KIND
KIDS IN NEED OF DEFENSE

Terre des Hommes Netherlands

How Children Displaced from Ukraine Use and View AI

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Acknowledgements and Imprint

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Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly becoming part of children's everyday lives, including for children on the move. AI offers children on the move with new opportunities for learning, gathering information, being creative and communicating, while also introducing risks. Offenders are using AI to scale the production of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and to facilitate grooming and exploitation of vulnerable groups of children, including those on the move. At the same time, the development of AI technologies is significantly outpacing laws and regulations designed to protect children from these harms. This study explores how children displaced from Ukraine to two countries, Poland and Slovakia, use and experience AI, and what gaps in protection exist for this particularly vulnerable group.

Key Findings

This study explored how children displaced from Ukraine to Poland and Slovakia use, understand and feel about artificial intelligence (AI), and what risks and gaps in protection they experience. This was done through focus group discussions with 27 children and young people (aged 14–21) and 14 stakeholders.

The study found that children displaced from Ukraine in Poland and Slovakia are frequent and confident users of AI and primarily use it for education, creative purposes and entertainment. A notable pattern among this group is **the use of AI for emotional support and companionship**, a finding that stakeholders linked to the particular vulnerabilities of displaced children, who may have fewer trusted adults and friends to turn to. While children generally demonstrated a sound practical understanding of how AI works, including its limitations, stakeholders worried that they cannot predict the longer-term consequences of its use.

In terms of feelings, children expressed a mix of excitement and concern about AI. Key worries included overuse and dependency, misinformation, privacy, the risk of AI-generated harmful content, and the impact of AI on future employment. These worries add to already existing challenges this group faces, including long-term disruption of their schooling as a result of the war, language barriers and limited social support networks, compounding their vulnerabilities.

A final notable finding of this study is the gap between children's assumptions about safety and the reality of available protections. Children largely believe that companies and governments have already put adequate rules and safeguards in place. At the same time, they do not know how or where to report AI-related harm. Stakeholders confirmed that regulation, accountability and guidance for children, parents and educators specifically focused on safe AI use remain very limited. For children displaced from Ukraine, this gap adds to a lack of available role models and school-based support that might otherwise help them navigate these technologies safely.

Children do not expect to carry the responsibility for their own safety alone, and look to parents, schools, technology companies and governments to keep them safe. The structures, guidance and accountability mechanisms they are relying on, however, largely remain limited or absent.

27 **Ukranian children & youth consulted**

14 **stakeholders interviewed**

2 **countries: Poland and Slovakia**

Top AI Uses: **creativity, entertainment, emotional support**

1. Background

In the last few years, artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly expanded, with its availability, accessibility and use now permeating daily life around the world.[1] AI refers to technological computer systems and programs, designed to perform certain tasks, such as decision-making, problem-solving, learning, reasoning, translation or creative production, that would regularly require human intelligence.[2] This includes generative AI, where completely novel outputs can be created at scale, including text, image, audio and/or video content.[3]

This technological advancement has introduced exciting new opportunities across society, to enhance productivity, creativity, innovation and education.[4] However, the same technologies introduce significant risks for children's rights, safety and wellbeing.[5] These include exposure to misinformation, privacy issues and forms of exploitation and abuse.[6] For instance, offenders are using AI tools to scale the production and spread of child sexual abuse materials (CSAM), and to facilitate grooming, sexual extortion, and trafficking of children.[7] At the same time, AI also presents important opportunities to help detect, prevent and address such harms.[8] For instance, AI holds great promise to develop innovative ways to investigate and disrupt crimes, to support the currently overtaxed children's rights NGOs and law enforcement authorities (LEAs).[9]

However, the development and public release of AI technologies is significantly outpacing official laws and regulations around the ethical development and use of such technologies around the world.[10] This legal delay has resulted in increased impunity of offenders misusing AI for child sexual exploitation and abuse purposes, and technology companies that are complicit in their AI platforms facilitating harms against children.[11] Given the rapid spread of AI technology, its potential to escalate child exploitation and abuse, and the current legal grey areas surrounding its misuse, urgent action is needed from governments, policymakers, tech companies, law enforcement authorities (LEAs - including police departments, judicial authorities, courts, judges, prosecutors and so on), children's rights NGOs, and civil society to address this growing threat.[12]

1 Dubrosa et al. (2024). Rising threats of AI driven child sexual abuse material, Pediatrics, *153*(2), 1-3.

2 Anjilla. (2024). Super-Intelligent Machines - Analysis of Developmental Challenges and Predicted Negative Consequences. *International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters, 7*(3), 1-32; Cahill et al. (2025). *Artificial intelligence and child sexual abuse: A rapid evidence assessment*. Australian Institute of Criminology; IWF. (2023). *How AI is being abused to create child sexual abuse imagery*; High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence. (2019). *A definition of AI: Main capabilities and disciplines*; Stockhem. (2020). *Improving the international regulation of cybersex trafficking of women and children through the use of data science and artificial intelligence*. Global Campus Europe.

3 eSafety Commissioner. (2023). *Tech Trends Position Statement- Generative AI*; Thorn. (2024). *Safety by Design for Generative AI: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse*; IWF. (2023). *How AI is being abused to create child sexual abuse imagery*.

4 Anjilla. (2024). Super-Intelligent Machines - Analysis of Developmental Challenges and Predicted Negative Consequences. *International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters, 7*(3), 1-32; Stockhem. (2020). *Improving the international regulation of cybersex trafficking of women and children through the use of data science and artificial intelligence*. Global Campus Europe; 5Rights. (2025). *Children & AI design code: A protocol for the development and use of AI systems that impact children*.

5 Kolokali & Fragopoulou. (2025). Unveiling AI's threats to child protection: Regulatory efforts to criminalise AI-generated CSAM and emerging children's rights violations. arXiv: 2503.004433; Parti & Szabo. (2024). The Legal Challenges of Realistic and AI-Driven Child Sexual Abuse Material: Regulatory and Enforcement Perspectives in Europe. *Laws, 13*(67), 1-19.

6 IWF. (2023). *How AI is being abused to create child sexual abuse imagery*; 5Rights. (2025). *Children & AI design code: A protocol for the development and use of AI systems that impact children*.

7 Thorn. (2024). *Safety by Design for Generative AI: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse*; Barassi. (2025). *Amplified visibility: Critical reflections on children's social media presence, sharenting and tech-abuse in the age of generative AI.* In: T. Annabell, C. Fieseler, C. Giants and I. Wildhaber (Eds.), *The Hashtag Hustle: Law and Policy Perspectives on Working in the Influencer Economy.* (pp. 13-31).

8 Babu, Kumari & Rani. (2024). AI's watchful eye: Protecting children from sexual abuse with artificial intelligence. In A Shaik, SL Thota and LR Atmakuri (Eds.), *Child Sexual Abuse*, (pp. 441-445); Olsen. (2022). The double-side of deepfakes: Obstacles and assets in the fight against child pornography. *Georgia Law Review, 56*(2), 865-892.

9 Thorn. (2024). *Safety by Design for Generative AI: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse*; Cahill, Cubitt & Wolbers. (2025). *Artificial Intelligence and child sexual abuse: A rapid evidence assessment*.

10 Olsen. (2022). The double-side of deepfakes: Obstacles and assets in the fight against child pornography. *Georgia Law Review, 56*(2), 865-892; Thiel, Stroebel & Portnoff (2023). *Generative ML and CSAM: Implications and mitigations*.

11 ibid.

12 Barassi. (2025). Amplified visibility: Critical reflections on children's social media presence, sharenting and tech-abuse in the age of generative AI. In: T. Annabell, C. Fieseler, C. Giants and I. Wildhaber (Eds.), *The Hashtag Hustle: Law and Policy Perspectives on Working in the Influencer Economy.* (pp. 13-31); Thorn. (2024). *Safety by Design for Generative AI: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse*; Dubrosa et al. (2024). Rising threats of AI driven child sexual abuse material, *Pediatrics, 153*(2), 1-3.

While these risks and gaps in protection affect all children, some groups face compounded vulnerabilities. In particular, children experiencing displacement face a distinct set of challenges in relation to AI. Displacement cuts the connection between children and familiar support networks such as peers, family members, schools and communities. These usually provide both emotional support and informal protection.[13] This isolation can lead children to turn to AI tools for connection, information and emotional support, particularly when trusted adults are less accessible. At the same time, disruptions to education often result in increased unsupervised time online, where offenders increasingly operate.[14]

Children displaced from Ukraine are a particular case in point. Many have continued schooling online rather than attending school in host countries and have become reliant on digital tools for translation, information-seeking and social connection.[15] This reliance on digital environments creates specific vulnerabilities, as children who are socially isolated and dependent on digital tools are more susceptible to the range of risks these technologies can pose.[16] Pre-existing challenges, including language barriers, loss of documentation and limited knowledge of legal rights in host countries further limit displaced children's ability to recognise risks or access support when harm occurs.[17]

Despite a growing body of literature documenting the risks faced by displaced children from Ukraine and a separate emerging evidence base on AI's role in child exploitation, no primary qualitative research has examined how children from Ukraine perceive and experience AI in relation to its risks and protective factors.[18] This report addresses that gap, detailing what children displaced from Ukraine in Poland and Slovakia have shared with us, touching on use, conceptualisation and perceptions on risks and benefits. The methods can be found in Annex I.

WHAT WE KNOW

- AI is changing children's online experiences
- AI is being misused for child exploitation
- Displaced children face heightened digital risks

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

- How displaced children themselves understand AI
- How they perceive AI-related risks
- What protective factors they identify

This report fills the gap — hearing directly from **children displaced from Ukraine** in Poland and Slovakia.

13 Winkens et al. (2023). Unaccompanied, but not alone: A systematic review of the influence of social relationships on the transition of unaccompanied refugee adolescents to adulthood. *Children and Youth Services Review, 155*, 107190.
14 GRETA. (2025). *GRETA Evaluation report: Ukraine, third evaluation round*.
15 Ryzkho et al. (2023). Models of the use of artificial intelligence in the context of life practices of Ukrainian youth. *Образ*, (3 (43)), 111-122.
16 GRETA. (2025). *GRETA Evaluation report: Ukraine, third evaluation round*; Martón-Gadós & Strzala. (2023). Human trafficking in the Russia's war on Ukraine. *Vectors of Social Sciences*, 35-42.
17 CoE GGU. (2024) *Special hearing report on understanding the risks of trafficking of children of Ukraine, including for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation*; GRETA. (2025). *GRETA Evaluation report: Ukraine, third evaluation round*.
18 Gearon. (2022). Hope to despair: Children and young people's lived experiences of trafficking abuse. *The British Journal of Social Work, 52*(6), 3347–3365.

2. Findings

Generally, children displaced from Ukraine are very familiar with AI and use it often. ChatGPT was most widely known, but Gemini, Sorra and DeepSeek were also mentioned frequently. In addition, children remarked that AI was incorporated into applications that they use every day, such as search engines like Google or social media. As one child explained:

> ***"I cannot imagine a life without AI. In the past I had to use Google and analyse the results myself. AI shortens that time and when you save time, you can use it for something more important."***
>
> - Child displaced from Ukraine to Slovakia

The next section provides an overview of what children displaced from Ukraine use AI for, their understanding of it, their feelings around it and risks that were associated with the use of AI.

Key Finding 1: AI is used for education, entertainment, creativity, companionship and emotional support

Most children indicated that they used AI for **educational purposes** such as for help with homework, studying and searching for information. AI was also used for **creative and entertainment purposes**, such as generating images or videos. Some children described how AI tools can turn photos into videos or animated content, which they found entertaining.

A notable usage pattern amongst children displaced from Ukraine was the use of AI for **emotional support or companionship**. One child shared that AI *"can help you in a difficult moment and it can improve your mood."* One girl now living in Poland said she used ChatGPT to discuss her mental health but would now advise against using this, as *"AI is not a specialist with [human] experience."* Some children discussed whether AI could be considered a friend, particularly when someone feels lonely. One child shared that if someone does not have friends, *"ChatGPT can be your friend."* At the same time, several children warned against this type of use and recommended not forming emotional relationships with AI, emphasising that *"real friends are always better than AI."*

Stakeholders working with children displaced from Ukraine also described situations where children use AI to discuss sensitive **personal or psychological topics**. In some cases, children were reported to seek support through AI chatbots when experiencing distress or mental health concerns. However, stakeholders emphasised that some of the topics raised by children, including self-harm or suicide attempts, were too serious to be addressed by AI tools and require support from trained professionals. Stakeholders highlighted concerns that children experiencing displacement may turn to AI for emotional support or advice in difficult situations. In addition, stakeholders worried that children may develop emotional attachments to AI systems and children sharing sensitive personal information, leading to privacy risks. Moreover, they worried that reliance on AI could discourage children from seeking support from trusted adults or professionals, potentially reinforcing feelings of isolation.

Key finding 2: AI is generally well understood, but foreseeing long-term consequences of its use is sometimes difficult

Children displaced from Ukraine generally demonstrated a **good understanding of AI**. They usually defined it as a tool that helps complete tasks or provide information. The understanding was mostly practical in nature, often describing AI primarily through its functions, such as solving homework tasks, generating texts, searching for information or producing creative outputs.

Both in Poland and Slovakia, children and young people discussed whether AI could be a friend, with some children saying it could because of the ability of AI to provide companionship and to provide advice. Others said that AI could not be your friend, since *"it doesn't feel anything"* and *"can only describe emotions"* because *"it just learned to speak that way from the internet,"* or only *"if you give AI certain conditions, like seeing your smile [and then] it can interpret emotions."* Children displaced from Ukraine therefore seemed to understand that AI was trained to interact like humans, such as *"ChatGPT studying jokes and generating them. But it doesn't understand them."*

Some children also reflected critically on AI. They noted that AI can give incorrect answers or misunderstand questions, particularly when used for homework tasks. Because of this, several children emphasised that AI outputs should be verified using other sources. One child shared:

> ***"ChatGPT can lie, so you have to verify information. It answers in a way that won't offend us, but there are special prompts to make it answer honestly. However, some censorship is still there."***
>
> - Child displaced from Ukraine to Slovakia

Key finding 3: Children are excited about the possibilities of AI, but also worried about overuse, abuse, misinformation, and AI taking over jobs

Children displaced from Ukraine expressed **mixed feelings** about AI. Most children (seven in Slovakia, five in Poland) were excited about the possibilities of AI, particularly its ability to help with their homework, create videos or generate ideas quickly. Others felt curious (six in Slovakia) about the possibilities and technology behind it, although also expressing confusion or uncertainty when AI gave incorrect answers or when they encountered limitations such as usage restrictions or data limits. Children who were worried (one in Poland) or unsure (one in Slovakia, seven in Poland) mostly pointed to potential risks. Interestingly, in the consultation in Poland, all boys indicated feeling excited about AI, while girls more often expressed uncertainty or worry. The following paragraphs describe the main worries that children and stakeholders expressed.

First, both children and stakeholders also raised concerns about **overuse of AI**. Children mentioned knowing peers who use AI excessively and described them as *"ChatGPT-aholics"* or warning that AI *"could make your brain rot."* Some also discussed people forming emotional relationships with AI systems. In their recommendations, children emphasised that:

> ***"Real friends are always better than AI."***
>
> - Child displaced from Ukraine to Poland

Children recommended companies to design AI in such a way that it keeps encouraging offline relationships, as they could imagine that users could feel alone. Stakeholders raised concerns about the broader social and emotional impact of this. They worried that heavy reliance on AI could reduce real-

life interactions and lead to greater social isolation. Similarly, stakeholders noted that while AI systems are always available and often respond in supportive or agreeable ways, which could make them appealing as companions, they feared this could reduce children's willingness to seek support from adults.

A second concern was raised around **misinformation**. Children frequently mentioned that AI can make mistakes and recounted experiences of AI being wrong. Particularly relevant to the context in Ukraine itself, stakeholders working with children displaced from the country highlighted concerns around children seeking information related to geopolitics, the war, or their national identity. They warned that depending on the databases AI systems are trained on, responses may contain misinformation or biased anti-Ukrainian or other discriminatory rhetoric. While children didn't explicitly mention this risk, they did express the need to keep critical thinking and verify information.

Another worry that was expressed by stakeholders was **child sexual abuse material** and the ability of AI to create this material based on photos. Children displaced from Ukraine in Poland also alluded to these risks during discussions about AI-generated videos from photographs and shared their worry:

> ***"One of my classmates can use my photographs, and it is not entirely safe. [..] As I didn't give my consent to use the photograph, this can be unsafe."***
>
> - Child displaced from Ukraine to Poland.

While children indicated awareness of such possibilities, they appeared hesitant to speak openly about the topic, illustrating the sensitivity surrounding AI-related sexual harms. For instance, after one of the children shared their worry, the rest of the group laughed and seemed embarrassed to discuss it further.

Fourth, children expressed being **worried how AI might affect future employment opportunities**. This became clear through children sharing that they feel bad for using AI for certain things that replace the work of professionals, like creating images. Other children were more explicit and reflected on the challenges of AI, *"for example people might not be able to get employed."* Another child shared:

> ***"Don't make all the work of robots. People need to work, earn money. It's possible that AI will take people's jobs, this is a very scary possibility."***
>
> - Child displaced from Ukraine to Poland.

Stakeholders noted that displaced children are already navigating disrupted schooling and language barriers. AI could add another layer of uncertainty about future employment pathways.

As a last concern, stakeholders stated that children experiencing displacement may be particularly cautious about **privacy and visibility** online, as concerns about personal safety can shape how they think about digital technologies. While for some children privacy concerns were not that prominent, many children throughout the focus group discussions warned against discussing personal information. For example, one girl asked:

> *"What are the privacy restrictions? How does it find information about us? That is a little bit scary. One time ChatGPT wrote something about me. It knew information about me. That was scary."*
>
> - Child displaced from Ukraine to Slovakia

> *"[Children from Ukraine] do not have as many role models, and schools cannot really catch up. For the kids, this is an extra layer that they do not have good models to follow how to use and not misuse AI in a safe and constructive way."*
>
> - Child Protection Stakeholder

Others jumped in and shared that AI and the internet remember what you share and that she must have entered the details in a previous time. Another girl shared that she did tell ChatGPT information about herself so it could speak to her better, but she felt uncomfortable when that information was later used. Children were also concerned about their privacy in relation to their parents. In their rulebook, children indicated that parents shouldn't read the chats of their children. *"It's disrespectful to the child,"* said one of the children who explained that they had faced such a situation, worrying that parents would see what they discussed or made with AI.

Key finding 4: Children assume necessary safeguards are in place to protect them from the dangers of AI, but significant gaps remain

Stakeholders working with displaced Ukrainian children emphasised that there is currently very **little education or programming** specifically focused on safe use of AI. They highlighted broader structural challenges, including limited regulation, lack of accountability of technology companies and insufficient guidance for parents, teachers and children on how to use AI safely. Stakeholders indicated that guidance is especially important for this group of children as:

Some children, on the other hand, assumed that existing laws and company policies already provide sufficient protection when using AI tools. Several children expressed the belief that technology companies have existing rules that regulate AI. As one child expressed: *"all the rules already exist from a legal perspective and the company has security measures in place."* However, children simultaneously reported that they would not know where to report harm or misuse related to AI, other than the *'help'* feature or talking to an AI chatbot about it.

Despite these safeguards not being in place, children indicated that they do rely on many others to keep them safe. They identified a range of actors and actions that could protect them, including parents, schools, companies, and governments. Participants suggested that parents should *"teach your children to use AI safely, they have more influence,"* [19] that companies should ensure that *"ChatGPT should indicate when something is nonsense,"* [20] and that governments should *"prohibit AI, [it] is the easiest way."* The contrast between the trust that children are putting into systems and actors to keep them safe from AI with the reality warrants closer attention. Children do not expect to carry this responsibility alone and largely assume that safeguards are already in place. Yet the structures, guidance and accountability mechanisms they are relying on remain limited or absent.

19 Children's consultation in Poland
20 Children's consultation in Slovakia

3. Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is already embedded in many aspects of the daily lives of children displaced from Ukraine, offering new opportunities for learning, creativity and access to information. Children displaced from Ukraine engage with AI frequently and confidently, using it for educational purposes, information seeking and creative content. Notably, they also use it for emotional support and companionship. Experiences of displacement, disrupted support networks and social isolation can shape how children interact with these technologies, and in some cases lead them to turn to AI in moments of distress in ways that may not always be safe or appropriate.

These findings illustrate how AI can act as a double-edged sword. While AI tools can support learning and provide valuable outlets for children navigating new environments, the same technologies expose them to risks including misinformation, privacy violations, harmful content and emotional dependency, risks that are compounded for children who already face disrupted schooling, language barriers and fewer trusted adults to guide them.

The responsibility for creating safe digital environments should not fall on children themselves. Governments, technology companies, schools and child protection organisations must take the lead in developing strong safeguards, accessible reporting mechanisms and meaningful guidance for all those who play a role in children's lives.

Recommendations

The findings highlight both the opportunities and risks associated with AI use among children displaced from Ukraine. While many experiences mirror those of children in other countries, the context of displacement, social isolation and exposure to conflict-related narratives creates additional vulnerabilities. The following recommendations build on suggestions shared by children and stakeholders in this study, as well as insights derived from the findings.

Due to the lack of laws and policies specifically targeting AI-related risks for children, **governments** should develop or strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks, including safeguards against misuse of AI-generated content, privacy issues and online abuse and exploitation. These frameworks should clarify the responsibility of AI developers and platforms and protect children's rights and safety in it. Policies should also promote age-appropriate design standards, including stronger age verification, transparency about AI-generated content and limits on potentially harmful functionalities. In addition, governments should support the integration of AI literacy and digital safety education into school curricula, ensuring that children develop the skills needed to safely use AI and navigate AI-generated information.

TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES

Technology companies should adopt a Safety by Design approach when developing AI tools. This includes implementing mechanisms to identify and reduce harmful content, flagging misinformation and ensuring that AI-generated material is clearly labelled. Companies should also strengthen reporting and support mechanisms, enabling children to easily report harmful or abusive uses of AI-generated content. Children suggested practical measures such as limiting usage for younger users, censoring sensitive content and clearly indicating that users are interacting with AI rather than a human.

SCHOOLS

Schools could play a key role in supporting children to use AI safely and critically. Teachers should receive training on AI technologies and their associated risks, enabling them to guide students in understanding how AI works, how to verify information and how to recognise harmful or misleading content. Educational programmes should emphasise critical thinking and responsible AI use, including discussions about privacy, digital footprints and the ethical implications of AI-generated content. In the context of children displaced from Ukraine, schools can also provide important spaces for trusted guidance and discussion about online risks and misinformation.

PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

Parents and caregivers should be supported to better understand AI technologies and their potential risks. Awareness programmes can help caregivers learn how to discuss AI use with children, recognise signs of distress or excessive technology use and encourage open conversations about online experiences. This could be potentially given at schools. Children emphasised the importance of guidance rather than surveillance, recommending that parents explain the risks of sharing personal information. They warned that looking at their children's chat history would be an invasion of privacy. Finally, children noted that their parents do not use AI often. Some felt that parents should not rely on AI for advice on raising children, given the importance of the subject, and worried they might receive inaccurate information.

CHILD PROTECTION ORGANISATIONS

Child protection organisations should start and continue to raise awareness about AI-related risks and support children in navigating displacement contexts alongside digital environments safely. Organisations should not shy away from discussing this topic because it's too complex, new or technical, but should recognise that risks exist and try to work to prevent harm from happening. Organisations working with displaced children should consider how experiences of displacement influence children's digital behaviour. This should also mean realising the benefits that AI could have for children displaced from Ukraine, for instance with finding the right information and helping to overcome language barriers.

CHILDREN

Children emphasised several key practices for using AI safely for their peers. These included verifying information using multiple sources, avoiding sharing personal information with AI tools and not relying on AI for emotional support or decision-making. They encouraged their peers to maintain a balance between digital and offline interactions, noting that AI should not replace real friendships or relationships.

Annex I

This study followed a qualitative research design with focus group discussions with key child protection stakeholders and children. The study was part of a larger study in five contexts: Nepal, The Philippines, Cambodia, Kenya and children and young people displaced from Ukraine (conducted in Poland and Slovakia). The Institute for Human Rights and Peace Studies of Mahidol University in Thailand reviewed the research protocol and research tools and assessed that the project meets ethical standards for research conducted in the target countries on 7 October 2025.

The sampling of children displaced from Ukraine was organised by Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), which has a broad network of child protection stakeholders in Europe working with children displaced from Ukraine in both Poland and Slovakia who participated in this research. For this group, the methods were adapted to fit the time that the children and stakeholders were available. The methods will be explained in the following paragraphs.

A.1 Focus group discussions with children

One focus group discussion was held in Poland (November 2025) and one in Slovakia (January 2026), engaging 24 children aged 14-17 years old and three youth of 18-21 years old. In the sample, 48% were girls and 52% were boys. Child participants for this study attended participatory consultations with discussions on usage of AI, as well as a voting exercise on how children feel about AI and making a rulebook for different actors. These consultations sought to engage and understand children's perspectives on AI, including how they use, understand and feel about these technologies. They also aimed to capture their perceptions of any concerns, risks or impacts AI is having on children's lives. The child consultations were facilitated in the most practical and commonly spoken local language, including adaptations and accommodations to ensure all children can participate. Parental consent and children's assent was required for all children participating in the child consultations.

A.2 Focus group discussions with stakeholders

Fourteen stakeholders representing Ukrainian civil society organisations, lawyers, law enforcement, government protection workers, social workers, the Ukrainian consulate in Poland, and various experts on children displaced from Ukraine participated in the focus group in Warsaw in November 2025. These consultations aimed to engage the perspectives of stakeholders across diverse professional backgrounds on AI technologies, and their use,

impacts and potential safety and wellbeing risks amongst children. They also sought to understand the current state of responses in place for each country to protect children's privacy, wellbeing and safety in relation to AI, as well as key gaps and recommendations for action in this area. These consultations included a roundtable where everyone could share their insights of the usage of AI amongst children displaced from Ukraine as well as the risks. Afterwards, a World Cafe set up was used to brainstorm about existing and missing measures to protect children in the age of AI. The session was closed by identifying recommendations for different actors to protect children from AI-related risks. Informed consent was obtained by all stakeholders prior to their participation in consultations.

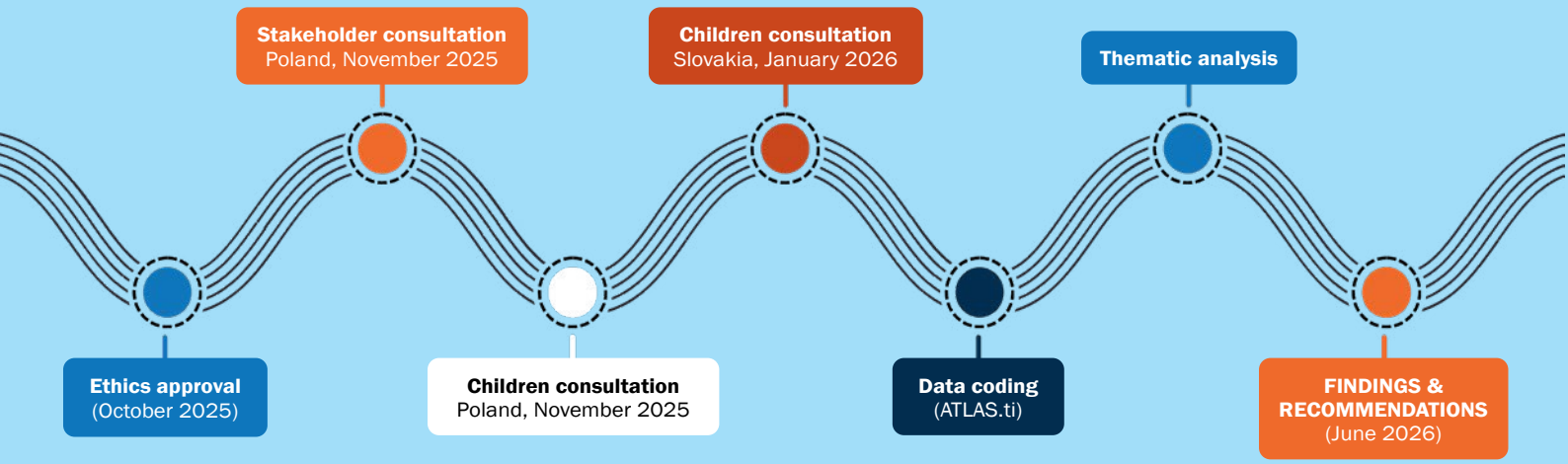
A.3 Analysis

Data was collected by taking notes in a data capturing template, supplemented by listening back to the audio recording before it was deleted. For the children, pictures of the creative outputs were translated to English and included there. All templates were carefully screened to ensure it contained no identifiable and solely pseudonymised information. This was later analysed by the TdH NL research team using ATLAS.ti Web software. A codebook was created and followed, with broad codes that matched the research questions and sections of the report. Coders read through the document and applied codes from the codebook where they recognised it. After everything was coded, researchers analysed each code group by going through the quotations and noting any patterns.

A.4 Limitations

The findings of this study should be seen in the context of the limitations. As this study employed a qualitative approach, prioritising the depth of the insights over the generalisability, the findings are not intended to be representative of all children's views globally or children displaced from Ukraine more widely. Another challenge of the choice for a qualitative approach, in particular focus group discussions, is the potential apprehension of children to share about sensitive topics such as sexual exploitation. As we have seen in the findings, related topics such as deepfakes were mentioned, but not discussed elaborately. It was clear that children were aware of the risk of sexual harm related to AI, but the sensitivity of the topic and the group setting could have impacted the extent and way in which these were discussed. Lastly, due to time constraints, not all exercises that were designed for the study and carried out in other countries were done with children displaced from Ukraine. As a result, the data did not fully reflect all themes discussed in the wider research and in some areas, might be limited. However, the discussions still provided valuable insights into how children displaced from Ukraine use, perceive and experience AI technologies in their daily lives.

This study addresses a critical evidence gap by documenting how children displaced from Ukraine perceive, use and experience AI technologies, including both risks and protective factors.



Kids in Need of Defense

Kids in Need of Defence (KIND) Europe is based in Belgium and operates across 9 countries: Belgium, Czechia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and the UK. We work with 14 expert NGOs and 51 law firms and corporate pro bono partners to advance protection for children on the move. Since 2016, our work with civil society and legal professionals has built deep expertise in protecting unaccompanied and separated children.

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Terre des Hommes Netherlands

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) is an international non-governmental organisation based in The Hague, Netherlands, and working globally with local partners. Our mission is to protect children by preventing and stopping child exploitation, and by empowering them to make their voices count. We envision a world where all children can flourish free from exploitation. We are guided by values that are human-centred, playful, bold, and responsible.

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