you have said that grownups should do, but we will try our best to help children.*"

Sit, kneel, stand

21. Gather the children into a circle. Explain that we're going to finish by finding out what you thought about today. Explain that we are going to read out some statements. If the children agree with the statement they should stand up. If they partly agree, they should kneel. If they do not agree, they should sit down. And to make it more fun, we will ask you to close your eyes (*this helps reduce the chance they will copy their peers*). Read out the following statements (and invite children to open their eyes after they have stood, kneeled or sat for each one):
 - I made new friends today.
 - People listened to my ideas.
 - I was bored.
 - I had fun.
22. Thank the children again for taking part. Give the children their snack.

Workshop for children aged 10-13 and 14-17 years old

Introductions and informed consent

1. Introduce the team running the workshop. Share your names and say that you work for Save the Children, an organisation that is working in Ukraine and in other countries around the world to help children be safe, go to school and grow up healthily. Explain that you are here today to learn from children and young people about their lives in Ukraine at the moment: what is good and what is bad for girls and boys. Explain that, "We will give you more details in a few minutes but first we want to get to know you a little bit."
2. Run an icebreaker activity with the children.

Introducing my neighbour

Steps: Ask all participants to form pairs. In each pair, participants introduce themselves to the other person and tell them three (3) things about themselves. For example: their name, what they like doing, and what their favourite food is. After this exchange, ask everyone to introduce the other person in their pair to the group based on the things they have shared.

Picture this – Explaining the workshop

Objectives:

- To explain to the participants how the discussions and outcomes will be documented and other messages regarding practicalities of the workshop and to do this in an interactive way that reassures group (facilitator is the first to draw)
3. Say:
“We’ve come to talk to you today to find out the lives of children like you in Ukraine: what you like and what you don’t like about your lives, whether your rights are respected, and what you think will happen to you in the future. We also want to hear if you have any ideas about how people could solve any problems children and young people like you have. We want to play a game now to explain what will be happening during and after the workshop.”
4. Stick some sheets of paper up on the wall. One of the facilitators will be responsible for drawing pictures to explain the following concepts. Explain to the children that we are going to draw some pictures and they have to guess what the pictures tell us about the workshop, the wider research or how the information collected will be used. Cover the following areas:
- **Speaking to lots of different children and adults to collect information.** [When children have guessed, explain that, “We are speaking to lots of different children in Ukraine as well as some adults – including parents, teachers and people working for charities. We want to hear about children’s lives in different communities, and how life might be different for boys and girls of different ages.”]
 - **Writing down notes.** [When children have guessed, explain that, “We will write down notes about what you say, but we won’t write down your names or who said what.”]
 - **Sharing the report with different people.** [When children have guessed, explain that, “We will be collecting information from different people and using it to create a report. This report will be shared with groups such as charities who want to know how to better help children and young people in Ukraine. We can’t promise that these groups will do everything that you suggest, but we believe it is important that these groups hear directly from children about what children’s lives are like. We also will create a short version of the report that will be shared with children and young people.”]
 - **A child asking a facilitator a question.** [When children have guessed, explain that, “You can ask us questions at any point during the workshop. If you have a question after the workshop, you can contact Save the Children by XXXXX.”]
 - **A child deciding not to take part in the discussion.** [When children have guessed, explain that, “It is up to you to decide if you want to join in the activities today. Participation is completely voluntary. If you don’t want to speak to us or join in the activities, that is ok. You can stop taking part at any time – just let us know.”]
5. We will stay here for at least 15 minutes after the end of the discussion if there is anything that you’d like to tell us that you don’t want to say in front of the group. Sometimes discussions bring up different feelings and memories. If you would like to speak to someone about these feelings, please come and tell us at the end.
6. Finish the activity by asking the children if they would like to continue taking part in the workshop today.

Please note: the guessing game described above was deemed too childish for some adolescents’ workshops and so the facilitation team instead just presented about the topics to support informed consent.

Making It Work

Objectives:

- To develop ground rules in a participatory way (giving participants some control over the workshop from the beginning)
7. Each child / adolescent is given a pen and two post-its and asked to think of two things that are needed to make the workshop a success. They stick their post-its onto a large sheet of paper on the wall.
8. The facilitator groups them and feeds back the key messages to the group. They can then sign up to their own ‘rules’. The ‘rules’ can be revisited throughout the workshop if they need to be.
9. If children / adolescents are contributing ideas that are not feasible or positive for the workshop, facilitators can also complete post-it notes and then discuss how to get a consensus on how to work together so all benefit. If children cannot come up with ideas, the facilitator could suggest some to start them off. If the following things are not suggested by children, please suggest them yourselves:
- Listen to and respect other people’s views. There are no right and wrong answers. Everyone has different experiences.
 - Actively participate. We might ask you actively about your views or ideas. If you do not wish to answer, that is perfectly fine; you can tell us, “I do not wish to speak now.”
 - What is said in this room stays here. We want everyone to feel comfortable in the group, even when sensitive issues come up. This means that we all agree not to share what other have shared in this group to those who are not in the room with us now.

Intro activity on child rights

10. Write the following words or ‘headings’ on three pieces of paper and tape each piece of paper on the wall so that they are a few feet apart from each other.
- Rights
 - Needs
 - Desire

11. Write the following words and 'concepts' on separate pieces of smaller paper:

Clean water	Chocolate
A tattoo	Education
Books	Designer clothes
Food	Shelter/a home
Medicine	Fresh air
Smartphone	To

Divide the group into two groups and then provide each group with an equal number of 'concepts'. 4. Ask each group to work together and place their 'concept' under the 'headings' (i.e. right, need, desire), which they feel is the most appropriate. Explain to the group that, at this point, there may not be a right or wrong answer and that there may be more than one correct answer.

12. Provide the participants an opportunity to explain why they have made some of the choices they have and ask participants from other groups if they agree or disagree.

13. Share the following information with children:

Conventions are legal agreements made by governments to protect girls, boys, women, men and also our planet. They highlight the promises governments have made on an issue (for example: to protect children and women's rights) and they are part of international law.

On the 20 November, 1989 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – also known as the CRC. The CRC sets out the human rights that all children, every boy and girl, everywhere in the world have. The CRC is the most accepted human rights Convention in history. Only one country in the world (the USA) has not accepted it.

It has 54 Articles (or sections) and addresses things like health care, education and legal, civil and social services. Some examples of rights include:

- *You have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.*
- *You have a right to the best health possible and to medical care and to information that will help you to stay well*
- *You have the right to a good enough standard of living. This means you should have food, clothes and a place to live.*
- *You have the right to education.*
- *You have the right to find out things and say what you think, through making art, speaking and writing, unless it breaks the rights of others.*
- *You have the right to play and relax by doing things like sports, music and drama*

The CRC says that all children have equal rights. It recognizes that children are vulnerable and need more protection than adults do. At the same time, children, like adults, have an important role in "realizing" their rights. This means that adults must listen to and involve children when decisions are made which will affect children.

Give children a child friendly summary of the CRC in Russian

14. Ask children if they were surprised by anything they learnt about the CRC.
15. Explain that during the next few activities we will be thinking about whether children are able to meet their needs and get their rights in eastern Ukraine.

Life-line

Objectives:

- *To understand the experiences that have shaped older children's lives*
- *To understand what they feel the future holds for girls and boys as they grow up (to understand norms and expectations)*

16. In groups of 5, children will be given large sheets of paper with a line drawn on them. This line will start at birth, and will have the present day marked on it. The line will then go off into the future.
17. Children will be asked to imagine a girl/boy of their age in their community. They will then draw or write about important events or things that have happened to that child along the life-line (from birth to the present day). Encourage them to include both good and bad things.
18. Children will then be asked to write/draw what they think the future holds for that child. What will they do when they are an adult? What options are there for young men/women in their community?
19. Ask the participants to present their life-lines (there should be two groups). Encourage discussion. For example, ask participants to think about what is similar or different between the two groups, and why that might be. Ask how these experiences (and the options children have in the future) make them feel. Ask if the experiences that children of the other gender have are different. Ask participants why they think this is what the future holds for young people like them. Take detailed notes of the discussion.

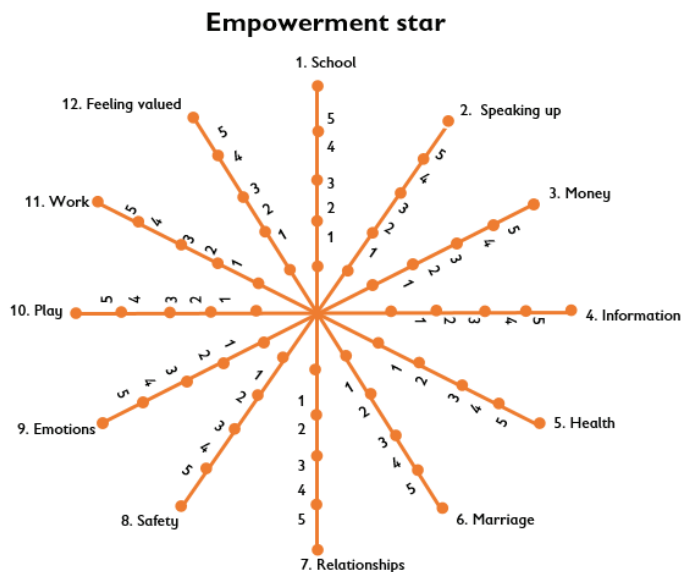
Empowerment star

Objectives:

- *To understand girls' and boys' perceptions of the opportunities and empowerment in their lives*
- *To understand whether children feel they are able to attain their rights*

NOTE: it might be good to give children their refreshments while they are doing their individual work on the empowerment star.

20. Explain that now we're going to do an activity to understand whether girls/boys are able to attain their rights, and what opportunities or difficulties they face in life. Give each participant a copy of the empowerment star worksheet. Explain that the different topics relate to different rights and opportunities children should have.
21. Each participant should read the question for each topic and decide they think the answer is never, seldom, sometimes, often or always (see table below for scale examples). Remind them that it's ok for different people to have different answers. Ask them to circle the number on both the table and then on the star diagram. They can then "join the dots" on the star diagram – the bigger the star/shape, the more empowered they think children are.



Issue	Question	Scale examples
1. School	Do G/B complete 11 years of school?	1: Never. G/Bs never go to complete schooling. 5: Always. All G/Bs complete school.
2. Speaking up	Do G/B say what matters to them in front of an adult male?	1: Never. G/Bs do not say what matters to them when an adult male is present or them. 5: Always. G/Bs openly say what they think when an adult male is present or can hear them.
3. Money	Do G/B help decide what to spend money on?	1: Never. G/Bs never access money or make decisions on how to spend it. 5: Always. G/Bs access and control money, and influence household expenses.
4. Information	Do G/B have access to information that they trust?	1: Never. No trusted information is ever shared with G/Bs. 5: Always. G/Bs have full and easy access to information from a range of trusted sources.
5. Health	Can G/B get medical care when they need it?	1: Never. G/Bs are never able to get the medical care they need. 5: Always. G/Bs are always able to get high quality medical care quickly.
6. Marriage	Do G/B decide when and who they marry?	1: Never. Adults decide if, whom and when a girl marries. 5: Always. G/Bs decide for themselves if, whom and when they marry.
7. Relationships	Do G/B get to decide when and with who they have relationships?	1: Never. Other people decide when they will have a relationship with a G/B, and that G/B does not have a say. 5: Always. G/Bs decide for themselves if, whom and when they have a relationship.
8. Safety	Do G/B feel safe in this community?	1: Never. G/Bs do not feel safe at home, at school or in the community. 5: Always. G/Bs feel safe everywhere at all times.
9. Emotions	Can G/B freely share their emotions and how they feel with other people?	1: Never. G/Bs never feel able to share their emotions or how they feel with other people. 5: Always. G/Bs feel comfortable sharing their feelings and emotions with everyone.
10. Play	Are G/B able to play and relax?	1: Never. G/Bs are never able to play and relax. 5: Always. G/Bs are always able to play and relax as much as they like, in ways that they enjoy.
11. Work	Can G/B decide what work they will do when they become adults?	1: Never. G/Bs have no options or control over what work they will do as an adult. 5: Always. G/Bs can choose freely to do whatever work they are most interested in when they are an adult.
12. Feeling valued	Do G/B's concerns matter in this community?	1: Never. G/Bs' concerns are never treated as important. 5: Always. G/Bs' concerns are always treated as important and addressed.

22. Bring the children together to discuss the scores, including any differences in scores. Use the discussion prompts below for inspiration. Take detailed notes.

Issue	Discussion prompts
1. School	What leads to G/Bs staying in school? What leads to G/Bs dropping out of school? What do G/Bs think about school?
2. Speaking up	Do G/Bs feel able to speak freely? Do G/Bs feel able to express their priorities and concerns?
3. Money	Can G/Bs access money to meet their needs? Do G/Bs influence how money is spent in their family?
4. Information	What information do G/Bs find useful? Where can G/Bs get information? Do G/Bs think that information is reliable and useful?
5. Health	Who decides when a G/B gets medical care? What helps G/Bs get medical care? What prevents G/Bs from getting medical care?
6. Marriage	What age do G/Bs normally get married at? Do G/Bs get to choose their spouse? Can G/Bs say whether or not they want to get married? Who decides?
7. Relationships	Are G/Bs able to choose who to have relationships with? Do G/Bs feel pressure to have relationships? What do G/Bs do when they are pressured into a relationship they don't want?
8. Safety	When, where and why G/Bs feel safe or unsafe? What G/Bs do when they feel unsafe? Who protects G/Bs?
9. Emotions	What kind of emotions is it considered acceptable for G/Bs to show? What prevents G/Bs from showing how they feel?
10. Play	What types of play and relaxation activities can G/Bs do? What would G/Bs like to do?
11. Work	Do G/Bs have options when it comes to work in the future? Or are their choices limited? What kinds of work will G/Bs do when they are adults? Why?
12. Feeling valued	Are G/Bs concerns heard and taken into account when decisions are made? Are G/Bs recognised as decision-makers? Do G/Bs have safe places to meet with their peers? Do G/Bs have someone to go to for help?

Dot voting

23. When you have finished discussing the empowerment stars, say, “We’ve been talking about some of the problems that children and young people like you are facing at the moment. Can you help me write a list of those problems?”
24. Write each problem on a large piece of paper (if all children are literate, no need to draw a picture to illustrate). Show these to the children and ask them if there are any big problems that children in their community face that we have not written down here. If there are other problems, add them.
25. Explain that now we are going to vote to find out about the biggest problems that children face. Give each child one dot sticker each. Ask them to stick their dot on the poster that represents their biggest problem. Remind children that they can vote for what *they* think is the biggest problem. They do not need to copy their friends. Different people can face different problems.
26. Once completed, give them another sticker, and ask them to do the same, explaining that they can put the second sticker with their first if it is really a big problem or on another poster representing another problem.
27. Repeat with a third and final sticker, until each child has placed 3 stickers on the problem sheets.
28. Once all children have used all 3 stickers the facilitator should pick out the 3 posters with the most dots on. These now represent the 3 biggest problems. Move these posters to the wall at the front of the room / on to the floor / on the table.
29. Facilitator: “from the activity we just did, it seems that the biggest problems for children right now are _____, _____ and _____. Does this sound correct? Are there any other problems that are bigger than these three problems that we didn’t talk about in that game?”
30. Facilitator to write down each bigger problem articulated by the children (if any) and to repeat back the final top 3 priority problems.
31. Ask the children to explain more about why these are problems. E.g. Facilitator: many children have said that food is a big problem. Why is it a problem? What are the bad things? Are there any groups of children that experience this problem more? Write down the detailed explanations. [Note: you may have already discussed the problems in depth during the Empowerment Star activity. If you did, then you can refer to what children shared then and ask if they have anything to add. E.g. during the last activity, you told me that safety was a big concern for boys, as they are worried about getting caught up in the fighting. Is there anything else you’d like to share about why this is such a big problem?”
32. Ask the children if they want to tell you more about any of the other problems (e.g. the ones that were not prioritised as top 3). It is important to give children this opportunity as there may be an issue that is a severe problem for one child but not others (e.g. a protection concern). Remind children that they can come and speak to you after the workshop if they want to tell you something privately.

Footsteps

Objectives:

- To gather children’s suggestions about how some of the problems they have talked about could be addressed

33. Say that, “We’ve been spending time talking about the problems children and young people face in this community. But we also know that you will have some good ideas about how some of these problems might be solved. So, we’re going to do a final activity around that.”
34. Ask children to get into pairs and draw around each other’s feet so that they have one right and one left footprint on each of their pieces of paper.
35. Ask each child to write down in the left footprint one thing that children/young people can do to address the problems we’ve discussed. In the right footprint, they should write down something that adults, the community or organisations (like Save the Children) could do to help address the problem. Ask them to specify *who* the recommendation is direct at (e.g. *Parents: please listen to us when we come to talk about our problems*).
36. The footprints are laid out as a journey or pathway along the floor and the facilitator will talk the group through them as steps we can all take to improve things for children and young people.

Wrap up

37. Finish the workshop by thanking the children for joining in the activities. Say, “You’ve told me lots of things about what life is like for boys/girls here. For example, you told me that some of the biggest problems for children are XXXX, but that children do have opportunity to YYYY. You’ve also shared your ideas about how different people, including children themselves, can help solve children and young people’s problems. Remember, always speak to adults that you trust, like your parents or teachers, if you have problems. I was also really impressed to hear how children and young people are helping each other. That shows how children can be leaders. Now we will share what you have told us with other adults and organisations like Save the Children so we try to improve the work we do with children. We can’t promise to do everything you have said that adults should do, but we will try our best to take your ideas into consideration as we make plans in the future. Remember, we are also intending to make a short report about this research, which we will share with you.”

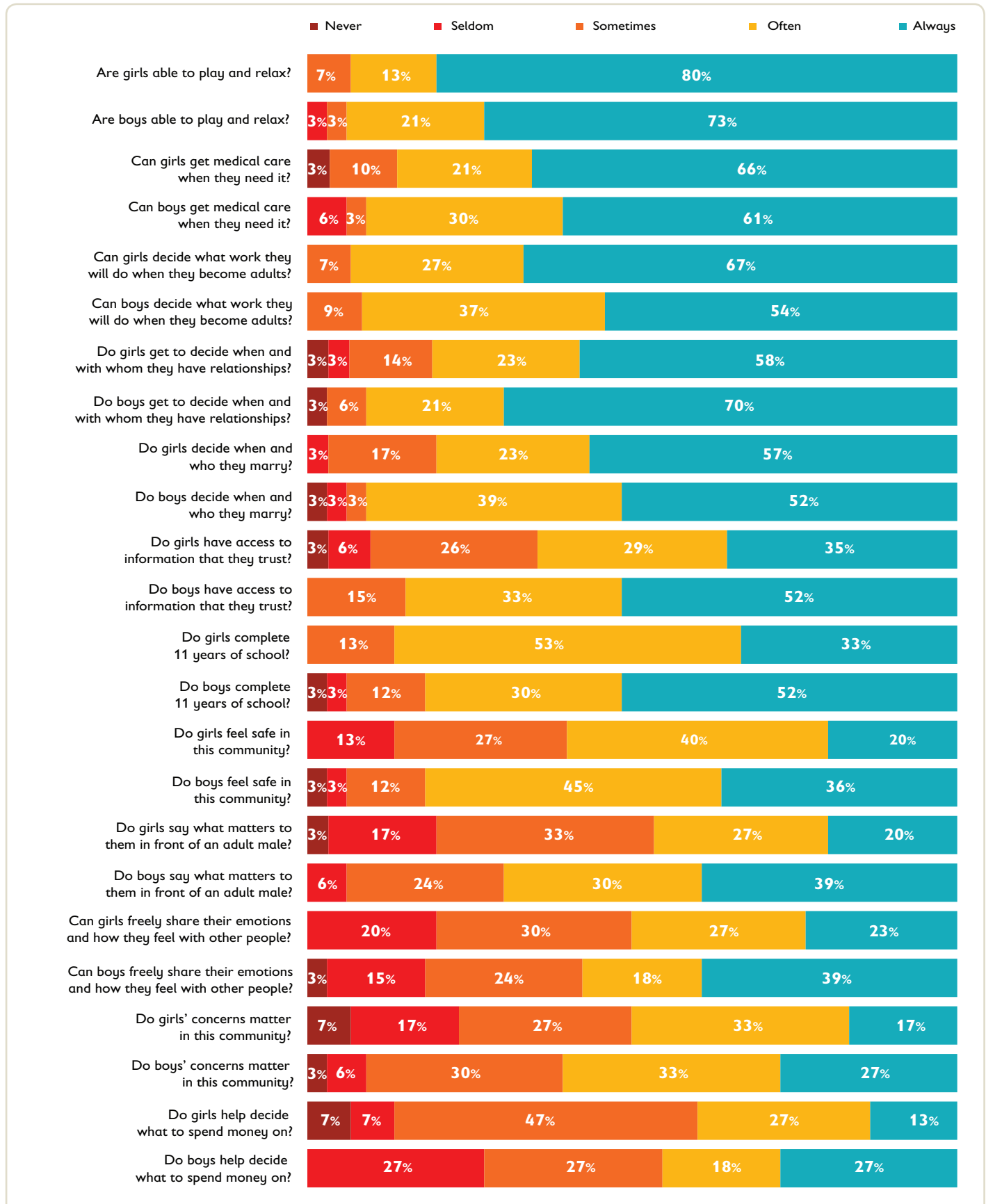
Feedback

38. To finish, ask the children to stand in a circle facing inwards. Give each child a “stone” (this could be an actual stone, but could also be a ball of paper or anything else small).
39. Each child throws their ‘stone’ into the circle in the middle of the group and says one thing they enjoyed and one thing they would change about the workshop. They do not need to go around in a circle, but can choose to speak when they feel ready to share their views.
40. Thank children again for taking part in the discussions today.

Annex 3: Adolescent girls' and boys' perceptions of opportunities, access and risks

The graph below represents the findings from the *empowerment star* activity, conducted with girls and boys aged 10-17. This assessment was not statistically representative and thus the percentages should be taken as indicative of the opinions of participating children, and not be treated as generalisable to the wider population.

Diagram 3: Adolescent girls' and boys' perceptions of opportunities, access and risks



Annex 4: Endnotes

- 1 OCHA Ukraine Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2019
- 2 OCHA Ukraine Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2019
- 3 OCHA Ukraine Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2019
- 4 One workshop for children aged 3-5 years old was mixed gender.
- 5 Committee of the Rights of the Child, General Comment #12, "The right of the child to be heard," 2009
- 6 Law of Ukraine on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, Verhovna Rada Journal (VRJ), 2005, N 52, p. 561, amended 2012 and 2014
- 7 Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Eighth periodic report on the implementation in Ukraine of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, 2014
- 8 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding observations on the eighth periodic report of Ukraine, 2017
- 9 UNFPA, Masculinity Today: men's attitudes to gender stereotypes and violence against women, 2018
- 10 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2017
- 11 UN Women, Gender Analysis: Impact of the Conflict on Men, Women, Boys and Girls, 2017
- 12 UN Women, Gender Analysis: Impact of the Conflict on Men, Women, Boys and Girls, 2017
- 13 Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility Newsletter, 2016
- 14 UNFPA, Masculinity Today: men's attitudes to gender stereotypes and violence against women, 2018
- 15 International Labour Organization, Gender Equality in the Labour Market in Ukraine, 2010.
- 16 Bureychak, T. "Studies on men and masculinities in Ukraine," Baltic Worlds, 2015
- 17 Protection Cluster, Mine Action in Ukraine. (February 2018).
- 18 UNICEF, Ukraine Humanitarian Situation Report January-June 2019
- 19 UNICEF, Children of the Contact Line, 2017
- 20 Danish Refugee Council – Danish Demining Group, "Child mine/ERW victim needs assessment report," 2019
- 21 UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine, An evidence-based analysis of the psychosocial adaptability of conflict-exposed adolescents, 2019 (using data from 2017)
- 22 Adeane, A. BBC News, Blue Whale: What is the truth behind an online 'suicide challenge'?, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-46505722>, 13 January 2019, accessed 8 September 2019.
- 23 UNICEF, Children of the Contact Line, 2017
- 24 UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine, 2019
- 25 REACH, Humanitarian Trend Analysis: Government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, June 2018
- 26 Health and Nutrition Cluster, as reported in HNO 2019
- 27 OCHA Ukraine Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2019
- 28 OCHA Ukraine Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2019
- 29 Education Cluster, Attacks on Education in Ukraine, Situation Report, as of 1 August 2019
- 30 REACH, Humanitarian Trend Analysis: Government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, June 2018
- 31 OCHA Ukraine Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2019
- 32 House, S. Mahon, T. and Cavill, S. "Menstrual Hygiene Matters," WaterAid, 2012.
- 33 UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine, An evidence-based analysis of the psychosocial adaptability of conflict-exposed adolescents, 2019 (using data from 2017)
- 34 UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine, An evidence-based analysis of the psychosocial adaptability of conflict-exposed adolescents, 2019 (using data from 2017)
- 35 UN Women and Roma Women Fund Chiricli, "The Rights of Roma Women in Ukraine," 2018
- 36 REACH, Protection assessment of isolated settlements in Government-Controlled Areas along the Contact Line, 2019
- 37 Gender-based Violence Area of Responsibility, Research, Evidence and Learning Digest: Intimate partner violence in emergencies, 2019
- 38 Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility Newsletter, 2016

- 39 UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine, An evidence-based analysis of the psychosocial adaptability of conflict-exposed adolescents, 2019 (using data from 2017)
- 40 Jaroszewicz, M. “Years after Crimea’s annexation, integration of Ukraine’s internally displaced population remains uneven,” Migration Policy Institute, 19 September 2019 (accessed 26 September 2019)
- 41 Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations, CRC/C/UKR/CO/3-4, 2011
- 42 Child Rights in Ukraine Coalition, Young Voices: Report on the Rights of the Child in Ukraine, 2018
- 43 It should be noted that there is not universal welcome for IDPs and some IDP children suffer bullying when joining new schools. However, studies suggest that bullying may not be linked primarily to IDP status but to lower levels of income and/or being new to the community (USE 2019).
- 44 World Health Organisation, Suicide factsheet, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide>, 2 September 2019

LISTEN TO US



Save the Children

**Girls' and boys' gendered
experiences of the conflict
in eastern Ukraine**

<https://www.savethechildren.ca/>
<https://ukraine.savethechildren.net/>