

Safety and normality

Access to Early Childhood Education for Ukrainian refugee children, Germany

Around 280,000 refugees have been registered in Germany, most of them mothers with children. To recover from the flight and psychological stress early intervention is key. Therefore, the IRC provides early childhood educators access to First Response-Information and trainings on pedagogical strategies to help children cope with their trauma.

The problem

On February 24, Russia deployed its military into Ukraine. Bombs and shelling have continued to escalate as people flee their homes and desperately seek safety.

Most of the Ukrainian refugees currently arriving in Germany are mothers with their children. The consequences of flight and psychological stress are a complex challenge for families to overcome. They need a place where children can recover from this stress, regain a sense of normalcy and childhood, build connections to peers and advance in their development. In Germany, children aged one year and older are entitled to a spot in a daycare center as soon as they no longer live in an Initial Reception Center. However, many parents struggle to find a spot because there are too few daycare centers in Germany, and many of them are not well set-up or experienced in supporting refugee families.

The partner

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) offers lifesaving solutions to today's most challenging human crises. In Germany, the IRC provides tools and support for the successful integration and resettlement of refugees.

IRC has responded to humanitarian crises in Europe since 2015, providing emergency aid, health and sanitation, and psychosocial support to refugees and migrants in Greece and in Serbia.

Since then, the IRC has supported families on the move in Germany, Italy, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and worked to integrate refugees into the fabric of their host communities in the UK.

The philanthropic solution

To mitigate the risk of long-term negative effects on the development, mental health and psycho-social wellbeing the IRC provides early childhood development (ECD) providers with skills and techniques to help children react to this stress and provide them with a stable environment. IRC's goals are:

- Early childhood educators and childcare providers (ECD providers) provide high-quality early learning and development opportunities.
- Caregivers actively engage with children's ECD providers about their children's care and education.
- Policies and resources are in place that support equal access to high-quality childcare and early education.
- Children who are experiencing or at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, receive high-quality services and support

The evidence

The Healing Classrooms methodology has been evaluated in several countries and there is promising evidence of impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of children affected by conflict.

The impact

- First-Response-Information: 300 ECD educators access First-Response-Information and/or teaching materials for ECD providers on how to support children affected by flight, war and crises (supporting 1,500 children)
- ECD provider trainings: 400 ECD educators are trained on pedagogical strategies (supporting 2,000 children)
- Community events: 8 community events organized in cooperation with ECD providers, reaching 120 (refugee) families and 100 ECD stakeholders
- New ECD materials: 5 new customized and client responsive resources/supporting materials developed

Source: <https://www.rescue.org/country/germany>

All programmatic data provided by International Rescue Committee. The UBS Optimus Foundation is a grant-making foundation that offers UBS clients a platform to use their wealth to drive positive social and environmental change. The Foundation selects programs that improve children's health, education and protection, ones that have the potential to be transformative, scalable and sustainable as well as programs tackling environmental and climate issues.

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