

**Early Childhood Education and
Care (ECEC) services in support
of Ukrainian refugees across
EU member states and Moldova**

Compendium of good practices

October 2023

Contents

Foreword	2
Introduction	3
Expanding access to quality ECEC	4
1. A job bank for retired educators	5
2. Data-based ECEC resource allocation	6
3. Certification and diploma recognition exemptions for Ukrainian staff	7
4. Expanding ECEC spaces through grant schemes	8
5. Grant scheme to increase qualified ECEC staff	9
6. Opening up ECEC spaces through play and learning hubs	10
7. Non-formal spaces for children and families who have experienced war	11
8. Digital solutions to increase access to ECEC	12
Support for integration through ECEC	13
9. Playful language courses for displaced children	14
10. ECEC system strengthening	15
11. Training for educators on psychological first aid	16
12. Refugee education for pre- and in-service teacher training	17
13. Online training for educators working with refugees	18
14. Efficient community organization	19
15. Inclusive and personalized education support	20
16. Intervention support teams for schools (including pre-schools)	21
17. Digital apps to support parents on child development	22

Foreword

The war in Ukraine has caused an unprecedented refugee crisis. In response, UNICEF and partners continue to work tirelessly to support millions of children and their families who have been displaced.

For a young refugee child, being able to access early childhood education and care (ECEC) in a host country means regaining a vital sense of stability and safety. The ECEC system is one of the first contact points between refugee families and host communities and can act as a bridging space to increase integration and create a sense of community and embeddedness within host societies. The refugee crisis has, however, exacerbated existing challenges in ECEC systems in Europe. Investing in resilient, inclusive and quality early learning environments is essential. Despite the many challenges caused by the increased demand, we have seen exceptional progress in expanding ECEC services and responding to the needs of young refugee children. Rather than have their lives on hold, these services continue to provide the youngest refugee children with the chance to work towards the bright future they so fundamentally deserve.

In acknowledgement of this important and inspiring work done across Europe, UNICEF is grateful to have had the opportunity to build the compendium of good practices on: **Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services in support of Ukrainian refugees across EU member states and Moldova**. This compendium captures relevant, effective and innovative approaches to expand access for young refugees to essential early learning and development opportunities. The practices mirror the compassion, solidarity and proactivity shown across Europe in these challenging times. It highlights significant efforts made by national and local authorities, civil society, international organizations and other partners to build a better future for young refugee children. The compendium will be accompanied by two briefs focused on the lessons learned from the region that link the vision for quality ECEC services with concrete and actionable recommendations for the future.

As development and humanitarian challenges continue to evolve in our region, we hope that this resource will serve as an inspiring legacy of how partnerships for quality ECEC services can advance progress towards more equitable, inclusive, peaceful and resilient societies for every child.



Regina De Dominicis
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Introduction

This Compendium is a collection of good practices on the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) supporting Ukrainian refugees in 27 European Union Member States and Moldova. The practices were identified through two cycles of research (from June 2022 until January 2023), commissioned by UNICEF's Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, and conducted by Ecorys. The Compendium presents initiatives that have made innovative use of funding, multi-sectoral cooperation, up-skilling and more, to **expand refugee's access to ECEC** and **support refugee integration**.

The document showcases a diverse range of ECEC policies and practices, from play-based learning approaches, to community mobilization, psycho-social support, creative teacher-training methods, and many more. The Compendium includes both formal and non-formal ECEC initiatives. While non-formal interventions may encounter issues of sustainability, these practices illustrate innovations in rapid service provision and show the wide range of actors engaging in ECEC provision. The aim of the Compendium is to inspire readers with promising approaches on welcoming young refugees and their families, allowing us to share knowledge and learn from this crisis.

The two detailed research reports that this Compendium is based on, analysing the ECEC response to Ukrainian refugees across EU Member states and Moldova, are available at the following link: <https://www.ecorys.com/moldova/our-work/monitoring-provision-early-childhood-and-care-ecec-services-ukrainian-refugee>

The identified practices were examined against the following criteria:

- › **Relevance:** A good practice is one which responds to the identified needs, be those specifically the needs of Ukrainian children or their caregivers, service providers, the ECEC system in the country, etc.
- › **Effectiveness:** A good practice is one which produces the results it aims to achieve, but also potentially one that (unexpectedly) achieved positive results. In case of interventions implemented in response to the Ukraine refugee crisis, it is early to talk about concrete results and evaluations of programs. However, potential effects or indicative signs of promise were taken into account.
- › **Efficiency:** A good practice is one which achieves the intended results with few resources (financial, human, etc.). Alternatively, it may be one that uses scarce and limited resources well, or one that allows for finding savings in other places to fund the necessary refugee ECEC responses.
- › **Coherence:** A good practice is one which fills an existing gap in the system, enables or complements other interventions and is linked to an existing system, or increases the effectiveness of other interventions.
- › **Sustainability:** A good practice contains an arrangement for it to be continued beyond the immediate implementation period. While sustainability in itself does not necessarily make an intervention a good practice, it can add to the overall positive assessment of a practice.
- › **Transferability:** Transferability itself does not determine that a practice can be considered good, but if a practice can easily be transferred and adapted suitably to local contexts it can translate into its more promising character.

- › **Innovative character:** The innovative character of a practice can involve the use of digital technology, a new way or approach of reaching families and young children, a fresh perspective on a combination of elements, etc. This criterion does not mean innovation for innovation's sake either. For a practice to be innovative, the applied innovation should positively influence other aspects of the practice, such as its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability or transferability.

This entire cycle of research has been carried out in close cooperation with the European Commission (DG EAC) and members of the [EU Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care](#), who have provided invaluable support in framing key issues for the research.

For further inspiration on good practices to support the integration of Ukrainian refugees, the Alliance4Ukraine – consisting of over 450 organizations and entities in Germany – has developed a handbook on successful approaches to care for 1-7 year-old refugees and their families.¹ The [handbook](#) covers a wide range of challenges in supporting refugee ECEC integration, with practical solutions, examples, and suggestions.

Navigating this Compendium

The first half of the Compendium presents **practices that expand access** to ECEC for Ukrainian refugees. The second half features **practices that support integration through ECEC**. There are also various sub-themes that these good practices support, such as **training & capacity building, sectoral cooperation, psychosocial support, innovative outreach, and support for vulnerable groups**. These sub-themes are visible as icons in the top right corner of each practice:



Training & capacity building



Inter- and multi-sectoral cooperation



Psychosocial support



Innovative outreach



Support for vulnerable groups

In summary, you will find a total of:

- › 17 good practices.
- › Across 18 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, United Kingdom).

¹ https://projecttogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2022_Alliance4Ukraine_Gute-Loesungen-fuer-die-Betreuung-von-Kindern-aus-der-Ukraine-Eine-Sammlung-von-Good-Practices.pdf



Theme 1: Expanding access to quality ECEC



1. A job bank for retired educators

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

A job bank for retired educators

Title of the practice in original language

Jobbank: Pensionister tager imod ukrainske flygtningebørn

Country

Denmark

Period of implementation

2021-ongoing

Institution responsible for implementation

The educators' union (BUPL), the Danish unemployment insurance fund ('A-kasse') and the educators' pension company (Pædagogernes Pension)

Source

<https://bupl.dk/aktuelt-fra-kassen/tilmeld-dig-jobbanken>

Description

In Denmark, there was a job bank established for retired educators who could step in to support Ukrainian children and their families. This included support for Ukrainian refugee children in day-care centers, after-school centers, and schools, in order to respond to educator staff shortages.

The invitation to register with the job bank was sent out to approximately 14,000 pedagogues between the ages of 60 and 72, who are currently either in early or full retirement. As of January 2023, the job bank housed around 1,300 retired educators who had volunteered to step in to relieve staff shortage pressures. According to the educators' union, there are a wide range of educator profiles in the job bank, with expertise ranging across day-care centers, leisure centers, schools, and reception classes. If the municipalities want to make use of the retired educators' support, they are instructed to simply contact the Danish unemployment insurance fund (A-kasse) and state their needs. The A-kasse then puts them in touch with potential candidates.

It is important to note, however, that only a small number of retired educators were eventually called on to support day-care centers in practice as the numbers of Ukrainians enrolling in ECEC were lower than initially predicted.

Why it's a good practice

This practice can be considered promising in that it provides a straightforward and practical emergency response to relieve educator staff shortages in a crisis situation. While it did not appear to be as needed in this instance as initially foreseen (because of low enrolment numbers of Ukrainian refugees), the model has a high potential for replicability in the future if a similar crisis occurs. The model could also be transferred to other country contexts where there are retired educators who can step in to support an educational crisis.

If the practice was to be adopted elsewhere, its success would depend on mechanisms ensuring that it is financially attractive for retired educators to participate, e.g. that there is no negative implications for the educators' pension, back pay, or other benefits.

It is also advised that this is introduced in conjunction with other initiatives to counteract teaching staff shortages in the system, such as part-time jobs for students training to be teachers, support to relieve educational leaders administratively, as well as employment of Ukrainians with experience from pedagogical work, where possible.

2. Data-based ECEC resource allocation

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

Data collection on the number and location of children

Title of the practice in original language

Laste arvu ja asukoha kohta andmete kogumine

Country

Estonia

Period of implementation

February 2022-ongoing

Institution responsible for implementation

Social Insurance Board, Ministry of Education and Research

Source

<https://www.educationestonia.org/data/>

Description

Estonian authorities collect comprehensive data on the number and location of Ukrainian refugee children who are willing to join or have already joined the Estonian education system. This data is divided into pre-school, primary, secondary, and vocational education levels. Data about children across different locations and educational institutions is submitted to the central database by educational institutions themselves, and this data is reviewed by the Ministry of Education and Research. This information is then used to map additional budget needs and services to arrange resources accordingly. It is therefore possible to efficiently plan for additional support programs, such as teacher training, mental health and more, exactly where it is needed.

Gathering this type of data is part of the routine data-based planning in Estonia – it is not an additional obligation or activity that requires extra funding. The collection of data to inform educational decision-making is an ongoing practice and there is no indication that gathering a dataset about refugee children will be ending any time soon.

Why it's a good practice

The effective governance of the education system in Estonia at central and local government level has been largely based on data-driven education interventions. Information systems inform decision-makers about needs and gaps, giving also good grounds for transparent financing decisions.

This approach has been very useful in rapidly identifying and allocating benefits to ECEC centers based on the data gathered and verified. This system could also be useful in the future regarding other crises, to better support municipalities as well as educational institutions from the central government.

This practice is efficient in that it can be continued without significant additional costs. Data-based educational interventions support Estonia's New Education Strategy² which will offer more personalized education delivery to children with different needs and capabilities, including refugee children, ensuring that they receive tailored support for their daily learning.

² <https://www.hm.ee/media/1590/download>

3. Certification and diploma recognition exemptions for Ukrainian staff

Sub-theme



EN

Title of the practice

Certification and diploma recognition exemptions for Ukrainian staff



Country

Lithuania



Period of implementation

2022-ongoing



Institution responsible for implementation

Lithuanian National Ministry of Education and Science



Source

Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė, D., Jašinauskas, L., Kudinoviėnė, J. (2023). *Lithuanian language learning in multicultural contexts for pre-school children and primary school pupils arriving in Lithuania*.

Description

Lithuania has introduced regulations allowing Ukrainian ECEC specialists to work in their profession by exempting them from standard diploma or certificate recognition procedures. This has been put in place to facilitate Ukrainian staff's employment (and integration) in their host country, while also filling gaps in staff availability to care for the newly arriving refugee children.

If there are children from Ukraine in an ECEC establishment, it is common to have educators from Ukraine working there as well. Ukrainian ECEC staff usually work as teaching assistants or as teachers who can communicate to Ukrainian children in their language, helping ease their integration to their new pre-schools. Through the cooperation of the Vilnius Ukrainian Centre (a hub supporting Ukrainian refugees in the city), several Ukrainian teachers have been employed at pre-schools in the city, including at the ECEC center of a teacher training university. Other examples where Ukrainian ECEC staff have been employed include private kindergartens, where Ukrainian teachers begin as teaching assistants and progress into being official ECEC teachers.

Why it's a good practice

Based on research conducted with Ukrainian teachers employed in Lithuanian ECEC centers, teachers were relieved that they were able to work in the same field that they were previously working in before the war.³ Moreover, refugee children were also relieved to be able to communicate and address some of their teachers in Ukrainian.⁴ Both Ukrainian and Lithuanian staff appreciated being able to work together and learn from one another's cultures, sharing experiences and adopting new educational methods. This cooperation can be especially useful when Ukrainian educators work in a team with Lithuanian educators, assisting them in the educational process, whereby they can observe and provide support.

Many teachers have started to learn Lithuanian, as the opportunity to work without Lithuanian language skills was only granted for two years. The study cited above suggests that the experience of integrating refugee educators could serve as a model for other countries in the European Union as well, where relevant. Indeed, the speedy changes in Lithuanian regulations allowed teachers to find a job in their field of specialization, overcome the stress related to finding work in their new country, while also supporting ECEC establishments to expand capacity and integrate more students. Lithuanian teachers also experienced less professional stress as Ukrainian teachers were able to speak and comfort newly arrived refugee children during their adaptation period into ECEC in their new host country.

³ Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė, D., Jašinauskas, L., Kudinoviėnė, J. (2023). *Lithuanian language learning in multicultural contexts for pre-school children and primary school pupils arriving in Lithuania*. Manuscript of the article.

⁴ *ibid.*

4. Expanding ECEC spaces through grant schemes

Sub-theme



	Title of the practice Service expansion through grant scheme
	Title of the practice in original language Dotace na aktivity na podporu rodin z Ukrajiny s dětmi (zejména ve věku 0 až 6 let) (Czech)
	Country Czechia, Slovakia
	Period of implementation 2022-2024 (Czechia) June-September 2022 (Slovakia)
	Institution responsible for implementation Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic (Czechia) Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (Slovakia)
	Source UNICEF Czech Republic Refugee Response Office https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/23013.pdf – call for applications “Predskolaci II.”

Description

In Czechia and Slovakia, National Ministries have put in place grant schemes to fund an expansion in ECEC spaces.

In Czechia, a grant mechanism of the Czech Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) was mobilized to issue funding to local ECEC service providers so that they could expand their services to Ukrainian refugees. Formal and non-formal ECEC providers (kindergartens, play centers, family centers, community centers etc.) were offered funding to rent new spaces, hire more staff, and introduce more activities. By utilizing UNICEF funding, MoLSA was able to quickly direct funds to providers “on-the-ground”, who are aware of local refugee ECEC needs. Grant recipients also used the funding to provide parenting programs, support groups, psychosocial counseling, as well as guidance to navigate the Czech system (healthcare, housing, etc.). The grant scheme was improved in 2023 by considering feedback from previous grant recipients. It has now integrated quality support, capacity-building, and training to grant-receiving ECEC service providers.

The Slovak Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced a similar grant scheme to ECEC settings, geared towards establishing new buildings, extending existing ones via reconstruction, and creating new classrooms for pre-schoolers. A new version of the grant scheme in 2022 (through funding from the EU and UNICEF) provides grants to equip newly created classrooms with learning materials and didactic toys for the holistic development of children. There is a special focus on addressing the expansion of spaces to include child refugees from Ukraine. At the same time, the National Institute of Education and Youth (NIVAM) in Slovakia-the technical arm of the MoE – is developing a professional development program on ECEC pedagogy, with the support of UNICEF. This will be mandatory for all ECEC teachers who do not meet the qualification requirement of having a Bachelor’s degree as their pedagogic qualification. The physical expansion of classrooms is in this way accompanied by quality trained staff.

Why it’s a good practice

The grant scheme in Czechia had a flexible approach, allowing local ECEC providers to open up spaces based on the specific needs of refugee children and their parents. It successfully managed to open up a large amount of spaces for ECEC-aged children. The scheme was cost-efficient in focusing on providers and services that already exist, thereby avoiding the large start-up costs and time needed in establishing ECEC centers from scratch. It also proved to be an effective way to quickly mobilize the most relevant partners in expanding ECEC access. The initiative is transferable to other countries where similar grant funding mechanisms exist; but the broader idea is to think creatively and make use of existing modalities to channel funding to providers who can expand their work to cater to urgent capacity needs.

In Slovakia, the grant scheme addressed the high demand for pre-school capacity for both Ukrainian and Slovak children across the country. The 2022 call succeeded in the creation of 3,406 new ECEC spaces in 183 kindergartens, reaching 346 Ukrainian children. Applications were assessed and funding was deployed quickly, within two months. This practice is sustainable in the sense that these newly opened ECEC spaces will be able to serve children in future years, as the funds have secured an initial physical and tangible investment into ECEC capital. To ensure the quality of these newly opened ECEC spaces, there is a need to train more ECEC staff, which the NIVAM intends to do through its upcoming professional development program.

5. Increasing qualified ECEC staff through grant schemes

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

Federal Program Integration courses with children: Building Blocks for Future (grant program)

Title of the practice in original language

Bundesprogramm Integrationskurs mit Kind: Bausteine für die Zukunft

Country

Germany

Period of implementation

October 2021-December 2023

Institution responsible for implementation

Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Federal Ministry of the Interior and Home Affairs, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

Source

[Program's website](#)

Description

Germany offers integration courses to foreigners so that they can learn about German culture and society. Sometimes parents cannot attend courses because of child-caring duties, especially if they have newly arrived in the country and have not yet organized ECEC for their children. This new program funds providers of integration courses so that they can arrange ECEC for the children of course attendees. As a result, parents can attend integration courses while ECEC staff supervise their children.

To expand the qualified ECEC workforce and meet ECEC demand, the federal program also offers funding to pay towards the ECEC certification of child-minders. Funding is provided under the following models:

Model 1: Supervision is provided by a qualified ECEC worker. The cost of hiring them is funded through the grant program.

Model 2: Supervision is provided by someone working towards a qualification as an ECEC worker. Both the cost of hiring the ECEC worker and their pathway to qualification is funded.

Model 3: Supervision is provided by a self-employed and already qualified ECEC worker in their own household. Funding is provided per child and per hour of care.

Entry-level model: Supervision is provided by entry-level staff. Funding is provided per child and lesson of the integration course that their parents are participating in. This model is intended to prepare for a change, ultimately, to model 1, 2 or 3.

Integration course providers can apply for funding by submitting a needs analysis to show how many children are likely to use childcare during one (or more) integration course, proposing suitable child supervisors.

Why it's a good practice

The numbers of incoming refugees and foreigners, including child refugees, have been adding to pre-existing shortages in the child-care system in Germany. This program responds to one of the key deficits in the German ECEC system: staffing and capacity problems. By April 2023, there were already 600 projects approved under the program, with more than 13 federal states participating. Most projects are currently being funded in federal states receiving the most foreigners and, therefore, suffering from the most acute shortages in ECEC personnel and infrastructure.

With four models at its disposal, the program provides opportunities for the upskilling, vocational training, and acquisition of qualifications for child-minders. It is also a targeted approach to expanding ECEC capacity, as it opens up spaces and trains professionals where there is new ECEC demand due to newly arriving families. It does this alongside meeting the needs of foreigners who can benefit from integration courses, ensuring that child-caring duties are not a reason for parents to miss the courses.

There is no data available yet regarding the number of ultimate beneficiaries, although high demand among applicants indicates that the intervention is relevant and responsive to the needs of the sector. Moreover, the program's efficiency is optimized by requesting applicants to provide a needs analysis in their application forms.

6. Opening up ECEC spaces through play and learning hubs

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

Play and Learning Hubs

Country

Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia

Period of implementation

April 2022-ongoing

Institution responsible for implementation

Bulgaria: Situational center “Open doors”; Aid for Ukraine, ADRA Bulgaria, Municipality of Burgas, Bulgarian Red Cross, Dokova and dokov Foundation, Charitable Foundation Fund Good – community based organizations

Czechia: Romodrom, Mryia

Hungary: War Child, Partners Hungary

Moldova: CNETIF, Step by Step Moldova

Poland: Foundation for Child Development/FRD (Comenius) and FINE Foundation

Romania: Romaniana Angel Appeal Foundation, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Romania, Step by Step Association, Regina Marina Foundation, ANAID, PATRIR, CREIS, Lumina Lumii, Bearing Fruit

Slovakia: Wide Open School; Union of Mother Centres; City of Bratislava; Mareena; SME SPOLU; Slovak Humanitarian Council

UNICEF

Source

<https://www.unicef.org/eca/introducing-play-and-learning-hubs>

Description

In response to the war in Ukraine, UNICEF supported the establishment of 154 Play and Learning Hubs (PLHs) across six refugee hosting countries. The PLHs provide young children (including those with disabilities) with play, care, and early learning opportunities. They establish a sense of routine, stability, and normalcy for both children and parents. The PLHs also serve as parenting support centers and enhance the capacities of the ECEC professionals to provide quality early learning opportunities to young children.

Both refugee and host country children attend the hubs. Children can receive counseling and psychological first aid (PFA) to respond to any trauma they might have experienced as a result of war and conflict. Children can also engage in play and learning activities that stimulate creativity and the development of language, cognitive, and socio-emotional skills. Among the integration activities provided are also host-country language classes, visits to tourist sites, and play and interaction with children from the host community attending the PLHs. While supporting integration, this initiative strives to make sure that Ukrainian children are able to maintain ties with their own culture, by employing educators from the host country as well as Ukrainian facilitators, who organize events to celebrate traditions of Ukrainian culture.

All Play and Learning Hubs offer parents and caregivers a wide array of services and activities, such as specialist psychological support; parental counseling; trauma interventions; peer support groups; and mothers’ support groups. Refugee parents also receive guidance to available medical services, job opportunities, school enrolment, and housing availability.

Why it’s a good practice

Due to a number of supply and demand barriers, only one out of three young refugee children are currently enrolled in the formal ECEC system in refugee receiving countries.⁵ The importance of these PLHs are therefore evident as they open up spaces for children to participate in ECEC. This project has deployed cross-sectoral collaboration by working with municipalities, who have proven to be key allies. Municipalities have offered physical spaces for the hubs, refurbishing where necessary, providing personnel and capacity-building for ECEC staff where necessary, and covering the running costs of PLHs to enable their eventual sustainability. The project has also considered efficiency in deploying and organizing locally existing resources.

One of the biggest successes of the PLHs was the understanding that parents (mostly single mothers in this Ukrainian crisis context) are key to working with refugee children. They help establish a new sense of normalcy and routine, but they are also in need of as much support as their children. The project is therefore a model to consider in how it holistically addresses the needs of both children and parents. Since the PLHs have been shown to work in six countries, there are signs that the practice is transferable to other country contexts as well.

The success of the initiative and the high demand for additional spaces and services has encouraged UNICEF to work towards the hubs’ sustainability and integration within the formal ECEC sector, moving from humanitarian to development contexts.

⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/27486/file/UNICEF.pdf>

7. Non-formal spaces for children and families who have experienced war

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

TUTU Psychophysical Development Center

Title of the practice in original language

Centrum Rozwoju Psychofizycznego TUTU

Country

Poland

Period of implementation

May 2022-ongoing

Institution responsible for implementation

Podkarpackie Association for Active Families (NGO)

Sources

BORGEN Magazine (2022)
[Providing Mental Health Support for Ukrainian Refugees](#)

Project HOPE (2022)
[In Poland, Ukrainians Find A Safe Space](#)

[TUTU Psychophysical Development Center](#)

Description

The [TUTU Psychophysical Development Center](#) in Rzeszów is a permanent, accessible, and safe space for people who have experienced war and its effects.⁶ The Center focuses on the psychosocial health of refugees and offers a range of free activities.

The center has three streams of services: to parents, children, and mixed groups (groups of adults and children, groups of students, or women-only groups). The Center's child-focused offer is dedicated to older ECEC children (5-6 year olds). The services tailored to children include art therapy, music therapy, social skills training, individual consultations, sibling art therapy, classes in a World Experience Room, relaxation activities, sports and movement activities, and reading therapy. All listed activities are centered around four key concepts: (1) "cooperation" (to socialize and build new friendships), (2) "regeneration" (support in overcoming trauma and improving mental wellbeing), (3) "adaptation" (learning and feeling at ease with new cultures), and (4) "development" (psychological development), to help children integrate into their new environment. The Center also organizes consultations and informative meetings with specialists, such as paramedics, doctors, dentists, and diabetologists to keep refugees well-informed concerning health-related topics.

The Center hires bilingual educators and psychologists, encouraging Ukrainian children to express themselves and explore their feelings, allowing them to feel more at ease in this safe space.

Why it's a good practice

Poland has been one of the countries welcoming the highest number of Ukrainian refugees. In terms of quantifiable impact, as of late November 2022, this Center has offered psychological support to more than 4,500 Ukrainian refugees and delivered between 15,000 and 20,000 participation sessions.⁷ One of the Center's assets lies in its ability to tailor its services to the diverse needs of children who are fleeing war and conflict. The staff at the Center have the required resources to meet these needs, which is not necessarily the case in public schools, where resources (time and staff) can be limited. In this sense, the Center offers a service that is complementary to the public education system. It is also important to note that these vital psychosocial services are provided free of charge, allowing those who are vulnerable to benefit from a range of therapies.

Activities provided by the TUTU Center are funded by Project HOPE (NGO). The co-founder of the Center noted that Project HOPE's help is essential when it comes to the functioning of the Center. Since operating a Center of this kind requires considerable financial resources (renting fees, hiring of Ukrainian-speaking staff etc.) the Center's existence is conditional on future funding, raising concerns about sustainability.

⁶ The PSAR website and more information are available at: <https://psar.pl/tutu/>

⁷ BORGEN Magazine (2022), [Providing Mental Health Support for Ukrainian Refugees](#)

8. Digital solutions to increase access to ECEC

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

Numo Online Pre-school

Title of the practice in original language

Numo Online preschool

Country

Ukraine (and available online)

Period of implementation

December 2020-ongoing

Institution responsible for implementation

Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science, UNICEF

Sources

[NUMO platform](#)

[NUMO's episodes on YouTube](#)

Description

NUMO is an online kindergarten project organized around a website and a platform that provides activities for children aged 3-6.⁸ NUMO offers educational and developmental videos, games, and exercises focused on skill development for the youngest. The content was developed by ECEC specialists at UNICEF, alongside the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science. There are numerous educational videos (including videos by Sesame Street in Ukrainian) for children to learn about the world. There are also instructions for parents to set up learning activities for children, such as puppet theatre and arts & crafts games. The idea is for children to be able to benefit from ECEC even if they cannot attend in person.

Additionally, a section of the online kindergarten is directed towards parents and guardians of pre-schoolers, offering them tips on pedagogic approaches when playing with their children. It also provides parents with interactive tests to understand whether they are behaving appropriately in typical interactions with children. Another section is devoted to educators, with an interactive test to help them identify their strengths and potential areas of improvement in their work with children. Finally, the platform features a classified library with helpful resources like webinars, links, and guidance from international organizations who are experts in ECEC.

NUMO videos are accessible on YouTube, MEGOGO, and other platforms, with some episodes amassing over 80,000 views.⁹ Concerning continuity, video posting stopped on the 31st of August 2022; however, the NUMO website and platform are still operational.

Why it's a good practice

The platform serves as an online pre-school that keeps children connected and engaged with their education, ensuring learning continuity in all contexts and situations. The platform responds to children's needs by offering them very similar content to what they would have received if they had gone to pre-school under normal conditions. In terms of effectiveness, the materials are used by a considerable number of people, as evidenced by the first episode which attracted over 80,000 views. While research has not been conducted on the effectiveness of NUMO, recent research on remote ECEC has shown positive results in terms of its potential to produce the same socio-educational benefits as in-person ECEC, under the right conditions.¹⁰

The materials being online, accessible from any technological device and in the Ukrainian language, greatly simplifies access and understanding for refugee children and families. In turn, the accessibility and playfulness of materials increases the engagement of children, which enhances their learning process.

This practice is sustainable over the long term as the website and videos are available to repeatedly use time and again at no extra cost. However, it should be noted that a significant amount of resources are needed for the production of new educational content.

⁸ NUMO platform is available in its original language at: <https://numo.mon.gov.ua/>

⁹ One of the most viewed episodes is available at: [Дитячий онлайн-садок НУМО. Випуск 1](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.ukfiet.org/2023/new-remote-ece-model-with-large-impacts-holds-promise-for-sdg-4-2-progress/>



Theme 2: Support for integration through ECEC



9. Language courses for displaced ECEC children

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

Playful language development courses for displaced children from Ukraine including parent counseling

Title of the practice in original language

Spielerisch umgesetzte Sprachförde kurse für vertriebene Kinder aus der Ukraine inkl. Elternberatung

Country

Austria

Period of implementation

2022-2024

Institution responsible for implementation

Bundeskanzleramt (Federal chancellery), LOQUI, STARTKLAR

Source

<https://www.verein-startklar.at/spielerisch-umgesetzte-sprachfoerderkurse-fuer-vertriebene-kinder-aus-der-ukraine-inkl-elternberatung/>

Description

The 2023 Annual Program of the Bundeskanzleramt (Federal chancellery) integrates financing from the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund to provide grants to projects supporting refugees and migrants in Austria. Among the 41 projects that were given funding to support refugee and migrant children, one specifically targets Ukrainian refugees. This project supports the integration of displaced Ukrainian ECEC-aged children through playful language learning and parent education activities.

The language learning activities are implemented through a playful pedagogic approach that is also linguistically sound. It aims for children to associate learning German with fun and joy, thus creating a positive feeling towards integration and the new language they are embarking upon learning. Children are provided with socialization activities and games to practice their new language, alongside support for vocabulary, sentence formation, pronunciation, and understanding. In addition to the direct support to children, free lectures and advice on the subject of multilingual education and the Austrian education system are offered to parents, so that they are better able to support the language development of their children at home. The language learning courses are free and take place once a week for 90-120 minutes. The project will be implemented in Lower Austria, Vienna and Burgenland.

Why it's a good practice

This project responds to the immediate need for German language skills so that young children can enter and integrate into the Austrian education system. Language skills were identified as one of the most widely mentioned (supply and demand side) entry barriers into the formal ECEC system.¹¹ This project is targeted specifically at Ukrainian children and is implemented across the country in regions with the highest numbers of Ukrainian arrivals. It focuses on language learning through play, which is a recognized approach for early years language development, as well as the involvement of parents as support ambassadors accompanying children's learning, representing a holistic approach to language acquisition.

The other strength of this project lies in its strategic context at federal level. It is situated within an existing Austrian National Plan developed for the integration of foreigners, with annual action plans financing targeted measures. The initiative leverages existing national financial resources with EU funding, creating a robust ecosystem for refugee integration activities. In this sense, this language development project is complementary with other actions being funded as it is one of many projects selected to implement the Action Plan, supporting several other ECEC integration measures.

¹¹ https://www.ecorys.com/sites/default/files/2023-06/Ecorys_synthesis_Cycle_2_Final.pdf

10. ECEC system strengthening

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

ECEC system strengthening through training teachers on playful pedagogies and MHPSS

Title of the practice in original language

Spatii de joaca si invatare

Educație formală și non-formală pentru copii în România cu focus pe Copiii vulnerabili și refugiații din Ucraina

Country

Moldova, Romania

Institution responsible for implementation

Step by Step Moldova, Step by Step Center for Education and professional Development Romania (Centrul Step by Step pentru Educație și Dezvoltare Profesională), HoltIs Association, in partnership with national and local authorities

Source

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064377862306>

<https://www.unicef.org/romania/play-learning-and-parenting-hubs>

<https://www.unicef.org/romania/ro/pove%C8%99ti/descoperim-lumea-prin-joac%C4%83>

Description

This project supported the opening of Play and Learning Hubs (PLHs) and trained ECEC staff in playful pedagogy and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). Through the LEGO Foundation who funded this project, the Play and Learning Hubs were equipped with pedagogic toys that can be used to stimulate learning, such as Lego and Duplo boxes. The main staff training activities consisted of offline training sessions on MHPSS and learning-through-play, accompanied by interactive sessions on the use of play-based activities to enhance the cognitive, emotional, and social skills of young children. There are plans to develop a train-the-trainer model to build a pool of local trainers who can continue to provide these MHPSS and Learning-Through-Play trainings in Moldova.

In Romania, in addition to training ECEC professionals in playful pedagogies, staff were also trained on parenting support services, particularly to address communities dealing with the refugee crisis. The intervention in Romania also aimed to update the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) for children aged 0-7, revising this existing document with new practices and chapters so that it supports holistic development from a child-centered perspective. The suggestions for the new ELDS were piloted at classroom level, providing opportunities for practitioners to suggest changes and revisions to determine the most age-appropriate activities.

Why it's a good practice

In Moldova and Romania, traditional ECEC practices lacked the flexibility and inclusivity needed to cater to the diverse backgrounds, languages, and traumatic experiences of newly arriving refugee children. This presented the opportunity to reform and strengthen the ECEC system by upskilling staff, improving workforce skills to make their pedagogical practices more play-based and developmentally appropriate. Through the project in Moldova, more than 500 ECEC staff have been trained in applying playful pedagogy and MHPSS, which has been identified as being very useful to the staff who took part. Since the start of this project, 4,400 children have been able to benefit from access to formal and non-formal ECEC in Moldova, and 630 children have received psychosocial support.

The intervention in Romania succeeded in training 150 professionals in playful pedagogies and 149 teachers from ECEC centers have started their training to become parent educators. Additionally, 160 professionals have been involved in the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) update. All of these efforts contributed to strengthening the ECEC sector and provided quality support to young Ukrainian refugee children and their parents. The update of the ELDS was deemed to be relevant since the process was comprehensive, dynamic, and inclusive, with participation of a range of ECEC professionals.

In Romania, the sustainability of the trainings is supported by the network of master trainers that was put in place, who will be rolling out trainings locally through a cascade approach. There are also resource centers that are being established in each of the eight developmental regions of Romania, which will continue to provide services for vulnerable children in each community.

11. Training for educators on psychological first aid

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

Foundational Training on Psychological First Aid and trauma-informed practices with young children and their caregivers

Country

Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine

Institution responsible for implementation

UNICEF, International Step by Step Association, War Child Holland

Source

<https://www.issa.nl/content/foundational-training-psychological-first-aid-and-trauma-informed-practices-young-children>

<https://mpc-edu.sk/sk/edu/program/1018>

Description

The Foundational Training on Psychological First Aid and trauma-informed practices is a Training of Trainers (ToT) aimed towards experienced trainers of early childhood professionals (with minimum 5 years of practice). These trainers are provided with foundational knowledge and skills around psychological first aid and trauma-informed practices, so that they can then better support ECEC staff and teachers.

The training can be provided in 3 days, 5 hours per day, in an online format but with the possibility of being adapted to in-person training. The content, format, and duration of the training at the country level can be tailored according to the context and needs of specific target groups. To effectively strengthen the capacity of practitioners, the ToT combines theory with practice. It focuses on applying the guiding principles of psychological first aid in daily practice, geared towards recognizing and addressing signs of distress in young children, caregivers, and practitioners. It also focuses on how to provide responsive and healing environments in early childhood settings and services, as well as how to manage stress and prevent burnout among practitioners working with distressed children and caregivers.

To ensure that country teams are well supported in rolling out the training at the country level, International Step by Step Association (ISSA) identifies a pool of experienced trainers in countries to further train trainers and/or teachers. It also equips trainers who attended the ToT with a whole package of translated resources (available in eight languages). ISSA supports the rolling out of trainings in countries with coaching sessions, learning exchange sessions, and an online platform for a cross-country learning community.

Why it's a good practice

Since June 2022, four ToTs have been delivered to experienced trainers coming from eight countries. In total, 137 master trainers from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine participated in the ToT and are currently engaged in the capacity building roll-out plans in their countries. These master trainers have organized numerous cascading trainings, reaching over 3,000 ECEC professionals, social service specialists, state and local authorities, psychologists, and more. The estimated number of indirect beneficiaries (children, who benefited from their teachers) currently stands at over 60,000. These trainings have also made use of efficient cross-sectoral collaboration where trainers have partnered with local organizations and entities to cascade their teaching.

The project is relevant as the training of trainers (ToT) has been filling a critical knowledge and skills gap in the early childhood workforce. One key takeaway from the project has been to undertake discussions with partners on the potential roll-out of the trainings, as unless there is funding and support allocated to this activity, there might be difficulties in rolling it out. Embedding the training on PFA and trauma-informed practices into available training programs or modules for ECEC practitioners can ensure sustainability of this initiative. For example, in the Czech Republic, the National Pedagogical Institute has included this training among routinely available capacity development opportunities for kindergarten teachers. In Slovakia, the National Institute for Education and Youth (NIVAM) also integrated the ToT materials into its national professional development program, creating an "innovation program" for kindergarten teachers and directors.

12. Refugee education for pre- and in-service teacher training

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

Improving Teaching to Improve Refugee Children Education – ITIRE



Country

Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Austria, United Kingdom



Period of implementation

2019-2022



Institution responsible for implementation

Aarhus University (Denmark), the Arctic University (Norway), the University of Akureyri (Iceland), the University of Vienna (Austria) and the University of Winchester (United Kingdom)



Source

<https://projects.au.dk/itire>

https://projects.au.dk/fileadmin/ingen_mappe_valgt/ITIRE_Report.pdf

Description

This project designed and implemented a transnational training program on refugee education for pre-service and in-service educators (including ECEC educators). The project was established based on the recognition that the arrival of displaced children is a permanent and expected phenomena in Europe and that, therefore, education systems and teachers need to be systematically equipped to carry out refugee education beyond an emergency response.

The project built a 30-hour teacher training course on various aspects of refugee education (integrating newly arriving children, creating a welcoming community in the host classroom, etc.) for pre- and in-service teachers, complementing the general academic program they attend to qualify as teachers. There is specific guidance for teaching in ECEC settings, covering themes such as belonging and diversity; language learning; trauma and well-being; and partnership with families. The other outputs of the project include an overview of approaches and strategies in refugee education across Europe; a bank of good practices in refugee education (including various activities that can be used at ECEC level);¹² a self-assessment tool¹³ addressed for schools to map the inclusion and participation of learners who are refugees and asylum seekers; and an online collaborative and interactive platform to ensure networking and continuing support for refugee education improvement. The project was funded through EU Erasmus+ grants.

Why it's a good practice

This is a comprehensive project that provides a systematic and forward-thinking solution to teachers' worries about being unable to successfully manage classes with refugee learners. It also provides a knowledge bank and a collaborative platform to encourage continuous professional exchanges on refugee education. It is based on extensive research by academics at multiple universities, covering theoretical and practical approaches to refugee education across different corners of Europe. In this way, it can be useful in diverse contexts across the continent. It is a transferable practice, as the resources which have been created can be used to develop teacher training programs in other countries. The self-assessment tool is also a unique output that can be used by schools and educators around Europe to provide reflection on how "refugee-inclusive" they are, and thereby inspire improvement. Finally, it is a training course that goes beyond a one-time webinar or workshop, as it is developed to allow deep exploration and learning about the topic of refugee education, equipping teachers through 30 hours of training.

¹² <https://projects.au.dk/itire/tools/bank-of-good-practices>

¹³ <https://projects.au.dk/itire/tools/self-assessment-tool>

13. Online training for educators working with refugees

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

Online training for staff in the national education system – welcoming children from Ukraine or other warzones

Title of the practice in original language

Formation professionnelle des personnels de l'éducation nationale – accueillir des enfants arrivant d'Ukraine ou d'autres zones de guerre

Country

France

Period of implementation

March 2022-ongoing

Institution responsible for implementation

The General Directorate for Education and the General Inspection of Education, Sport and Research

Source

https://eduscol.education.fr/3143/accueillir-des-enfants-arrivant-d-ukraine-ou-d-autres-zones-de-guerre?menu_id=3881

Description

To support the educational staff who welcome children arriving from Ukraine, and more broadly all children arriving from a conflict zone, the Ministry of Education in France has developed an online training course. The course materials have been selected and developed by professionals and specialists in the field of crisis management, child psychology, and pedagogy. The training modules and videos are available for free¹⁴ for all staff and levels of education (including ECEC): teachers, pedagogical leaders, school management, principals, assistant staff, school nurses, and school psychologists.

The training course has three strands: the first focuses on understanding how to welcome children arriving from conflict zones, explained through interventions from a child psychiatrist. This strand explains the concept of psychological trauma, how to create a reassuring and welcoming environment for displaced children, the ethics of the pedagogical relationship, and the practice of active listening. The second strand focuses on integrating children from conflict zones into the classroom, how to teach host children about the conflict (through a variety of activities and academic intensities), and links to resources on integrating children who do not speak French. The third strand of the training module focuses on how to follow up with children and signs or symptoms to look out for that might be cause for concern in terms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or unsuccessful integration¹⁵. There are also whole-school approaches to building an inclusive school community.

Why it's a good practice

This practice is important as it features a robustly structured training course divided into three logical phases of integrating refugee children. The course is developed by experts in the field and available to all educational staff in the country as it is on the Ministry's education portal. It has a wide reach and can therefore be considered as a national training initiative to improve the skills and knowledge of the national educational community on how to successfully welcome displaced learners.

It is unique in that it is designed to cater to all staff working with children, ranging from assistants to school management, as it provides holistic training on the topic of displacement, child psychology, and inclusive school environments. It was mobilized quickly (in March 2022) and can be easily and repeatedly be used in the future without extra resources, as it is available online.

¹⁴ https://magistere.education.fr/local/magistere_offers/index.php?v=formation#offer=1106

¹⁵ https://eduscol.education.fr/3143/accueillir-des-enfants-arrivant-d-ukraine-ou-d-autres-zones-de-guerre?menu_id=3881


14. Efficient community organization

Sub-theme




EN Title of the practice
Community Response Forums

 Country
Ireland

 Period of implementation
April 2022

 Institution responsible for implementation
Local Authorities across Ireland

 Source
www.gov.ie/en/press-release/77715-ukraine-crisis-community-response-forum-in-each-area-to-coordinate-local-measures-welcoming-ukrainians/

Description

Community Response Forums have been established in every local authority in Ireland. These coordinate the community and voluntary response to a crisis, ensuring effective communication and information sharing between those who are providing services (NGOs and volunteers) and those who need to use the services. The support offered spans employment and health, housing, child protection, and education. The Forums build on structures and relationships which were highly effective during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ambition of the Community Response Forums is to build a collaborative team around Ukrainian refugee families that helps with all their needs without duplicating efforts or creating gaps in the support offered. The Forum also harnesses the goodwill and assistance available within communities, including the resources of the community and voluntary sector, to manage offers of assistance to ensure that the complex needs of those arriving are met. For children between 0-6 years of age, city/county childcare committees support all families in accessing ECEC offers and schemes at a local level. In the case of 4-6-year-olds, Regional Education and Language Teams (REALT) have been set up across Ireland to support families in finding places at schools. The Forums also coordinate initiatives that provide family fun days, excursions, and music and art therapy courses. The Forums are supported by funding at national level from the Ministry for Rural and Community Development.

Why it's a good practice

These Forums provide a tailored response to refugee children and families through a localized focus that pools together all the resources available and matches these to the needs of families. As such, it prevents families from getting “lost” in the variety of services available to them. The Forums are also an important practice from the viewpoint of ensuring collaboration among services and initiatives for refugees, avoiding a duplication of efforts. This supports efficiency, preventing time and resources from being invested in integration efforts that may already exist through another provider.

There have been several local news articles published attesting to the positive reception of these Forums,¹⁶ even though they do not specifically mention impacts at ECEC level. The Forums have shown to be sustainable, as they were already successful during the Covid-19 pandemic and have been repurposed to support the Ukrainian refugee crisis. This suggests that the coordination structure is strong enough to sustain and adapt to new situations. During emergency responses, there is often a rush of goodwill among the population and efforts from civil society to support a cause – however, it can be challenging to funnel this energy in an organized manner to the people and services that need it most. Effective coordination mechanisms are therefore invaluable.

¹⁶ <https://www.fingal.ie/news/budding-ukrainian-entrepreneurs-complete-business-start-program>
<https://www.galwaydaily.com/news/initiatives-to-support-health-and-wellbeing-of-ukrainian-refugees/>

15. Inclusive and personalized education support

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

Inclusive education with Rajaleidja

Title of the practice in original language

Kaasav haridus Rajaleidja kontseptsiooniga

Country

Estonia

Period of implementation

2014-ongoing

Institution responsible for implementation

Estonian Board of Education and Youth

Source

<https://rajaleidja.ee/>

<https://harno.ee/kaasav-haridus>

Description

Rajaleidja (Pathfinder) is a pan-Estonian network that offers free learning advice to parents, teachers, and support specialists who are responsible for the learning and development of children (aged 1 and above). Any of these adults responsible for children can contact the Rajaleidja network for counseling and advice via a phone number or e-booking system to arrange an appointment.

During educational counseling, the Rajaleidja specialists seek to understand the various issues that might be related to a child's learning or behavior. They then provide advice to the adults around the child on how to support the child's development, how to organize their education and growth, and what support services the child might permanently need.

The specialists include social pedagogues (who provide advice on any broad societal or bullying related issues), special needs experts, speech therapists, and psychologists. If it becomes clear that an official decision or administrative act is needed to organize a suitable educational path for the child (e.g., to appoint a special group in kindergarten or postpone formal education) such a decision is made by three Rajaleidja specialists based on the parent's request. Educational staff are also welcome to ask for advice on general pedagogic issues, unrelated to a specific child. With regards to Ukrainian refugee children, specialists from Ukraine were onboarded and trained to become part of the network to ensure proper services for Ukrainian children, and also build trust among Ukrainian refugees towards this widely-used support service.

Why it's a good practice

The Rajaleidja network and services form a system that is commonly known in Estonia, especially at the local level. Rajaleidja plays a key role in creating a support network for children with special educational needs.¹⁷ There are more than 100,000 clients per year across all Rajaleidja centers.¹⁸ It is a unique network in that it brings together child specialists with different areas of expertise into a local center, making it easier for parents to navigate.

The refugee-specific angle through onboarding Ukrainian specialists to support educational institutions and Ukrainian children has been greatly appreciated by the refugee community, based on the reports of stakeholders consulted for the research informing this Compendium. It has not yet been possible to assess the impact or the results of training Ukrainian specialists since the situation has been changing continuously (with some families returning to Ukraine). However, the concept of a one-stop-shop for guidance on the developmental needs of children, and the onboarding of incoming refugee adults so that they can provide assistance through tailored support is an innovative approach. It is potentially scalable to other countries as the expertise involved is universal (educational support specialists), although the financing model (with an additional emphasis on the upskilling needed to accommodate refugee children) must be considered. This support service in Estonia is funded from the national budget, but there are difficulties in that there are not enough specialists to meet demand. This is an issue highlighted by the Ministry of Education, and accordingly, universities are being further subsidized to admit more specialists into the service.

¹⁷ <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/estonia/educational-support-and-guidance>

¹⁸ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving/resources/foundation-innove-pathfinder-centres-estonian>

16. Intervention support teams for schools (including pre-schools)

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice
Intervention support teams

Title of the practice in original language
INTERVENČNÉ TÍMY

Country
Slovakia

Period of implementation
March 2022-ongoing

Institution responsible for implementation
The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport

Source
<https://ukrajina.minedu.sk/data/att/22845.pdf>
<https://psychologickecentrum.sk/tim-podpory-pre-ukrajinu/>
<https://vudpap.sk/vudpap/krizova-intervencia/>

Description

At the start of the war in Ukraine and the influx of Ukrainian refugees, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport in Slovakia established 62 intervention teams available for schools and pre-schools, involving psychologists and special educators that have experience with crisis intervention. These experts are from the state Centers for Counseling and Prevention (CCP), which normally provide professional psychosocial and psychological care for children, but were mobilized at national level in this instance to meet the needs of Ukrainian refugee children in Slovakia.

The teams of psychologists and experts can arrive at pre-schools, community spaces, or wherever there is a need, as their primary function is to be available anywhere across the country in person. They can be contacted via a phone number or email address, or also through local education authorities. They are able to offer support to both teachers and children. The teams can screen for psychological difficulties or special education needs, provide psychological counseling and care, and establish therapy interventions.

Children and families who are not yet attending school can also request counseling. Throughout the Ukrainian crisis, the teams have mainly been active in places where many new Ukrainian children have arrived with their parents, such as in Bratislava, Nitra, and Prešov.

Why it's a good practice

A concrete example of the effectiveness of this program is when the Center for Counseling and Prevention Bratislava launched a special psychological support team of female psychologists directly from Ukraine. They assessed the risks and needs of Ukrainian children in pre-schools in Bratislava, provided support and professional consultations for Ukrainian teachers, parents and students, and provided interventions for children and families who are experiencing any emotional, educational, or psychological difficulties. It is also noteworthy that the Ministry was able to mobilize this service very quickly following the outbreak of the war.

The CPP and their professional staff also participated in networking meetings to advocate and arrange for specific municipal governments to help refugees from Ukraine. The Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology created a website for these experts, pooling together information and materials on dealing with the context of the war in Ukraine. This was intended to support the specific activities of individual Centers across the country. Overall, the intervention support teams represent a nationwide coordinated effort to address the psychological needs of arriving Ukrainian families.

17. Digital apps to support parents on child development

Sub-theme



EN Title of the practice

Bebbo Parenting app

Country

International; Focused implementation in Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

Institution responsible for implementation

UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

Source

<https://www.unicef.org/eca/Bebbo-parenting-app>

<https://bebbo.app/>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.unicef.ecar.bebbo>

<https://apps.apple.com/az/app/bebbo/id1588918146>

Description

UNICEF ECARO has launched a mobile parenting application called Bebbo. This parenting app supports parents and caregivers of children aged 0 to 6 years old by providing them with evidence-based advice and interactive tools to promote children's development and well-being.

Through fun and engaging games and activities, the app encourages parents to engage in daily practices that support early learning, including cognitive, motor, socio-emotional, and language skills. The app also includes a rich library of parenting advice written by experts, and trackers to record doctor visits and vaccinations. Bebbo is available in 14 countries across ECA in 14 different languages (with 23 language variations).

Since its launch 1.5 years ago, the app has already been downloaded by over 900,000 users (as of May 2023). Bebbo is being used in emergency responses to support parents in Ukraine and in all other neighbouring countries where they took refuge. Parents are using the valuable information from Bebbo to engage with their children. More than 72,500 users have accessed the Ukrainian version of Bebbo. The majority of users (95%) are mothers and they have registered more than 46,500 children on the app.

Why it's a good practice

Since the app is free and available on mobile phones even in offline mode, it allows people on the move to easily make use of it, making it more relevant to the needs of refugees than desktop digital resources. Many parents have a lot of questions on how to assist their children to grow healthy and smart, and it is important that this app provides information based on peer-reviewed studies and UNICEF's expertise. As disinformation is rife and refugees are a vulnerable group to manipulate, it is critical that parents are supported with science-based guidance that is developed entirely around children's wellbeing. The content on the app is contextualized for each implementation country and is made available in local languages. The initiative has already proven to be effective, with high numbers of downloads and usage. As with other digital resources, it is resource efficient as it doesn't require personnel to implement. It is also transferable and scalable owing to its digital format and availability in multiple languages.



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