

Bulgaria

Human Rights Education and Gender-Based Violence Prevention

Locations	Specific locations: the four open-type refugee centres – Ovcha Kupel, Voenna Rampa, Vrazhdebna and Harmanli
Level of implementation	Local
Name(s) of implementing institutions	Caritas Sofia, Migration and Integration Unit (implemented within the project “We Play and Learn”)
Partners/Supporters	UNICEF Bulgaria
Main idea behind it, initial situation (why?)	The main idea of the initiative was to organise weekly sessions on human rights accompanying the educational and recreational activities already provided by the project.
Objective (what for?)	The objective was to respond to the pressing need to educate asylum seekers accommodated in the four open-type refugee centres in Bulgaria on their rights and obligations in their host country as well as to raise tolerance levels within the refugee community itself, to bring together people from different nationalities and ethnicities and to improve their awareness on important topics such as discrimination, abuse, gender inequality and stereotypes, etc.
Description of practice (what?)	Organising weekly sessions on human rights education for children, adolescents and adults accommodated in the four open-type refugee centres in Bulgaria in order to empower and provide them with essential knowledge on rights and obligations as well as give them practical information and advice – for instance, what to do if they encounter a situation where they are being discriminated against, who to contact, etc. Main thematic areas covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender mainstreaming; Discrimination on various grounds; Violence; Bullying; Stereotypes; Freedom of religion; The right to education; The right to work; The right to an adequate standard of living; Parents’ obligations and responsibilities.

Managed/driven by	Caritas Sofia, Migration and Integration Unit
Time-frame (start/end/ongoing)	<p>Start: June 2018</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>The planned end of the initiative was the end of August 2018. However, based on the observation that there is a great need for people to be educated on such topics as well as in order to ensure sustainability and be able to reach out to the recent arrivals in the centres, the initiative is still ongoing, with planned weekly sessions until the end of the “We Play and Learn” project in December 2018.</p>
Stand-alone initiative or incorporated into other initiatives?	The initiative is incorporated as separate weekly activities within the wider-scale project of Caritas Sofia – “We Play and Learn” running for nearly 2 years and which focuses on improving access to support and care for children, adolescents and women accommodated in the refugee centres in order to reduce their vulnerability and improve their coping mechanisms.
Main target group (nationals, non-nationals - types)	Mainly asylum seekers with a few exceptions of international protection status holders who have not yet left the open-type registration and reception centres of the Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees.
Promotion	<p>Oral & through printed leaflets with timetables translated in the native languages spoken in each refugee centre.</p> <p>Languages: Bulgarian, English, Arabic, Dari, Kurdish</p>
Information provided on legal, practical and procedural aspects of protection against racism/hatred and discrimination	Yes, but only to adolescents (14-20) and to the adults participating in the sessions.
Methods of language/content teaching	<p>The languages which the sessions were conducted in varied based on the particular environment/situation in each centre as well as the nationality and ethnicity of the refugee populations accommodated there.</p> <p>With the children aged 5-13, many of whom are enrolled in Bulgarian schools and speak a very good level of Bulgarian, sessions are predominantly conducted by a facilitator speaking in Bulgarian with the help of staff who are native speakers in Arabic, Dari and Kurdish. Interpreters are an integral part in making the sessions a success. They are there to help newly arrived people as well as to explain for all others the more complicated concepts in order to be able to get the overall message across.</p> <p>With teenagers, adolescents and parents, the languages used are predominantly English, Arabic, Dari and Kurdish.</p>

	The content is taught through a number of different methods depending on the group whose needs the team has to respond to – sessions with children are conducted through various interactive games, exercises suitable to their level of development and role-playing. Whereas sessions with older beneficiaries (teenagers, adolescents and adults) are more formal and done through discussions, presentations and discussing important information materials.
Accessibility:	Costs: Free Obligatory: No Eligibility criteria: Asylum-seeking children between the ages of 5 and 18 as well as adults residing in the centres (focus mostly on parents but other adults attended as well)
Budget, sources of financing	The practice was implemented within the “We Play and Learn” project, funded by UNICEF Bulgaria and implemented by Caritas Sofia. Therefore, no separate budget was envisaged apart from the resources (personnel, materials, safe-spaces in which to conduct the sessions) already available. An initial training on leading human rights and empowerment sessions with vulnerable groups as well as discussions and preparation of topics and activities was organised for the field teams which was also part of a 5-day quarterly training within the bigger project.
Sources and references (hyperlink(s))	We Play and Learn

Impact Assessment foreseen?	Partially. Impact assessment is foreseen only for the wider-scale project within which the particular initiative was implemented.
How often?	Annually (for the whole project)
By whom?	Internally
Is the target group involved into the evaluation/impact assessment?	Yes
If yes, how?	Through focus group discussions.
Methods of impact assessment	A combination of a qualitative analysis (focus groups) and quantitative analysis (statistics for number of people involved, number of times each one has attended sessions, age, sex and gender breakdown).

Indicator based? If yes: please name some indicators	No
Which actors of host communities are included?	No actors of the host community are included apart from Caritas Sofia staff working in the centres.
Degree of inclusion:	voluntary
How can racism and xenophobia be countered through this activity? How can the impact of this practice be measured/made measurable?	The sessions are directly dealing with fundamental rights and anti-discrimination topics empowering foreigners against possible violations and giving them tools for counteraction. Because of the specifics of working with refugee populations and the dynamic environment, it is difficult to measure the direct or immediate impact of such a practice. The most useful method of determining impact so far has been through focus groups with the beneficiaries. However, they do not always present an accurate picture.
Elements of sustainability	The practice can be considered as relatively sustainable in that it is part of the activity of an established organisation working with persons seeking international protection and status holders.
Elements of transferability	The practice in itself demonstrates elements of transferability in that it transfers the teaching team's expertise among age groups adapting the fundamental rights content in accordance with the particularities of each group.