

## B. Some considerations to be aware of when working with children from Ukraine

**Aim: To offer recommendations for teachers on issues relating to the background of children arriving from Ukraine and their most urgent needs**

All school staff, especially teachers, need to pay special attention to the vulnerable emotional state of children arriving from Ukraine by following the recommendations below.

- Prepare the students in your normal classes for the arrival of children from Ukraine by giving information about these children's background and having a class discussion about their needs
- Welcome the new arrivals and try to reassure them. Aim to create an atmosphere in which children from Ukraine feel able to express themselves and to share whatever information they wish about themselves but expect different children to behave differently: one child may talk about his or her life in Ukraine or recent experiences, but this does not mean that all children will want to do the same
- In general terms, respect the privacy of the children you are working with and, depending on their age, remind them of principles such as tolerance, equality, and respect
- In class, it is best not to ask personal questions about children's situation in Ukraine or the experiences they have had travelling to reach safety
- It is important to avoid discussing topics that may distress these children or make them feel uncomfortable. If sensitive issues are raised by students from the host community, they may upset individual children and cause them to withdraw from learning activities
- Children may spontaneously talk about their traumatic experiences. If they do, listen with empathy and show that you are interested in them as people. If you feel that some individuals are still suffering from the effects of these experiences, seek the help of a psychologist or counsellor
- Children suffering trauma may be disorientated and upset, and may have problems with concentration and memory, so they may need encouragement to participate in learning activities
- Consider carefully the following three main needs, and try to identify who in the school is available to help with them:
  - the need for healthcare: children may be exhausted and distressed when they arrive. They may also be ill due to difficult conditions during their journey.
  - their welfare needs: depending on their accommodation, they may not have easy access to good food, suitable sleeping and bathroom arrangements, clean clothes, etc.
  - the need for orientation and information concerning their exact location, the layout of the school, their timetable, etc.
- Discuss these and similar difficulties with the other school staff members, such as healthcare staff, counsellors and social workers and those in charge of administrative procedures
- Dealing with traumatised children may itself be traumatic, so never try to handle serious cases alone: get help from other members of staff and discuss your experiences with an expert.