

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG REFUGEES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

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OVERVIEW

- A.** Emotional wellbeing of refugee children
- B.** A relational approach on psychosocial support for refugee children and youth
- C.** School-based preventive interventions
- D.** Wellbeing of the teacher

REFUGEE

losses

difficult experiences/
trauma

≠ traumatized
control
body
past - present

Belgi

REFUGEE

losses

difficult experiences

daily stressors

Belgi



REFUGEE

losses

difficult experiences
daily stressors

acculturation
integration - uncertainty

		Cultural maintenance	
		YES	NO
Cultural assimilation	YES	integration	assimilation
	NO	separation	marginalisation

REFUGEE

losses

difficult experiences

daily stressors

acculturation

uncertain future
perspective

aspirations &
concerns

CHILD

developmental tasks

changing familial relations
separation/missing parent / reunification

parentification

trauma communication

safety parent-child-relationship/
parental availability



**NORMAL CHILDREN IN
AB-NORMAL SITUATIONS**

**A RELATIONAL APPROACH OF
PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT OF REFUGEE
CHILDREN**

HOME COUNTRY

TRAUMA

POVERTY

FAMILIAL
PROBLEMS

ILLNESS

...

HOST COUNTRY

LOSSES (family, friends, social
network, belongings, future,
culture, status, role,...)

LIVING CIRCUMSTANCES

ACCULTURATION

DISCRIMINATION

SOCIO-ECONOMICAL
STATUS

ACCESS TO CARE &
SERVICES

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES



MIGRATION PROCESS

connection - continuity - connectedness



(1) NORMALISATION, CONTROL & INFORMATION

- “Your feelings and reactions are normal”
- Day structures — predictability
- Information for & from parents

(2) COLLABORATION WITH PARENTS

- Information from — for parents (behavior, father,...)
- Transition home — school (e.g., parents in classes,...)
- Language — interpreters

(3) EARLY DETECTION & REFERRAL

- Early detection of psychosocial problems
 - Making connection & taking time
 - Meaning in context: in past and present
 - Meaning in collaboration: here and there
 - Interpreters and cultural mediators
 - Referral network — collaboration
- Sensitivity: impact of traumatisation and migration on wellbeing & relational functioning

(4) CONTINUITY & CONNECTEDNESS

- Support building new social networks & creating connectedness and positive relationships (peers, leisure time, buddies, volunteers,...)
- Creating continuity (material, background/practices, language, ...)
- Specific programs on refugees' wellbeing (parents / children) in schools (cf infra)

**SCHOOL-BASED PREVENTIVE
INTERVENTIONS FOR REFUGEE AND
MIGRANT CHILDREN & YOUTH**

RefugeesWellSchool

Preventive school-based interventions to promote the mental well-being of refugee and migrant adolescents



A European Horizon2020 Research project

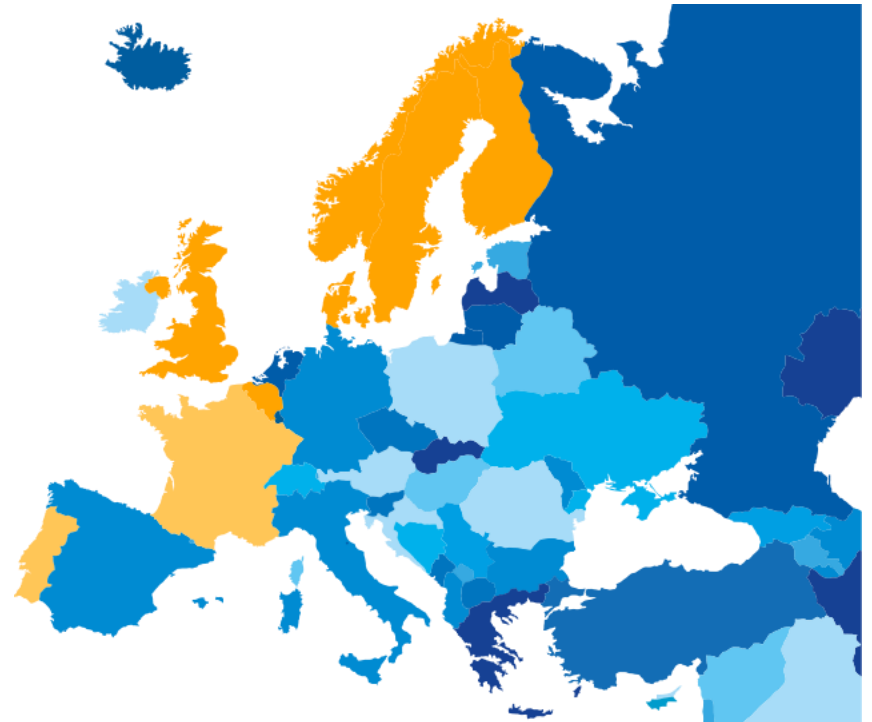
Refugeeswellschool.org

The interventions

- Classroom Drama (CD) workshops;
- Welcome-To-School (WTS);
- Peer Integration and Enhancement Resources (PIER) programme;
- In-Service Teacher Training (INSETT);
- In-Service Teacher Training + Teaching Recovery Techniques (INSETT + TRT).

Implemented in 6 European countries:

- Belgium
- Denmark
- Finland
- Norway
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

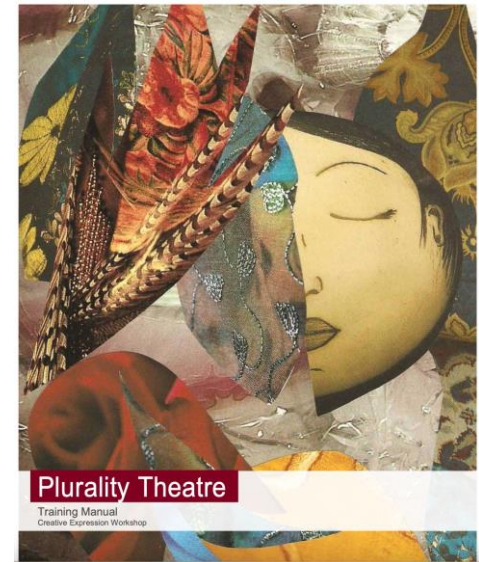


Short description of the interventions



Classroom Drama

- Based on Boal's forum and Fox' playback theater (Fox, 2000), and developed at McGill Transcultural Psychiatry and Concordia University Creative Arts
- Improvisational practice - theatrical representation of stories of participants
- Playback theatre provides possibilities to address migration-related themes (e.g., exile, exclusion, inequality), through actively re-shaping social structures in theatre and enabling dynamic relational positions in the participant group.
- Nine-week sequence of 75-minute sessions with the regular class group.
- Coordinated by a play director, a team of trained actors and musicians (with experience in applied theatre in vulnerable communities)



Welcome to School



- Build on the Welcome to School initiative developed by the Pharos Refugees and Health Knowledge Centre (the Netherlands) & rooted in the theoretical principles of social capital
- Aims: to strengthen the competencies of refugee and migrant youth with regards to self-esteem, coping, social skills and behavioral adjustment
- 15 sessions that bring refugee and migrant adolescents of a class group together in small discussion groups and using non-verbale techniques (e.g., drawings, drama), under the guidance of their teacher.
- Building bridges between past, present and future
- Covering a range of themes, e.g., people of importance, friendships, being in love and dating, leisure time, discrimination and visions for the future
- Adolescents are encouraged to share experiences, thoughts and difficulties, and identify ways of dealing with stressors or problems.

Peer Integration and Enhancement Resource (PIER)

- Aim: strengthening school belonging and promoting dialogue between minority and majority groups through clustering pupils with migrant and non-migrant background in small collaborative groups working together on establishing social connection and participatory activities in the school context,
- Eight weekly sessions; each session between 45 and 60 minutes guided by an experienced facilitator and in presence of the class teacher
- The first half of the intervention (weeks 1-4) aims to encourage understanding of migrant and refugee experiences (why do people become refugees, experiences of refugees, roleplaying scenarios,...)
- In weeks 5-8, students participate in activities which aim to encourage integration between migrant or refugee young people and children from the 'host society' (documentary about a friendship between a young Syrian student and a white British student , reflection on own positionings in school life)

INSETT

- Aim: to enhance teachers' insight into how refugee /migration experiences may impact young refugees' and migrants' well-being and school functioning
- strengthen teachers' competence and self-efficacy in three areas:
 - (1) Promoting refugee/migrant students' mental health and psychosocial wellbeing;
 - (2) Encouraging positive interethnic relationships and strengthening school belonging; and
 - (3) Fostering supportive interrelationships with parents, caregivers and/or guardians to promote school involvement
- The INSETT intervention runs over a period of 10-12 weeks.
- Three interrelated course modules:
 - two collective learning modules (whole-day seminars) at the start and at the end
 - in between: an individual module: Augeo online course: 8 sections (4-5 hours of study in total): each lecture deals with a special theme, including theory, case histories, exercises and further reading

Teaching Recovery Techniques (TRT)

- Manualized intervention for children diagnosed with PTSD
- Developed by the Children and War foundation (Yule, Dyregrov, Raundalen, & Smith, 2013).
- Based on trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy
- Two group leaders who receives training in TRT deliver the sessions.
- Seven sessions for young people and two for the caregivers.
- Each session lasts between 90 to 120 min and includes skills training, rehearsal and homework.
- Themes of the sessions: getting to know each other, intrusion, arousal, exposure and traumatic reminders,....

Other interventions



MindSpring

- Group programme with, for and by refugees and immigrants about topics related to life in exile.
- Aim: create awareness and empowerment and hereby prevent the development of psychological and social problems.
- 8-10 participants in a group; 6-9 group sessions of 2 hours
- Sessions are conducted in the participants' native language
- Facilitated by MindSpring trainer - a volunteer with refugee or immigrant background (peer-to-peer method); and co-trainer - a professional social worker from the local area - acts as an assistant to MindSpring trainer
- MindSpring trainer has seven days of formal training in the MindSpring method before facilitating a MindSpring group; the co-trainer participates two of the seven days.
- Different forms:
 - Mind-Spring Adults
 - Mind-Spring Junior 14-18 years (6 sessions)
 - Mind-Spring Junior 8-13 years (can be combined with MindSpring Parental Support)
 - Mind-Spring Parental support (can be combined with MindSpring Junior 8-13)

<https://mindspring-grupper.dk/about-mindspring/materials>

Creative arts-based expression program *(Rode Neuzen – FWO - De Haene & Derluyn)*

- Manualized program that was developed and studied by Rousseau et al. (2004)
- Classroom-based, creative arts program; verbal and non-verbal modalities
- 8-to-12-year old migrant and refugee children in multiethnic elementary schools
- A qualified creative arts therapist in conjunction with the class teacher
- Eight sessions (Rousseau et al.: 12 sessions); three consecutive parts, combining storytelling and drawing in individual and collective work:
 - Week 1-2: around myths and tales belonging to different cultures
 - Week 3-6: children are asked to construct a story of migration of a character of their choice, depicting pre-migration, migration, and post-migration phase (drawing, writing, theatrical exercises)
 - Week 7-8: bridge the gap between home and school by inviting children to bring in tales from their family and community contexts
- All sessions fixed, predictable structure, involving a warming-up and closure activity; and the main activity

AND THE WELLBEING OF THE TEACHER?

And the wellbeing of the teacher?

- Uncertainty
- Powerlessness
- Secondary traumatisation
- Burn-out

....sharing
... self-care
....position





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