



MINISTRY  
OF EDUCATION AND  
SCIENCE OF UKRAINE

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# Guidelines for implementation of catch-up programmes

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## Introduction

Education in Ukraine is going through a difficult time. During the COVID-19 pandemic and since the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine, children have suffered significant learning losses. Remote learning and then the temporary occupation, hostilities, air alerts, living in shelters, lack of electricity and deteriorating mental health are just a few of the external factors that have affected and continue to affect the quality of children's education and development of necessary skills. Therefore, the issue of creating and implementing programmes to compensate for learning losses is currently crucial.

These guidelines are intended for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders (e.g., educational institutions, educational authorities) that are currently implementing or planning to implement programmes to make up for learning losses. The document is based on a discussion on the challenges of implementing catch-up programmes, which was organised on 7 June 2023, initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. It reflects the participants' common vision of the implementation of such programmes.

Representatives of the following educational organisations took part in the discussion: Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment, Institute of Education Content Modernization, Ukrainian Institute for Education Development, State Service of Education Quality of Ukraine, Educational Ombudsman, as well as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), INGO Plan International, World Vision International, People in Need, Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council, GoGlobal NGO, Teach for Ukraine, 'Re: Education' NGO, 'Women's Consortium of Ukraine' NGO, Association of Innovative and Digital Education, Optima Educational Center, Charity Foundation Smile UA, 'Smart Education' NGO, ICF savED, 'Osvitoria' NGO, 'DobroDom Dnipro' NGO and Street Child Ukraine.

This document is intended as a guideline and identifies priority locations and subjects for catch-up programmes. For example, if an NGO works in a region where primary school children cannot read, the priority is to teach them, as this is a basic skill that is essential for a child to be able to perceive information, process it, use the knowledge gained to their advantage, and so on.

# Definition of a catch-up programme

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) defines a catch-up programme **as a short-term education programme for children and youth who had been actively attending school prior to an educational disruption**. The programme is an opportunity to learn the material they have missed in order to re-enter the formal education system.

**A catch-up education programme in the Ukrainian context**, as defined by the working group during the event on 7 June 2023, **is a set of activities for school students aimed at identifying learning gaps and compensating for them, with a focus on adaptation, prioritisation of subjects (knowledge and expertise), and providing psychological and socio-emotional support.**

## Principles of catch-up programmes

**The 10 Principles for Catch-up Programmes**, which were developed by the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) of INEE<sup>1</sup>, are comprehensive and relevant to the Ukrainian context. These guidelines were developed to support ministries, implementers, donors and other partners in designing and evaluating catch-up programmes so that they can improve their quality, which will also impact the quality of the education system overall and help students with learning gaps catch up and continue their education.



### STUDENTS

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- Principle 1:** The catch-up programme meets the holistic needs of learners whose education was disrupted for several months to approximately a year.
- Principle 2:** The learning environment is physically and emotionally safe, and emergency prevention, preparedness and response plans are in place.
- Principle 3:** The catch-up curriculum is shortened; priority is given to the most important qualifications, their integration and consolidation.
- Principle 4:** Instructional time, delivery modality and examinations are adapted.
- Principle 5:** The catch-up programme effectively uses learner-centred pedagogy.



### TEACHERS

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- Principle 6:** Teachers are (re)engaged and their well-being is supported after the education disruption.
- Principle 7:** Teachers have the capacity and resources to re-engage all learners and implement the catch-up programme.



### PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

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- Principle 8:** Learners, families and communities are informed, consulted, engaged and accountable.



### COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

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- Principle 9:** The catch-up programme is recognised by and aligned with the national education system and has clear transition pathways.
- Principle 10:** The catch-up programme is integrated into the national education system and relevant humanitarian architecture.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://inee.org/resources/catch-programmes-10-principles-helping-learners-catch-and-return-learning>

# Target audience

The target audience of catch-up programmes is children of primary and secondary school age who have had limited or no access to full-time and/or distance education for a long period. These include:

- children staying in the de-occupied territories;
- children staying in territories with ongoing hostilities or in areas located near such places;
- children from border areas where educational institutions do not operate in a full-time format due to the security situation;
- children returning from abroad;
- internally displaced children who, for one reason or another, have not had access to full-time and/or distance education for a long period.

## Priority regions for implementing catch-up programmes with ongoing (or past) active hostilities and prevailing distance education:

- Dnipropetrovska oblast;
- Donetsk oblast;
- Zaporizhzhvska oblast;
- Luhanska oblast;
- Mykolaivvska oblast;
- Odeska oblast;
- Sumska oblast;
- Kharkivvska oblast;
- Khersonvska oblast;
- certain communities in oblasts other than those mentioned above, bordering the Russian Federation and Belarus, where educational institutions operate remotely due to security concerns.

## Given the limited resources for implementing programmes to make up for learning losses, it is necessary to prioritise children from vulnerable categories for participation in such programmes, including:

- children from low-income families;
- children from large families who do not have enough devices for distance education;
- children with disabilities;
- national minorities children;
- children who are not registered in primary or secondary schools.

Another category of children who need to be involved in catch-up programmes are children returning from the Russian Federation and the temporarily occupied territories. When designing programmes for them, it is necessary to take into account the fact that they studied in the Russian Federation and may need psycho-emotional support.



Children continue learning in the shelter when the air raid alarm goes off.  
Photo: European Union/O. Ratushniak

# Content of catch-up programmes

The focus of catch-up programmes in the regions mentioned above should be on basic subjects.

## Primary school:

- Ukrainian language (reading and writing);
- math.

## Secondary school (focus on grades 5-6):

- Ukrainian language and literature;
- math.

## Diagnostic testing

For effective implementation of the programmes, it is necessary to prepare diagnostic tests. Starting in September 2023, tests in all subjects will be available on the All-Ukrainian School Online platform for students in grades 5-9.

## Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) should be part of programmes to overcome learning losses. This should include:

- training teachers to provide psychosocial and psycho-emotional support;
- integrating social and emotional learning into the educational process;
- monitoring children's mental state;
- referring to professional help in difficult cases;
- supervising teachers.

Programmes to make up for learning losses in war should be based on a thorough understanding of the psychology and motivation of students, teachers and parents. They should include the use of tools that give students choice, provide opportunities to demonstrate their strengths and skills, engage them in socially important activities through project tasks related to rebuilding their communities or volunteering, and so on.

# Implementation modalities for catch-up programmes

Method* (implementation mechanism)	Potential difficulties and risks	Solutions
<b>Teacher's work during and outside the educational process to make up for students' learning losses</b>	Difficulties with individualising learning in large classes.	Needs to be resolved at the state level; will be taken into account when developing the national strategy.
	Lack of funds for additional classes outside of school hours.	Needs to be resolved at the state level; will be taken into account when developing the national strategy.
	Overload of teachers and students, low motivation.	Programmes only focused on key topics and subjects.
	Insufficient skills of teachers to work with children with disabilities; insufficient skills to adapt programmes, etc.	Professional development programmes offered by various entities.
	Insufficient number of correctional and pedagogical classes for children with disabilities.	Paying teachers extra for these classes.
	Lack of educational and methodological materials for overcoming learning losses and gaps (materials on key topics, diagnostic tools, etc.).	Developing materials on key topics and diagnostic tools; training teachers to use them.

<b>Engaging volunteers, students and additional teachers to work with children</b>	Lack of volunteers and teachers who are able and willing to conduct such classes.	Promotion with a broad engagement campaign.
	Lack of a model for administering such programmes.	NGOs and other entities that are currently implementing or planning to implement programmes to compensate learning losses can prepare their solutions and models that will be considered and taken into account when developing the national strategy.
<b>Summer programmes to compensate learning losses</b>	Lack of funds.	Searching for international partners.
	Low motivation of students and teachers.	The camp format may be of interest to students.

\* All these methods can be implemented online, face to face and in mixed formats.

## Entities involved in implementing catch-up programmes

### Who can implement it:

- primary and secondary schools;
- institutions of afterschool education;
- public organizations;
- community-based education authorities.

### Who can teach:

- teachers;
- invited trainers;
- volunteers;
- parents;
- students of pedagogical higher education institutions (as part of their internship), other educational institutions with methodological support and/or guidance;
- strong students (with teacher support or mentoring).

### Qualification requirements for a teacher of catch-up programmes:

- knowledge of theoretical and practical principles of facilitating the learning process;
- methodological training in implementing programmes to compensate learning losses;
- basic psychological knowledge and trauma-informed approach;
- knowledge of formative and summative assessment strategies;
- knowledge of digital technologies.

All educators (tutors, volunteers, and so on) involved in implementing programmes with children should follow basic principles to protect children from any form of abuse or violence, and there should be a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or abuse.



Hlib,8, a student from the Khersonska school, connects to his online classes using a tablet received from UNICEF.  
Photo: UNICEF/O. Filippov

## Monitoring

### Recommended indicators for monitoring programmes to compensate learning losses

To evaluate the effectiveness of catch-up programmes, we suggest using the following indicators:

- number of girls and boys who participated in the programme;
- percentage of children who improved their knowledge in at least one subject/improved at least one key competency or cross-cutting skill as a result of participation in a catch-up programme.

### We recommend collecting data on the following indicators:

- gender (boys/girls);
- age – preschool/primary (grades 1-4), secondary (grades 5-9), high school (grades 10-12);
- Vulnerability category (internally displaced children/from large families/with disabilities, etc.);
- location (region, district, community, school where a child is registered).

When calculating the number of children who have participated in a catch-up programme, it is necessary to determine the criteria used to make this calculation. For example, this could be the percentage of classes attended and only those children who have attended at least 50 per cent of the classes provided by the catch-up programme should be included in the calculation.









It is also important to collect data on which educational institution a child is registered in. This will help to ensure effective coordination in the implementation of catch-up programmes, facilitate data exchange between partners and ensure the avoidance of duplication in data analysis and reporting.

The Education Cluster collects information on which projects are being implemented and where. On the Education Cluster's website, there is a link to a [form](#) that can be filled out and sent to the Cluster to avoid data duplication.










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