

Ukrainian Teacher Professional Development to Support Well-being in War and Displacement

Lessons Learned while Co-Creating Online Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Courses with and for Ukrainian Educators



By Alisa Vereshchagin and the Center for Professional Learning Project Team



**Center for
Professional Learning**
at Childhood Education International

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Natalia Humenuk, Project Fellow
Julie Kasper, Director of Teacher Learning & Leadership, CPL, CE International
Taisa Konevska, Project Fellow
Ulyana Kozachol, Project Fellow
Anastasiya Luzheska, Project Fellow

Volodymyra Makhukova, Project Fellow
Natalya Onyskiv, Project Fellow
Zhanna Pyschyk, Project Fellow
Maryna Stoliar, ECD Program Director, Ukraine
Lina Syranchuk, Project Fellow
Alisa Vereshchagin, Senior Project Associate, CPL, CE International
Nataliya Vovkula, Project Fellow

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I. Project context and overview

Between October, 2022 and September 2023, a team of educators, practical psychologists, instructional designers, education leaders, and project partners worked with the Center for Professional Learning (CPL) at Childhood Education International and in partnership with the Ukrainian Institute of Education Development (UIED/YIPO) to contextualize and re-imagine four online courses from CE International's OER Library for Ukrainian early childhood educators, caregivers and guardians. These courses were identified as of particular value and interest for educators across Ukraine by project partners at UIED/YIPO, Teach for Ukraine, the Ukraine Reform Support Team with the Ministry of Education, and members of the Ukraine Education Cluster and ECD/MHPSS working groups:

- Trauma-informed: practices for educators and teachers, (*Травмообізнані: практики для вихователів і вчителів*)
- Trauma-informed: The impact of trauma on the development of young children, (*Травмообізнані: Вплив травми на розвиток дітей раннього віку*)
- Quality holistic education in my context: Social-emotional learning and psychosocial support, (*Я і якісне та цілісне навчання. Соціально-емоційне навчання і психосоціальна підтримка*)
- Child Well Being & Protection, (*Благополуччя та Захист Дітей*)

This co-creative, course building and dissemination project began approximately seven months after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24 of the same year. Since the February 24th invasion, nearly four million Ukrainians have become internally displaced persons, including over a million children (UNHCR, 2023). Another 6.3 million Ukrainians have left the country due to the war and over 17 million across the country are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance (UNHCR, 2023). The invasion disrupted schooling, which was just returning to normalcy following the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, since the start of the war, over 400 schools and places of learning have been destroyed by bombing and thousands of others damaged (UNICEF 2023).

When the war began, teacher professional development designed to attend to social and emotional learning, psychosocial support, and trauma-informed practices was identified as a significant need by Ukrainian education ministers, local educators, NGOs and INGOs. In response to this call and with the guidance of colleagues at UIED/YIPO, the Center for Professional Learning worked with local partners and a dedicated project consultant based in Kyiv to recruit and lead a team of 10 project fellows - early childhood educators and practical psychologists from different regions of Ukraine - through a process of contextualizing, reimagining, and, ultimately, completely rebuilding four online professional development courses, noted above.

The project team worked in a digital community of practice through extraordinary circumstances for the duration of the project. Project Fellows were teaching in a combination of in-person, hybrid and distance education programs. Electricity and Internet connectivity were ubiquitous challenges, and given the constant shellings - there were over 6,000 air alerts in Ukraine in 2023 alone (Gumenyuk, 2024) - the team often took calls from bomb shelters or in darkness. Several of the fellows had relocated and arranged life in new cities and were working in and from displacement. In addition to their professional activities, the all-woman team of fellows took care of children of their own and dedicated time and funds to the Ukrainian war effort. Despite these challenges, a high level of accountability and dedication remained a defining quality of the team. The members attended weekly meetings whenever possible and took on project responsibilities in their area(s) of interest and expertise such as translation, graphic design, video and sound creation, interactivity and gamification, and course building on the learning management system (LMS).

Through this body of work and within a sustained community of practice, the project team deepened their understandings that course contextualization is nuanced and demanding and that digital courses thrive in “native” environments such as nationally or regionally recognized platforms. Additionally, and not surprisingly, the team experienced how volatility in wartime affects communities of practice, such as this project’s team, and makes a lasting impact on project designs and implementation. The building of courses exclusively for the Ukrainian context in a time of great need cultivated hope and excitement through a sense of shared purpose and contribution while (1) empowering educators to share their voices and experiences about what it is like to work as a teacher in wartime and (2) providing space to care for themselves, each other, and their wider communities.

Key outcomes of the project include:

- Increased access to high-quality, deeply contextualized, Ukrainian-language resources for use by adults who teach and care for children which normalize self-care in the process of teaching/caring for children
- Broad dissemination of these online courses across Ukraine, reaching more than 24,000 individuals between their Fall 2023 publication and the formal project closing date of March 31, 2024 (courses remain open)
- Multiple learnings at individual, community, organization, and system levels which are shared in the following sections to (1) further support for Ukrainian educators and learners and (2) serve as a reference for the broader education in emergencies and education in displacement ecosystems

II. Project Structure: Learning and Leading in a Community of Practice (CoP)

A community of practice is a group that shares a concern, set of issues, or topic of interest and gathers to achieve both individual and collective objectives. Communities of practice frequently center on knowledge creation and exchange so that members can strengthen their practice and affect positive change within their communities and professional field(s). In a strong community of practice, members have a shared domain of interest, commitment and competence; they are united around a collective purpose while also feeding individuals' aspirations and interests. Because of their power to encourage collaboration, collective inquiry and action, communities of practice can serve as an effective form of professional development for teachers (DuFour et al, 2008).

The team involved in this project was diverse, bringing a range of perspectives to the conversations and the course building experience within their community of practice. Among the 10 fellows in the group, a wide range of ages, years of professional experience, interests and skills, and geographical locations were represented. While some of the team members were located in Ukraine, others were displaced or moving around during the course of the work. These multiple perspectives and the many varying lived experiences among group members contributed to the diversity and dynamism within the project's core community of practice.

The Center for Professional Learning at CE International cultivates and sustains communities of practice (CoPs) across the broad scope of its work to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing as part of its sustainable learning design, based on the [Sustainable Learning Framework](#) developed in 2018 and [recently further conceptualized](#) by Dr. Diana Woolis. When it comes to education in emergencies, CoPs afford the individual members within the community the unique opportunity to share and exchange insights, experiences and best practices. Many educators involved in CPLs projects over the years have expressed appreciation for how the community of practice not only gave them access to a group of like minded individuals, but also elevated their voices. The fellows working on this project spoke to this in posts to a community Jamboard halfway through the project (notes have been translated from Ukrainian):

- *This is one of the cooler moments in my work experience. The team is all about the ability to share, trust, delegate, overcome difficulties, think differently. And to be happy, to laugh, to reflect.*
- *We have a lot in common. However, we are all very, very different, and have different experiences, visions, thoughts. It's cool when they [colleagues] compliment you, and you sit and think "Oh, I've done it!"*

- *This experience helped me to believe in myself, to feel socially useful, and to get acquainted with teammates as well as important information that can be conveyed to a large number of people.*
- *The teamwork was well coordinated. A very warm community of teachers and professionals in their field.*
- *Teamwork was a very valuable experience for me. The team was professional and friendly. It was very comfortable to work. Thank you to everyone.*

In building a robust and active community of practice, the fellows on this team learned from one another. They thus deepened their understanding of trauma informed practices, technology integration, online course building, and much more over the course of the project.

“This is one of the cooler moments in my work experience. The team is all about the ability to share, trust, delegate, overcome difficulties, think differently. And to be happy, to laugh, to reflect.”

III. Project Findings: Key Learnings and Related Recommendations

A. There is interest across Ukraine in courses supporting teacher professional development, particularly those focused on MHPSS/SEL.

Course enrollee data affirms that there is a strong interest in the courses developed across Ukraine, which suggests a desire for professional learning opportunities tailored to the context of Ukraine and of wartime which focus on topics of mental health and psychosocial support, social and emotional learning, and child protection. Participants in the courses live in urban and rural locations across Ukraine including small and large cities, villages, currently occupied territories (Popasna) and unoccupied territories, including Bucha. **The wide geographical distribution of course enrollees across various regions of Ukraine highlights their necessity on a national scale.**

There is a wide distribution in the ages and levels of children that the enrolled educators and caregivers work with, which speaks to a need across the learning and schooling continuum for this type of professional development. Although the courses were developed for early childhood educators, there was a fairly even distribution among the ages/levels taught. The largest representation (43.38%) came from enrollees teaching secondary school students while those teaching pre-school (ages 1-4) and lower primary school (ages 5-8) represented 18.31% and 43.08% of enrollees, respectively (Table 1). The even distribution of levels taught by course

enrollees suggests that they are eager to access and take courses relevant to the topics of well-being, SEL/PSS, and child protection, even if they are not the perfect fit for their teaching context (in this case not perfectly aligned with the ages taught by the educators). Data from the post course evaluation further supports this. When asked how well the training met their needs, the average response on a scale from 0 (not at all relevant) to 5 (exactly what I needed) was 4.8, a high score considering that the content might not have been grade-level appropriate for all enrolled educators (Figure 1).

| | |
|---|---------------|
| дошкілля (1-4 роки) <i>Preschool (1-4 years)</i> | 18.31% 119 |
| початкова школа (5-8 років) <i>Primary school (5-8 years)</i> | 43.08% 280 |
| старша початкова школа (9-11 років) <i>Upper primary school (9-11 years)</i> | 37.38% 243 |
| молодша середня школа (12-14 років) <i>Lower secondary school</i> | 42.15% 274 |
| старша середня школа (15-18 років) <i>Upper secondary school</i> | 43.38% 282 |

Table 1. Course enrollees by student age/level taught.

Total over 100 because teachers were allowed to select more than one choice

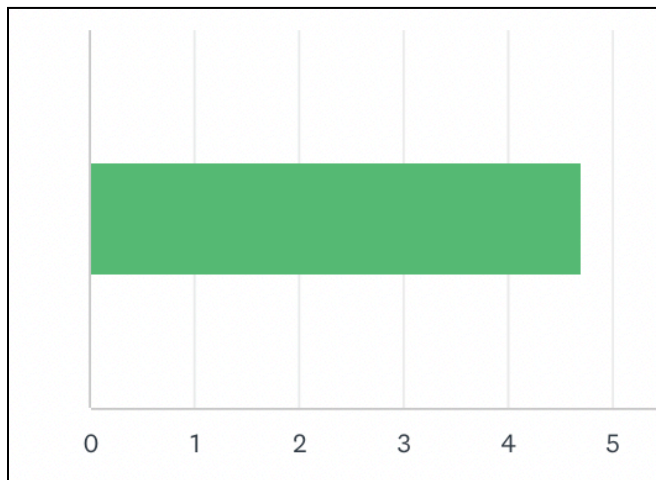


Figure 1. Ranking of how well course(s) met needs.

How well did this training meet your needs from 0 (not at all relevant) to 5, (exactly what I needed)?

Наскільки це навчання відповідало твоїм потребам? (0 - зовсім не відповідало, 5 - це саме те, що мені потрібно).

Additionally, there was a high level of engagement with courses on CE International’s home platform, Eurekaos. Across all four courses 80%¹ of course enrollees engaged with some or all of the content. Based on feedback from participants, the team attributes this to a clear need and interest in the content as well as to the short, easily accessible and digestible nature of the courses which could be completed in one sitting or in a few short days.

Impressions from fellows and participants further echo the necessity of this new set of courses for Ukraine. For one Project Fellow, engaging in the project pushed her to think more about the differences between generations of teachers. As she noted, older generations of teachers trained during the Soviet era (the average age of teachers in Ukraine is 45 years old) are used to paying attention to the academic performance of students. This is because they grew up and began their teaching careers in an environment which considered students’ grades as the sole benchmark of success. Consequently, it is difficult for these teachers to perceive pedagogies such as SEL or inclusive education as important directions she feels. As a result, there exists a need for trauma awareness courses for Ukrainian educators to avoid misanthropy, bullying, suicides, and violence. For this Project Fellow, the need became more apparent as she worked on the course materials and noted their deviation from long-accepted norms.

A similar reflection was shared by a course enrollee that teaches in a pedagogical university. In a conversation about the courses’ relevance to her professional experience she stated that, “unfortunately, SEL is often not the focus of teachers’ attention because it is still very common to use evaluative statements about children.” The courses provide ideas that depart from this tradition according to her review, analysis, and application of the content.

Reactions from other course participants were much more profound on the personal level because the courses made them realize or find something within themselves. In a focus group session, one participant mentioned that she initially approached the courses as another free novelty that would help her be an even better mother. But at some point the information resonated and she realized that the courses could first help her reflect on her own childhood. This woman shared that this inspired her to seek out a psychotherapist for the first time to initiate her own healing process.

Another key observation among participants was that the courses hold potential to influence future educators who are enrolled in or planning to enroll in teacher preparation programs. One of the Project Fellows noted this from her conversations with course participants: “according to the testimony of university students, course learners themselves; the courses became a defining thing in the future interaction with students or their own children.” This suggests underlying potential for the courses to inspire and motivate future generations of Ukrainian educators as they are picked up and utilized within pre-service, alongside in-service, teacher learning programs.

“According to the testimony of university students, course learners themselves; the courses became a defining thing in the future interaction with students or their own children.”

¹ Engagement data is available for Eurekaos only.

B. Quality, deep contextualization is an intense, co-creative, and detail-oriented process.

The process of course contextualization – or **Ukrainization** as the Senior Project Consultant, Dr. Zlata Gromova, described it – proved to be a rigorous, sustained, and involved process. What was initially projected to take four to five months took nine months.

Childhood Education International had four courses of interest to ministry and project partners in their OER library when the conflict broke out in February of 2022. These were quickly, and very crudely translated into Ukrainian, Polish, and Romanian. Thus, the project team started with pre-existing course texts in translation. It took some time for the fellows to read, digest and make sense of the course material. In true co-creative fashion, they pulled the content apart, reviewed and reimagined it, and then came up with a plan to rebuild the courses. The team decided to build one course on the platform at a time, allowing for more profound conversations in team meetings concerning the course content and in relation to the experiences and expertise each of the Project Fellows brought to the community, as early childhood educators, practical psychologists, learning and development, and interactive instructional design enthusiasts. This process allowed the group to pool their collective knowledge and skills to make each course as responsive, relevant, and meaningful to educators across Ukraine as possible.

As noted above, **the fellows were invested in not only contextualizing but in Ukrainizing the courses.** This meant recreating some of the elements in the courses to speak directly to Ukrainian language, culture, experience, and current lived realities. A few examples of the contextualization, or Ukrainization, are as follows:

- **Adding specific war-time content:** Given the war in Ukraine, the fellows modified content to align with their current situation. One area in which this is particularly notable are activities in the courses. An example of this appears in Module 2 of the course Child Well-Being and Protection (4th course) on the page titled Identifying Risk Factors in our Schools (*Виявлення факторів ризику в наших школах*). The page presents photographs alluding to war-time and asks the learner to think about the risk factors involved (Image 1).

ЗРОБИ ЦЕ

Подивись на фотографії нижче. Зроби кілька нотаток у своєму щоденнику стосовно того, що ти побачив.

- Які фактори ризику для дітей та учнів ти відразу побачила/в у цих умовах?
- Які фактори ризику можуть бути приховані від очей або не показані на цих фотографіях?
- Які фактори ризику існують у твоїй школі та її околицях?



Image 1. An activity in the Child Well-Being and Protection course in which the learner has to identify risk factors in each photo.

- **Creating completely new course images that were meaningful to the Ukrainian context:** In many cases, this meant generating images (through AI, photography, drawing) and then making modifications to ensure that they were suitable for the course. Two examples of images created specifically for the course are provided below (Images 2 and 3).



Image 2. Ukrainian лялька (montaka doll) made out of household cloth by members of the project team for inclusion in course 4, Child Well-Being & Protection.

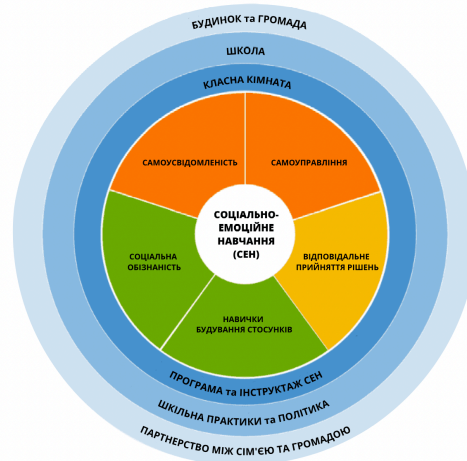


Image 3. Social and Emotional Learning CASEL Wheel recreated by fellows with Ukrainian translations for all terminology. This graphic previously existed in several languages, but not in Ukrainian.

- **Revising course objectives and their respective assessments to align with the time and context:** For example, in Course 1, a drag and drop activity involves identifying collective historical and/or generational traumas in Ukraine, a formative assessment created by the Ukrainian Fellows as part of priming learners to explore deeper concepts (Image 4).

Активність "Перетворення"

Уяви себе чарівницею/чарівником.

Зараз у тебе буде можливість повернутися до всього лихоліття, яке траплялося з нами, українським народом, упродовж багатьох століть. Для цього «перетягни» і «закрий» віконечками неприємні моменти історії, сильними сторонами нашої особистості і внутрішніми психологічними ресурсами – самотурботою, адаптивністю і т.д. У тебе все вийде.

Вір у це!

"Перетворення"

| | | |
|--|--|----------------|
| Позитивний досвід подолання стресових та травмуючих ситуацій | російське вторгнення 14д анексія Криму, війна на Донбасі | Револьюції |
| Травма-інформоване середовище | | |
| Самотурбота | Буремні 90ті | Репресії |
| Знання з психології | | |
| Саморефлексія | Повномасштабна війна та життя в її контексті | Аварія на ЧАЕС |
| Травма-інформовані практики | | |
| люди які підтримують | ІІ-га світова війна | Тоталітаризм |
| адаптивність психіки | | |

Перевірити

Image 4. A drag and drop activity in course 1, Trauma-informed: practices for educators and teachers, (Травмообізнані: практики для вихователів і вчителів) in which the learner has to link historical events in Ukraine to the respective generational traumas they are associated with.

- **Determining the appropriate translations for vocabulary terms in the courses:** The translations of many widely-used terms received special attention because i) some of these terms can be translated in numerous ways and ii) when a widely-accepted term or translation does not yet exist, there may be debate among scholars, practitioners and other implicated parties about which terms are the most appropriate to use in specific contexts. The following words resulted in discussion among the fellow team surrounding the topic of appropriate contextualization and, despite continued debate amongst project partners on the best terminology to use, the Project Fellows decided upon these translations based on their contextual knowledge as early childhood practitioners:
 - **students:** *учні*
 - **very young child:** *малолітні діти*
 - **educational institution:** *Заклад освіти*
 - **educator:** *вчитель*
 - **refugee trauma:** *травма біженця та переселення*
 - **intimate partner violence:** *домашнє насильство (насильство від інтимного партнера)*
 - **self-care,** *піклування про себе*
 - **quality holistic learning:** *Якісний та цілісний процес навчання*
 - **social and emotional learning:** *соціальне та емоційне навчання*

- **Attending to educator well-being and self-care was central to the co-creative process and became key to the course redesign process:** Woven into the courses are activities that can be used by educators to regulate their own stress or to take care of themselves. Some examples of this are a) a calming breathing exercise b) an anti-stress journal and c) a self-care calendar. In addition, team calls always led with check-ins on wellbeing, stress levels and sharing of the measures that the team was taking for self-care during the war in Ukraine.

C. Ensuring open digital access to courses (and other digital teacher professional development) is critical for teachers working in displacement and emergency contexts.

Individual countries, communities, and institutions have varying technological capabilities, educational priorities, and infrastructures, necessitating **customized solutions** when it comes to online learning. Understanding the specific needs and circumstances of each educational context is crucial for the successful dissemination, uptake, and impact of professional development courses and materials. Put simply, teacher professional development lives in different spaces across learning communities and in interactive national, regional, and global digital ecosystems. Discovering and becoming familiar with the landscape of teacher professional development, and specifically where open educational resources (OERs) supporting teacher development are housed and shared, is of utmost importance when it

comes to increasing accessibility, especially in emergency, displacement, and conflict-affected regions.

In addition, learning which spaces are accessed most frequently by educators, and following these spaces as they evolve, is critical. Guided by advice from the Senior Project Consultant in Ukraine, Dr. Gromova, the CPL team explored many localized platforms and ultimately partnered with Prometheus to transfer and host the courses originally created on Childhood Education International's home platform on this more accessible and widely visible Ukrainian platform. Prometheus is the biggest online education platform in Ukraine and its goal is to make quality virtual education available to every Ukrainian. Currently, the platform has more than 250 courses and more than 1,800,000 students. During project implementation, the project team saw a significant jump in enrollees after moving course content to Prometheus, a "native" space for Ukrainian educators and one with a fully Ukrainian-language interface. This reinforces the importance of accessibility and use; **user platforms that already have established use within the community are more likely to attract participants and support learning in easily accessible ways.**

Additionally, and not to be overlooked in the education sector, the fact that the courses are available to participants **free of cost** is especially advantageous. A Project Fellow noted that there are not many resources available on psychological support for teachers in Ukraine, and these stand out further for their accessibility. As she shared in closing reflections on her experience as a project team member: "They are free, confirmed by a certificate, have an interesting format, and are available to all participants, regardless of their experience or role in the educational sphere."

The team was also very much aware of the necessity for the courses to be **accessible in an offline format** due to disruptions in electricity and connectivity. Knowing that Internet access and speed is varied across Ukraine, the project team made the courses available in a text-based version in the form of PDFs downloadable from the first page of every course to allow for access where internet connection is limited. These PDFs were also uploaded to Learning Equality's [Kolibri](#), a digital platform for users in low connectivity contexts to access and use resources offline. All four courses are currently accessible on that platform.

"There are not many resources available on psychological support for teachers in Ukraine, and these stand out further for their accessibility. They are free, confirmed by a certificate, have an interesting format, and are available to all participants, regardless of their experience or role in the educational sphere."

D. It is ideal to design online courses with modularity and portability – and thus adaptability – in mind, especially in education in emergency and displacement contexts.

OERs must be designed with mobility and sharing in mind. Our team learned that certain [H5P](#) objects can travel and transfer well between different LMS platforms while other course elements did not always transfer or “translate” well across digital landscapes. By building H5P-rich courses, the project team was able to share them with more users in the format of their original conceptualization. One way in which this was achieved this was by preserving many of the interactive elements in the courses both on Eureka and Prometheus through the use of particular H5P objects in each of those LMSs. This transfer was not without its challenges, however. **Learnings surrounding course mobility and transfer include:**

- **Online courses often look different on a mobile device than on a computer screen.** Some platforms are not mobile compatible or mobile friendly. Revisions or adaptations will need to be made to the content and/or formatting to best suit mobile needs across platforms and iterations of OER application.
- **Most learning management systems (LMSs) or platforms face linguistic constraints or have specific language parameters that make multilingual use and/or specific language applications challenging.** The Eureka platform, for example, is not directly compatible with the Ukrainian language as it does not have a Ukrainian-language interface (at the time of our usage). For this reason, the course build team had to default to English menu buttons in building the courses. While not ideal, work-arounds were found such as creating images with translated text to guide the user (Image 5).

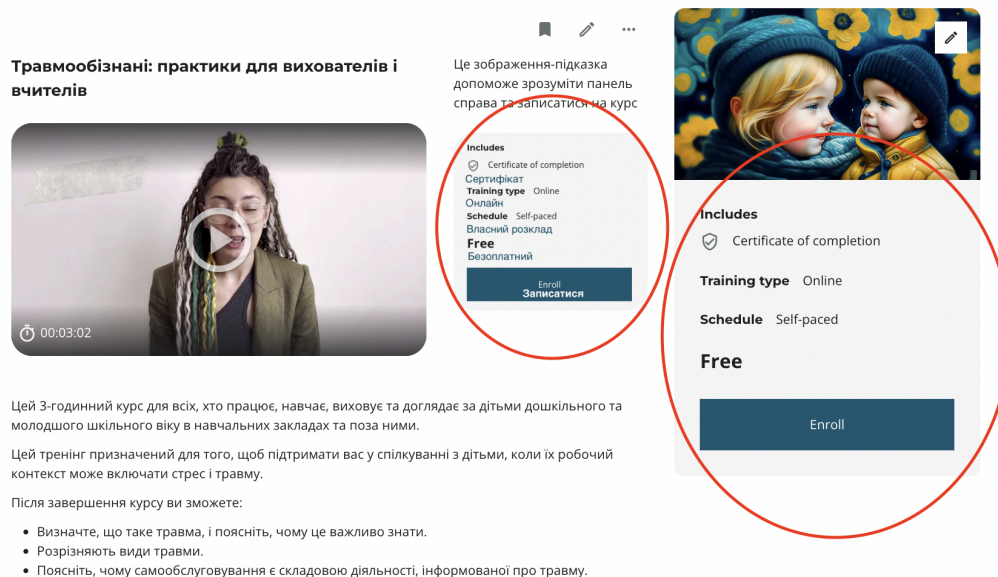


Image 5. Linguistic work-around in courses: The text circled on the left functions as a linguistic work-around. It is a Ukrainian translation of the circled text on the right, which was auto-generated by Eureka in English.

- **Designing for use in various contexts is critical.** The project team designed and delivered the courses as a set of four to allow for more adaptability. The four courses can be taken in the order presented or in the order of the learner's choosing. And, a learner can pick and choose the courses that most closely fit their needs. Each course can be completed in one sitting because they are short and bite-sized. The courses can also be easily adapted. For instance, a university professor can build them into a semester-long course as enrichment or offer them as on-going PD for in-service teachers as a community support tool. **Because of their modularity and portability, they are adaptable and can be repurposed across the ecosystem to meet the needs of educators in various stages of their career and including for online, offline, or blended training or PD.**

E. Volatility in education in emergency, displacement, and conflict-affected contexts will affect the speed and flow of collaborative work.

Building online courses in emergency and displacement contexts is challenging due to the volatile nature of such environments. Project consultants, fellows, and partners working on this project faced uncertain living conditions and had to, necessarily, take time for their other work, family, and personal priorities throughout the project period. They also faced difficulties securing consistent access to stable internet, electricity, and other essential resources for working in a digital environment. Despite such challenges, however, they found purpose and strength through this project with one Project Fellow noting, "I realized that I CAN do this type of work. I felt inspired. Now without a doubt I will say "YES" to new opportunities and projects." In their collectively-written [Childhood Innovations article](#), the fellows noted that the work on the courses attuned them to the importance of self-care, which improves the "psychological stability of teachers in emergency circumstances and allows them to perform their roles more effectively during the war."

Similarly, **educators in emergency and displacement settings face many obstacles to do their work and, yet, remain committed to that work.** Constant mobility and unpredictability in displacement contexts poses obstacles to establishing a structured and reliable educational infrastructure, impacting every aspect of schooling, teaching, and learning. The development and delivery of online courses is no exception and as actors in education in emergency and displacement settings know, flexibility is essential to managing project timelines while attending to participants' and partners' well-being.

Additionally, **changes in leadership at national levels**, including in ministry and ministry-affiliated organizations, **and at international levels**, among working groups and INGO staff, **can impact partnerships and project workflows.** In the summer of 2023, there were multiple changes in education leadership roles across Ukraine, including with our key partner organization, a ministry-affiliate: the Ukrainian Institute of Education Development (UIED/YIPO). While the project team was fortunate to have been able to maintain relationships with all partners despite

these transitions, they demonstrate the unpredictability and fluctuation of education in emergencies. **It is necessary to remain sensitive, flexible and responsive to partners and participants in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) teaching and learning environments, such as emergency and conflict-affected regions.**

F. Elevating practitioners' voices and celebrating their resilience and expertise is vital to ensuring a sustainable educator workforce.

Teacher recognition and respect are pivotal in fostering teacher motivation, professional growth, and ultimately, student success. As emphasized in the UNESCO 2024 Global Teacher Report, which outlines potential solutions to the worldwide teacher shortage, "a recognition of the skills, competencies and transformative potential of teachers needs to be at the heart of valorizing the profession" (UNESCO, 2024) This sentiment underscores the critical need to acknowledge and honor the multifaceted abilities of educators. Acknowledging and respecting teachers not only enhances their morale but also serves as a catalyst for their professional development and commitment to professional excellence. Central to this acknowledgment is the notion of teacher autonomy, which empowers educators to exercise control over their instructional methods and curriculum design, and own their professional development endeavors (Vermote et al, 2020). Communities of practice can serve as spaces of teacher empowerment, recognition, and growth, fostering a space for educators to share expertise, exchange ideas, and collectively innovate to enhance their professional practice. **Through this project, the involved fellows not only grew professionally but gained a powerful supportive community through which they were able to amplify their voices and share them with others.**

For these educators, the project was motivating and empowering. As they wrote in the article previously mentioned about their experience building the courses: "From working on these courses we gained more authorship in our own lives, motivation to support Ukraine now and in the future." The opportunity to work in a community of practice was an especially powerful experience because many were working from their own experience and knowledge as opposed to answering to an expert or authority.

"From working on these courses we gained more authorship in our own lives, motivation to support Ukraine now and in the future."

This further empowered them to step into positions of leadership in the project, and to amplify the voices of millions of Ukrainians. As they wrote in the same blog: "Each of us experienced more than one personal tragedy, as did the millions of Ukrainians around. In such millions, we

"Having worked in a team, I learned a lot. Now I apply this knowledge in my work. I share it with my colleagues. This is my weapon!"

found ourselves – a community of teachers, educators and psychologists who joined the CPL team." They carry their learnings, both from the building and from the content, into their professional lives and feel like they can encourage the learning of others. As one fellow noted, "having worked in a team, I learned a lot. Now I apply this knowledge in my work. I share it with my colleagues. This is my weapon!"

G. Professional learning is a lifelong process that benefits from living, evolving courses and OERs.

Lifelong learning is important for educators because it enables them to adapt to evolving educational landscapes and meet the diverse needs of learners. UNESCO's 2024 Global Teacher Report emphasizes the crucial role of ongoing learning goals in empowering educators to navigate challenges, embrace innovation, and foster inclusive and effective learning environments (UNESCO, 2024). Specifically, a lifelong learning mindset is associated with enhanced teacher efficacy, and better prepared teachers are more likely to remain in the profession (Kini and Podolsky, 2016). Furthermore, by engaging in lifelong learning, teachers model the value of curiosity and growth mindset to their students and contribute to their own job satisfaction and career fulfillment (Day & Gu, 2007).

The role of technology is especially important in the lifelong learning of teachers. Technology provides access to continuous training and opportunities for collaboration which in turn enhance teaching practice in the classroom. It is well known that online learning is a dynamic and ever-evolving landscape, and as such it continually adapts to both changes in technology and societal needs. **As technology advances and new platforms emerge, online courses - such as the ones built through this project - must undergo constant adaptation to ensure they remain relevant, engaging, and effective.** Online courses need to be flexible enough to integrate new tools, accommodate diverse learning styles, and harness the power of emerging technologies. They must also be portable and useful offline and in blended professional learning spaces.

The contextual relevance of course content plays a crucial role in its evolution. The courses developed in 2023 will evolve over time, especially given that they are now available on various platforms and as OER content for use across modalities and learning programs. Individual institutions and educators may wish to share and adapt the materials to their own situations, incorporating them in workshops, webinars, or other online courses. They are open for use by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science, the Ukrainian Institute of Education Development, the Reform School Team, the MHPSS and ECD Working Groups in Ukraine, university and pedagogical institutions, INGOs and NGOs, and regional or local education authorities. The CPL team at Childhood Education International remains committed to ensuring that every educator and at every level is prepared and supported to deliver quality holistic learning opportunities to their colleagues – via professional learning experiences – and through them, to children and youth across Ukraine. The CPL Team invites creative uptake, adaptation, and implementation in line with the [Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License from Creative Commons](#).

Therein lies the beauty of OERs; they provide free and open access to a wealth of educational materials, fostering equitable learning opportunities for all who engage with them. The four Ukrainian-language courses developed for this project and other OERs offered by Childhood

Education International and many other organizations and institutions around the world play an important role now and in post-war Ukraine in fostering the development of new skills, facilitating recovery, and supporting educator growth.

IV. Conclusion

This project has resulted in four free, practical and easily accessible courses to support the educator community in Ukraine while proving to be an invaluable experience for the project team. Through this work, the fellows grew their confidence and honed many of the skills essential for the creation of indispensable resources to aid Ukrainian educators as they work with children in need of emotional and psychosocial support now and in the future. The courses create a foundation for a new generation of resources aimed at advancing the professional development of educators across Ukraine. It is the hope of the project team that these openly available resources will be adapted, edited and improved over time to align with the evolving needs of educators, parents, and families for the foreseeable future. The CPL team takes the aforementioned learnings and lessons with us to support continued uptake of the courses and to engage in meaningful, co-creative projects, like the one described herein, with the goal of supporting learning and well-being, uplifting and celebrating the expertise, and sustaining the commitment and hope of educators working in challenging contexts around the world.

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