FEEL PROJECT:

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES

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FIRST PART

THE WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The theoretical basis of the FEEL project is the Health-promoting school (HPS) model, promoted by WHO, UNESCO, and the EU, that adopts a Whole-School Approach to health promotion.

What is the whole school approach?

The Whole-School Approach is based upon the recognition that all aspects of the school community may impact students' health and wellbeing. It acknowledges that learning and health are strictly linked: students with good school careers have higher levels of health, and people with higher levels of well-being and healthy behaviors learn better. The approach aims at individual and organizational changes in the school setting (and in general in the educational system) through the offer of health education and health promotion programs and services. Since people learn from formal and informal experiences, through this approach, continuous experiences, normative behaviors, beliefs, and habits can be offered. To change people's habits, it is necessary to integrate action to enhance individual awareness and intentions and change the context.

In light of the above, the Whole-School Approach represents a beneficial way to address refugee and asylum seeker children and meet adolescents' needs and challenges. It can be strategic in facilitating this specific kind of students' inclusion in the school context of the host country.

it must be considered that youth with a migrant background, particularly refugees and asylum seekers, mainly belong to families with low income. They experience high levels of inequalities compared to youth from high-income families in the following fields: health, life satisfaction, social wellbeing, and medical attended injury.

As demonstrated in the WAY project, to which FEEL is closely linked: health and migrant inclusion are very connected

The health of pupils and the sustainable environments in which they live are considered fundamental to their learning outcomes. A health-promoting school continuously strengthens its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning, and working. It implements a structured and systematic plan to promote the well-being of students, teachers, and non-teaching staff.

THE HPS RECOMMENDS FOCUSING ON SIX COMPONENTS TO ACHIEVE A COMPREHENSIVE WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH

SCHOOL PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Includes buildings, grounds, and surroundings. For example, creating a healthy physical environment may involve making the school grounds more appealing for recreation and physical activity.

SCHOOL SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Relates to the quality of relationships among school community members, e.g., between pupils themselves and between pupils and school staff. The social environment is influenced by the social competencies of the school's community members and relationships with the broader community.

COMMUNITY LINKS

Links between the school, pupils' families, and key groups/individuals in the surrounding community. Consulting and collaborating with community stakeholders will support health-promoting school efforts and the school community in their health-promoting actions.

HEALTHY SCHOOL POLICIES

Clearly defined documents or accepted practices designed to promote health and well-being. These policies may regulate which foods can be served at the school or describe how to prevent or address school bullying. The policies are part of the school plan.

INDIVIDUAL HEALTH SKILLS AND ACTION COMPETENCES

Can be promoted through the curriculum and activities that develop knowledge and skills, enabling pupils to build competencies and take actions related to health, well-being, and educational attainment. Actions should be included in the school's everyday life. They should aim at, for example, healthy eating, daily physical activity, developing social skills, and health literacy.

HEALTH SERVICES COLLABORATIONS

Local and regional school-based or school-linked services responsible for pupils' health care and promotion by providing direct pupil services. This includes pupils with special needs. Health service workers can work with teachers on specific issues, e.g., hygiene and sexual education.

- **BY ADDRESSING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING SIMULTANEOUSLY THROUGH THE SIX COMPONENTS, THEY REINFORCE EACH OTHER AND MAKE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE HEALTH MORE EFFECTIVELY**

The HPS model is based on the following core values:

1 EQUITY:
Equal access for all to education and health.

2 SUSTAINABILITY:
Activities and programs are implemented systematically over a prolonged period.

3 DIVERSITY:
Diversity is celebrated. Schools are communities where all feel trusted and respected.

4 EMPOWERMENT:
All members of the school community are actively involved.

5 DEMOCRACY:
Health-promoting schools are based on democratic values.

Among these, equity and inclusion are especially important with respect to the integration of students with migrant backgrounds, also taking into account that education is one of the main factors that can influence inequalities and the outcomes of HBSC survey shown above. This reaffirms the idea that the HPS model is particularly relevant in order to enhance school integration of such populations of children and adolescents.

Scholars need to further explore this topic, but some central themes to plan school-based interventions that support the mental health and psychosocial well-being of refugee and asylum seeker pupils are already clear. For example, cultivating a trusting partnership with the surrounding community is a key factor, as it encourages participation and makes activities "with" migrant groups instead of "in" them. It is also important to reach students and their families in a manner that aligns with their beliefs, practices, identities, and idioms. Moreover, it is necessary to adopt socio-ecological and multi-layered interventions to adequately attend to the interplay of individual and structural factors influencing refugee and asylum seekers students' experiences, traumas, and educational outcomes.

SECOND PART

THE FEEL PROJECT

WHY?

The last European refugee crisis, caused by the war in Ukraine that started in February 2022, is putting pressure on various systems: reception, labor market, housing, and education. The arrival of large numbers of Ukrainian refugees, mostly women and minors, forces the education system to take immediate responsibility for these students to favor their reception and integration. However, Ukrainian refugees already benefit from temporary protection status.
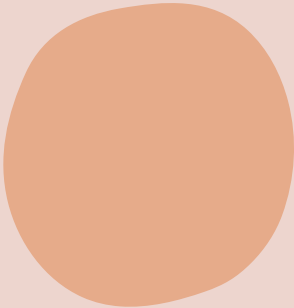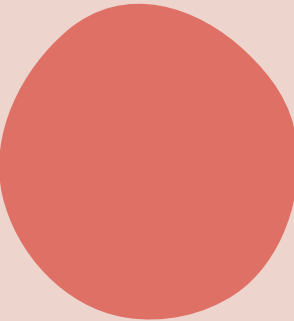
Connections:

FEEL (Fostering refugEEs incLusion) project is strictly linked to, and is an extension of, the WAY project, in which we used the Whole-School approach. In the WAY project, 40 professors and teachers were trained in this approach and highlighted their concern about the inequalities being created within their classrooms. Teachers are not only faced with the challenge of integrating new Ukrainian pupils, which is already complex, but also avoiding discrimination between refugees and displaced persons.
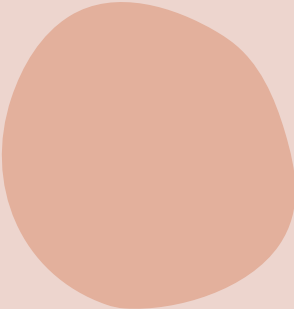
Project goals:

To **develop a Pedagogical Support Tool** (PST) based on the Whole-School approach to foster refugee integration.

To **develop a Best Practices Document** (BPD) mapping best practices on refugee integration, with particular attention to the recent Ukrainian situation at EU and local levels.

To **exchange the PST and BPD at EU and local levels** with 40 organization members participating in the project during an international workshop, with particular attention to health promotion, community links, and personal skills.

To **exchange the PST and BPD with the target group** in each participating country at the local level.

Long-term aims:

» Utilize the Whole-School Approach to facilitate the social inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeker students.

» Reduce early school leaving for refugee and asylum-seeker students.

PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS:

The European Centre for Economic and Policy Analysis and Affairs (ECEPAA), a Belgian nonprofit organization

Laboratory Center of Vocational Schools of Katerini, Greece

Association Maison d'Enfant pour la Culture et l'Education, is a social promotion NGO based in Turin

Střední průmyslová škola, technical high school based in Rakovník, Czech Republic

AIM OF THE PEDAGOGICAL SUPPORT

The aim of the PST is to provide professionals in education and training with concrete tools and specific methods of intervention to facilitate the inclusion of Ukrainian refugee and asylum-seeking students through the Whole-School approach. Refugee and asylum seeker students risk experiencing higher rates of economic inequalities than their native peers, with consequent complexities in accessing the health system, sports activities, and healthy food habits. This PST, together with the BDP, are the main outcomes of the FEEL project. This PST springs from the outcomes of research carried out in different participating countries. Besides, the activities were tested during the Rakovink training, which allowed us to adapt and further improve them.

THE FOCUS GROUP

To develop the Pedagogical Support Tool for training teachers and educators, qualitative research was carried out. From the main results of the research, the partnership identified four topics to build four activities, which will be shown in the strategy of intervention section.

The research was conducted between the first and second transnational meetings held in Italy and Greece. During the second meeting, the consortium debated and provided inputs around potential topics. In the end, four main topics were identified. The methodology used during the research was the focus group.

In each partner country, a focus group was conducted to understand the main problems of Ukrainian and refugee and asylum seeker students, how the teachers are solving them, and the main difficulties teachers have in helping and favoring the inclusion of these students. Participants were also asked about their suggestions and the solutions they are applying to solve the problems. The focus group participants included teachers, headmasters, Ukrainian students and parents, and members of NGOs and local bodies.
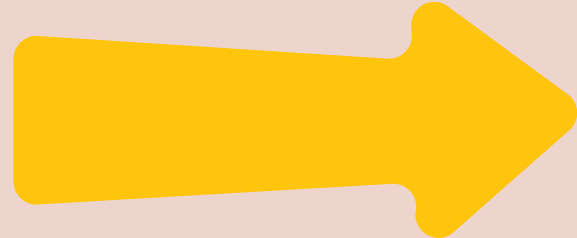
MAIN CHALLENGES
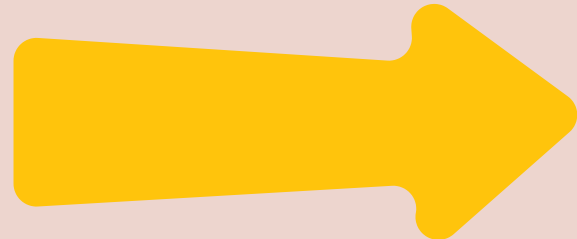
➡ **LANGUAGE GAP**

➡ **CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**
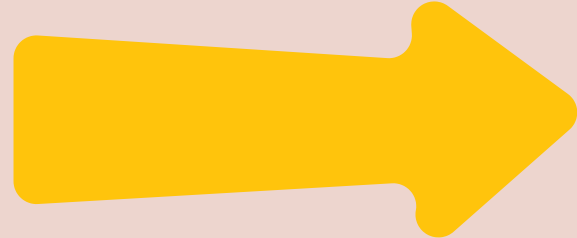
➡ **EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS**

1 Many Ukrainian students find the grammar of partner countries too complex, negatively affecting their learning and active class participation. Additionally, the lack of English knowledge of both students and teachers slows down the learning of the host country's language. In some cases, adult migrants who speak the host country's language teach it to other migrants.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

- Presence of language and cultural mediators
- Use of various teaching methods such as pictograms, images, photographs, games, audio-visual materials, interactive exercises, graphs, and diagrams
- Use of Google Translator

APPLIED SOLUTIONS:

- Use of English

2 These differences characterize classroom interactions and academic expectations. A lack of information about local customs, the education system, health services, and other important areas can hinder successful integration.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

- A welcoming attitude in a non-judgmental, supportive, and helpful environment

APPLIED SOLUTIONS:

- Use of Russian by adults living in the Czech Republic and Greece and by Czech teachers

3 Many students have traumas, anxiety, risk of social isolation, difficulty making new friends, and can be exposed to prejudice or bullying.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

- Psycho-pedagogical support

APPLIED SOLUTIONS:

- In the Czech Republic, students from a migrant background were used as guides for newcomers

1 THE HELP OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The support of the educational system was strongly felt only in the focus group held in Greece. Bureaucracy, often seen as a hindrance, should be managed to help, not hinder, Ukrainian students' integration process.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Teachers should know good practices about inclusion and intercultural education to help students feel more comfortable and join groups more quickly (cooperative learning, dramatization, dialogue).
- School staff should be trained on the following topics:
- Psychological and pedagogical support of these students
  - Foreign languages, psychology, and sociology
  - Capacity to address educational and psychological problems both inside and outside the school environment
  - Promoting a welcoming environment where Ukrainian students feel listened to, supported, and motivated to actively participate in school life
  - Teachers should satisfy native students' curiosity to understand Ukrainian students' history

HEALTH PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Teachers find it difficult to provide an environment that supports mental health and students' emotional well-being.
- Educational practices and policies need to be updated to ensure that every student can live with serenity in the school environment.
- Some Ukrainian migrants arrived with health problems but without their medicines.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Involvement of psychologists or other mental health experts
- Preventing bullying and creating a positive school culture
- Involving families through support programs and resources to help them navigate available services
- Teachers should dialogue with students even during breaks to gain their trust and learn about any serious health problems
- Promoting safety and physical health through physical education courses, emotional and mental health support from qualified staff
- Ensuring access to nutritious meals (importance of nutritional education and promoting a healthy lifestyle)

3 SCHOOL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT (community links)

All focus groups noted the warm hospitality their communities had extended to these students

SUGGESTIONS:

- Promote collaborations, community events, and projects
- Foster connections between schools and the local community and encourage participation in local festivals and events
- Local and international authorities and NGOs should cooperate with schools to facilitate these students' integration

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen and diversify support structures within educational institutions (implement specific training programs for teachers to acquire skills and tools necessary to address the unique and diverse needs of Ukrainian students)
- Promote initiatives aimed at the health and well-being of students, ensuring continuous and adequate psychological support
- Strengthen ties between the school and the surrounding community
- Adopt an approach of continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implemented strategies and initiatives

Based on the focus group outcomes in the Greek meeting, the partnership decided to work on the following topics:

1. How to increase the involvement of parents and the local community (external actors)

Objective: The main purpose of this topic is to provide teachers and educators with the main information about counseling and peer education to teach them to their students, stimulating mutual knowledge between Ukrainian and native students.

Expected Outcomes: Participants will learn the main tools of counseling and peer education, thanks to role-playing. This will enable them to more effectively involve students and stimulate curiosity among both groups of students.

BACKGROUND IMFORMATION:

- Many Ukrainian students suffer from trauma and anxiety due to the war in their country. These psychological issues often hinder their ability to make new friends because their mental health status does not allow them to be curious, causing them to close off and avoid establishing new relationships.
- According to social psychologists who work in the Whole-School Approach, health education projects implemented in many European schools by external professionals are not effective. It is better if relationship skills are taught by the same teachers who work in the classrooms with students.
- Counseling and peer education are practical and effective approaches, as shown in many scientific essays and projects implemented in schools. These approaches facilitate communication and quickly build relationships and empathy among students.

ACTIVITY

1. A brainstorming activity will serve as an icebreaker. Teachers will be asked to reflect on the meaning of the concepts of empathy, interculturality, integration, interaction, and equity. A board is divided into five columns; the purpose is to group as many words as possible and identify differences, similarities, and references. (10 minutes)
2. Participants will be shown 5-6 slides introducing them to peer education and counseling (verbal and non-verbal communication), the role of empathy, and the value of helping relationships. The importance of simulation and putting oneself in another person's shoes will be emphasized. (15 minutes)
3. A post-it activity on difficulties they encounter in class (anonymously), to be discussed after the simulation. (5 minutes)

SIMULATION:

Teachers will engage in a role-play where an interaction between a native student and a Ukrainian student takes place, concluding in mutual learning. Specifically, three simulations will cover three main topics:

- Christmas: Differences, similarities, curiosities about the ways of celebrating it.
- Music: Music trends in respective countries, popular music, streaming platform Spotify, and comparisons between popular singers of the same music genre.
- Relationships: How interactions between friends develop into romantic relationships? Is the use of dating apps common among young people? What are the most common activities for people hanging out for the first time?

CONCLUSIONS:

Through a discussion activity, participants will comment on the simulation and its effect on them. They will refer to the difficulty expressed in the post-it at the beginning: do they think they will have more tools to overcome future difficulties at the end of this activity? How will they transfer the techniques they learned to their students?

2. Addressing language gap

Objective: The main purpose of this training session is to introduce participants to a mobile phone application for immigrant students (mainly from Ukraine) that will help them adapt to local life, culture, school, shops, and healthcare services.

Expected Outcomes: Participants will learn how to use the application in their everyday lives and eventually start using it during their adaptation period or beyond. The main aim of the application is to help them solve difficulties they might experience during their first weeks of stay in the new town, giving them a sense of security and greater familiarity with the new environment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Apart from the cultural gap, immigrants usually experience a language gap that deeply impacts their feelings during the first days and weeks of their stay in a foreign country. They might suffer from stress (e.g., Ukrainian students who had to leave their country because of war); this stress can worsen due to a lack of knowledge of the new language, surroundings, and culture. Sometimes special persons act as tutors/guides for foreign students, e.g., fellow students. However, these peers might be available only at school, during limited hours. Immigrant students might then experience difficulties and feelings of loneliness and helplessness after school hours when they need to use local facilities, shops, or services. Additionally, they might feel ashamed to discuss medical problems with their fellow students.

When looking up facts on the internet, immigrant students might find false and misleading information, causing further problems in their real life. It is important that they have a reliable source of information about the new place where they are currently trying to settle down.

ACTIVITY

1. The participants will brainstorm possible difficulties they might encounter when arriving in the new country.
2. They will be introduced to the application "Community Connection" (CC) and will test the demo version on school tablets.
3. They will be given a task, e.g., "You have a toothache. Find dental offices in your area and make an appointment." They will try to accomplish this task using the CC application.
4. In the end, they will prepare and perform dialogues related to the place or service they were supposed to find. For example, a dialogue usually conducted at a dentist's office.
5. Participants will take notes on the English vocabulary and phrases used, helping them learn these. A worksheet containing various useful words and phrases will also be prepared.

3. Psychological aspects and Integration

Objective: to explore and understand the psychological aspects related to students' difficulties in integration and socialization, with a strong focus on their mental health. By leveraging visual tools, the workshop aims to enhance teachers' understanding and equip them with practical strategies to promote inclusive educational environments.

Expected Outcomes: By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Understand psychological challenges: Gain a comprehensive understanding of the psychological challenges faced by students during the integration process.
- Develop support strategies: Formulate practical strategies to support the mental health and well-being of students.
- Increase sensitivity and awareness: Heighten awareness and sensitivity towards the emotional and psychological needs of diverse student populations.
- Utilize visual tools: Effectively use visual tools to identify and address integration challenges in educational settings.
- Create inclusive environments: Apply inclusive strategies in their daily practice to foster a supportive and welcoming school environment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Migration significantly impacts individuals' ability to build social relationships, understand local cultural dynamics, and cope with daily challenges. This is especially true for students, who face linguistic, cultural, and social diversity that can generate emotions such as nostalgia, anxiety, isolation, and a sense of identity loss. Prioritizing mental health becomes essential in such contexts.

For students migrating from Ukraine and other regions, the emotional burden can be substantial. They must navigate the complexities of new relationships, different social contexts, and varied expectations, leading to mental health challenges if not adequately supported. The absence of a supportive environment increases the risk of issues such as depression, anxiety, and social withdrawal.

Teacher training plays a pivotal role in equipping educators with the necessary tools to address these challenges.

Training programs involving a multidisciplinary team of experts—local cultural mediators, psychologists, pedagogists, and sociologists—provide a comprehensive understanding of migrant students' needs. This approach ensures teachers are well-prepared to create inclusive educational settings fostering mutual understanding and respect among students from diverse backgrounds.

Collaboration between educational institutions, local communities, and social organizations is crucial in supporting the integration and psychological well-being of Ukrainian students. Building strong support networks and promoting diversity awareness are fundamental to effective social inclusion initiatives.

These efforts help create a society that welcomes and values diversity, facilitating a positive transition for all involved.

An **integrated and supportive approach is essential**. By focusing on mental health and using visual tools to highlight and address challenges, educators can significantly impact students' well-being and integration success. This workshop aims to provide the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to support these efforts effectively

ACTIVITY

Session 1: Images of Integration and Socialization Challenges: a. Visual Presentation of Challenges:

- Use projected images to depict scenarios of difficulty, stimulating reflection on their impact on students' mental health.
- Immersion in Sensitivity: Display images illustrating the sensitivity required in handling students' psychological challenges, promoting awareness and inclusion.
- Activity 1: Image Analysis: Divide participants into groups to analyze and discuss images, identifying challenges and suggesting intervention strategies.

Session 2: Images of Individual Skills and Psychological Treatments: a. Health Education and Visual Information:

- Utilize interactive graphs and images to represent the impact of education on students' overall health.
- Visual Psychological Interventions: Showcase images of specific interventions and successful cases, using diagrams to illustrate the process of integrating health services into the school.
- Activity 2: Creating a Visual Map: Provide paper, markers, and stickers for each group to create a visual map representing key concepts learned during the session.

4. Involvement of parents and the local community

Objective: The main purpose of this training session is to comprehend the factors that limit parents' involvement in school activities and understand the advantages of the local community's contribution to the smoother integration of Ukrainian students at school.

Expected Outcomes: Participants will identify the importance of parents' and local community involvement and create a strategy plan to increase their engagement in supporting the Ukrainian students' integration into the education system.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to the research project WAY, it was found that:

- Family engagement can have very positive results for both parents and children:
  - Improved parent–child relationship quality
  - Security feelings and motivation
  - Reduced aggressive behaviors and psychological symptoms
  - Overall improved academic performance
- Community involvement has:
  - Positive impacts on school outcomes
  - Promising effects on school attendance and continuation

ACTIVITY

1. **Introduction of Topic + Background Info**
2. **Storyboarding**:
   - Show a picture of children and their parents at school and ask questions: a. What does smooth student integration mean? b. What are its benefits for Ukrainian students?
3. **Mind Mapping on Whiteboard:**
   - What challenges/difficulties do Ukrainian refugee parents face regarding the smooth integration of their children into the school community?
4. **Nominal Group Technique (or Brainstorming):**
   - Subject: How can we increase the involvement of parents and the local community to amplify the smooth student/educational integration of Ukrainian students?

Phase 1: Silent idea generation
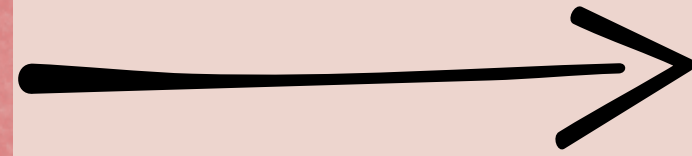
Explain the problem the group needs to solve. Participants individually think about the problem and come up with their own ideas/solutions. Then they write them on post-it notes (no discussion at this stage).

Phase 2: Round Robin idea collection
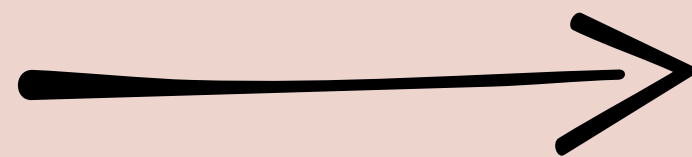
Participants share their ideas in turn, one idea at a time. The ideas/solutions are written on the whiteboard. The process is repeated until all ideas are shared. If a participant does not have an idea to share when their turn comes, they can choose to pass.

Phase 3: Clarifications and discussion
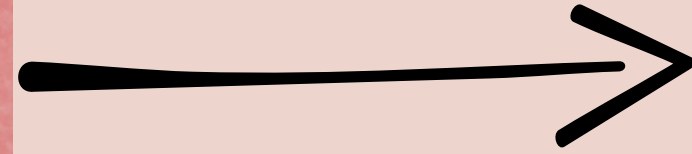
Participants clarify and expand on the ideas they shared so the group understands them better. No ideas should be criticized or eliminated at this point. Similar ideas can be grouped. Finally, the ideas/solutions should be numbered.

Phase 4: Voting, ranking ideas

Each participant rates each idea by its number on a predefined rating scale. If a participant thinks a particular idea is very effective in solving the problem, they rate it higher, and vice versa. Voting can be performed on post-it notes, which are collected at the end. The ratings of each idea are summed up to a final score. The ideas are then ranked based on the final score. Those with the highest final score are selected as the most effective based on the group's beliefs.

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